

The Perception of a Polish Democratic Backlash in the German Public Opinion

Bachelor Thesis

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Abstract

This paper discusses how political changes in Poland between 2015 and 2019 were perceived in German public opinion, and if the latter influenced German official policies.

Therefore the following research question was be addressed:

In what way did a change in German public opinion, regarding the democratic backslide in Poland since 2015, influence official foreign policy positions of the German government?

This question was addressed by utilizing theories on public opinion formation and concepts of government responsiveness to such trends in public discourse. In the realm of a qualitative data analysis, sources of written media content were assessed to examine public opinion trends. The results were compared to the findings of a qualitative analysis of official statements of the German government. This allowed identifying changes in public opinion, as well as deviances between the public opinion and the German government's positions. While the German public expressed concerns about Polish democracy, the German government stayed reluctant to public criticism.

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1. Introduction

This thesis aims to analyze how Polish politics is reflected in German public opinion and how this perception developed between 2015 and 2019.

The end of the Soviet era marked a significant turning point in Polish politics. From there on, political and administrative systems in Eastern Europe underwent a drastic change. Poland, which has been closely affiliated with the Soviet Union, regained its independence in 1989 and could consequently introduce a democratic constitution. This went along with a reorganization of its institutional and political landscape, as well as with a re-consideration of civil liberties and the introduction of a free-market economy (Bugarič, 2015). Since 1991, Poland is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Though, the country's orientation towards the west went even further. Since 1994, Poland worked in close cooperation with the European Union to fulfill the 'Copenhagen criteria'. These are set out requirements, accession candidates to the Union need to meet. At the heart of these requirements are political and economic criteria, as well as the demand to be able to function within the net of European institutions. Polish politics focused on implementing these requirements for almost ten years. Finally, in a referendum in 2003, the population voted for the country's accession to the European Union, which was realized in 2004. This membership came along with vast economic benefits for the restructuring country and led to high rates of public support for the Union (Bugarič, 2015). As a western neighboring country, Germany depicts an essential bilateral partner for Poland. After the country's traumatic experiences with Germany during World War II, the fall of the Iron Curtain marked a new chapter within the countries' shared history. Germany welcomed the democratization trends in Poland and could, as an influential European country, bring in a strong voice when it came to the accession negotiations between Poland and the EU (Woyke, 2014). However, not only did Germany's foreign policy change after 1989. Equally, the perception of Poland altered within German society. Germans considered their country's relation to Poland to be stronger and better, as well as that one could observe increased cultural exchange between the two countries (A. Łada, 2019). However, Polish support for European integration and cooperation decreased with the election of the PiS (Law and Justice) party in 2015. The country experienced several reforms, amongst a reform of the judicial system, that visibly destabilize liberal democracy and question the current state of the European Union (Fomina & Kucharczyk, 2016).

1.2 Context of the research

To embed this research in a broader context, a brief overview of political developments in Poland since the country's accession to the European Union will be outlined. These developments will be related to the evolution of the German-Polish relationship over this very same period.

1.2.1 Poland's accession to the European Union

After Poland's independence from the soviet patronage, the country found itself in a deep economic crisis. To improve the economic situation, Polish politics and society worked towards a thorough integration towards the west. However, for a membership in the European Union, the post-communist state had to restructure its societal order. It required many changes in the country's institutional set-up to make several drastic economic reforms possible. Besides the transition of the Polish economy to a free market-economy, the country reformed its social systems and decentralized its administrative body. In general, the Poles took these reforms well, as they were seen to pave the way to a membership in the European Union. Such a membership held the promise of a higher standard of living and a better economic situation (Przybylski, 2018). Since Poland could benefit from a number of pre-accession funds, e.g. PHARE, the country could

finance reforms in a variety of societal sectors, such as agriculture, banking, and finance, or infrastructure (Commission, 1997).

After the Cold War ended, Germany kept orientating towards its western allies. However, it pursued three primary interests regarding the imminent east enlargement of the European Union: security and economic interests, as well as moral interests. Due to its geographical proximity to Eastern Europe, the country strongly supported the idea of integrating Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, and Cyprus into the European Union in 2004. Political stability in these countries meant securing a 'buffer zone' for Germany against a threatening dominance of Russia. Secondly, Germany saw the opportunity to greatly profit from the east enlargements economically. Hence, Germany aimed to tighten its trading relations with the East and attract eastern businesses on its territory. Additionally, Germany saw a chance to reconsolidate its ties to Eastern European countries, as the atrocities committed by the Nazis left the relations considerably shuttered (Woyke, 2014; Zuba, 2020). After the Polish accession to the European Union in 2004, the country could benefit economically from Structural and cohesion funds, which aimed to help the country catch-up to its western neighbors (Commission, 1997). However, Polish politics started to take a slight turn. With the emergence of the political parties 'Civic Platform' (PO) and the 'Law and Justice Party' (PiS), two major political actors started to shape the political landscape. As the EU was no longer at the forefront of Polish political efforts, the parties competed to prove that they could put Poland in a favorable position within the EU and hence ensure further economic growth. Until 2015, the liberal-conservative party PO led the country with one interruption in the years between 2005 and 2007 (the country was led by the PiS party). Over their time in office, PO politicians could maintain economic growth and foster democratic consolidation. Therefore it looked like the country went through a successful transition process in the first years after Poland became a member of the European Union (Fomina & Kucharczyk, 2016; Przybylski, 2018). This led to an overall positive assessment of the European Union in Polish society and, in turn, it also leads to a generally positive trend in German public opinion regarding Polish politics (Łada, 2013).

1.2.2 The democratic backslide

In the early 2010s, the national-conservative Polish 'Law and Justice' (PiS) party began to increasingly pressure the reformed political system in Poland. By showing solidarity for apparent losers of the political reforms since the 1990s, the party proposed a different approach towards Polish and European politics. In 2015, the PiS party won parliamentary and presidential elections and consequently altered Poland's political discourse. While Poland can still be regarded as a democratic country, the PiS party pushed for deep-cutting political changes over its time in office. Reforms that lead to increased political influence on the judiciary and efforts to centralize administrative systems, all affected the consolidation of Polish democracy (Fomina & Kucharczyk, 2016; Przybylski, 2018). Such attacks on a well-functioning democracy are more likely to occur in states which have little democratic tradition. As Poland rushed through deep-cutting societal reforms in just 25 years, civil society, the courts, and media were less involved in the establishment of liberal institutions. This might explain why Polish society has trouble with attacks on relatively newly installed liberal institutions (Bugaric, 2015). This paper aims to explore how presented political developments in Poland were reflected in German Public Opinion in the years between 2015 and 2019. Trends in public perception of the issue could ultimately lead to changes in how German policy-makers assess the issue, and consequently, what official positions they put forward. Such an analysis highlights how an official position corresponds to, but also potentially differs from public opinion. Hence, one can assess the government's responsiveness to societal influence when it outlines strategic policies.

1.3 Research question

Consequently, this project addresses the following exploratory research question:

RQ: In what way did a change in German public opinion, regarding the democratic backslide in Poland since 2015, influence official foreign policy positions of the German government?

To answer this central research question, subquestions are formulated, which will be answered in different subsections of the paper.

Subquestions:

RQ(A): To what extent was a democratic backslide in Poland reflected in the German public opinion between 2015 and 2019?

RQ (B): What were the main positions of the German government regarding the democratic backslide in Poland between 2015 and 2019?

RQ (C): To what extent do the German public opinion and the official positions of the German government align between 2015 and 2019?

1.4 Scientific and social relevance

The contribution of this thesis to the existing body of research can be identified in two respects: The paper aims to explore trends in the German public opinion on political developments in Poland between 2015 and 2019. Secondly, it asks how such a change in public opinion influences policies of official authorities. The exploration of the change in public opinion investigates how a political reorientation of an immediate neighboring country can influence public discourse. This first part of the analysis connects to the second issue of interest, which constitutes an analysis of how this public opinion relates to government officials' formal policies. Hence, it is to examine how responsive German authorities reacted to changing attitudes in society. A change of official positions is expected to alter the bilateral relationship between Germany and Poland. Such an alternation could very likely transfer to the supranational dimension of the European Union. Germany has a powerful vote within the European Union and can, therefore, influence Poland's stance amongst the other member states. Hence, the paper can be expected to answer questions of relevance for the academic realm, as well as for society as a whole.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

The consecutive sections of this thesis should give insights into all relevant elements necessary to answer the posed research question. Firstly a theoretical framework is outlined, which further introduces and conceptualizes democratic backsliding, public opinion, and government responsiveness. These theoretical concepts are used to formulate hypotheses. After an outline of the employed methods (section 3), the analysis of relevant data is reported in the fourth section. Finally, the concluding chapter will present an answer to the posed research question.

2. Theory

In order to embed the principle concepts of the research question in a theoretical framework, an overview of the current body of academic literature will be presented. These central concepts are: ‘democratic backsliding’, ‘public opinion formation,’ and ‘government responsiveness.’

2.1 Democratic backsliding

Firstly, a theoretical approach to democratic backsliding is outlined to conceptualize the phenomenon of a ‘democratic backlash’. Bermeo (2016) presents the following types of modern backlashes: a promissory coup, executive aggrandizement, and strategic electoral manipulation (Bermeo, 2016). According to this analysis, a democratic backlash, thus a deterioration of the quality of democracy in a given country, changed its appearance over the last 70 years. Since today, a violent and visible coup d’ état is less likely, more subtle, hidden regime changes occur more often. This leads to “...political systems that are ambiguously democratic or hybrid” (Bermeo, 2016). To classify a democratic backlash in Poland, where the 2015 elected PiS party aims to gather considerable authority and powers, the case of executive aggrandizement would be most fitting (Fomina & Kucharczyk, 2016). Bermeo (2016) describes such a form of democratic backsliding as situations in which executive incumbents initiate institutional changes that lessen checks and limitations of executive powers. Other than violent changes of the executive, these “...change(s) can be framed as having resulted from a democratic mandate” (Bermeo, 2016).

2.2 Public opinion formation

The second concept which needs to be considered is the notion of a ‘public opinion’ and its formation. This conceptualization aims to understand public opinion and its effects on the views of policy-makers, which finally may lead to an alternation of policy positions. For a stable democracy, this relation between the public and its representatives is crucial. As scholars like Robert Dahl point out, the government’s responsiveness to public opinion ideally transforms public preferences neatly into policies (Wlezien & Soroka, 2016).

