Citizens' Solidarity in Europe

Civic Engagement and Public Discourse in Times of Crises

Edited by

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1. European solidarity: an introduction to a multifaceted phenomenon

Christian Lahusen

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Solidarity has become a strongly debated issue within the European Union. Ongoing conflicts between member states about financial solidarity with states affected severely by the economic crisis of 2008 and about fair burden-sharing with regard to the high numbers of refugees show the difficulties of living up to the standard of solidarity which the EU lists in its treaties as one of its guiding principles. At the same time, the debate unveils that solidarity is highly contested. The reservations of EU member states to share the burdens regarding the costs of the economic crisis and the migration inflow can be criticised as a lack of interstate solidarity and a prioritisation of national interests; they also evidence a more fundamental difficulty in agreeing on adequate public policies and coordinated problem-solving strategies. Governments are sensitive to nationalist and populist mobilisations and parties, whose electoral successes seem to limit the readiness of member states to engage beyond what might be conceived of as an instrumental and utilitarian solidarity of 'quid pro quo'. More than that, nationalist and populist parties contest the idea of European solidarity precisely in the name of national solidarity, and the need to defend national communities against outside interventions.

Hence, controversies about solidarity prevail within the public sphere. These debates, however, have paid more attention to interstate solidarity, thus marginalising another topic that is much less discussed and researched: European social or civic solidarity. In fact, even though we might expect that both dimensions are interrelated, it is necessary to differentiate between solidarity among states and solidarity between European citizens, between the 'intergovernmental' and 'transnational' dimensions of solidarity, and between the 'vertical' support of interstate solidarity by citizens and the 'horizontal' engagement of citizens in cross-border relations of support and help (Apostoli, 2012: 4). Very little is known about the amount of transnational solidarity and the effects of

the current crises on it. On the one hand, we might expect that 70 years of European integration should have helped to promote the idea of European solidarity between citizens. The European integration process has gradually established feelings of belongingness to the European community, promoting shared identifications with Europe and the EU (Delanty and Rumford, 2005; Beck and Grande, 2007; Fligstein, 2008). Moreover, European integration has furthered cross-national experiences and contact among citizens, as well as transnational trust between European people (Delhey, 2007). Finally, public opinion polls show that in the midst of the European crisis, a slim majority of respondents agreed that it is desirable to give financial help to other countries in times of crisis (i.e., 50% against 44%), and this support increases slightly (55%) when addressed in terms of inner-European solidarity (Raspotnik et al., 2012). Recent survey data from 13 member states even show that the support for redistributive policies is rather widely diffused within the European Union, given that more than 60% of respondents agreed in 2016 that financial help should be given to other EU countries facing severe economic difficulties (Gerhards et al., 2018). All this shows that Europeans approve of the idea of solidarity and redistribution also within the EU (Börner, 2014; Gerhards et al., 2019).

On the other hand, it is also true that the intensity and the number of crises lived out within the EU seems to impact on rates of European solidarity, both between governments and citizens. Populist and Eurosceptic parties are mobilising a wider group of voters (Krouwel and Abts, 2007; Hutter and Grande, 2014; Kriesi and Pappas, 2015), and this means that not all EU governments can be relied on to stand by the majority in favour of EU membership. The 'Brexit' vote in June 2016 shows how fragile these majorities can be. Since then, the choice of opting out is on the table and is being discussed in a number of other member states. Beyond the erosion of enthusiasm for the European cause, we also know from research that European solidarity is also patterned with cleavages along North–South and West–East divides, between 'Europeans' and 'not-yet Europeans' (Eder, 2005), between countries with higher degrees of mutual trust (Northern and Western Europe) and the others (Delhey, 2007). Additionally, we need to take into consideration the fact that transnational solidarity between citizens does not seem to be diffused evenly among European people, but differentiated along socio-demographic traits, civic skills, political attitudes and cultural beliefs (see e.g., Kriesi et al., 2006; Lahusen and Grasso, 2018).

These observations show that European solidarity is badly equipped to arouse consensus. Not only are EU member states and governments in disagreement about interstate solidarity, but citizens are also divided when called to support other European countries and citizens. While agreement

is more probable when European solidarity is addressed in general terms, dissent is more likely once we move to specific measures and policies of cooperation, burden-sharing and financial help. In fact, solidarity might be a highly cherished value, but once we consider solidarity in practice, various lines of contention emerge. Citizens might disagree about which particular group to prioritise, i.e., whether national, European or global solidarity should be the first choice. Additionally, citizens might have different views about whether solidarity should be granted unconditionally or should be constrained to specific groups along considerations of trustworthiness, reciprocity, neediness, social proximity or deservingness. Finally, dissent will emerge when asking citizens whether solidarity should be a matter of charitable help, informal exchange relations, political demands or binding legal entitlements. In all these aspects, we must expect that cross-border civic solidarity will most probably be a restrained, contested and potentially fragile phenomenon.

So far, scholarly writing has generated little evidence on the scope and structure of citizens' solidarity within Europe. Research has been interested in citizens' preferences for solidarity, but the focus was primarily on the 'vertical' support or institutionalised forms of solidarity, such as welfare institutions and social policies at the national and European level (Svallfors, 1997; Alesina and Giuliano, 2011; Baute et al., 2018; Gerhards et al., 2018, 2019). Less attention is paid to relations of solidarity between citizens across countries, hence, with the horizontal and/or transnational component of solidarity. This book aims to fill in part of this gap by presenting findings from an EU-funded project that has been devoted to the analysis of European solidarity. Its mission was to analyse the "European paths to transnational solidarity at times of crisis: Conditions, forms, role models and policy responses" (TransSOL). Research work was conducted between June 2015 and May 2018, with funding from the Horizon 2020 research programme (Grant Agreement No. 649435). Its main objectives were, among others, to assemble a systematic and cross-national database on solidarity in Europe at various levels of analysis (individual citizens, civil society, public policies and public discourses), to engage in an analysis of factors and forces promoting and inhibiting solidarity at these various levels, and to identify good practices and propose recommendations about remedial measures and policies. In all these aspects, we were geared to paint a nuanced and differentiated picture of European solidarity that does justice to its multifaceted and contentious nature. In fact, while it is important to map and measure the general readiness of Europeans to support others in need, we argue that it is also important to ask for the 'specific' readiness to help 'specific' groups of people, given that solidarity might be tied to various notions of conditionality. For this purpose, our analyses were

comparative in two respects: we were interested in measuring and analysing solidarity with regard to various target groups (people with disabilities, the unemployed, migrants or refugees) and territorial entities (people living in their own countries, within the EU or outside). Additionally, research was conducted in eight countries in parallel (Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Switzerland and the UK) in order to give an authentic picture of the diversity of situations within Europe and the diversity of contexts impinging on (European) solidarity.

Our research was devoted to a number of leading questions. How strong is solidarity among Europeans after almost 70 years of European integration? How is European solidarity organised in terms of civic groups and initiatives, organisational fields and transnational networks? How far is European solidarity also a contested issue within public debates, and does the public sphere contribute to the construction and/or erosion of the idea of European solidarity? And what do we know about beneficial and detrimental factors affecting European solidarity at the level of citizens, organisational fields and public spheres? In order to answer these overarching questions, we devoted our research to specific areas of inquiry. First, we were interested in measuring and studying attitudes and activities of solidarity at the level of individual citizens by means of a representative survey (see Chapter 2). Second, we mapped and analysed organised forms of civic solidarity within and across member states, by focusing on civil society initiatives, non-governmental organisations and/or protest groups at the grass-roots level (see Chapter 3) and at the national- and EU-levels (see Chapter 4). Third, we engaged in addressing solidarity at the societal level, as well. For this purpose, we analysed the role of solidarity within the legal framework and public policies of the eight countries and at EU-level (see Chapter 5), and we engaged in an analysis of public discourses within the print and social media in order to better understand how ideas and principles of (European) solidarity are constructed and eroded (see Chapters 6 and 7). Our aim was to gather systematic data and thus provide the empirical foundation for an in-depth description and analysis of European solidarity in its various components and contexts.

These empirical analyses were grounded in a project-internal, yearlong debate about conceptual and theoretical issues, because 'solidarity' is a widely used and multifaceted concept. Any attempt to unpack (European) solidarity in empirical terms will simply confirm that the object of this research is highly complex, broad and diffuse. The complexity and breadth of the phenomenon is even increased when consulting scholarly writing, given that solidarity has received a great deal of attention in the long history of the social sciences (Bayertz, 1999; de Deken et al., 2006; Stjernø, 2012; Smith and Sorrell, 2014). Various disciplines and research strands

have been devoted to the analysis of solidarity, with very different research questions and aims in mind. Consequently, the study of solidarity is dominated by a diversity of disjointed inquiries and fragmented insights. Moreover, we lack a discussion about whether existing knowledge about solidarity is a fruitful reference point for the analysis of solidarity within the EU. The attempt of TransSOL has been to overcome this fragmented situation by developing a conceptually integrated, multidimensional research framework. In the following, we wish to present this analytical framework in more detail. In a first step, we will assemble available evidence, systematise empirical insights and discuss conceptualisations. In a second step, we will propose a consistent framework of analysis that promises to be well adapted to the study of European solidarity.

1.2 EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY AS A RESEARCH FIELD: THE STATE OF THE ART

Solidarity is a topic that has always played an important role in the social sciences, because it has been identified as a core element for the constitution of social order and societal cohesion (Alexander, 1980; Durkheim, 1997). As a consequence, social theory and empirical research has tended to develop very different insights into the core dimensions, causes and consequences of solidarity (Bayertz, 1999; Maull, 2009). The field of research is marked by divergent concepts and understandings (Giugni and Passy, 2001; Featherstone, 2012). This brief overview already points to an interesting paradox of previous research: There is an overabundance of concepts and assumptions, but little reflection on the multifaceted and contested nature of solidarity. At the same time, there is an overabundance of empirical evidence on various aspects, as will be shown, but little data on those aspects at the centre of our own analyses, namely transnational solidarity in the EU.

Before engaging in the development of a conceptual and theoretical framework of analysis, it thus seems necessary to map the immediately relevant fields of research. The latter can be grouped as follows: the study of European integration; the analysis of the public's support for re-distributional policies and institutions; studies on transnational (solidarity) movements and civil societies; and research about interpersonal or inter-organisational help between citizens. As we will explain later on, these areas conform to the three levels of aggregation of solidarity, the macro, meso and micro levels, to which TransSOL was devoted.

The first and largest strand of research focuses on societies, and thus on large-scale entities. One basic line of reasoning is devoted to

a sociological analysis of modern societies, whose internal complexity leads to civic, voluntaristic and/or universalistic forms of solidarity (e.g., Parsons, 1951; Alexander, 1980; Durkheim, 1997). The construction of the European Communities fits into this argument, because European integration is perceived as a process that deepens the division of labour and the interconnectedness of people and corporate actors across borders (Münch, 2012). Increasing interdependencies and shared identities become an important precondition for a more stable European Union, growing solidarity between member states and citizens, and developing reciprocal obligations between them (Mau, 2006; Börner, 2013; Gerhards and Lengfeld, 2015). Recent debates tend to be more sceptical about the possibility of developing stable forms of transnational solidarity within the EU (e.g., Schäfer and Streeck, 2013), particularly because the economic and so-called refugee crisis seem to undermine the societal and institutional foundations of European solidarity (e.g., Galpin, 2012; della Porta and Mattoni, 2014). However, the normative strand of this debate still insists on the need to cultivate transnational and/or postnational forms of solidarity that are able to absorb the disintegrative effects of globalisation and Europeanisation. Most often, they point to the political and constitutional preconditions for the development of a transnational or universalistic solidarity (Brunkhorst, 1997, 2005; Habermas, 2013). In this regard, a democratically grounded, and transnationally knit European citizenship is highlighted as an important building block for a solidarity that transcends both national divisions and discriminations (e.g., Balibar, 2004: 44; 2014: 162–3; Jacobs, 2007; Dobson, 2012; Guild et al., 2013; Isin and Saward, 2013).

Next to these theoretical debates, empirical research in the social sciences has been guided by the attempt to identify measurable indicators of solidarity. In this area, we can identify a second field of research that is made up of empirical studies that inquire into re-distributional preferences, most often with a focus on social policies. These studies are relevant for our purposes, because they argue that welfare states and social policies are institutionalised forms of wealth redistribution and collective solidarity (Svallfors, 1997; Fong, 2001; Amat and Wibbels, 2009; Alesina and Giuliano, 2011; Rehm et al., 2012). Studying public support of redistributive policies is thus taken as a measure of vertical solidarity, and thus for the readiness of people to support institutionalised solidarity, i.e., to finance and endorse public programmes aimed at sharing wealth with the needy. This empirical focus has the advantage of measuring solidarity at the individual level indirectly: it allows us to understand the redistributive preferences and attitudes of people, their cognitive correlates, and social-structural determinants. Many of these studies are comparative

(e.g., Blekesaune and Quadagno, 2003; Scheepers and Grotenhuis, 2005; Banting and Kymlicka, 2006; Brooks and Manza, 2007), and allow for an explanation of vertical solidarity with reference to individual factors (micro) and country-level determinants (macro). In this sense, they provide an important source of inspiration to identify explanatory factors impinging on individual solidarity.

A third research strand is located at the meso level of analysis, and deals with civil societies and social movements. The basic line of reasoning is that civil societies and social movements can be conceived as organisational fields of collective action that mobilise, organise and stabilise solidarity within and across countries. Social movements and civic groups do not only rally for solidarity with specific target groups, but also require internal solidarity among their supporters and members in order to arouse and sustain collective action. As we will see, these studies point to the importance of resources and collective identities (Hirsch, 1986; Polletta and Jasper, 2001; Hunt and Benford, 2004). This insight applies to the transnational level as well, because scholars have argued that the mobilisation of collective actions and social movements across borders depends on the ability to arouse identity and solidarity (e.g., Smith et al., 1997; Batliwala, 2002; Bandy and Smith, 2005; della Porta and Caiani, 2011; della Porta, 2018). Finally, studies in this field of research underscore solidarity as a contested field. Social movements that rally for solidarity with certain target groups are often confronted with counter-mobilisations and/or competing issues and missions (e.g., Kriesi and Pappas, 2015; della Porta, 2018). As a result, organised solidarity, out of necessity, builds on group identities that erect distinctions between 'us' and 'them', heightening antagonism between both. In-group solidarity might thus imply out-group enmity.

Finally, the analysis of horizontal solidarity can also benefit from the extensive field of studies on social capital at the micro level. Many of these studies are interested in forms of interpersonal help and support; they highlight the importance of (interpersonal and institutional) trust; and they emphasise the importance of membership and active participation in voluntary groups and civic associations (Bourdieu, 1986; Anheier and Salamon, 1999; Putnam et al., 2003; van Oorschot et al., 2006; Brown and Ferries, 2007; Bauer et al., 2013). Research tends to converge on the conviction that social capital is the necessary 'glue' of social cohesion (Jeannotte, 2000; Chan and Chan, 2006), and thus also essential for understanding the conditions, structures and dynamics of solidarity. In explanatory terms, scholars have tended to confirm the importance of socio-demographic determinants (e.g., social class, age, and gender), attitudes (post-materialist values and religious beliefs) and societal context factors (e.g., social cleavages, political conflicts, welfare state institutions) in explaining levels and

forms of social capital (Kumlin and Rothstein, 2005; van Oorschot and Arts, 2005; Gelissen et al., 2012). Also, in this field of analysis, scholars have insisted on the fact that solidarity might involve group closure, and thus a bifurcation of solidarity relations. The notion of 'bonding capital' was coined in particular to point to the fact that individuals do tend to limit their relations of trust, reciprocity and solidarity to a reduced number of strong ties and intimate relations, thus fencing themselves off from their wider social environment, civil networks of engagement and other constituencies and targets (Putnam, 2000; Patulny and Svendsen, 2007). All in all, the study of solidarity has thus to consider the dark side of social closure.

As we can see, empirical research has provided a variety of insights. However, available knowledge still has to struggle with considerable limitations. First, empirical research has privileged the attitudinal dimension of solidarity, describing and explaining the disposition to help. Less attention has been paid to the question of what kind of behaviour constitutes solidarity. Second, the analysis of solidarity is not clearly distinguished from other related phenomena, and sometimes, the analysis considers altruism, care, philanthropy, empathy, help or support as potential synonyms. Hence, if solidarity is to be considered as a proper field of analysis, the specific traits of solidarity need to be highlighted. Third, much research has been undertaken with regard to public support of redistributive policies, but less knowledge is available on the level of interpersonal forms of solidarity. This is particularly true with respect to the international level, because there is almost no evidence about the European dimension of social solidarity. Undoubtedly there is abundant evidence with regard to the acceptance of the EU by its citizens, e.g., when referring to the debate about Euro-scepticism (Hooghe and Marks, 2007; Wessels, 2007; Lubbers and Scheepers, 2010; Boomgaarden et al., 2011) and public support for redistributive policies within the EU (Baute, Meulemann and Abts 2018; Gerhards et al., 2019). However, most research is unrelated to European civic or social solidarity in a stricter sense. Fourth, research lacks consideration of the various levels (micro, meso and macro) into which solidarity is structured and organised in modern societies. As we will argue in this chapter, European solidarity can only be properly understood and analysed when considering this multilevel structure.

1.3 EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY: A CONCEPTUAL AND EMPIRICAL APPROACH

What is needed is a sufficiently complex and consistent framework of analysis that allows for the study of solidarity in its various aspects and

at its various levels of aggregation. Such a conceptual and theoretical mission, however, has to overcome various challenges. First, our object of analysis – European solidarity – refers to a spatial entity, to which solidarity is or might be attached. In this respect, we need to distinguish clearly between EU-related and European solidarity. Solidarity should be more palpable, once attributed to the European Union, and less clear when attributing it to the more diffuse notion of 'Europe', because the EU is an institutionalised spatial entity that expects cooperation and solidarity among its members (countries and citizens). The Lisbon Treaty, for instance, stipulates that the EU "shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States" (TEU, Art. 3), a call that is restated in specific domains, such as asylum or security policies (TFEU, Art. 222). Even though these treaties primarily target the member states, they also provide a legal and institutional frame of reference for voicing and mobilising transnational solidarity below the state level. Following this line of reasoning, it might be advisable to speak of EU-related solidarity only. However, such an exclusive reference to EU solidarity is short-sighted, particularly if we look at interpersonal, civic forms of solidarity within and across European countries. In fact, while interstate solidarity is strongly tied to and patterned by formal membership in the EU, this is not necessarily the case when dealing with citizens and civil society organisations. Civic solidarity across borders might be smaller than the EU, when citizens and civil society organisations cooperate with other groups and support beneficiaries in neighbouring countries; but transnational solidarity might also go beyond EU member states, when considering that some European countries are not formal members of the EU and/or people living outside Europe. The insertion of Switzerland into the joint research is nurtured by the intention to combine an EU with a European-related analysis, because Switzerland is not formally a member of the EU, while it is tightly included in many of its treaties (e.g., the European Economic Area, the Schengen or Dublin space).

Second, our analytical framework has to do justice to the specificities of European solidarity, given that we are speaking of transnational practices and attitudes within a rather large and extensive community. In this regard, the analysis of European solidarity is particularly intriguing, because we might expect that horizontal types of European solidarity between citizens have to overcome problems associated with the (factual and/or perceived) size of Europe and/or the EU. The possibility of rooting solidarity in individual, face-to-face relations of help and exchange is rather limited, but not excluded, given the growing importance of mobility with regard to education, work or leisure. This might help to create informal networks based on ethnic background, culture or common interest (Glick Schiller et

al., 1995; Morokvasic, 1999; Recchi and Favell, 2009). However, beyond these transnational networks or groups, it is to be expected that intermediate, mediated and institutionalised forms of solidarity are required in order to mobilise, stabilise and sustain transnational forms of civic solidarity within Europe. In this sense, an analysis of civil society and social movements is required, because these organisational fields might be essential in fuelling and organising European solidarity.

Finally, the analysis of spatially demarcated forms of solidarity has to take into consideration that social spaces are not necessarily separated and isolated entities. Transnational solidarity might be located within various spatial entities and address various spatial targets simultaneously. Some citizens, for instance, might proclaim the need to promote solidarity within their own country, within the EU and at the global level at the same time, while other citizens might prioritise solidarity with one entity (e.g., the nation-state), possibly at odds with others (e.g., Europe or the world). This means that the study of European solidarity should not be dissociated from the study of (complementary or antagonistic) claims for solidarity, e.g., towards the regions, the nation-state, other member states and/or the global level.

1.3.1 Conceptual Matters: The Multidimensionality of 'Solidarity'

Our conceptual and theoretical framework required a definition of solidarity that is able to identify the specificity of this concept, as compared to other notions like altruism, empathy, compassion, help or care. Following the conceptualisation of others (Bayertz, 1999; de Deken et al., 2006; Stjernø, 2012; Smith and Sorrell, 2014), we assume that solidarity has to do with these concepts, as Stjernø (2012: 88) proposed when defining solidarity as "the preparedness to share resources with others". However, we argue that this basic understanding is not enough, given that solidarity is not only a matter of philanthropic help towards others, of empathy or altruism. Solidarity is linked to reciprocal expectations and practices between people expressing sameness, togetherness and inclusiveness (Stjernø, 2012). Solidarity thus assumes the existence of (imagined) reference groups with some sort of 'membership', implying responsibilities for the others. Consequently, we propose the following definition: Solidarity is understood here as dispositions and practices of mutual help or support, be that by personal contributions or by the active support of activities of others, tied to informal and/or institutionalised groups. Solidarity entails relations of care and help, of altruism and empathy, but it is more than these concepts propose, because solidarity is grounded in group-bound rights and obligation (Scholz, 2008). Additionally, solidarity is much

more than a purely individual phenomenon. Solidarity is an interpersonal, collective relation, because solidarity presupposes joint norms, expectations and practices. Solidarity might be apparent in individual acts and dispositions of help and care, but individual help and care are only acts of solidarity insofar as they are part of mutual relations of support. Finally, solidarity is grounded in mutual relations of support, because this mutuality is a practised manifestation of the normative underpinnings of solidarity: Solidarity builds (implicitly and/or explicitly) on the notion of rights, because people can expect to be helped; and solidarity entails an (implicit and/or explicit) notion of obligations, because people are expected to help each other.

This definition requires several clarifications. First, our conceptualisation does not necessarily take sides in the theoretical and normative debate between communitarianism and universalism (Rasmussen, 1990; Zürn and de Wilde, 2016), because it departs from a more analytical understanding of groups, and thus allows for variation with regard to the kind of social entities, narratives and ideologies involved (Arendt, 1963, 1972; Bayertz, 1999; Scholz, 2008). Citizens, civic initiatives and associations might cherish the idea of 'communitarian' solidarity, and thus they might believe that only members of established, natural or local communities are enmeshed in reciprocal relations of help and support and are thus eligible for common rights and obligations. But citizens, civic initiatives and associations might also promote the idea of 'universalistic' solidarity. They might thus proclaim that anybody – as part of their quality as a human being – can expect to receive help from others, and that everybody is at the same time called to provide support to others, given universal concepts of mutual rights and obligations. These particularist and universalist notions of solidarity apply to European solidarity as well. In fact, European solidarity can be defined as an attitude and behaviour in support of other Europeans, regardless of their national origin, but this definition leaves enough room for different normative orientations. European solidarity might be motivated by a communitarian understanding of membership, cherishing common identities, cultural traits, historical legacies and missions. However, it might also be encouraged by a more universalistic notion of European citizenship and a more open notion of (social, civic and political) rights and obligations of European citizens and/or residents. According to our understanding, European solidarity is an analytic concept that focuses on 'groups' with potentially different normative orientations.

Second, our own definition of solidarity stresses the need to consider attitudes and behaviours, particularly because solidarity entails notions of rights and obligations. So far, academic writing has tended to privilege attitudinal dispositions, in particular by focusing on the preparedness of

citizens to share some of their resources with others (e.g., Stjernø, 2012: 2). Moreover, survey-based studies measure solidarity by the citizens' approval of re-distributional policies, and thus by readiness to devote some of their contributions or taxes to the needy (Svallfors, 1997; Fong, 2001; Amat and Wibbels, 2009; Rehm et al., 2012). This option has been used to measure European solidarity, e.g., in terms of fiscal help, redistributional measures and burden-sharing (Lengfeld et al., 2012; Gerhards et al., 2016; Baute et al., 2018; Gerhards et al., 2019). However, this focus on attitudes is not without problems. Taxes and contributions to social security programmes are compulsory and, hence, it is not completely clear what surveys measure when they ask respondents about their approval of redistributional policies – their general support of welfare states, or solidarity relations with specific groups of needy people. In other words: approval of social policies might not predetermine the readiness to commit individually in support of others. At the same time, social psychology has demonstrated that attitudes do not necessarily transform into actions, particularly if complex value and belief systems, structural impediments or individual costs are involved (Blumer, 1955; Festinger, 1964; Ajzen and Fishbein, 2005).

Third, standard measures of solidarity tend to privilege philanthropy or altruism (Skitka and Tetlock, 1993; Schroeder et al., 1995; van Oorschot, 2000). However, solidarity also has a political dimension. People demonstrate solidarity with others when participating in collective actions (e.g., public claims-making, political protests, communication campaigns) that strive to improve the situation of these groups by mobilising public support, committing stakeholders and/or changing public policies on their behalf (Cinalli, 2004; Balme and Chabanet, 2008; Baglioni and Giugni, 2014; Giugni and Grasso, 2015). In this sense, solidarity is a way of combating injustice and oppression suffered by specific groups or communities, on whose behalf individuals or organisations speak up (Bayertz, 1999: 16; Scholz, 2008). Solidarity is thus a means to enact (imagined) political communities with shared missions, ideas and beliefs. In these cases, European solidarity is already present when people in some countries are aware about and support public claims by citizens of other European countries, their organisational representatives or government officials, and when they actively help them to promulgate their views and claims.

This sensitivity to the political dimension of solidarity helps to acknowledge the contentious aspects of solidarity, because claims of solidarity might entail exclusive identities and obligations, and they might challenge the status quo on behalf of specific groups against others (Arendt, 1963, 1972; Reshaur, 1992; Balibar, 2004). For a systematic analysis of European solidarity, this political dimension seems crucial. Populist groups and parties speak out on behalf of exclusive, national communities, often claiming

that solidarity with weak compatriots comes before solidarity with others, thus downplaying the legal, political or moral obligations nation-states have as members of the European Union; pro- or pan-European groups instead will speak out on behalf of social groups and member countries most affected by the crises, possibly as part of a struggle to improve the situation of weak compatriots, too. In these terms, particularistic and universalistic solidarity claims are in conflict with each other.

Fourth, the definition of solidarity has to be open due to the variety of manifestations. Two main issues need to be taken into consideration. On the one hand, solidarity can be motivated by very different norms, rules and expectations. Mau (2006) and Lengfeld et al. (2015), for instance, have highlighted different reasons and motivations for supporting European solidarity. For some, interstate support in times of crisis is a necessary correlate of common duties and moral obligations, for others just a consequence of reciprocal relations of mutual help, while still others define it as a rational (utilitarian) investment for the benefit of member states, donors included. In this sense, solidarity can be patterned along different levels of compassion and abnegation, reciprocity, cooperation and interdependency (Malamoud, 2015). On the other hand, we have to consider that solidarity is a relative phenomenon, i.e., conditional on membership of specific communities and groups. Undoubtedly, solidarity can be a value tied to abstract groups or entities (i.e., humankind), and thus associated with a universalistic notion of generalised support (Brunkhorst, 1997; Balibar, 2004). In survey-based research, this solidarity is measured as a generalised, civic disposition of help not tied back to any particular group or conditionality (Svallfors, 1997; Fong, 2001; Amat and Wibbels, 2009; Rehm et al., 2012). However, empirically speaking, particularism is tightly associated with solidarity, too. As shown by empirical analyses, solidarity seems to be patterned by the assumed 'deservingness' of various social groups, thus favouring elderly and disabled people over the unemployed, the poor and immigrants (van Oorschot, 2006: 23). Conditionality is not necessarily restricted to social groups, but can apply to countries as well; consider, for example, low rates of public German support for fiscal help to the Greek government, in comparison with German support towards Ireland, Italy and Spain (Lengfeld et al., 2012).

1.3.2 Analytical and Explanatory Matters: Multi-Layered Solidarity

The conceptual clarifications help to define solidarity as a relation of mutual support linked to (informal/formalised, imagined/institutionalised, universal/particular) groups. This conceptual discussion requires further development, because solidarity might be organised and institutionalised

at different levels of aggregation, particularly if we are speaking about complex social systems, such as national societies, and even more so, Europe or the European Union. As we will show, it is advisable to distinguish three levels of aggregation and organisation. Solidarity can be organised at the interpersonal level (micro), at the level of organisations and organisational fields (meso), and at the level of political entities such as welfare states and public spheres (macro).

This differentiation of various levels of analysis is necessary to empirically map and describe solidarity in a more comprehensive manner. Additionally, however, we need to differentiate our analytic framework also with regard to the theoretical approaches used by previous studies in order to identify and explain types, processes and structures of solidarity (Doreian and Fararo, 1998). In fact, our research was not only geared to describe levels and forms of solidarity within Europe, but also to decipher causes, correlates and consequences. In this regard, we developed a multidimensional framework of analysis along two dimensions. On the one side, we argue that solidarity is socially produced and reproduced at various levels of aggregation, which means that solidarity will most probably be shaped by different forces at the micro, meso and macro levels of analysis. This multidimensionality requires an analytical framework that makes use of available theories and explanatory models for each of the three levels. On the other hand, previous analyses of solidarity have been related to theories either highlighting objective structures and mechanisms, or privileging ideational factors and communicative processes, as suggested by Archer (1996) who distinguishes between structures and social actors, and cultures and cultural actors. Existing theories have tended to privilege one of these approaches when dealing with solidarity at the micro, meso and macro levels. Table 1.1 summarises our analytical framework, by listing the various levels of analysis and the theoretical approaches. On this basis,

Table 1.1 Explanatory strategies in the study of (European) solidarity

	social-structural factors	cultural-ideational
micro level: individual solidarity	socio-demographic determinants	preferences, identifications, values and ideas
meso level: organised solidarity	organisational fields: resources, networks and cleavages	organisational spheres: frames, ideologies, and identities
macro level: institutionalised solidarity	societal structures: legal and socio-economic contexts, welfare institutions and policies	cultural structures: belief systems, institutions, discourses

we can identify for each cell which explanatory factors should be taken into consideration. Overall, it provides us with a heuristic instrument to develop a multidimensional framework of analysis.

In the following, we wish to develop the theoretical arguments of this heuristic model by moving from the micro to the macro level, arguing for the necessity of the former levels of analysis to be embedded in the latter ones. Our theoretical journey will make use of previous research in order to highlight the specificities and potential of each approach.

A first focus of explanatory strategies has been the micro level of individual solidarity. Previous research has tended to privilege this level. Research has been interested in group-internal solidarity and the rules guiding internal exchange relations and group cohesion (Hechter, 1988; Markovsky and Lawler, 1994; Komter, 2005), in attitudes and practices of compassion, help and altruism (Skitka and Tetlock, 1993; Schroeder et al., 1995; Scheepers and Grotenhuis, 2005), and in understanding the citizens' support of the welfare states and their redistributive policies support (Blekesaune and Quadagno, 2003; Brooks and Manza, 2007). Regarding explanatory strategies, the analysis has tended to privilege the two approaches introduced before. In the first instance, we can refer to authors who explain levels and forms of solidarity with reference to resources, objective interests and rational choices (Hechter, 1988). Solidarity is a choice reflecting the individuals' socio-economic situation and the related cost-benefit calculations. We should thus expect that solidarity is more diffused among the most vulnerable and invulnerable social strata of the population (van Setten et al., 2017), as it implies more gains than losses for both sides. Recipients might suffer stigmatisation, once they disclose their neediness, but they gain financial help, while donors have to share their financial resources, but gain social recognition. But do these considerations apply to Europe? Solidarity within Europe might be more conditional and complex, and possibly also pre-structured by interlocking group memberships. Vulnerable social groups in affluent societies, for instance, might oppose the sharing of public funds with poorer countries, while privileged groups might expect less social recognition from inner-European redistribution of wealth.

These observations lead to the second strand of micro-level analyses, because they highlight that solidarity choices will most probably be predetermined or mediated by subjective perceptions, emotions, values and belief systems (Markovsky and Lawler, 1994; Komter, 2005). Research on solidarity has identified a number of these factors such as political allegiances (Skitka and Tetlock, 1993), religion (Abela, 2004; Stegmueller et al., 2012; Lichterman, 2015), post-materialism (Inglehart and Rabier, 1978), loyalties to ethnic groups (Alesina and Glaeser, 2004; Luttmer,

2001), beliefs about the causes of income (Fong, 2001), or perceptions of deservingness (van Oorschot, 2006). These factors will most probably shape levels of individual solidarity at the local and national levels. However, this does not fully open the door to an understanding of the subjective and ideational determinants of European solidarity as such, given the fact that the EU is a much more multicultural entity than most member states are. Consequently, we must assume that individual solidarity within the EU is also shaped by the following two factors. On the one hand, we might expect that European solidarity is conditional on the development of identifications with the European Union, either as unique identifications and/or as elements of multiple (local, national, transnational) identities. On the other hand, we might assume that solidarity within the EU is conditional on spatial and/or cultural closeness, i.e., limiting individual solidarity between countries that are perceived to be (spatially, socially, culturally, historically) closer to each other.

Overall, we argue that a research strategy centred on individuals might be an adequate way of operationalising solidarity empirically, but an incorrect way of explaining solidarity theoretically. In fact, findings about individual dispositions or acts of solidarity tend to argue that solidarity transcends the individual, namely by referring implicitly to group norms and beliefs, joint expectations and responsibilities among group members. In this sense, solidarity is a collective phenomenon before it becomes an individual one. This is the reason why the study of individual solidarity needs to be embedded in an inquiry of the meso and macro structures.

Accordingly, we propose to move to the meso level, following the assumption that solidarity very often requires some sort of organisation. Undoubtedly, solidarity is also a matter of individual and spontaneous acts of help within face-to-face situations. However, as soon as we transcend this level of isolated activities, informal networks and interactions within everyday life, we move into what research about civil societies and social movements has identified as the determinants and properties of collective action (Smith et al., 1997; Giugni and Passy, 2001). Solidarity demands, on the one hand, the pooling of resources, the coordination of individual activities, the provision of incentives and sanctions (Hirsch, 1986), while, on the other hand, building on the promotion of shared behavioural norms, ideas and identities is also a requirement (Minkoff, 1997; Hunt and Bendorf, 2004). Individual acts of solidarity will very often be motivated, directed and spurred on by the affiliation, membership or adherence to specific organisations and movements. The latter provide incentives to participate, role models for acting, and norms and identities to motivate and/or justify solidarity, e.g., when referring to membership fees and charitable donations, joint political protests, events of claims-making.

These observations are particularly relevant for European solidarity, given the fact that we are analysing rather complex and territorially extended forms of collective actions (Batliwala, 2002; Smith, 2002). European solidarity will most probably be more dependent on organisation as a process, and on organisations as entrepreneurial entities. In this regard, it seems indispensable to link the study of European solidarity to the analysis of transnational solidarity organisations and organisational fields (Bandy and Smith, 2005; Balme and Chabanet, 2008; della Porta and Caiani, 2011; Baglioni and Giugni, 2014). On the one hand, we hypothesise that European solidarity is clearly dependent on the development of transnational fields or networks of civil society and social movement organisations, which increase connectivity and diffusion processes, mobilise and organise constituencies, and define and circulate common discourses and identities. Consequently, we assume that European solidarity will most probably be structured differently in various issue fields and policy domains, mirroring the diverse organisational strength and mobilisation power of the various organisational fields. On the other hand, we have to take into account that organisational fields are patterned along cleavages, conflicts and oppositions, too, which are of particular importance to better understand the contentiousness of European solidarity. In fact, in many issue fields and policy domains at national and EU level, we see the emergence of populist, nationalist and xenophobic groups, political parties and movements (Kriesi, 2012; Wodak et al., 2013; Gómez-Reino and Llamazares, 2013), which in many instances oppose attempts to mobilise and institutionalise measures of European solidarity. Here, we refer back to our argument that solidarity is highly political in the sense of implying (competing) notions of (imagined) groups or communities (e.g., regional, national, European) with opposing memberships, missions and ideas. In organisational terms, we hypothesise that the development of European solidarity at the individual and collective levels is therefore strongly dependent on organisational fields, their internal cleavages and contentions.

Third, the analysis of solidarity recurrently heads towards the macro level, and here, social theories tend to privilege either structural, institutional and/or cultural dimensions. Here, the range of potential theoretical explanations is very wide, and thus we need to restrict ourselves to those most pertinent to our analysis. Of lesser importance are approaches committed to the sociological modernisation theory, which stress the emergence of 'organic' solidarities in functionally differentiated societies (Parsons, 1951; Durkheim, 1997), post-materialistic orientations within economically affluent societies (Inglehart and Rabier, 1978), and post-nationalistic and cosmopolitan orientations in times of reflexive modernity (Beck et al., 1994). All of them tend to stress unidirectional and linear developments,

thus disregarding the contentiousness of European solidarity. Much more relevant are theories dealing with institutionalised forms of solidarity in terms of welfare states, public policies and constitutional rights.

