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"One Country Alone Cannot Solve These Problems": German Leadership's Role in Europe's Decade of Crisis

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“One Country Alone Cannot Solve These Problems”: German Leaderships’ Role in European (Dis)Integration During Continuous Crisis

College Honors Thesis

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Abstract

Continuous crisis in the European Union has resulted in skewed power dynamics between Member States and supra-state institutions. This project explores how German leaders have positioned themselves in the European Union during acute crises and how their discourse promotes integration efforts. Press conferences, press statements, and government statements between 2010–2020 are analyzed, informed by actor-produced policy-narrative analysis and archival research methods. Dominant themes of economic stability, unity, and bordering are revealed. European institutional power and European identity have shifted in the last decade due to the complex institutional dynamics between nation states and the European Union. Broader questions over identity, border control, and the future of Europe have been challenged by theses crises as policies pushed forward by Germany have both increased and decreased integration. Recent trends in anti-Europeanism among the German electorate have shifted domestic politics away from pro-integrationist policies, threatening the support for future European integration. This study contributes the discussion about the stability of the European project.

Introduction: Always Somewhere Between the US and EU

I have been moving between the United States and Germany since I was an infant. Part of my extended family lives in Germany so I have spent summer and winter breaks moving between the European Union and the United States for the majority of my life. My dual citizenship has made this movement exponentially easier. This ease of movement was made obvious to me when my family moved to Berlin briefly and only my mother — who is an American — needed to acquire residency, while my siblings and I did not. Coming to college, mobility and migration have been at the forefront of my academic interests. And while discussing the bordering and restriction of movement of others, the privilege and ease of my own mobility has been brought to the forefront of my more recent travel experiences.

Studying abroad was something I had dreamt about my entire college career and getting on a plane, getting out of Burlington, and going to one of the most eclectic and historic places in Germany was a pinnacle in personal and academic achievement. Going to Berlin for seven months on my own, living in a *Wohngemeinschaft* with German students, and getting an internship over the summer felt liberating and like I was finally becoming "German." I was always the "American" among my German friends and although I could flash my German ID, my shoes, wallet, and misuse of the dative always gave me away. Although Germany was a very familiar place to me, I was ready to truly connect with a large part of my identity. Not only did I have my own personal goals with language acquisition and personal growth, but I also was striving toward an academic goal that had been built and fostered through global studies projects at UVM. I was to build a country profile on refugee resettlement using local sources, my own photography, and a daily journal. Once in Berlin I began asking my professors about local organizations to get in touch with and resources I could use for my project. As I was exploring

the city and taking pictures of neighborhoods, fliers, and food stands while going to classes about the history of the European Union and the culture of Berlin, the city itself started to get quieter. We had an emergency meeting. We were being sent home because of the exponential increase of coronavirus cases.

Five weeks. Five weeks of constantly speaking and thinking in German. Five weeks of trying to spatialize and visualize refugee resettlement in a city that seems to be full of different types of migrants from resettled refugees to Erasmus students to European expatriates. When I came back to my parents' house in Maryland I was defeated and felt like I had been ripped away from growth, from engaging with the world, from understanding how to conduct research "on the ground." And yet, amid my sadness I began to reflect on systems of mobility — which I am so often drawn to in my academic pursuits — and how unprecedented the COVID-19 pandemic was. I was overwhelmed but enthralled by the current state of immobility.

The refugee resettlement project I was pursuing abroad was reframed once the pandemic hit, and I was able to complete country profiles on refugee resettlement in Austria and Germany. This research was foundational for my thesis as it informed me on the history of German migration law and policy as well as on leadership's position throughout the migrant crisis. Doing extensive research on the tensions between Austria and Germany during the migrant crisis provided deeper questions on Euroregions – border regions between Member States – and how identity politics play out in technically border free areas. This then prompted further inquisition into how Germany dictates policy initiatives, not only nationally but also at the EU level. This sparked my interest in how Germany acts as a national and European leader during times of crisis.

My own experience of mobility restriction in the German context made me question the concept of a European identity and the reality of European mobility during crisis. While I was debating whether or not to stay in Berlin in March 2020, I was considering two things: I had a lot more trust in the German healthcare system and government to handle a crisis situation than I did the United States and the fact that most people could not choose between staying and leaving. I knew I would be able to go back to the United States regardless of Donald Trump's border closures because I was a US citizen and had a right to repatriation. I also knew I had the right to stay in Germany unlike most of my peers who had not acquired their German student visas yet.

Understanding my privilege of mobility and education, I have used my personal and familial connections as well as past academic pursuits in the realm of migrations studies to drive this project on Germany's positionality in European cohesion during crisis. My own positionality has largely informed my thesis work, as mobility and borders have always been central to how I get to see my family — who are currently living in San Diego, New York City, London, and Mönchengladbach — yet have only recently been restricted to me.

The European Union's foundations are built on the principles of the free movement of people, goods, services, and capital. However, from its inception the EU has been challenged by a dichotomy between integration and nationalism. For over a decade, a culmination of crises have challenged the project of a unified Europe. The Eurozone crisis beginning in 2009, the "migrant" crisis beginning in 2015, and the COVID-19 crisis beginning in 2020 have all impacted the Single Market, the free movement of people and goods, and the idea of European identity. There have been other acute crises during this time frame, notably Brexit, the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union. While this decision, first voted on by the citizens of the UK in 2016 and officially implemented in 2021, addresses these key questions

surrounding financial stability, free movement, and European identity over nationalism, I chose not to include it in my analysis. Starting with the COVID-19 pandemic and the global processes it disrupted (economic flows, migratory flows, healthcare capacities) I moved backwards and looked at crises that impacted European policies in these acute areas. The Eurozone crisis and migrant crisis address institutional policies of financial stability and free movement. I believed introducing Brexit as a case study along with COVID-19 would be examples that are intersectional in ways that were too complicated to achieve in this project. For clarity and concision, I address Brexit and the UK's role in European politics and focus on the Eurozone crisis, the migrant crisis, and the COVID-19 crisis to address my research questions.

Moving through continuous crisis, the tension between European institutions and nation states has grown. Germany has increasingly emerged as a leading voice within the EU during crises. The discourse used by German officials since reunification stresses the dependency Germany has had on the European community. As Germany has become a more politically and economically dominant Member State, the political discourse has begun to balance domestic interests with European ones. German leaders use discourse that provides examples of how European institutional power and European identity have shifted as a result of crisis management. Within this shift, citizens have become key to pushing for broader integrative measures through their willingness to cooperate with crisis mitigation strategies.

The main research questions this project seeks to answer are: how do crises complicate the idea of the European Union? How has Germany framed itself within each crisis and how has its policies influenced the idea of a unified Europe? How does identity, mobility, and economic power get leveraged during times of crisis to promote or oppose integration?

This study complements existing literature by providing an analysis of how German leadership's management of the COVID-19 pandemic compared to the Eurozone crisis and migrant crisis has impacted European integration. The questions of European identity and European unity are intertwined with these crises and what they have threatened: financial stability, mobility, and health and wellbeing. The mass politicization of national identity that has arisen as a result of the Eurozone and migrant crisis has impeded progress in burden sharing and crisis mitigation strategies across. Further study in this field may reveal the ongoing impact the coronavirus pandemic is having on European integration as well as the complex dynamics that operate between the nation state and supra-state institutions.

The paper is divided into seven sections. It begins with an introduction which explains my relationship to this research and gives a description of the dynamic relationships between nation states and supra-state actors and the tensions that arise from power imbalances. After, I provide a detailed account of my methodologies which lays out how I acquired and analyzed my data as well as why I chose a historical-textual analysis. I analyze 27 documents which include press statements, press conferences, and government statements from the Press and Information Office of the Federal Government of Germany. These documents provide a mixture of question and answer forums with Chancellor Angela Merkel and other political leaders, as well as straightforward explanations of government policy positions. Each is split into three time frames marking the beginning, middle, and (perceived) end of the crisis. Within each time frame I select three texts by searching for keywords such as "Eurozone," "*asylant,*" (asylum seeker) and "coronavirus" to narrow my search. After selecting my samples, I coded my data in NVivo using open and axial coding. This multi-step coding process allowed me to look for broad themes as well as cross-crisis themes. I ensured I was "informed by prior in-depth reading on current

scholarship around the topic but accompanied by an openness around the ultimate direction of the research" (Roche 2010, 228). By mixing techniques used in archival research with discourse analysis, I was informing myself on nuanced references made by politicians as well as contextualizing events that happened during the time the press conference, press statement, or government statement was released.

The next section provides an overview of the existing literature on crisis theory and European integration theory, as well as an extensive review of the Eurozone crisis and migrant crisis and how it impacted Germany and the EU. There is less literature covering the COVID-19 crisis, but I include an overview of how Germany and the EU addressed the crisis beginning in January 2020. I additionally provide an overview of right-wing populism across Europe and how it connects to these crises and impacts European integration. Next, I contextualize Germany in the EU by providing an overview of the European project and Germany's history and standing within the bloc.

I then set out my findings. I divide this section into themes: contextualizing crisis, German leadership, economic power and privilege, unity and cooperation, and bordering and rebordering. Using quotes from the press conferences, press statements, and government statements, the complicated relationships between the nation state and European institutions is revealed. My next section analyzes my findings, discussing the disconnect between national and supranational agreements, which I argue has resulted in varying degrees of disintegration and integration efforts during crisis in Europe. I inform my analysis through the hegemonic-stability theory, which challenges main European integration theories by claiming that the dominance of Germany is necessary (although not sufficient) for the maintenance of a stable European Union. Germany's role as a hegemon in Europe has been debated among scholars, yet since the

Eurozone crisis especially, it has been described by many as the EU's "indispensable nation" (Webber 2014, 1145). With Germany's position as a stabilizing hegemon in the European Union, the centrality of the supranational institution in German leaders' discourse during both the Eurozone crisis and the migrant crisis was profound. The COVID-19 crisis rescaled the gravity of threat facing Germany, but also repositioned broader transnational cooperation and solidarity. Rescaling border control towards the nation state but cooperation on crisis support towards the supranational level has impacted Germany's role as the stable hegemon and will have lasting impacts on the EU.

Finally, I conclude with an update on coronavirus policies within Germany and the EU since my data collection ended. Both have struggled in wakes of second- and third outbreaks combined with slow vaccination rollouts. I call for further study on how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted Germany's role as a hegemonic influence in the European region. A popular perspective through a media analysis could complement this study and provide alternative perspectives on how integration efforts impact the future of the European Union.

Methodology: Policy Narratives Informed by Archival Research

In order to explore how German leadership has impacted European integration during crises, I decided to use qualitative discourse analysis informed by both actor-produced policy-narrative analysis and archival research methods. I selected samples of press conferences, press statements, and government policy statements selected from the onset of each crisis, the middle of each crisis, and the perceived end of each crisis. Because the COVID-19 crisis is on-going, I chose time periods that coincided with the beginning of European lockdowns in March, the summer (from June - August) when there was stability in case numbers, and October when there was threat of a second wave. A summary of what has happened since October — including the onset of a second and third wave and the European vaccination program — will be included in my conclusion. The press statements, press conferences, and government policy statements were acquired from the Press and Information Office of the Federal Government of Germany. The government provides transcripts of all governmental press statements, press conferences, government policy statements, speeches, press releases, and interviews in German. Only a few texts are available in other languages. There were only three translated documents in English that were relevant to the crises and within my time frames, and after reaching out to the Press and Information Office in order to obtain copies of English transcripts of the specific documents I was working with, I decided to use the original German texts.

I decided to analyze press statements, press conferences, and government policy statements because they provided a mixture of question and answer forums with Chancellor Angela Merkel and other political leaders as well as straightforward explanations of the government policy positions. The voicing of public opinion and concern in the manner of questions from reporters as well as the more concise statements made by the government gave

differing insights into German crisis management. Additionally, previous work done to understand European's crisis management protocols has employed actor-produced policy-narrative analysis (Fischer 2003 and Fischer and Forester 1993). Maricut 2017 suggests that the objectives of the researcher are most important in an actor-produced policy-narrative approach, and that the narratives must be appropriately and consistently used as a means to reach those ends. Policy narratives, provided by government texts like press states, press conferences, and government statements, are "organized forms of discourse put forward by actors involved in the policy process who 'share a social construct' and 'actively try to impose their views of reality on others" (Maricut 2017, 163). Political actors speak with a functional purpose, as they are trying to construct narratives to confront a social phenomenon. I used this actor-produced policy-narrative analysis to inform my own data analysis. Because the data collected are government sources from 2010-2020 and could not elaborate on a topic or answer follow-up questions, I ensured I was "informed by prior in-depth reading on current scholarship around the topic but accompanied by an openness around the ultimate direction of the research" (Roche 2010, 228). Roche emphasizes the need for rigorous preparedness for archival research. While doing initial coding, I made sure to note policies that I had not yet contextualized in my literature review. This process ensured I was informing myself of the context of the press conferences, press statements, and government states so I could understand nuanced speech and slang. Combining a policy-narrative analysis approach with methods used during archival research, I ensured I was informing myself on references made by politicians as well as contextualizing events that happened during the time each press conference, press statement, or government statement was released.

To find documents, I relied on the Press and Information Office website's archive. It allows you to search specific types of documents by year and by key words. You can search "before 2010" or by each year from 2010–2021. Each crisis is split into three time frames that mark the beginning, middle, and (perceived) end of the crisis. Within each time frame I selected three texts by searching for keywords such as "eurozone," "*asylant,*" (asylum seeker) and "coronavirus" to narrow my search. I also had used timeframes of larger events happening in Europe and Germany to further narrow these searches, such as when Germany provided bailout loans to Greece or asylum seekers arrived at the Munich train station. While these events are subjectively deemed important, it was helpful in contextualizing political actors motivations.

For the Eurozone crisis I chose documents from April 28, 2010, June 14, 2010, October 27, 2010, February 22, 2011, July 22, 2011, October 23, 2011, May 16, 2013, October 25, 2013, and December 20, 2013. In 2010, a series of austerity measures, emergency loans, and bailout packages were implemented. Specifically, the Eurozone countries agreed to 30 billion in emergency loans in April 2010; in May Eurozone Member States along with the International Monetary Fund agreed to a 110 billion bailout package for Greece, and another bailout package for Ireland at the end of November. In February 2011 the European Stability Mechanism, a permanent bailout fund, was established. In the summer of 2011, there were talks of Greece being the first country to have to leave the eurozone, accompanied by EU loans and implementation of austerity measures. In October 2011 another round of Greek bailout loans was approved. In 2013, the Eurozone crisis was perceived to be largely over; however, in May the European Central Bank cut the bank rate to 0.5 percent to aid recovery and again in November to 0.25 percent.