As public opinion represents a complex concept, largely discussed in social sciences, different definitions were presented over time. For this analysis, the concept of the ‘public sphere’ by Jürgen Habermas will be outlined. It presents a basic notion of the public realm, which organizes to formulate a prevailing public opinion. As the analysis aims to investigate such a general public attitude, this concept is deemed to clarify the notion of ‘the public’ in this context. Habermas perceived popular participation to be vital for a functioning democracy. He described a ‘bourgeois public sphere,’ in which private interests and concerns of individuals meet the global demands of public and social life. Hence, within the realm of such a public sphere, individuals can identify a common interest and develop a societal consensus (Kellner, 2000). After identifying a notion of ‘the public’, it is to investigate how public opinion is formed and changes over time. To relate their personal interest to the broader societal context, citizens need to deploy over a certain degree of political knowledge. As the acquisition of political knowledge is costly, individuals need to weigh the opportunities that political knowledge hold, against the costs of informing themselves adequately (Visser, Holbrook, & Krosnick, 2007). Visser et al. (2007) outline that people spend more time-consuming information on issues they perceive as important, at the expense of topics they consequently do not know much about. According to Visser et al. (2007), people attach salience to a political issue if it corresponds with either their material interests, fits their personal core values, or corresponds to the interests of an identifiable group (Visser et al., 2007). Though, according to Noelle-Neumann’s analysis, people generally feel the fear of social isolation if holding a controversial opinion. This fear will entice people to hide their genuine opinion and remain silent (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). Individuals need to observe their environment and sources of information to make out what opinion can be considered as popular. This popular opinion can be

regarded as the mainstream opinion, dominating societal and media discourses. As individuals often do not feel comfortable defending an opinion contrary to dominating beliefs, they mostly accept the mainstream opinion or remain silent (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). In the context of this analysis, it will be investigated how the German public classified political changes in Poland and how their perception of the latter may have changed over time. Furthermore, it is examined how these changes influence the official positions of the German government. When following Habermas' notion of 'the public', as space where individuals aggregate their interests and express them towards government incumbents, one more actor has to be taken into account. This third actor would be the media, presenting an intermediary element between the public and official authorities by deploying the public with information (Moy & Bosch, 2013).

2.3 The role of the media in public opinion formation

According to Noelle-Neumann's analysis, media content is the most important source of information for individuals to study their environment and to make out which opinion is the most prevalent. This, in turn, explains what importance is assigned to a controversial subject in a given societal discourse (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). As Habermas noted in a warning tone, in our modern society, the domination of powerful elites and media influences threatens the functioning of a participatory public sphere, in which all members discuss lively to reach a consensus, without one interest group being overly dominant (Kellner, 2000). This position provides the media power over the construction of public opinion. Theories of agenda-setting and framing outline how the media can influence what content the public is informed about, and possibly also how a consequential judgment will turn out. Hence, framing an issue in a certain way can have implications for the perception of this issue in the public realm (Moy & Bosch, 2013). If considering this role of the media in the 21st century, the emergence of social media has to be taken into account. Social media allow a softening of hierarchies regarding the transmission of news and information, which makes everyone a potential content-creator, equipped with tools to frame a given political issue (Moy & Bosch, 2013). From this theoretical outline, the following hypothesis may be derived:

Hypothesis 1a: As a reflection of public opinion, German media content increasingly covered political and institutional changes in Poland between 2015 and 2019.

Hypothesis 1b: Political changes in Poland were increasingly reflected in German public opinion, and consequently, the perception of the quality of Polish democracy changed.

2.4 Government responsiveness to public opinion

In the following, the connection between public opinion and the government's position are outlined. For this analysis, public opinion will be perceived as an independent variable, leading to a change of policy-makers' views (Wlezien & Soroka, 2016). Baum and Potter (2008) present this link by drawing an analogy to an economic market. They describe a platform on which three primary actors interact: the public and the policy-makers, as well as the media. The primary commodity on this market is information, desired by the policy-makers and the public. Hence, the media is the intermediary, trading the commodity. While policy-makers have an interest in presenting themselves in a favorable light, the public wishes to be deployed with independent information. If an incident, especially concerning foreign policy, took place in the recent past, little information is publicly available, and the media has to rely on authorities' information for reporting. Although over time, more information becomes available, and the media feel pressure to report independently on an issue (Baum & Potter, 2008). Therefore, it is rather to expect that public opinion will

influence policy-makers in the long run. Wlezien and Soroka (2016) discuss three dimensions of how public opinion is transferred into public policy: policy correspondence, policy consistency, and policy covariation. Policy correspondence is concerned with the extent to which policy is developed according to public preferences. Policy consistency describes how an acute change in policy is in line with public preference change. Policy covariation, in turn, assesses to what extent policy changes can be linked to changes in public preferences in the long term (Wlezien & Soroka, 2016). The public deploys over two main mechanisms of representation by which representatives can be chosen and held accountable. The first one is an indirect way of representation. By electing political candidates, carrying similar attitudes, the voter can ensure the representation of his/her matters. The second mechanism is direct and describes how incumbent politicians respond to the public's preferences. This direct representation can be related to the explanation of individual preference formation discussed by Visser et al. (2007). The entire public, hence an aggregation of opinions, assigns higher importance to topics of societal relevance. Thus, it is at the government to identify variations in public preferences to design and modify policies according to relevant trends in public opinion (Wlezien & Soroka, 2016). Consequently, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: Variations in the German official positions, regarding Polish democracy, reflect the variations in the public opinion, as policy-makers adjust policies to the public's preferences.

2.5 Conclusion

To conclude and summarize this section, Figure 1 should illustrate the main concepts and their interrelations, outlined in the preceding theoretical framework. It thus illustrates how the academic literature is applied to theoretically inform the conduct of an empirical research project. Figure 1 describes how the democratic backslide in Poland leads to increased attention from the media to the quality of Polish democracy. This increased information is presumed to lead to an alternation of public opinion. Consequently, such an altered public attitude towards Polish politics is expected to positively influence the views of German policy-makers.

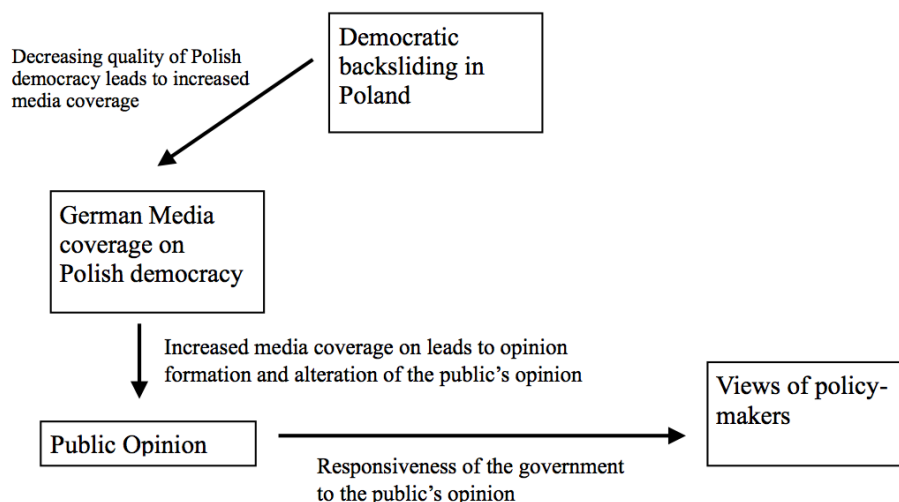


Figure 1: Theoretical Model

3. Methods

In the following section, the data selection process and the employed research methods to analyze the obtained data shall be discussed. Therefore, the research design, the case selection, the data sampling, and the operationalization of the research question will be discussed.

3.1 Research design

This research depicts an exploratory study. It aimed to analyze reoccurring themes in German media content and in official documents of the German government, regarding the state of Polish democracy. In this study, a qualitative content analysis was performed. Such allowed an interpretation of the text and its context by looking at aspects relevant for answering the research question. Therefore, a qualitative content analysis can be regarded as adhering to a naturalistic research paradigm (Schreier, 2012). Furthermore, such an analysis needs to be embedded in a well suiting research design. According to Maxwell (2009), a research design determines all key components of a scientific study. The research design connects the research question, the study's goals, the theoretical framework, the research methods employed, and the consciousness of possible validity threats. In this paper, the research question aimed for an investigation of the relation between a democratic backlash in Poland and public opinion formation in Germany. Further, the influence of public opinion on official positions of German authorities was examined. In the theory section of the paper, the research question is embedded in a framework of existing theoretical concepts. By drawing on existing research, hypotheses could be formulated and tested within the realm of an empirical data analysis. To do so, a qualitative analysis of secondary data sources was conducted. Therefore, purposeful sampling strategies were used to select relevant documents. Here, newspaper articles and social media content are chosen as sources of information (Maxwell, 2009). There are certain disadvantages to a qualitative data analysis that need to be addressed: possible biases of the researcher, possible data gaps, and the use of the adequate methodology. The researcher needs to be aware of his own attitudes and convictions over the entire research process since these can profoundly impair the quality of outcomes. These threats equally arise for the research project discussed in this paper. Awareness of potential biases when outlining the theoretical framework and, most importantly, when collecting and analyzing documents, is of extreme importance (Maxwell, 2009). Furthermore, the possible confrontation with large gaps in documentation has to be taken into account. As analyzed documents are secondary data, not explicitly written for scientific analysis, gaps can frequently arise (Bowen, 2009). In order to address this threat, a variety of information sources was included (newspaper articles, social media content). Although, to thoroughly test the presented hypotheses, further diversification of the retrieved data set would be very beneficial. Therefore, methodological techniques like triangulation, referring to the use of different kinds of methods and data, would highly improve the validity of conclusions (Bowen, 2009). Besides the listed threats to the validity of a qualitative document analysis, there are equally numerous advantages to mention: the easy accessibility of data, the non-reactivity of existing documents, as well as the suitability for drawing comparisons between different documents. Secondary data is often easily accessible, compared to time-consuming primary data collection. Additionally, secondary data is marked by its non-reactivity. While primary data is prone to be influenced by the research process, secondary data present a stable and accurate source of information (Bowen, 2009). Bowen (2009) indicates that document analysis can be very useful if researchers aim to portray a change over time. As will be further outlined in the following, the pursue of a qualitative document analysis is most suitable for analyzing the presented research question. Considering that different approaches to a representative study of German public opinion would overwhelm the scope of this thesis, the operationalization and analysis of public opinion as a reflection of news and media content is most feasible and promises the best results.