In fact, solidarity is a political idea and a legal norm institutionalised by the emerging welfare states in order to regulate the social rights and obligations of their citizens. The principle of solidarity is thus woven into constitutions (Brunkhorst, 2005; Bellamy et al., 2006; Ross and Borgmann-Prebil, 2010; Dalessio, 2013), but also in policy fields and specific policy measures, as research on welfare regimes and social policies argues (Esping-Anderson et al., 2002; de Bùrca, 2005; Morel et al., 2012). The extent to which citizens can count on the solidarity of the state and citizenry thus depends on the range and kind of social rights and entitlements guaranteed by public policies, on the way social policies are funded and administered, and on the way citizens claim their rights in case of dissent. An analysis of legal frameworks and institutional settings is not only important to understand the levels and forms of institutionalised solidarity, though. It also seems pertinent with regard to the analysis of civic solidarity at the level of individual citizens and civil societies. Research has shown that different welfare regimes provide different opportunities and constraints for non-profit associations, private welfare provision, or volunteering (Evers, 1995; Anheier and Salamon, 1999; Bauer et al., 2013); and they shape the normative expectations addressed to their citizens and thus potentially also their attitudes and practices (Banting and Kymlicka, 2017). Before this backdrop, we might hypothesise that the uneven institutionalisation of solidarity within the legal framework and public policies at the national and EU level will have implications for the uneven development of solidarity at the level of citizens and civil societies. Research has given examples of how a benevolent welfare state with strong policies of redistribution might spur on crowding out effects on private philanthropy (Abrams and Schitz, 1978; Frey, 1998; Nikolova, 2014). In this vein, we can assume that the weak institutionalisation of solidarity at the EU level might condition crowding in effects on civic solidarity, particularly in times of accelerating crisis and urgent need for remedial actions.

References to the legal and institutional framework are incomplete if we do not take into consideration the constitutive role of the public sphere as an arena of contestation and deliberation. Law and public policies mirror, to a certain extent, ideas, beliefs and values cherished within the public sphere (Habermas, 1996: 76; 2013), which means that also institutionalised solidarity is constantly constructed and reproduced through public narratives, ideologies and discourses (Brown and Gilman, 1960; Calhoun, 2002; Pensky, 2008). Our references to the macro level would thus remain incomplete if we ignored the decisive role of the mass media as an arena

for the formation of collective opinions and ideas about legitimate solidarity (Mylonas, 2012; Papathanassopoulos, 2015). This role has been evidenced in previous episodes of the European integration process (e.g., Statham and Trenz, 2013), but is particularly important when considering the impact of the European crisis on public debates at the European and national levels. Studies have dealt with the Great Recession since 2008 and have shown that the crisis increased the intensity of conflicts within the public sphere, thus highlighting the disagreements between different governments about the necessary measures to combat the (budgetary, economic, and social) consequences of the crisis (Wilde et al., 2013). Given the fact that the mass media are still strongly attached to different language areas, political systems and specific national audiences (Schulz-Forberg and Stråth, 2010; Boomgaarden et al., 2013), it is very probable that the propagated notions of European solidarity will structurally mirror the antagonistic positions of member states within the European crisis. Additionally, research on public debates about the so-called refugee crisis of 2015 and 2016 evidences that public debates diverge between European member states also in regard to the degree of contentiousness and polarization (Berry et al., 2016). They show that public debates play a role both in mobilizing and weakening European solidarity.

Overall, we thus propose a conceptual and theoretical framework that includes various analytical dimensions and explanatory factors. Beyond a purely additive rationale, this framework insists on the need to analyse the embeddedness of individual and organised forms of solidarity within the meso and macro levels of collective constraints and opportunities, cultural meanings and discourses. In fact, we assume that the degree and the forms of European solidarity among citizens will be shaped by their socio-demographic traits and immediate social environments (e.g., gender, social class, political and/or religious allegiances), but also by the availability of organisations (e.g., self-help groups, welfare associations, social movement organisations), and the transnational structures of organisational fields. Finally, individual solidarity will also be influenced by constitutional and institutional opportunities and constraints on social solidarity, and it will most probably be impacted by public discourses on legitimate and accepted forms of (European) solidarity (Lindenberg, 1998). In fact, individual citizens might withdraw from solidarity in reaction to proliferating public mistrust against the addressees of help; they might also be less inclined due to flourishing reservations against civic organisations or public authorities channelling (financial) contributions, or they might abstain because of a mushrooming scepticism about the value of helping others in times of crisis. Charitable or political organisations might find it harder to mobilise individual, corporate or state support for their work in times of shrinking

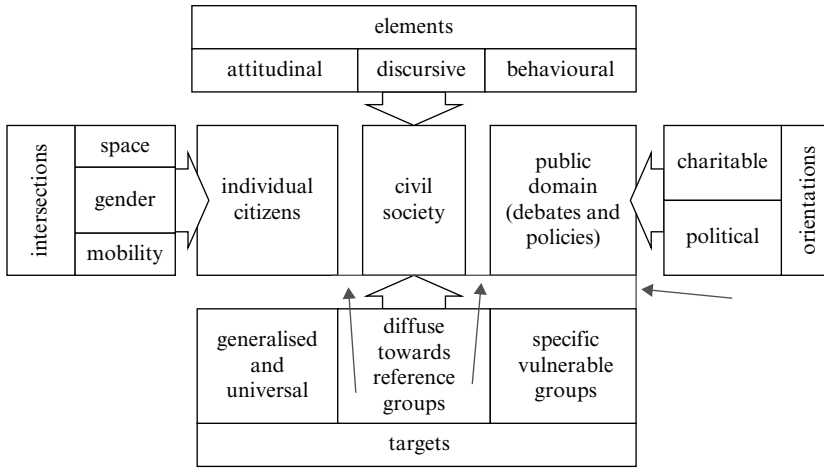

Figure 1.1 European solidarity as a multidimensional phenomenon

institutional and/or interpersonal trust and eroding public commitment to (transnational) solidarity.

In the following chapters, we will present the main findings of our joint research effort along the analytic framework presented here. The major challenge of this research was the under-developed body of knowledge we had to build upon. In fact, while the study of solidarity is as old as the social sciences, we have very few studies focusing on European solidarity, particularly in regard to social and civic social solidarity across borders. This book aims to close part of this knowledge gap, by providing systematic data on the levels and forms of solidarity within Europe, and by engaging in in-depth analyses of the factors promoting and inhibiting civic solidarity. It is structured along the various levels of analysis identified as relevant forms and arenas of solidarity formation: the level of citizens and interpersonal solidarity (micro), the level of civic groups and interorganizational fields (meso), and the level of public discourses and legal systems (macro).

Chapter 2 by Maria Grasso and Christian Lahusen presents the findings from a survey carried out on individual citizens. Its results highlight that a considerable share of the population in our eight countries is committed to solidarity practices and approves of redistribution. However, European solidarity is the weakest element in the array of target groups supported by the respondents. The third and fourth chapters deal with organised forms of transnational solidarity. In Chapter 3, Maria Kousis, Angelos Loukakis, Maria Paschou and Christian Lahusen focus on the grass-roots level of local initiatives, groups and organisations. In Chapter 4, Simone

Baglioni and Tom Montgomery focus on the national and supra-national levels. Both chapters identify a remarkable range of initiatives and show that citizen groups and associations are strongly committed in responding to societal grievances, not least those caused by the various crises affecting the EU and its member states. At the same time, they show that the organisational fields within the various countries are not strongly transnationalised in terms of cross-national activities. Organised solidarity, even when committed to a European mission and scope of activities, is marked by a decentralised organisational structure.

The following chapters move to the macro level of analysis. Veronica Federico presents the evidence gathered through the analysis of national constitutions, public policies and court rulings in Chapter 5. She shows that solidarity is a legal principle nurturing the legal systems of all countries, but that this principle is unevenly institutionalised both in the eight countries and the three issue-fields under analysis (migration, unemployment and disabilities). Moreover, we identify regressive moments that are due to the various crises affecting Europe since 2008. Chapters 6 and 7 portray public discourses on the so-called refugee crisis between mid-2015 and early 2016. Manlio Cinalli, Olga Eisele, Verena K. Brändle and Hans-Jörg Trenz focus on public claims publicised within national media, and they inquire into comments by news users. The analysis shows that solidarity is indeed a key issue within the news coverage and the news usage of readers. Moreover, they identify the momentous emergence of Europe-wide solidarity during the summer of 2015, but also regressive trends since then. The concluding Chapter 8 by Christian Lahusen addresses the common themes and findings of this book. It argues that European solidarity is firmly rooted within citizenry, civil societies and social movements, and public policies and discourses. At the same time, however, findings show that European solidarity is exposed to conflicts and subject to fluctuations. Our research thus evidences that European solidarity is a societal force, but one that is, however, contested and fragile in nature.

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2. Solidarity in Europe: a comparative account of citizens' attitudes and practices

Maria Grasso and Christian Lahusen

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Solidarity has received heightened attention in recent times due to the various crises that have affected the European Union since 2008. Critical voices have repeatedly raised concerns that solidarity is severely at risk within the EU because of the inability of the European institutions and member states to agree on mechanisms of burden-sharing. Evidence for this is found in regard to the economic and financial crisis that has affected several European countries. Even though the European Union has developed a number of policy measures (e.g., the European Financial Stability Facility, the European Stability Mechanism, and the Stability and Growth Pact) which have opened the door to financial assistance, the EU has remained committed to bail-out policy packages that delegate financial liabilities and risks to nation-states threatened by bankruptcy. As a consequence, most commentators shared the conviction that international solidarity was dead (see Balibar, 2010; Habermas, 2017). A similar conclusion was drawn in regard to the increased influx of refugees from Syria and other regions affected by wars, and the inability of EU institutions and its member states to agree on a coordinated asylum policy, on quotas and on mechanisms of admission and integration. Consensus could only be reached in regard to the external dimension (e.g., border controls, the fight against human trafficking), leaving the issue of internal coordination unsolved.

The success of populist parties, the Brexit vote, and the mobilisation of Eurosceptic and xenophobic protests across Europe (e.g., Kriesi and Pappas, 2015) have raised further concerns that European solidarity might be at risk in a more fundamental and far-reaching manner. In times of crisis, we might not only be witnessing the erosion of cooperation and solidarity between member state governments, but also the corrosion

of solidarity at the level of the European citizenry, thus threatening the social foundations of solidarity on which EU institutions and policies are built. In this regard, we might even expect that European solidarity is becoming even more fragile, restrained and contested at the level of the European population. Do these observations and concerns mirror the current situation throughout the European Union? Is European solidarity an ideal shared by the European citizenry? And how do we explain these differentiations; that is, can we identify factors responsible for further and/or limiting solidarity within the European population?

We are urgently in need of empirical evidence in order to answer these questions. Public debates and conflicts continue to return to this issue but we have had very little empirical evidence on which to draw to inform this debate. Previous research has painted a mixed picture. On the one side, it seems true that the various crises affecting the EU are putting European solidarity under strain. Possibly, it is easier to profess cooperation in times of economic growth and optimistic economic outlooks, while solidarity might turn out to be more difficult to sustain in times of recession and scarcity. This is particularly true given that populist and xenophobic political entrepreneurs can draw on the exacerbation of citizens' fear and grievances and that the crisis overlaps with a long history of ineffective policies in key domains, such as poverty and unemployment, immigration and asylum. Consequently, political debates are marked increasingly by antagonism, conflict and mistrust between governments and citizens. On the other hand, 60 years of European integration have gradually established feelings of belongingness to the European community, and have enabled shared identification with European institutions, as well as European and cosmopolitan identities (Delanty and Rumford, 2005; Beck and Grande, 2007). Moreover, European integration has furthered cross-national experiences and contacts among citizens, as well as transnational trust between European peoples (Delhey, 2007). Finally, public opinion polls show that, in the midst of the European crisis, a majority of respondents still agree that it is desirable to give financial help to other countries in the name of European solidarity between member states (see Eurobarometer data, 2011, 76.1; Lengfeld et al., 2012; Gerhards et al., 2018).

This chapter aims to shed more light on this debate by presenting some key findings in this respect from an original population survey conducted in late 2016 among citizens of eight European countries (Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, and the UK) to analyse questions of solidarity in Europe. The survey was conducted as part of the TransSOL project. The questionnaire was administered in the relevant languages to approximately 2,000 respondents in each of the countries of the project (Total N 16,000). Respondent samples were

matched to national statistics with quotas for education, age, gender and region, and population weights were applied where relevant. The questionnaire aimed to address the major dimensions of solidarity, both attitudinal and behavioural, as well as key independent variables. More information about the survey and the country-specific findings is available through the project's website (see reports on the website: http://transsol.eu/).

In this chapter, we analyse data with two major objectives in mind. First, we wish to present evidence on data reflecting the readiness of European citizens to support European solidarity both in terms of activities and attitudes. For this purpose, we will look at levels of civic solidarity across the eight countries under study, and we will compare levels of support for European solidarity in comparison with other potential targets (national and global solidarity). Second, we will engage in an analysis of these findings, particularly with respect to identifying those individual factors such as socio-demographic traits, political attitudes, and cultural values that are linked to the likelihood among European citizens to engage in acts of solidarity at the European level. As such, we are interested in examining the potential cleavages nurturing public contentions with respect to European solidarity within the European population. The structure of this chapter follows the main objectives outlined. In Section 2.2, we present and discuss previous research in order to make sense of the complexity of the phenomenon under study and develop our hypotheses for analysis. We also present the main concepts and hypotheses leading to our empirical analysis. In Section 2.3, we turn to the two research objectives, namely the descriptive account of European solidarity at the level of the European population, and the explanatory analysis for contributing factors. In Section 2.4, we summarise the key findings and discuss potential implications of the research.

2.2 CONTRIBUTING KNOWLEDGE TO AN ESTABLISHED FIELD OF RESEARCH: CONCEPTS AND OBJECTIVES

Solidarity is one of the key phenomena studied in the social sciences. For many decades, scholars from sociology, economics, political science and psychology, among others, have inquired into the forms and conditions of solidarity, even though our knowledge is quite limited with respect to the transnational dimension, such as, for example, European-level solidarity. This lacuna is even more serious once we move to the individual level and look at attitudes and practices of European citizenry with respect to European solidarity. How strongly is the idea of solidarity shared

by citizens throughout Europe, and to what extent are they engaged in solidarity-related activities? Is solidarity limited to specific communities or target groups, and what is the importance of solidarity among Europeans? What can we say about the social traits, beliefs and convictions of people engaged in solidarity activities? And which are the factors inhibiting solidarity dispositions and practices?

A review of available studies is important in this respect to lay the theoretical groundwork for the following analyses. First of all, previous research is important in conceptual terms, given that we need to define what the notion of solidarity is all about. In this regard, we converge with a strong strand of research that defines solidarity as the preparedness to share one's own resources with others and/or support state redistributive policies (e.g., Stjernø, 2012: 2). This proposal stresses one element that has received much attention in the social sciences: namely, attitudes and dispositions. In fact, most surveys are primarily interested in measuring the readiness of citizens to share some of their resources with others, and here, a recurrent topic was the support for redistributive (social) policies and the willingness of respondents to devote their taxes to these means (Svallfors, 1997; Fong, 2001; Amat and Wibbels, 2009; Rehm, 2009; Rehm et al., 2012). This aspect is crucial for European societies, given the prominence of welfare institutions and social policies as institutionalised forms of solidarity. However, we cannot be sure that whether these lessons also apply at the European level, because public support of welfare institutions and social policies might also lead to opposition towards European policies of redistribution, as they might curtail or endanger national solidarity.

Research into redistributive preferences among citizens is an important contribution to understanding the extent to which the welfare state is rooted in society. However, our own research needs to enlarge the focus in three directions to grasp the role and place of European solidarity. First, attitudes and dispositions do not determine actual practices (e.g., Maio et al., 2006). This means that the analysis of solidarity dispositions within the European population helps to paint only a partial picture of European solidarity. Our own survey aimed more explicitly to measure reported activities in order to get a more reliable picture of the extent to which European citizens are committed to supporting others within and beyond their countries and communities.

Second, scholarly writing has tended to focus on (financial) help for the needy, thus privileging the charitable or philanthropic dimension of solidarity. While this aspect seems to be closely related to solidarity in the public understanding, it nonetheless ignores the political dimension of solidarity. In fact, people demonstrate solidarity with other persons in need when participating in collective actions (e.g., public claims-making,

political protests, communication campaigns) that strive to improve the situation of these groups by mobilising public support, committing stakeholders and/or changing public policies on their behalf (Giugni and Passy, 2001). Particularly in the context of the EU, it is important to include this dimension of solidarity (Balme and Chabanet, 2008; Lahusen, 2013; Baglioni and Giugni, 2014; Giugni and Grasso, 2019). European solidarity is already present when people help other European citizens make themselves heard, particularly if we are speaking of social groups at the fringes of society that are not only exposed to social exclusion, but also to political marginalisation and invisibility in terms of news coverage and interest representation.

Third, our project confirms results of previous research, namely that solidarity is of little analytic and practical use when conceived of as a generalised disposition or practice. Studies recurrently highlight that solidarity is conditional and thus tied to specific issues and target groups (Komter, 2005). Solidarity is related to ideas about the neediness, deservingness or social proximity of targeted groups. These targets can be vulnerable groups within society, such as the elderly, the unemployed or the disabled (van Oorschot, 2006), but also entire countries, such as the European member states affected by the 2008 economic crisis (Lengfeld et al., 2012).

The research design of our survey reflected these conceptual clarifications. First, our questionnaire included questions addressing attitudes and dispositions related to solidarity, but also asked respondents to list reported activities. In asking questions about which types of solidarity-related activities individuals engaged in, we tried to be more demanding than previous studies by assembling information about various activities, ranging from boycotting products to active participation in voluntary associations. Second, the survey was conceived to measure not only the charitable dimension of solidarity, but also the political aspects indicated above. For this purpose, questions were developed on a rights-based concept of solidarity by asking respondents whether they actively supported the rights of various groups. Additionally, we assembled information on political activities and orientations related to solidarity, ranging from protest participation to policy related issues (e.g., European solidarity measures). Third, the survey aimed at gathering data on the 'vertical' and 'horizontal' dimension of solidarity. To this end, on the one hand, it included questions measuring the support of respondents for redistributive policies within their country and at the EU level. On the other hand, it asked respondents to indicate their involvement in interpersonal forms of help and support. Finally, we also looked at whether solidarity dispositions and practices were generalised and/or bound to certain target groups. For this purpose, we differentiated between a spatial dimension (i.e., solidarity with people

within the respondents' countries, within the EU, and beyond the EU) and an issue-related dimension by addressing three different target groups (i.e., the refugees/asylum seekers, the unemployed and the disabled).

These conceptual clarifications are important in order to unravel the complex phenomenon of solidarity and develop measurement instruments that are able to grasp the various dimensions of solidarity. They also helped to identify basic assumptions guiding our descriptive analysis. In fact, previous research can be used to formulate three descriptive hypotheses. First, we expect that citizens will be more inclined to support institutionalised forms of solidarity (e.g., in terms of social policies and their objectives), when compared with the number of citizens engaged in solidarity action themselves. Second, we expect that civic solidarity action might be stronger in regard to the philanthropic or charitable dimension, and weaker in regard to overly political aspects, such as participation in political protest actions. Third, we assume that solidarity towards other Europeans will be less strongly diffused in the population, when compared to solidarity among fellow citizens and other groups of the population that are considered to be closer and more needy.

Beyond these descriptive aims, our analyses will also be devoted to the identification of explanatory factors that support solidarity at large and European solidarity in particular. Also, in this regard, our survey followed knowledge on the subject previously accumulated in scholarship. Many studies converge in the observation that civic or social solidarity among citizens is highly patterned by a series of factors, such as socio-demographic traits and social-structural factors, political allegiances and social capital, religious beliefs and values among others. In order to systematise this evidence, we propose to group these studies into three strands of inquiry as follows.

A first source of inspiration comes from empirical research on redistributive preferences. These studies are interested in identifying those factors that guarantee the support of citizens for the welfare state at large and various social policies in particular, and thus spur the backing of institutionalised forms of wealth redistribution and help (Svallfors, 1997; Fong, 2001; Amat and Wibbels, 2009; Rehm, 2009; Alesina and Giuliano, 2011; Rehm et al., 2012). Studies have addressed a variety of social policy fields, among them pensions (Jaime-Castillo, 2013), poverty (Alesina and Glaeser, 2004; Scheepers and Grotenhuis, 2005) and immigration (Banting and Kymlicka, 2006; Mau and Burkhardt, 2009). More recent studies have expanded the focus onto the European level by analysing public support for redistributive policies within the EU (Mau, 2005; Baute et al., 2018; Gerhards et al., 2018). Evidence suggests that support for redistributive preferences is influenced by the respondents' position in society, e.g.,

the rational calculations tied to their state of vulnerability (Iversen and Soskice, 2001; Rehm, 2009) but that cognitive and cultural factors also play a role (Mau, 2005). Research has pointed to the role of religion and religiosity (Stegmueller et al., 2012; Lichterman, 2015), but also general beliefs about the causes of income inequality (Fong, 2001) and perceptions of deservingness (van Oorschot, 2006). With respect to the latter, research has identified several criteria that influence the judgement of deservingness: (1) the level of perceived responsibility and neediness, (2) social and spatial proximity and identity, including loyalties to ethnic groups, (3) the recipients' attitudes and the degree of reciprocation (receiving and giving) (van Oorshot, 2000, 2006; Luttmer, 2001; Alesina and Glaeser, 2004).

Second, the extensive field of studies on social capital and social cohesion is relevant for our discussion here since it focuses on topics that are closely interrelated to (transnational) solidarity. In this field, we find studies that are interested in forms of interpersonal help and support, which highlight the importance of (interpersonal and institutional) trust, and which emphasise the importance of memberships and active participation in civic associations and groups (Putnam et al., 2003; van Oorschot et al., 2006) for the development of reciprocal trust and the bedrock of well-functioning democratic societies. In all these areas, the assumption is that social capital is the necessary 'glue' for social cohesion (Jeannotte, 2000; Chan et al., 2006; Delhey, 2007), and thus also essential for understanding the conditions, structures and dynamics underpinning solidarity. Similar conclusions to the above-stated research have been made in regard to the conditioning factors. Civic engagement is more diffused within the middle and upper social classes—it is tied back to post-materialist values and religious beliefs; at the same time, it is less common in societies with social cleavages, political conflicts and more residual welfare state institutions (Kumlin and Rothstein, 2005; van Oorschot and Arts, 2005; Gesthuizen et al., 2008; Gelissen et al., 2012).

Finally, there are also lessons to be drawn from research on political behaviour in general, and social movement and protest participation more specifically. These strands of research focus on the political dimensions of solidarity. Scholarly writing seems to support some of the research assumptions presented before, by showing how political behaviour is patterned by social inequalities and forms of social exclusion (Brady et al., 1995; Kronauer, 1998). Moreover, studies agree on the fact that solidarity is also highly patterned by political preferences and orientation, e.g., along the left–right scale (Likki and Staerklé, 2014). Social movement analysis adds relevant knowledge by pointing to the importance of mobilisation processes led by existing organisations and groups, with the latter considered as collective means of mobilising, organising and perpetuating

(transnational) solidarity in terms of binding norms, commitments and behaviours (Smith 1997; Balme and Chabanet, 2008; della Porta and Caiani, 2011; Baglioni and Giugni, 2014). That is, being a member or follower of a certain initiative, association, organisation or movement implies a commitment not only to specific norms of solidarity, but also to palpable acts as well (e.g., membership fees and charitable donations, joint political protests, events of claims-making).

Based on these insights, we will try to identify those factors impinging on European solidarity, both in terms of activities and attitudes. We propose to test a number of hypotheses that emanate from the previously presented research strands. First, we assume that European solidarity is restrained to a population group with similar socio-demographic traits. The study of civic engagement, for instance, has shown that voluntary engagement tends to replicate the public/private divide by centring more strictly on male-dominated and public activities, to the detriment of female networks of care and help (Neill and Gidengil, 2006; Valentova, 2016). It has been shown that younger and older citizens are more active in social movements, following different grades of biographical availability in the life course (Beyerlein and Bergstrand, 2013). And we know that migrants are often involved in cross-national networks of support and help (Glick Schiller et al., 1995; Morokvasic, 1999; Recchi and Favell, 2009). Hence, we hypothesise that European solidarity action is more likely among men (H1); younger and older citizens (H2); and those with a migrant background (H3).

Second, we test whether solidarity is patterned by the differential access of citizens to valued resources and skills, such as income and education, by the respondents' social status and affiliation to social class (Verba et al., 1978; Cainzos and Voces, 2010), and by different levels of social exclusion and deprivation (Kronauer, 1998). Following the lines of previous research, we thus hypothesise that European solidarity activities will be more diffused among respondents with higher resources such as those from professional classes and those with higher levels of educational attainment (H4).

Third, solidarity should be supported through higher levels of social capital, following the propositions of research devoted to civil society and social movements (Jenkins, 1983; Putnam et al., 2003; van Oorschot et al., 2006). In this respect, we assume that European solidarity will be prevalent among respondents with higher rates of interpersonal trust and associational involvement in a wide range of social, cultural and political organisations (H5).

Fourth, European solidarity might be tied back to political activities and attitudes, such as conventional forms of political participation and

ideological orientations (e.g., Blekesaune and Quadagno, 2003; Amat and Wibbels, 2009; Likki and Staerklé, 2014). In this sense, we would expect that European solidarity might be more likely among respondents that are interested in politics (H6), regularly participate in elections (H7) and also among those who are more leftist (H8).

Finally, previous research has insisted on the role of normative orientations and collective identities that might condition levels of (European) solidarity (Luttmer, 2001; Komter, 2005; Stets and McCaffree, 2014). On the one hand, this might apply to religion and religiosity (Stegmueller et al., 2012; Lichterman, 2015), assuming that religious citizens might be more inclined to act in support of the needy, both in charitable and political terms, and thus also in support of fellow Europeans. On the other hand, it is very likely that citizens with a stronger sense of belongingness to Europe might be more often involved in acts of solidarity with fellow Europeans. Thus, we expect that European solidarity action is more likely among citizens with stronger religious attachments (H9) and a stronger attachment to Europe (H10).

2.3 EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM EIGHT EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

The online survey conducted by the TransSOL project in November and December 2016 provides systematic data to depict and analyse public support of European solidarity in its various dimensions. In the following, we will begin with a description of levels of civic solidarity in the eight countries under analysis, first for individual attitudes, and second in regard to reported activities, before we move on to an explanatory analysis that aims to test the hypotheses introduced above.

2.3.1 Public Support for European Solidarity: A Descriptive Account

The conceptual discussion of previous research has highlighted the need for a differentiated analysis of European solidarity. On the one hand, we need to distinguish between attitudes and reported activities; on the other hand, we have to compare levels of solidarity within Europe with other potential targets of solidarity, both in spatial and social terms. For this purpose, we will present findings on a number of questions that are closely related to solidarity preferences, before we move on to reported activities.

In regard to attitudes, we can rely on a series of questions that are aimed at measuring the public support for redistributive policies within countries,

Table 2.1 Eliminating inequalities. Eliminating big inequalities in income between citizens

	Not at all important (%)	Not very important (%)	Neither (%)	Fairly important (%)	Very important (%)
Denmark	5.4	12.7	33.1	32.8	16.0
France	2.4	5.8	20.3	37.5	34.0
Germany	2.0	6.2	22.8	39.3	29.7
Greece	1.8	3.5	16.7	35.1	42.9
Italy	1.4	3	14.9	40	40.7
Poland	2.6	5.4	21.7	36.5	33.8
Switzerland	3.2	7.9	22.3	38.9	27.7
UK	3.6	6.7	28.5	35.8	25.4
Total	2.8	6.5	22.6	37.0	31.1

Source: TransSOL (Horizon 2020, GA, no. 649435)

between EU member states and in relation to developing countries. As we will see, there is more diffused support for policies of redistribution between fellow citizens than with Europeans or non-Europeans. In fact, European citizens largely agree that solidarity is a high value to which a society should be committed. Our respondents were asked to identify the objectives and measures a fair society should be committed to. Here, we wish to present their responses on two items: eliminating income inequalities, and providing services guaranteeing that basic needs are met.

Table 2.1 shows that European citizens strongly support the general objective of redistributive public policies with 68% considering the reduction of big income inequalities as an important goal. National differences are not very strong, thus unveiling that there seems to be a shared consensus on the need to keep a social model alive everywhere in Europe. Smaller deviations occur between the more generous and the more residual welfare states: many more Danish respondents agree that the elimination of inequalities is not important (i.e., 18.1%), when compared to the small minority of Greek and Italian citizens agreeing to the same statement (i.e., 5.3% and 4%, respectively). These deviations seem to mirror the differing national contexts: in a more generous welfare state, the elimination of inequalities seems to be less important than in countries where the welfare state is less generous.

This broad public support for reducing income inequality shows that the idea of national solidarity seems to be widely diffused. And this support translates into a generalised support for political measures that aim to

Table 2.2 Meeting basic needs. Guaranteeing that basic needs are met for all, in terms of food, housing, clothes, education, health

	Not at all important (%)	Not very important (%)	Neither (%)	Fairly important (%)	Very important (%)
Denmark	1.1	2.2	14.5	44.0	38.2
France	1.4	2.6	14.6	39.7	41.7
Germany	1.0	2.8	11.8	36.2	48.2
Greece	0.8	1.3	5.7	23.4	68.8
Italy	0.9	2.4	11.8	31.6	53.3
Poland	1.8	3.6	17.8	33.0	44.0
Switzerland	1.4	3.0	14.8	34.2	46.6
UK	0.9	3.5	12.3	36.4	46.9
Total	1.2	2.7	12.9	34.9	48.3

Source: TransSOL (Horizon 2020, GA, no. 649435)

guarantee a universal provision of services that allow the basic needs of the population to be met, such as food, housing, clothes, education and health. Table 2.2 summarises the responses, reasserting that a fair society has to provide a wide range of services. 83.2% of all respondents agree that these policies are important, while only 3.8% do not attribute importance to this. Also, in this regard, national differences are minimal; only the Greek respondents rally even more consensually in support of this statement (92.2%).

These findings need to be put into context, because there are other spatial entities (the global and the European level) that might be pertinent targets of solidarity. In our survey, we aimed at measuring the degree of public commitment to the idea of supra-national solidarity by asking respondents whether they would support redistributive policy measures or programmes. Table 2.3 addresses the global level, and it shows that a strong majority of respondents supports the attempts of the EU to help countries outside Europe in fighting poverty and promoting development, with 62% supporting and only 14% opposing these measures. National differences are moderate, with Germans and Italians being most supportive (74% and 72%, respectively), and the Polish being the least committed (43%). With the exception of Poland, however, there is a majority of citizens approving this kind of measure across the European countries analysed here.

As we move to the European level, we see that solidarity policies are less supported, and that public opinion is much more divided when it comes to the question of whether governments should engage in solidarity measures

Table 2.3 Development aid. "The European Union provides development aid to assist certain countries outside the EU in their fight against poverty and in their development. How important do you think it is to help people in developing countries?"

	Not at all important (%)	Not very important (%)	Neither (%)	Fairly important (%)	Very important (%)
Denmark	4	8	26	43	19
France	5	9	32	38	16
Germany	3	6	18	46	28
Greece	6	7	21	44	22
Italy	4	7	18	46	26
Poland	5	16	35	35	8
Switzerland	3	8	20	44	25
UK	6	9	27	37	21
Total	5	9	25	42	20

Source: TransSOL (Horizon 2020, GA, no. 649435)

Table 2.4 Fiscal solidarity: pay public debts. "The EU is currently pooling funds to help EU countries having difficulties in paying their debts. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this measure?"

	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
Denmark	14	24	34	23	5
France	15	19	30	28	8
Germany	15	26	25	27	6
Greece	7	4	24	38	26
Italy	5	11	18	47	19
Poland	8	12	42	33	6
Switzerland	14	22	31	28	5
UK	18	23	25	27	7
Total	12	18	29	31	10

Source: TransSOL (Horizon 2020, GA, no. 649435)

within the EU, thus corroborating previous findings by Mau (2005). In the case of fiscal solidarity measures in support of countries with public debts, Table 2.4 shows that supporters outweigh the opponents only slightly (41% vs. 30%), with 29% undecided respondents.

Table 2.5 Fiscal solidarity: help refugees. "Would you support or oppose your country's government offering financial support to the European Union in order to help refugees?"

	Strongly oppose (%)	Somewhat oppose (%)	Neither (%)	Somewhat support (%)	Strongly support (%)
Denmark	16	17	25	27	14
France	26	19	29	21	5
Germany	12	17	24	35	12
Greece	24	15	23	31	8
Italy	21	25	28	23	4
Poland	18	19	33	24	5
Switzerland	21	25	20	28	6
UK	20	18	27	26	10
Total	20	19	26	27	8

Source: TransSOL (Horizon 2020, GA, no. 649435)

Table 2.5 further shows that with respect to supporting refugees, the group against offering more funds for EU measures slightly outweighs the supporters (39% vs. 35%), again with a considerable share of respondents saying they neither agree nor disagree. The support is somewhat stronger in countries requiring help in the relevant crisis: i.e., support is stronger in Greece and Italy with regard to public debt, and higher in Germany, Greece and Denmark with regard to refugees.

These findings need to be interpreted prudently, because questions related to the national, global and European levels are not strictly comparable. The questions about national solidarity address fundamental issues of solidarity (inequalities and basic needs), while the question on the support for developing countries is related to humanitarian concerns and does not explicitly touch on the question of what fair distribution of wealth is. In the European case, however, respondents had to react to very specific questions about burden-sharing. What the data show is that European citizens are more reluctant to agree to sharing costs and responsibilities. This more reluctant posture, however, seems to be in line with previous studies (i.e., Mau, 2006), while deviating from the more optimistic findings of a recent study by Gerhards et al. (2018), who detected a wide support for both fiscal solidarity and redistributing the responsibility for refugees (both above 60%). Findings here could in part be a result of different question wordings, given that the study by Gerhards et al. (2018) frames questions in more striking (severe debt crisis) and programmatic terms (the EU countries could tackle the refugee problem together), while

our own questions leave more discretion for people to disagree with the obligation to help other European countries in dealing with their debts and with refugees. Such results thus show that European solidarity is not a generalised and robust disposition within the European population, but is rather marked by ambivalence and differentiation.

These differentiations seem to be marked particularly with respect to ideas of redistributive justice (Arts and Gelissen, 2001; de Witte, 2015). European citizens seem to be more reluctant to agree to binding policies of fiscal solidarity, because they tend to believe that these measures might infringe principles of distributive justice. In fact, the motives of people for supporting fiscal solidarity within the EU (see Table 2.6) show that the largest group subscribes to the idea of reciprocity and deservingness. According to these views, solidarity in the EU is an exchange relation of giving and receiving help. Moreover, groups receiving help need to show that they are worthy of being helped. European solidarity suffers immediately when citizens have the feeling that support measures are one-sided and that they could be potentially misused. This finding mirrors evidence from other studies on solidarity, which argue that the readiness to support others and/or to endorse redistributive measures by state actors is tightly linked to the ideas of reciprocity, fairness, trustworthiness and deservingness (see Wheeless, 1978; Thielemann, 2003; Lengfeld et al., 2015). Citizens who believe that the recipients of solidarity might not be trustworthy and deserving, and might not be committed to fair and reciprocal relations of mutual help, tend to qualify their readiness to engage in solidarity themselves.

2.3.2 Reported Solidarity Action: A Descriptive Account

The previous findings show that European citizens tend to subscribe generally to the ideals of solidarity and to the need to take care of basic needs and to reduce social inequalities. Enthusiasm is less marked as soon as we move closer to specific policy measures designed to further European solidarity, possibly since citizens might feel that these measures could infringe principles of distributive justice. The degree of public support, however, decreases more once we move from individual attitudes to the level of reported activities. As expected, we see that fewer respondents have engaged in support for other people or groups in their daily life, when compared with the percentage of respondents supporting redistributive policies and/or objectives.

Table 2.7 summarises this finding by listing the percentage of respondents that indicates having engaged in various solidarity activities in support of other people or groups. This question was asked in regard to different

Table 2.6 Fiscal solidarity: reasons. "There are many reasons to state for or against financial help for EU countries in trouble. Which one of the following best reflects how you feel?" Multiple answers possible (in %)

	Denmark	France	Germany	Greece	Italy	Poland	CH	UK	Total
Financial help has also beneficial effects for the own country	20	13	15	19	16	24	13	15	17
It is our moral duty to help other member states that are in need	18	16	21	27	20	20	15	17	19
Member states should help each other, as somewhere along the way every country may require help	33	37	45	59	52	49	42	31	44
Financial help should not be given to countries that have proven to handle money badly	40	37	40	22	26	38	38	42	35
Don't know	19	17	9	8	13	11	12	16	13

Source: TransSOL (Horizon 2020, GA, no. 649435)

Table 2.7 Support of other people. "Have you ever done one of the following in order to support the rights of people/groups?"

	People in your own country (%)	People in other countries within the EU (%)	People in countries outside the EU (%)	Disability rights (%)	The unemployed (%)	Refugees/ asylum seekers (%)
Denmark	47	23	35	44	27	30
France	47	25	30	50	24	20
Germany	51	31	40	52	27	34
Greece	62	35	36	62	58	36
Italy	47	32	33	49	36	28
Poland	59	35	37	65	40	27
Switzerland	59	34	45	67	33	33
UK	38	19	25	35	19	22
Total	51	29	35	53	33	29

Note: At least one of the following was named: protest, donated money or time, bought or boycotted goods, passive or active membership

Source: TransSOL (Horizon 2020, GA, no. 649435)

addressees or target groups, ranging from fellow citizens to Europeans and non-Europeans. Additionally, we included three further groups of needy persons, namely the unemployed, refugees/asylum seekers and persons with disabilities, which were the focus of the TransSOL project's case studies. A majority of respondents have engaged in solidarity activities in support of people in their country (51%), including donating money or time, protesting and engaging in voluntary associations. At the same time, however, citizens are less inclined to support other Europeans through solidarity actions (29%), while a slightly higher percentage engaged in activities supporting non-Europeans (35%). As to the three target groups, citizens have been more committed to helping people with disabilities, and least to supporting refugees/asylum seekers, though in some countries the figures for support of the unemployed are lower (Denmark, Germany, the UK) thus generally corroborating empirical evidence from previous studies on deservingness (von Oorschot, 2000, 2006).