For the migrant crisis I pulled documents from June 18, 2015, September 24, 2015, November 29, 2015, January 22, 2016, March 16, 2016, May 27, 2016, February 3, 2017, August 11, 2017 and August 29, 2017. In June 2015 the European Council agreed to relocate 40,000 migrants from Italy and Greece to other Member States. In September 2015 Angela Merkel famously declared "*Wir schaffen das*" as thousands of refugees, who had been held at the Keleti train station in Budapest, were allowed to travel to Austria and Germany. In November 2015 there were a series of terrorist attacks which shifted many European officials' stance on border control and migration policy. In January 2016 there were sexual assaults in Cologne, Germany, with suspects who were asylum seekers, causing public backlash against Germany's liberal migration policy. In March 2016, the EU-Turkey agreement was established. In May 2016, EU discussions of burden sharing of migrants increased. In 2017, the height of the European migrant crisis seemed to be over, but across Europe anti-immigration parties began to enter governments as a result of citizen frustration with the handling of the crisis.

For the COVID-19 crisis I chose documents from March 11, 2020, March 26, 2020, March 28, 2020, June 27, 2020, July 8, 2020, August 27, 2020, October 2, 2020, October 14, 2020, and October 28, 2020. In March 2020, the first restrictions were put in place in Germany and the Robert Koch Institute confirmed exponential increase in COVID-19 cases. In June 2020, the EU Commission presented a strategy for a European wide vaccination program. In July, EU leaders agreed on a six-year recovery plan. In August, the EU provided loans and grants to 15 Member States to protect citizens and mitigate the socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic. In October 2020, the EU disbursed more loans and grants to countries under the SURE program while also providing information on vaccine deployment ("Timeline" 2021).

As you can see each press document circles large events happening at both the German and EU level. I ended up with 27 documents in total.

After selecting my samples, I began coding my data in order to determine how European unity and integration was portrayed by German leadership and government. I used the software NVivo to organize, code, and analyze my data. I first read through each document and identified who was speaking and their political affiliation (if they were a German politician). Then I went back and assigned each important phrase or passage with a specific code or codes. I decided to employ open and then axial coding, as defined by Strauss and Corbin 1998. Open coding uncovers, names, and develops concepts by closely examining discrete parts of text for similarities and differences (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 102). Then, axial coding was used to regroup the data, using the open-code categories to look for more analytical concepts (Babbie 2014, 410). This multi-step coding process allowed me to look for broad themes as well as recurring discourse narratives more closely. The dual-coding process was particularly helpful in finding cross-crisis themes. After I finished coding my data, I shared my codebook and two documents (which had to be in English due to language restrictions) with a peer for validation. Validity involves checking whether you are measuring what you say you are measuring (Babbie 2014, 430). While my codes did address my research questions, during validation I restructured my code book to include sub codes which allowed me to more descriptively analyze broad themes. My code book is represented in Table 1.

Table 1	**Code**	**Sub-Code**
	Economy and mobility	• Economic policy or growth • Free movement
	European Culture of Stability	• European Identity

	German Leadership	•
	Historical Connection	• Future of Europe
	Inseparable	• Germany compared to other EU member states
	International Cooperation	•
	Right extremism	•
	Social Responsibility of Nation States	• Citizen cooperation with crisis protocols
	Systematic change	• Crisis prevention

Other research methods I considered were in-depth qualitative interviews with experts (economists, migration studies scholars, and healthcare professionals) and a social media analysis of the public perception of German leadership through crises. However, there were several limitations I saw in using these methods which led me to decide against them. First, finding several experts in three fields and conducting lengthy interviews would be time consuming and limited in scope. I would have had to supplement their expert views with culturally specific interlocutors or other sources to gain the full picture of the German-European context. The social media analysis presents a similar issue of time and resource constraint, as well as a lack of institutional perceptive. Ultimately, using discourse analysis of government documents, which includes fielded questions from journalists, provides both an elite perspective as well as a limited media perspective to how the German government dealt with European crises.

The combination of a discourse analysis informed by a policy-narrative analysis approach with methods informed by archival research allowed me to tease out the far from straightforward

political frameworks Merkel and her government put forward. The intra-institutional frameworks at play are not homogenous and become entangled, especially when addressing questions of identity, mobility, and economic power between Germany and the European Union. Because of Germany's position in the EU and the dominant role Merkel has had in policy creation, a historical-archival background was necessary to understand the intricacies of the complex objectives of the German government, both at the domestic and EU level. This coupled with my data collection and analysis provided a unique insight into the political perspective on crisis management.

Using meaningful scholarly research to inform my analysis I attempt to connect the narratives of German leadership through crisis.

Literature Review: Continuous Crisis in the EU

The European Union has dealt with three substantial crises in the last decade: the Eurozone crisis, the migrant crisis, and (currently) the COVID-19 crisis. These crises have challenged the project of a unified Europe, specifically its internal single market, the free movement of people and goods, and the idea of "European citizenship." Germany, a political and economic leader in Europe, has led the Union through these moments of crisis. Germany is one of many international actors but is unique due its influential position at the supranational level. To understand Germany's position in all three crises we need to contextualize the complex global processes of the Eurozone crisis, the migrant crisis, and the COVID-19 crisis. These contexts are also vital to understanding the surge of right-wing populism across Europe and how these crises have played a role in its rise to prominence.

Crisis Theory

The EU, a unique political entity, was set up in such a way to maintain peace on the continent; however, there has been discussion of the Union being in perpetual states of crisis. Crisis cannot simply be understood as static moments in history but rather should be understood as omnipresent dislocation in globalized societies, as local identities are subject to constant communal transformation (Nabers 2019, 270). Here, dislocation refers to dramatic shifts within apparently stable discourses of national homogeneity. Therefore, crises of certain degrees are a part of the social fabric; however, sudden events that impede on policy-makers ability to formulate a firm and coherent action plan result in instability.

Since the end of the Cold War, European powers have faced crises in an effort to peacefully rebalance and change Europe (Wivel and Wæver 2018, 323). As new nations joined the European citizenry, new challenges arose, specifically in relation to "national uniformity."

Policy makers under normal circumstances utilize time and resources to find the best solutions. But because in crisis scenarios there is often lack of information and a stress on time, decisions and policies implemented are subpar. To avoid this, institutions need to be able to predict crises and develop scenarios by examining and diagnosing weaknesses in administrative organization (Al 2020, 2). While crises are constitutive of society, institutions nevertheless need to be prepared to face momentary emergencies that are pejoratively deemed crisis. The Eurozone crisis embodies a globalized dislocation crisis, while the migrant crisis and COVID-19 crisis are more indicative of the momentary emergencies with long-lasting social impacts.

Integration Theory

As stated on the onset of this project, the European Union has been a balance between integration and separation. Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2021 discuss how European integration started from diversity, not identity, as a common aversion to war held the European community together (358). Because of the sparse attachment to a European identity, integration theorists have attempted to explain how the European Union has managed to remain a coherent cooperative. First, integration can be defined as an increase of joint policies and European institutions' ability make and implement decisions, against the will of individual Member States (Webber 2014, 342). Webber also includes integration as the number of EU Member States increasing; however, I do not see this as a sufficient measure of integration as including more nations in the Union does not lead to more integrative policies among existing members and could even be more indicative of disintegrative measures as national identity and histories must be brought in line with common European ideals. Disintegration therefore is the decline of joint policies and European institutions' ability make and implement decisions.

Main theories on European integration include neofunctionalism, postfunctionalism, and intergovernmentalism. Neofunctionalism emphasizes path-dependency and spillovers — which suggests that integration in one sector would lead to integration others — and will result in more integration. The cyclical nature of neofunctionalism suggests that as European-level structures grow and transnational exchange increases, so too will the societal demand for these supranational structures. Therefore, neofunctionalism sets out a self-perpetuating system of socioeconomic institutional determinism where disintegration is virtually impossible (Webber 2019, 1136). Because institutionalization prevents crisis induced collapse, there can never be true disintegration in a neofunctionalist framework.

Postfunctionalist theory emphasizes that imbalances caused by crisis results in backlash driven by mass politicization, resulting in less integration (Schimmelfennig 2018, 972). Nation states' broader need for cooperation with the narrower territorial scope of community causes tensions between the supranational European body and Member States, creating political cleavages that toe the Leaver-Stayer line seen in Brexit. Postfunctionalism takes into consideration the power of the nation state and national identity in comparison with the relative weakness of the European identity (Webber 2019, 1140-1141). Therefore, disintegration is likely due to the growth of identity politics and mass politicization.

Liberal intergovernmentalism theorizes European integration as a process of inter-state bargaining in which governments are chiefly motivated by economic preferences (Hooghe and Marks 2019). Because there is an asymmetrical interdependence between nation states, the creation of supranational institutions is seen as a means of securing credible commitments from Member States (Webber 2019, 1136). Disintegration is very unlikely because this economic interdependence remains strong as a result of supranational cooperation.

The three aforementioned theories in integration either take a too optimistic or too pessimistic look at how crises impact European integration. As Schimmelfennig 2018 describes, "in the context of integration, [crises] present a manifest threat and a perceived significant probability of disintegration but may also trigger reform activities leading to more integration" (969). Crises are constitutive of society but are still massive disruptors of policy priorities. While there are many other theories that can be explored, the hegemonic-stability theory provides a more critical lens at which to look at the complexities of European integration. The hegemonic-stability theory suggests that the overwhelming dominance of one country is a necessary condition for the maintenance of an open and stable regional economy (Webber 2014, 352). Germany's economic and political position in the EU has given it a semi-hegemonic status in the EU and has incentivized integration efforts, but the recent increase in nationalism in the Federal Republic as well as across the EU is challenging the incentive for pro-European policies.

Webber 2019 lays out three criteria for assessing if a state is a hegemonic power: "Does it play a pre-eminent role in setting the rules on which the system is based? Does it bear a disproportionate burden of the costs of maintaining the system, especially in crises? Does and can it mobilize (sufficient) support for its strategies to stabilize the system among other ('follower') states?" (1145). As I will show in the following chapters, Germany has filled these criteria throughout the 21st century and especially during crises. Until recently, France and Germany have been in a hegemonic duopoly working together to promote European political stability. After World War II, France was the political powerhouse in Europe, and Berlin, while in close partnership with Paris, defaulted to it as the political leader of Europe. Since reunification, however, Germany has increasingly become more economically powerful and more politically stable. The Franco-German partnership has remained vital to Europe throughout

the 21st century. France has strong connections to the Southern Europe while Germany has connections to Eastern Europe, and both are economically and politically strong.

Unlike other regional hegemons such as the United States or China, Germany does not dominate Europe militarily, demographically, or financially, especially because the German political system disperses rather than centralizes power (Webber 2019, 1146). Therefore, many scholars suggest Germany maintains a semi-hegemonic position in Europe, which has been critical to the stability in times of crisis. This stability has rested on Germany's commitment and incentives to pro-integrationist policies. Germany's national socialist past along with its reliance as an export economy on European partners has driven integration policies at the EU level; however, over the last decade of crisis and mass politicization at home and abroad has called for more domestic initiatives to be made. The future of European political integration is more contingent than traditional theoretical approaches suggest.

The Eurozone Crisis

The Eurozone is an economic project to reduce trade barriers as much as it is a political project to unite the continent, according to Lemke 2014. Galpin 2015 and Hertner and Miskimmon 2015 use Germany's historical experience with European integration to analyze German leaders' commitment to the European project. Galpin 2015 draws on Chancellor Helmut Kohl's support for a single currency, which he related to overcoming the militaristic and nationalistic past by tying a united Germany closely to Europe. This same commitment to Europe is used by Hertner and Miskimmon 2012 to describe Chancellor Angela Merkel's narrative on addressing the Eurozone crisis, as Merkel constantly repeated "When the euro fails, Europe fails" during speeches. Lemke 2014 and Galpin 2015 both discuss Germany's strict austerity position and *Ordnungspolitik* (ordoliberalism), a German variant of neoliberalism

which focuses on regulated markets for competitiveness, budgetary discipline, and individual responsibility, in framing how the country addressed the crisis. Germany is highly invested in the Eurozone and its success as its status as an export country depends on the euro. More than two-thirds of German trade is exchanged within the EU (Lemke 2014, 20). Schild 2013 adds the importance of the Franco-German alliance during the euro crisis. Germany and France's high GDP and shares of the Central European Bank allowed them to take leadership in the 2009 crisis and push forward the European Stability Mechanism, the European semester (a tighter European fiscal surveillance), and an "euro plus pact" to improve economic policy coordination (Schild 2013).

To deal with the crisis throughout the Union, the EU established the European Financial Stability Facility in May 2010 to coordinate and administer financial assistance. This was replaced by the European Stability Mechanism in October 2012 which became the permanent institution for financial assistance; however, creditor countries (Germany, France) wanted receiving countries (Greece, Portugal, Ireland) to meet preconditions for rescue packages. The Fiscal Compact, which subjected receiving countries to strict austerity measures, was signed in March 2012. All of these measures greatly raised the institutional powers of the EU and brought the legitimacy of the supra-state organization into question (Lemke 2014).

The Migrant Crisis

The legitimacy of the EU was further scrutinized in 2015 when the migrant crisis reached an apex and the supranational institution failed to implement comprehensive, union-wide policies. Nedergaard 2019 describes how the Schengen states had abolished the internal borders between them for the security of external borders, yet different traditions pertaining to the rule of law between Member States lead to divergent border security strategies. This has presented

serious challenges for cooperation for refugee policy due to the difference between countries regarding the mobility of citizens, refugees, and asylum seekers in a time of border crisis (Nedergaard 2019, 83). Kushnir et al. 2020 reiterate these sentiments in European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation, or Euroregions, the border zones between countries, after the 2015 migrant crisis. The crisis made enlargement unattractive and strained relationships with existing Member States because of border policies implemented at national levels.