3.2 Case selection

The case of this study is Germany, while the unit of analysis is the perception of Polish politics in the German public. The choice to pursue such an analysis was motivated by the increased attention to the Polish political discourse since 2015. As Poland's neighboring country, the public discourse in German society, regarding Polish politics is of particular interest. Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004 was of special interest to Germany after a long history of tense relations between the countries. The Polish membership to the EU can be regarded as a new basis for the Polish-German relationship, which brought the countries closer together (Woyke, 2014). Hence, an increased public discourse in Germany on changes in Polish politics can be expected. This reflects the large number of articles dealing with Polish politics in the years between 2015 and 2019. Only for the three newspapers 'Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung', 'taz', and 'Bild', 178 articles could be found for the period between 2015 and 2019. These papers present tabloid ('Bild') and quality papers ('FAZ'; 'taz'). Thus, a variety of German media covered changes in Polish politics. This makes Germany a suitable case for an analysis of the perception of Polish politics in a neighboring European country.

3.3 Sampling

The units of observation of this study are newspaper articles, supplemented by social media content, and official documents by German authorities. The journals 'Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung' (FAZ), the 'taz' (Die Tageszeitung), and the 'Bild' were chosen for the newspaper articles. The 'FAZ' and the 'taz' represent quality papers of high reach. The daily edition of the 'FAZ' was read by 870.000 people every day in the first quarter of 2020 (FAZ, 2020). Whereas in 2019, 239.000 people read the 'taz' daily edition (taz, 2020). The 'Bild' is a German tabloid paper that sold 1,36 million editions everyday of 2019, this makes the 'Bild' the most widely read newspaper in Germany (statista, 2020). Additionally, the 'FAZ' is classified as conservative paper, and the 'taz' is more of a left-wing journal. Hence, this variety of media sources was deemed to reflect diverse stances on the issue under analysis. Further, the newspaper articles were supplemented with data from the social media platform 'Twitter', as this platform is often used to publish on political events. For the second group of units of observation, official documents of the German government, like press conference transcripts, official statements and speeches were selected. The newspaper articles of the 'taz' and the 'Bild' were retrieved from the database 'WISO' (media database available to many German Universities), whereas for the 'FAZ', the archive of the journal was used. In both databases, as well as on the Twitter platform and the relevant websites of the German government, a search for the keywords 'Poland' and 'Democracy' was performed. For the search of the newspaper articles and the official government documents, the period from October 25th, 2015 (election of the PiS party in Poland) until December 31st, 2019, was specified. For the twitter data, such an extensive search was not possible. Since the platform constraints downloads of data older than seven days, the retrieved twitter comments date from the 17.05.2020-26.05.2020. This constraint has to be regarded as a weakness of this study, although the twitter comments are merely deemed to supplement the analysis of sampled newspaper articles. An overview of the results of the analyzed comments is presented in section 4.1.3. Hence, the twitter comments were not be part of the main analysis. However, similarities and differences in general trends in both data groups will be apparent. For the 'FAZ' 1.221 articles were obtained, for the 'taz' 350, and for the 'Bild' 19. Additionally, the Twitter platform identified 60 posts for the keywords 'Poland' and 'Democracy'. These posts were mostly by politicians or channels of large German newspapers. From government websites, seven suiting official statements of government members could be obtained.

To select a suitable sample for a qualitative content analysis, purposeful sampling strategies enabled the selection of information-rich cases. This justifies a smaller sample, as the examined cases will help to enlighten the subject of interest (Patton, 1990). For purposeful data collection, different techniques can be

employed, each aiming at slightly different outcomes (Patton, 1990). In this paper, intensity sampling techniques were used. These techniques guide researchers to identify information-rich cases which demonstrate the studied phenomena in intense clarity (Patton, 1990). This thesis is concerned with the investigation of public opinion change in Germany, regarding political changes in Poland. Thereafter, it was looked at the influence of such possible changes on the positions of the German Government. To do so, the obtained newspaper articles, twitter posts, and official government statements were checked for their relevancy regarding this research project (see Appendix 3-6 for a list of analyzed documents). Texts that did not present a clear link to the topic and mainly treated different subjects, like the European elections in 2019, or comments on the history of the Polish-German relation, were not included in the sample. Furthermore, newspaper articles below 100 words were excluded from the analysis as they are regarded to be low in substance and not particularly suitable for qualitative content analysis. Equally, the sampling excluded interviews with Polish politicians in the selected newspapers, since these cannot be regarded as reflecting the German public opinion. An additional sampling decision had to be made in regard to the obtained articles of the 'FAZ.' Since the journal's archive provides articles from all different special formats of the 'FAZ' (FAZ Einspruch, FAZ Magazin, FAZ Metropol, FAZ Quarterly, FAZ Sonntagszeitung, FAZ Woche), only the articles published in the daily edition of the 'FAZ' were considered. Publications in the special formats of the 'FAZ' are too specialized as to be regarded as a reflection of public opinion and thus were excluded from the sample. Furthermore, this exclusion kept the group of sampled 'FAZ' articles closer to the number of articles retrieved from the 'taz'. When selecting relevant data, possible biases to this process need to be addressed and avoided as much as possible. As intense cases are meant to be insightful, but not extreme to any extent (Patton, 1990), articles that reflect extreme opinions on the subject were avoided. Therefore, it was opted for documents published by the mainstream media. The government's statements are equally not deemed to present extreme positions as a majority of the German population elected their authors. Consequently, the sample aimed to include various, but no radical views on Polish political developments.

3.4 Operationalization

In the following, the key concepts 'public opinion' and 'democratic backsliding' need to be operationalized. As outlined in the previous sections of this paper, public opinion is analyzed as a reflection of various written media contents. This is not the only possibility to perceive public opinion, and it surely does not present a complete picture of public attitudes. Though, as the study's scope sets limits, a qualitative content analysis was chosen as it is deemed to enlighten the process of public opinion formation and to highlight changes in public attitude. Such a qualitative content analysis reduces the selected data by shedding light on the concepts of interest, presented in the research question. These relevant aspects are expressed in different categories of a coding scheme. Systematically, relevant quotes of the examined texts are assigned to these categories. This categorization leads to a loss of detail of the analyzed information, though, this ordering makes comparisons and, consequently, the analysis easier and more reliable. Therefore, the researcher can reduce the amount of data and interpret results by looking solely at the data parts, falling under the category measuring the aspects of interest (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Schreier, 2012) (see Appendix 2;8).

To represent a diverse picture of the German public opinion, articles from three major papers were selected. Therefore, two of the most sold informative papers were chosen: the 'taz' (left-wing) and the 'Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung' (conservative). The most read German tabloid paper, the 'Bild,' was used as a third data source. In all three papers, Polish political developments were covered between 2015 and 2019. As social media gained popularity in the 21st-century (Moy & Bosch, 2013), posts and comments were used to complement the information derived from the newspaper articles. To keep the results as representative as possible, posts from the well-used platform 'twitter', were used. To examine the positions of German government authorities in the period between 2015 and 2019, official statements and press conference transcripts were used. Different members of the German government stated on the issue in question and

addressed it in the realm of press conferences. These documents can be found on the official website of the German federal government (Bundesregierung), and on the webpage of the German Federal Foreign Office (see Appendix 6). In total, seven documents could be obtained that refer to the state of Polish democracy. The second concept which has to be operationalized would be the ‘democratic backlash’ in Poland. As presented in the theory section of this paper, Bermeo (2016) proposes a type of modern democratic backlash, an ‘executive aggrandizement’, which describes institutional changes, allowing a concentration of power in the executive governmental branch (Bermeo, 2016). This characterization of democratic backsliding corresponds well with empirical observations of Poland’s political changes since the election of the national-conservative PiS party in 2015 (Fomina & Kucharczyk, 2016). To analyze how such a democratic backlash was reflected in the German public opinion and how the latter influenced the positions of policy-makers, characteristics, and indicators had to be defined for the coding of media content and government documents. Thus, text segments were classified according to their position concerning the state of Polish democracy. As changes in public opinion might lead to changes in official positions, documents of different periods will be categorized, analyzed and compared. A summary of how the main concepts of the research questions are defined and measured can be found in Appendix 2, a further elaboration on the coding scheme is presented in the following section of the paper.

3.5 Data analysis

For this research, the data were analyzed using categorization strategies. Such a categorization of data facilitates comparisons between different types of analyzed documents (newspaper articles, social media content, policy documents) (Maxwell, 2009). To portray similarities and differences between the different units of observation, the three sub-questions were answered in successive steps of the analysis. The first two subquestions aim to analyze German public opinion and, respectively, the positions of the German government, regarding a democratic backlash in Poland. To answer these two questions, a coding frame was developed to segment the data into categories. As this research presents an exploratory study, just the main theoretical concepts were included in the coding scheme (see Appendix 8). These concept-driven codes presented a starting point for the research, since over the course of the data analysis, different (sub)categories were expected to emerge. Thus, data-driven codes are presumed to shed light on further aspects, explaining the phenomenon of a democratic backlash and how it was perceived in the German public opinion. Therefore, in a first step, the newspaper articles were examined to sort relevant quotes into the previously generated theoretical categories. As these categories were not expected to present a comprehensive picture of all relevant aspects present in the data, further categories were generated to complete the assessment of the German public opinion. This analysis of newspaper articles could be complemented by an analysis of recent twitter posts on the issue. Building upon this first part of the analysis, the extended coding frame was used to analyze official documents of the German government, which are deemed to provide a picture of the German government’s position regarding Polish politics. For the analysis of the sampled documents, the qualitative research software atlas.ti was utilized. In a third step, a juxtaposition of the main themes found in the newspaper articles and in the documents of the German government allowed an assessment of the government’s responsiveness to the public opinion. In Appendix 8, a summary of the used coding scheme is presented. It distinguishes between the deductively and the inductively generated categories and presents overarching themes that could be derived from the analysis. These themes summarize and connect categories and are successively presented in the forth chapter of this thesis.

4. Analysis

In the following chapter, the conducted analysis of the sampled data (see section 3.4) will be presented. This presentation is structured according to the indicated subquestions (see section 1.3).

4.1 Reflection of a Polish democratic backlash in the German public opinion

The first subquestion addresses the German perception of a democratic backslide in Poland between 2015 and 2019. The question reads as follows:

RQ (A): To what extent was a democratic backslide in Poland reflected in the German public opinion between 2015 and 2019?

In this paper's theory section, hypotheses were formulated, presenting assumptions of possible trends in the German public opinion. In order to answer to this first subquestion, these hypotheses will be examined in the succeeding subsections.