The levels of practised solidarity do largely correspond to what previous research has noted in terms of country specific levels of civic engagement (e.g., Bauer et al., 2013). Of particular interest is the fact that Greek and Polish citizens (and to a lesser extent also Italians) exhibit high levels of participation in activities in support of people within and outside their

Table 2.8 Support for other Europeans. "Have you ever done one of the following in order to support the rights of people/groups in other countries within the European Union?"

	Protest	Donate money	Donate time	Consumption	Passive membership	Active membership
Denmark	3.8	11.7	5.2	9.9	4.4	3.9
France	4.7	9.3	6.7	10.8	2.7	3.5
Germany	6.5	13.4	8.7	15.0	3.3	4.7
Greece	9.8	8.4	16.0	17.4	5.8	5.4
Italy	7.7	12.1	7.5	11.2	4.7	6.2
Poland	6.0	13.1	12.7	9.8	3.7	3.8
Switzerland	4.2	18.2	8.2	17.6	5.6	3.7
UK	3.2	8.6	4.0	5.4	3.3	3.0
Total	5.7	11.9	8.6	12.1	4.0	4.3

Source: TransSOL (Horizon 2020, GA, no. 649435)

country. These rates are close to – or even higher than – levels of solidarity in the other, supposedly more active countries. This could reflect the situation of crisis, uncertainty and transition experienced in these countries. Particularly in the case of Greece, we know that the economic and financial crisis since 2008 – as well as the so-called refugee crisis of 2015/16 – have unleashed a wave of social solidarity initiatives (Sotiropoulos and Bourikos, 2014; Giugni and Grasso, 2016; Grasso and Giugni, 2016, della Porta, 2018). Also, in other countries, the support for refugees and asylum seekers is rather high, particularly when considering that in previous studies these target groups tended to come far behind other potential recipients (e.g., van Oorschot, 2000, 2006). This observation applies to Denmark, Germany, Greece and Switzerland. The dramatic hardship experienced by refugees on their way to and through Europe to their countries of destination incited a wave of welcoming initiatives in many countries (Evangelinidis, 2016). In this sense, our data reveals that European citizens tend to deliver in terms of voluntary engagement, also in times of crisis and in emergency situations.

If we look at specific activities engaged in to support fellow Europeans (Table 2.8), we can see that membership in associations and participation in street protests are the least common practices, with fewer than 6% of respondents engaged in these actions. Donating money and buying or boycotting products tend to be the most common activities. The Swiss and Germans are more active in donating money and buy/boycotting, while the Greeks and the Italians are more strongly involved in protest activities, the donation of time and active involvement in associations in support

of other Europeans. These higher rates of activities seem to mirror the generalised mobilisation of Greek and Italian citizens in solidarity with others, thus demonstrating that there are links between target group and specific solidarity actions.

2.3.3 Drivers of European Solidarity: An Explanatory Account

Previous analyses have shown that solidarity practices in support of other Europeans are restricted to a smaller group of citizens, i.e., less than one out of three respondents (see Table 2.7). This observation leads to follow-up questions. Who are those citizens involved in European solidarity actions? Do those citizens share a common profile, e.g., in regard to socio-demographic traits, social-structural positions, political attitudes and cultural values? For this purpose, we wish to engage in a multivariate analysis that takes a closer look at the index variable measuring reported activities in support of other Europeans and explore the hypotheses introduced before with respect to possible drivers. To this end, we first look at descriptive statistics for each driver with respect to activism in support of fellow European citizens (Table 2.9) and then move to a regression model examining the relative importance of the various factors (Table 2.10).

With respect to our hypotheses, we look first at some preliminary evidence from the descriptive patterns. In Table 2.9 we can see that by and large H1 is confirmed in several countries with men more likely to engage in activism than women. With respect to H2, the pattern is generally one where the youth is most active, while older citizens are only more active in a couple of the countries. Confirming also H3, non-citizens are almost everywhere more active in support of other people in European countries. H4 is also confirmed by and large with higher resources in terms of education linked to greater engagement, although in some countries, individuals in some of the lower classes are also quite engaged in comparison with those in professional classes. We also find support for H5 with those more involved in organisations and with higher social trust more engaged. H6 on political interest is also confirmed, though evidence for H7 on voting is more mixed and more specific to some countries; H8 on leftist identification is also supported. H9 on religiosity and H10 on attachment to the EU are also confirmed with respect to greater engagement.

Finally, we turn to Table 2.10, which shows odd ratios and includes all variables discussed above to see which effects remain strong net of the others. Here we find strong age effects (H2) with middle aged and older individuals significantly less likely to engage than the younger respondents partially confirming biographical availability theorising. We also find strong effects (H3) of non-citizen status, thus also confirming findings from the

Table 2.9 Determinants of support for other Europeans (in %). "Have you ever done one of the following in order to support the rights of people/groups in other countries within the European Union?"

	DK	FR	DE	EL	IT	PL	CH	UK
Gender								
Male	23	28	34	38	35	35	33	17
Female	24	23	29	32	28	34	36	20
Age groups								
18–34	31	32	38	30	39	33	36	35
35–54	21	25	29	35	30	34	33	17
55+	20	22	29	38	29	37	35	9
Citizen status								
Not citizen	40	42	35	19	52	52	42	36
Citizen	23	25	31	35	31	34	33	18
Education level								
University+	30	29	36	41	41	38	40	26
Completed secondary	24	28	32	37	31	34	32	17
Less than secondary	18	21	25	30	30	34	33	14
Class chief earner								
Professional	30	31	35	41	42	45	41	24
Manager/Sr Adm	27	29	39	42	45	45	35	21
Clerical	17	23	28	42	29	33	32	15
Sales or Services	23	28	37	42	38	34	30	35
Foreman/Superv	30	24	25	39	43	37	31	10
Skilled Manual	26	30	25	31	24	31	33	13
Semi-/Unskilled	18	20	24	26	21	24	35	15
Other, e.g., farming	21	17	21	19	28	28	26	18
Association member								
No	15	19	23	26	18	26	26	9
Yes	39	49	51	44	57	61	45	48
Social trust								
No	22	23	25	32	28	32	30	15
Yes	25	35	43	46	42	44	41	25
Political interest								
No	18	19	19	29	21	28	29	11
Yes	27	30	35	40	38	38	38	23
Voted								
No	27	26	26	33	33	28	35	27
Yes	23	25	33	36	31	37	34	17
Leftist								
No	19	23	28	32	29	32	30	15
Yes	32	33	37	43	36	42	45	29
Religious								
No	22	23	28	41	29	33	32	16
Yes	26	31	40	31	35	36	39	26
Attached to EU								
No	19	21	25	31	27	26	30	10
Yes	31	30	37	42	37	39	46	33

Source: TransSOL (Horizon 2020, GA, no. 649435)

Table 2.10 Multivariate logistic regression on support for other Europeans (odds ratios)

Gender	
Male	RC
Female	.98
Age groups	
18–34	RC
35–54	.80***
55+	.66***
Citizen status	
Citizen	.67***
Education level	
University+	RC
Completed secondary	.98
Less than secondary	.98
Class chief earner	
Professional	RC
Manager/Sr Adm	.99
Clerical	.83**
Sales or Services	.97
Foreman/Supervisor	.86
Skilled Manual	.89
Semi-/Unskilled	.71***
Other, e.g., farming	.74***
Association member	
Yes	3.28***
Social trust	
Yes	1.39***
Political interest	
Yes	1.36***
Voted	
Yes	.92
Leftist	
Yes	1.34***
Religious	
Yes	1.17***
Attached to EU	
Yes	1.56***
Country	
Denmark	RC
France	1.42***
Germany	1.50***
Greece	1.91***
Italy	1.65***
Poland	2.00***
Switzerland	1.64***
UK	.78***
N	16,239
Loglikelihood	−8841.6309

literature in regard to the importance of transnational networks, into which citizens with a migrant background are more likely to be involved. We find some support for H4 on resources with respect to class with those in clerical, semi or unskilled manual and other (e.g., farming) occupations all less likely to engage than individuals in the professional classes. Associational involvement increased the likelihood of engagement by over three times and more socially trusting individuals were also more likely to engage (H5). Those politically interested were more likely to engage (H6), as were those with leftist values (H8), religious beliefs (H9) and those with strong attachments to the EU (H10). We also found some interesting country differences with citizens in six countries more likely to engage than those in either Denmark or the UK (the latter to an even lesser extent).

2.4 CONCLUSION

The various crises affecting the European Union since 2008 have underlined the need for solidarity between European governments. In addition, the consequences of the Great Recession and the immigration of refugees fleeing from war, persecution and poverty have seemingly called for immediate remedial actions also by European citizens themselves. The aim of this chapter was to provide empirical evidence on two main questions related to this observation. How strong is this private form of social solidarity within the European citizenry? And how generalised is the readiness of Europeans to help others in need?

The empirical evidence presented in this chapter gives a mixed picture about transnational solidarity in Europe. We found that a strong majority of respondents supports the attempts of the EU to help countries outside of Europe in fighting poverty and promoting development. And European citizens strongly support solidarity-based (redistributive) public policies, with almost three-quarters considering the reduction of big income inequalities as an important goal. In other words, the traditional European social model is not questioned by respondents. However, the strong public support of institutionalised solidarity in terms of state-led policies of humanitarian aid and social redistribution does not necessarily translate to vivid support for solidarity within the EU.

In fact, the readiness of the European population to support solidarity between member states of the EU is more limited when addressing financial assistance to countries with public debts and higher numbers of refugees. Additionally, citizens are involved in solidarity activities to a considerable extent, but they are engaged more in support of fellow citizens – and people living outside of Europe – than on behalf of fellow

Europeans. The findings show that European solidarity is guiding the behaviour of a significant minority of respondents, i.e., one in every three European citizens. However, for the majority, solidarity in Europe is rather a matter of subsidiarity, and thus a matter of national policies and solidarity support among fellow citizens.

Proponents of European solidarity activism are younger and in a privileged occupational situation; they have acquired more extensive social capital in terms of associational involvement and trust, they lean towards the political left, are more religious and identify clearly with Europe. At the same time, less privileged citizens are less likely to be engaged in European solidarity, even though this does not mean that they are explicitly against it. For them, national solidarity seems to be a more reliable and important issue. Consequently, European solidarity still seems to be patterned along social and cultural divisions (see also Gerhards et al., 2019).

These findings generally confirm what scientific studies have said about the levels and drivers of civic engagement, voluntarism and political behaviour at large (Wilson, 2000; Cainzos and Voces, 2010; Bauer et al., 2013; Grasso, 2013; Giugni and Grasso, 2015). And this means that European solidarity does not greatly deviate from the picture research has painted about social and civic solidarity in general. Before this backdrop, we might expect that the general challenge faced by proponents of European solidarity is rather its low level of institutionalisation within the EU. Perhaps many Europeans do not see the EU as an accomplished political community establishing and guaranteeing common rights and mutual obligations. European solidarity seems to be more diffused among citizens sharing a more inclusive and open conception of European citizenship (Kurowska et al., 2019; Lahusen and Theiss, 2019). Giving solidarity more institutional weight within the EU might also be an instrument of reaffirming that solidarity is an important baseline of European citizenship.

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3. Waves of transnational solidarity organisations in times of crises: actions, obstacles and opportunities in Europe

Maria Kousis, Angelos Loukakis, Maria Paschou and Christian Lahusen

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Although transnational solidarity organisations have a long history and cover a wide repertoire of activities (Davies, 2016), there is a lack of up-to-date empirical, systematic and cross-national studies on Europe. This is particularly true when examining recent transnational solidarity activism in fields exposed to severe alterations and grievances, such as migration and unemployment. This analysis is overdue and promises important insights, given the recent crises that have affected the European Union and its member states and have thus spurred solidarity activities to a considerable extent. In fact, the financial and refugee crises of the past decade have witnessed the rise of solidarity organisations within and beyond national boundaries, including citizen initiatives, producer-consumer networks, time banks, cooperatives, NGOs, volunteer organisations, social movement groups/organisations, and unions. Such organisations often surface in response to hard economic times (Moulaert and Ailenei, 2005; Kousis and Paschou, 2017; Kousis, Kalogeraki and Cristancho, 2018), but are likely to sustain their activities for groups in need also in less turbulent periods.

The recent refugee crisis of 2015 has accentuated the importance and growth of transnational solidarity organisations. Contentious as well as solidarity movements across the globe, which address refugee and migrant needs, are an important and growing form of a social movement, in need of scholarly attention (Ataç et al., 2016), as they challenge political actors and publicly voice their demands. Older movements, such as the unemployment and labour movements, also illustrate the importance

of transnational solidarity and the impact of the crisis. Yet, disability activism studies usually focus on the national level (Soldatic and Grech, 2014; Hande and Kelly, 2015). By contrast, recent work on transnational unemployment/labour solidarity addresses its global dimension outside of the European context (McCallum, 2013; Scipes, 2016), as well as within Europe (Lahusen, 2013; Baglioni and Giugni, 2014). Nevertheless, there is a dearth of systematic empirical, cross-national studies on transnational solidarity organisations in these three fields, for the recent crises, with a few exceptions (Kanellopoulos et al., 2018; Loukakis and Maggini, 2018; Zschache et al., 2018).

This chapter's overarching aim is to provide empirical evidence about the development and profile of citizens' collective solidarity mobilisations.[1] It wishes to address a question that has captured the attention of scholars of social movements and civil societies alike: When, where and how do collective forms of action in support of deprived groups emerge? Moreover, given our interest in transnational solidarity, we can rephrase this question: When, where and how do organised forms of transnational solidarity emerge in Europe? Previous research has provided rich insights into these questions, primarily by highlighting the relevance of two supportive factors: the existence of grievances within the environment in which citizens, civil society organisations and social movements operate, and the existence of resources upon which these citizens, groups and organisations can tap. Social movement scholars have tended to place more weight on resources and organisational capacities, arguing that grievances are a necessary but not sufficient condition for arousing collective action (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Edwards and McCarthy, 2004; Kriesi et al., 2007). Ultimately, the mobilisation and organisation of collective (solidarity) action depends on the retrieval and assemblage of resources and other organisational capacities. In this chapter, we wish to combine both strands of reasoning, because both are essential to understand the dynamism of solidarity activism and its scope of action. In fact, if we want to understand the formation and expansion of organised transnational solidarity activism in times of crises, we need to point to the mobilising force of external social grievances (a 'pull-factor') and of internal resources (a 'push-factor').

The chapter draws on data on organisations and practices of transnational solidarity, such as citizens' initiatives and networks of cooperation among civil society actors. Such initiatives appear to have become especially visible in the past few years owing to the strong impact of the economic crisis following the drastic cuts in social services and heavy losses in income and jobs (Kousis et al., 2017). Data is available for three different issue fields: migration, unemployment, and disability. The first two fields were included in the analysis because they have been severely affected by

the economic and financial crisis since 2009 and the so-called refugee crisis of 2015-16, while the field of disabilities seems to have been affected indirectly. The chapter uses a random sample of 2,408 Transnational Solidarity Organisations (TSOs) deriving from Action Organisation Analysis (AOA) (Kousis, Giugni and Lahusen, 2018), as well as an online-based survey sent to 1,108 TSO representatives (TransSOL, 2016).

The chapter will present the empirical evidence in different steps. After introducing the methods and the data upon which this analysis is based, we will deal with longitudinal and cross-sectional analyses. On the one hand, we will present descriptive evidence on the diachronic waves of organised solidarity activism during crises, by field and country, in order to corroborate that the evolution of the field of TSOs at several levels of action (local, national and European) is strongly driven by grievances within specific contexts. On the other hand, we will present the findings of an explanatory analysis of TSOs that is geared to identify those factors that tend to promote and/or inhibit transnational solidarity action in its European scope. This section will be helpful in identifying those organisational capacities that seem to enable waves of cross-national solidarity mobilisation. Finally, the chapter will address also the social and political constraints, within which TSOs and transnational activism have to subsist. It provides insights into the opportunities and constraints that facilitate or challenge solidarity work. The main findings are, finally, discussed in the concluding section.

3.2 THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The empirical study of citizens' initiatives and organisations is a challenging venture, given the informality of many of these groups and the flexibility and fluidity of the organisational field as a whole. With the aim of mapping this field in a reliable and encompassing manner, we had to develop methodological and empirical instruments that are able to paint an authentic picture of these fields in all countries under study. For this purpose, the TransSOL project developed and applied tools to study TSOs through Action Organisation Analysis (AOA) and a web-based survey of highly visible TSOs,[2] as described below.

3.2.1 Action Organisation Analysis

The unit of analysis applied under AOA is the innovative transnational solidarity initiative/organisation (TSO), a specific formal or informal group of initiators/organisers who act in the public sphere

through solidarity events with visible beneficiaries and claims on their economic and social wellbeing – including basic needs, health, and work – as depicted through the TSO website/online sources (TransSOL, 2016; Kousis, Giugni and Lahusen, 2018). Innovative solidarity reflects responses to actual social everyday challenges, mostly via direct action, in times of crises and embracing online means to promote their cause. According to our criteria of selection, organisations are 'transnational' in terms of at least one of the following categories: (a) organisers with at least one organiser from another country, or supranational agency, (b) actions synchronised or coordinated in at least one other country, (c) beneficiaries with at least one beneficiary group from another country, (d) participants/supporters with at least one participating or supporting group from another country, (e) partners/collaborating groups with at least one from another country, (f) sponsors, with at least one from another country or a supranational agency (e.g. European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF)), (g) frames with cross-national reference/s, (h) volunteers with at least one volunteer group from another country and (i) spatial, at least across two countries (at the local, regional or national level).

Excluded from the random sample are organisations which were: (1) irrelevant to our three fields and devoted to other areas of work (e.g. elderly care, child care), (2) exclusively organised (or led) by the state, or the EU, or private corporations, (3) non-solidarity oriented, and (4) with a non-transnational, purely local/national orientation, i.e. without any of the nine transnational features (a)–(i) mentioned above (TransSOL, 2016; Kousis, Giugni and Lahusen, 2018).

The randomly selected TSOs are solidarity-oriented in terms of at least one of the following categories: (a) mutual-help, mobilising or collaborating for common interests (bottom-up, solidarity exchange within group), (b) support or assistance between groups, (c) help or offer of support to others and (d) distribution of goods and services to others (top-down, solidarity from above). Second, we were interested in 'innovative' groups insofar as their solidarity work was responding to actual social challenges, and they were engaged in communication via the Internet. Third, our aim was to map the field of solidarity work with these target groups in its transnational dimension. For this purpose, we opted for an inclusive sampling strategy that is not only interested in civic groups directly engaged in 'transnational solidarity', but also open to all organisations indirectly tied into this sector via their partners, supporters or beneficiaries. This sample allows those factors that distinguish the degree of involvement into transnational solidarity work to be identified. Our sampling process yielded 2,408 randomly selected cases (300 in each country, 100 for each

field). These cases then entered the next stage in the research process, namely coding.

3.2.2 Online Organisational Survey

Aiming to shed more light on TSOs based on the views of their representatives, a targeted sample of 1,108 high-visibility TSOs was constructed following systematic Google searches. The web-based survey was conducted in May and July 2016, and involved organisations, groups and networks organising transnational solidarity actions mostly related to the three fields, but also to similar ones (TransSOL, 2016). Following a cycle of reminders, a total of 144 TSO representatives participated in the online survey, leading to an average response rate of 13% by the end of July 2015, when the survey closed (this response rate is not uncommon in organisational surveys).

The questionnaire offers detailed information on the mechanisms, activities and links of the involved collective actors, the ways in which they address transnational solidarity with people confronting hardships, and the different types of required resources (TransSOL, 2016).

3.3 PORTRAYING TRANSNATIONAL SOLIDARITY ORGANISATIONS: A DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT OF SOLIDARITY WAVES DURING HARD TIMES

The methodologies developed allowed us to gather empirical data that paints a diachronic portrayal of TSOs, the spectrum of the solidarity activities they engage in, and the conditions that influence their development. The data not only provides a clear overview of the major characteristics of solidarity groups and organisations, but also sheds new light on their exposure to grievances linked to the different crises of the past decade. In general terms, the data show that TSOs tend to respond to upcoming and pressing grievances. In fact, the evolution of the organisational field is uneven across countries and issue fields, depending on where and how grievances emerge more severely.

3.3.1 Who Are the Innovating TSOs? Types, Starting Year and Actions

Our data help to delineate the types of TSOs involved in transnational solidarity. Based on our examination, we find (Figure 3.1) that overall NGOs are the most frequent actor, as seen in almost half (46.3%) of all TSOs. This is a non-surprising finding as similar studies have shown that

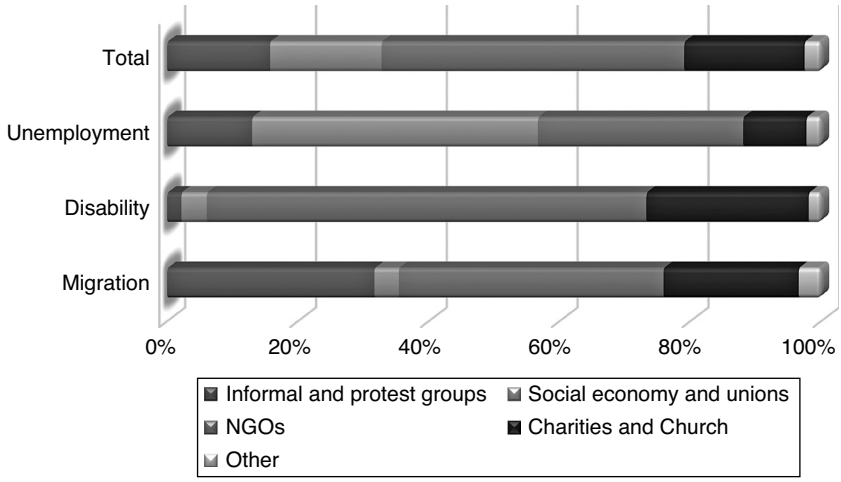

Figure 3.1 Type of TSOs per field

European civil society is dominated by formal humanitarian organisations such as NGOs (Warleigh, 2001; Lahusen et al., 2018). Other expected significant solidarity providers are the Church and charities as well as social economy enterprises and unions (18.4% and 17.0%, respectively). While unions are an expected actor – as solidarity is the most promoted value of the workers' movements from the late nineteenth century – the appearance of social economy enterprises is a later development. Social and solidarity economy TSOs also promote equality and rights for the unemployed, people with disabilities and migrants, especially during hard times, and offer an alternative to the dominant capitalist modes of production and consumption.

This picture changes when examining the types of organisations across our three TSO fields. In the unemployment field, the prominent type of TSOs is that of social economy enterprises and unions (43.7%) – an expected finding as unions are organisations centring on offering solidarity to unemployed or precarious workers. Moreover, there are also NGOs which are mostly oriented towards solidarity services to unemployed people, as well as informal and social movement/protest groups which are mostly active in street politics. Similarly in the disability field, NGOs maintain the leading position, not only engaging in solidarity actions, but also advocating for the rights of people with disabilities in national and EU policy arenas. Finally, in the migration field, solidarity is provided by a very interesting combination of formal and informal TSOs. More specifically, informal citizen and protest groups are very important solidarity

providers in the migration field as they comprise almost one third of the migration TSOs. This finding strongly reflects the grassroots solidarity offered by local communities that mobilised as a response to the refugee crisis of 2015-16. Informal mobilisation, however, is but one side of the coin, as formal organisations such as NGOs, charities and Churches were equally important solidarity providers during the same period.

3.3.2 How Does the Organisational Field of Transnational Solidarity Evolve? Depicting Diachronic Waves

Our data illustrate the diachronic changes within the field of transnational solidarity by making use of the TSOs' starting year. Figures 3.2–3.5 provide an integrated picture of these waves. Looking at the aggregate level that combines TSO data on all eight countries (Figure 3.2), three main findings emerge. First, it is noteworthy that overall, TSOs in the three fields have roots as far back as the early 1900s, with noticeably increasing waves immediately after World War II and the 1950s and 1960s, especially in the unemployment and disability fields. Second, unemployment TSOs and disability TSOs have existed longer than migration TSOs. Third, the top peaks in the numbers of new organisations in the three fields are different: disability organisations were the most numerous from the early 1980s to the early 2000s; unemployment organisations were most widespread from the late 1970s to the early 2010s; and the new migration TSOs escalated in the most recent period, from the 1990s to the present, but with an outstanding peak in the past three years – especially in 2015. Thus, the overall growth of these fields in the eight countries as a whole seems to be concomitant with societal developments. The dynamics tend to reflect the urgency of the various crises affecting the EU, both in terms of accelerating economic downturns and increased rates of immigration.

The picture, however, changes when we disaggregate at the country level by field, as seen in Figures 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5, reflecting different national historical and political-economic contexts. Country differences emerge in the starting year of migration-related TSOs, seen in Figure 3.3. A more even spread with no visible increases in the recent period is seen in Denmark and the UK, in contrast to Germany and Greece with the highest peaks of new TSOs since 2010 and moderate increases in Switzerland and Italy. It is interesting to note that our data reveal earlier peaks in the starting year of TSOs in the 1960s and 1980s for France and Italy, respectively, as well as in the late 1980s and early 1990s in Poland.

Different patterns emerge when looking at disability-related TSOs in Figure 3.4. Compared to the migration ones, the peaks in these newly established TSOs appear in earlier periods and have undergone a decrease

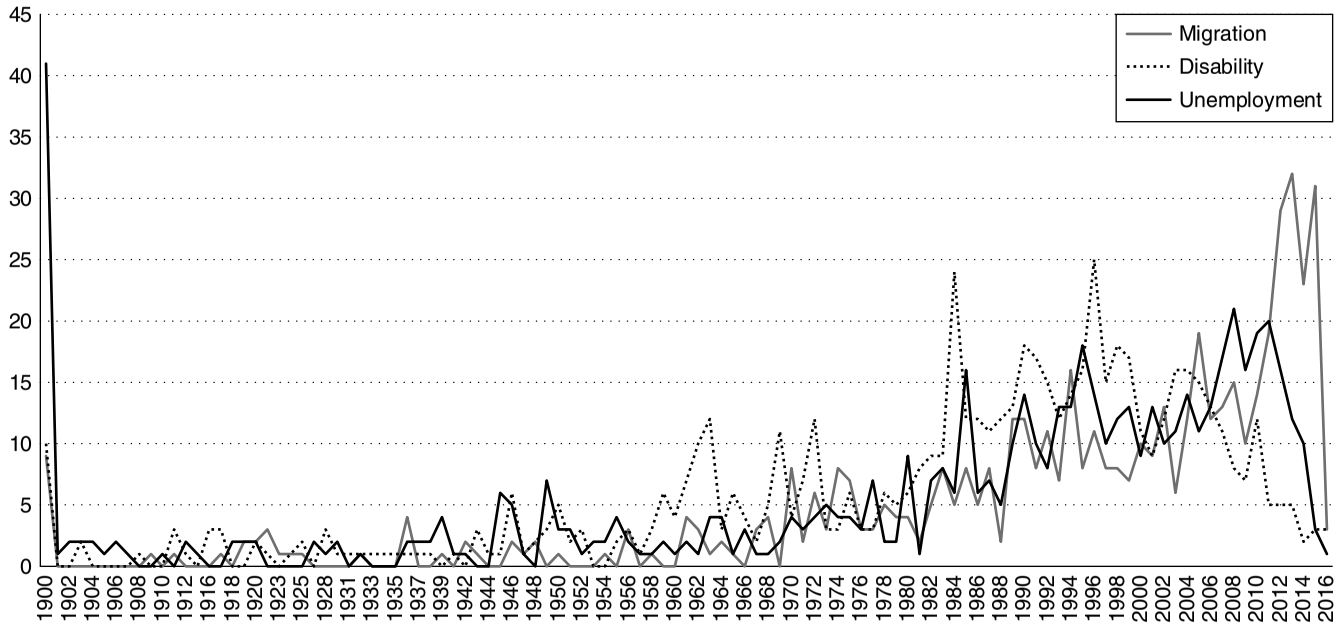

Figure 3.2 Starting year of TSOs by field

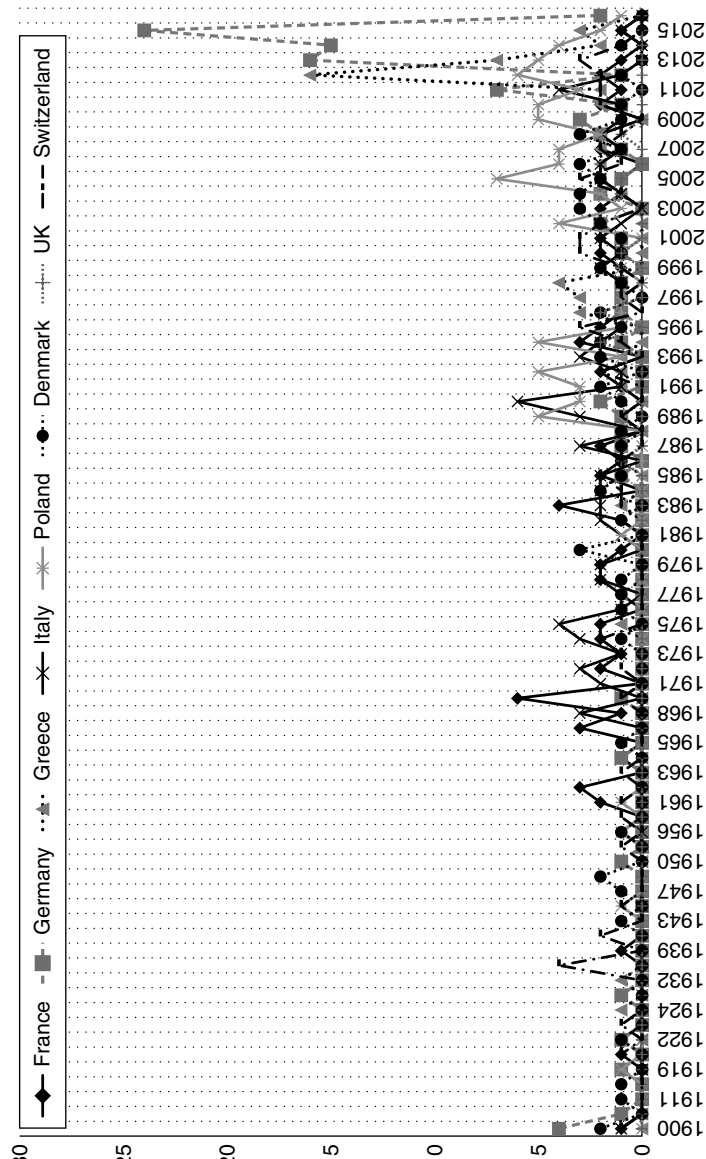

Figure 3.3 Starting year of migration TSOs by country

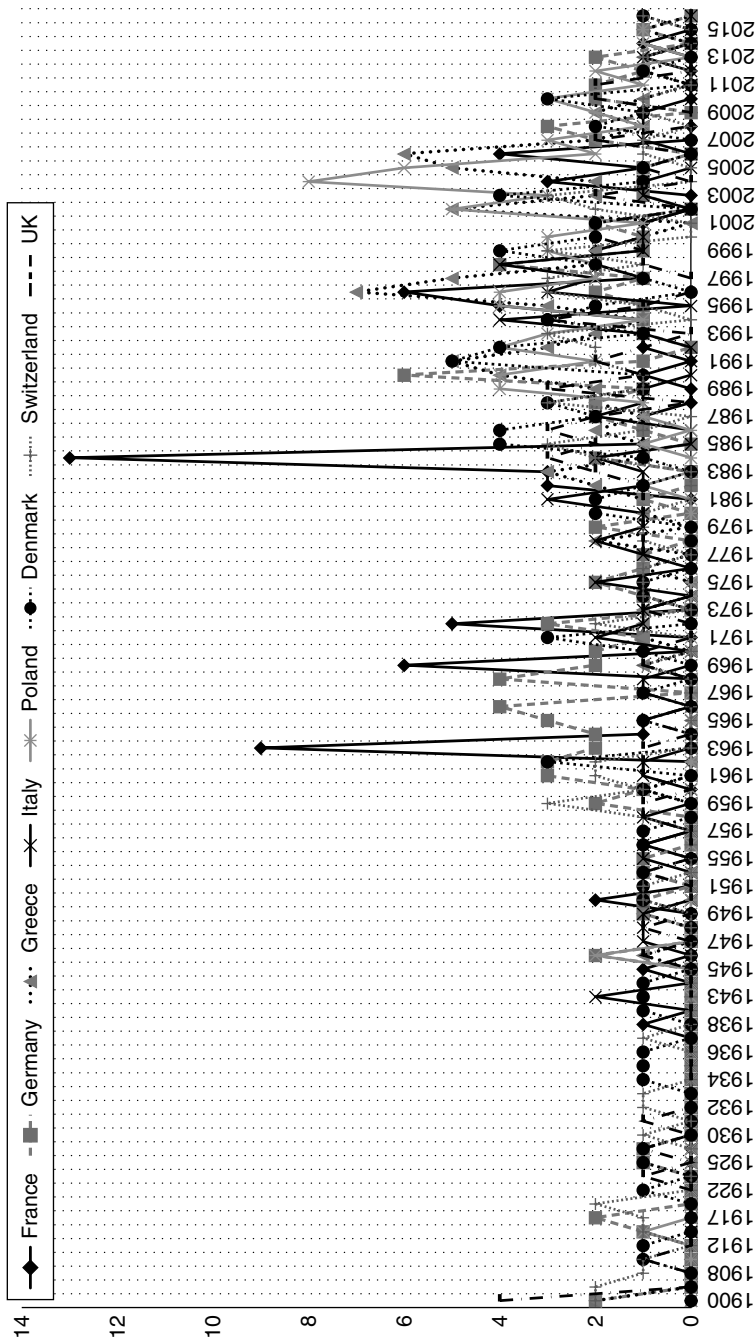

Figure 3.4 Starting year of disability TSOs by country

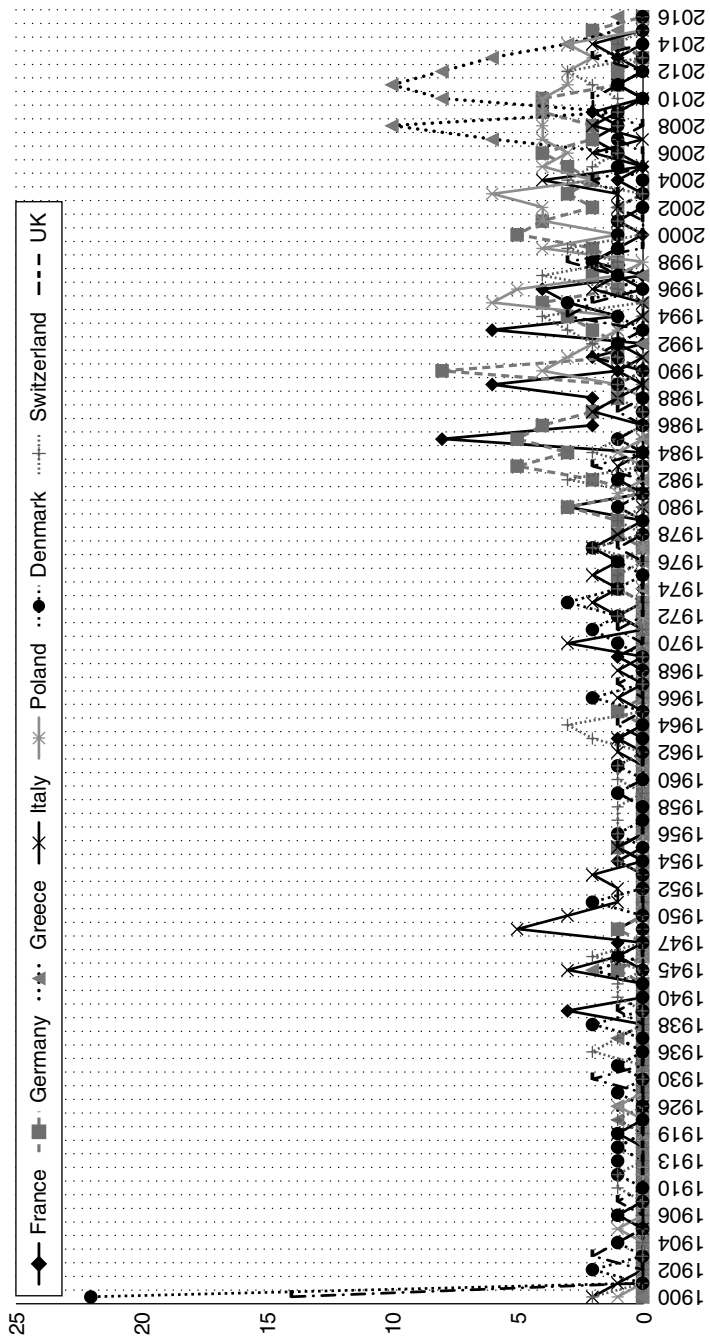

Figure 3.5 Starting year of unemployment TSOs by country

or very slow growth since 2008. More specifically, significant peaks are visible for France and Germany from the 1960s to the early 1980s, while moderate peaks are seen for the UK, Switzerland, Italy, and Denmark from the 1980s to 2003, but slightly later for Greece and Poland, from the late 1980s to 2007.

An even more intriguing pattern emerges when examining unemployment-related TSOs in Figure 3.5. These show a longer history, as more of these organisations were established prior to 1900. With the exception of moderate increases in these labour-related TSOs in Italy (1947–53) and Switzerland (early 1960s), a durable growth is seen since the 1980s, with markedly high peaks in France, Germany and Poland. This steady growth, however, has decreased since 2007, with the exception of Greek unemployment TSOs which underwent their highest peaks from 2007 to 2014 – an expected finding in the country with the highest unemployment rate.