Merkel's leadership and Germany's economic and political standing in the EU allowed for a strong response to the 2015 migrant crisis. Mushaben 2017 describes Merkel's leadership in Germany's migration policy. Liberalizing Germany's historically restrictive migration policies from the 1990s has been a priority since she took office in 2005, convening the first National Integration Plan in 2006, expanding it in 2012, and introducing widespread reform in 2013. In 2015 she kept the borders open to refugees coming from Hungary, resulting in an outpouring of citizen engagement and "welcome culture." However, after opening the borders and letting in over 1.2 million asylum seekers, there was major social and political backlash. In March 2016, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) won 11.7 percent of the vote in Rhineland-Pfalz, 14.9 percent in Baden-Württemberg, and 24 percent in Sachsen-Anhalt. Merkel also faced electoral setbacks in her home state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, where the AfD garnered 20.8 percent of the vote in 2016. In 2018, Merkel had to concede on an open-door refugee policy to maintain her coalition government, agreeing to set up transit centers for asylum seekers to stay in before they were approved for legal entry. This caused backlash from the political left and the public, who were advocating for asylum seekers human rights and Germany's moral and humanitarian mission (Petzinger 2018). Merkel announced in October 2018 that she would be stepping down as the head of the Christian Democratic Union and would not seek re-election as Chancellor after

electoral setbacks. Laubenthal 2019 describes Germany as a selectively liberal immigration country, meaning the country balances the view of migrants as helpful (to fulfill labor shortages) and problematic (dangerous and draining on social welfare). Laubenthal contends that while there have been problematic policies put in place, especially between 2013 and 2017, there has been a proactive approach to immigration reform and policy implementation. Additionally, more restrictions to asylum policy passed through the *Bundesrat* in 2019. Germany took the Council of the EU's Presidency from July 2020 to December 2020, where uniting the EU's refugee and asylum policy was one of Merkel's main priorities; however, combating the massive economic and social toll of the coronavirus pandemic obviously took precedent (Angela 2020).

Within the EU, Germany took a leading role in the EU-Turkey deal, combining domestic and foreign policy goals in the talks. EU-Turkey relations were questionable due to accession talks being at a standstill. Turkey's democratic performance was endangering its compliance with the Copenhagen Criteria, necessary requirements to become a Member State, but the EU still needed a strategic partnership with the nation (Saatçioğlu 2020). Reiners and Takin 2020 describe the historical German-Turkish relations which allowed for a leading role in the EU-Turkey deal, which provided a three-billion euro aid package to Turkey as well as reinvigorated accession talks. These connections are through Turkish diaspora living in Germany as well as the established economic and political partnerships between the two countries.

Migration is still a leading topic in Germany and the EU, especially during the coronavirus pandemic as asylum seekers face increased risks and closed borders.

The Coronavirus Crisis

The COVID-19 crisis in many ways is a combination of the economic crisis, the migrant crisis, with an additional healthcare crisis. Brinks and Ibert 2020 contextualize crisis

management in the era of coronavirus. They claim crises are performative, as they have to be declared as urgent, uncertain, and threatening to the population. Nationally there has been limited scholarly articles on COVID-19 and the German response. However, there has been analysis of how the spread of COVID-19 occurred in Germany by Kübart and Stabler 2020 and Jung et al. 2020. On January 27, the first case of COVID-19 was detected in Germany. On March 17, the Robert Koch Institute classified the risk situation for Germany as moderate to high. At this point, there were already more than 9,000 confirmed cases and 26 COVID-19-related deaths in Germany. On March 23 severe social restrictions and a "lockdown" was put in place, initially for two weeks. Regions have been lifting and imposing these restrictions ad hoc based on local case numbers (Krieger et al 2020). As of April 11, 2021, Germany is in the midst of a third wave of coronavirus, with 13,245 new cases reported, according to the New York Times.

Benton 2020 further describes what life will look like after the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided, and how lifting travel restrictions will be slow and conflicting. Many countries will be forced to prioritize different kinds of movement, whether they are reliant on tourism, migrant labor, or business travel. Similarly, mobility will likely have to be pushed towards automation, including facial recognition, touchless border crossings, and contactless baggage check. Ethical dilemmas when discussing these "safer" options for travel and mobility is put into context as well — as a privilege of the elite. As a vaccine or treatment becomes available, Benton 2020 expresses that this will further marginalize those already pushed to the fringes of movement and mobility.

The European Medicines Agency authorized the BioNTech/Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine December 21, 2020. Moderna's vaccine is going through an application for marketing

authorization, to be decided January 6, 2021 (Dimitrova 2020). Vaccine passports have been authorized to travel in the European Union.

Like during the Eurozone crisis, France and Germany agreed on a 500 billion EU bond and Multiannual Financial Framework. This is historic, as Germany abandoned its refusal to accept EU-wide borrowing and the Franco-German alliance had been revitalized after laying relatively latent, both within EU and foreign political initiatives. In terms of moving Europe forward from the COVID-19 pandemic, France's leader Emmanuel Macron's European vision matched with Germany's international perception as "most responsive" makes this coalition vital (Puglierin and Franke 2020).

Past pandemics, namely the SARS and MERS epidemics help fill in gaps due to the contemporary nature of the coronavirus pandemic and how governments are addressing it. Ibrahim 2007 describes how health communication in Singapore during the 2003 SARS epidemic was heavily framed in military and war language, allowing for severe and even "draconian" measures to be taken by the government to secure borders and take swift action (Ibrahim 2007). Understanding the governmental framing of past pandemics is important in my analysis of the COVID-19 pandemic and how leaders are impacting movement and freedoms.

Right-wing Populism

These crises have led to a rise of right-wing populist parties. Baier 2016 makes the distinction between right-wing radicalism and right-wing populism, an important distinction in this project. According to Baier, right-wing radicalism encompasses parties and groups that position themselves on the margin of the political spectrum, use violence, and usually relate to the tradition of national socialism. Right-wing populism or modernized far-right politics claim to operate in the framework of parliamentary democracy and rhetorically distance themselves from

extremism. Right-wing populists have an authoritarian conception of society, an ethnic sense of nationalism (namely xenophobia, racism, and anti-Europeanism), and what Baier 2016 calls a social chauvinism, meaning a belief that the social welfare system is exclusively for nationals. Within right-wing populist parties there is still the basic rejection of a multicultural or heterogeneous society. For this project, I will focus on right-wing populist movements that have attained EU parliamentary victory. Within the European Parliament there are three party groups that have right-wing populist members: The European Conservatives and Reformists, Identity and Democracy, and the Non-Inscrits.

The European Conservatives and Reformists

The European Conservatives and Reformists parties' that can be considered right-wing populist and have gained parliamentary victory include: New Flemish Alliance (Belgium), Bulgarian National Movement (Bulgaria), Croatian Conservative Party (Croatia), Civic Democratic Party (Czechia), Brothers of Italy (Italy), National Alliance "All for Latvia! – For Fatherland and Freedom" (Latvia), Forum for Democracy (Netherlands), Christian Union-Reformed Political Party (Netherlands), Law and Justice Party (Poland), VOX (Spain), and the Sweden Democrats (Sweden).

The New Flemish Alliance (N-VA) had an impressive electoral growth from 4.8 percent in 2003 to 31.9 percent in the 2014 elections, becoming the largest party in Belgium and entering regional and federal coalitions governments (Abts et al. 2019). N-VA also won three seats in the 2019 EU parliamentary elections with 13.7 percent of the vote. The party advocates for a radicalization of Flemish nationalism and for the establishment of an independent Republic of Flanders.

The Law and Justice party won an outright parliamentary majority in the Polish 2015 elections and employed an anti-immigrant and xenophobic rhetoric that almost completely shut out asylum seekers and refugees (Szczerbiak 2017, 404). Seven thousand migrants were relocated to Poland in-line with the EU Council's relocation scheme, but Law and Justice said that this figure was unrealistic because family members would be able to join initial arrivals and that it would be used as a precedent to force Poland to take in additional migrants in the future (ibid, 412). In 2019, Law and Justice won 26 seats in European Parliament with 45.4 percent of the national vote.

The Sweden Democrats first appeared in politics in 2002 and became the third largest party in Sweden in 2014 despite other established parties refusing to cooperate or enter into coalitions with them (Loxbo and Bolin 2016, 171). The Sweden Democrats received 15.3 percent of the vote in the 2019 EU parliamentary elections and received three seats.

In Spain, both right- and left-wing populism have emerged after the 2008 Eurozone crisis. VOX inhabits the right-wing and calls for the immediate deportation of undocumented migrants and an end to social policies aimed at integrating migrants (Vampa 2020). Territorial issues play a large role in elections in Spain, and VOX is most electorally powerful where "sub-state territorial demands have been weaker," that is to say where sovereignty is not in question like in Catalonia (ibid). VOX received 6.3 percent of the 2019 EU parliamentary vote and received three seats.

Identity and Democracy

Right-wing populist parties in Identity and Democracy consists of: The Freedom Party of Austria (Austria), Flemish Importance (Belgium), Freedom and Direct Democracy (Czechia), Danish People's Party (Denmark), The Estonian Conservative People's Party (EKRE, Estonia),

Finns Party, formally the True Finns (Finland), National Rally, formally National Front (France), Alternative for Germany (Germany), and Lega Nord (Italy).

Jacoby et al. 2017 suggest that the rise of populist parties are challenging Austria's existing party systems and classic coalition formulas around Europe. Austria, where coalitions have been the crux of government formation since the end of the WWII, has overused clientelism, the opportunity for parties to channel benefits to their constituencies and enjoy the benefits themselves, leaving Austrian grand coalitions an ineffective sterilization tool. Sterilization in this sense relates to the coalition's ability to exclude populist parties (both from the left and the right) from government. The Freedom Party of Austria surged in polls and almost won the presidency in 2017 due to their hard line policies against immigration. In 2019 the FPÖ won 17.2 percent of the vote and received three EU parliament seats.

The Danish People's Party is founded on the principles that migrants are: a threat to homogeneous and peaceful Danish nation, as well as to Daish culture and norms; believed to lead to increase in crime; and are a drain on social welfare (Rydgren 2004). According to Rydgren, there was a convergence of the major parties regarding socio-economic problems, which depoliticized these issues and instead mobilized socio-cultural politics around issues like migration, allowing the Danish People's Party to gain popularity (ibid, 498). In 2019, the Danish People's Party won 10.8 percent of the EU parliamentary vote and received one seat.

Petsinis 2019 describes that the Estonian Conservatives People's Party interlinks the collective memories of "colonization" under the Soviets with the collective anxieties of becoming colonized again by the EU in the future. These fears are woven into national rhetoric and anti-immigration sentiments that have proven effective. EKRE was the third most popular

party in 2017 and received 12.7 percent of the vote in the 2019 EU parliamentary elections, giving them one seat.

Arter 2010 suggests that supporters of the Finns Party see them as a center-right or left-leaning populist party due to the commitment to universal social welfare, it is clear that the party's nativism, anti-establishment sentiments, and traditionalist values solidify the Finns Party position as a right-wing populist party. Founded in 1995, the Finns Party has been a proponent of traditional families (against same-sex relationships), against integration of immigrants into society, but for national social welfare and healthcare for Finnish citizens. In 2019 they received 13.8 percent of the vote for EU parliamentary elections and two seats.

The National Rally, formerly known as the National Front, is a keystone European right-wing populist party. Jean-Marie Le Pen founded the party to unify marginalized far-right movements and although he gained some electoral success, France's majoritarian two-round system essentially prohibits the National Rally from winning a plurality or majority of seats (Surel 2019). Marie Le Pain has worked on "de-demonizing" the party and continues its electoral viability by positioning itself around: 'the people' constitute; the dangerous elite institutions that have betrayed the interests of sovereign people; and the return to a golden age in France in which society had authentic habits and beliefs (ibid, 243). The National Rally received 23.3 percent of the 2019 EU parliamentary vote and received 22 seats.

Lega Nord is a populist regionalist movement that has grown from calls for a sovereign region of Padania to a more encompassing return to Italian sovereignty from Europe. Newth 2019 and Brunazzo and Mascitelli 2020 describe how Lega Nord used the concept of Padania to more narrowly define citizenship and campaign against racial and ethnic minorities. Lega Nord

won 34.2 percent of the vote in the 2019 European parliamentary elections, affording them 28 seats.

The Alternative for Germany blends populist anti-elitism with nativist alarmism according to Donovan 2020. The party orients itself around a basic people versus elite framing that emphasizes eastern disenfranchisement, making the AfD strong in eastern German states. The party was the third most popular party in 2017 and won 11 percent of the vote in the 2019 EU parliamentary elections, receiving 11 seats

The Non-Inscrits

The Non-Inscrits parties' that can be classified as right-wing populist include: Mislav Kolakusic (Croatia), Popular Association—Golden Dawn (Greece), The Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik; Hungary), Five Star Movement (Italy), Slovak National Party (Slovakia), Brexit Party (UK), and the Democratic Unionist Party (UK). The Non-Inscrits are unattached members of the European Parliament.

The Five Star Movement in Italy is anti-establishment and refused to enter into coalition negotiations until 2018. According to Mosca and Tronconi 2019, the Five Star Movement eludes most common classifications of populist parties on both sides of the political spectrum because of the party's dichotomous stances on socioeconomic and sociocultural issues. In the 2019 EU parliamentary elections the party won 17.1 percent of the vote and 14 seats.

Pytlas 2013 describes the historical myths and narratives that construct nativism in Slovakia and Hungary. The Slovak National Party program revolves around nativist, anti-minority directed at Roma and Hungarian populations and populist anti-establishment rhetoric. There is wide-spread sentiment that Hungarians believe Slovakia is still under their control,

which increases nativist sentiments (Pytlas 2013, 174). The Slovak National Party received 12.1 percent of the vote in the 2019 EU parliamentary elections, giving them two seats.

According to Cutts et al. 2019, the 2019 EU parliamentary elections in Britain was seen as a proxy second referendum to the 2016 Leave-Remain vote. The six-week old Brexit Party, led by Nigel Farage, finished with 30.8 percent of the vote with hard attacks on "the Establishment." This afforded the Brexit Party 29 seats in the European parliament despite the UK leaving the European Union officially at the beginning of 2021.

Right-wing Populism in Germany

Mainstream parties in Europe have failed to address the economic crisis that began in 2008 and the migrant crisis that began in 2015, creating economic anxiety and anti-immigrant sentiment (Grzymala-Busse 2019). This has made voters vulnerable to populist appeals such as reclaiming national sovereignty from European institutions and distributing social welfare exclusively to national citizens. Hayes and Dudek 2020 explain that although Germany has generally had short-lived, electorally insignificant radical right-wing parties, prolonged states of crisis has allowed the radical right to take electoral strongholds. Due to Germany's Nazi past, it has a collective memory of *vergangenheitsbewältigung*, the struggle to work off the past, which differs in the East and West. This collective consciousness is based on shame and reparations for World War II victims, which inhibited the development and acceptance of radical right-wing parties. Denazification efforts differed in East and West Germany. West Germany institutionalized shame, yet still employed former NS-officials while East Germany emphasis was on the struggle between communism and fascism. The differences in the denazification processes, along with remaining socioeconomic divides, has manifested in radical right-wing parties and preferences being significantly higher in former East German federal states.