4.1.1 Intensity of the media coverage of political and institutional changes in Poland

Firstly, the sampled materials were categorized according to sources and publication dates. Such a presentation of the data provides an overview of the coverage of Polish political and institutional changes in the German media. Appendix 7 presents a list of the numbers of articles published each year in each of the newspapers (a complete list of analyzed articles can be found in Appendix 3-6). A comparison of these distributions in Appendix 7 is presented by examining the first hypothesis (see section 2.3). It assumes that:

Hypothesis 1a: As a reflection of public opinion, German media content increasingly covered political and institutional changes in Poland between 2015 and 2019.

As indicated in Appendix 7, 141 newspaper articles could be obtained from the journals 'FAZ', 'taz', and 'Bild' for the period between 2015 and 2019. However, significant differences between the coverage of the issue in the different journals and the different years are visible.

4.1.1.1 Differences in the coverage of Polish political and institutional changes in the years from 2015 to 2019

The election of the national-conservative PiS party in Poland (25.10.2015) demarcated the starting point for this project's data collection. For the remaining months of 2015, all three of the newspapers published articles on Polish political and institutional changes. As only little over two months of the year were left, the number of obtained articles was relatively high for all three newspapers ('FAZ':12; 'taz':5; 'Bild':2).

For both quality-papers, the highest number of articles could be obtained for the year 2016 ('FAZ': 34; 'taz': 25), only the 'Bild' did not publish any article on the topic in 2016. For the years 2017 to 2018, relevant publications decreased for the journals 'FAZ' (14;14) and 'taz' (17;5). The 'Bild' published one article in each of the years. The lowest number of articles could be obtained for the year 2019, in which the 'FAZ' published seven articles, the 'taz' four, and the 'Bild' none. This comparison of sampled publications leads to the conclusion that political and institutional changes were most present in the German public opinion in the first two years after the Polish PiS party's election.

4.1.1.2 Differences in the coverage of Polish political and institutional changes in the different newspapers

However, not only did the coverage on the issue vary over the years, substantial differences were equally visible between the different journals. The two informative papers 'FAZ' and 'taz' reported on Poland's political and institutional changes in a relatively elaborate fashion. While the 'FAZ' published the largest number of articles (81); also the 'taz' regularly featured the topic (56 articles). Contrastingly, the tabloid paper 'Bild', only published a minimal number of articles (4). It is apparent from these differences that only the informative papers had a greater interest in reporting political and institutional changes in Germany's neighboring country. Thus, it seems like mainly readers of quality papers informed themselves about political developments in Poland. Based on these findings, the first hypothesis cannot be fully accepted. It assumes a general increase in the media coverage of Polish political and institutional changes after the election of the PiS in 2015. According to Visser et al. (2007) and Wlezien & Soroka (2016), the public attaches higher importance to topics of societal relevance. As far-reaching political and institutional changes in Poland were expected to present such an issue of social relevant, a high media coverage on the topic was expected. Opposing to this assumption, a higher media coverage of the topic only lasted until the end of 2016. Furthermore, it was very low for the most important German tabloid paper, which daily informs millions of German readers.

4.1.2 Perception of a Polish democratic backlash in the German public opinion

In order to answer the first subquestion, a second hypothesis, presupposing changes in the German public perception of a Polish democratic backlash was examined:

Hypothesis 1b: Political and institutional changes in Poland were increasingly reflected in German public opinion, and consequently, the perception of the quality of Polish Democracy changed.

4.1.2.1 Dominant themes in the German media coverage

In order to find out how the German public perception of a democratic backlash in Poland evolved, a mixed theory and data-driven coding scheme was used to analyze relevant documents. This analysis allowed the generation of prevalent themes. These themes are meaningful main categories of codes that aim to provide insights into trends in the German public opinion between 2015 and 2019 (see Appendix 8).

Institutional changes

The first overarching theme, apparent from the analysis of the sampled German newspaper articles were institutional changes in Poland. This theme is based on theoretical categories, connected to Bermeo's (2016) definition of a democratic backslide (see Chapter 2). The topic of institutional changes was mentioned in high frequency in the entire data sample. Codes that referred to the theme of 'institutional changes' in Poland were found 238 times in the 'FAZ', 191 times in the 'taz', and ten times in the 'Bild' (see Appendix 9a). The codes, assigned to the theme 'institutional changes' include general references to such changes (one reference in the Bild, 9 in the 'FAZ', 10 in the 'taz'), as well as references to the subcategories 'extensive executive power' (3 references in the Bild, 30 in the 'FAZ', 23 in the 'taz') and 'lessening of institutional checks and balances' (three reference in the 'Bild', 42 in the 'FAZ', 35 in the 'taz'). As evident from this high occurrence of the topic, the German media emphasized indicators, that Bermeo (2016) discussed to describe a democratic backslide. Multiple references illustrate the perception of a Polish government that initiates far-reaching changes in the Polish political system. An example of such a reference is: "Die rechtsnationale Partei "Recht und Gerechtigkeit", PiS, erhielt die absolute Mehrheit im Parlament. Seitdem baut sie den Staat so gründlich um, dass viele schon von einer Demokratie sprechen - oder von einem Staatsstreich." ("The national right-wing party "Law and Justice", PiS, received the absolute majority in parliament. Since then, it has restructured the state so thoroughly that many are already talking about a

Demokratie (hybrid regime between a democracy and a dictatorship) - or a coup d' état"; DACHZEILEAutoritär, taz, 2015). Directly connected to these perceived general aspirations of the PiS to reconstruct the Polish state are references that illustrate how the elected PiS party tried to hold on to powers that often extended their constitutional rights and obligations: "PiS greift sich alles" ("PiS grabs everything"; Vorwärts in die Vergangenheit THEMA DES TAGES, taz, 2015). Institutional changes, favoring the executive to such extent imply a weakening of the constitutional powers of each governmental branch. This issue is well illustrated in the German media report on Polish judicial reforms (one reference in the 'Bild', 123 in the 'FAZ' and 76 in the 'taz') and on new laws on the Polish media (two references in the 'Bild', 34 in the 'FAZ' and 47 in the 'taz'). Such reforms were initiated by the PiS right after their electoral victory. The independence of the judiciary and equally the decreasing power of the constitutional court seemed to be the goals of these judicial reforms: "Gleich nach Amtsantritt griff das Parlament deshalb das Verfassungsgericht an. Es soll als Kontrollinstanz ausgeschaltet werden." ("Immediately after taking office, parliament (therefore) attacked the Constitutional Court. It is to be eliminated as a supervisory body"; DACHZEILEAutoritär, taz, 2015). As for the judiciary, the selected German newspapers also reported on impaired freedoms of the press and the limited independence of Polish journalists: "MEDIEN: Ein "Bevollmächtigter" soll staatliche Programme auf PiS-Kurs trimmen, anti-polnische Tendenzen verfolgen und ausländische Verlage "notfalls zum Verkauf ihrer Titel" in Polen "zwingen" ("MEDIA: An "authorized representative" is to trim state programs to PiS standards, prosecute anti-Polish tendencies and "force" foreign publishers "if necessary to sell their titles" in Poland", Rechtsaußen-Partei höhlt Polens Demokratie aus, Bild, 2015).

Values dominating Polish society

The second theme that reoccurred over the analysis of the sampled newspaper articles concerns the perceived reception of institutional and political changes in the Polish population. Thus, this theme aims to outline how Germans perceived Poles' reactions to the ruling PiS party. This theme is based on data-driven categories, which emerged throughout the analysis (see Appendix 8). In general, German newspapers portrayed two very different attitudes of Poles towards politics and society. On the one side, it was reported that certain groups in Polish society could identify well with conservative and nationalist values of the PiS. However, another part of the population supposedly carried different attitudes, stressing the importance of European cooperation and a more liberal society. The first category concerned conservative values in Polish politics and society. In the German media coverage between 2015 and 2019, the category 'nationalist and conservative values' occurred 75 times in all three selected newspapers (see Appendix 9a). However, significant differences between the different journals were visible. The rather left-wing oriented paper 'taz' referred to this category 54 times, the rather conservative journal 'FAZ' only mentioned 'nationalist and conservative values' 18 times. The 'Bild' referred three times to this category; however, the sample of the 'Bild' was considerably smaller than those of the other journals. The category 'nationalist and conservative values' incorporates further subcategories. These distinguish between conservative and nationalist views of the Polish Government and in Polish society in general. The Polish government, thus the elected PiS party, was portrayed as carrying conservative and nationalist values in three references in the four sampled 'Bild' articles. Fourteen such references could be found in the sample of the 'taz' (56 articles), and 26 in that of the 'FAZ' (81 articles). Additionally, German media depicted the PiS party as skeptical towards further European integration. This portrayal of a party, attached to a conservative and nationalist view that is somewhat against increased European cooperation, but advocates the conservation of Polish traditions can be illustrated by quotes like: "In der Weltsicht der PiS werden Werte wie Toleranz und Multikulturalismus als Bedrohung für die katholisch-konservative Ordnung angesehen" ("In the world view of the PiS values like tolerance and multiculturalism are seen as a threat to the Catholic-conservative order"; Das Streben nach den Seelen, taz, 2016). The sampled German newspaper articles showed that these political values of the PiS found

resonance in the Polish population. Twenty-eight references in the 'taz' and 4 references in the 'FAZ' illustrate conservative and nationalist values in Polish society. Besides the outline of nationalist and conservative values in Poland, German newspapers also highlighted very liberal values in Polish society. These seem to challenge the government's conservative attitudes. In the 'FAZ' 16 references were made to worldly views in Polish society that favor European cooperation. Nineteen such references could be found in the sample of the 'taz' (zero references in the Bild). These values are illustrated by quotes like: "240.000 Menschen kamen nach Angaben der Stadt unter dem Motto " Wir sind und bleiben in Europa" am Samstag zusammen" ("According to the city, 240,000 people came together on Saturday under the slogan "We are and will remain in Europe"; Polen demonstrieren für Europa, 2016, taz).

The political divide in Poland

The third theme that dominated the German media discourse is the portrayal of a political divide in Polish society. This theme connects to the insights gained from the previous section, outlining dominating values in Polish society. Equally, the theme of a 'Polish political divide' is based on inductively generated categories (see Appendix 8, 9a) and aims to present the perceived political stances in Polish society. While the sampled newspaper articles did refer to the popularity of the PiS party, they also intensely covered Polish protest and dissatisfaction with the PiS. According to the German newspapers, Polish society seemed to be separated into two opposing camps. Each presented as carrying very different attitudes regarding the Polish political future (zero references in the 'Bild', 11 in the 'FAZ', and 18 in the 'taz').