To sum up the findings described above, the timelines overall show that different types of crises were always a part of the European social and political reality. Our findings reflect specific moments of 'crises' that augment grievances and thus mobilise organised transnationally oriented solidarity. Thus, we argue that these solidarity mobilisations are closely related to the intensity of the crises. This means that TSO emergence varies depending on national contexts. The more pervasive the impacts of crisis are in a country, the more likely the solidarity mobilisations will be. The most prominent case that supports our argument is that of TSOs in the migration field. Our data clearly illustrate that countries most severely affected by the so-called refugee crisis of 2015-16, such as Greece and Germany, are those witnessing the rise of new TSOs. Similarly, in the unemployment field, peaks in the starting year of the TSOs reflect a crisis of the labour market in different countries. Thus, some countries have the oldest groups (Denmark and the UK), in France and Germany the growth reacts to phases of mass unemployment and mass mobilisation (Lahusen, 2013), and in Greece it reflects the ongoing impacts of the economic crisis since 2010. Finally, illustrating peaks of new TSOs for most of the countries between the late 1980s and early 2000s, the disability field appears to be affected less clearly by the crises of the past decade. The peaks may reflect austerity policies and implementation of cuts in provisions and benefits to their citizens. Overall, our findings indicate that TSOs, especially in the migration and unemployment fields, were established in order to assist those who were left out of state-provided social safety nets. Thus, we could speak of TSOs as Europe's fire brigade, with the subsequent implications this has.

3.3.3 Which Transnational Solidarity Activities do Citizens Organise? Addressing Urgent Needs in Local Contexts

The economic and refugee crises of the past decade that have shaken Europe and left part of the population with unmet needs, are mainly due either to state cuts and austerity policies or decreasing labour market opportunities, especially for migrant/refugee groups. In response to these conditions and the related rise of grievances, many TSOs have organised activities, which mirror the increased demand not only in services, but also in political advocacy.

The spectrum of activities organised by TSOs are seen in Figure 3.6. Overall, most prominent are those activities that are related to urgent needs, i.e. provisions meeting basic daily needs such as food, shelter, clothing, medical services. This is an expected finding, not only for refugees arriving in Europe, but also for people with disabilities facing the consequences of a shrinking welfare state. Next in prominence across the three fields are public sphere dissemination activities which include drafting reports, people's media, raising awareness actions and educational activities for the public. Economy related activities, such as job training programmes, financial support, products and service provision at low prices, fundraising

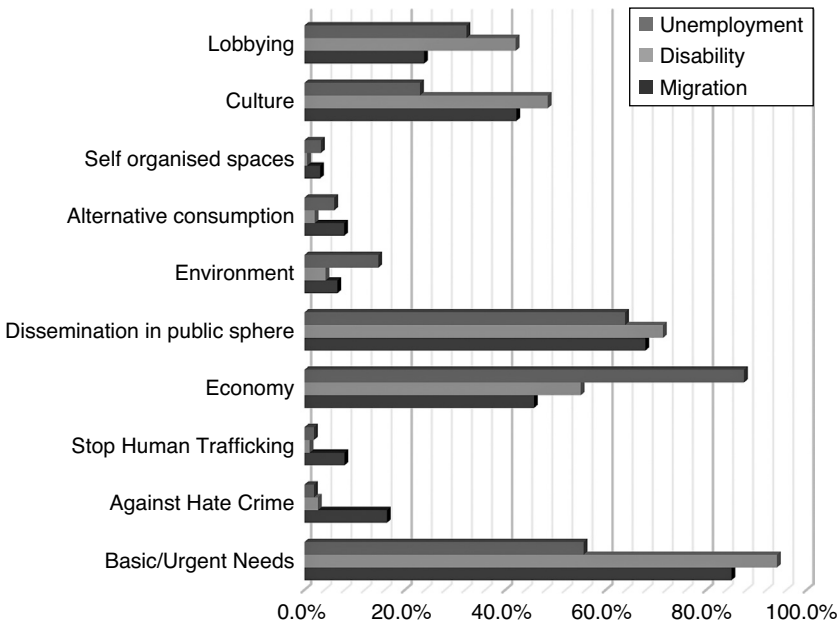

Figure 3.6 Actions of TSOs by field

activities, second-hand shops and bazaars, as would be expected, are the most prominent activities among unemployment organisations (87.5%). A possible explanation of the high frequencies of this category could be the deregulation of labour markets and the rise of the gig economy in European countries as a tool for increasing competitiveness, especially in the Eurozone area. Following in frequency are culture-related (including art, sports and social hangout actions) and lobbying activities. Both are common among TSOs in all three fields, but they are more frequent for disability TSOs (48.4% and 42%, respectively). With respect to the first, this could be an indication that there is an increased demand for cultural activities, which are, for a significant part of Europeans, related to socio-cultural contexts and may be avenues of support for non-cultural activities. Finally, activities against hate crimes and human trafficking can be found especially in migration/refugee-related TSOs, and are most likely linked to the 2015-16 refugee crisis.

The scope of action depicted in Figure 3.7 illustrates that as the frequency of TSOs decreases, the scope of action increases. Thus, citizens' transnational solidarity is mainly manifested at the local level, with more than seven out of ten TSOs being active at this level, irrespective of their field of action. Having in mind that the most prominent action category was that of urgent needs, this finding is possibly an indication that transnational solidarity is mostly expressed in helping specific people in specific circumstances. Moreover, this finding also mirrors the grassroots orientation of transnational solidarity initiatives and social movements as well as an attempt by these initiatives and groups to find collective ways to

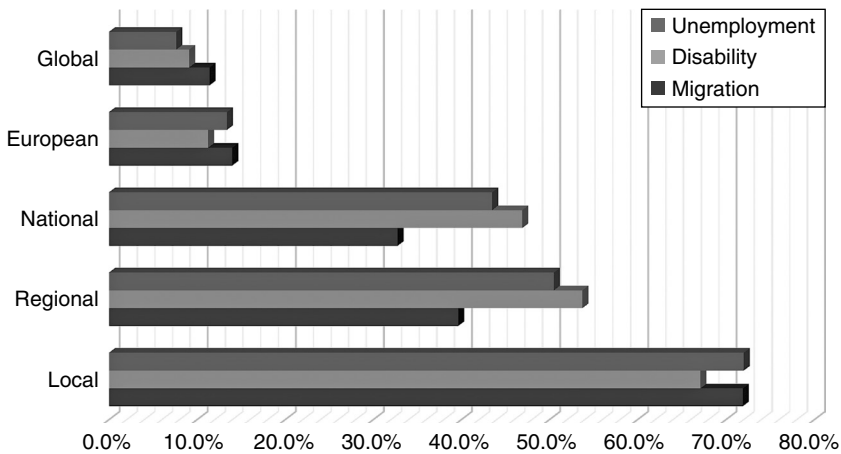

Figure 3.7 The scope of TSO activities by field

respond to hard times at the local community level. Regional and national level activities are organised by almost 40% of the TSOs, mostly by those active in the unemployment and disability fields. This may reflect their resourced organisational structures, compared to the local ones. As for the activities beyond borders, these are the less frequent ones, with 13% of TSOs being active at the EU level and approximately one out of ten at the global level; migration TSOs are more transnationally oriented than the TSOs in the other two fields. The relatively small number of TSOs that organise activities abroad indicates that (a) organising activities beyond the state is an arduous task requiring considerable resources (material, informative, networking and human) which only a few organisations can afford, and (b) the number of people with unmet basic needs has been increasing in European states as a consequence of both the economic and refugee crises of the past decade.

3.4 UNDERSTANDING THE CONDITIONS OF ORGANISED EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY: THE RELEVANCE OF RESOURCES IN TRIGGERING COLLECTIVE ACTION

The descriptive account presented above has given first indications that organised forms of transnational solidarity are driven by external grievances, given the uneven evolution of the field across countries and issue-fields. In this section we move to a cross-sectional analysis of the coded website data of 2,408 TSOs in order to highlight those internal factors that tend to promote organised solidarity activism, but here, the focus will be exclusively on the European scope of activity, as this is a more demanding venture. For this purpose, we can make ample use of hypotheses and findings discussed within the literature on civil society organisations and social movements. In this regard, we offer four propositions all of which relate to different forms of organisational capacities: formality, partners and supporters, the age and experience, values and identities, and action repertoires.

3.4.1 Applying Existing Knowledge to TSOs: Explanatory Factors and Research Assumptions

Abundant works in the field of organisation and social movements indicate that formality is related to the scope of activities undertaken by organisations. More specifically, Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Jenkins, 1983) examines structural factors,

as well as the availability of the organisation's resources and networks, in order to analyse the emergence of social movements and their characteristics. In general, the most common organisational resources are those of personnel and finances (Edwards and McCarthy, 2004; Kriesi et al., 2007). Thus, previous research has shown that centralised and formally structured organisations mobilise resources and achieve goals more effectively than decentralised and informal groups (Jenkins, 1983; Edwards and McCarthy, 2004). Based on this approach, as similar studies have shown (Lahusen et al., 2018; Loukakis and Maggini, 2018) we can expect that European solidarity is strongly affected by the structure and resources of the organisations we have coded, regardless of their field of activity. Therefore, our first hypothesis is as follows:

H1: *European-level activities by TSOs are related to the degree of their formalisation, given that TSOs with higher levels of formality have greater organisational capacity and skills to engage in activities beyond national borders compared to informal groups.*

There is also a rich literature in the field of social movements about the importance of networks and partners as factors that foster transnational mobilisation (Imig and Tarrow, 1999; Kousis and Eder, 2001; della Porta and Caiani, 2009). Most of these studies focus on the diffusion of mobilisation and action repertoires from one country to another and the impact of Europeanisation. Other studies, (e.g. Ruzza and Bozzini, 2008) indicate that EU-level associations and networks play a role in the coordination of transnational protest activities. Similarly, in the solidarity mobilisations field, Lahusen et al. (2018) point out that the existence of transnational partners foster the Europeanisation of solidarity. This can be summed up in our second hypothesis:

H2: *TSOs that mention EU or its agencies as partners are more likely to engage in European-level activities than those that do not mention EU-related partners.*

The economic crisis and austerity measures have reduced funding opportunities for civil society organisations, with funding from both state and private donations becoming unstable and unreliable, while at the same time competition over scarce resources is increasing. A study of the impact of the 2008 economic downturn in the USA on the nonprofit sector suggests that the sector overall experienced declining revenues (Salamon et al., 2009). At the same time, we also know that new organisations face greater risk of failure and are more vulnerable towards changes in their

environment (McCarthy and Wolfson, 1996). Empirical evidence confirms that older organisations can weather an economic crisis more effectively (i.e. without witnessing a decrease in their financial resources) and more often, compared to the newly established ones (Raffo et al., 2016). Thus, we expect that younger TSOs, which are established during hard economic times, will have fewer resources and, therefore, fewer opportunities to engage in European level activities. To sum up, our third hypothesis is:

H3: *TSOs established during the 2008 crisis are less likely to be engaged in European-level activities than the TSOs established before the crisis.*

Solidarity as a core element of TSOs' strategic targeting is a broad and multidimensional concept. One can distinguish between a vertical approach and a horizontal approach to solidarity. The former (top-down) focuses on service provision and is largely related to philanthropic values towards helping others; the later (usually bottom-up) is governed by the idea of reciprocity and mutualism (see Uba and Kousis, 2018). Horizontal solidarity is tied to political aims towards the empowerment of communities and social change, while in its scale shift it bears "on fractured and contested political struggles and communities" (Featherstone, 2013: 37–8), being subject to political conflict (Passy, 2001). Hence, the Europeanisation of TSO activity is most likely related to a horizontal approach of solidarity, which prioritises a set of political aims, such as the promotion of universal rights, policy reforms at the European level and transnational networking. Contrary to this, vertical or pragmatic approaches of solidarity are more likely to be tied to particular (proximal or transnational) localities. This leads to the formulation of the following hypothesis:

H4: *The adoption of a solidarity orientation grounded on the principle of reciprocity and mutual help is expected to predict engagement in activities at the European level.*

Organisations select their action repertoires based on structural conditions (McAdam, 1983) and shifting political opportunities (Tarrow, 1998), their available resources (Freeman, 1979) and their interpretations of the institutional environment in relation to the efficacy of particular forms of action (Carmin and Balser, 2002). Conventional and institutionalised approaches, such as lobbying, litigation and educational practices are more diffused among highly formalised, rationalised and professionalised TSOs (Piven and Cloward, 1977; Staggenborg, 1988; Hwang and Powell, 2009), when compared to those engaged in contentious action repertoires. Added to that, the forms of action employed by organisations are channelled by

the resources they receive, thus "reflecting the interests of their funders" (Carmin and Balser, 2002: 367; see also McCarthy et al., 1991). Having all these assumptions in mind, we expect that TSOs engaged in conventional action repertoires and strategies such as lobbying, awareness raising and policy change should be more inclined to expand their scope of action towards other countries, as they might count on additional resources and a more supportive political context. Contentious groups will remain more strongly tied to a local or national scope of activities, given that their protests will be linked to specific demands, addressees and constituencies. Based on the above, the final hypothesis is:

H5: *TSOs that apply conventional approaches to achieve their goals are more likely to be engaged in European activities than those that use protest as a strategy.*

In order to empirically test the theoretical hypotheses we have presented above, we operationalised the relevant factors by means of a number of independent variables that might foster actions with a European scope: degree of formalisation, year of establishment, partnership with EU and its agencies, solidarity approaches, organisational strategies and contextual control variables (countries). Before describing the independent variables, it is necessary to define what we considered TSO engagement in European level actions to be (dependent variable): they reported activity in at least one EU or non-EU European country, and/or they have beneficiaries in at least one other European country (both EU and non-EU), and/or they took part in European-level protest actions, and/or they tried to defend their beneficiary/participants' interests and rights via European courts. Finally, we ran three different logit regression models, one for each field.

Regarding the independent variables, formality is measured through a list of eleven organisational features, i.e. having: a board, president or leader, secretary/administrative assistant, treasurer or someone responsible for finance, trustees, paid staff, a written constitution, spokesperson/media-PR, general assembly, neighbourhood/open assembly and committees for specific issues. We constructed a composition index based on these features and then divided the TSOs into three categories that measure formality based on their scores in this index: *Low* (includes the TSOs which scored 0 to 3; it is the reference category), *Medium* (scores 4 to 6) and *High* formalised TSOs (scores above 6). Moreover, in order to check the crisis effect on TSO activity, a dummy variable was created based on whether the TSO was founded before (0) or after (1) the financial crisis. The period after 1 January 2008 was defined as the crisis threshold. In order to test whether partnership with EU agencies foster European level activism, we

merged three variables that measure if TSOs mention Migration- and/or Disabilities- and/or Unemployment-related European/EU agencies as partners, and we created a new dummy variable which measured if the TSO indicates the EU or its agencies as partners (0 = no, 1 = yes). Regarding the solidarity approaches, there are four possible approaches (from bottom-up to top-down) in our codebook: Mutual help, Support/assistance between groups, Help/offer support to others (altruistic), as well as Distribution of goods and services to others.

Regarding the strategies that the TSOs apply, our codebook specified a number of both conventional and contentious actions. In the specific model we chose, we opted to test the effect of four possible ways by which TSOs try to achieve their goals, using dichotomous variables for (a) protest actions, (b) raising awareness, (c) lobbying, and (d) policy reform (in our codebook there are seven variables that indicate policy change as strategies; we merge these via the and/or command and create a new dichotomous variable).

Finally, our analysis aims to ascertain whether transnational solidarity actions are distributed evenly across countries. For this purpose, we included dummy variables specifying the country (with France as the reference category). The third part of the analysis is also descriptive and it is based on the results of the organisational online survey with 144 representatives of high visibility TSOs operating mostly across borders (TransSOL, 2016). In this part we present the core changes that the organisations felt after the crisis, the increased demands that they faced, as well as the constraints that they had to overcome in order to continue their activities.

3.4.2 Explanatory Analysis: The Determinants of European-Level Activities across Countries and Issue Fields

Table 3.1 presents results for all three models, which include odds ratios as well as goodness-of-fit statistics (Nagelkerke pseudo-R-squared values). The explanatory power of all three models is about 25% to 30%, i.e. satisfactory for organisational data. The analysis shows that only a few factors tend to impact on transnational solidarity activism.

Two hypotheses cannot be validated. Highly formalised TSOs (H1) are slightly more active at the transnational level, but the effect is not statistically significant. Interestingly, TSOs of moderate formality are less likely to be engaged in such activities than the informal TSOs. These findings contradict expectations (Jenkins 1983; Hirsch, 1986; Kriesi et al., 2007), as they indicate that varying degrees of formality are a less decisive factor in predicting engagement in transnational solidarity. Obviously, informal groups are almost as often involved in these activities, probably due to

Table 3.1 Logit regression models for transnational activities for each field

	Migration	Disability	Unemployment
Formality*			
Medium	−0.322	−0.830*	−0.316
High	0.194	0.116	0.010
EU partners	0.779**	0.230	0.072
Established during crisis	−0.245	−0.039	−0.440
Mutual help	−0.322	0.512+	−0.328
Collaboration	0.419	0.662*	1.278***
Altruistic	−0.043	0.012	0.126
Top down	0.139	0.329	0.417
Collective/protest action	−0.499	0.047	0.868*
Raise awareness	0.450	0.484	0.430
Lobbying	0.387	−0.313	−0.244
Policy reform	0.743*	1.031**	0.758*
Country*			
Germany	−2.699***	1.595**	1.342*
Greece	−1.617**	0.015	−1.223
Italy	−2.112***	−0.224	0.252
Poland	−0.778+	−1.632	1.697**
Denmark	−1.558**	1.283*	1.921***
Switzerland	−3.787***	−0.520	0.599
UK	−22.053	−0.640	−0.353
Constant	−0.002	−3.281***	−3.579***
pseudo R2	0.294	0.312	0.261
N	534	636	594

Notes:
+p=0.1, *p=0.05, **p=0.01, ***p=0.001
*low formality is the referenced category, *France is the reference category

increased grievances across countries. Also, the time of establishment (H3) is not a significant factor. Table 3.1 shows that TSOs active in transnational solidarity are less often established during the crisis, thus conforming to our expectations, but this effect is not statistically significant. This finding may reflect the fact that a considerable share of groups were founded in direct reaction to the crises and were also engaged in transnational solidarity.

A number of organisational factors tend to have a beneficial impact on transnational solidarity actions. The existence of European partners (H2) is positively associated with engagement in European-scope actions, but the effect has only statistical significance for the migration TSOs, thus refuting research assumptions expressed in the literature (Ruzza and Bozzini, 2008; Lahusen et al., 2018; Loukakis and Maggini, 2018). This

means that TSO engagement is not fully dependent on European partners, as they may react to the immediate calls to action within an environment dictated by grievances.

Solidarity approaches are clearly related to the engagement of TSOs in activities with European scope (H4). In fact, horizontal solidarity orientations (i.e. driven by reciprocity and mutuality) are more likely to lead to European activities, compared to vertical ones (unilateral help provision). In detail, Table 3.1 indicates that only two out of the four solidarity approaches are statistically significant for the European activities of the TSOs. Starting with the mutual help approach, findings show that they increase the likelihood of European engagement only in TSOs active in the disability field while they are negatively associated with the other two fields, yet without being statistically significant. On the other hand, a collaborative solidarity approach increases the odds of European activities engagement for both disability and unemployment TSOs without touching those of the migration field. As for the remaining two solidarity approaches (altruistic and top-down), they do not significantly affect any of the TSOs, regardless of field.

Action repertoires also influence readiness to engage in European solidarity, but they do not corroborate our expectations in all respects. Activities geared towards policy reforms clearly increase the likelihood for European level engagement of TSOs in all three fields. Also protest as a strategy increases the probability of European-level activity, but only among the unemployment TSOs, while it decreases the likelihood for those engaged in the migration field, even though the effect is not statistically significant. This finding is an indication that a contentious action repertoire might be more diffused among specific issue-fields, in this case in the ambit of TSOs addressing unemployment issues. This seems to reflect the impact of labour movements and of labour conflicts in times of accelerated economic crises, the deregulation of labour markets and austerity measures.

Summing up the findings from our explanatory models, the solidarity approach and the repertoire of action seem to be the best predictors, albeit for specific fields. Unemployment and labour-related TSOs are committed to a horizontal understanding of solidarity that involves norms of reciprocity and mutualism and that is linked to more political and contentious activists. This leads them to develop cross-national forms of activism – independently from the question of whether these organisations are formal or informal, new or old. The fact that these organisations have more partners underlines the horizontal approach. Migration TSOs are influenced by their EU partners in carrying out their transnational solidarity activities, and these activities are also driven by a more conventional action repertoire aiming at policy reforms.

3.5 STRUGGLING WITH CIRCUMSTANCES: A DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT OF CONTEXTUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS FOR TSOs IN TIMES OF CRISES

Previous findings have shown that organised solidarity activism – particularly those activities with a European scope – depends on a number of conditions. In its local, national and European expression it is more probable in contexts marked by collective grievances and urgent needs. With respect to its European scope of activity, it is additionally patterned by organisational capacities and resources. These findings raise questions about the contextual opportunities and constraints that might endanger transnational solidarity activism. To answer this question, we present the findings from the online organisational survey data, as they help to demonstrate with which opportunities and constraints high visibility TSOs have been faced since 2010, under the two crises. Overall, findings document that in times of crises, needs increase but resources are scarce, while constraints increase at the same time. This situation reduces the capacity of TSOs to fulfil their mission effectively.

In terms of funding, Figure 3.8 demonstrates that state funding decreased, while non-state and EU funding increased. EU funding is reported as a stable and reliable funding source unaffected by national austerity policies, which restrict the availability of national funds. Migration- and disability-related TSOs received more funding from non-state sources, while unemployment-related TSOs expressed equal degrees of increases

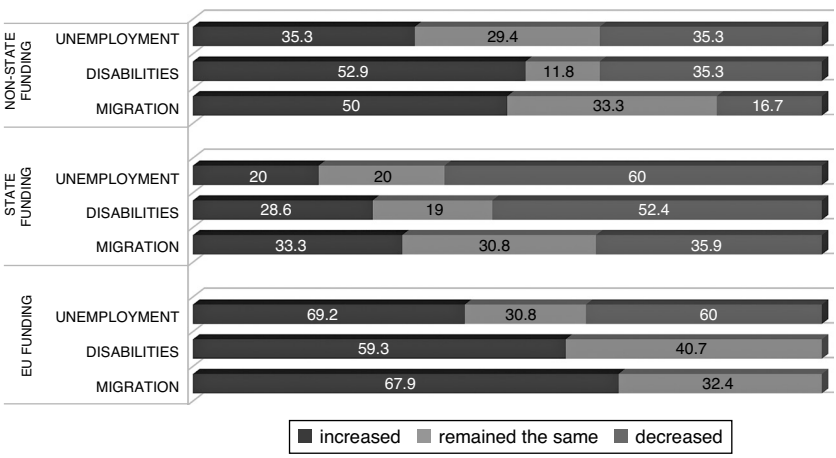

Figure 3.8 Experienced changes in funding sources, by field

and decreases in non-state funding. As for state funding, more than half of unemployment and disability TSOs experienced a decrease, while for migration TSOs, there is a balance in their responses on the direction of change. In regard to EU funding, none of the migration TSOs faced decreases in EU funding, while in addition, the majority of TSOs in the field of disability and unemployment experienced an increase. These findings might reflect changing funding opportunities: while national funding seems to be on the retreat, possibly as a reaction to the economic crisis and austerity measures, EU funding becomes a more important source. Thus, our findings provide further evidence for the detrimental effects of the economic recession on the operation of civil society organisations (Pape et al., 2016), but most importantly on their Europeanisation, with respect to funding due to budget cuts at the national level in the context of the eurozone crisis (Sanchez Salgado, 2017). In addition, the relatively higher levels in the increase of funding reported by migration organisations relates to their involvement in the management of the recent refugee crisis (Feischmidt et al., 2019).

As for the changes related to the action repertoires of the TSOs and the frequency of their actions, Figure 3.9 shows that needs have increased with a simultaneous increase in the number of TSO beneficiaries or participants. At the same time, TSOs try to conduct more activities in

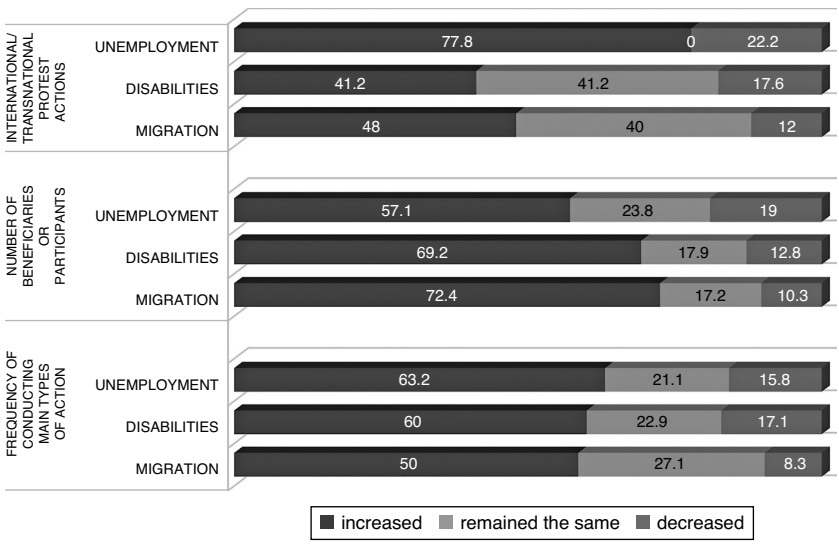

Figure 3.9 Experienced changes in the form of demand/need (protest, direct action, no. of beneficiaries), by field

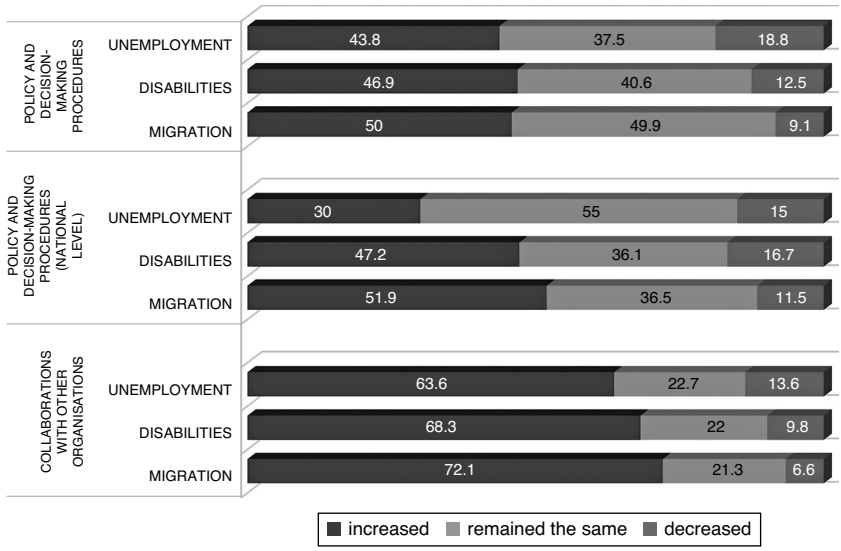

Figure 3.10 Experienced changes in policy outreach, participation and other collaborations, by field

order to meet these needs and engage in transnational protest in order to increase their effectiveness. Engagement in transnational protest actions and campaigns increased for the vast majority of the unemployment TSOs and for a significant part of TSOs from the other fields. This is an expected outcome (especially for the unemployment TSOs) as protest is a common strategy in times of austerity and increased inequalities. At the same time, more than half of the TSOs point out that the number of their beneficiaries increased, while only 10–20% declare that they support fewer people than they used to prior to the crisis period. As for the frequency of the conducted activities, approximately six out of ten TSOs, irrespective of their field, mentioned that they organised more actions compared to the pre-crisis period. The responses to these last two questions are a clear sign that both crises increased the number of beneficiaries or participants in need of support. Moreover, they demonstrate the reflexes of civil society in assisting those in need during times of increased inequalities.

Moving to TSO collaboration tactics shown in Figure 3.10, the crisis appears to be an opportunity for networking with similar organisations and groups. As the availability of the resources in periods of crises is limited, TSOs have to collaborate with other organisations in order to maintain their activities. Indeed, almost seven out of ten TSOs, regardless of their field, mentioned that they cooperated more with other organisations

during the crisis period than they did in the past. The crises also increased TSO engagement in policy and decision making procedures at the national and supranational level. At the supranational level almost half of the TSOs mentioned that they have increased their participation in policy making procedures, while approximately four out of ten mentioned that they participate at the same level as always. Moving to the national-level decision making procedures, the situation is almost the same for TSOs in the migration and disability fields. In contrast to the unemployment TSOs, half of them mention that there is no change in participation and a third that they participate more than they did in the past.

3.6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Our analysis of TSOs takes an integrated approach, as it was our attempt to better address their development through time and provide an enhanced understanding of their actions, obstacles, opportunities and constraints. Findings show that solidarity activities are widely diffused across Europe and are carried out by a wide network of active citizens, civil society groups and social movement organisations. However, the development of the organisational field of TSOs and the intensity of its activities depends strongly on both contextual and organisational factors. Citizens and civic groups tend to step up their efforts in contexts marked by crises and grievances, with their European activities being especially dependent on organisational capacities and resources.

With regard to the dynamism of the organisational field, our data portray a lively picture of civic solidarity across Europe, showing that transnational solidarity, which has its roots in the beginning of the twentieth century, has grown considerably in the recent period, seemingly trying to keep up with societal challenges within the European Union. Transnational solidarity organisations and groups are committed to confronting a number of problems and hardships such as poverty, social inequalities, exclusion and discrimination. They do so by committing to activities that address various sectors of our society including politics, the public sphere, the judicial system, and civil society. TSOs nevertheless remain rational decision makers "to achieve instrumental and cultural goals" (McAdam et al., 1988 in Carmin and Balser, 2002: 385). Furthermore, the evolution of organised transnational solidarity across fields and countries mirrors heightened grievances in times of economic crisis and austerity policies and the subsequent mobilisation of civic support and political protest.

The analysis of organisational capacities and contextual opportunities

and constraints allows us to draw a number of lessons. First, citizen groups and social movement organisations operate mainly at the local level, thus responding to urgent needs and demands in their immediate environment. Additionally, these groups tend to cherish the grass-roots level as a primary focus of activity, more strictly linked to constituencies and more immediate in its accountability. This is not an indication that transnational solidarity is absent within the wider field of TSOs. The fact that most TSOs are of local scope leads to the proposition that European solidarity is mainly a question of cross-national cooperation between local groups (Tarrow, 1998; Mattoni and della Porta, 2014; Lahusen et al., 2018). This is known in movement studies as soft diffusion, or, in our understanding as soft transnationalism (see Chapter 8), when compared to the hard transnationalism of fixed and formal supra/transnational organisations. There might be indications that this soft form is more flexible in adapting to upcoming grievances, and more compatible with the advocatory grass-roots orientation of many movements. Further analyses are needed on the above, as well as on the sustainability of these civic efforts, and the circumstances under which they can and will prolong their work during times of extended insecurities and crises.

Second, solidarity organisations reach out beyond their national borders and they are also exposed to processes of Europeanisation (Monforte, 2009; della Porta and Caiani, 2009), which imply, to a certain degree, a scale shift from the local and national to the European level. However, this process is highly conditional on a number of factors, i.e. from organisational capacities to the use of external opportunities. TSO representatives report an intensification of their actions due to increased demand, particularly in meeting urgent needs, and to the broadening of vulnerability and the increase in beneficiary groups. Given that competition over scarce national funding is harsh, organisations are apparently turning their attention to European funding, which appears to be a more stable and reliable source of support allows for an expansion of their collaborations beyond national borders. Hence, the various crises affecting European countries seem to give impetus towards a Europeanisation of solidarity activism. Organisational features that would have been expected to predispose a scale shift, such as formality, established partnership with EU institutions, and the age of TSOs, do not seem to play a decisive role, given that also younger and more informal groups are actively engaged in cross-national solidarity.

Finally, it appears that European activities are driven by a specific understanding of solidarity. TSOs with transnational activism believe in a conception of solidarity that emphasises horizontal elements of mutualism and reciprocity. These TSOs are also more likely to engage in

EU partnerships, while they are more contentious and political in terms of their action repertoires. In this sense, it seems as though transnational solidarity organisations are promoting an alternative vision of European solidarity that professes the idea of empowerment and cross-national cooperation at the grass-roots level. While TSOs call on governments and EU institutions to take responsibility for societal problems and crises-related grievances, they are at the same time voicing the need to construct and mobilise an active and critical citizenship across borders.

NOTES

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2. Qualitative data based on in-depth interviews were also used in TransSOL's Work Package 2; however, they are analysed in a related comparative volume (see Lahusen, Kousis and Zschache (eds), 2020, Palgrave) and are not used in this chapter.

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4. The welfare dimension: understanding trans(national) solidarity in Europe

Simone Baglioni and Tom Montgomery

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In times of crisis and polarisation, the value of being committed to mutual support, particularly in the absence of any legal obligations to do so or communitarian connections (Musso, 2015; Supiot, 2015) is one of the crucial components that can hold society together, along with welfare state policies and, more broadly, public interventions. We can best comprehend this type of support through the concept of solidarity and we can most easily recognise it through its organisational expressions, either formal or informal, via collective action. These organisational expressions of solidarity provide the vehicles through which collective action can reach beyond divisions and strive towards a common goal that brings benefits to vulnerable groups at different geographical levels, whether that is neighbourhoods, countries, continents or beyond.

In this chapter, we explore how civil society organisations (CSOs) operate as vehicles of solidarity with three groups of vulnerable people: the unemployed, disabled people, and migrants/refugees. Our focus is on those organisations which, through involvement in service delivery across a range of policy domains primarily connected to welfare state provision, promote an idea of solidarity based on the sharing of common resources to address salient needs at a time of economic crisis. However, we will also consider the advocacy capacity of civil society and their work to support people's engagement across a range of policy-oriented activities through direct action and forms of mobilisation, while maintaining our primary focus on welfare state service-oriented CSOs. In fact, our interest in the intervention of civil society organisations in the welfare state supply chain stems from our recognition of the critical role that the welfare state plays in the promotion of solidarity as a set of collectively funded actions to support people across a range of needs. Moreover, we focus on the

welfare state because civil society organisations have become increasingly important actors in the implementation and sometimes even in the design of welfare state services across Europe. These developments have led to a body of literature that speaks to the existence of a 'welfare mix' (Evers, 1995) in order to illustrate the intertwinement of public sector and civil society actors in the design and delivery of welfare state policies. More recent developments in both research and practice has led to the emergence of the concept of co-production in which the welfare state is characterised as being in formal partnerships with civil society or third sector actors to meet the needs of a variety of service users (Brandsen et al., 2014).

Our analysis took place during a period of economic and financial strain in Europe, when public resources have been curtailed by policies designed to reduce public budgetary deficits while societal needs have increased, in particular the needs of the three groups which form the focal point of our research. Unemployment increased in many European countries as a result of the 2008 onward economic and financial crisis, disabled people have seen their demands remaining more and more unanswered due to reduction in public expenditures (Montgomery and Baglioni, 2018), while the number of refugees has grown in some countries as a consequence of the civil war in Syria, as well as the broader political instability in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. Against this backdrop, it is worth considering whether the role of civil society has contributed towards keeping welfare state solidarity alive, and whether there have been nuanced variations in these forms of solidarity among European countries.

Furthermore, we are interested in exploring if such a civil society-driven solidarity spans across boundaries, that is, if it qualifies as a transnational, cross-European form of solidarity. The existence of organised transnational solidarity remains contested in the academy. Several scholars have contributed critical perspectives regarding the existence and functioning of a truly European sphere of solidarity: most of this criticism has focused on the relationship between the institutions of the European Union and the weak capacity of organisations to shape EU policies and discourses in comparison to the ways in which they have been shaped by the EU. One critique has focused on the way EU institutions have opportunistically used civil society, that is, by confining solidarity organisations to an ancillary role of policy implementation rather than policy innovation and design. The existence of a genuine European civil society has been called into question from those perceiving EU funding mechanisms to have become a trap which contributes towards silencing the voice of solidarity organisations and one where only tame organisations are allowed to operate (Warleigh, 2001). Others have pointed to a European sphere of solidarity being de facto reduced to a Brussels-based elite of professionals

primarily devoted to lobbying (Greenwood, 2007). Similarly, scholars have also criticised the selection bias operated through the modus operandi of European institutions according to which only the most resourceful and financially astute organisations succeed (Lahusen, 2014; Baglioni, 2015). Finally, there are also scholars who consider the question regarding the existence of a European sphere of solidarity as a bogus question, given that most organisations are nationally embedded rather than operating across Europe (van Deth, 2008). Following such critical voices, one would be inclined to conclude that official policy rhetoric about the existence of a transnational or European-wide sphere of solidarity qualifies as a participatory myth (Smismans, 2003). The latter understanding of the shortcomings of a transnational or pan-European civil society might be confirmed by the type of analysis, such as ours, which focuses on the activation of civil society in the field of the welfare state, given that welfare states have remained primarily nationally bound. However, should we find evidence revealing truly transnational forms of activism occurring in this area, we might then provide vindication in favour of those arguing that the European Union has had a transformational effect on national welfare states, leading to their Europeanisation or destructuring/restructuring (Leibfried and Pierson, 1995; Ferrera, 2005).

Any potential transnationalisation of civil society may have occurred, paradoxically, as a consequence of the economic and financial crisis that has affected Europe since 2008 and the arrival of would-be migrants and refugees on the southern shores of the continent in 2015–16, due to civil war in Syria and political destabilisations in the Middle East. These phenomena have in fact summoned the potential existence of a transnational sphere of solidarity in Europe. Mobilised through collective actions to support people in desperate need or to make claims for different socio-economic policies, the existence of a truly transnational mode of solidarity (Florini, 2000; Khagram et al., 2002), however marginal or fragile, seems not only possible, but tangible. This is not to dismiss the reality that most forms of organised solidarity may be nationally embedded. On the contrary, even those organisations which have identifiable transnational dimensions may be rooted in the local as opposed to the global. These organisations that are engaged in transnational solidarity may operate across the boundaries of the national and transnational and, consequently, our efforts to investigate these forms of solidarity learned to embrace such nuance.