Throughout Western Europe, there has been a policy of *Ausgrenzung* or *cordon*-sanitair, which means coalitions do not go into agreements with right-wing populist parties. Political actions is combined with sustained social mobilizations, through peaceful public demonstrations and the media. This looks like denouncing racist and xenophobic rhetoric and outright refusal to recognize right-wing populist parties. Because this social mobilization must be sustained and the anti-elite rhetoric of the radical right fits into this narrative of social exclusion, parties have been able to garner support and even cooperate with other mainstream political parties. This has led to normalization and widespread consolidation of right-wing populist parties throughout Europe, as shown above. Importantly, the Eurozone crisis and migrant crisis were important catalysis in right-wing popularity, as mainstream parties "failed" to handle the crises adequately.

Despite a collective rejection of right-wing political parties, the AfD became the third largest party in the *Bundestag* in 2017, and for the first time since the early 1950s, held viable political space to the right of the dominant Christian Democratic Union. Lees 2018 describes the rise of AfD, which was founded in 2013 when Germany and the rest of Europe was coming out of the euro crisis, as an anti-elitist party for "the people." At this point, the AfD was not an anti-European party, but that quickly shifted as Germany and Europe faced the migrant crisis in 2015. Art 2018 posits that the rise of the AfD was a direct product of Merkel's actions and policies taken to combat the Eurozone crisis. Because the radical right was of little political consequence during this time, Merkel did not consider their political backlash (Art 2018, 77). Routinely describing her policy initiatives as *alternativlos* (unavoidable), Merkel's government directive led to the foundation of the Alternative for Germany, whose party name plays on the chancellor's own rhetoric.

My research will add to work on crisis management, mobility, and European integration.

Context: The European Project

Piepenschneider 2015 describes the driving forces behind European unification after World War II as: peacekeeping; belonging to a community of values; increasing economic prosperity; and more influence in foreign and security policy. The legacy of World War II has left Member States with different historical grievances and memories, making the establishment of a European society with common values challenging. Petrović 2019 explains that this official EU narrative of a peaceful and prosperous integration was met immediately by Euroscepticism and nationalism. European integration has grown in tandem with Euroscepticism, as both rely on narratives of the recent past to either establish and justify a strong supranational community or national sovereignty. Therefore, when citizens imagine Europe, they imagine both the international community but also their own national contexts within broader European history. The establishment of the European Union as a supra-state organization rescaled state powers and lowered the significance of internal borders (Paasi 2014, 4). This supra-state organization allowed for region building that gave individual nation states certain powers but ultimately, members of the European Union relinquished sovereignty for continental stability. The power dynamics between nations and the EU are imbalanced and cause local tensions. To understand the European project, we must understand these power dynamics and how a European identity was constructed in order to combat nationalism and skepticism.

History of the EU

The creation of the European Union, the introduction of European citizenship, and the euro started the process of establishing a concrete European identity (Petrovic 2019). However, national memories impact what it means to be European and how that identity takes shape. France and Germany created a strong relationship linked by the European Coal and Steel

Community of 1951, which became the basis for a European Union. While free trade agreements were the basis of European integration, these negotiations had wider political purposes. Thym 2016 describes how economic integration was the first building block to a European federation and is what led to the discussion of the free movement of people along with goods and services. Schmuck 2015 adds that Member States must understand the European project as a community of interests, must have the same opinions about what it means to be part of that community, and must have common goals in order to strengthen the Union and maintain cohesion. Because of the local, national, and supranational alliances citizens have, leaders need to work together to avoid disjointed and contradicting policy. However, coordinating these interests have proved difficult as the economic, social, and political interests have varied among Member States. The Treaty of Rome, which established the European Economic Community (EC) in 1958, aimed to build a common market, improve living conditions, gradually align economic policies, promote cooperation between members, and improve cooperation with other states. The treaty also made no distinction between an EU citizen and a third country national, but only recognized "worker," emphasizing the EC's commitment to economic integration and stability (Thym 2016, 303). However, migration policy was still the nation states mandate, causing tensions at the supranational level with guest workers moving throughout the EC. This shifted in the 1980s when migration entered the EU framework. After the Cold War ended in 1991, the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 formally established the EU and the Copenhagen Criteria, which stipulates how candidate countries can ascend into the Union. During this time the Union expanded to include former Soviet countries and a reunified Germany. The Maastricht Treaty also formally introduced EU citizenship and specific rules for "nationals of third countries."

Since 1951 and the first trade agreement, European identity and integration was a political goal. While there was increasing expansion of mobility rights and integration efforts, Member States still have their own historical contexts to the Union; Germany and France are the founders and therefore push for stability; Spain and Greece joined after right-wing dictatorships fell to democratic regimes; and ex-Soviet countries tentatively agreed to give up sovereignty to another supranational polity. These different national identities join under one European identity. Therefore, in the words of the German constitutional court, "the citizenship of the Union is nothing, which culturally or normatively precedes the EU Treaties. One might conclude, therefore, that Union citizenship pretends to be more than it is" (Thym 2016, 302).

European Citizenship

Brändle 2020 defines citizenship as "a relationship between individuals and a political community," but conceded that there is tension in the EU because there is not one political authority which regulates the dynamics of in- and exclusion. This tension is a result of unequal socioeconomic status across the European Union. European citizenship was formally established by the Maastricht Treaty and has cultural and civic components. Sikoldi 2015 describes that a citizens' sense of belonging to the European continent is shaped by cultural, social, and ethnic similarities, while the civic component comes from identification with the EU's political structures, institutions, rights, and rules. Sikoldi 2015, Thym 2016, and Brändle 2020 all describe that citizens' understanding of their mobility rights (stemming from their civic component of identity) shape how they understand and feel about being EU citizens. Plainly, citizens gain access to the biggest right granted by EU citizenship when they become mobile.

EU citizenship is built on citizens' ability to capitalize on their right to free movement, and these rights are dependent on economic resources and educational attainment. Sikoldi 2015

suggests that intra-EU mobility enhances individuals connection with their EU identity, including non-citizens, and assists in managing the multiple layers of this identity, including social factors such as gender and age as well as the local, national, EU, and cosmopolitan levels of identity. Northern and Western countries are historically better educated and wealthier and therefore can activate their EU citizenship more easily than Southern and Eastern countries, which apart from some recently ascending to the European Union, were also hit hardest by the Eurozone crisis in 2008. And while intra-EU mobility is facilitated by EU citizenship, Brändle 2020 suggests that national and local contexts still dominate the ways in which rights, access to welfare, and economic participation in another EU member state can be practiced. After capitalizing on their right to free movement, people's understanding of themselves as foreigners or as integrated locals in their new nation impacts how they view their EU citizenship and sense of belonging.

Citizens of Member States are automatically granted EU citizenship, but there are many more third country nationals who reside in the EU who also want to capitalize on the fundamental right of free movement. Only after the adoption of the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999 did the EU expressly govern the status and intra-EU mobility of third country nationals (Della Torre 2018, 1413). Thym 2016 describes that EU law mandates equal treatment for foreigners and nationals, so once living in Europe the differences between foreigner and citizen begin to disappear over time. After five years of legal residency, third-country nationals with "sufficient resources" obtain the right to long-term residence status, which grants access to the labor market, enhanced protection against expulsion, and the option of intra-EU mobility (Thym 2016, 314-315). However, until third country nationals obtain long-term residency status, they are required to stay in the host Member State or risk losing status. Della Torre 2018 describes how this

confines migrants to a "spatial–temporal waiting zone," preventing third country nationals from integrating and pursuing jobs elsewhere in Europe. Once granted long-term status and access to the labor market, third country nationals are still marginalized. They are what Thym 2016 calls depoliticized denizenship, or a group of people who benefit from economic and social integration without being granted political participation. Carmel 2013 adds that the European Union plays a significant role in regulating mobility rights in ways which undermine the rights accessible to migrants and that the distribution of rights for citizens and non-citizens within its territory are uneven. The EU is based on equal treatment and freedom of movement, but there are discrepancies in who gets to access mobility based on citizenship.

Mobility

The European Community, established by the Treaty of Rome, guaranteed the free movement of capital, goods, services, and people. While the Treaty of Lisbon of 2009 abolished the EC and replaced its roles with the wider EU framework, these four pillars of movement are still fundamental to the success of the European Union. These freedoms are both why countries want to join the Common Market and the EU and also why they want to leave it. The lack of internal borders has caused tension about who is allowed to move freely within the EU, who is granted EU citizenship, and whether or not Member States or supranational institutions are responsible for regulating movement. Therefore, understanding mobility in the EU and the Schengen Area is vital in understanding the European Project.

Mobility can be defined as the embodied as well as physical movement experienced by people. This encapsulates the physical and emotional experiences of crossing borders as well as social identity and economic capital that are vital to mobility experiences. While mobility is not just the physical ability to move — it also includes communication, ideas, social class, and

identity — physical mobility is deemed socially valuable. Mobility is a signifier of social capital and, according to Urry 2012 and Gössling and Stavrinidi 2016, a precondition for social belonging. But there are immense barriers to movement due to unequal access to time, wealth, and safety. Therefore, movement in general is heavily securitized and monitored by in-groups, seen at the external European border. Migration policies at the European level are implemented in order to allow free movement within the Schengen Area, but these policies come at the price of higher border securitization practices at the external border, border outsourcing to other countries like Libya and Turkey, and economic incentives which uphold imperialist relationships between the European Union and neighboring countries.

Johnson et al. 2011 describe how borders are "historically contingent and characterized by contextualized features and power relations" (62). To stabilize Europe, national discourses over borders needed to be quelled and a unified conception of them had to be adopted. The formal performance of the border, the description and defense of the EU's external border, as well as the popular performance of borders, the political and public contestation over the meaning of the border, have both come under pressure from crises in the Union and Schengen Area alike (Johnson et al. 2011, 63). Because European and national discourse over borders are constantly in discussion, historical contexts and particularities often get misconstrued. The supranational border discourse emphasizes strengthening the external border to allow Europe to flourish while national and right-wing parties capitalized on citizens' fear to advocate for strict migration and border policy. These differing performances of the border increase the imbalances between national and supranational agendas concerning border policy.

The Schengen Area, which includes 26 countries, is not synonymous with the European Union; however, the Area is vital to the mobility experienced within the EU. The only EU

countries not in the Schengen Area are Ireland and the most recently ascended countries (Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus). Non-EU countries included in the Schengen Area are Norway, Iceland, Switzerland, and Lichtenstein ("Brief" 2020). Schengen states have agreed to the core idea of free movement and renounced permanent border checks. However, there are still certain circumstances in which non-systemic police checks for immigration or crime control purposes in border areas are deemed legitimate (Van der Woude 2020, 115). As internal borders were opened, the perception of increased crime and irregular migration strengthened control on external borders. Protecting external borders to guarantee free movement in Europe is at the basis of migration policies in Europe and the use of databases such as the Schengen Information System and the European Dactylography System are used to track intra-Schengen movement (ibid, 117). Increased policing and securitization always impacts the most vulnerable populations, and while political discourse surrounds these measures to protect "freedoms" we must always ask: for who? Member States grant citizenship and include who is in the European imaginary and systematically exclude along race, ethnic, and class lines. External borders have been pushed from the edges of the European Union into Turkey and Libya, where EU policies are implemented to vet asylum seekers and police borders, upholding global migration injustices.

European border policy focuses on protecting the distant external border, Member States still have large control over intra-Schengen border policies, challenging the strength and unity of the Schengen acquis (ibid, 123-124). Schengen Border Control 20 states that any control, whether systemic or by spot checks, carried out for the sole reason of crossing an internal border violates the idea of the Schengen Area. However, SBC 23 allows countries to exercise police power under national law and to carry out identity checks in intra-Schengen border zones, as long as: "the exercise of these powers cannot be considered equivalent to the exercise of border

checks, the police measures do not have border control as an objective, are based on general police information and experience regarding possible threats to public security and aim, in particular, to combat cross-border crime and, lastly, as long as the measures are devised and executed in a manner clearly distinct from systematic checks on persons at the external borders and are carried out on the basis of spot-checks (ibid, 118). While SBC 23 gives provisions on how police can exercise border control, it is contradictory in upholding free movement between Schengen states. Not only is there ethno-racial concerns on how border policing is conducted, but there is a clear power imbalance between supra-state and state actors, giving nation states more power over movement, emphasizing tensions between national and supranational institutions.

Since the Eurozone crisis beginning in 2008, there has been a new complexity of migratory flows as globalization interconnects societies, both within the EU and outside of it (Trenz and Triandafyllidou 2017, 550). Migration throughout Europe has followed patterns, although Member States have experienced mobility and migration flows differently. East-West migration has been historically subdued and criminalized, making border security in countries like Croatia, Romania, and Bulgaria a policy emphasis before ascension into the Schengen Area is granted. However, in states that were formerly in the Soviet Union, the EU's call for debordering still has an intimidating connotation for residents, signaling the fragility of sovereignty and the urge to comply with a supranational body (Bürkner 2020, 560). Other crises such as the migrant crisis beginning in 2015 and the COVID-19 crisis beginning in 2020 have impacted movement in the Schengen Area. Tensions over open internal borders and hard external borders have been simplified to rhetoric around good and bad Europeans. This has resulted in reducing the need for European integration and trust, as failed member states are

rebordered outside of the Schengen Area and preferred accession states are included and debordered (Bürkner 2020, 555).

Although mobility is a keystone in accessing European integration, member states are responsible for the implementation and operational administrative capacity surrounding migration (Schimmelfennig 2018, 985). Instead of bolstering EU institutions with the power to dictate Union wide migration and mobility policy, crises have emboldened national border and migration policy. Jean Monnet, a founding father of European integration, claimed to have "always believed that Europe would be built through crises, and that it would be the sum of their solutions," and that "people only accept change when they are faced with necessity, and only recognize necessity when a crisis is upon them" (Monnet 1978, 417). After the Eurozone crisis, integrative economic policies were institutionalized at the supranational level, but migration policies have been neglected after the migrant crisis. While the coronavirus continues to halt movement, it is imperative the EU addresses flaws in mobility throughout the Union.