Apparently, the PiS was popular in certain parts of society (1 reference in the 'Bild', 20 in the 'FAZ', 45 in the 'taz'). Seemingly, the PiS promised large electoral gifts like increased child benefits or lower taxation for low-income households: "Die Regierung geschafft hat, sich durch soziale Wohltaten offenbar das Wohlwollen der Mehrheit im Land zu erkaufen" ("...the government has managed to buy the goodwill of the majority in the country through social welfare"; Kaczynskis Feldzug, FAZ, 2016). Another critical factor, leading to the popularity of the PiS party in Poland, seemed to be the alienation of parts of the population with the liberal party, that governed the country prior to the PiS: "Um sich politisch zu retten, muss zudem ein Eingeständnis der PO her, in acht Jahren Regierungszeit für soziale Verwerfungen gesorgt zu haben" ("In order to save itself politically, the PO (Polish liberal party) must also admit that it has caused social upheavals during its eight-year term in office"; Der Marsch der Besitzstandswahrer, taz, 2017). However, another, considerably large part of the Polish population was depicted as an anti-pole to the PiS's supporters. Protests against the PiS and its policies were mentioned three times in the sample of the 'Bild', and 59 times in that of 'FAZ.' Ninety-three references could be found in the sample of the 'taz'. These protests seemed to be very present in the Polish civil society: "50000 Demonstranten gingen zuletzt allein in Warschau auf die Straße, um die "Demokratie zu retten"." ("50.000 demonstrators took to the streets in Warsaw alone to "save democracy", Rechtsaußen-Partei höhlt Polens Demokratie aus, Bild, 2015). However, equally, resisting actions of the Polish opposition parties were covered by the German media. Although, due to the absolute majority of the PiS in parliament and the victory of the PiS affiliated candidate, Duda, in the presidential elections (2015), it seemed to be hard for the opposition to block controversial policy projects of the PiS. Nevertheless, the opposition parties appeared eager to show their dissent in regards to the governing majority: "Seither haben die Abgeordneten der Opposition, und zwar namentlich der liberalen Parteien "Bürgerplattform" und "Die Moderne", (wie weiland Rejtan) das Parlament in wechselnden Schichten besetzt gehalten "Since then, the members of the opposition, namely the liberal parties "Civic Platform" and "Modernity", (like weiland Rejtan), have occupied the parliament in alternating shifts" (Aus der Tiefe der Geschichte, FAZ, 2017). Furthermore, resisting actions of the constitutional court, which appeared to be one of the main targets of the PiS' policies, were mentioned eight times in the 'FAZ', and five times in the 'taz'. Regardless of the critique of a considerable part of society, the PiS appeared mostly closed off towards the protestors: "...ihre Kritiker wurden als "Polen der schlechteren Sorte", Landesverräter und Schlimmeres

beschimpft" ("...its (the PiS') critics were called "Poles of the worse kind", traitors and worse"; National und sozial, FAZ, 2019).

Signs of worry about Polish democracy

The fourth theme, derived from the data analysis of the sampled German newspaper articles are expressions of worry about the state of Polish democracy. This theme is based on data-driven categories that aim to summarize quotes, depicting signs of German worry about Polish democracy (see appendix 8, 9a). In the 'Bild', five references indicate worries about Polish democracy, in the 'taz' such a reference appeared 87 times, while in the 'FAZ', 77 references on the issue could be found. The category 'worry about Polish democracy' encompasses signs of worry about civil liberties and minority rights in Poland. Equally, it includes references to the perceived restrictions of the principle of the rule of law in Poland: "Polens Tage als demokratischer Rechtsstaat sind endgültig vorbei" ("Poland's days as a democratic constitutional state are definitely over"; Polen im Rückwärtsgang, taz, 2017). In the 'FAZ' 39 references indicated German concerns about the rule of law, in the sample of the 'taz', 23 references on the topic could be found (zero mentions in the 'Bild'). These expressed worries about the state of Polish democracy in the German press seemed to have had implications for the German perception of the relationship to Poland. In numerous articles, references indicated a German suspicion of the Polish government and its policies (zero references in the 'Bild', 54 in the 'FAZ', and 31 in the 'taz'). This German skepticism towards the Polish PiS is expressed in quotes like: "Sie verwechseln den Wählerauftrag mit einem Freibrief. Wahlsieger haben nicht nur Rechte, sondern auch Pflichten; sie tragen Verantwortung für das große Ganze. Man fragt sich, was eigentlich noch passieren muss, bevor die EU klare Worte an Warschau richtet." ("They confuse the electoral mandate with a free pass. Election winners have not only rights but also duties; they are responsible for the big picture. One wonders what really needs to happen before the EU sends clear messages to Warsaw."; Dämonenjagd, FAZ, 2015). However, references, showing German solidarity with Polish protesters and ambitions for a closer German-Polish relationship, were equally presented. Regarding institutional and political changes in Poland, the German press presented a rather reserved attitude of the German government on the issue. Quotes like: "Nur an wenigen Stellen schimmerte so etwas wie Kritik am Zustand des Rechtsstaats in Polen durch, und auch hier nur in der Tarnung polnischer Geschichtsmythen." ("Only in a few instances did something like criticism of the state of the rule of law in Poland emerge, and here too only in the camouflage of Polish historical myths."; Barfuß durchs Minenfeld, FAZ, 2016), show that the German government was not perceived as an overly direct critic of the Polish PiS government. With a worrying eye, German newspapers referred not only to the German-Polish relation but also to Poland's position within the European Union. EU criticism of Polish politics, and even infringement proceedings and monetary sanction for restrictions of the rule of law in Poland, were frequently mentioned (6 times in the 'Bild', 113 times in the 'FAZ', and 48 times in the 'taz'). Although, regardless of this criticism, references to a certain caution of the EU to criticize and sanction Poland, were present as well. References that value the Polish EU membership and show the willingness of the EU to enter in a dialogue with the Polish Government illustrate quotes like: "'Polen ist ein Mitglied der Europäischen Union, ohne das sie nicht existieren könnte.'" ("Poland is a member of the European Union, without which the Union could not exist" (Ein letzter Aufruf zum Dialog, FAZ, 2017). Evident from this presentation of dominant themes is that the German public seemed concerned about the state of Polish democracy. This is apparent from the coverage of institutional and political changes initiated by the governing PiS party. Consequently, hypothesis 1b, assuming an altered German perception of politics, can be confirmed.

4.1.3 Analysis of the sampled Twitter posts

The analysis of sampled twitter posts depicts a supplementary analysis, deemed to provide additional insights into the German public perception of a Polish democratic backlash. As the analyzed twitter

comments stem from a different period (17.05.-26.05.2020) (see section 4.3.1), a separate subsection is dedicated to its presentation. Since the sample of analyzed twitter posts is considerably smaller than the sample of the newspaper articles (29 posts), not the same richness of results can be expected. Nevertheless, like in the analyzed newspaper articles, Polish institutional changes like the judiciary reforms or new legislations on the media (two references to each type of institutional change) were equally present in the twitter comments (see appendix 9b). The theme ‘worry about Polish democracy’ was by far the most often referenced theme (14 references). In connection to this overarching theme, a German suspicion of Polish politics was mentioned 11 times. Although, eleven references indicated the wish for a closer relationship between Poland and Germany. Evidently, the twitter posts from the year 2020 show similar trends than the much more elaborate analysis of newspaper articles from the period 2015 to 2019.

4.1.4 Answer to the first subquestion

To answer to the first subquestion, asking for the extent which a democratic backslide in Poland was reflected in the German public opinion between 2015 and 2019, the coverage of the Polish political and institutional changes, and the altered perception of the latter in the German public, need to be addressed. Evident from the preceding subsections of this analysis is an increased coverage of Polish politics, just after the election of the PiS in 2015. This observation is in line with the theoretical outline by Wlezien & Soroka (2016), according to which aggregated opinions in a given society assign higher importance to topics of societal relevance. Furthermore, Germans seemed to worry about values, that lead the PiS and its supporters to initiate policies, altering the political and institutional system in Poland. These changes seem to solely foster the interest of the governing PiS party, and increase its powers over the entire Polish state. However, based on the analysis of sampled media content, the German public supported the numerous protests against the PiS, which seemed to be present in all parts of Polish society.

4.2 Central positions of the German government regarding a Polish democratic backslide

The second subquestion, indicated in section 1.3, asks for an analysis of the central positions of the German government, regarding a democratic backlash in Poland. As outlined in the theory chapter, a democratic backlash refers to institutional and political changes, favoring the executive of a given country. The subquestion reads as follows:

RQ (B): What were the main positions of the German government regarding the democratic backslide in Poland between 2015 and 2019?

In order to answer this subquestion, an analysis of German government officials’ statements addressing Polish democracy, is to be presented. Therefore, the dominant theme, generated from this qualitative content analysis, will be outlined by a successive presentation of all its subcategories (see Appendix 9c).

4.2.1. Dominating theme in official statements the German government

For the analysis of official statements of the German government, a set of inductive codes was generated. These codes could be categorized, and eventually, an overarching theme summarizing these categories could be created (see Appendix 8).

Reserved actionism of the German government

A reluctance to address political and institutional changes in Poland was discernible as an overarching theme, summarizing the attitudes of the German government (see Appendix 8). Eight references in five of the analyzed documents showed how members of the German government did not clearly address institutional and political changes in Poland. Only very subtle hints indicated German dissent with Polish political developments after the election of the PiS. The German government often did not seem to see itself in the position to criticize, but left censure to the European Commission instead: “Jetzt sollten wir in aller Ruhe abwarten, wie Polen und die EU-Kommission sich über die offenen Fragen verständigen” (“Now we should calmly wait and see how Poland and the EU Commission agree on the open questions”, Deutschland und Polen: “Gemeinsam den Weg der letzten 25 Jahre fortsetzen”, Auswärtiges Amt, 2016). In the seven analyzed government statements, only nine instances showed German criticism of the Polish PiS party’s policy projects. However, the German government officials’ critical comments seemed very diplomatic and not aggressive or demanding. The most striking reference in the German government statements was the emphasis on good bilateral and inter-European relations. In a total of seven documents, 46 references indicated a good German-Polish relation. German government officials emphasized that besides the close relations between the two governments, German and Polish civil societies were in vivid exchange as well. Furthermore, German government officials stressed the importance of the maintenance of such good relations. Exemplary, this is shown in the following quote: “Ich bin der festen Überzeugung, dass wir auch weiterhin im offenen und vertrauensvollen Gespräch und in der starken Freundschaft, die wir uns hart erarbeitet haben, die besten Voraussetzungen finden, unseren partnerschaftlichen Weg fortzusetzen.” (“I am firmly convinced that the open and trusting dialogue and the strong friendship that we have worked hard to establish will continue to provide us with the best conditions for continuing on our path of partnership” ; 25 Jahre deutsch-polnische Nachbarschaft – Wo stehen wir? Auswärtiges Amt, 2016).