The chapter unfolds as follows: in Section 4.2, we present our research methods after which we discuss our findings, firstly, by considering the forms of solidarity (4.2.1), and secondly, its territorial scope (4.2.2). Finally, in Section 4.3, we elaborate the conclusions we have drawn from our analysis.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

To properly examine the existence of transnational solidarity in Europe – and by solidarity we mean, as specified in Chapter 1 of this volume, "dispositions and practices of mutual help or support, be that by personal contributions or by the active support of activities of others, tied to informal and/or institutionalised groups" – we undertook an approach that sought to answer two key research questions: (i) How is solidarity operationalised across Europe? (ii) What scales of action are solidarity organisations engaged in across Europe? To begin to answer these questions we conceptualised transnational solidarity as a spatial dimension resulting from three sets of intertwined factors related to civil society organisations: (a) organisational formal structures, that is, those functional dimensions of organisations that allow them to operate in policy advocacy and service delivery, such as human resources, funding, decision making mechanisms; (b) organisational activities, including the range of actions organisations are involved in, with a particular focus on specific campaigns and events connected to the three fields of disability, unemployment and migration/asylum; and (c) relational dimensions, that constitute organisations' social and political connections and networks (Figure 4.1 summarises our research framework).

Building on this conceptualisation, we then turned to our unit of analysis; those organisations operating in this space – which we define as Transnational Civil Society Organisations (TCSOs). Our research design focused upon organised solidarity occurring at the edges between national and transnational boundaries to ascertain the degree of solidarity at the

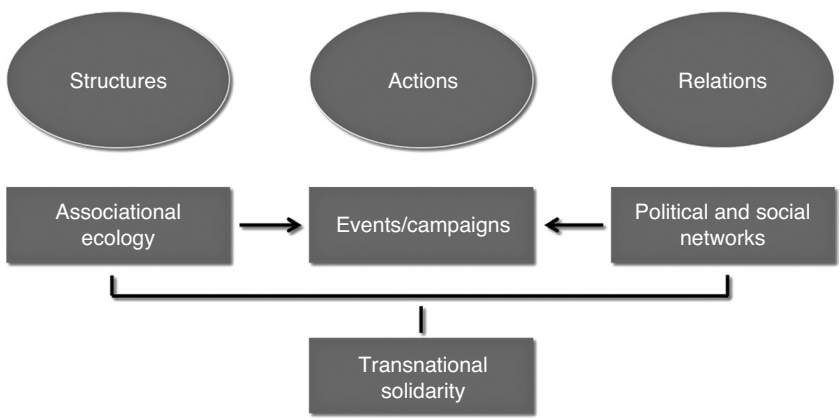

Figure 4.1 Research design framework to study TCSOs

national and supranational levels while capturing the different dimensions such collective action might involve. In doing so, we pursued a sampling strategy to uncover the most relevant and cutting-edge examples of how solidarity is operationalised. To accomplish this, we relied upon two sources to provide us with research participants. For interviews conducted by our colleagues across the eight European countries of our study, we asked teams to sample those organisations based in their country that could be drawn from the memberships of transnational umbrella organisations and networks. Following this sampling approach, teams conducted at least 30 interviews per country comprising at least ten interviews across each of the fields that formed the focus of the TransSOL project: migration, disability or unemployment. In addition, three campaigns that were either monothematic and thus focused upon one of the three issue fields (e.g. decriminalising solidarity on migration/asylum; European day of persons with disabilities) or those that were cross-thematic (e.g. the Transnational Social Strike operates across employment and migration) formed the focus of further interviews by three dedicated teams from each of the eight countries. In this chapter we focus exclusively on interviews conducted by the eight teams across Europe. The findings from our research on transnational campaigns have been published as part of the broader TransSOL study (Baglioni and Montgomery, 2017).

Building upon the extensive experience of the teams in conducting research into civil society organisations, a survey design process was initiated during which teams were consulted for their expertise in the field and to draw upon their methodological skills. Pre-tests took place to ascertain the effectiveness of the survey design and to identify any issues prior to its deployment across all participating countries. The 245 interviews we conducted with TCSOs can be best described in three parts: (i) an open ended question format to capture information from interviewees on the participation of their organisations in joint events and campaigns; (ii) the composition of organisations and their operational scope; and (iii) working with interviewees to identify the relationships their organisation had with other civil society organisations and institutions. Although the findings in this chapter are informed by the open-ended questions in our survey, the focus of our analysis are those questions that reveal the ways in which TCSOs operationalise solidarity in connection with the welfare state, in their everyday work, and the territorial scope of their operations.

4.2.1 Findings I: The Shape of Solidarity

We begin our analyses by revealing the extent of the activation of TCSOs on welfare-state issues across the eight European countries of our study.

Table 4.1 Providing assistance in access to the welfare system

	Often (%)	Seldom (%)	Never (%)
Denmark	73	3	0
France	61	15	9
Germany	33	17	0
Greece	67	10	0
Italy	90	7	0
Poland	50	7	0
Switzerland	33	13	7
UK	56	6	0
Total	58	10	2

Note: (N=245)

Table 4.1 provides evidence regarding the salient role civil society actors perform in the promotion of solidarity when this is connected with the welfare state: almost two thirds of TCSOs provide assistance with accessing the welfare state on a regular basis and another 10% does so from time to time. Moreover, Table 4.1 reveals that the complementary welfare state action of TCSOs is not only relevant in countries with less generous welfare regimes such as Italy and Greece (where respectively 90% and 67% of TCSOs interviewed provide assistance with accessing the welfare state system) but also in countries with relatively more generous welfare provisions, such as Denmark (73% of TCSOs provide support with accessing welfare services). This high frequency of interactions with the welfare system may speak also to the sometimes complex, bureaucratic and conditional welfare regimes that claimants must navigate when accessing support to meet their basic needs. This means that the type of solidarity promoted by TCSOs is not only expressed through the provisions of services, it is also involved in facilitating access to services directly provided by public bodies. Hence, TCSOs are engaged in an activity which contributes to solidarity by enabling citizens experiencing a variety of needs to enforce their right to support.

Table 4.2 complements our understanding of the welfare-state related contribution to solidarity that TCSOs provide by revealing how civil society organisations support vulnerable individuals in need by providing in-kind help such as meals, clothes, and accommodation which would usually be provided by public anti-poverty programmes. Table 4.2 shows that one in every four organisations provides such in-kind services on a regular basis, and that more than one in every ten does so occasionally. The provision of in-kind services is more salient in countries such as Greece that are

Table 4.2 Providing assistance: in-kind support (e.g. meals, accommodation, clothes)

	Often (%)	Seldom (%)	Never (%)
Denmark	27	10	63
France	30	15	39
Germany	10	13	73
Greece	43	27	30
Italy	30	10	60
Poland	37	10	53
Switzerland	13	20	60
UK	13	22	66
Total	25	16	56

Note: (N=245)

experiencing difficult circumstances, but is still not negligible in welfare generous and affluent countries such as Denmark, France and Italy, where a third of TCSOs provide these services regularly or occasionally. These findings highlight the complementary role that TCSOs play in engaging in solidarity with individuals in crisis across the eight European countries of our study. They also raise questions about the capacities of such organisations to sustain their operations in case of (in some cases further) cuts to the very public budgets which help to keep their organisations open and meet the needs of vulnerable groups (Federico, 2018), particularly given that such cuts would serve only to increase the numbers of vulnerable people requiring assistance from these same TCSOs.

Table 4.3 provides an estimation of the magnitude of solidarity via TCSOs by presenting the number of beneficiaries that such organisations reach with their welfare-state related services: 40% of our samples offer services on a yearly basis to a large number of beneficiaries (more than 1000), with some of these reaching even a much larger share of the population in need. There is evidence therefore in Table 4.3 of an active solidarity that reaches out to a large share of people in need through the various forms of pro-welfare state action.

What Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 confirm is the contribution that TCSOs are making in keeping solidarity alive when welfare state services are at stake and even more so in a period of economic crisis and austerity. They provide vivid evidence of the welfare-mix (Evers, 1995) which has been described as reflective of contemporary European welfare systems, where a mixture of public and private actors provides a range of services, in a diversified legal pattern across different contexts.

Table 4.3 How many persons (beneficiaries) overall obtained services in the last year?

	None (%)	Less than 100 (%)	Less than 500 (%)	Less than 1000 (%)	More than 1000 (%)	Don't Know (%)
Denmark	7	7	20	10	50	7
France	0	18	15	9	55	3
Germany	0	17	10	20	27	27
Greece	0	17	33	10	30	10
Italy	0	7	23	13	53	3
Poland	0	17	17	17	30	20
Switzerland	0	17	20	3	37	23
UK	0	6	25	9	41	19
Total	1	13	20	11	40	14

Note: (N=245)

4.2.2 Findings II: The Scope of Solidarity

Our analysis of the transnational involvement of TCSOs for solidarity purposes now turns to the consideration of their (territorial) scope of action. Earlier in this chapter, we observed that solidarity when essential welfare state services are at stake is heavily dependent upon the actions of civil society organisations. But to what extent does this activism vis-à-vis the unemployed, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, expand beyond local and national boundaries? Given that welfare state regimes are still defined by national territorial and political boundaries – in the sense that beneficiaries of welfare services are those living within the boundaries of a given state – do we have evidence of solidaristic actions that transcend boundaries in the name of common needs and transnational challenges? Moreover, do we have evidence that supports those analyses that the opportunities provided in Europe for the de-nationalisation and Europeanisation of the welfare state have resulted in transnational solidarity?

Table 4.4 provides an overview of the different territorial levels at which civil society organisations can deploy their activities, ranging from the local, to the regional, national, and finally European and transnational (representing those activities occurring inside and outside the EU) levels. For the purposes of this chapter, we consider as activities occurring at the transnational level those which occur both at the European (across Europe) and at the transnational (in and outside the EU) level. As Table 4.4 shows, if we read the 'total' row, one in every two civil society organisations is active at the transnational level (53.9% at EU, and 48.6% at transnational

Table 4.4 In which of these geographical areas is your organisation/group active?

	Local (%)	Regional (%)	National (%)	EU (%)	Transnational* (%)
Denmark	63.3	66.7	96.7	86.7	63.3
France	69.7	75.8	81.8	57.6	57.6
Germany	23.3	33.3	90	40	43.3
Greece	36.7	46.7	73.3	36.7	30
Italy	76.7	66.7	76.7	50	56.7
Poland	56.7	53.3	86.7	76.7	66.7
Switzerland	50	63.3	66.7	43.3	33.3
UK	81.3	56.3	62.5	40.6	37.5
Total	57.6	58	79.2	53.9	48.6

Note: * Transnational here refers to activism inside and outside the European Union (N=245)

level). Given that our sample focused on those organisations which were part of supranational umbrella organisations, we would have expected to find a higher share of TCSOs to be engaged in solidarity actions beyond their own national borders. Therefore, the first lesson we learn from Table 4.4 is that for civil society organisations, including those that are part of transnational networks and campaigns, the national level remains the most salient geo-political spatial dimension at which to act (the national level of action is by far the most popular choice of our TCSOs, with close to 80% of them affirming that they operate at that level). Hence, solidarity, when understood through the provision of services related to the welfare state, remains an issue of national scope, thus suggesting that the argument from some scholars that the decoupling of the welfare state from the national state remains far from reality. Further reinforcing the importance of the country level of action, Table 4.4 also shows that slightly more than one in every two organisations is active at sub-state levels as well (both local and regional) and that these scales of activity are at least as, if not slightly more, important than the EU level for the TCSOs in our study (a finding made all the more significant when considering that the TCSOs we interviewed across the eight European countries were sampled based on their membership of transnational umbrellas and networks).

Moreover, Table 4.4 reveals that the situation is more nuanced if we consider cross-country differences: Danish and Polish TCSOs lead the group on European and transnational level activities, while Greek, German, British and Swiss organisations appear to be less inclined to engage

Table 4.5 Action types by geo-political level

	National (%)	Transnational* (%)
Political education of citizens/raising awareness	89	28
Services to members (e.g. counselling; material support)	81	14
Interest representation/Lobbying institutions	79	36
Participation in legal consultations/policy making	79	31
Mobilising members through direct action	69	20
Fundraising	64	20
Services to others (e.g. clients)	61	17
Mobilising members through protest/demonstrations	51	20

Note: * Transnational here refers to activism inside and outside the European Union (N=245)

across their country borders, while French and Italian TCSOs occupy an intermediary position. A deeper analysis of the transnational activism of Danish TCSOs is, in part at least, explained by the connection and activation of these TCSOs through Scandinavian networks rather than through EU-based ones. When a similar scrutiny is placed upon the Polish case, the high degree of Polish transnational (particularly EU level) activism may reflect the country's engagement with the EU in terms of access to regional development-related funding. Otherwise, it may also reveal the difficulties that Polish civil society organisations are facing at home in their relationships with a government which approaches migration, asylum, disability and unemployment, our TCSO fields of action, with a conservative policy frame (Szczupak and Petelczyc, 2017).

The prominence of the national level also emerges when considering the spatial distribution of TCSOs' activities. Table 4.5 shows that no matter which specific activity an organisation deploys (it can be a political-related one such as political education of citizens, or a service delivery-focused one, such as offering counselling services or material support) in each case the national level largely overshadows the transnational one. In the case of service delivery and material support it is understandable that TCSOs with scarce resources do not aim to deliver such services on a cross-border scale (Baglioni and Montgomery, 2017) and welfare states services provision remains bound to national resources and policy frameworks, but in terms of raising awareness (although resources will of course play a role here) it is still perhaps not the full story given that in a digitally interconnected age the transnational level is very much a secondary priority to the national

level. Somewhat unsurprisingly, activities that imply an active mobilisation of membership (in Table 4.5 these are mobilising members through direct actions and mobilising members through protest/demonstrations) essentially occur at the national level: in contrast with literature having advocated for the existence of a European public sphere for political collective mobilisation (Imig and Tarrow, 2001; Chabanet, 2008), it seems that our TCSOs are still much more focused on mobilising members at the national level rather than at the transnational one.

Another intriguing finding of Table 4.5 is the poor number of organisations that look at the transnational and European levels of action for fundraising: only one in every five organisations declares that it undertakes fundraising activities at the transnational level while two thirds carry out fundraising at the national level. Given the importance of securing finance to the sustainability of TCSOs we might conclude that the strong focus on the national level will not disappear if we add in the analysis of other organisational dimensions. In fact, organisations in constant need of funding will likely focus their capacity and resources for action at the spatial level where they can expect such funding to have the greatest impact and where future funding streams are most readily available. Moreover, as we have seen in our earlier section on findings, most organisations focus their activities on welfare state-related provision, which remains primarily deployed within their countries' boundaries, in support of people that might also be of a different nationality, but that are still based within the country where a given organisation is based.

In sum, we might predict that our TCSOs act at the national level more than at the transnational one because their audience is, in many senses (funding-wise, policy-wise, and beneficiary-wise), national more than transnational.

If we consider the sources of funding for TCSOs (Table 4.6), we see that national level donors (in this case, 'Grants from national governments') are more than twice as important as European grants, which is consistent with our earlier findings. Again, there are differences among countries: French and Polish TCSOs show a higher interest in pursuing, or a greater reliance upon transnational (European) grants than TCSOs in the other countries as they comprise more than a third of the civil society organisations for whom European grants are very important for everyday action. Actually, for Polish organisations European funding is as relevant as national government funding: in fact, due to the strong political polarisation promoted by the centre-right government, many TCSOs that oppose government policies need recourse to EU funding in order to survive, given that they are precluded from government funds. In Greece, funding emanating from the EU largely supersedes funds from national government, perhaps as a consequence of

Table 4.6 Share (%) of TCSOs for whom national and EU level grants are very relevant for survival

	National Government Grants (%)	EU Grants (%)
Denmark	80	13
France	45	36
Germany	50	7
Greece	7	20
Italy	27	10
Poland	37	33
Switzerland	37	3
UK	13	9
Total	37	17

Note: (N=245)

the reduced capacity of the Greek state to subsidise civil society due to the critical situation of its public budget. For the remaining countries, national governments still provide a quite relevant source of economic resources not comparable with the transnational one (in Denmark 80% of organisations access national grants while only 13% consider EU grants as very important; similarly in Germany, one in every two organisations relies upon national grants, while less than one in ten considers EU-level funding as very relevant). Aside from Greece, one other country where national government grants were less relevant was in the UK, where our national-level analysis revealed a fragmented landscape of funding with numerous organisations relying upon a portfolio of funding sources, including charitable trusts, to sustain themselves. This is in a context where funding for local authorities has been at the forefront of austerity measures implemented since 2010.

Another indicator we examine to assess the capacity of TCSOs to engage in transnational solidarity is whether or not they are part of consultative policy-making processes at various spatial levels. Solidarity, therefore, is not just expressed through front-line service delivery activities but is also promoted by TCSOs through their efforts to generate policy change and (re)shape the policy environment so that it better meets the needs of vulnerable people. Table 4.7 provides an overview of this indicator: overall, once again, the national level is more relevant than the European one as an arena for policy engagement. Also, the subnational one is overall a political-spatial level where TCSOs are engaged in policy advisory functions. However, if we consider the situation among countries, again, there are interesting differences to be noted. Firstly, consistent with our earlier results pointing to the importance of the EU for the fundraising

Table 4.7 TCSOs' participation with a consultative status in policy-making procedures at different spatial levels

	EU consultative (%)	National consultative (%)	Subnational consultative (%)
Denmark	17	80	40
France	39	61	51
Germany	53	53	30
Greece	33	53	60
Italy	47	70	80
Poland	63	77	60
Switzerland	20	57	50
UK	34	69	63
Total	38	65	54

Note: (N=245)

activities of Polish TCSOs, Table 4.7 reveals that Polish TCSOs are highly engaged at the EU policy consultative level (63% of those we interviewed in Poland say that they are consulted systematically on policy issues by EU bodies). Secondly, there are some differences between the results in Table 4.7 and earlier tables: while in earlier tables (e.g. Table 4.4), Danish TCSOs appeared to be more engaged at the transnational level than German TCSOs, in Table 4.7 we see that one in every two German organisations is consulted by an EU body during ad hoc policy-making procedures, and the same occurs with Italian TCSOs, while less than one fifth of Danish organisations are consulted in EU policy-making processes, despite Table 4.4 having shown that 87% of Danish TCSOs were active at the EU level.

In sum, there is no direct correspondence between those TCSOs that undertake action at the transnational level and those that, although focusing on nationally bounded solidarity activities, are still considered valuable interlocutors in policy processes in Brussels and are therefore invited to provide advice during a policy-making procedure. This is an outcome we should consider in greater depth as it may have implications for how we interpret transnational activism, drawing our attention to the existence of different shades of transnational activism and different types of organisations engaged at the transnational level: some more openly focused on supranational policy issues and arenas, others more concerned with their own country's situation but still open to engage, if invited and on an ad hoc basis, also at transnational level.

In fact, when we discussed with TCSOs their experiences of working at the transnational level, most of them did appreciate acting across state

boundaries as an opportunity of mutual learning, and also as a viable way to strengthen their voice vis-à-vis policy makers and stakeholders. Moreover, activities done at transnational level seem somehow less exposed to intra-TCSO competition, and as such are appreciated for their fostering cooperation and reciprocal support. However, three factors have been noted as obstructions to further engagement at transnational level: the diversity of circumstances among European countries; the different welfare states and social protection models in the three policy fields covered by TransSol; and the fact that working across state boundaries requires substantial human and economic resources and even the overcoming of language barriers.

4.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided evidence about the existence of a range of activities that TCSOs engage in – primarily in connection to (a weakened degree of publicly funded) interventions in welfare state issues – that speak about solidarity as an act of support in meeting people's needs. Furthermore, what our findings indicate is a paradox between the issues confronting the vulnerable groups of our study and the gap in transnational solidarity among the TCSOs we interviewed. On the one hand, the economic crisis, the Eurozone crisis and the austerity measures which followed are essentially transnational issues themselves that involve transnational actors. Moreover, the so-called refugee crisis (although perhaps better understood as a tragedy for the refugees and perceived as a border crisis in Europe) is a transnational issue at its core that can only be properly addressed through multilateral action. Despite our best efforts to target organisations that are active across countries through being part of a specific transnational umbrella organisation or network, this chapter reveals that we have found limited evidence of transnational dimensions of solidarity. Of course, in some of our countries, namely Denmark and Poland, there is evidence of a degree of engagement by TCSOs which operate across spatial-political levels, including the transnational or European levels. In most of the other countries, although cross-border activities are not rare (roughly one in every two organisations does operate transnationally on a cross-country average), their scope of action remains heavily centred on the national (and also the sub-national) level. Our understanding of these findings is that civil society organisations will likely act at those spatial-political levels, where they understand their beneficiaries and their key political interlocutors to be located: therefore, if a TCSO decides that for a specific issue or mission goal, the key institutional or political interlocutors are

located at the European level, they will likely engage at the transnational level, while if, due to their specific field of action, and even more so if they work on welfare state-related services and needs, they consider it to be more effective or strategic to address authorities at a different (e.g. national or subnational) level, their action will primarily develop across these levels.

Overall, it is clear from our interviews across eight European countries that the more formalised or institutionalised component of civil society organisations active in the fields of unemployment, migration, and disability, as formal expressions of solidarity, remain bounded to their national contexts. However, as discussed in this book (e.g. Chapter 8), we have found evidence of horizontal transnationalisation (Lahusen et al., 2018) among the more grass roots-based and informal models of collective action and civil society. Civil society-led transnational solidarity comes at a time when reactionary parties and xenophobic movements are on the rise in Europe and beyond, and therefore our findings act as a signal that efforts to construct a truly transnational civil society may be more necessary than they have been before.

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5. Talking about solidarity . . . it sounds like a whisper: solidarity in law and public policies[1]

Veronica Federico

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Solidarity is etymologically rooted in a legal principle, the *obligatio in solidum* that in ancient Roman times meant that, in contracts with several co-obligants, each of them was liable for the full payment or performance. In other words, something like 'one for all, all for one'. Over the course of many centuries, this legal principle has moved from Roman contract law to the constitutional realm, underpinning the principle of collective responsibility and "allowing individuals to think on a collective dimension" (Supiot, 2015: 7; see also Blais, 2007; Rodotà, 2014). By recognising the revolutionary principle of solidarity (named *fraternité* in that context) as the socio-legal marker of a nation state, the newly created national communities of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries transformed solidarity into a proper and binding legal standard. Since then, solidarity has become a general principle of law, first at national level, and then, through the action of the European Court of Justice and the principles endorsed by the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights, at the European level.

As a general principle of law enshrined in European member state constitutions, solidarity defines the interdependences of the diverse elements of the social fabric, bridging the different divides that characterise contemporary societies in a tight weft of reciprocal exchanges. Recent crises have re-opened a number of those divides both within European member states (between the rich and the poor, the native and the foreigner, the employed and the unemployed, etc.) and among member states themselves, increasing the need for solidarity in both material and symbolic terms. Inequality has increased among and within countries; poverty is back on the political agenda and in the spotlight of media debate; inequality has generated an escalation in xenophobia and the tightening of immigration laws; and it has polarised political debate. Crisis-driven reforms (welfare system,

labour market, immigration and asylum laws, to quote the more relevant for our analysis) have marked all countries examined here (Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, and the UK), although to very different extents.

Against this backdrop, the purpose of the chapter is to explore to what extent solidarity as a fundamental principle in law and policy-making, as well as in judicial review and constitutional litigation, has proved to be a meaningful legal paradigm during the years following the 2008 financial crisis. This can be measured by the capacity of stimulating adequate normative responses to material and political needs generated and increased by the crisis, and in mitigating at least a portion of the most severe retrenchment measures.

Prima facie, we could be tempted to claim that solidarity simply came up short. In fact, the failure to meet European citizens' expectations in terms of the capacity to both provide adequate responses to basic needs, and to craft new, alternative visions of future European societies, is evident. And yet, the story is more complicated than this basic statement. The political, social and academic debates of the past decade have revealed the latent potency of existing legal, institutional, social principles and mechanisms that could prove useful when re-thinking and re-conceptualising social, political and legal institutions at national and supranational level in post-crisis times. New actors have emerged over the years (movements, groups, parties, etc.), and others (such as courts) have sometimes revealed themselves to be more forward-thinking than expected. A more sophisticated discussion on the presence of solidarity among the funding principles of contemporary European constitutional systems will unveil specific policy traits and legal systems and their social responses. These are crucial for reflecting on whether – following Habermas' (2013) call – a viable path is still available towards a more pervasive European (i.e. transnational) solidarity which will overcome politically the heavy legacy of the economic crisis that itself threatened the very legitimacy of the EU. That is to say, whether solidarity as a legal principle still has something to offer to post-crisis societies.

In this chapter, we will reflect on the significance of the formal inclusion of solidarity in the constitutional texts of Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, and the UK, and in the EU treaties. Secondly, we will discuss the most relevant dimensions of solidarity in the different jurisdictions. Finally, through the comparative scrutiny of legal and policy regulations of the unemployment, disability and immigration/asylum sectors, and of the impact of the financial crisis, we will examine whether solidarity has proved to be a robust enough shield to safeguard alternative visons for European societies.

5.2 TALKING ABOUT SOLIDARITY . . . IN THE CONSTITUTIONS

Since the end of the Second World War, solidarity has been fully entrenched in constitutional texts in Europe (De Búrca and Weiler, 2011; Tuori, 2015), enshrined in a new model of constitutions grounded in the value of the person, human dignity and fundamental rights. In these constitutions, rights and liberties are conceived in a solidarity frame; therefore the respect for and guarantee of those rights and liberties has to be intrinsically combined with the meta-principle of social solidarity (Cippitani, 2010: 34–7). It is a highly relevant legal innovation. Despite the fact that in Western democracies rights and liberties are based on the individual (Bobbio, 1990), the solidarity principle they are framed in transforms them into the cement holding political communities together; that is to say, solidarity contributes to contemporary democracies' community-building (Brunkhorst, 2005). The interweaving of rights and solidarity becomes clear, for example, in Art. 25(4) of the Greek constitution ("The State has the right to claim of all citizens to fulfil the duty of social and national solidarity") and in Art. 2 of the 1948 Italian Constitution ("The Republic recognises and guarantees the inviolable human rights, be it as an individual or in social groups expressing their personality, and it ensures the performance of the unalterable duty to political, economic, and social solidarity"). Inviolable human rights are therefore intertwined with the "unalterable duty to [. . .] social solidarity".

At the EU level, on 9 May 1950, the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman, proposing the creation of a European Coal and Steel Community, declared that "Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a *de facto* solidarity" (Ross, 2010: 45). Solidarity has featured in the EU landscape since the very beginning, despite a number of ambiguities, and "the Lisbon treaty confirms [its] centrality in the EU's future constitutional arrangements" (Ross, 2010: 45).

A closer look at the constitutions reveals that solidarity is explicitly named in the constitutional texts of France, Greece, Italy and Poland; in France, Poland and Switzerland it is also evoked (or only) in the preamble to the constitution, and in the remaining three cases (Denmark, Germany and the UK) it has to be inferred by a systematic interpretation of contiguous legal principles, such as equality, human dignity, and so on. In the EU treaties, a number of articles explicitly refer to solidarity: from Art. 3 of the TEU, enunciating the objectives of the Union (the Union "shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States") to Art. 80 of the TFEU ("The policies of the Union set

out in this Chapter [V, devoted to EU policies on border checks, asylum and immigration] and their implementation shall be governed by the *principle of solidarity* and *fair sharing of responsibility, including its financial implications*, between the Member States" – emphasis added), and Arts 122 and 194 of the TFEU which establish a principle of solidarity in the field of economic policy and in particular with reference to energy policy: "Without prejudice to any other procedures provided for in the Treaties, the Council, on a proposal from the Commission, may decide, in a spirit of solidarity between Member States, upon the measures appropriate to the economic situation, in particular if severe difficulties arise in the supply of certain products, notably in the area of energy."

Solidarity, therefore, is part of the constitutional DNA of all the countries examined here and of the EU. This entails, first, that the constitutional value attributed to solidarity allows legislators and policy-makers to refer to it as a legitimate source of laws and policies that go far beyond the more typical application of the principle of solidarity (the welfare system), spanning many areas, from housing policies to family law; from fiscal measures and tax law to labour law; from international cooperation to energy legislation; from the promotion of volunteering and civil society to freedom of association (Federico, 2018). Second, should any legal or policy act be in breach of it, as has happened during the financial crisis, the constitutional entrenchment of solidarity makes it easier for judges, especially constitutional judges, to refer to it as an insurmountable constitutional paradigm. Indeed, both the Italian Constitutional Court and the French Constitutional Council have been prone to refer to solidarity as a tool to mitigate measures that might have a negative impact on vulnerable people's dignity. The French Constitutional Council has referred to the notion of solidarity many times with a plurality of meanings. The Constitutional Council uses the terms *mécanisme* (mechanism) of solidarity, *principe de solidarité* (principle of solidarity), *exigence de solidarité* (solidarity requirement), *objectif de solidarité* (solidarity objective), sometimes relying on several of them in the same decision. It is therefore not a monovalent concept. Obviously, the privileged applications of these notions lie in the domain of social systems, spanning the routes that individuals make across their lives, for example in and out of the labour market. Similarly, the Italian Constitutional Court often uses solidarity in very diverse fields. Recently, in a case concerning the right to education of pupils with disabilities (CC decision n.257 of 16 December 2016), the Court went much further than simply mitigating austerity measures. It argued that, when a core of absolute, unswerving guarantees for vulnerable people is at stake, the very balancing of interests (which is the essence of constitutional courts' usual reasoning) becomes pointless. The duty of

social solidarity simply prevails. What emerges here is a very powerful interpretative innovation that might open the door to more pervasive applications of the solidarity principle in the future.

Noticeably, in Greece, constitutional case-law is more ambivalent than in other countries and it brings to the forefront another very important – but highly contested – entailment of the principle of solidarity: sacrificing the interests of determined categories in the name of the survival of the whole nation. During the crisis, the Greek judiciary has interpreted solidarity as a constitutional paradigm both to mitigate some crisis-driven reforms (in this case solidarity assumes the function of a shield, protecting people's fundamental rights and access to a decent living), and to enforce other austerity laws (in this case solidarity assumes the value of the community's higher common interest). In fact, on the one hand the Council of State (case 668/2012) maintained that the reductions in public wages, pensions and other benefits were justified by the stronger public interest of improving the state's economy and financial situation (moreover the measures guaranteed the common interest of the member state of the Eurozone, which made this a sort of reinforced public interest). On the other hand, the Court of Auditors (Proceedings of the 2nd special session of the plenary, 27 February 2013) ascertained that the discretion of legislators to adopt restrictive measures to decrease public spending should not jeopardise adequate living conditions (recognised by Articles 2 and 4(5) of the Constitution), and should ensure a fair distribution of the crisis-burden on citizens in the name of the principle of proportionality (Art. 25(1)) and of the state's right to require social and national solidarity as a duty of all citizens.

This is particularly interesting from our perspective: the apparent ambiguity of Greek court decisions reveals a crucial element of the notion of solidarity mentioned in the introduction. If solidarity is to be considered as a status of intersubjectivity, in which people are bound together, whether by a shared identity or by the facts of their actual interest, into mutual relationships of interdependence and reciprocal aid, the two dimensions of solidarity that emerge in Greek case-law are both crucial: fundamental rights that grant human dignity on the one hand, and the very existence of the community, which may require the sacrifice of individual interests and benefits, on the other. Beyond the political and social evaluation of the Greek austerity measures, what is relevant here is that this extremely critical situation revealed the notion of solidarity as an interconnection between rights and duties. And it is this interconnectivity that integrates the individual into a community of citizens (Apostoli, 2012: 10–11).

At the EU level, until recently, the Court of Justice had developed case-law which incrementally broadened EU citizens' rights to social benefits

in the name of a certain degree of financial solidarity among member states (Lanceiro, 2017: 4). Recently, however, the *Dano* and *Alimanovic* judgments represent a significant change and they contribute to the consolidation of a restrictive trend in interpreting solidarity-based measures, "casting an increasingly tolerant eye upon national measures restricting the access to social benefits by mobile EU citizens [. . .]. By so doing, it sacrificed the expansive logic of Union citizenship as a fundamental status of European citizens" (Giubboni and Costamagna, 2017). Accentuating the protection of member states' interests, the Court sacrifices a broad, pervasive understanding of solidarity between member states.

5.3 TALKING ABOUT SOLIDARITY . . . ITS DIMENSIONS

When solidarity "defines a *perimeter of mutual assistance* which includes some people and excludes others" (Supiot, 2015: 15), citizenship – which is the marker of this perimeter – means that the legal bond between the individual and the state creates a relationship of mutual responsibility that does not simply concern a bi-directional vertical dimension between the state and its citizens, but also a bi-directional horizontal dimension, i.e. between fellow-citizens. Every citizen is responsible for the promotion and guarantee of fellow citizens' rights and needs (Apostoli, 2012: 143). Moreover, in decentralised states, solidarity acquires a further, crucial aspect: the territorial dimension, i.e. the principle of federal solidarity. "The general idea is that governments forming a federation do not merely calculate their actions to be to their own benefit. By forming a federation, partners intend to work collectively for the common good of a shared citizenry. Each government – be it federal, provincial or territorial – owes special duties to the other common members of the federation that they do not necessarily owe to foreign states (or that are not owed with the same degree of intensity) precisely because they belong to a common body politic" (Cyr, 2014: 31). These three dimensions (vertical, horizontal and territorial) are all interconnected, and they assume a slightly different connotation at the EU level.[2]

The most relevant element of solidarity's vertical dimension in every country is the welfare system (Ferrera, 2005). European welfare states diverge in the extent and form of institutionalising solidarity: from the Danish social democratic Nordic welfare model (Esping-Andersen, 1990), where there is a strong state that builds on the principles of universalism by providing tax-financed benefits and services, to the Italian residual welfare state in the broader category of the conservative-corporatist model (or

Ferrera's (1996) Southern group model), where social services are provided to people who are unable to help themselves; from the Swiss liberal welfare with a moderate decommodification but with a high generosity index, close to the one in Sweden (Scruggs and Allan, 2006: 67) to the Greek pre-crisis corporatist model based on moderation and the elimination of the most dramatic inequalities through redistribution policies; from the Polish social model which blends elements of liberalism in a conservative and corporate tradition inherited from the period between the wars (Esping-Andresen, 1990) to the French corporatist regime reflecting, for the most part, the Bismarckian tradition of earning-related benefits (Serre and Palier, 2004); from the British universalism based on the Beveridge model (Taylor-Gooby, 2013) to the typical conservative welfare regime in Germany (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Whatever the type of welfare regime, however, all presume an unequal distribution of resources and wealth, and the specific function of solidarity is to bridge these inequalities through redistribution policies. Solidarity that is embodied in welfare systems on the one hand promotes human dignity through the enforcement of fundamental rights, and, in this sense, the welfare state represents the institutional form of social solidarity generated in constitutional principles and specified in codified entitlements to social policies. On the other hand, solidarity promotes social cohesion through the binding force of the interconnectivity between rights and duties. Indeed, the welfare state as a set of redistributive policies has been a key tool in the promotion of national identity, and therefore as a way to create solidarity among citizens, "bounding for bonding" (Ferrera, 2005: 44). In fact, citizens allow a redistribution of their resources to happen as long as they perceive each other as members of the same group or nation. As we will highlight later on, the crucial issue, then, becomes the boundaries of welfare, i.e. where to draw the perimeter of solidarity.

The second dimension is the horizontal one. "The concrete enforcement of solidarity in its vertical dimension (from the State and the institutions towards individuals) is tightly connected to the functioning of the guiding principle of subsidiarity [. . .] as subsidiarity presupposes the *subsidium*, which is the duty of participation and support 'top down' by virtue of social cohesion" (Apostoli, 2012: 61). Subsidiarity opens the public sphere to citizens' participation and free engagement in the fulfilment of fundamental rights and in services delivery, connecting the vertical and horizontal dimensions.

Civil society participates in enforcing the rights and may even go further by directing its energy towards expanding and enriching the quality and quantity of those rights (Onida, 2003: 116). In other words, if rights cannot be fully and directly enforced by the state, either because of economic restrictions (as may be the case during a crisis) or because of

political opportunity reasons, the state may activate the citizens' duty of solidarity through legislation promoting private intervention.

Civil society activism may be favoured by specific legislation and measures promoting the third sector (as has been the case of Italian law n.266 of 1991 or the Polish Law on Public Benefit Activity and Volunteerism of 23 April 2003), and it has provided valuable solidarity responses during the crisis, as the Greek case clearly describes (Mexi, 2018). But the opening to this horizontal dimension may also acquire more ambiguous political aspects, as was the case in the UK, with David Cameron's 'Big Society' policy, where subsidiarity became the excuse for retrenchments and cuts (Montgomery and Baglioni, 2018).

Moreover, the horizontal dimension of solidarity finds its most evident and most widespread expression in volunteerism. Indeed, in all our case-studies the social value of solidarity is tightly intertwined with volunteering. Being engaged in civil society activities, donating time, competencies and money, is a shared value and a widespread practice in the countries on which this research focuses (Lahusen and Grasso, 2018). Thus, if we assume volunteerism as an indicator of social solidarity at the interpersonal level (Hustinx and Lammertyn, 2000; Valastro, 2012), we can assert that Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Switzerland and the UK host a number of forms of horizontal solidarity. This paints a rather rich European horizontal way towards solidarity.