EU Institutions

The four main European institutions are the European Commission, the European Council, the Council of the EU, and the European Parliament. The European Commission is the only institution that represents the entire interest of the EU through the implementation of the policy and the EU budget. The Commission is also the main governing body as it is the politically independent executive branch of the EU. The European Council decides on the general direction and political priorities of the EU but does not pass laws. The European Council consists of the heads of state and government of all EU countries, the President of the European Council, and the President of the European Commission. The Council of the EU negotiates and adopts EU laws together with the European Parliament on the basis of proposals from the

European Commission. The European Parliament adopts EU laws together with the Council of the EU based on proposals from the European Commission. The Parliament is elected directly by EU voters every 5 years and provides democratic oversight over other EU institutions (Schmuck 2015). The supranational character of the EU establishes power over the Member States as countries relinquish certain sovereignties in order to work together. Countries and citizens understand some EU rights, known as primary rights, supersede national rights, known as secondary rights, in order for the EU to be an established legal entity. Gaining and renouncing sovereignty creates an interdependent international community.

Germany and European Integration

After the Second World War, West Germany began integrating into democratic Europe. West Germany was occupied by the United Kingdom, France, and the United States, with limited sovereignty and a controlled economy which maintained only a basic supply of necessary goods for the population. In June 1948, a currency reform brought a better relation between goods and money, spearheaded by Finance Minister Ludwig Erhard. However, the exchange of Reichsmarks for Deutsche Mark was ten to one. German citizens gave up their savings and trusted in a new government in hopes for a better, stabler future. This trust in the German economy and German international standing enabled the emergence of a social market economy in which the state was allowed to act alone in the free market, bringing about the well-known *Wirtschaftswunder* or economic miracle. This allowed Germany to recover from the Second World War and establish itself in the European market (Schmuck 2015). The strength in the German economy and culture of trust in its ordoliberal system remains today. German ordoliberalism focuses on regulated markets for competitiveness, budgetary discipline, and individual responsibility (Galpin 2015). Germany remained an occupied country for 10 years

after World War II until the signing of the General Treaty or the *Deutschlandvertrag.* This established the Federal Republic of Germany as a sovereign state and West Germany joined NATO, establishing itself as a trusted western ally.

The Cold War was significant in integrating West Germany into Europe. Specifically, the Korean War brought Germany back to an export country and allowed Germany to start manufacturing and exporting steel, armored weapons, and bombs which accelerated the economy (Weber 2013). Since, Germany has maintained itself as an export country, 59 percent of exports going to other European countries. After the Berlin Wall fell and the Cold War ended, German reunification resolidified Germany's commitment to Europe. With the European Union established in 1993, German leaders looked to the future. While West versus East dominated European discourse for much of the 20th century, moving into the 21st century leaders across Europe were trying to define the European Union in a new way. Germany specifically was trying to become a more assertive leader but debates about the "normalization" of decisive foreign policy and "military de-tabooization" rested on an image of Germany becoming a traditional power-state again (Wivel and Wæver 2018, 322). However, Germany has established EU-centered policies since reunification that have allowed it to take a more dominant leadership position within the European Union. According to Wendler 2017, German reunification and European integration became so semantically related they were almost inseparable, showing the Federal Republic's focus on the future of the European Union and the new role Germany plays in it. Angela Merkel has stated that "The Cold War is over. The whole continent can live according to the European idea today. [. . .] Europe needs to find intrinsic reasons for its existence and has to demonstrate that it can shape politics according to its own values in a world of increased competition and global transparency" (Wendler 2017, 579). For Germany, the recent past has

dictated economic and social policy in relation to how the country interacts with the EU; however, the focus should be on building a sustainable and self-reliant future that addresses the unique challenges of the EU's common market, security policies, and welfare state.

Germany's Standing in the European Union

Germany increasingly gained power and standing throughout the European Union after World War II by successfully establishing itself as a western ally, becoming a strong export economy, and having European-focused policies. There are several positions on Germany's standing in the EU, ranging from hegemony to normal nation state. The "German Europe" thesis considers Germany as the hegemon of Europe as a consequence of the global economic crisis of 2008 (Bruno and Finzi 2018, 51). Because of the asymmetric impact of the Eurozone crisis on southern Europe, scholars posit that Germany was able to become an unrivaled economic hegemony over the region due to its size and economic importance. The "Semi-hegemony" theory suggests that Germany's ordoliberal politics and culture of stability have led the country to push for austerity in the region. Scholars who argue Germany is "Normal" cite the countries occupation after World War II stagnated its economic growth and the Eurozone crisis and the larger Global Economic Crisis returned the Federal Republic to normality by pursuing its own national interests like other fully sovereign nations (ibid, 52). Overall, Germany has contributed €25.267 billion to the European Union's budget in 2018 while the EU spent €12.054 billion in Germany. The country's real GDP in the third quarter of 2020 was 8.5 compared to 0.2, the average among the rest of the EU member states. Unemployment (based on the International Labor Offices definition) was 4.5 percent compared to 6.1 percent, the average among the rest of the EU member states in 2020 ("Germany" 2018). These are just some indicators of Germany's standing compared to other EU member states and should be understood in context.

The regional power Germany has gained since the 2008 economic crisis, due in part to its culture of order and stability, avoidance of military intervention, and the struggle to come-to-terms with national socialism, but also due to Merkel's leadership in times of crisis when multilateral leadership was not available, has afforded Germany with unintentional power over the region (Bruno and Finzi 2018, 53). Bruno and Finzi state that regional powers bear a special responsibility for regional security and order, and Germany's culture of stability and its leader's rhetorical commitment to a strong EU not only show its influence over the region but also the commitment to European success. Germany's own constitution, the Basic Law or *Grundgesestz,* as interpreted by the Constitutional Court, has norms framing German EU policy and constraints on executive autonomy in European decision-making (Wendler 2017, 576). The federal parliament, the *Bundestag,* debates on European affairs to ensure limits on EU integration and national sovereignty. These constraints have become important during times of crisis when supranational integration and national sovereignty have been blurred in order to push policy forward at the supranational level.

Angela Merkel

Chancellor Angela Merkel has had an important role in establishing Germany as a leader in the European Union. Merkel took office in 2005 and established herself as a leader not only of Germany but of the EU by emphasizing international cooperation and stability. In 2008, Merkel used Germany's historical experience with European integration and reunification for the basis of her narrative on addressing the euro crisis. However, her national fiscal plan of austerity did not address the Eurozone's weaknesses but rather emphasized the importance for defending the common currency in order to maintain the stability of the European project (Hertner Miskommen 2015, 49). Not only was Merkel a key negotiator in the 2008 European Economic Recovery Plan,

but Germany also increased its contribution to bailouts in 2011 and 2012 to emphasize the necessity to reform economies in line with EU policies. Merkel's commitment to Germany's position in the EU also encompasses migration policy, which she has prioritized throughout her time as chancellor. She convened the first National Integration plan in 2006, expanding it in 2012, and introduced widespread reform in 2013. In 2015 she kept the borders open to refugees coming from Hungary, resulting in an outpouring of citizen engagement and "welcome culture" (Mushaben 2017).

Along with taking decisive action within Germany, Merkel took a leading role on EU policy negotiating the EU-Turkey Agreement. The agreement included the return to Turkey of each irregular migrant arriving on Greek islands after the 20 March, 2016 and the resettlement of one Syrian refugee from Turkey to the EU for each Syrian being returned from Greece to Turkey, known as the 1:1 mechanism. The agreement also discussed enhanced preventative measures Turkey needed to take in order to stop new sea or land routes for irregular migration to Europe through Turkey, as well as providing an additional 3 billion euros towards the Refugee Facility for Turkey and improvement of humanitarian conditions in Syria. Additionally, the EU-Turkey deal reaccelerated the visa liberalization procedure of Turkey's EU accession negotiations, focusing on financial and budgetary provisions (Reiners and Tekin 2020).

However, since Merkel's humanitarian policy to keep borders open, she has faced public and political backlash. In March 2016, the Alternative for Germany won 11.7 percent of the vote in Rhineland-Pfalz, 14.9 percent in Baden-Württemberg, and 24 percent in Sachsen-Anhalt. Merkel also faced an electoral blow in her home state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, where the AfD garnered 20.8 percent of the vote in 2016. In 2018, Merkel had to concede on an open-door refugee policy to maintain her coalition government, agreeing to set up transit centers for asylum

seekers to stay in before they were approved for legal entry. This caused backlash from the Left and the public, who were advocating for asylum seekers human rights and Germany's moral and humanitarian mission (Petzinger 2018).

Merkel announced in October 2018 that she would be stepping down as the head of the Christian Democratic Union and would not seek re-election as chancellor. The CDU/CSU party and coalition government have been afflicted with infighting, causing delays in appointing a new head of the party. However, since the COVID-19 pandemic has ravaged Europe, Merkel has regained favorability with approval ratings as high as 86 percent within Germany (Morris 2020). Holding the seat of EU presidency from July 2020 to December 2020, Merkel has focused on strengthening the European Union. Known as the "austerity chancellor" from her policies during the euro crisis, Merkel has flipped positions during this crisis and joined French President Emmanuel Macron in promoting a plan that would collectivize EU debt and help the countries hit hardest by the pandemic through a combination of grants and loans. Merkel's commitment not only to Germany's success but Europe's success can be seen in her evolving policy decisions throughout her 16 years as chancellor.

Findings: The Nation State as Supranational Actor

My study examines 27 press conferences, press statements, and government statements that address the Eurozone crisis, the migrant crisis, and the COVID-19 crisis which span from 2010 to 2020. While hundreds of press conferences, press statements, and government policy statements concern domestic, European, and foreign policy, I argue that this sample provides significant insight into how Chancellor Angela Merkel and other political figures portrayed and handled each crisis. Within my exploration of how German leadership handled each crisis, I also focus on how these crises complicate the larger project of European identity, mobility, and governance. In this section I will discuss my findings.

Analysis of coded qualitative data revealed dominant themes of economic stability and growth, unity and cooperation among Member States, and bordering as a process to secure both the nation state and Europe. These themes appeared throughout each crisis and across time frames in various densities. While using discourse analysis to analyze these themes, it is important to remember that these crises were and are dynamic in nature. Each theme informs the other in important and dramatic ways, especially during crisis situations. By dividing up the discussion into themes, I hope to illuminate the myriad of processes occurring throughout Europe during the "decade of crisis" to better understand how crises has complicated our understanding of Europe.

Crisis in Context

Each crisis is complex and continues to influence European integration, policy, and identity in dynamic ways. To help conceptualize how German leaders spoke about these dynamic processes over time, I created word clouds which visualize word frequencies. I used a five word minimum for the 1,000 most frequent words to create each figure.

Figure 1
Eurozone Crisis, Word Frequency

Figure 2
Migrant Crisis, Word Frequency

Figure 3
COVID-19 Crisis, Word Frequency

Table 2 **Crisis**	**Word**	**Word Count**
Eurozone	Europe or European	114
	Crisis	47
	Economic	32
	Germany	27
	States	25
Migrant	Europe or European	67
	States	27
	Refugees	24
	Federal	23
	Countries	21
COVID-19	People	24
	Germany	22
	Europe	21
	Federal	19
	Measures	17

I used this data visualization technique to help connect themes across crises and across national and European scales. Each word frequency cloud showed keywords to identify the core of each crisis like “economic,” “refugee,” and “health,” although these offered fewer insights into cross-crisis themes. Most profound is the centrality of Europe in German leaders discourse

during both the Eurozone crisis and the migrant crisis. There is a shift during the COVID-19 crisis from a supranational perspective to a domestic one, focusing on the citizens of Germany. The shift from and supranational to a domestic framework broadly shows the nature of each crisis and how the German government shifted from dealing with international organizations to directly addressing citizens. The Eurozone and migrant crisis overwhelmingly exposed institutional problems in the eyes of German leadership and therefore were dealt with by addressing Europe as a whole. The COVID-19 pandemic, however global in reach, directly is impacting each citizen on a daily basis, so the German government's discourse shifted to address the needs of the people.

Shifting from European institutional discourse to the German citizenry not only shows the nature of each crisis, but also shows the way in which governments are dependent on citizens to mitigate crises. This became evident in the COVID-19 pandemic when government policies were reliant on citizen cooperation unlike at any stage during the other crises.

> "Germany has met the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic thanks to the committed cooperation of all social actors and, above all, the citizens, which has been well managed in the past few months." - August 27, 2020; Government Statement

> "I think it is particularly important that we have actually addressed precisely those areas in which there are no controlled and controllable procedures. In the workplace, in public transport, in schools, in caterers, in retail and in many areas of public life, we see that the rules that we have decided together are implemented well, that they are accepted and supported by the citizens and that they are also easy to control." -Michael Müller, October 14, 2020; Press Conference

The Eurozone crisis mainly dictated national spending, debt thresholds, and also restructured international loans and bank levies. The migrant crisis reframed European societies, both the

faces within them and their approaches to migration policy. Communities were called on to support national efforts to house and integrate refugees into society, but policy was nationally and (sometimes) supranationally focused. The coronavirus pandemic shifted this trend, as government policy and community compliance became explicitly linked with crisis management success. Leaders had to shift their discourse and appeal to a wider base, reach compromises across party lines, and inspire and empathize with citizens all while tackling an unknown threat. While all leaders around the world faced this challenge, German leadership was praised at the onset of the pandemic for its decisive action and cooperation in containing the spread in Europe. However, as summer turned to fall, the leading coalition of the Christian Democratic Union and the Social Democratic Party began to falter as Merkel's time as chancellor began to wind down.

German Leadership

Angela Merkel has led Germany for 18 years and has steered the country through the global financial crisis, the Eurozone debt crisis, the migrant crisis, the COVID-19 crisis, as well as other acute crises. Merkel stepped down as chair of her party, the CDU, in 2018 but finding a successor has been a challenge. While not without her critics, Merkel's crisis management skills have been forefront in discourse not only in facilitating compromise among German ministers but also in building consensus among EU partners.

International organization leaders, German minister presidents, and others have discussed Merkel's leadership in times of crisis as pragmatic, diplomatic, and even at times, boring. With Germany's history of national socialism, charismatic leaders are unwelcome, and Merkel's rational voice through crisis has been applauded against the background of other world leaders (like Vladimir Putin, Donald Trump, and Silvio Berlusconi). Over time, Merkel's leadership has been, if anything, steady.