4.2.2 Answer to the second subquestion

The second subquestion of this study asked for the main positions of the German government regarding a democratic backslide in Poland between 2015 and 2019. From this analysis it is apparent that the German government did not publicly express a clear opinion on institutional and political changes in Poland. Instead, members of the government avoided addressing the issue and emphasized their intentions to maintain a good relation to their neighboring country. Criticism of the Polish PiS government remained reserved and indirect.

4.3 The German public opinion and the positions of the German government

The third subquestion, presented in section 1.3, asks for the extent to which the German public opinion coincides with the German government’s statements.

RQ (C): To what extent do the German public opinion and the official positions of the German government align between 2015 and 2019?

In order to answer this third subquestion, a third theoretically derived hypothesis will be examined.

4.3.1 Alignment of the Government’s positions with the public opinion

The indicated hypothesis 2 assumes that policy-makers adjust their positions to the public's preference.

Hypothesis 2: Variations in the German official positions, regarding Polish democracy, reflect the variations in the public opinion, as policy-makers adjust policies to the public's preferences.

To assess this hypothesis, the findings of sections 4.1 and 4.2 will be compared. While section 4.1 provides insights into the reflection of a Polish democratic backlash in the German public opinion, section 4.2 casts light on the German government's position on the issue. Consequently, a juxtaposition of these two sections' findings will allow an assessment of their similarities and differences.

4.3.1.1 The misfit between the German public opinion and the German government's positions

The analysis presented in section 4.1, portrayed the German public as worried about a democratic backlash in the neighboring country. As a reflection of the public's opinion, German newspaper content showed that concerns about institutional and political changes in Poland were very present in the public discourse. Furthermore, German support for the Polish protests against the governing PiS party, was clearly expressed. Contrary to these findings, section 4.2 sheds light on the official positions of the German government. The analysis of government statements elucidated German executives' reluctance to publicly address the issue of a Polish democratic backslide. Members of the Government put considerable emphasis on a good bilateral relationship, whilst criticism remains subtle and indirect. When comparing these two findings, it is apparent that the German public opinion and the German government's positions do not perfectly align. Seemingly, the German government did not express the same worry and discontent about Polish politics under the PiS party, as the German public did. Consequently, hypothesis 2, assuming policy-makers to adjust their positions to the public's opinion, has to be rejected.

4.3.2 Answer to the third subquestion

The third examined subquestion asks for the extent to which the German public opinion and the official positions of the German government align between 2015 and 2019. According to Wlezien & Soroka (2016), government authorities have an interest in aligning their positions with the public's preferences, as they are supposed represent the public in the political realm. According to this analysis, the public's opinion and the government's positions regarding a Polish democratic backslide, do not seem to match. Even though, the German public does not seem opposed to a close relationship to Poland, concerns about the state of Polish democracy are openly addressed. Contrastingly, the German government seems reluctant to address such criticism.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The following discussion presents an outline and contextualization of obtained results, which allow to formulate a meaningful answer to the central research question of this thesis. A summary of this project's results (Chapter 4) will be connected to the background chapter (see section 1.2) and the project's theoretical framework (Chapter 2). Subsequently, limits to this study will be addressed, and consequently, recommendations for future research can be provided.

5.1 Answer to the research question

As the introductory chapter outlines, Poland's orientation towards the west after the communist era (accession to the NATO and the EU) was of great significance. Poland and Germany could build a close bilateral relation, which is especially important, given the historical background of the two countries (Woyke, 2014). As Lada (2019) outlined, the German perception of Poland changed as one got to know the eastern partner better and better. Embedded in this context, this study asks for a change in the German perception of Polish politics since the national-conservative PiS party was elected in 2015. In the analysis

chapter of this paper, the three indicated subquestions could be addressed. The first subquestion, asking for the reflection of a Polish democratic backlash in the German public opinion, was answered in two steps. Firstly, the results indicated a high German media reporting on a Polish democratic backlash for the years 2015 and 2016. This period marked the time just after the election of the Polish PiS. Secondly, an altered perception of the German public, regarding political and institutional changes in Poland since 2015, was outlined. It appeared, that concerns about policy projects of the PiS, possibly altering the quality of Polish democracy, were frequently expressed in the German public. The second subquestion addresses the German government's main position, regarding a Polish democratic backlash. From the conducted analysis, it appeared that the German government attached importance to a good partnership with Poland, rather than to criticize the governing PiS party. The third subquestion aims to compare the German public opinion and the positions of the German government. Based on the results of this analysis, it seems as if such an alignment was limited. While in the German public discourse, no pleads for an immediate distancing from Poland were discernible, worries about Polish democracy were clearly addressed. In turn, the German government only addressed such criticism in a rare and reserved manner. Drawing on these results, the central research question of this paper can be addressed:

RQ: In what way did a change in German public opinion, regarding the democratic backslide in Poland since 2015, influence official foreign policy positions of the German government?

In the theory chapter of this thesis, it is assumed that public opinion is an aggregation of individual opinions in a public realm. An individual participating in public discourse consumes information on issues related or his or her interest (Kellner, 2000). However, in their opinion formation, individuals often feel constraint by a mainstream opinion and thus do not dare to express an opposing stance. Hence, generally, rather homogeneous attitudes can be expected (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). The media often portray this mainstream opinion and thus shape the individual's informational environment (Moy & Bosch, 2013; Noelle-Neumann, 1974). As resulting from this study's query, the German public showed interest and worry about Polish democracy. Furthermore, the research question asks for a possible influence of the German public opinion on the German government's position. As outlined in the theory chapter, it is assumed that higher pressure on the media to independently report on an issue pushes the government to move its positions towards the public's preferences (Baum & Potter, 2008). This results in policy correspondence, policy consistency, or policy covariation. Policy correspondence is concerned with the extent to which policy is developed according to public preferences. Policy consistency describes how an acute change in policy is in line with public preference change. Policy covariation, in turn, assesses the extent to which policy changes can be linked to changes in public preferences in the long term (Wlezien & Soroka, 2016). Contrastingly to these assumptions, this study's results indicate how the German public opinion and the German government's positions regarding a democratic backslide in Poland seemed to differ. Thus, it cannot be asserted that the German government fully responded to the German public's preferences. Apparently, the German government did not feel sufficient public pressure to address criticism in a more direct manner. Drawing on the results of the yearly published 'Deutsch-Polnisches Barometer' (German-Polish barometer), Polish and German people still valued a good bilateral relationship between 2015 and 2019 (A. Łada, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019; A. W. Łada, Gabriele, 2018). Hence, it is to assume that people might not have welcomed any harsh condemnations of the German government, which would most likely have lead to a deterioration of Germany's relation to Poland. Therefore, the results of this analysis could be understood as a sign of genuine German concern about Polish democracy, not as a plead to end a well-developing relationship. Such an interpretation of the result would relativize the misfit between the German public opinion and the German government's positions.

5.2 Recommendations for future research

As the scope of this study sets limits, the sampled data for this project just encompassed three newspapers and a limited number of twitter posts. A more representative study of the German public discourse, possibly incorporating a multiple methods approach, could provide a more precise picture of the German public opinion. This equally holds for an analysis of the government's positions, since assumingly, not only official statements are of importance to assess the government's stance on a given issue. Hence, a project, further investigating the German-Polish relationship would be of great value. Equally valuable would be an analysis of the strategy of the German government to address a Polish democratic backlash, also with regard to the role of the European Union. Nevertheless, this study can be regarded as a detailed exploration of trends in the German perception of Polish politics, and it thus depicts a valuable starting point for future research projects.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Data collection

Document Type	Publisher	Number of documents	Totals
Newspaper articles	taz	56	
	Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung	81	
	Bild	4	
			141
Official statements of the government Government	German federal government / German Federal Foreign Office	7	7
Social media posts	Twitter	29	29

Appendix 2: Operationalization table

Theoretical Concepts	Variables	Context related definition	Measurement	Data collection
Public opinion Formation Democratic backsliding	German public opinion on the democratic backlash in Poland	German media content on a democratic backlash in Poland is perceived as a reflection of the German public opinion on the issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>How intensely was the issue of a democratic backslide in Poland covered in the German media in the period from 2015 to 2019?</i> - <i>What were the main aspects, dominating the German media coverage of a Polish democratic backlash between 2015 and 2019?</i> 	German media content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Newspaper articles - Twitter posts
Government responsiveness	Official positions of the German government	Government responsiveness is assessed by examining to what extent the German public opinion aligns with the official positions of the German government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>What were the central positions of the German government on a democratic backlash in Poland between 2015 and 2019?</i> - <i>To what extent did the German public opinion and the German government's positions on a democratic backslide in Poland align between 2015 and 2019?</i> 	Official statements by members of the German government