Finally, in decentralised states, subsidiarity allows for interconnectivity between the different tiers of government, making the significance of solidarity relations among all territorial entities emerge. The importance of territorial solidarity is taken into consideration in the cases of Germany, Italy, the UK and Switzerland. In all these jurisdictions, the very structure of the decentralised (federal, regional or cantonal) state relies on the mechanism of power sharing (which assumes different political and legal forms, structures and mechanisms in the different countries) that enables mediation between sub-national and national interests, needs, resources and competences. However, in none of these countries is the equilibrium between diversity, autonomy and solidarity a simple one, and the crisis has exacerbated several elements of this difficult balance. The British and the Italian cases represent the two most critical aspects of territorial solidarity: the very respect of the *pactum unionis* among sub-national entities and the exacerbation of difference to the detriment of equality in rights enforcement which questions the solidaristic dimension of decentralisation.

In the UK, the solidarity-creation mechanisms between sub-national entities (Scotland, Wales, England, and Northern Ireland) have been seriously challenged in the past few years by political and political-economic issues. These challenges seem to be a catalyst for the robust revival of

sub-national solidarities against the British one. The devolution of power occurring from the end of the 1990s has come under intense scrutiny in recent years in terms of its capacity to allow sub-national communities to have their voice and interests represented by British decision-making. As a consequence, in Scotland in 2014, a referendum took place for one of the constituting nations of the UK to become independent. Although the vote upheld the will of Scottish people to remain part of the United Kingdom, this was a very strong attempt to reshape the boundaries, and even the content, of territorial solidarity. Even though not directly connected with the Scottish national question, the British people put another form of supranational solidarity under pressure as a legitimate system of redistributing resources across the continent: solidarity based on the European Union. In June 2016 they voted to leave the European Union – a dramatic outcome.

In Italy since the 1990s, there has been a significant devolution of functions to regions in the field of welfare, which has radically changed the relationship between the central government, the regional governments, and local governments according to the principle of subsidiarity. The economic crisis had the effect of modifying and reinforcing the role of regional governments in new strategic policy-making and service delivery to temper both the direct effect of the crisis and the impact of national retrenchment measures. Regional responsibilities in the field of social policies have become so important that scholars argue that Italy has moved from welfare state to welfare regions (Ferrera, 2008). This process has exacerbated existing differences, especially between northern and southern regions, that remain more strongly marked by high rates of poverty, unemployment, social exclusion, and whose regional governments have proved to be less proactive in counterbalancing the worst effects of the crisis, especially in the field of unemployment. The gap is not only measurable in terms of per capita income, but also in terms of well-being and opportunity gaps (Cersosimo and Nisticò, 2013). The paradox is that the regions most severely hit by the crisis were the most vulnerable ones, and the most severely hit populations were the most marginalised – another dramatic failure of territorial solidarity.

5.4 TALKING ABOUT SOLIDARITY . . . IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM, UNEMPLOYMENT AND DISABILITY[3]

Principles and rules deriving from the European Union legislation and policies should provide a common normative framework in the fields of

unemployment, disability and immigration/asylum in EU member states. Nonetheless, the comparative analysis of the seven EU member states plus Switzerland[4] shows that national principles, legislation and policies in these areas remain highly country-specific. Moreover, even at the national level there is often a lack of consistency. Disability legislation and policies, for example, are generally characterised by internal fragmentation and, in decentralised states, they are even influenced by the regional or federal organisation of the competences.

In many European countries the economic and refugee crises of past years have had a considerable impact on the legal entrenchment of the solidarity principle in the three policy domains of our analysis and its implementation in administrative practice. Across Europe, this impact has been felt differentially, depending on each country's specific crisis experience. The transposition of the constitutional solidarity principle into specific legislation and policies is not simple, and in several cases, there are evident discrepancies between the solidaristic approach embodied in the constitution and specific laws, regulations and policies violating it. As already highlighted, courts may intervene and quite often they do so, reaffirming the overarching constitutional value of solidarity, but this has not prevented dramatic welfare and social security retrenchment measures and a generalised tightening of migration laws.

Very seldom is solidarity expressly named as the leading principle in any of the framework legislation in the policy domains of disability, unemployment/asylum and migration across the eight countries focused on in the present research. Interestingly, from being a fundamental value at the constitutional level, solidarity seems to have become a recessive one at the level of legislation.

Nonetheless, solidarity is of relevance for rights and entitlements in disability, migration/asylum and unemployment law to the extent that it can be derived from other basic constitutional rights and principles, such as equality and anti-discrimination legislation, with few exceptions (e.g. solidarity contracts in Italy and Switzerland). For instance, in Germany it can be derived from the constitutional vision of humanity, the fundamental rights, the welfare state principle, equal treatment, equal participation, and equal opportunities. The right to live a life of human dignity stands above all, and all other rights are subordinate to it. This also means that rights have to be interpreted in the light of the overriding right to a dignified life. Thus, irrespective of the missing explicit reference to solidarity, German law still foresees a broad range of instruments and mechanisms to support the unemployed, asylum seekers and disabled people. And yet, some degree of vagueness in determining the exact significance and legal impact of these principles opens the door for policy-making to downplay the role of

solidarity and to increase the conditionality of solidarity within vulnerable groups. This has happened particularly in the asylum and unemployment fields in the past few years. Moreover, laws and their administrative implementation are not always perceived by civil society as sufficient to meet solidarity expectations. Indeed, recent policy reforms have shown that solidarity remains highly contested and subject to political struggles between different interest groups in society, even in a country with good economic performance and low unemployment like Germany (Zschache, 2018).

In other countries, such as Greece, although solidarity and the social welfare state are clearly defined in the constitution as a duty of the Greek state towards its citizens, there is mounting evidence that the recent policy options are progressively eroding their normative foundation and practical exercise. After several years of recession, Greece has adopted painful policy choices with regards to wage and pension cuts, labour relations, layoffs and social policies. Failure to protect the weaker, vulnerable population groups most severely hit by the country's multiple crises suggests that solidarity is under stress in Greece. The weakening of solidarity policies for the social protection of people with disabilities, the unemployed, migrants, newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers has gone hand in hand with increased retrenchment, severity of sanctions and welfare conditionality (Mexi, 2018).

Indeed, the process of translating the constitutional principle (either directly or indirectly enforced) into specific legislation and policies is more complex than expected and varies across countries and policy domains.

5.4.1 Solidarity in Disability Legislation and Policies

In the frame of the EU approach mainly based on non-discrimination measures (Di Napoli and Russo, 2018), Danish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Polish, Swiss and British disability laws pursue social integration and equality combining typical anti-discrimination measures, proactive integration tools (e.g. social inclusion at school and in the labour market) with social assistance.

People with disabilities have suffered significant reductions of disability grants and allowances due to the crisis in all countries except Germany (Lahusen and Federico, 2018). The introduction of a system of means-testing for services and benefits in several countries and reforms of the welfare system generally have implied a further increase in the vulnerability of people with disabilities. This occurred especially during the first years of the crisis, even in countries not strongly economically affected such as Denmark, Switzerland and Poland. Disability is one of the typical fields where the notions of intersectionality and multiple discrimination have become very

relevant (Soder, 2009; Lawson, 2016), which means that disadvantages in the intersection between disability and, for example, unemployment, gender, race, class, etc. are likely to become more severe, and this is why austerity measures tend to have a stronger impact on people with disabilities.

In a first group of countries (Germany, France, Italy, Denmark and Greece) there have not been significant reforms, whereas in the UK, Switzerland, and Poland a number of reforms have been upheld, not touching the principles, but reviewing the mechanisms for accessing benefits. In Poland, indeed, there has been relevant legal activism in order to align with European standards, which has meant an enhancement of rights' guarantees for Polish people with disabilities. Moreover, the concomitant adoption of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006 has entailed innovative approaches to disability, which means that in the time-frame of the crisis, paradoxically, in terms of legal principles and values, law reforms have tended to enhance the level of rights and guarantees (Petelczyc, 2018).

Nonetheless, the crisis has exacerbated the process of socio-spatial production of legal peripheries (Febbrajo and Harste, 2013) in the field of disability, where contemporary discourse of inclusion and tolerance of diversity is at odds with the real guarantee of fundamental rights, regarding the relationship with the democratic institutions and public administration services. While formally entrenched in legal documents, basic human rights are systematically denied by the lack of resources, and those same rights then become the terrain where exclusion is de facto widespread and strong.

Interestingly, in most countries, the main concerns regarding the disability field do not lie in the lack of legislation, but in its implementation. In Italy, for instance, the legal framework is in line with the most progressive European countries. In some fields, Italy has been (and sometimes still is) ground-breaking, as with the example of disabled pupils' integration in schools. What remains highly problematic is the actual implementation of existing legislation because of a lack of resources and political and administrative will to do so (Federico and Maggini, 2018). But this is true even for a country like Germany, where the effective enforcement of guarantees and the rights of disabled persons is often a question of the quality of administrative practice at the levels of national state, the single federal states, local authorities and benefit providers, and the assertiveness of individual claimants (Welti, 2010: 27; Kuhn-Zuber, 2015).

5.4.2 Solidarity in Unemployment Laws and Policies

The impact of the crisis on the quantitative and qualitative levels of employment has put heavy responsibility on European institutions' capacity given

that Art. 145 TFEU states that "the Union shall contribute to a high level of employment by encouraging cooperation between Member States and by supporting and, if necessary, complementing their action". Despite the fact that EU competence in this field relies primarily on coordination of national policies and legislation, EU legislation and policy have developed along two salient issues: social protection of workers and social rights. Human rights play a key role within the EU coordination of national employment policies in times of crisis: all actions of EU institutions and member states shall comply with them, as well as with the European Social Charter of the Council of Europe (Di Napoli and Russo, 2018). However, the potential role of European institutions is still undeveloped, and the implementation of these principles has fallen short of people's expectations.

At the member state level, the 2008 global economic crisis had very different effects in terms of unemployment: some countries were severely hit by the economic and financial crisis, especially southern countries, but conversely, in Germany, Switzerland, and, partially, in Poland, the crisis had a more modest impact. The picture of policy and legislative responses in the field of unemployment shows also differentiated patterns which, nonetheless, do not necessarily adhere to the crisis effect. The crisis has been seen as an opportunity to address historical weaknesses in the labour market in some countries (as was the case in Italy and Greece), whereas in other countries it was more an "excuse" to pursue a politically oriented agenda (in e.g. Poland, France and the UK). In all countries, however, we detected a general tendency towards policy changes emphasising flexibilisation of labour relations, conditionality for welfare and unemployment benefits and 'activation' elements, in accordance with the broader supply-focused trend characterising European unemployment policies throughout the 1990s and 2000s. And against this trend, employment and unemployment remain highly contested terrains, especially in the countries where the most radical reforms have been upheld (Federico, 2018). Solidarity is a recessive value in current unemployment/labour legislation, even though in this domain it is overtly named, for example, in solidarity contracts in Italy and in Switzerland and in solidarity gradual pre-retirement contracts in France.

5.4.3 Solidarity in the Field of Migration Legislation and Policies

The economic crisis was followed by a refugee crisis that especially affected Mediterranean countries like Italy and Greece. The EU legal framework in this field is pivotal: the principle of solidarity has a special role in the common policies of asylum and immigration, set forth respectively in Arts

78 and 79 of the TFEU (Favilli, 2018). This is due to Art. 80 TFEU which meaningfully provides that these policies and their implementation shall be governed by the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility, including its financial implications, between the member states. However, the principle of solidarity in immigration and asylum policies also includes the relationship between the EU and its member states, on the one hand, and between the EU, its member states and individuals, especially those escaping persecution and war and looking for asylum in Europe, on the other hand. Indeed, this is the sole interpretation, which is in harmony with the values enshrined by Arts 2 and 3, para. 5 of the TEU, according to which, "In its relations with the wider world . . . it shall contribute to peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth, solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the child, as well as to the strict observance and the development of international law, including respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter." According to this interpretation, solidarity should apply both to the relationship among member states and to the relations among peoples inside and outside the European territory. It expresses a model of society that should fight against discrimination, violence and unfairness towards disadvantaged people and should actively promote minimum standards of dignity for all human beings. However, moving from theory to practice, the effectiveness of such fundamental provisions is problematic.

Immigration and asylum laws were generally amended during the timeframe of the research, adopting more restrictive measures, except in Poland and Greece. This occurred regardless of the country's actual involvement in the migratory crisis, signalling a politicisation of this policy domain and the increasing importance of populist claims in this regard (Boswell et al., 2011; Van der Brug et al., 2015). This has been confirmed by the firm Polish refusal to welcome refugees and asylum seekers according to the burden-sharing approach of the European Union, a refusal that has led to sanctions by the European Commission who launched infringement procedures against Poland (and Hungary and the Czech Republic) in June 2017 for not having fulfilled their obligations to host relocated migrants from Italy and Greece.

The importance of the migration waves has been claimed as political justification for restrictive legislation and policies in Germany and in Italy, but the Greek case, where there were no severe restrictions in legal access to the country, demonstrates that, even under very critical conditions, the legal response may assume different tones (Mexi, 2018). Furthermore, as in the cases of Denmark, Switzerland, the UK and France, the real numbers of people involved in either the refugee or the economic crises are easily

overlooked in the political debate, confirmed by a number of research papers and studies (e.g. Van der Brug et al., 2015; Geddes and Scholten, 2016). Moreover, the security trend of legislative and policy reforms has been intensified by a lack of material resources and slow policy implementation, especially in those countries most severely involved with and affected by massive influxes of refugees and migrants.

Finally, little reference, if any at all, is made to solidarity. There are other keywords often mentioned in this field, such as fundamental rights, human dignity and social integration, but solidarity, with its distinctive significance, is absent from the legal discourse and, curiously, it appears in media and popular language to identify a crime in France. On the contrary, it has been the watchword of pro-migrant movements and organisations, as is illustrated in the chapters in this volume devoted to civil society organisation analysis. Nonetheless, solidarity has not been sufficiently evocative and provocative to build a potent counternarrative.

5.5 SOLIDARITY . . . IT DOES SOUND LIKE A WHISPER

Solidarity can be portrayed as an hourglass: its broad and solid entrenchment at both constitutional and EU treaties level on top; an equally important spectrum of solidarity practices at the level of civil society at the bottom; the two connected through a bottleneck of legislation and policies that are at peace neither with the former nor with the latter.

All countries involved in the present research, in fact, are characterised by complex webs of solidarities, and the same applies to the legal and policy framework at the European Union level. Solidarity is the EU's intimate component: it is indicated as a key-value in its founding treaties both as a general principle and as a norm guiding mutual support among member states and peoples during specific circumstances such as natural or man-made disasters. These multiple solidarities are sometimes imposed by legal frameworks, while at other times the legal frameworks accommodate and recognise existing solidarity ties and practices, and on other occasions, laws and policies result in counter-solidarity measures.

The courts have played a significant role, admittedly with a certain degree of ambiguity in some jurisdictions (at the level of the EU, the judgments rendered by CJEU in the *Brey* and *Dano* cases show how EU case-law fluctuates between two "visions" of solidarity, as already mentioned (Thym, 2015)), in mitigating the most severe austerity measures, using solidarity as a valiant constitutional paradigm. But courts' intervention and civil activism, as illustrated in other chapters of this volume, have not prevented

a further liberalisation of the labour market, the redefinition of the role of the unions and the reforms of retirement age in the field of unemployment. In the field of immigration and asylum, laws have been generally amended, adopting more restrictive measures. Concerning disability, the crisis has led to a reduction of grants and allowances and to the introduction of a system of means-testing for services and benefits. Moreover, the reforms of the welfare system have generally meant an increase in the vulnerability of people with disability.

Has solidarity resisted the crisis crush test? In our analysis, we have tried to free solidarity from the rhetoric often associated with the idea, and to understand the effective potency of the notion. In all the three policy domains, solidarity has been a recessive value against the imperative of the market (in the field of unemployment), of the securisation discourse (in the field of migration) and of welfare retrenchment (in the field of disability). And even in the field of disability, where all our country analyses have highlighted a strong entrenchment of solidarity in the legal framework, the implementation of the laws remains highly problematic, and this seriously jeopardises people's rights and dignity, and undermines solidarity.

The presence per se of solidarity in the constitutions or in the EU treaties does not guarantee the solidaristic quality of national and European laws and policies. During the crisis law-makers and policy-makers at national and EU level decided to privilege other values. Laws and policies entrenched in those years bear little of the various meanings of solidarity, if any at all. The conclusion of this critical discussion is pessimistic: despite the need for solidarity, in both material and symbolic terms, and despite civil society claims for solidarity-based policy-making, political decisions have taken different directions. But constitutions and treaties are documents deemed to persist in time, and solidarity is not solely the virtue of hard times. During the crisis, courts' legal reasoning and public and scientific debates have unveiled multiple dimensions of solidarity and they have highlighted diverse policy domains where solidarity may disclose its still latent potency. Solidarity has been just like a whisper, but the crisis has enriched this whisper with new, interesting and, hopefully, more effective tones, which remain one of the few positive legacies of the hard times engendered by the crisis.

NOTES

1. Freely inspired by the lyrics of "Talkin' 'bout a Revolution", a song by Tracy Chapman.
2. Due to the supranational nature of the EU legal system, at this level solidarity is embedded in two dimensions: the relationship between member states (horizontal dimension)

that is evoked in a number of articles of the treaties – for example, Art. 3 of the TEU, enunciating the objectives of the Union, declares that the Union "shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States" – and the relationship between the states and their subjects, i.e. the individuals (vertical dimension), which appears in the Preamble of the TEU stating that the Union aims are to "deepen the solidarity between their peoples while respecting their history, their culture and their traditions".

3. For the rationale underlying the selection of the three policy domains, please refer to Lahusen in Chapter 1 of the present volume.
4. Research on the EU impact on Swiss law and policy is widely available. Examples of influence include the so-called autonomous adaptation; multilateral agreements; passing of international treaties; and the comparative law method. For insights, see Epiney, 2009; Jenni, 2014.

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6. Solidarity contestation in the public domain during the 'refugee crisis'

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6.1 INTRODUCTION

Of the many crises that Europe faces today, the so-called 'refugee crisis' is the one that has a profound impact on the self-understanding of the European Union as a community of values based on the respect of human rights and global solidarity. Historically, Europe has for many centuries been a promoter of values that are held to be universally valid. In this tradition, the European Union (EU) has been built also on a set of fundamental values such as 'respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights' (Art. 2 TEU). These values are meant to unite all member states. It is the goal of the European Union to defend and promote them in both its internal and external actions. As we will argue throughout this chapter, the events that led to the so-called refugee crisis in 2015 and 2016 represent a clash of solidarities rather than a lack of solidarity within and across established member states; a clash between our moral and legal obligations towards refugees, and also a clash between nation state relationships and with regard to the moral foundations of our community of states and citizens (Krastev, 2017b).

When the number of refugees and asylum seekers from war zones in Syria increased in summer 2015, positions of EU member states with regard to the question of transnational solidarity and the degree of hospitality that should be granted to incoming refugees varied widely. Greece, together with Italy, as the first entry point to the European Union for most refugees, insisted on fair burden-sharing with the rest of Europe. After a series of dramatic events at Europe's external borders and on the transit routes through the Balkans, Germany decided to suspend the Dublin Regulation at the end of August 2015 in order to accept asylum applications from refugees travelling from Greece. In turn, this open-door policy was heavily criticised by Denmark and Poland, but supported by France,

which was, however, less affected by the inflow of refugees. Great Britain strengthened its stance against France over the responsibility for refugees in the camps in Calais who maintained hopes of crossing the English Channel. Finally, Switzerland, as a non-EU country, but nonetheless a part of Schengen, also received increasing numbers of refugees from Syria, mainly entering through its southern borders with Italy.

In light of these differences in attitudes of hospitality and divergences in policies of control, security and solidarity, this chapter has a number of main objectives in order to engage fully with public contention about solidarity. In particular, drawing on 'claim-making' (Koopmans and Statham, 1999), we identify the extent to which acts of solidarity towards refugees were granted public awareness and what claims on behalf of or against hospitality towards refugees were made, and by whom. We also examine the discursive construction of European solidarity in terms of its positions and justifications underlying public debate, and how such differences are used in contestations between various allegiances (e.g. proponents and opponents of humanitarian transnational solidarity vs. traditional national solidarities). In addition, we look more specifically into the fault lines that opened up across Europe; in particular, we assess the extent to which national debates followed similar patterns of divisions among governments, political parties and civil society actors, for example in terms of both their positioning vis-à-vis refugees, and the way that these same actors justified (or not) solidarity with refugees.

Overall, our approach in this chapter allows for reconstructing solidarity contestation in the media. Propositions of, and opposition to different solidarity projects are taken as 'claims' that compete for salience in the public domain as represented by the media. As actors of these 'claims', claimants intervene within national public spheres; but their solidarity contestations are carried out across Europe since the decision of one country to open its borders towards refugees potentially affects all the others. What is at stake is the fact that solidarity relationships are not containable within one single country, but need to be re-negotiated between all Europeans. Accordingly, we recollect the general patterns and dynamics of 'claims' in the public sphere during the most intense crisis period between August 2015 and April 2016. By focusing on eight European countries—namely, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Poland and Switzerland—we control for relevant variations in terms of transnational solidarity with the incoming refugees. While Greece and Italy have insisted on fair burden-sharing with the other EU countries (as they are the first entry point to the European Union for most refugees) other countries such as Denmark and Poland have opposed open-door policies; France has overall supported fair redistribution, but only Germany has taken a

clear stance by suspending the Dublin Regulation so as to accept asylum applications from refugees travelling from Greece. Great Britain has contested with France the responsibility for refugees camping in Calais, while Switzerland, as a Schengen country, has also received increasing numbers of refugees. Through our quantitative analysis of 'claims', we can thus analyse the main protagonists and targets in the public domain, the main concerns expressed, the degree of trans-nationalisation (and Europeanisation) of debates, the various forms which claims took, the favourable or unfavourable positions that claimants had towards refugees, as well as the justifications given for either granting or rejecting solidarity.

6.2 SOLIDARITY CONTESTATION IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

Solidarity relationships in modern society are activated through a type of public communication that binds strangers together in a discourse about justice and the common good. This is the classical constellation of the public sphere as it emerged at the end of the eighteenth century. In the public sphere, the moral mechanism of commitment to the concerns of others applies to social relationships established by anonymity and distance (Habermas, 1974). Public discourse is used to communicate and exchange information about the needs of others and the moral obligations and commitments that follow from it from a perspective of social justice. This opens the possibility of communication about experiences of injustice of people who are not present, or who even live at a distance but who are nevertheless included in a discourse of moral commitment and thus recognised as carriers of rights (Brunkhorst, 2005). Such a widening of our horizon of moral commitment relies, however, on the availability of a mediating infrastructure to bring distant events to our attention and make them relevant for us. The solidarity of the public sphere relies in other words on the mass media, which are not just a neutral transmitter of information about what is happening at a distance but also a forum of critique and of normative debate about the interpretation of these events and their relevance for our moral self-understanding (Silverstone, 2006).

The public sphere of the mass media facilitates not only almost instant global dissemination, but also turns information about distant events into news that is discussed by underlying common criteria of relevance (Neidhardt, 1994). The shared world of news is in this sense also a world of shared concern and commitment. Responses to images of the pain of others and their translation in a political language of commitment follows established and institutionalised narratives that structure our

social relationships to strangers and justify our moral stance towards them (Boltanski, 1999). The 'repertoire of justifications' on which we can base our moral commitment is limited and, in itself, can only claim generalised validity through mediated discourse. Solidarity as a discourse follows narrating structures that are held valid over time and across social contexts.

Solidarity as discourse in the public sphere is further linked to particular social positions that become relevant in communication among strangers. There are, first of all, the 'discursive entrepreneurs' who call for or against solidarity, providing the basic information about distant events and the needs of people in distant places. Solidarity and anti-solidarity entrepreneurs are, however, not just those who take a verbal stance about the needs of others but also seek to promote a particular normative stance of benevolence or conflict with these others (Cinalli and Giugni, 2013, 2016a, 2016b). In our study, such discursive entrepreneurs will be approached as public claims-makers who call for or contest solidarity with refugees. In a public sphere of solidarity contestation, there are, secondly, the targets of solidarity, usually particular categories of social actors in need of assistance. The question arises whether these targets are mainly treated as objects, whose needs are defined by others and represented in public discourse or whether they appear in a more active role as subjects with the power to self-define their needs and negotiate the conditions under which they receive assistance. In our study, these targets of solidarity are broadly defined as refugees, but objects of solidarity can also shift, for instance, in the way calls for solidarity with member states (such as Greece) are raised in mastering the crisis. There are, thirdly, media organisations and mediating institutions such as journalism that facilitate flows of information, create the conditions for the selective visibility of the suffering and the needs of others and selectively amplify the calls of solidarity. In our study, we will rely on the news coverage of broadsheet newspapers (quality and tabloid newspapers) as a proxy for solidarity contestation in the national public sphere. And, finally, there are the passive audiences of those who listen to or are addressed by solidarity discourse. In our claims-making approach of solidarity contestation, we can discuss whether such audiences of solidarity discourse are primarily addressed as a national community of citizens, whether reciprocal commitments of a European solidarity community are taken into consideration or whether solidarity discourse raises global responsibilities. In Chapter 7 of this volume, we will further consider selected audience responses on social media commenting sites as contributing to the dynamics of solidarity contestation in the public sphere.

Solidarity in the public sphere remains a contested notion. On the one hand, national media organisations and journalism will often give preference to a nationalist-exclusive framing of solidarity that distinguishes

between insiders and outsiders (Williams and Toula, 2017). In the case of the refugee crisis, especially, we can expect a contentious politics in defence of a nationally exclusive understanding of solidarity against European or global humanitarian commitments (della Porta, 2018). On the other hand, we can expect the media and journalism to defend an ethos of transnational and global solidarity (Brunkhorst, 2007; Calhoun, 2005). In our case, the news coverage of the 'refugee crisis' facilitated not only almost instant global dissemination, but also turned information about distant events into news that was discussed from a European and global perspective. Sharing news about the European 'refugee crisis' is in this sense also a way of sharing concern and commitment.

In tracing these contentious dynamics of solidarity discourse in news media, we build on a specific research design of claims-making that links actors' positions to public justification. Solidarity contestation in the public domain is in this sense represented by the dynamics of claims-making in the media. Media claims are partly related to strategies of agenda-setting of social actors (individuals, political representatives or institutions). As such, they relate to power positions of moral entrepreneurs, who compete for attention in the public arena (Koopmans and Statham, 2010). Media claims are, however, also given selective salience by media actors who filter and frame public discourse in a way to draw the attention of the audience. As such, media claims follow a particular media logic of publicity (Altheide, 2004; Couldry, 2012). In the following, we will account for our method of claims-making as applied to the comparative mapping of solidarity contestation in the public sphere.

6.3 THE METHOD OF CLAIMS-MAKING

Our claims-making approach allows for the study of interventions by organised publics in the public domain (Bassoli and Cinalli, 2016; Cinalli and Giugni, 2013, 2016a; Koopmans and Statham, 1999) providing a detailed cross-national overview of solidarity in Europe. Within the public domain, solidarity contestation was carried out by a large plurality of actors, whose claims were made selectively salient in the media: state actors and governments, political parties and powerful elites, as well as corporate actors, pressure groups, and civil society organisations and movements. These different actors competed for attention in the media as a common arena for making public their positions, mutual conflicts, shared agreements, and so forth. While previous research on solidarity in Europe has dealt with the direct interactions between state and civil society actors on the one hand, and the objects of solidarity on the other, our focus is on

mediated relationships and mediated conflicts as they develop in the public domain, including different types of 'publics' that are at the same time the subject and the object of policy-making.

In any large polity—whether consisting of a specific city, a larger region, a national state, or the whole European community—it is impossible for all actors to interact face-to-face with each other. Consequently, they must rely, to a considerable extent, on the media to access the public domain, and be able to contribute to debates by expressing their own opinions, pondering on the pros and cons of different policy choices, or calling for action. This key role of the print media as a forum for public debate and opinion formation is confirmed by the literature on comparative media systems and journalism (Hallin and Mancini, 2004; Pfetsch et al., 2008), which is why we have selected print media as our primary source of analysis. Our argument is that a comprehensive research design dealing with the public domain must allow for examination of the crucial discursive dynamics by which the plurality of claimants intersects with each other. We thus follow the example of a key body of literature that deals with the crucial relationship between different types of actors, their interventions, and the public domain that is available through the various types of media acknowledging the plurality of modes of intervention that may be used (Cinalli and O'Flynn, 2014; Sanders, 1997; Young, 2000). More specifically, we rely on the method of claims analysis so as to capture the main trends of 'claims-making' within the public domain. 'Claims-making' was born in the scholarly field of contentious politics (Koopmans and Statham, 1999), and it consists of retrieving interventions in the public domain on a given issue (or range of issues), drawing from media sources, and most often—also here—newspapers. Hence, claims-making is valuable to study the roles and positions in the public domain of all actors that formulated claims relating to the refugee crisis.

Our unit of analysis is the single claim, which is defined as an intervention, verbal or nonverbal, made in the public domain by any actor in the media (including individuals), which bears relation to the interests, needs or rights of refugees. In the quality of objects of the claims, these include refugees as individuals or as a collective group. Each claim by any actor is characterised by a typical structure, which can be broken down into a number of elements enquiring into the main characteristics of a claim. In particular, our cross-national analysis of print media here deals with six main comparative variables of all claims, including the actor (who makes the claim), the addressee (who is held responsible by the claimant), the issue (what the main concern is), the form (the action through which the claim is inserted in the public domain), the position (whether the claim is unfavourable or favourable to refugees), and the value (how claimants

justify their interventions). The analysis draws on a comparative dataset, stemming from a systematic content analysis of newspapers in each of the countries under study. A complex procedure has been followed to gather the relevant content-analytic data, combining the advantages of automated search and selection of online archives of media contents with the qualitative detail allowed by human coding as detailed below.

In the first step, a representative number of national newspapers were selected (available online through sources such as LexisNexis and Factiva). The choice of these newspapers followed from the need to ensure, as far as possible, a representative and unbiased sample. Thus, we included both quality newspapers and more tabloid-oriented newspapers, while at the same time considering newspapers from different political orientations as well as more neutral ones.[1] All articles containing any of the two words refugee (and its derivatives) and asylum were selected and coded, to the extent that they referred to the current 'refugee crisis'. We created a comparative dataset by coding about 700 claims per country pertaining to transnational solidarity over the 'refugee crisis' between 1 August 2015 and 30 April 2016 from a systematic random sample of articles (for a total sample of 5,948 claims). We considered all articles which reported political decisions, verbal statements, direct solidarity action or protest actions on a number of themes that refer explicitly or obviously to the 'refugee crisis'. Claims concerning the activities of actors who claimed to be victims of the 'refugee crisis' were also coded. We coded all claims taking place in one of the analysed countries, or addressing actors from these countries. Claims were also studied if they were made by or addressed to a supranational actor of which one of our countries of coding is a member (e.g. the UN, the EU, the UNHCR), under the condition that the claim was substantively relevant for any of our countries.

The definition of the claim as the unit of analysis, rather than the article or the single statement, has two implications. First, an article can report several claims. Second, a claim can be made up of several statements or actions. Statements or actions by different actors were considered to be part of a single claim if they took place at the same time (on the same day), place (in the same locality), and if the actors could be assumed to act in concert (i.e. they are considered as strategic allies); simply put, in our coding, claims have a unity of time and place. At the same time, only articles from news sections were coded, meaning that other genres, such as sport sections, editorials, or letters, were excluded. In so doing, we excluded simple attributions of attitudes or opinions to actors by the print media since our main focus, in fact, was on the claims of the actors themselves.

6.4 EUROPEANISATION/POLARISATION OF SOLIDARITY CONTESTATION IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

By engaging in a cross-national overview of claims in the print media, we take the 'refugee crisis' as a field of public contestation that can tell us more about where Europe stands in terms of its union and divisions. We start by considering the diachronic development of claim-making in order to assess the extent to which claims follow (or do not) a similar cross-national pattern over time. Hence, we appraise whether potential matching across countries can be related to variations of grievance-based factors such as the number of asylum applicants. In fact, given some crucial cross-national similarities in terms of asylum-seeking (Harcup and O'Neill, 2016; O'Neill and Harcup, 2009), it is unlikely to find strong cross-national variations in terms of whole volumes of claims-making. We also consider the potential impact of other domestic-based factors given that any disruption of societal routines opens up political space for many actors who are willing to redefine issues, policy reforms, and gain advantage on opponents (Boin et al., 2009: 82). In doing so, we engage with a long-standing tradition of scholarly debate that opposes grievance and opportunity theories in the field of contentious politics. If, on the one hand, we wonder whether grievance-based potential for conflict has a positive impact on claims, we are only too aware that other scholars have, contrastingly, argued that grievances do not necessarily lead to claims-making (Kriesi, 2004; Meyer, 2004). Under this viewpoint, given the nature of the 'refugee crisis' and its transnational implications, the main ambition is to enquire into the relationship between Europeanisation and re-nationalisation of solidarity contestations beyond an initial appraisal of similarities of debates across countries in terms of attention cycles.

Our engagement with Europeanisation vs. polarisation continues by appraising three main variables of claims which our codebook has scored directly in terms of their variations across the national/transnational scope, namely, the actor, the addressee, and the issue. The variable actor is especially useful for assessing the visibility of different claimants in the public domain, paying particular attention to the presence of national and supranational actors, respectively. The crucial role of the 'refugee crisis' for imposing some primary definers of debate against the others is evident when distinguishing between national and transnational actors, respectively. Obviously, the securitising and nationalisation twists suggest the likely hegemony of national actors among the primary definers in the public domain; by contrast, a more supranational view of a European people that discuss matters of common interest predicts some very high

cross-national visibility of supranational actors in the public domain. We are also interested in appraising whether political actors in particular are still maintaining their inherent news value allowing for their more extensive coverage (Koopmans and Statham, 2010; Tresch, 2009), or if the 'refugee crisis' is instead opening up more space for the intervention of other actors, such as, for example, advocacy groups challenging established policies or other potential claimants of change (Boin et al., 2009: 82). In addition, the specific salience of claims by civil society actors gives a more refined understanding of how much centrality the state is still holding in the refugee field through different types of actors.

Afterwards, the same analysis can be repeated for the variable addressee, the main actor who is held explicitly responsible for acting with regard to the claim, or at whom the claim is explicitly addressed as a call to act. In particular, the two variables, actor and addressee, can be intersected in the discussion so as to have a more detailed view of cross-national variations of the public domain between the two polar configurations of nationalisation, whereby the field is dominated by national actors addressing other national actors, and supranationalism, whereby the field is dominated by supranational actors addressing supranational addressees (Balme and Chabanet, 2008; della Porta and Caiani, 2007). In the same vein, our codebook also scores the variable 'issue' in terms of national/supranational variations: in particular, we can rely on some specific issues such as a refugee quota or border controls that would indicate the importance of European policy-making through the strengthening of a national focus on European topics (Boomgaarden et al., 2013; Brüggemann and Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2009; Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2012).

Finally, we focus on three main variables, namely form, posit and frame. The variable 'form' refers to the type of action that claimants use to enter the public domain, distinguishing between repressive measures (policing, courts' ruling, etc.), political decisions (law, governmental guideline, implementation measure, etc.), verbal statements (public speech, press conference, parliamentary intervention, etc.), protest actions (demonstration, occupation, violent action, etc.), humanitarian aid, and solidarity action (the latter as a direct act of providing help/assistance to others in need of support). In this case, it seems highly relevant to understand whether the 'refugee crisis' has transformed into a typical contentious field of European politics, or rather stands out as a more heterogeneous field where protests do not take over a larger variety of *repertoires* (Tarrow, 1994; Tilly, 1978).

The variable 'posit' is useful for checking for cross-national and longitudinal increases of favourable/unfavourable positions vis-à-vis refugees. In addition, this variable is valuable to appraise whether anti-refugee

claims-making is driven by salient divides about solidarity towards refugees, or instead whether media debates do converge on issues and positions about solidarity. In this case, we expect national debates to follow similar dividing lines to governments, political parties and civil society actors, especially when considering the favourable or unfavourable position of their claims vis-à-vis refugees. An assessment of polarising trends between favourable and unfavourable claims within the overall debate, also adds further understanding about the degree of contentiousness in the field, for example, allowing us to discuss the 'backlash thesis' and the relationship between conflict and coverage (Boin et al., 2005; Boomgaarden et al., 2013; Heath, 2010; Van der Pas and Vliegenthart, 2016). Our last variable 'value' considers how different actors justify their opposing views on questions regarding solidarity with refugees. By connecting the positionality of claimants towards refugees with their justifications, i.e. criss-crossing 'value' with 'posit', our analysis aims to understand how, and to what extent the humanitarian aspects of the 'refugee crisis' become visible. Most crucially, however, does the analysis of the variable 'value' allow for a closer look at the core idea of whether solidarity contestations may be driven by a new divide replacing traditional ideological cleavages, and that juxtaposes the so-called communitarians with cosmopolitans in unmistakable terms?