> "The Chancellor is a good leader; this has been raised several times today, and it is true." - Juan Somavia, 28 April 2010; Press Conference

> "In any case, Germany was and is not without leadership today. At the moment, that is the most important thing." - Markus Söder, October 28, 2020; Press Conference

Although the context in which Merkel led Germany between the Eurozone crisis and the COVID-19 crisis vary greatly, the sentiment of stability and belief in her ability to unite Germany remains. At the same time as leaders are praising Merkel for collaborating across party lines as well as with international actors, public opinion and the media have challenged that perception. Many policies Merkel has pursued have been politically turbulent and caused public backlash from German and European citizens.

> "Your critics keep accusing you of having no passion or vision for Europe. What do you think of them?" - Question, July 22, 2011; Press Conference

> "Especially at the election campaign events in East Germany, you can always hear this 'Merkel has to go.' That is based on that 89 call 'The wall must go.' Can you explain why you, as the East German Chancellor, have your bitterest and loudest critics in the East, how close such situations are to you and to what extent they affect you?" - Question, August 29, 2017; Press Conference

Merkel's fluctuating public perception has challenged her ability to be the face of European integration, especially as calls of her commitment to Europe (especially in the deindustrialized Eastern areas) was called into question. These criticisms notably come in the form of questions from journalists present at press conferences and not from other international or national leaders. Popular opinion and elite opinion differ and seem to be held to a different standard, specifically in addressing crises.

Economic Power and Privilege

By far the most dominant topic among German leadership across time and crisis was the economy. The German economy was not the sole focus, but the Eurozone (which includes the 19 countries using the euro) and the wider 27 Member States of the European Union were also discussed. Economic stability, growth, and recovery were topics of concern. The policies implemented during the Eurozone crisis —- between 2010 and 2013 —- have impacted European financial policy, economic power, and privilege in subsequent crises, affecting how Germany has been perceived as a European economic leader.

Angela Merkel, her government, and international coalitions perpetuated policies that privileged the Eurozone as well as Germany's own standing under the slogan "if the euro fails, Europe fails." I found that during the Eurozone crisis, German leaders tried to quell the resentment building between the Eurozone members and the larger European Union.

> "The problem is that Europe consists of an Eurogroup of 17 countries and the 27 member states. The 17 can work together more closely, but parliamentary control is always geared towards the 27, i.e., the European Parliament. The Commission is always the Commission of 27. If there are countries like Great Britain that say, 'As far as we can see, never the euro', we have to talk in principle about what that actually means for integration options on the same contractual basis." - Angela Merkel, July 22, 2011; Press Conference

> "In the meantime, however, we are experiencing a phase of social crisis that includes keywords such as unemployment among young people, resentment against Germany and rejection of Europe. The key political question must be: Can we bear this?" - Angela Merkel, May 16, 2013; Press Conference

In 2011, Merkel attempted to address the disunity arising between non-euro and euro Member States, but increasingly stuck by Germany's commitment to saving the euro no matter the cost.

This resulted in dramatic social and political backlash. Germany's own critique and positioning of a European social crisis at the "end" of the euro crisis in 2013 shows the German government reckoning with the political backlash from the imposition of strict austerity measures, both domestically and internationally. Merkel delicately tries to balance the power disparities between the Eurozone and the European Parliament. The rift between financial and legislative power points to larger institutional disintegration at the supranational level, because economic stability seemed to supersede other political priorities.

In connecting the success of the euro to the success of Europe, German leadership firmly positioned itself in ordoliberal and austerity policies. I found that Merkel shifted from harsh, decisive action to more empathetic and cooperative economic policy over time and crisis. This is most likely due to the nature of each crisis, as the Eurozone crisis did not impact Germany as hard or for as long as other countries such as Greece, whereas Germany was more directly impacted by the migrant crisis and the COVID-19 crisis. German leadership has also been under scrutiny since they pushed through austerity measures during the Eurozone crisis. The German government has been self-critical and has moved to change European policies to better address future crises. This was shown repeatedly by Merkel and other German officials framing the importance of coordinated economic policy.

> "Because only if we are economically in good shape will we be able to cope with the pressing challenges of our time in the future" - Angela Merkel, March 16, 2016; Government Address

> "We are determined to spare no effort, either individually or collectively, when it comes to protecting lives, securing jobs and income, restoring trust, maintaining financial stability, revitalizing growth and emerging stronger from the crisis, to minimize disruptions in trade and global supply chains, to provide support to all

> countries in need, and to coordinate public health and financial measures" - Angela Merkel, March 26, 2020; Government Address

Mentioning economic policy and stability during the migrant and COVID-19 crisis shows the failings of European policy changes during the Eurozone crisis to mitigate future debt and liquidity problems as well as the constant need for economic coordination in the EU. While the European Union is fundamentally a political and economic union, suggesting coordinated economic policy at its core, this call for cooperation throughout crises not only shows the disintegration of national fiscal policies but also the failure of past crises to adequately address future ones.

Unity and Cooperation

Another major theme was the need for unity and cooperation. While unity should be an obvious component of the European *Union*, there is a lack of coordination across the bloc in economic, migration, and health policies which have not only resulted in the unequal distribution of burden in times of crisis but have also resulted in certain nation states having more power than European institutions in enacting policy solutions.

In press conferences, specifically with other national leaders, I found that even though leaders were calling for European unity, they were still placing nations at the forefront of decision-making.

> "Angela, I would like to thank you very much for what you personally have done to create a common, new European architecture that will allow us to cope with these new challenges we are facing. Thank you for your support, for your friendship and for the hospitality that I always experience here." - Georgios Papandreou, February 22, 2011; Press Statement

> "The nation states are the masters of the treaties or the ladies of the treaties - it doesn't matter. The state is the master. If you commit to representative democracy,

> the competencies are transferred through the democratically elected institutions. At the moment, for example, when I give the European Commission the power of attorney according to the motto "You have the competence to negotiate free trade agreements for me" - I still have to ratify that nationally - I have of course given up some of my competence. But then the European Parliament is again the democratic controller, and there are Austrians in it again. In other words, if you then feel that you are not being given sufficient attention, you are basically not committed to Europe" - Angela Merkel, May 16, 2013; Press Conference

> "You are now an experienced crisis manager during the financial crisis. What conclusions do you draw from this for your current work? Where do you see similarities and where do you see differences?"- Question, March 11, 2020; Press Conference

Germany has been both idealized and vilified for its position as crisis manager. Scholars take different stances on Germany's position as an economic hegemon of Europe, due to its size and economic importance. A common trend shown in my data is that Germany has become a "Semi-Hegemony" as leaders forcefully assert economic policy while still trying to promote European unity. Germany's unique historical context cannot be discounted here, as its reunification process is intimately tied to the success of the European Union. This has caused German leaders both to assert more dominance in policy decisions, but also still have Europe at the center of policy decisions, at least rhetorically. The juxtaposition between upholding the power of the nation state while still emphasizing commitment to stronger EU institutions to address EU crises shows the disconnect in national and supranational power, a main focus of Eurosceptics and right-wing populists.

> "These AfD people also exist in the old federal states, but they are particularly dominant in the new federal states; that's true. But I believe that it is right to face it. Thank God there are always very many who think differently. I am very happy about that." - Angela Merkel, August 29, 2017; Press Conference

> "But finances will not be the only topic in our Council Presidency; it is also about migration, the rule of law and, of course, above all two major tasks which will lead us into the future' -Angela Merkel, July 8, 2020; Press Statement

The right-wing populist movements that have been growing in strength since 2010 were hardly spoken of and rarely directly named. Not directly addressing right-wing populist groups aids the narrative of a unified Europe but minimizes the strength these movements have accumulated, many since 2010. The leading coalition consists of mainstream, center-right and center-left parties that have been losing favor among voters, in many parts because of citizens disenfranchisement from crisis management strategies. Referring to right-wing populist parties and building Euroscepticism as issues concerning "rule of law," German leaders evade facing questions of racism, xenophobia, and extremism head on in government statements and press statements. This surprised me because there is usually a zero-tolerance attitude toward extremist ideology in Germany due to the history of national socialism. Nevertheless, only when directly asked by a reporter who mentioned the AfD did Merkel also address the right-wing populist party by name. In references to other countries and broader EU agendas, leaders would always refer to rising Euroscepticism and right-wing populism as "the rule of law."

Unity and skepticism has been balanced in Europe since its foundation, yet the persistent crises and power imbalances between individual Member States and European institutions have created greater fractions. Discourse placing nations at the forefront was contrasted with intense calls for coordination.

> "We also have to establish globally coordinated rules so that we can restructure or wind down systemically relevant financial institutions across borders in the event of a crisis, in a way that is kind to the financial market and, if possible, without burdening taxpayers." - 27 October 2010; Government Address

> "Germans and Europeans paid a high price because it would become obvious that previous measures were only sham solutions that only addressed the symptoms of the crisis, but not the causes" - 16 March 2016; Government Address

> "In order to secure our future, we are committed to strengthening national, regional and global capabilities to respond to potential infectious disease outbreaks by substantially increasing our spending on epidemic prevention." -March 26, 2020; Government Address

Throughout the decade, systematic change for financial, border, and healthcare policies were called for in order to secure a stabler future. Throughout this call for unity, we must ask who this better future is being made for and who is being left behind.

Bordering and Rebordering

Borders in the European Union have been challenged during crises. During crises the European Commission has amended the Schengen Border Code to address the new challenges that face both the internal and external borders. It is important to remember power dynamics that play into the bordering process, which in international law give individual nation states the power to determine who gets to cross their borders and who does not. The EU has attempted to rescale state borders for a homogenous internal border. Yet, in times of crisis, the nation state still wields ultimate power and has securitized its border and deter entrance. Meanwhile, the EU as a supra state organization maintains a colonial external border policy in outsourcing border policing and offloading true migration reform on third party countries.

I found the free movement of European citizens was emphasized most during the Eurozone crisis and the COVID-19 crisis. During the Eurozone crisis, emphasis was put on mobility in order for citizens to find jobs and maintain trade while border policy during the COVID-19 pandemic calls on citizens to avoid unnecessary travel to slow the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus to preserve national healthcare capacities. The discourse used around these

border policies is decisively citizen focused for the financial stability as well as physical well-being of individuals.

> "Second, we need to increase mobility in Europe. In Germany we only managed to achieve German unity by reducing youth unemployment because the young people from my constituency on the Baltic coast are now in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg." -Angela Merkel, 16 May 2013; Press Conference

> "We call on citizens to refrain from private trips and visits from relatives, if these trips are not absolutely necessary. This also applies to tourist and day-trip trips and trips. Accommodation offers in Germany are only made available for necessary and expressly non-tourist purposes." -Angela Merkel, October 28, 2020; Press Conference

Border policies centering the citizen emphasizes the European Union's commitment to free movement. As one of the main ways to activate European citizenship, upholding the right to mobility is paramount, even in times of crisis. Leaders have used a citizen-centric approach to quell unrest and fear of encroachment on freedoms. However, there have been increasing use of temporary border restrictions, especially with an influx of migrants and increase in terrorist attacks over the last decade. Currently, there are 11 countries with temporary border restrictions in place.

Table 3 **Country**	**Time Frame**	**Temporary Reintroduction of Border Controls**[1]
Austria	(February 28 – March 29, 2021)	COVID-19; borders with the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic
	(November 12, 2020 – May 11, 2021)	Secondary movements, risk related to terrorists and organized crime, situation at the external borders; land borders with Hungary and with Slovenia

[1]"Temporary Reintroduction of Border Control." Migration and Home Affairs - European Commission. Accessed March 4, 2021.

Belgium	(February 26 – March 17, 2021)	COVID-19; all internal border
Denmark	(November 12, 2020 – May 11, 2021)	COVID-19; to be determined but may concern all internal borders;
	(November 12, 2020 – May 11, 2021)	Terrorist threats, organized criminality threats; to be determined but may concern all internal borders
Finland	(February 22 – March 18, 20201)	COVID-19; all internal border except border with Iceland
France	(November 1 2020 – April 30, 2021	Continuous terrorist threat, situation at external borders; all internal borders
Germany	(March 4 – March 17, 2021)	COVID-19; land and air border with the Czech Republic, air border with Austria
	(November 12, 2020 – May 11, 2021)	Secondary movements, situation at the external borders; land border with Austria
Hungary	(February 28 – March 15, 2021)	COVID-19; all internal borders
Norway	(February 10 – March 12, 2021)	COVID-19; all internal borders
	(November 12, 2020 – May 11, 2021)	Terrorist threats, secondary movements; ports with ferry connections to Denmark, Germany and Sweden
Portugal	(March 2, – March 16, 2021)	COVID-19; internal border with Spain
Spain	(March 1 – March 16, 2021)	COVID-19; land border with Portugal
Sweden	(November 12, 2020 – May 11, 2021)	Terrorist threats, shortcomings at the external borders; to be determined but may concern all internal borders

These temporary border controls are reintroduced on the prerogative of the Member State and while the Commission may issue an opinion regarding the measure, it cannot veto the decision. There are time limits between 10 days to until "the threat has dissipated," giving Member States immense power over sealing borders, dictating what situations necessitate border controls, and who is allowed to pass through national borders.

Again, the question of national versus European power comes into question. Member States wield so much power in the bordering process they are weary to reform European migration policy. Unlike economic policy which has marked benefits for nation states —lower unemployment rates, lower debt ratios, etc.— comprehensive and coordinated migration policy does not have the same incentive. While leaders might campaign and promise coordinated EU migration policy, nation states maintain more power when they have the ability to dictate migration policy at the national level. German leaders have claimed to want a fair distribution of refugees among Member States and an overhaul of the Dublin procedure, yet still implemented temporary border controls in 2016 to manage internal migration.

The type of crisis situation is also important when it comes to implementing border controls. As stated earlier, during the Eurozone crisis and COVID-19 crisis, leaders used citizen-forward discourse when talking about mobility and border policy. There was a clear difference in tone from the migrant crisis to the COVID-19 crisis regarding the necessity of border closures.