Appendix 3: List of the analyzed 'taz' articles

Document Number	Title	Link to the article
1	Vorwärts in die Vergangenheit / THEMA DES TAGES / Polen I Bei den Parlamentswahlen gewinnt die rechtshexnationale Partei "Recht und Gerechtigkeit" (PiS) des Ex-Ministerpräsidenten Jarosław Kaczyński eine absolute Mehrheit und löst die Bürgerplattform ab	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList#TAZ__T151027.5241968
2	Polnischer Kulturkampf auf der Straße THEMA DES TAGES Demokratie 50.000 Menschen protestieren am Samstag in Warschau für die Verfassung und gegen die Manipulationen der neuen konservativen Regierung. Mehrere Tausend halten am Sonntag dagegen Proteste in Warschau Polnischer Kulturkampf auf der Straße 50.000 Menschen protestieren am Samstag gegen die Manipulationen der neuen Regierung. Mehrere Tausend sind am Tag danach dafür.	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList#TAZ__T151214.5257146
3	DACHZEILE Adam Krzeminski über Demonstrationen in Polen Es gibt zwei Polen	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList#TAZ__T151214.5257118
4	*DACHZEILE Autoritär Die polnische Regierung ist kaum im Amt und versucht schon, Medien und Justiz auf Linie zu bringen. Die meisten Polen interessieren sich kaum dafür Demokratie in Gefahr	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList?offset=0&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#TAZ__T151205.5253489
5	*DACHZEILE Stadtgespräch / Brot und Spiele / Polens Innenminister schlägt mit der Nazikeule jede Bitte um Solidarität	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList#TAZ__T151121.5249533
6	*DACHZEILE POLEN Die Verschärfung der Mediengesetze durch die neue PiS-Regierung wird nicht nur von der EU kritisiert - auch im Land wächst der Protest. Das Porträt einer Aktivistin Die Unabhängige	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList#TAZ__T160116.5266022
7	DACHZEILE Specht der Woche Pressefreiheit muss sein	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList#TAZ__T160115.5268541
8	Post aus Polen stop ii Seitdem die PiS regiert, erhalten deutsche Redaktionen massenhaft Briefe aus dem Nachbarland	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList#TAZ__T160114.5265618
9	*DACHZEILE Gabriele Lesser über den deutsch-polnischen Beziehungskrach Die PiS und der Blitzkrieg	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList#TAZ__T160112.5265145
10	"Freie Medien - freies Polen" POLEN Zehntausende gehen in Warschau und vielen anderen Städten auf die Straße. Die Regierungspartei PiS stört das weniger als die zunehmende Kritik aus der EU	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList#TAZ__T160111.5264999
11	Ein Zeichen gesetzt Pressefreiheit Hunderte demonstrieren am Samstag gegen das neue polnische Mediengesetz	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList?offset=10&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#TAZ__T160111.5264950
12	Das Urteil ist kein Urteil	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList?offset=10&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#TAZ__T20160804.5293586
13	" Das hat Revolutionscharakter"	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList?offset=10&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#TAZ__T20160804.5290006
14	Zurück in die Diktatur	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList?offset=10&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#TAZ__T20161203.5282791
15	" Eine Politik des Dialogs, nicht der Wut"	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList?offset=10&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#TAZ__T20161202.5273370

Appendix 3: List of the analyzed 'taz' articles

Document Number	Title	Link to the article
16	Das Streben nach den Seelen KULTURKAMPF Unter den Intellektuellen in Polen wächst der Protest gegen den "patriotischen" Kurs der rechtskonservativen Regierung	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/ referenceList? offset=10&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#T AZ__T160208.5275347
17	*DACHZEILEPolen Justizminister darf wieder als Generalstaatsanwalt überall eingreifen Ziobro der Allmächtige	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/ referenceList? offset=10&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#T AZ__T160130.5270518
18	Das ungezogene Kind Die Polen können und müssen ihre Probleme selbst lösen. Deutsche Überheblichkeit hilft nicht weiter	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/ referenceList? offset=10&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#T AZ__T160123.5267389
19	Polens neue Opposition	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/ referenceList? offset=10&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#T AZ__T20161306.5309064
20	Polens Demokraten zu Gast bei den Grünen	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/ referenceList? offset=10&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#T AZ__T20161005.5299487
21	Polen demonstrieren für Europa	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/ referenceList? offset=20&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#T AZ__T20160905.5302316
22	Massenproteste in Warschau	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/ referenceList? offset=20&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#T AZ__T20160905.5298990
23	Proteste gegen die PiS-Regierung reißen nicht ab	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/ referenceList? offset=20&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#T AZ__T20162609.5339177
24	Wir haben ein Auge auf euch	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/ referenceList? offset=20&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#T AZ__T20161308.5324990
25	Deutsche Dominanz, polnische Ignoranz	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/ referenceList? offset=20&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#T AZ__T20170903.5387586
26	Freundliches Winken aus Polen	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/ referenceList? offset=20&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#T AZ__T20170702.5378141
27	Der Marsch der Besitzstandswahrer	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/ referenceList? offset=20&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#T AZ__T20172501.5374547
28	Erst mal in Ruhe abwarten ist die Devise der EU zu Polen	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/ referenceList? offset=20&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#T AZ__T20162212.5366960
29	Presse-Einschränkung erzürnt Polen	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/ referenceList? offset=20&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#T AZ__T20161912.5364940
30	Rasanter Abbau der Demokratie	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/ referenceList? offset=20&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#T AZ__T20161912.5364786
31	Fahnen für die Pressefreiheit	
32	Und Brüssel tut nichts	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/ referenceList? offset=30&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#T AZ__T20160512.5359514
33	Demonstrieren von Gottes Gnaden	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/ TAZ__T20160512.5359525/76395/30?all=

Appendix 3: List of the analyzed 'taz' articles

Document Number	Title	Link to the article
34	Ein Präsident verteidigt seinen Poste	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ__T20172007.5428486/76395/30?all=
35	Staatsstreich um Mitternacht	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ__T20171507.5426755/76395/30?all=
36	Wer die EU-Grundwerte nicht teilt, bekommt nichts mehr	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ__T20173105.5416990/76395/30?all=
37	Bauern fallen vom Glauben ab	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ__T20170805.5403846/76395/30?all=
38	Fakten sind nebensächlich	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ__T20172809.5448243/76395/30?all=
39	Im Labor des Populismus	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ__T20172309.5446757/76395/30?all=
40	Der Manager der Opposition	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ__T20172208.5435520/76395/30?all=
41	" Wir werden zu einem Außenseiter in der EU" Roza Thun	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ__T20173107.5430197/76395/40?all=
42	Ernst und harmoniebedürftig	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList?offset=40&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#TAZ__T20172707.5429584
43	Ärger mit dem Schwiegervater	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ__T20172507.5429131/76395/40?all=
44	Parlament nickt Justizreform ab	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ__T20172107.5434239/76395/40?all=
45	Polen im Rückwärtsgang	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ__T20172007.5428406/76395/40?all=
46	Der Klub der polnischen Demokraten	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList?offset=40&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#TAZ__T20181201.5474101
47	Nur eine Marionette	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ__T20170912.5469071/76395/40?all=
48	Rechte marschieren durch Warschau	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ__T20171311.5459337/76395/40?all=
49	Arm in Arm mit Antidemokraten	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList/76395?offset=40&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#TAZ__T20181311.5549674
50	Ein historischer Besuch	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList/76395?offset=40&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#TAZ__T20180506.5507782
51	Abschied vom Rechtsstaat	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList?offset=50&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#TAZ__T20180507.5518965
52	" Freie Gerichte!" , skandieren Tausende in Warschau	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList?offset=50&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#TAZ__T20180507.5518939
54	Vorschlag aus Misstrauen gegen die Neue	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList?offset=50&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#TAZ__T20191907.5607495
55	Hoffen auf Luxemburger Richter	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList?offset=50&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#TAZ__T20192406.5604972
56	Polnische Opposition ruft zum Widerstand gegen PiS auf	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList?offset=50&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#TAZ__T20191612.5646227

Appendix 3: List of the analyzed 'taz' articles

Document Number	Title	Link to the article
58	Polens PiS muss eine Niederlage einstecken	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList/76395?offset=50&max=10&sort=dateCreated&order=desc#T AZ__T20191411.5641987

Appendix 4: List of analyzed 'Bild' articles

Document Number	Title	Link to the article
2	Tillys Rosenmontags-Wagen ist der Renner in Polen	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList/76631#BILD__156321693
4	WARUM IST POLEN IN DER EU SO KRAWALLSKI?	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList/76631#BILD__150003528
5	Sind Sie Polens dunkle Macht, Herr Kaczynski?	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList/76631#BILD__146019960
6	Nachrichten	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList/76631#BILD__144477832
7	Haben die Polen einen Vogel?	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList/76631#BILD__140945889
8	Rechtsaußen-Partei höhlt Polens Demokratie aus	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList/76631#BILD__140452764
9	Stolze Polen	https://www.wiso-net.de/documentReference/referenceList/76631#BILD__140452742

Appendix 5: List of the analyzed 'FAZ' articles

Document Number	Title	Link to the article
1	Düstere Zeiten	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
2	Kaczynskis Obsession	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
3	Zehntausende Polen protestieren gegen Regierung	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
4	Dämonenjagd	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
5	Polens Demokratie	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
6	In Polen eskaliert der Streit über das Verfassungsgericht	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
7	Das polnische Dilemma.	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
8	Kaczynskis langer Kampf.pdf	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
9	Was vor der Wahl verschwiegen wurde	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
10	Wie in finsternen alten Zeiten	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
11	Barfuß durchs Minenfeld.pdf	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist

Appendix 5: List of the analyzed 'FAZ' articles

12	Brüssels stumpfe Waffen	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
13	Das Ungleichgewicht der Gewalten	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
14	Der Gewinner darf nicht Moskau sein	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
15	Der Rivale	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
16	Deutsch-polnische Annäherung als "Vorbild"	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
17	Die hohe Kunst, ein Pferd zu besteigen	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
18	Die Uhr läuft nun gegen Warschau	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
19	Duda setzt Gesetz trotz Kritik in Kraft	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
20	Ein Kampf und Recht und Demokratie	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
21	Ein Satz, den keiner mehr sagt	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
22	EU Kommission leitet Verfahren gegen Polen ein	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
23	Europäisches Parlament kritisiert Polen	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist

Appendix 5: List of the analyzed 'FAZ' articles

24	Europäisches Parlament rügt Polen	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
25	Gauk- Auch Kontroversen bleiben unverzichtbar	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
26	Grenzen der Mehrheitsherrschaft	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
27	Hoffen auf Europa	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
28	Kaczynskis Feldzug	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
29	Kampf um die Herrschaft des Rechts	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
30	Kritik und Aggression	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
31	Lächeln mit gefletschten Zähnen	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
32	Leere Drohung	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
33	Mehr als 20000 Demonstrationen in Polen	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
34	Nicht das Bündnisvertrauen zerstören	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
35	Polen weist Kritik aus Deutschland zurück	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist

Appendix 5: List of the analyzed 'FAZ' articles

36	Polnischer Pathos	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
37	Polnischer Präsident will im Machtkampf vermitteln	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
38	Post aus Warschau	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
39	Rechtsstaat in Gefahr	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
40	Verfassungskrise in Polen eskaliert	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
41	Vorteile der Demokratie	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
42	Warschau will führende Rolle in der EU	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
43	Wenn kultivierte Herren ihren Unmut äußern	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
44	Zehntausende protestieren gegen Kaczynski	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
45	Zündeln am polnischen Pulverfass	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
46	Aufstand des Ziesohns	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
47	Aus der Tiefe der Geschichte	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist

Appendix 5: List of the analyzed 'FAZ' articles

48	Beschluss im Dunkel der Nacht	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
49	Der Dominoeffek	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
50	Ein letzter Aufruf zum Dialog	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
51	Ein Pensionär ruft zur Revolte	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
52	Europaparlament will gegen Polen vorgehen	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
53	Justizreform in Polen vorläufig gestoppt	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
54	Kampagne gegen Deutschland	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
55	Kampf der Gerichtokratie	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
56	Kassierst du meine Begnadigung, kassiere ich dein Urteil	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
57	Moralisierer mit Makel	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
58	Rote Linie	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
59	Wurzeln des Rechtsstaats	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist

Appendix 5: List of the analyzed 'FAZ' articles

60	Autokratie mir Bürgerrechten	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
61	Die Emanzipation eines Zöglings	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
62	Duda ernannt 27 neue Richter	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
63	Eine etwas andere Sternstunde	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
64	Ins Autoritäre	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
65	Maas will Polen für "neue Ostpolitik" gewinnen	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
66	Mauer des Unverständnisses in Polen	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
67	Polens Krankheit	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
68	Sonnen die doch urteilen	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
69	Deutsch-polnische Nachbarschaft hat großes Potential.	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
70	Von Mücken und Elefanten	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
71	95 Warschau geht auf EU zu	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist

Appendix 5: List of the analyzed 'FAZ' articles

72	Wurstdiebe in Richterroben	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
73	Zum "Polexit" darf es nicht kommen.pdf	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
74	Das deutsch-polnische Wunder	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
75	National und sozial	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
76	Neuauszählung in Pole beantragt	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
77	Proteste in Polen	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
78	Wächter	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
79	Zurück im Rampenlicht	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
80	Zwei Schauplätze	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist
81	Zehntausende Polen protestieren gegen Regierung	https://www.faz-bibliothek.de/faz-portal/faz-archiv?q=Polen+Demokratie+&source=FAZT%2CFAZ%2CFAZH&max=10&sort=&offset=0&&_ts=1591798867164&CN=C4EXPO&DT_from=25.10.2015&DT_to=31.12.2019&timeFilterType=0#hitlist

Appendix 6: List of analyzed government documents

Document Number	Title	Link to the document
1	25 Jahre deutsch-polnische Nachbarschaft – Wo stehen wir?	https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/newsroom/161024-ko-pol-willy-brandt-lesung/284788
2	Pressekonferenz von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel und dem polnischen Ministerpräsidenten Mateusz Morawiecki	https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/aktuelles/pressekonferenz-von-bundeskanzlerin-merkel-und-dem-polnischen-ministerpraesidenten-mateusz-jakub-morawiecki-1545442
3	Deutschland und Polen: Gemeinsam den Weg der letzten 25 Jahre fortsetzen	https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/newsroom/160121-bm-gazeta-wyborcza/277776
4	Eröffnungsrede Maas Konferenz zu polnisch-deutschen Beziehungen	https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/aussenpolitik/laender/polen-node/jahrhundert-deutsche-polenpolitik-konferenz-maas/2161512
5	Gemeinsam für starke EU: Antrittsbesuch vom polnischen Außenminister Czaputowicz	https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/aussenpolitik/laender/polen-node/-/1307062
6	“Ein Jahrhundert deutsche Polenpolitik”	https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/newsroom/maas-ein-jahrhundert-deutsche-polenpolitik/2161660
7	Rede von Außenminister Heiko Maas beim 28. Kongress der Deutsch-Polnischen Gesellschaften	https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/service/bulletin/ansprache-des-bundesministers-des-auswaertigen-heiko-maas--1690704

Appendix 7: Analyzed newspaper articles published between 2015 and 2016

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Totals
Faz	12	34	14	14	7	81
taz	5	25	17	5	4	56
Bild	2	0	1	1	0	4
Totals	19	59	32	20	11	141

Appendix 8: Summary of the coding scheme

Analyzed documents	Theoretical Definition	Themes	Categories	Sub-categories	Exemplary Code
German media content	Deductive categorizing	<i>Democratic backsliding:</i> Institutional changes that lessen institutional checks and balances Increasing executive power	Institutional Changes	Extensive executive power	Appointments of judges
				Lessening of institutional checks and balances	Judicial Reforms New Media Laws
German media content	Inductive categorization	Political divide in Poland	Popularity of the PiS	Promises of the PiS party	People that feel left behind by liberal politics
				Political protest against the PiS government	Rejection of the policy project of the PiS Reaction of the PiS towards the protests
		Values dominating Polish politics	Conservative world views	Nationalist world views	Conservative values of the PiS
				Negative positions towards the EU	Conservative values in Polish society Negative positions towards the EU in Polish society Negative positions towards the EU in Polish society
			Progressive world views	Positive attitudes towards the EU in the Polish population	Questioning of conservative values in Polish society
		Political divide in Poland	Popularity of the PiS party		Promises of the PiS Polish citizen's that felt left alone by liberal parties
				Protest against the PiS party and its political projects	Resisting actions of the Polish PiS party Strength of the Polish civil society Reaction of the PiS to protests

		Signs of worry about the state of Polish democracy	Implications for the Polish-German relationship	German suspicion towards Polish politics Perceived reactions of the German Government to Polish politics Wish for a closer bilateral relationship	German suspicion towards Polish politics Signs of hostility towards Germany by the PiS
			Implications for Poland's position in the EU	EU criticism of Polish politics Aim of the EU maintain a good relationship with Poland	EU infringement proceedings EU ambitions to enter in a dialogue with the Polish Government
Official statements of the German government	Inductive Categorization	Good Polish-German relationship	Diplomatic references to Polish political and institutional changes Reserved actions of the German government		Good relationship between Poland and Germany Wish for a close cooperation in the future

Appendix 9a: Code-document table of the newspaper articles

This table originates from a code-document table retrieved from atlas.ti. It shows which subcategories belong to each of the different themes. Also the table shows how many codes were assigned to each subcategory in the three analyzed journals. The table presents the codes and counting that were used to describe the perception of a Polish democratic backlash the German public opinion.

	Bild Gr= 21; GS =4	FAZ GR = 639 GS = 81	taz GR= 541 GS=56	Totals
Theme 1: Institutional changes				
Subcategory 1: Institutional changes Gr= 20	1	9	10	20
Subcategory 2: Extensive executive power Gr= 57	3	30	23	56
Subcategory 3: Lessening of institutional checks and balances Gr = 80	3	42	35	80
Subcategory 3a: Judicial reforms Gr= 202	1	123	76	200
Subcategory 3b: New laws on the media Gr=85	2	34	47	83
Totals: Theme 1	10	238	191	439
Theme 2: Values dominating Polish society and politics				
Subcategory 1: Nationalist and conservative values Gr=82				
Subcategory 2a: Conservative and nationalist values in Polish society Gr=32		4	28	32
Subcategory 2b: Conservative and nationalist values of the PiS government Gr=34	3	14	26	43
Subcategory 2: Progressive and open minded views Gr=35	0	16	19	35

Totals: Theme 2	3	34	73	110
<hr/>				
Theme 3: Political divide in Poland				
Subcategory 1: Political divide in Poland Gr=29	0	11	18	29
Subcategory 2: Popularity of the PiS Gr=66	1	20	45	66
Subcategory 3: Protest against the PiS Gr=155	3	59	93	155
Subcategory 3a: Resiting actions of the Polish opposition Gr=29	0	22	7	29
Subcategory 3b: Strength of the polish civil society Gr=10	0	5	5	10
Subcategory 3c: Reaction of the PiS to the protests Gr =118	2	72	44	118
Totals: Theme 3	6	189	212	407
<hr/>				
Theme 4: Worry about Polish democracy				
Subcategory 1: Worry about Polish democracy Gr=110	5	77	87	169
Subcategory 2: Implications for the German-Polish relationship				
Subcategory 2a: Reactions of the German Government to the new Polish government Gr=53	0	35	10	45
Subcategory 2b: Search for a closer bilateral relationship Gr=16	1	4	8	13
Subcategory 2c: German suspicion towards Polish politics Gr= 96	0	54	31	85
Subcategory 3: Implications for Poland's position in the EU				

Subcategory 3a: EU criticism of Polish politics Gr=167	6	113	48	167
Subcategory 3b: Aim of the EU maintain a good relationship with Poland Gr=64	0	45	17	62
Totals: Theme 4	12	328	201	541

Appendix 9b: Code-document table of the Twitter posts

This table originates from a code-document table retrieved from atlas.ti. The twitter data are a supplementary source, meaning to complement the analysis of the newspaper articles. The table shows which themes could be equally found in the twitter data and indicates which subcategories belong to each of the different themes. Also, the table shows how many codes were assigned to each subcategory in the analyzed twitter comments. The table presents the codes and counting that were used to describe the perception of a Polish democratic backlash in the German public opinion.

	Twitter Import: Polen / Demokratie Gr= 30; GS=29	Totals
Theme 1: Institutional changes		
Subcategory 1: Institutional changes Gr= 147	1	1
Subcategory 2: Judicial reforms Gr= 202	2	2
Subcategory 3: New laws on the media Gr= 85	2	2
Totals: Theme 1	5	5
Theme 2: Worry about Polish democracy		
Subcategory 1: Worry about Polish democracy Gr=183	14	14
Subcategory 2: Implications for the German-Polish relationship		
Subcategory 2a: Reactions of the German Government to the new Polish government Gr53	1	1
Subcategory 2b: Search for a closer bilateral relationship in German society Gr= 16	3	3
Subcategory 2c: German suspicion towards Polish politics Gr= 96	11	11
Subcategory 3: Implications for Poland's position in the EU		
Subcategory 3a: Aim of the EU to maintain a good relationship with Poland Gr= 167	2	2
Totals: Theme 2	31	31

Appendix 9c: Code-document table of the official government statements

This table originates from a code-document table retrieved from atlas.ti. It shows which subcategories belong to each of the different themes. Also, the table shows how many codes were assigned to each subcategory in the analyzed government documents. The table presents the codes and counting that were used to describe the main positions of the German government regarding a Polish democratic backlash.

	Official government statements Gr=61; GS=1	Totals
Theme: Good relationship between Poland and Germany		
Subcategory 1: Good relationship between Poland and Germany Gr=46	46	46
Subcategory 2: Diplomatic reference to the state of the rule of law in Poland Gr=3	9	9
Subcategory 3: Reserved actionism of the German government Gr=17	8	8
Totals of the theme	63	63