6.5 EUROPEANISATION AND DIACHRONIC DYNAMICS

Starting with our research question on Europeanisation, an analysis of longitudinal dynamics is crucial to evaluate whether solidarity debates are nationally confined—leading us to expect a low degree of overlap between attention cycles across countries—or whether attention cycles do peak cross-nationally at the same time. By tracing dynamics of solidarity contestation over time, we can thus detect a Europeanised public debate with similar attention cycles across countries, or alternatively, a re-nationalisation in how Europe discusses the 'refugee crisis' in each country distinctly. Figure 6.1 shows that Europe's claims-making landscape stands out for a quite regular distribution over time of the total number of articles retrieved cross-nationally. In particular, the months of September and January mark frequency peaks in covering the 'refugee crisis' across Europe, thereby matching the main calendar of important events in the field. The 'refugee crisis' was particularly salient in September 2015 given that the EU ministers voted on the EU Commission's plan to redistribute 160,000 refugees across EU member states. Salience has a second cross-national peak in the following months, December to January, though in

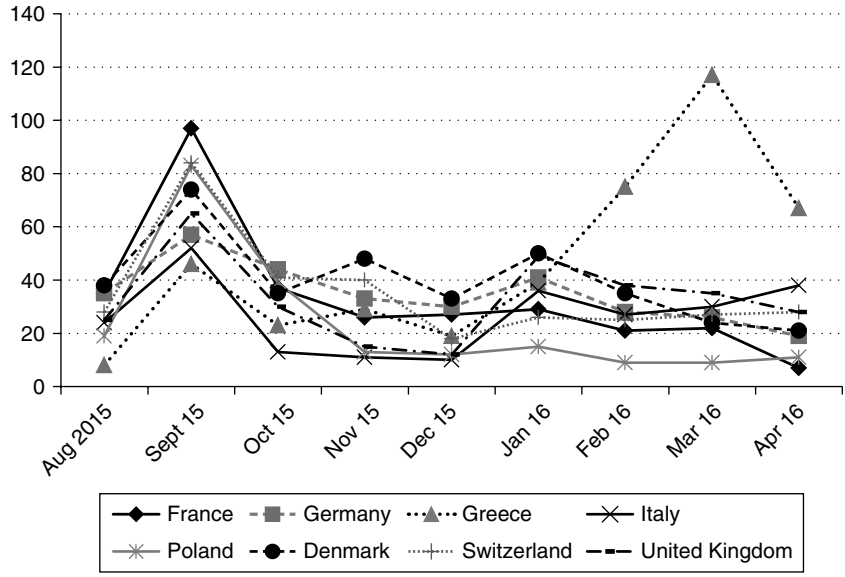

Figure 6.1 Total number of articles over sample time period

this case, salience seems to follow more specific national dynamics, for example owing to the traumatic experience of terrorism in France, or the contentious jewellery law in Denmark.

Greece is the only national case that departs from this ubiquitous trend, given that the increase of claims in January continues in the following months by contrast with the decreasing trend in all other countries, reaching a peak in March which is unparalleled throughout the whole period and across all countries. In fact, the first three months of 2016 were extremely important in Greece because there was a series of events, political decisions and debates which strengthened the 'refugee crisis' in the public discourse much more than in any other country. Briefly, these took the form of debates about the expulsion of Greece from the Schengen area, the closure of the Balkan route between Greece and Austria, and especially the EU–Turkey agreement on curbing large numbers of refugees arriving in Europe. Once again then, this finding underlines the potential re-appropriation of the transnational 'refugee crisis' that each national state performed from the end of autumn 2015 onwards, in a way to fit the domestic dynamics of its own national politics. Simply put, our main argument is that the two peaks of September 2015 and January 2016 are profoundly different: the 'refugee crisis' had a common supranational momentum in September 2015, which was lost in the re-nationalisation of the public domain in the

following months, thereby triggering national claims-making on follow-up events or political decisions by national governments.

The frequency distribution of the sampled claims in Figure 6.2 confirms the existence of the supranational momentum of September 2015. With a peak in September 2015, European claims-making decreased in the following months, but then increased again in a new (minor) peak at the beginning of 2016. Once again, we find that, in contrast with trends in other countries, claims in Greece continue to increase throughout the first trimester of 2016, reaching the highest peak only in March (though this peak in terms of claims-making is lower than the peak for articles in Figure 6.1).

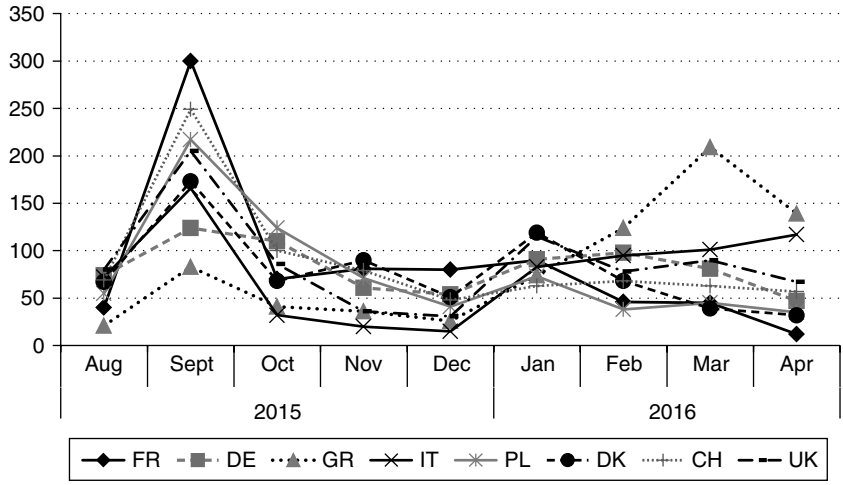

Figure 6.2 Total number of claims over sample time period

As stated previously, a crucial analysis consists of matching this consistent diachronic trend across both articles and claims with the variation of a main grievance-based factor, such as the number of asylum applicants. This is based on the assumption that higher numbers of asylum applicants also imply their higher visibility; thus, the higher numbers of asylum seekers stand for stronger feelings over refugees, thereby potentially leading to more claims and media coverage in general. By contrast, lower numbers of asylum seekers are expected to translate into low levels of claims and media coverage in general. Figure 6.3 shows numbers of first-time asylum applicants. It confirms the existence of very similar patterns of asylum-seeking across the eight countries, which in turn fits the expectation that a similar diachronic pattern should be found across them in terms of both articles and claims. Yet, while we have already noticed the existence of a

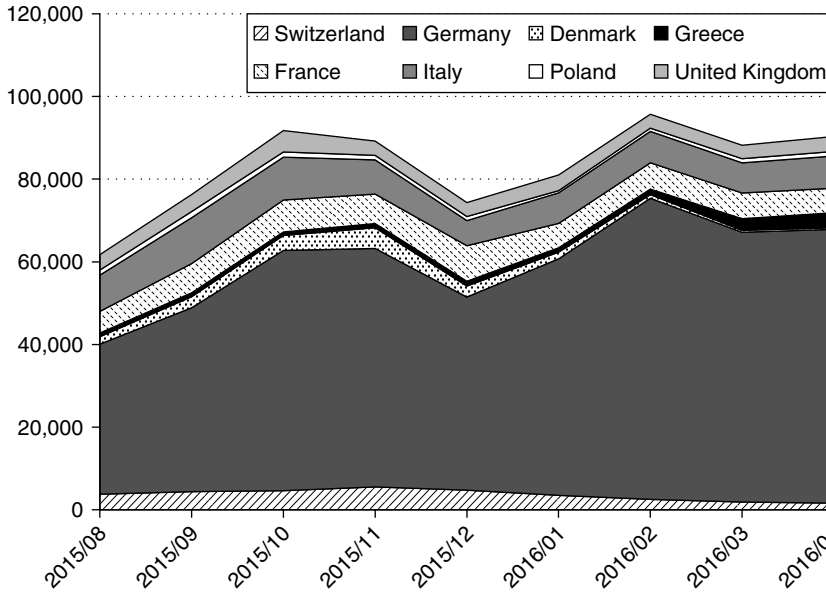

Figure 6.3 Number of first-time asylum applicants during the 'refugee crisis'

similar diachronic pattern in terms of articles and claims, this hardly follows the same chronology of asylum requests in Figure 6.3. In particular, we can detect two peaks, but these peaks have a more gentle slope than in Figures 6.1 and 6.2, following, rather than anticipating, the two peaks that were found in the analysis of the public domain. In other words, discursive dynamics in the public sphere follow their own logics, having to do more with the strategic posture and claim-making capacity of actors in the field rather than objective grievances.

6.6 PRIMARY DEFINERS, TARGETS AND CONCERN OF CLAIMS

A detailed enquiry into Europeanisation can be expanded by the analysis of claims-makers as the primary definers of the 'refugee crisis' in the public domain. Accordingly, Table 6.1 shows the cross-national distribution of claims when looking at the main claimants, answering the simple question "Who makes the claim?". Findings are provided so as to distinguish the main actors of decision-making, such as the state and political parties, civil society groups and organisations of different kinds,[2] individual citizens,

Table 6.1 Actors of claims by country (percentages)

	State actors and political parties	Civil society groups/ collectives	Individual citizens/ activists	Supranational actors	Unknown	Total (absolute numbers)
FR	64	23.2	6.4	6.4	0	100 (764)
DE	63.5	15.8	13.5	7.2	0	100 (740)
GR	63.1	20.6	5.6	10.5	0.2	100 (753)
IT	64.5	21.4	6	8	0.1	100 (701)
PL	58.8	26.9	7.9	6	0.4	100 (699)
DK	57.7	22.9	9.8	9.6	0	100 (707)
CH	62.7	20.4	5.4	10.8	0.7	100 (796)
UK	62.3	20.9	5.1	11.7	0	100 (788)
Total	62.1	21.5	7.4	8.8	0.2	100.0 (5948)

and lastly, supranational actors in their role as major stakeholders in the public debate over the 'refugee crisis'.

The cross-national comparison of figures (see Table 6.1) shows that state actors and political parties had the lion's share in all countries, with very little variation existing between countries with the highest (Italy) and the lowest (Denmark) percentages, respectively. The low cross-national variation is confirmed when dealing with civil society groups. With the exception of Germany, which stands out for a very low score of 15.8%, all other percentages varied between 20.4% for Switzerland and 26.9% for Poland. This relatively high salience of civil society further shows that the domestic debate was not state- and government-driven, but that many other groups, such as trade unions, advocacy groups and human rights organisations took part in the debate. Some larger cross-national variations can be noticed when dealing with individual citizens and activists since we can detect at least two poles of lower (Great Britain, Switzerland and Greece) and higher presence (Germany), respectively. However, most crucially for our argument, cross-national variation is evident when focusing on supranational actors. In this case, percentages doubled when moving from the lowest presence of supranational actors in Poland (6%) to the highest presence of supranational actors in Great Britain (almost 12%).

In spite of a dominance by state actors as main protagonists in the field, overall results seem to suggest that there is a wide distribution of voices across different categories of actors (even though voices are distributed unequally over different actor categories), which shows that refugee solidarity debate was quite plural and with no ultimate monopoly of single actors. Even if visibility of political parties varied across countries, the

share of state actors and parties was similar across countries. The same can be said about civil society in general, that is to say, regardless of specific distinctions made within this category. The proportions between state actors and parties on the one hand, and civil society on the other, are also useful when focusing on national specificities; thus, the true force behind the more generous stand that Germany took vis-à-vis the other European countries seems to originate particularly in the direct relationship between policy actors and individual citizens, with only a minor role left for client politics (Freeman, 1995, 1998). However, overall comparative findings are sufficient to indicate that supranationalism followed a different trend across countries, which is consistent with the idea that the European momentum of the first peak in Figures 6.1 and 6.2 was lost in the following months, while the second peak in the same figures may be due to the process of re-nationalisation of narratives within the public domain of various countries.

Moving on to the analysis of the addressee, Table 6.2 shows the cross-national distribution of claims when answering the question "Who is held responsible with regard to the claim?". Once again, findings are provided so as to distinguish the main actors/decision-makers, such as parties and the state, civil society groups and organisations of different kinds, individual citizens, and, lastly, supranational actors in their role as major stakeholders, hence a very likely target to be addressed by other actors.

The first overall finding is that only a minor percentage of claimants explicitly addressed another actor when intervening in the public domain. However, when focusing on the analysis of valid cases (almost a quarter of

Table 6.2 Addressees of claims about the refugee crisis by country (percentages)

	State and political party	Civil society groups/ collectives	Individual citizens/ activists	Supranational actors (EU and UN)	No actor or unknown	Total (absolute numbers)
FR	9.3	1.8	1.2	3.7	84.0	100.0 (764)
DE	9.2	0.9	0.7	1.9	87.3	100.0 (740)
GR	19.1	10.4	2.0	6.1	62.4	100.0 (753)
IT	12.7	5.8	1.9	3.9	75.7	100.0 (701)
PL	20.2	5.2	4.6	2.3	67.8	100.0 (699)
DK	15.7	2.7	1.1	4.4	76.1	100.0 (707)
CH	17.5	1.1	3.5	4.3	73.6	100.0 (796)
UK	14.8	1.8	0.8	3.2	79.4	100.0 (788)
Total	14.8	3.7	2.0	3.7	75.9	100.0 (5948)

the whole sample) we find that state actors and political parties are, once again, dominant across all countries. In this case, some higher variation distinguished countries with the lowest addressing of state and parties on the one hand (France and Germany), and countries with the most extensive addressing of state and parties on the other (Poland and Greece). In addition, this difference between the two poles of the most- and the least-addressed, respectively, is somewhat confirmed when dealing with civil society groups, for example considering that they are scarcely addressed in Germany, but extensively addressed in Greece.

Most crucially for our argument, cross-national variation is once again evident when focusing on supranational actors. In this case, percentages more than tripled when moving from the lowest presence of supranational actors as an addressee in Germany (under 2%) to the highest presence of supranational actors in Greece (over 6%), while scoring differently in each other country along the continuum between one pole and the other. Emphasis should be put on the fact that countries which played a minor role in the 'refugee crisis' were not necessarily indifferent to discussing and detecting responsibilities at the supranational level, while countries with a major role were not necessarily interested in detecting responsibilities at the supranational level (cf. the low percentage of Germany when compared to France, controlling for a similar number of valid cases). So overall, the data fit the idea that national specificities may have prevailed in the long run, having lost the driving potential of the supranational momentum of September 2015.

With regard to the analysis of the issue, Table 6.3 shows the cross-national distribution of claims when answering the question "What is the

Table 6.3 Issues of claims about the 'refugee crisis' by country (percentages)

	Migration management	Integration	Background of refugees	Consequences of refugee crisis	Public/civic initiatives	Total (absolute numbers)
FR	64.9	5.2	10.9	11.9	7.1	100.0 (764)
DE	49.9	8	12.3	16.2	13.6	100.0 (740)
GR	66.1	2.9	11.6	11	8.4	100.0 (753)
IT	65.5	2.6	15.4	7.1	9.4	100.0 (701)
PL	62.4	4	10.6	9.9	13.1	100.0 (699)
DK	66.5	8.9	7.6	7.8	9.2	100.0 (707)
CH	66.1	4.2	8.4	6	15.3	100.0 (796)
UK	68.1	3.2	15.9	8.6	4.2	100.0 (788)
Grand Total	63.7	4.9	11.6	9.8	10	100.0 (5948)

main concern about?". Findings are provided to help distinguish among a number of major issues that were in the public domain cross-nationally, namely, migration management, integration, the background of refugees, consequences of the 'refugee crisis', and public/civic initiatives. Overall, data show that the debate in Europe about the 'refugee crisis' focused in particular on migration management. This is consistent with both a national and overall supranational fit, given the ubiquitous contestation over borders in almost all countries, as well as for the direct engagement of the EU in the formulation of the refugee quota scheme. Yet, national specificities are once again present when focusing on other dominant issues after migration management. The concern about integration was especially prevalent in Denmark; the concern about the background of refugees was especially prevalent in Great Britain; the concern about the consequences of the 'refugee crisis' was especially prevalent in Germany; the concern about public/civic initiatives was especially prevalent in Switzerland. Simply put, overall findings once again fit the idea of a specific re-appropriation of the refugee crisis in each country, in spite of a strong overall supranational framework.

6.7 SOLIDARITY DIVIDES ACROSS COUNTRIES: FORM, POSITIONALITY AND JUSTIFICATION OF CLAIMS

A key aspect to consider when focusing on solidarity contestations in the public domain refers to the analysis of forms of political intervention, in line with seminal literature debate over repertoires within the scholarship field of contentious politics (Tilly, 1978). Accordingly, Table 6.4 provides data on forms of mobilisation by answering the question "By which action is the claim inserted in the public domain?". In this case, our systematic analysis refers to all potential forms of action over the 'refugee crisis', such as purely verbal statements (including public statements, press releases, publications, and interviews), protest actions (including forms such as demonstrations and political violence), humanitarian aid (including solidarity mobilisations), direct solidarity (including the provision of help and assistance to others in need of support) as well as other forms of intervention that were the prerogative of state and policy actors such as political decisions and repression. The hegemony of verbal statements is just one expected finding given the intense debate over the 'refugee crisis' spreading throughout Europe. Yet, beyond this homogeneous result, we find once again some crucial evidence for emphasising national specificities.

In particular, an elites-based and state-centric approach in France, Denmark and Switzerland translated into an extensive presence of political

Table 6.4 Forms of claims about the refugee crisis by country in percentages

	Political decisions	Direct solidarity	Humanitarian aid	Protest actions	Repressive actions	Verbal statements	Unknown	Total (abs. numbers)
FR	20.5	7.5	2.0	8.9	0.9	59.9	0.3	100.0 (764)
DE	10.7	9.2	1.8	10.4	0.5	67.4	0.0	100.0 (740)
GR	12.7	6.2	2.9	13.9	2.3	61.9	0.0	100.0 (753)
IT	15.3	3.7	1.9	12.7	5.0	61.5	0.0	100.0 (701)
PL	11.2	3.7	2.4	9.8	0.6	72.2	0.0	100.0 (699)
DK	18.0	3.8	3.3	8.1	2.3	64.6	0.0	100.0 (707)
CH	21.6	6.3	2.0	9.7	2.8	57.7	0.0	100.0 (796)
UK	15.5	1.8	1.6	9.4	1.3	70.4	0.0	100.0 (788)
Grand Total	15.8	5.3	2.2	10.4	1.9	64.4	0.0	100.0 (5948)

decisions. Political decisions were less extensive in more crisis-laden countries such as Germany, Greece and Italy; these latter countries, by contrast, stood out as the ones with the highest percentages of protest action. While we find no relevant cross-national differences in terms of humanitarian aid, we do find some substantial variation across countries when dealing with the delivery of direct solidarity; in particular, countries covered variable positions across the two poles of high solidarity in Germany on the one hand, and low solidarity in Great Britain on the other. Overall then, findings suggest that the 'refugee crisis' did not become a typical contentious field of European politics, or rather, only a few countries have witnessed this. By contrast, we observe a more heterogeneous field cross-nationally, where protest did not dominate over a larger variety of national-specific repertoires.

Another key aspect to consider when focusing on solidarity contestations in the public domain is the question "How do different actors position themselves towards the question of refugee solidarity?". With regard to the overall position towards refugees as our object of solidarity, findings in Table 6.5 suggest that all countries were strongly divided about the question of refugee solidarity. Public claims-makers were generally disposed to granting solidarity to refugees with a slight majority of positive (39.7%) over negative voices (35.7%) (see Table 6.7). 24.6% of the claims were neutral or ambivalent. This somewhat even distribution between pro- and anti-solidarity claims in the media indicates a rather balanced coverage of different political opinions in all countries, but also underlines the lack of agreement among claimants regarding the question of how Europe should treat its refugees. In this case, data do suggest a relatively high degree of contestation given that positive and negative claims were more dominant, i.e. opinionated claims made up 75.4% of the claims (as opposed to 24.6% of neutral or ambivalent claims).

Table 6.5 Positions across countries in percentages

	Negative	Neutral/ambivalent	Positive	Total (Abs. Numbers)
FR	31.8	29.6	38.6	100.0 (764)
DE	29.6	31.8	38.6	100.0 (740)
GR	42.1	14.9	43.0	100.0 (753)
IT	30.2	29.4	40.4	100.0 (701)
PL	34.3	30.2	35.5	100.0 (699)
DK	40.0	19.9	40.0	100.0 (707)
CH	33.2	19.3	47.5	100.0 (796)
UK	43.7	22.8	33.5	100.0 (788)
Total	35.7	24.6	39.7	100.0 (5948)

Table 6.6 Positionality across claimant types

Positionality	Percentages	Absolute Numbers
Negative	35.7	2122
State and political party actors	26.2	1560
Civil society groups/collectives	4.6	276
Individual citizens/activists	2.9	173
Supranational actors	1.8	107
No actor or unknown	0.1	6
Neutral/ambivalent	24.6	1465
State and political party actors	16.9	1007
Civil society groups/collectives	3.6	215
Individual citizens/activists	0.6	35
Supranational actors	3.5	206
No actor or unknown	0.0	2
Positive	39.7	2361
State and political party actors	19.0	1128
Civil society groups/collectives	13.2	785
Individual citizens/activists	3.9	232
Supranational actors	3.6	212
No actor or unknown	0.1	4
Grand Total	100.0	5948

When zooming in more closely to observe the different countries of Table 6.6, we find the lowest level of neutral claims, and thus the highest level of solidarity contestation, in Greece, arguably the one country in the sample which was affected the most by huge numbers of refugees landing on its coasts. With less than 20% of neutral claims, Denmark and Switzerland also show a high degree of contestation, most likely as a result of polarised politics among decision-makers (cf. the high percentage of political decisions in Table 6.4). Positions seem rather evenly distributed in Polish, French, German and Italian claims, but more positive overall for the latter three mentioned, while Great Britain stands out for being the only case where negative claims outweigh the positive ones. Overall, then, positions seem to be covered rather evenly in the media, often (slightly) more positive, with the exception of Great Britain, where claims in the three largest newspapers were more often anti-solidarity claims. Nevertheless, findings in Figure 6.4 suggest that differences were not that big: average positionality ranges were between *c*.0.15 and −0.10. The use of a very small interval scale in Figure 6.4, however, allows for capturing cross-national differences, no matter how small they are.

As discussed already, state and political actors were the most dominant

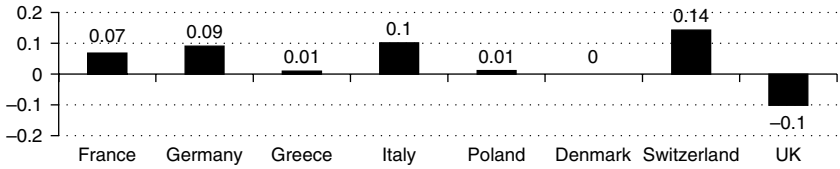

Figure 6.4 Average positionality towards refugees per country

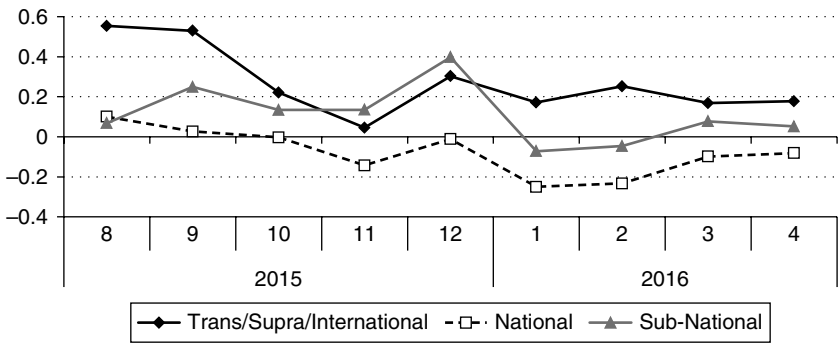

Figure 6.5 Average position of actors by scope across all countries over time

claimants. This is, in itself, not a surprising finding since political actors tend to be the most dominant in the public space in general (e.g. Tresch, 2009). However, when dealing with positionality, findings in Table 6.6 show that state and political actors were particularly visible with negative claims where 26.2% of the negative stances towards refugees were expressed by them—as opposed to 4.6% by civil society groups and collective actors. State and political actors also led the field in positive (19%) and neutral claims (16.9%), yet, negative claims were more prominent. Overall, our claims analysis neatly pictures the political contestation over how to treat refugees—not only between political actors and the more positive claimants from civil society, but also among the different categories of state and political party actors.

In terms of the Europeanisation of solidarity contestation during the refugee crisis, one way to understand it is to look at the positionality of actors with different scope. Here, when pooled across countries, Figure 6.5 shows quite clearly that actors were on average the most negative when they had a national scope, whereas claimants with a scope beyond or below the national context were substantially more positive throughout the whole time. This seems to match the specific divisive nature of electoral

politics at the national level, which has in fact led to the further rising of the extreme right in many European countries. By contrast, sub-national and EU politics follow quite different dynamics, as they are often inspired by the common search for bipartisan solutions to concrete issues (the subnational level) or by the formation of consensus among different national perspectives. More broadly, as stated, this trend mirrors the division between national governments looking for electoral support on the one hand, and the EU on the other: the EU actors, favouring a European solution based on universal human rights, found themselves in opposition to national governments refusing to comply with EU resettlement schemes. However, the average positionality of claims seems to follow similar trends across different scopes. This suggests that events like the Paris attacks in November 2015 and the sexual assaults in Cologne over New Year in 2016 influenced the discourse about solidarity with refugees towards the negative (though the trend is less pronounced for transnational actors).

Looking into the average positionality of actors of different scopes by country reveals some remarkable differences. Figure 6.6 shows that Germany and Greece, for example, are the two countries in the sample where actors of national scope had, on average, made more positive claims about refugees, whereas in all other countries, national scope equalled negative tonality. Germany stands out for the closest gap in positionality between the domestic and the European level, not surprisingly so given its leadership in Europe and the relatively scarce role that the supranational cleavage plays in its electoral politics. A close gap can also be observed in Greece, yet this

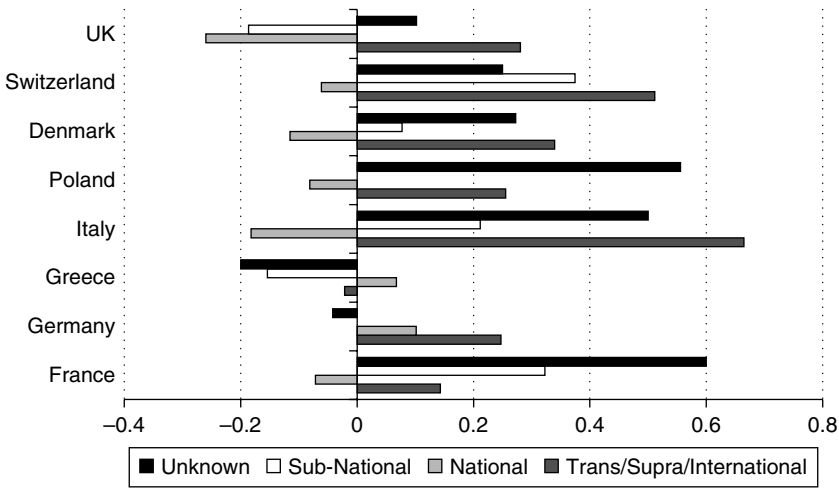

Figure 6.6 Average positionality of claimants by country/scope

latter stands out in particular when looking into the positionality of actors with a larger than national scope. Greece is the country in the sample with the most negative claims put forward by trans-, supra- or international actors, possibly owing to their usual way of portraying European actors for their problem-bringing, rather than problem-solving, capacity since the beginning of the debt crisis in 2008. Overall, solidarity claims in Greece seem to follow an opposite dynamic in terms of positionality and scope when compared to most of the other countries in our sample. As regards these latter, we have already referred to the divisive nature of their national politics, with the instrumental position that the extreme right takes against EU institutions for maximising electoral results.

The overwhelming majority of claims were made by actors with a national scope. However, this does not shed light on potential divisions between different nationalities. Zooming in on the national category of actor scopes, again, reveals interesting differences between countries. First of all, nationalities could not be identified for the main claimant in around 15% of cases. Going back to the example of Greece, Figure 6.7 shows that Greek actors were responsible for the overall positive positionality of claims, while actors with other nationalities were negative on average. The same was true for all countries except Great Britain and Denmark, where all types of national-scope claimants were negative on average. Claimants with a national scope and nationalities from other European countries made more negative claims in all countries. Regarding non-EU nationalities, Poland was the only country in which such actors seem to have made more positive claims.

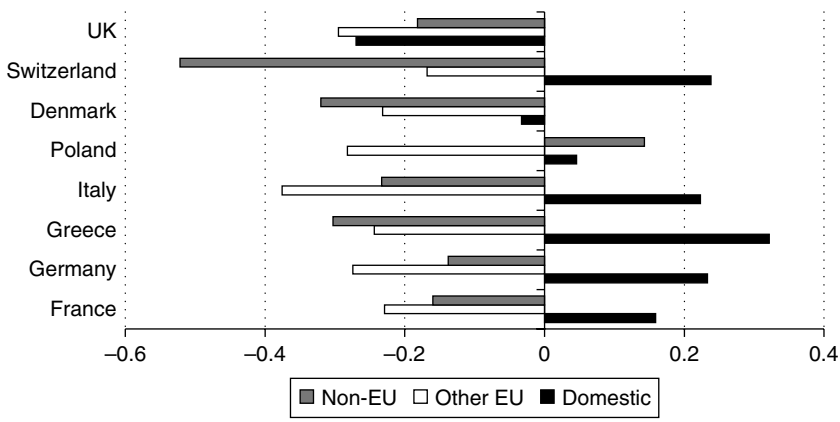

Figure 6.7 Average positionality of claimants with national scope by nationality

Table 6.7 Percentages of justifications (n=5948) in all claims by position and claimant

	Interest-based	Rights-based	Identity-based	No justification	Grand Total
Political actors					
Negative	13.8	1.7	1.8	10.8	28.0
Neutral/ambivalent	9.4	1.4	0.7	9.0	20.4
Positive	6.4	6.0	1.0	9.1	22.5
Civil society actors					
Negative	2.2	0.4	1.5	3.4	7.5
Neutral/ambivalent	1.3	0.3	0.3	2.4	4.2
Positive	2.0	6.8	1.2	7.1	17.1
Unknown/unspecified					
Negative	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
Neutral/ambivalent	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Positive	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
Grand Total	34.9	16.7	6.5	41.9	100.0

Moving on to consider the justification of claims, we should emphasise that the debate over the 'refugee crisis' was mainly about values and the morally defensible limits of humanitarian assistance (Bauböck, 2018: 141). With regard to our analysis here, the question then is whether and how claimants justified their respective stances on the question of solidarity with refugees. A first finding in Table 6.7 is that the largest volume of claims (41.9%) were not provided with a justification. This share is followed by 34.9% of claims that were justified by using an interest-based value[3] to give more rational or pragmatic reasons. A rights-based value[4] was used in 16.7% of cases whereas an identity-based[5] value was the least employed in justifying positive, neutral/ambivalent or negative positions. When focusing on specific actors, one finds that the interest-based justification seems to be reserved for political actors and their negative positions, rather than the other claimant groups who are, as already stated, more positive overall and use rights-based arguments to justify their opinions.

Zooming in more closely on the different countries, Figure 6.8 shows that rights-based values are almost ubiquitous when claiming solidarity with refugees. Findings also show that the opposite is true for interest- and identity-based justifications, although the tendency towards the negative is not as spelled out. In Switzerland, Denmark and France, identity is, on average, more related to positive stances, which in turn seems to suggest a more inclusive approach to solidarity in these countries, whereas claims in

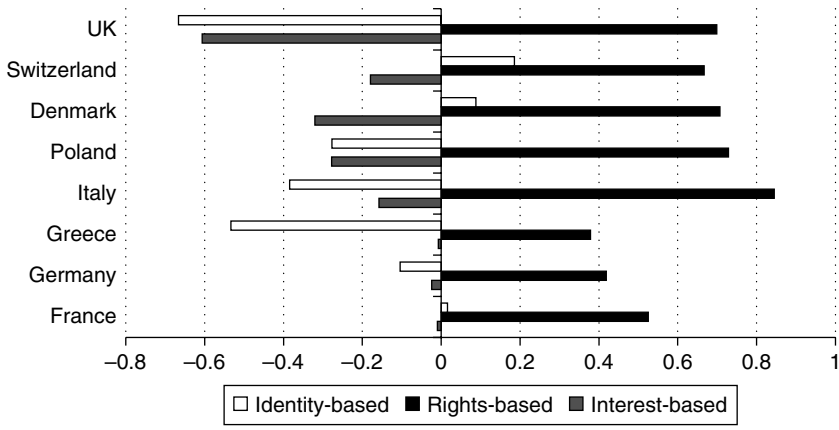

Figure 6.8 Frames and average positions in claims by country

Great Britain and Greece more often conveyed a perception of an exclusive national identity in opposition to the identity of refugees. Interest-based positions were almost balanced in Greece, Germany and France.

6.8 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, we have shown that public debate and contestation over the 'refugee crisis' emerged as a dynamic process. This dynamic process started with a genuine European momentum, but then transformed quickly through the re-appropriation of the 'refugee crisis' by national actors, who were mainly driven by concerns and positions of national politics. We have demonstrated that solidarity contestation depends upon particular moments, and certainly a moment for European solidarity was triggered by the dramatic events that unfolded throughout the summer of 2015. Yet supranationalism declined over time, leaving the space for national specificities to re-emerge and re-nationalisation to take place over the following months. At the same time, our findings have suggested that the 'refugee crisis' has not yet at least become a typically contentious field of European politics; in fact, we have observed the presence of heterogeneous forms of action in the public domain, whereby protest does not dominate the larger variety of national-specific repertoires.

Looking into the average positionality of actors, we have shown that the public domain is not a main arena that can be held solely responsible for promoting anti-solidarity and anti-refugee attitudes, justifications and positions. The overall position of claims was often favourable, rather than

unfavourable, vis-à-vis refugees, while some strong emphasis was regularly put on humanitarian issues and not just on security concerns. In addition, civil society was particularly active, and most often with a positive position. In particular, we found only some limited cross-national differences when looking at average positionality. By contrast, variation is stronger when looking at intra-national differences between actors: state and political actors stand out for their stronger involvement in negative claims whereas civil society groups and collective actors engage more extensively in pro-refugee claims.

Claimants with a trans-, inter-, or supranational scope were overwhelmingly positive regarding solidarity with refugees (in contrast to national scope claimants), thereby widening the potential gap between the more cosmopolitan standing of the EU, on the one hand, against the national revival across member states, on the other. Furthermore, we have identified some relevant patterns in terms of values which claimants appeal to when justifying their claims. In particular, rights-based values are often used when claiming solidarity with refugees, while the opposite is true for interest- and identity-based justifications. This finding corroborates the opposition between supranationalism and re-nationalisation processes: thus, national governments often refused to comply with EU resettlement schemes in order to defend their interests and identities, at the same time as EU actors favoured a solution based on universal human rights.

Ultimately, our findings have shown that there was a potential to mobilise solidarity beyond the borders of the national public domain, but this was especially linked to the European momentum of September 2015, after which solidarity simultaneously declined and re-nationalised. European integration has always been advanced as an expansive solidarity project, for example, the EU as a humanitarian power, free flows of labour, capital and people, or the propagation of inclusive notions of citizenship or of a European social model (Trenz, 2016). Yet European solidarity, instead of being perceived as expansive, can also turn into a more exclusive and protective project. In this new constellation, European cooperation would be limited to coordination of the fight against irregular immigration and of external border controls with the objective to protect national welfare regimes.

This might suggest a new dynamics of transnational solidarity contestations that would be driven by a new ideational divide that replaces traditional ideological cleavages and that juxtaposes so-called communitarians with cosmopolitans (Kriesi et al., 2012; Zürn and de Wilde, 2016). By looking at media contestation over the refugee crisis, this chapter has uncovered the ambivalence of European solidarity between the needs to provide humanitarian assistance and the protection of national welfare

and democracy. While one may disagree with the idea that the 'refugee crisis' was Europe's September 11 (Krastev, 2017a), it is nonetheless clear that the 'refugee crisis' has not only been about refugees, but has also been, and still is, about Europe itself.

NOTES

1 In particular, *Le Monde, Le Figaro, and Le Parisien* were selected for France; *Süddeutsche Zeitung, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, and *Bild* were selected for Germany; *Proto Thema, Ta Nea*, and *Kathimerini* were selected for Greece; *La Repubblica*, *Corriere della Sera*, and *Libero* were selected for Italy; *Gazeta Wyborcza, Rzeczpospolita*, and *Fakt* were selected for Poland; *Politiken, Jyllandsposten*, and *BT* were selected for Denmark; *The Guardian, The Telegraph*, and *The Express* were selected for Great Britain; lastly, due to its regional specificities, the Swiss case relied on the examination of five newspapers (*Le Matin, Le Temps, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Tages Anzeiger, La Regione Ticino*), two of which are written in German, two in French, and one in Italian.
2 Under this category we have included a wide range of civil society actors, including welfare movements, charity networks, cooperatives, human rights organisations, citizens' initiatives, and different types of advocacy and policy-oriented groups.
3 Including different items such as political calculations, economic calculations, efficiency/functionality, rule of law and security (cf. Cinalli and Trenz, 2016).
4 Including different items such as human rights, equality and non-discrimination, moral responsibility/philanthropy, democracy, restriction of rights-based on criteria of fairness or deservingness (cf. Cinalli and Trenz, 2016).
5 Including different items such as nationality, religion, race, traditions, gender, ethnicity, territory (cf. Cinalli and Trenz, 2016).

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7. Taking voice and taking sides: the role of social media commenting in solidarity contestation

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7.1 INTRODUCTION

New media forms and social media are increasingly used by citizens to engage with and debate the boundaries of political community and solidarity. Yet, the effects of fragmentation or inclusiveness on the public sphere are seen as ambivalent. In the literature, the destabilisation effects of social media on existing communities or publics are emphasised. In particular, social media and news commenting sites are often held responsible for the spread of hate speech and uncivic culture towards fellow citizens (Gerhards and Schafer, 2010; Michailidou et al., 2014; Rasmussen, 2014). Others, however, emphasise the new opportunities provided by social media as a stimulus for agenda-setting, more inclusive deliberation, identity-building, and therefore also solidarity. Political debates are more civic, global, inclusive and accessible, and empower disadvantaged groups and pluralise the public sphere in various ways (Dahlgren, 2013; Rauchfleisch and Kovic, 2016). An uncivic online sphere, on the other hand, would be a major threat to established solidarity relationships.