> "How sure are you that border controls will still take place at the German external borders after November? As the situation is at the moment, I think we need these border controls." - Question and answer from Angela Merkel, August 29, 2017; Press Conference

> "Incidentally, closing the borders across the board does not prevent what happens there. It is in the country, and the moment you reduce border measures again, it starts again. I understand that at the moment there is a special situation on the northern Italian border, and I understand that you will then come to temporary checks there. But that is something different from fundamental border measures" - Angela Merkel, March 11, 2020; Press Conference

These two different expressions of border control show the power of bordering. During the migrant crisis there was fear of "the Other" in the form of asylum seekers flooding

into Germany and overwhelming the country. During the COVID-19 pandemic Germans as well as other Europeans were the carriers of a deadly virus that has been overwhelming the entire world. The different frames in which border closures occurred — one to stop Black and Brown Muslim asylum seekers from claiming refugee and one to discourage unnecessary leisure travel — emphasizes the power disparity in mobility, bordering, and national migration agendas.

These themes put into perspective the complicated relationships between the nation state and European institutions as actors during crises. The government statements, press statements, and press conferences point to the disconnect between national and European policy during times of crisis, emphasizing the power disparity between the two.

Discussion

My data provides evidence that crises have impacted how the European project is framed from a German political perspective. Discourse used by German leadership provides examples of how European institutional power and European identity have shifted in the last decade and that citizens are more crucial than ever to the success of crisis management policies and broader integrative measures.

All three crises analyzed came under pressure from exogenous shocks which showed major endogenous flaws in European integration. In the Eurozone crisis, nation states preserved the euro and agreed on the creation of a permanent rescue fund, the banking union, and enhanced macroeconomic and budgetary supervision of the Member States (Schimmelfennig 2018, 970). This was seen as an increase in European integration efforts. During the migrant crisis, Member States maintained control of borders and failed to agree on substantial integration progress (i.e., reforming the Dublin Agreement). Currently in the COVID-19 crisis, there are on-going coordination problems with border control measures, travel restrictions, vaccine distribution, and strengthening health systems across the EU (which will be discussed further in the conclusion).

Main theories on European integration include neofunctionalism, postfunctionalism, and intergovernmentalism. Neofunctionalism emphasizes how path-dependency and spillovers result in more integration. Postfunctionalist theory emphasizes that due to imbalances caused by crisis, there is backlash which is driven by mass politicization and results in less integration (Schimmelfennig 2018, 972). Liberal intergovernmentalism theorizes European integration as a process of inter-state bargaining in which governments are chiefly motivated by economic preferences (Hooghe and Marks 2019). The future of European integration is more contingent than these theoretical approaches suggest. Therefore, I propose a hegemonic-stability theoretical

approach to explain how European integration has been impacted by the three crises I have set forth. Hegemonic-stability theory contends that Germany's economic and political position in the EU gives it a semi-hegemonic status in the EU which drives integration efforts, but the recent increase in nationalism throughout the Federal Republic as well as across the EU is challenging the incentive for pro-European policies. While Germany has had pro-integrationist policies and has strong economic and political incentives in the maintenance of a politically and economically stable European Union, domestic politics of Member States have increasingly become adversary to European integration (Webber 2014, 354). Stability of the European Union is interwoven with German success and is why German leadership puts such a large focus on supra-state policies. About 60 percent of Germany's trade is with other EU countries. Additionally, Germany's historical role in the region and its central position on the continent requires it to avoid diplomatic isolation. While Germany has constantly called for unity — in both social and economic policy — this stance has come under duress in times of crisis.

My data show German political discourse centralizing around economic growth and stability as well as broad European cooperation and the promotion of a united European citizenry. The discourse used during the Eurozone crisis, the migrant crisis, and the COVID-19 crisis each reframe "Europe," impacting integration efforts. Similarly, the emphasis on economic well-being in contrast to other sectors of the Union, namely mobility and healthcare capacity, show how national interests influence EU policy coordination and integration efforts. Germany's unique historical context cannot be discounted here, as its reunification process is intimately tied to the success of the European Union. The juxtaposition between upholding the power of the nation state while still emphasizing commitment to stronger EU institutions to address EU crises shows the disconnect in national and supranational power. Lack of coordination across the bloc

in economic, migration, and health policies have not only resulted in the unequal distribution of burden in times of crisis but have also resulted in certain nation states having more power than European institutions in enacting policy solutions.

"Europe" itself and how it relates to Germany has been complicated during times of crisis, as Germany has become an efficient driver of policy change at the European level threatening the supra-state–nation state power balance. German leadership's discourse has been focused on unity (*Einheit*) and integration (*Einigung*) since German reunification in 1990 (Wendler 2017, 574). During the Eurozone crisis, German political discourse focused on European cohesion, Germany's dependency on the European Union for success, and on future growth and stability. However, there was this dichotomy between needing cohesive EU financial policy (which was in some ways achieved) and implementing austerity measures that enhanced Germany's economic power in the region. As set out in my findings, the economy was the most prevalent theme in German discourse, and the policies established during the Eurozone crisis impacted future crisis management strategies. Importantly, Angela Merkel, her government, and international coalitions perpetuated policies that privileged the Eurozone as well as Germany's own standing under the slogan "if the euro fails, Europe fails." Europe was seen both as inseparable from German economic success but also dependent on Germany, emphasizing the power of nation states within the supra-state organization. In 2011, Merkel attempted to address the disunity arising between non-euro and euro Member States, but increasingly stuck by Germany's commitment to saving the euro no matter the cost. Since the Eurozone crisis, German leadership has also been under scrutiny for the harsh austerity measures and has moved to change European policies to better address future crises.

> "Because only if we are economically in good shape will we be able to cope with the pressing challenges of our time in the future" - Angela Merkel, March 16, 2016; Government Address

The dominance of economic stability in German political discourse, especially during the Eurozone and migrant crisis, shows that Germany still had strong economic and political incentives in the maintenance of a politically and economically stable Europe, like the hegemonic stability suggests. Economic influence over austerity measures and focus on stability comes in stark contrast to the institutional powers of the European Union. Germany was able to wield economic power and in turn provide stability for the region, especially during the Eurozone crisis. Discourse around economic stability was connected to the call for unity found in the data, showing that at this time Germany was still committed to integrationist policies.

The Eurozone crisis shaped European institutional power, expanding the executive branch's power (the EU Commission) while constraining the legislative branch's power (the EU Parliament), emboldening discourse among the radical right and Eurosceptic movements which tout the EU as an unrepresentative and undemocratic supranational structure (Lemke 2014, 19). This legitimacy crisis of the EU is reflected in German political discourse, which privileged European Economic Area members over the EU 27 members. This sentiment follows the German narrative of "if the euro fails, Europe fails," which is why German leaders privilege policies that benefit the euro's standing perhaps over policies that would benefit the entirety of the EU. The hegemonic-stability theory suggests that "the overwhelming dominance of one country is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition" for the maintenance of a stable region economy (Webber 2014, 356). Germany, France, and the UK have been the dominant powers in Europe in the 20th and 21st century, but Germany has slowly become the overwhelming driver of policy initiatives. Since the Eurozone crisis, there have been increasingly asymmetrical

relationships between Berlin, London, and Paris, especially because of the UK's final departure from the Union in 2021 and France's increasingly junior partnership with Germany on financial integration. While discourse shows that German political leaders were trying to toe the line between crisis manager and EU cheerleader, the policies Merkel pushed forward divided the Union into winners and losers. Stronger economies dominated policy negotiations and recovered more quickly from the Eurozone crisis while weaker economies continued to struggle with austerity measures causing high unemployment rates for years after the "end" of the crisis in 2013. Large portions of EU citizenry lost faith in the institutions that were meant to unite and protect the rights of the political and economic union. While the European Union is fundamentally a political and economic union, suggesting coordinated economic policy at its core, this call for cooperation throughout crises not only shows the disintegration of national fiscal policies but also the failure of past crises to adequately address future ones.

Countries that were hit hardest by the Eurozone crisis is also where migrants came in the biggest waves. Again, legitimacy of the EU came into question as the migrant crisis was not handled in accordance with adopted legislation but instead defaulted to individual nation states which had different border restrictions, asylum policies, and traditions pertaining to the rule of law (Nedergaard 2019, 82). Member States like Italy, Greece, and Spain were seeing a huge influx of asylum seekers due to their geographical location on the Mediterranean Sea, yet countries like Germany, France, and the United Kingdom were driving policy initiatives due to their economic standing, creating a disjointed EU response to the migrant crisis. My data show a clear shift in discourse surrounding borders and travel restrictions between the migrant crisis and the COVID-19 crisis, emphasizing the power Member States have in the bordering process. Border securitization to protect "Europe" was framed by German leaders as requiring a pan-

European solution, yet Member States institutionally hold the power to reinstate border restrictions, citing security threats and needing to better mitigate migration flows. German leadership, while calling for an overhaul of existing systems to combat the migrant crisis, was instating border controls and had discourse that implied indignation at countries that did not want to participate in redistributive mechanisms. Unlike in the Eurozone crisis, the migrant crisis showed how reliant Germany was on other Member States for cooperation in implementing comprehensive reform of treaties. Because of Germany's liberal policies at the onset of the migrant crisis and the resulting political and public backlash, leaders were determined to establish and push forward an EU agenda that emphasized burden sharing and a more integrative approach to migration and border controls.

Many EU countries have reinstated temporary border restrictions and travel bans throughout the on-going COVID-19 pandemic to preserve healthcare capacity and stop the spread of the novel coronavirus. For the first time in its history, the European Union closed all its external borders to prevent the spread of the virus on March 17, 2020 with Member States imposing national border restrictions as well (Linka et al. 2020, 710). German politicians have claimed border closures are not the way to mitigate the COVID-19 crisis yet currently have border controls with Austria and France. The current system of Schengen cooperation (or lack thereof) has serious challenges for the institution's legitimacy because there are staggering differences between participating countries beliefs about compliance with statutory rules (Nedergaard 2019, 83). This variance in compliance was evident during the migrant crisis as individual nation states dictated border controls and not EU institutions, creating a nationalistic sense of borders, integration, and acceptance of migrants. The type of crisis situation is also important when it comes to implementing border controls. My data show that during the

Eurozone crisis and COVID-19 crisis, leaders used citizen-forward discourse when talking about mobility and border policy. There was a clear difference in tone from the migrant crisis to the COVID-19 crisis regarding the necessity of border closures.

> "How sure are you that border controls will still take place at the German external borders after November? As the situation is at the moment, I think we need these border controls." - Question and answer from Angela Merkel, August 29, 2017; Press Conference

> "Incidentally, closing the borders across the board does not prevent what happens there. It is in the country, and the moment you reduce border measures again, it starts again. I understand that at the moment there is a special situation on the northern Italian border, and I understand that you will then come to temporary checks there. But that is something different from fundamental border measures" - Angela Merkel, March 11, 2020; Press Conference

These two different expressions of border control show the power of bordering and how the nation state is able to wield its power in a crisis situation. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this nationalism at borders in times of crisis. While there is institutional rhetoric and material symbols of an integrated, networked Europe, social boundaries still dominate border zones (Opiłowska 2021, 592). Persistence of mental and language barriers, cultural differences and historical trauma maintain national divides in the EU and is why, especially during crisis, leaders invoke border control. The ability for nation states to dictate border closures and controls and the unwillingness for Member States to cooperate on integrative measures emphasize how crises have caused mass politicization across the EU, and nation states seek to protect national identity and domestic interests over European integration efforts.

The imposition of border controls are perceived by nation states as providing security in times of crisis, yet as we have seen during the coronavirus pandemic, they are permeable and insufficient at stopping threats. As mechanisms of state control, border restrictions in the EU show the uncoordinated policies between the institution and nation states. However, the

disruption border restrictions have caused at the local level show an alternative to disintegration, one of "how interconnected European border regions already are and how transnational border spaces have become" (Opiłowska 2021, 597). European border regions, officially called European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation, or Euroregions, were one solution to enhance cross-border relations and mitigate the aforementioned social boundaries that hampered international integration. These Euroregions have played historic roles in maintaining mobility across European borders but have been underfunded and under-supported due to crises facing the Union. Different cultures, languages, and customs required nation states and the EU to work together and provide public services to foster a strong sense of community, but "bordering practices … allow certain expressions of identity and collective memory to exist while blocking others" (Paasi 2014, 9). While Euroregions have been places encouraged to integrate across nations, cultures, and languages, events like the migrant crisis and the COVID-19 crisis have raised a question about how borders are actually drawn, where they are, and who gets to cross them.

The migrant and COVID-19 crises have altered how citizens view their relationship to movement, in part due to reinstated border controls, but also due to politicians' discourse emphasizing threats posed by others and the need for solidarity and cooperation. While citizens were applauded for their acceptance of refugees during the migrant crisis, German leaders heavily relied on calling on citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic as merely political action would not be enough to stop the spread of the virus. German citizens were put at the forefront of crisis mitigation within the borders of Germany —discourse focused on the nation state and while the wider wellbeing of the EU was only secondary— in contrast to the migrant crisis in which German citizens' role was framed more as a necessary participant in the wider EU struggle

to mitigate migrant flows. Who is included in this idea of citizen complicates and problematizes who is included in the nation's and the EU's imagining of these spaces.

Again, Germany's role as President of the Council of the EU from July 2020- December 2020 influenced the discourse on combating the coronavirus together as a one united Europe; however, when calling on citizens, Merkel directed speech at Germans.

Empirical studies suggest that intra-EU mobility enhances the sense of EU identity and belonging of individuals, including non-citizens, and assists in managing the multiple layers of identity, which relates to intersecting social factors such as age, gender, race and ethnicity, as well as local, national, EU, and cosmopolitan levels (Sikoldi 2015, 823). Yet, as stated previously, mobility in the European Union is largely dictated by individual nation states. The EU has attempted to rescale state borders for a homogenous internal border. In times of crisis, the nation state still wields ultimate power and has securitized its border and deter entrance. The migrant crisis emphasized the power of bordering and exclusion while the COVID-19 crisis illuminated how obsolete borders can be. Border closures dictated by the state and not at the EU level emphasizes the power imbalance in the bordering process, as the bordering process becomes discriminatory based on citizenship, residency, race, and now "infection potential."

The framing of Europe, European identity, and the way in which citizens have conceptualized mobility have been complicated if not totally overturned by recent crises. What seems to be in perpetual crisis in the EU has, as previously mentioned, given rise to numerous radical right-wing populist parties. Much like the Member States in which they manifest, these parties are divided amongst each other through competing nationalism based on memory politics and redefinitions of historical experiences but are united by strong anti-Europeanism and anti-elitism. Far right rhetoric challenges integration by challenging international engagement in

favor of nationalist policies, creating a *Krise des Zusammenhalts* or a crisis of cohesion. Merkel and other political leaders were calling for cooperation and unity, although rarely calling out radical right-wing actors (like the AfD) in Germany. However, this call for cooperation shows the need to combat nationalistic rhetoric that has grown and caused diminishing international crises responses (Lemke 2020). While discourse by German political leaders emphasized joint action among Member States, mainstream parties like the CDU have failed to address systematic problems in crisis management, specifically in burden sharing. Distributing the burden of crisis among Member States has resulted in asymmetries of interdependence and bargaining power and mainstream parties and elites failed to address these crises by openly evaluating tradeoffs, presenting distinct policy alternatives, and demonstrating responsiveness to voters (Grzymala-Busse 2019, 40). For so long Germany has not had to cope with radical right-wing populist movements and has been able to push for pro-integrationist policies. Now however, with the AfD as the third strongest party in Germany, political leaders have had to shift discourse to encapsulate a more domestic-centric policy platform. While this does not necessarily mean the downfall of integration efforts for the European Union, it does weaken it due to Germany's economic and political power in driving integration policy forward.

My main themes of economic stability, unity and cooperation, and bordering and rebordering manifest throughout the three crises in different ways and exacerbate processes of national and supranational power. Discourse heavily emphasized economic stability which showed the nation-states priority and willing to compromise at the EU level for integrative measures. Economic stability and growth policies can be leveraged by the economically powerful, like Germany, and was. The stark divide that appears when discussing economic policy in Europe increases hostilities of the idea of a united European identity, especially when

citizens of Member States believe they are "bailing out" or paying for the stability of other nations. This discourse of some nations propping up others is precisely why the call for unity and cooperation has been so strong among leaders. The historical reliance Germany has had to other European countries for economic success is why policies have been aimed at maintaining stability across the union. Yet, the pro-integrationist policies that allowed Germany to become a dominant political and economic actor in Europe are losing favor domestically. This is in part to the power of bordering and who belongs. Because the nation state maintains ultimate power in border controls within the Schengen Area, it is hard to establish a truly open internal border zone, especially when there are crisis situations. Integration across state lines becomes threatened as national identities supersede European unity.

There has been a mix of disintegration and integration efforts during crisis in Europe, exemplified by the disconnect between national and supranational agreements. However, there have also been varying degrees of identification with European citizenship and calls from politicians to cooperate at local and transnational scales, resulting in increased integration. The Eurozone crisis brought about more economic integration, in many parts because Germany has large political and economic incentives and maintains the stability of the European Economic Area. During the migrant crisis, domestic policy drove German leaders to push for overhauling the Dublin Agreement and advocating for equitable distribution of refugees, but not for changing the rights of Member States to enforce border controls, showing how national identity and domestic interests impact preferences for the scale of European integration. This scope of European integration preferences was seen by the lack of cooperation among Member States in reforming migration and border policy during the migrant crisis like they did for economic policy during the Eurozone crisis. Without change, mass border closures and fear of the end of

the Schengen Area were discussed as the novel coronavirus shut down the EU in 2020. Member States closed their borders and restricted travel to preserve their nations healthcare facilities and protect their citizens from COVID-19, despite their being a common "European" identity and European right to free movement. The integration efforts of the EU are in question as growing economic and political pressure demand a more nationalistic focus.

Conclusion: The Future of Europe

The three crises I have analyzed have shown the dynamic ways in which European institutional power and European identity have shifted in the last decade and how crucial citizens are to the success of crisis management policies and broader integrative measures. I found that German political leaders stressed economic stability, European unity, and mobility in discourse. While crisis situations would undoubtedly put the main pillars of the European Union under duress (it is, after all, a political and economic *union* with a Single Market that abolished internal borders), these themes put into perspective the complicated relationships between individual nation states and supranational institutions. The government statements, press statements, and press conferences point to the disconnect between national and European policy during times of crisis, emphasizing the power disparity between the two. Comparing the Eurozone crisis, the migrant crisis, and the COVID-19 crisis and how Germany positioned itself within those showed me the complexities of European identity, politicization of national identity, and the process of burden sharing in the bloc. Germany's political system, which disperses rather than centralizes power, combined with its role as stabilizing hegemon throughout several crises has resulted in an uneven role in pushing for an integrated Europe. German leaders have taken a dominant role in EU policy creation, especially during crisis, and while Germany has historically had a strong incentive to push for pro-integrationist economic and political policies, as it relies heavily on exporting to other EU countries, recent trends in anti-Europeanism among the German electorate have shifted domestic politics. This threatens the semi-hegemonic role Germany plays in Europe and the stability it gives the EU as domestic incentives for supporting future European integration wanes.

Limitations

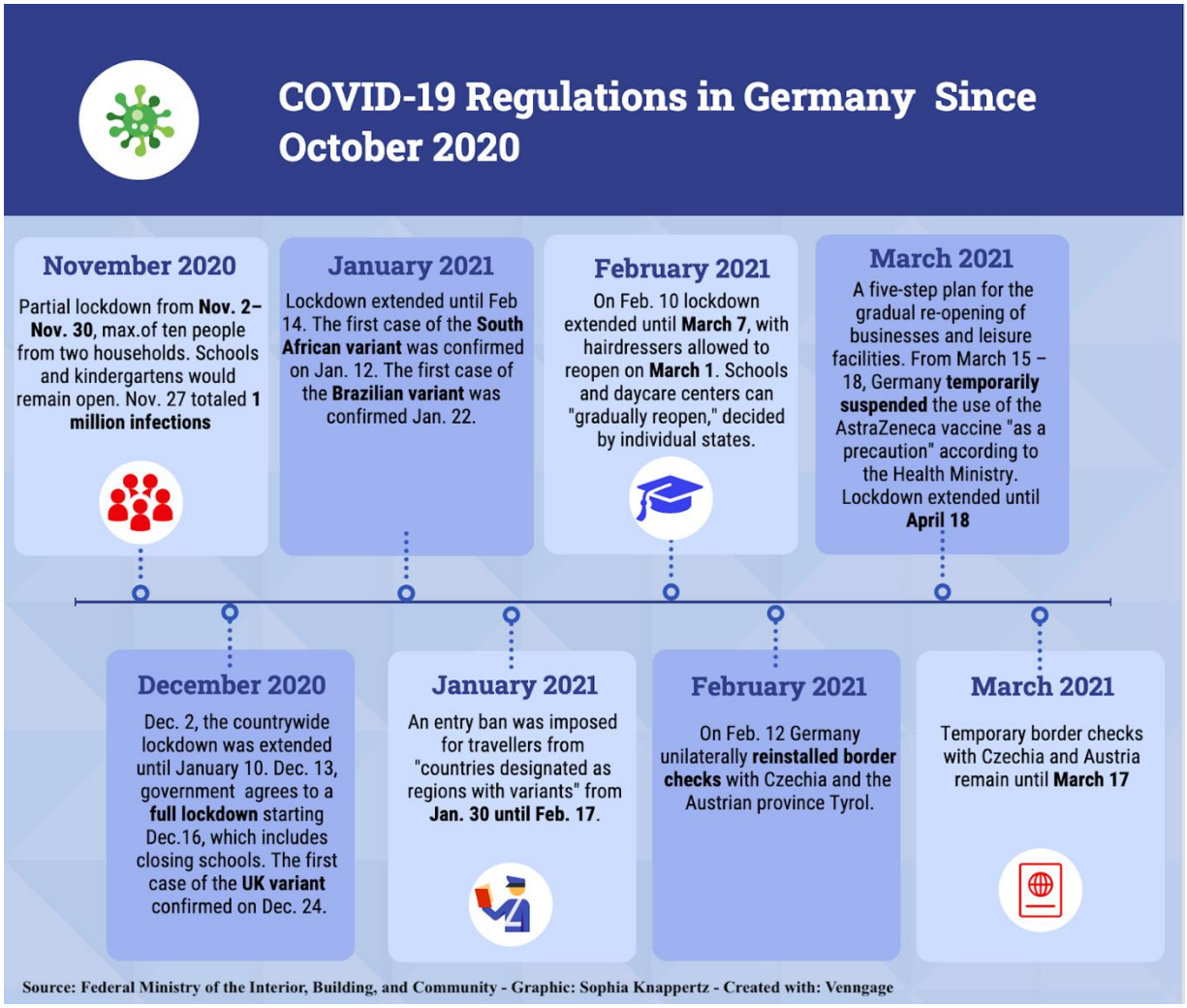
One of the greatest limitations in this study is my proficiency in political German. While my German is strong enough to read and understand the press conferences, government statements, and press statements, it is possible that I missed nuances due to the politician jargon used. I used dictionaries as well as asked my father to clarify any political rhetoric. Similarly, although I have dual citizenship and family living in Germany, I myself have lived in the United States for most of my life and therefore approached this study as an outsider. The political discourses surrounding these crises and the lingering feelings of how politicians handled them is something I can only glean from conversations with friends and family as well as academic research. Additionally, the feeling of *Einheit* and *Einigung*, connecting German success to European integration that has been fundamental to German foreign policy and in many ways German identity is something that I do not feel as a dual citizen. However, from my position I have the ability to critically look at how German political figures managed crises.

Coronavirus Update

Because the COVID-19 pandemic is still evolving, my data only represents a specific time frame. Therefore, I want to provide a brief overview of what has happened in Germany and the EU since my data collection, which will be helpful when discussing areas for further study. Measures implemented since the last press conference I analyzed from October 28, 2020 until March 23, 2021 are shown in Figure 4.

My data collection ended in October 2020 before the second wave of coronavirus infections hit Europe. Before this, Merkel had up to 80 percent approval rating within Germany and the country was revered for handling the pandemic swiftly and directly. Since October,

Figure 4



Germany and the rest of the European Union has experienced a second wave, the European Medicine Agency has authorized three vaccines (later than the UK and the United States) and has implemented an EU-wide purchasing and distribution plan of the vaccines which has been slow and unorganized. The vaccination campaign in Germany is being carried out at the state level and the federal policy is that vaccines will be divided among German states according to their relative population sizes. Now in the midst of a third-wave, with infection rates similar to those in April 2020 and vaccination rates lower than those in the UK and the US, Merkel and her government are now under scrutiny for their crisis management. Opposition parties (the AfD, the

Left, and the Free Democratic Party) called on Merkel to ask parliament for a vote of confidence over the rising discontent with her coronavirus policies ("Merkel" 2021). Merkel refused.

Areas for Further Study

While Germany's semi-hegemonic role in Europe has been discussed by many scholars, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Germany's standing in Europe needs to be explored further. My data collection ended in October 2020 before the second wave of coronavirus infections hit Europe. Since October, the European Union has experienced a second wave, the European Medicine Agency has authorized the Pfizer BioNTech, Moderna, and AstraZeneca vaccines, and has implemented an EU-wide purchasing and distribution plan. The late authorization of vaccines caused delays in acquiring the necessary number of doses on the EU Commission's timeline. Unlike the US and the UK, who were active partners with pharmaceutical companies, the EU just established contracts with these companies and organized them comparatively late. While the vaccination plan is coordinated at an EU level, national red tape as well as supply disruptions have caused delays, distress, and disarray with providing vaccines to every Member State. This begs the question of how effective EU institutions can be at managing the coronavirus crisis without a hegemonic force like Germany mitigating integrative efforts. President of the EU Commission Ursula Von der Leyen specifically voiced concerns over if "just a handful of big players — big member states — had rushed to it [the vaccine …] everybody else would have been left empty-handed," adding that it would have been "the end of our community" (Kwai 2021). Unlike in other crises, EU institutions have taken a leading role in coordinating policies to combat the coronavirus on a supranational level. The slow vaccine rollout at the EU level, Germany's fall from successful crisis manager since the onset of the pandemic, and calls from Merkel's government for a vote of confidence complicates

the established roll nation states have had in preventing disintegration and promoting crisis prevention measures. Further study in how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted national and supranational cooperation is necessary.

The future of European integration is also influenced by the United Kingdom's new relationship with the EU. The UK officially left the EU on February 1, 2020 with the Withdrawal Agreement, which protected the rights of EU citizens in the UK and UK nationals in the EU; avoided a hard border in Ireland; settled financial obligations; and provided for a transition period until December 31, 2020 ("EU-UK" 2020). As of January 1, 2021, the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement dictates the relationship between the UK and the EU. It involves a trade agreement for free, fair, sustainable trade, with zero tariffs and zero quotas; a broad economic, social, and environmental partnership; a new partnership for citizens' security; and a common governance framework to ensure a sound and lasting partnership ("EU-UK" 2020). It is interesting to compare the UK's membership within the EU (as it was not a part of the Schengen Area or the euro Area) and the current agreement it has. Although the UK's position made its departure from the EU less difficult, it caused mass politicization between "leavers" and "stayers" not just nationally but across the bloc. The impact Brexit has had on national versus European identity as well as mobility needs to be explored further, as leaving the EU has complicated the incentives of the Union both through institutional and informal channels. The UK's successful vaccination campaign compared to the EU's would be an interesting case study of mobility and identity politics that have manifested in a post-Brexit moment.

The coronavirus pandemic has decreased the incentives in many ways for national governments to pursue pro-integrationist policies, as the threat of infection has made security the top priority of nation states. The migrant crisis similarly found nation states making security and

not economic efficiency their number one priority. Prioritizing security, and effectively rebordering the EU, has stripped EU institutions of the regulatory control over free-movement during the coronavirus pandemic. Meanwhile, there has been expectations of community being made at the transnational level. Member States that have been more severely impacted by the coronavirus pandemic have increased empathy and led to more EU solidarity and leadership. The COVID-19 pandemic has in many ways shown the juxtapositions I have exposed in the framework of EU integration being reliant on Germany as a regional hegemon, yet it is possible that this crisis has weakened Germany's willingness or even ability to act as that stability mechanism. While I have been criticizing the EU for not being able to pursue integrative policies and being more reliant on Member States like Germany, the EU-coordinated vaccine program could be showing a shift in both national and supranational willingness to cooperate and bolster EU institutions. The COVID-19 pandemic and healthcare/capacity crisis could be a turning point from which Member States realize they cannot protect their citizens from a biological threat such as a virus without massive coordination and cooperation and not one that can be dictated by one or two nation states.

Incorporating a media analysis would further the understanding of how German leaders handled crises, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. A popular view of crisis management allows for a more intimate look at how citizens are feeling about the government as well as policies in place, and not just how leaders are trying to construct crisis management policies. Comparing how the media frames crisis situations and how political leaders frame crisis situations would provide further insight on the future of European integration and the overall commitment of not only nation-state actors but also citizens of the EU.

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