The potential both to erode and to empower solidarity bonds across social, political and national boundaries establishes online and social media as networks or platforms for the contestation of solidarity. What these new ways for solidarity contestation have in common is that they engage users with media content that conveys information or messages about the needs of other people. Through the confrontation with such content, social media users become witnesses of instances of distant suffering by others. Such witnessing creates a situation of moral spectatorship (Boltanski, 1999; Silverstone, 2006). Social media moral spectatorship can consequently build more immediate relationships to objects of suffering while, at the same time, activating critical capacities of online citizen-users

(Mortensen and Trenz, 2016). The witnessing of human suffering through the media is, on the one hand, paired with the expression of strong emotions such as pity, indignation or hate. On the other hand, it raises moral demands that can motivate and encourage media users to commit and to group each other around a cause. In contrast to the more passive reception of political news through legacy media, social media witnessing of controversial, shocking or concerning news content can easily become more personal and committing (Chouliaraki, 2013; Mortensen and Trenz, 2016). Forms of moral spectatorship can, for instance, create new opportunities for global solidarity mobilisation through visuals that are shared on social media platforms and translated into political speech which claims solidarity with victims in other parts of the world and ascribes responsibility (Chouliaraki, 2013; Chouliaraki and Stolic, 2017). In contrast, it can also fuel perceptions of stigmatisation, threat or hate towards minority groups – also in combination with circulated unauthentic material (Georgiou and Zaborowski, 2017). In other words, they mobilise emotional debates. By expressing this commitment through posting or liking, for example, the expression of emotions is translated into forms of political speech. Such political expressions of emotions, whether or not the concerned person or group deserves solidarity in a controversial way, ascribe political responsibility.

In the overall context of this book, we consider social media platforms as particularly promising arenas for citizens' contestation of solidarity. In this chapter, we further extend our view on solidarity contestation through the media from Chapter 6 with an interest in political discourse (Cinalli and Giugni 2013 and 2016), by focusing on bottom-up dynamics of solidarity contestation through social media by citizen-users. We focus our analysis of this type of user-driven bottom-up contestation on the case of the 'refugee crisis' of September 2015. That month was marked by a series of dramatic events that brought the 'refugee crisis' to the attention of mass audiences. In particular, the highly emotive images of Alan Kurdi, the drowned boy from Syria found at the beach in Turkey in September 2015 were widely shared through social media and triggered a wave of solidarity mobilisation (Thomas et al., 2018). Other instances of moral spectatorship generated risk perceptions, threats and rejection of solidarity, as for example, in the case of the New Year's Eve 2015/16 sexual assaults and muggings in Cologne. We thus expect the need for (trans)national solidarity with migrants to be discussed controversially on social media in direct response to news coverage delivered by professional journalists.

Given the complementary nature of this chapter to the claims-making analysis of mainstream media coverage (see Cinalli et al., Chapter 6 in this volume), we selected Facebook user comments that were posted in

response to news articles on mainstream newspapers' Facebook pages. This suited our aim of collecting data on the more hidden side of the public sphere. While our claims-making analysis in Chapter 6 allowed us to map the official voices that were capable of leading politics (Freeman, 1995, 1998), the online commenting analysis in this chapter collects the various informal ways users as news readers on social media seize the chance to express emotions and translate them into political speech from the bottom up. The following analysis thus adds to an understanding of solidarity contestation from the bottom up, considering users' Facebook comments below posted news articles as arenas for direct intervention with political discourse.

Bottom-up mobilisation of solidarity is commonly analysed in terms of initiatives by civil society activists, affected citizens, communities and grassroots movements to provide support to vulnerable groups of the population (see Kousis et al., Chapter 3 in this volume). An investigation of bottom-up contestation about solidarity on social media sheds light on a particular arena where citizens form their opinions and commit to social and political norms or values, as in our case solidarity. Our investigation emphasises hereby, first, the ways in which citizens express their opinions and emotions and how they make use of some of the affordances offered by social media. We wish to address the question to what extent emotional expressions translate into moral commitment and political speech, that is, the question of the civic- or uncivicness of solidarity contestation. Second, we focus on citizens' moral commitments and political speech themselves, that is, the question of to what extent they reject or support solidarity in these instances.

7.1.1 Civic and Uncivic Elements of Online Solidarity Contestation

As a response to being confronted with the news coverage of the 'refugee crisis', commenting social media users enter into some sort of collective, interpretative work. They produce text in the form of comments that relate to news media content in specific ways, e.g. by interpreting the evidence presented in the newspaper articles, by supporting or rejecting claims raised by politicians in the news media or by ascribing political responsibility and reflecting on political consequences. It is, of course, an exaggeration to say that these interpretations unfold in a completely autonomous way. Structures of meaning in user debates remain embedded and are influenced by the frames of interpretation used by political actors in the mainstream media (Galpin and Trenz, 2019) but in addition to journalists, intellectuals and political actors as claimants, the users now contribute in significant ways to the generation of public discourse. To perform this

interpretative work, social media users need to relate to each other and engage in an exchange of arguments. They need to come up with their own justifications as to why solidarity towards refugees is accepted or rejected.

The manners in which such an exchange of arguments is organised varies, however, in important ways. In the following, we wish to distinguish conceptually between two alternative scenarios of an online civic sphere and an online uncivic sphere of solidarity contestation. According to the first scenario, news readers' commenting practices on social media are part of an online civic sphere that enriches the traditional top-down ways of political communication by facilitating horizontal exchanges among citizens, making the media voice more plural and participatory, thus facilitating a more inclusive sphere for the formation of public opinion (Dahlgren, 2013). Commenters on online platforms can be characterised as more active users who consider themselves as people with a relevant voice to be heard (Coleman, 2013: 219). In this way, Facebook news sites offer platforms for these people to engage in the bigger debates, to respond to the claims in the posts curated by the newspapers and, by this, to take voice.

This hypothetical scenario of an online civic sphere can be validated if commenting practices meet the following three criteria. First, we would expect online users to be responsive to news content and to claims raised in the news media. Second, we would expect them to relate directly to refugees as objects of solidarity and to critically judge whether or not solidarity should be granted to them. And third, we would expect users to seek political influence, i.e. to translate informal opinion-making into formal political action. Taking voice through social media commenting should be paired with demands for collective action: 'we shall', 'let's do'. Such calls for actions would typically expand existing bonds of solidarity towards refugees, either by reference to emotions such as pity or by references to universal principles supporting a notion of transnational solidarity. Users would motivate and encourage each other to swing to commitment and to group each other around a cause. As such, they would become secondary definers of the 'refugee crisis' because they would not simply accept or reject claims raised in the media, but also give witness testimony, engage in their own collective practice of interpretation of the situation and take sides on the question of refugee solidarity.

At the same time, online participatory news formats and, in particular, the evolving forms of user commenting on social media and online news sites have become the object of a harsh normative critique (Gerbaudo, 2014; Krämer, 2017). According to our second scenario – the uncivic sphere – online publics would be non-responsive and marginal and overall suffer from deficits of publicity. The online media would engage selected

citizens, but these debates would remain detached from formal, decision-making contexts and would have minimal impact on political outcomes or public opinion in general (Givskov and Trenz, 2014). Considering the general relationship between news content and commenting on Facebook, the online publics would be fragmented into different opinion bubbles, closed communities, where users mainly exchange opinions among the like-minded (Sunstein, 2009; Rasmussen, 2014). Online fragmentation would further affect users' capacities to express informed opinions or to defend values of social justice and solidarity. Closed within their bubbles, online users would position themselves in increasingly polarised ways. Such a polarised constellation of online discourse would be paired with increasing distrust and enmity between the opposing camps who would engage primarily in an exclusive and non-solidaristic rhetoric against their political opponent or against migrants as undeserving outsiders. There would be, in other words, a general tendency in online users to adopt what, in line with Benjamin Moffitt (2016), can be called a populist style in challenging the performance of democratic (representative) politics and to display and amplify primarily positions taken by populist parties in an electoral contest. The online uncivic sphere would in this sense unfold through a populist style of user debates, which would be exclusive and anti-solidaristic against either a political opponent or people in need. In terms of solidarity contestation, we would expect online publics to voice their discontent with established representative politics, to restrict rather than expand solidarity relationships and to target political enemies or refugees in an exclusive way, i.e. as undeserving of solidarity.

7.1.2 Witnessing Human Suffering: From a Politics of Fear to a Politics of Pity

An important element of the media story of a humanitarian crisis consists of the expression of emotions such as sympathy or antipathy towards refugees for the purpose of political mobilisation (Chouliaraki, 2013). One (and possibly the most frequent) case for the use of emotions in media discourse on migration was the evocation of fear (Wodak, 2015). A politics of fear can be distinguished as a style of political mobilisation that portrays refugees in the media as threats to be excluded from the solidarity community. In line with such a politics of fear, media coverage builds often on fear-appealing metaphors such as flood, swarms or marauders, or on suffixes such as unwanted, irregular or illegal. Another (and possibly more exceptional) case for the use of emotions in media discourse on the humanitarian crisis is what Boltanski (1999) calls a politics of pity. Pity, which is to be defined as an emotional reaction to the witnessing of human

suffering, can be considered as an important element in the mobilisation of solidarity in the way it allows for rapid changes of opinion from indifference or even antipathy towards the object of solidarity to attention and personal emotional engagement (to be followed by possible forms of individual or collective support action). In the case of the 'refugee crisis', for instance, one example of the solidarity effects of such a politics of pity would be the so-called welcoming culture that triggered spontaneous reactions of assistance either in the form of direct aid or of financial assistance. Hospitality and empathy towards refugees were motivated here by mediated images of human suffering (such as the image of the drowned boy, Aylan Kurdi, on the Turkish beach), which contributed to rapid shifts in opinion in reception countries and to considerable levels of political mobilisation (Mortensen and Trenz, 2016; della Porta, 2018).

A focus on refugees and asylum seekers as a particular target group of bottom-up solidarity contestation is particularly interesting because the case of solidarity with refugees and asylum seekers has divided public opinion all over Europe with advocates of human rights and open borders opposing supporters of exclusive, nationalist welfare (della Porta, 2018). Online commenting as a form of bottom-up mobilisation could thus take shape either as a politics of fear or a politics of pity. We expect that the social media community of news readers is divided on these issues and that bottom-up contestation of refugee solidarity is triggered by particular events and their interpretation in the media, such as the humanitarian disasters at Europe's external borders that unfolded during the months of 2015/16 (Triandafyllidou, 2018). The dramatic events which were brought into focus by the so-called 'refugee crisis' of September 2015 are particularly interesting because they were staged in many countries as a direct confrontation between citizens and refugees (Thomas et al., 2018). It is therefore all the more interesting to zoom in on solidarity contestation unfolding on Facebook at the peak of a heated debate, when media claims-making was most intensive.

We conducted a comparative analysis of online commenting on Facebook news sites in order to assess the political expressions of selected citizen-users who decided to position themselves in debates about refugees. In particular, we were interested in the civic and uncivic elements of online user commenting in response to news. This includes the question whether social media news sites, in addition to sharing information, also offer an opportunity for citizens to take voice or take sides with the cause of refugee solidarity. We expect, however, bottom-up mobilisation of solidarity on social media to be not entirely autonomous, but rather to be responsive to the context of debate provided by main claimants in political news. Social media commenting would in this sense not unfold within a bubble,

but rather contribute to the broader spectrum within which solidarity is debated at national and European level. Our research thus offers a glimpse at the reception site of political news, which allows us to measure opinions in the form of general attitudes expressed towards refugees as shaped by media discourse. We can further measure responsiveness to top-down contestation by political actors in the form of consenting or opposing claims raised by selected citizens on social media. And finally, we can measure voices in the form of political statements made by these citizen-users who intervened in the debate as secondary definers of the events.

7.2 METHODS: AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF ONLINE SOLIDARITY CONTESTATION

This study of solidarity contestation on Facebook covers the most intense time of the 'refugee crisis', with the highest number of refugees having arrived in Europe in September 2015. We selected the five most commented on Facebook posts with news content on the refugee crisis from three newspapers per country.[1] For each post, 20 comments were coded (with a number of 300 comments per country divided per three newspapers). These 20 comments had to be the 20 most-liked top comments on Facebook in the form of primary statements of users and not replies to other user comments. In addition to the comments, the main posts (usually newspaper articles) were sampled and coded following the method of claims-making analysis described in Cinalli et al. (Chapter 6 in this volume). In that way, we are able in this chapter to systematically link top-down solidarity contestations by claimants in the news media in articles pasted on the Facebook pages of the respective news outlets with patterns of bottom-up mobilisation of user comments posted below these articles on Facebook.

The codebook for user commenting analysis was developed as a supplement to the codebook of claims-making used for main article coding (for details, see Chapter 6 in this volume) in order to grasp user responses to public contestations about European solidarity. This codebook was made applicable for team coding and imported into SPSS statistical analysis software. The unit of analysis was the single user comment. These comments were thematically related to the topic of European solidarity through the main news article – either in response to information given in the main article, in response to opinions expressed by political actors/journalists in the article, or as an independent statement/opinion/expression of sentiments in the general context of these debates. Replies to user comments expressed by other users/commenters were excluded, as were all comments that were not thematically related to the topic of the 'refugee crisis' in its broad sense.

The degree to which user-commenters discussed refugees as objects of solidarity varied and was open to investigation. Usually (but not necessarily) comments had at least an identifiable issue and expressed an opinion on our object of solidarity (refugees). In user comments, such opinions were, however, often expressed in abbreviated forms and not given in the form of a full claim. For instance, the comment 'poor child' was considered as an opinion on our object of solidarity (here a refugee child). We did not code any comments that were unrelated to political opinion formation or contestation, such as comments that were part of a general conversation between users without a political focus, or comments that asked for clarification ("Can you explain this?"), for information or requests ("Send me the link!") as well as comments that simply tagged other Facebook users.

Our sample of user comments is thus constructed around user opinions that become most visible on newspapers' Facebook sites. This implies that non-discursive forms of comments, such as hate speech, remain hidden and only in very few instances enter our sample. The absence of hate speech is, however, not a sample bias, but a result of the process of mainstreaming user comments and making them visible on newspapers' Facebook sites. As such, it can be explained as a result of debate moderation by the site owners (the newspapers) and of Facebook's popularity ranking (the most popular user comments are unlikely to contain elements of hate speech). We have, of course, no information about the percentage of comments which breach netiquette or that are filtered out by the group moderators, but we would assume from existing studies that this number is low (in an internal survey, *The Guardian* speaks of 2% of comments that breach netiquette in the commenting sections on their own news site[2]).

7.3 ONLINE CONTESTATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 'REFUGEE CRISIS': MAIN FINDINGS

During the month of September 2015, media claims-making in our longitudinal survey of refugee solidarity contestation peaked in all countries under investigation (see Chapter 6 in this volume). This peak is commonly explained with a surge of solidarity with refugees that followed the sharing of the image of Aylan Kurdi, a drowned Syrian toddler found at the beach in Turkey. The visual images of distant human suffering allowed for the emergence of what has been called "impromptu publics of moral spectatorship" (Mortensen and Trenz, 2016). The literature emphasises, however, the exceptional character of solidarity mobilisation. Sympathy with refugees was found to peak only for a relatively short period and only

in some countries (Thomas et al., 2018). Social media also did not become a unified space for solidarity mobilisation, and the European space of solidarity was fragmented along national lines (Triandafyllidou, 2018).

Beyond this background, our study offers a comparative view on solidarity contestation in this peak moment of attention. Even though solidarity remained contested, the coverage of the Syrian civil war and of the human histories of war refugees created a European momentum. This focused attention on European solidarity contestations was clearly visible in the contentious dynamics of public claims-making in the news media (see Cinalli et al., Chapter 6 in this volume) and correspondingly also in the practice of user commenting on Facebook news sites.

7.3.1 The Civicness of Citizens' Commentary on Facebook News Outlets

Regarding our first scenario of an online civic culture, we investigate whether online news readers engage in an exchange of opinion about political news, and act as secondary definers of the debate, relating to original content and interpretation and entering into a more direct relationship with the objects of solidarity. The alternative scenario is that social media commenting practices lead to fragmentation of refugee solidarity debates. As an indicator for segmentation, we can analyse how users connect their comments to mainstream media content. We speak of fragmentation of solidarity contestation when user debates unfold independently of the news content provided by professional journalists and are unrelated to claims raised by political actors.

In order to investigate what kind of public sphere the bottom-up contestation presented to us, i.e. interdiscursive or fragmented, we found that commenting is generally responsive and often motivated as a form of engagement in public debate. We distinguish three forms of motivation: (1) to make a general contribution to the debate raised by the article, (2) to respond to a claim, and (3) to make an independent contribution to the debate outside the thematic context of the article. The second form is obviously the most interdiscursive, but the first and the third from a deliberative point of view can also be considered valid contributions to a political debate.

The responsiveness of commenters on Facebook and thus the degree to which they enter into an exchange of opinion is in this sense found to be high (Figure 7.1): 74.4% of all commenters responded to news content on the refugee crisis and only 25.6% of the users posted unrelated independent statements (most of them, however, still within the thematic context of the refugee crisis). Among those comments, which related directly to news content, the majority (39.2%) responded to the general issue raised in the

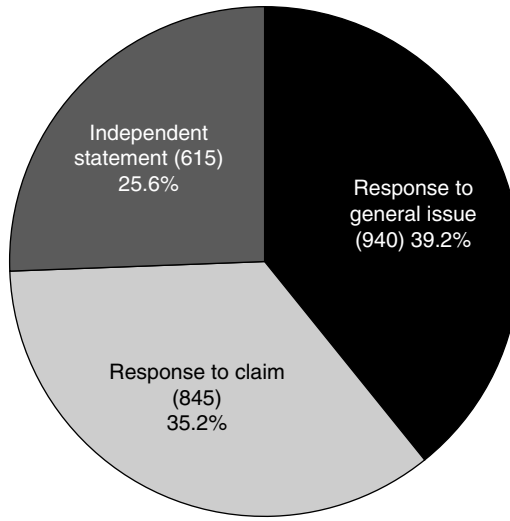

Figure 7.1 Comment type: in % and frequency in brackets

main article, but every third comment (35.2%) also responded to a claim raised by a claimant in the main article.

Instead of an online bubble, there was a vivid exchange of content and information between news articles and user comments. This suggests that commenters form a group of engaged citizens who wish to express their voice on highly contentious issues. In other words, these findings show that a majority of the commenters talked back to content and claimants in the media. The power of media claimants as primary definers of the debate is, in this sense, not challenged but rather confirmed by online commenting. The content and the claims raised in the news article set the context for user debates and their interpretations and expressions of opinions.

Given the reactive nature of the comment sections (Reagle, 2015: 2), their responsiveness can be assessed further by analysing how commenters, who responded to the issues or claims in the posted news article, talk back to claims. Note that the categories in Table 7.1 do not refer to commenters' tone regarding solidarity (which will be discussed at a later point) but shed light on commenters' response patterns to journalistic output. We find that the great majority of commenters (80.1%) took sides in the sense of either affirming or opposing claims or issues in the posted news article. Among those, 47% of responsive comments were in opposition to the general issues or claims in the main article, and only 33.1% expressed support. User commenting was, in this sense, found to be more critical than affirmative.

Table 7.1 The type of comment by position of commenter towards the issue/claim in the posted article (frequencies in brackets)[3]

	Negative/ opposing	Neutral/ ambivalent	Affirmative/ supportive	Total
Response to general issue in main article	29.6% (463)	10.1% (158)	14.3% (224)	54.0% (845)
Response to claim raised in main article	17.4% (272)	9.8% (154)	18.8% (294)	46.0% (720)
Total	47.0% (960)	19.9% (428)	33.1% (626)	100% (1565)

Further research should probe into the direct connection between claims for and against solidarity and commenters' responses to investigate what kinds of responses pro- or anti-refugee claims in news articles trigger opposition or affirmation among commenters. Nevertheless, it is still possible to interpret commenters' positionality towards this posted journalistic output mostly as a direct reaction in the form of actively taking sides in a controversial political debate. These findings lend some support to other research on social media commenting and might further contribute to differentiating among different contexts and platforms where commenting takes place (Hille and Bakker, 2014), instead of understanding comment sections on mainstream news Facebook pages as an outlet for blatant political outrage and disillusion that ignores political discourse.

Furthermore, in order to understand what is at stake in commenters' contestation regarding solidarity with refugees and asylum seekers, we looked at the issues (or concerns) raised (see also claims-analysis, Cinalli et al. Chapter 6 in this volume). Although the limited sample size does not allow for more general observations, the online claims seem to follow the broader patterns of print claims regarding main claimants and issues to a great extent, putting state actors as claimants and issues of migration management centre stage (see Cinalli et al. in this volume). Our analysis reveals that the issue agenda of news and the agenda of topics raised for debate in online commenting largely overlapped, yet with a slightly different emphasis put by online commenters that reflects a more bottom-up dynamic of mobilisation (Figure 7.2). 37.7% of commenters raised issues regarding migration management, which was also the most salient issue in media claims-making. Commenters put, however, comparatively less emphasis on control policies and raised a more diverse mix of issues. Bottom-up mobilisation did not, in this sense, simply mirror the political agenda of news but added to the plurality of the debate and a more profound

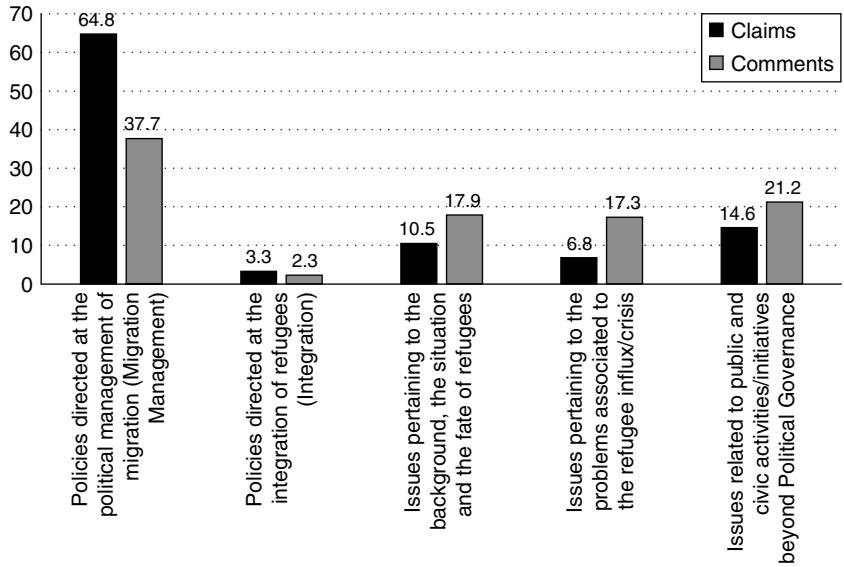

Figure 7.2 Main issues in claims and comments (%)

understanding of issues relating to refugee solidarity by highlighting, for instance, civic initiatives (21.2%) as well as the potential consequences of the influx (17.3%) and personal backgrounds of refugees and asylum seekers (17.9%) (Table 7.2). This suggests a focus on more personal aspects regarding the 'refugee crisis' in which commenters shared their own experiences and views. In this sense, the comment sections also gave expression to bottom-up views on the 'refugee crisis', and, more precisely, offered a look into the concerns and demands of those more active citizen-users. Despite the overall congruence of issues of concern in the refugee debate from top-down and bottom-up perspectives, we find important nuances in user commenting that speak for the expression of a plurality of issues and concerns in social media, and not a narrowing down of the news agenda. The power of claims-makers as primary definers of the debate is, at least to some degree, challenged by commenters, who as secondary definers of the debate, partly replicated the issue agenda of the news media but partly also shifted its emphasis.

For our understanding of solidarity contestation across countries, it is of further interest to investigate whether commenters across countries focused on the same issues or whether attention was distributed unequally with different issues brought into focus by commenters in different countries. This is also relevant since national news-making is focused on

Table 7.2 Cross-country distribution of issues in comments

	Migration management	Integration	Background/ situation of refugees	Consequences of refugee influx/crisis	Issues regarding public/civic initiatives	Unknown	Total
France	49.3%	3.0%	7.3%	21%	17.7%	1.7%	100%
Germany	16.3%	0.3%	17.3%	40.7%	22%	3.3%	100%
Greece	54%	0%	18%	10.3%	17.7%	0%	100%
Italy	33.3%	1%	21.3%	5%	21.3%	18%	100%
Poland	25.3%	9%	15%	30.7%	18%	2%	100%
Denmark	44.3%	0.3%	13.7%	7.7%	31%	3%	100%
Switzerland	29.3%	4.3%	20%	14.3%	31%	1%	100%
UK	49.3%	0.7%	30.7%	8.7%	10.7%	0%	100%
Total	37.7%	2.3%	17.9%	17.3%	21.2%	3.6%	100%

their specific national audiences (Pfetsch, 2007). However, as shown in Table 7.2, we did not find a clear pattern in the cross-country distribution of issue attention, apart from an overall congruence of the agenda, which makes us conclude that from a bottom-up perspective, the 'refugee crisis' raised similar issues of concerns in all countries under investigation. Commenters in all countries focused on the 'refugee crisis' as a management problem that required the state to regain control and adopt adequate policies. Further, there was concern regarding the general consequences of crisis and the problems created by refugees. Non-state civic activities also figured prominently, especially in Denmark and Switzerland. The background situation and the fate of refugees were also discussed to some degree, especially around the case of the drowned Syrian boy, Aylan Kurdi.

Finally, we were able to establish degrees of moral commitment of online news readers with refugee solidarity. We did so by distinguishing between comments which directly or indirectly related to refugees as an object of solidarity, and comments which did not engage in this kind of solidarity contestation (Table 7.3). The analysis shows that, across countries, the majority of commenters did indeed show engagement in solidarity contestation. Thus, commenters on the Facebook news sites on average strongly tended towards leaving comments directly related to refugees and did not shift the focus of debate contesting other unrelated issues (such as the legitimacy of domestic actors during the 'refugee crisis'). They took sides on the question regarding solidarity for refugees. These dynamics of taking sides on refugee solidarity will be analysed in further detail in the next section.

The differentiation between comments referring directly to refugees as potential recipients of solidarity and those that do not also serves another purpose. It refines our analysis of solidarity contestation regarding users'

Table 7.3 Comments relating to refugees/not relating to refugees as 'object'

	Refugees not the object of comment	Refugees discussed as objects of solidarity	Total
France	8.7%	91.3%	100%
Germany	33.0%	67.0%	100%
Greece	8.0%	92.0%	100%
Italy	20.3%	79.7%	100%
Poland	20.3%	79.7%	100%
Denmark	22.7%	77.3%	100%
Switzerland	2.3%	97.7%	100%
UK	13.3%	86.7%	100%
Total	16.1%	83.9%	100%

emotional and moral expressions by enabling us to focus on the specific comments that engage in the relationship with refugees directly. In the following, we therefore only refer to the 83.9% of comments (column 3 in Table 7.3).

7.3.2 Reactions to the Witnessing of Human Suffering

Our comment analysis builds on this notion of a politics of pity by investigating the way emotions such as fear or pity are given political expression. We do not analyse emotions directly, but the way emotion is translated into a public statement of solidarity that takes sides. Consequently, we are focusing on moral debates in which citizens became engaged in debating whether solidarity should be granted or not (see Mortensen and Trenz, 2016). Through our combination of claims-making and reader commenting analysis, we argue that fear or pity as expressed in strong emotions in media discourse was turned into public speech, i.e. used as an element of claims-making through which responsibility was ascribed and politicians were called upon to act. The question thus is how a politics of pity interferes with a politics of fear in media discourse, what contributes to the salience of pity or fear at any particular moment of the debate, and who defines and interprets pity and fear and translates them into calls for or rejections of solidarity.

Taking sides in the solidarity question

By looking at commenters' tonality regarding refugees, we can measure degrees of polarisation of the solidarity debates. We speak of a polarisation of solidarity contestation when user comments mainly clashed with political actors who spoke in the media and expressed diametrically opposed opinions or when their opinions were, on average, more extremist on the scale of positionality.

We first analyse how far users relate to refugees. Generally, across all countries, we can see that even though the majority (47.7%) rejects solidarity with refugees, there was a substantial minority of supportive users (31.1%), while 21.3% remained neutral or ambivalent (Table 7.4). These numbers suggest a degree of polarisation or disagreement among the commenters on the solidarity question. This, again, implies a need to develop a more differentiated understanding of online commenting sections – legacy news Facebook pages display comment sections through which users engage directly with posted journalistic output (see Table 7.1). Rather than a homogenous group displaying widespread anger towards or rejection of refugees, we do find commenters adopting a wide variety of stances towards refugees and posting a diverse range of material. Nevertheless,

Table 7.4 Percentage tonality of claims and comments across countries

	Claims in newspapers			Comments		
	Anti	Neutral	Pro	Anti	Neutral	Pro
France	28.5%	24.5%	47%	53.3%	26.3%	20.4%
Germany	22.6%	28.2%	49.2%	55.2%	21.4%	23.4%
Greece	41.5%	17%	41.5%	24.6%	42%	33.3%
Italy	31.9%	22.3%	45.8%	27.6%	23%	49.4%
Poland	27.2%	29%	43.8%	75.3%	15.9%	8.8%
Denmark	39.3%	14.5	46.2%	47.4%	12.9%	39.7%
Switzerland	24%	14.4%	61.6%	48.8%	16.4%	34.8%
UK	40.7%	24.6%	34.7%	52.3%	10%	37.7%
Total	30.7%	22.3%	47%	47.7%	21.3%	31.1%

users who reject solidarity are most dominant, a finding which is important to note when considering that the claims in the posted news articles are more strongly positive towards refugees (47%). Indeed, the distribution of negative and positive tone seems to be mirrored in reverse when comparing claims in posted news articles with comments (news claims: 30.7% negative, 22.3% neutral, 47% positive; comments: 47% negative, 21.3% neutral, 31.1% positive). This seems to suggest that comment sections serve not only the purpose of taking sides regarding a political issue, but also to take voice by being critical of top-down political discourse.

In order to understand this possible implication better, we look more closely at the average tone in the comment sections, which provides further details to the percentages in Table 7.4. As shown in Figure 7.3, the online claims in the most popular Facebook articles during September were, on average, rather positive towards refugees.[4]

This is interesting from the viewpoint of understanding commenters in terms of taking sides on the question of solidarity with refugees. Except for Greece and Italy, where online claims and commenters were positive, we found that commenters tended to be more negative towards refugees than claimants in the online news articles (Figure 7.4).

By looking more closely at the country differences, we find that commenters in countries with external borders that were crossed by refugees, Italy and Greece, were on average more positive towards refugees, while commenters in Germany, whose government 'welcomed' high numbers of refugees in September 2015, tended to reject refugee solidarity. Poland, with the lowest number of asylum applications (9,490) in our sampling period from August 2015 to April 2016 (Eurostat, 2018), was the most negative country.

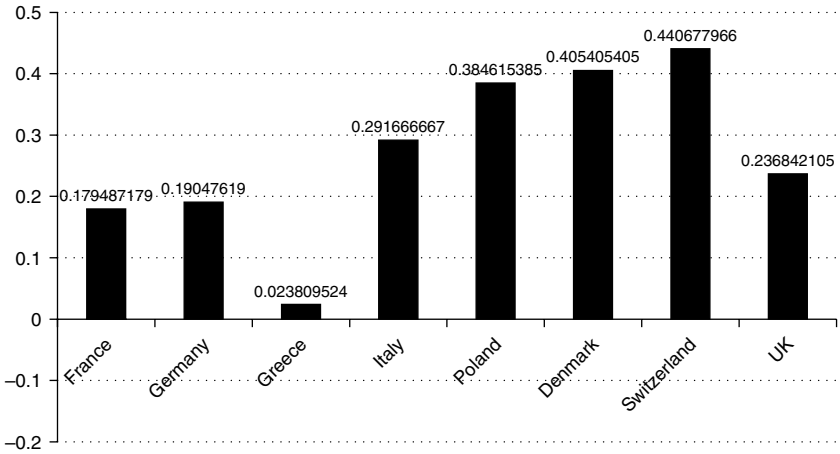

Figure 7.3 Average tonality in claims in Facebook posted news articles

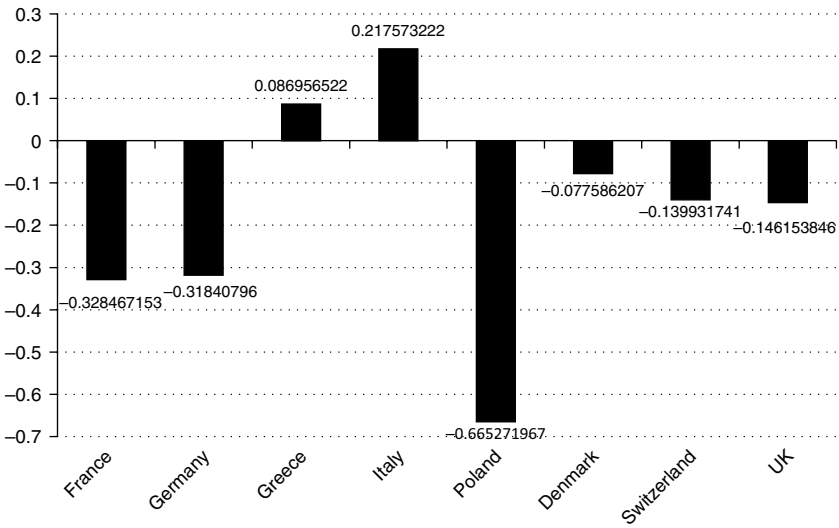

Figure 7.4 Tonality of commenters across countries

It is further noteworthy that negative and supportive commenters raised different issue agendas (Tables 7.5 and 7.6). In line with a politics of fear, the most salient issue of migration management was more strongly referred to by negative commenters (Table 7.5: 42.0%),[5] followed by issues relating to the consequences of increased migration influx to their

Table 7.5 Issues among commenters with negative stance towards refugees[6]

	Migration Management	Integration	Background/ situation: refugees	Consequences of refugee influx/crisis	Issues regarding public/civic initiatives	Total
France	61.6%	1.4%	2.7%	22.6%	11.6%	100%
Germany	20.7%	0.0%	4.5%	64.9%	9.9%	100%
Greece	57.4%	0.0%	4.4%	25.0%	13.2%	100%
Italy	43.9%	1.5%	9.1%	13.6%	21.2%	100%
Poland	19.4%	11.7%	16.7%	43.3%	7.8%	100%
Denmark	42.7%	0.9%	25.5%	17.3%	13.6%	100%
Switzerland	35.7%	5.6%	12.6%	22.4%	23.8%	100%
UK	65.4%	0.7%	12.5%	16.9%	4.4%	100%
Total	42.0%	3.5%	11.6%	29.5%	12.5%	100%

Table 7.6 Issues among commenters with positive stance towards refugees[7]

	Migration Management	Integration	Background/ situation: refugees	Consequences of refugee influx/crisis	Issues regarding public/civic initiatives	Total
France	41.1%	3.6%	8.9%	19.6%	26.8%	100%
Germany	6.4%	2.1%	53.2%	8.5%	29.8%	100%
Greece	16.3%	0.0%	52.2%	5.4%	26.1%	100%
Italy	17.8%	0.8%	47.5%	4.2%	29.7%	100%
Poland	23.8%	4.8%	23.8%	9.5%	38.1%	100%
Denmark	37.0%	0.0%	12.0%	1.1%	48.9%	100%
Switzerland	26.5%	2.0%	27.5%	6.9%	35.3%	100%
UK	25.5%	1.0%	61.2%	0.0%	12.2%	100%
Total	24.4%	1.3%	38.0%	5.6%	30.2%	100%

countries (29.5%). As Table 7.6 shows, positive commenters, instead, in line with a politics of pity, highlighted refugees' personal backgrounds and situations (38.0%, compared to 11.6% in negative comments), followed by a focus on civic initiatives (30.2%). Hence, whenever the background situation or fate of the refugees was referred to (politics of pity), this increased the likelihood of a positive positioning towards refugees. If instead an emphasis was put on crisis (politics of fear), this was mostly done in the context of a negative statement towards the refugees. If governance and state policies were mentioned, this was mainly combined

with negative attitudes towards refugees, while civic activities were related to positive statements.

Consequently, we find different issue patterns between negative and positive commenters. The generally more personal focus on the comments in comparison to claims (see Chapter 6 in this volume) might derive from the more positive commenters. This group of citizen-users might therefore relate to refugees more directly (and personally) by highlighting their backgrounds and pathways to Europe. They also referred to (often local) initiatives beyond political governance. In this way, and possibly to a higher degree than claimants in the news media, positive commenters did not dehumanise refugees. On the contrary, they focused on humanitarian issues in the 'refugee crisis'.

Summing up this section, we can conclude that Facebook commenting on mainstream newspaper sites became a site of moral commitment with questions of refugee solidarity. In this moment of heightened attention, a politics of fear was balanced by a politics of pity with a focus on the need to provide humanitarian assistance in an emergency situation. User commenting forums were not found to be (as is commonly assumed) the place for radicalisation of political opinion through the expression of xenophobia or hatred, partly because such more radical opinions were downgraded by other users and thus did not appear in our sample of most popular comments, partly because, as we must assume, they were filtered out by the moderators of the Facebook pages as a breach of netiquette. At least below the most popular posts and the respective most popular comments that were ranked highest on Facebook and likely moderated by the newspapers' web administrators, refugee solidarity was debated in a rather balanced way, with a majority rejecting refugee solidarity. However, this anti-solidarity voice did not dominate the debate and also did not systematically become disrespectful towards the opinions of others, or towards our objects of solidarity.

Justifications

Online commenting forums are not structured in a way to facilitate an exchange of arguments among users. Commenters rarely enter a dialogue with each other. Providing justifications by expressing one's opinions is therefore in no way self-evident, as opinions are often expressed in an abbreviated way by making use of more emotional language instead of rational argumentation.[8] Our initial assumption has been, however, that a politics of pity and a politics of fear require citizen-users as witnesses of human suffering to translate their first emotional reactions into public speech. In line with this assumption, we found that a slight majority of

commenters (57.2%) justified their stances regarding solidarity towards refugees, pointing thus to discursive contestation and engagement instead of plain opinion-stating (Figure 7.5). By making such a solidarity statement, the user-commenters thus took a side and decided about the deservingness of the refugees as an object of solidarity.

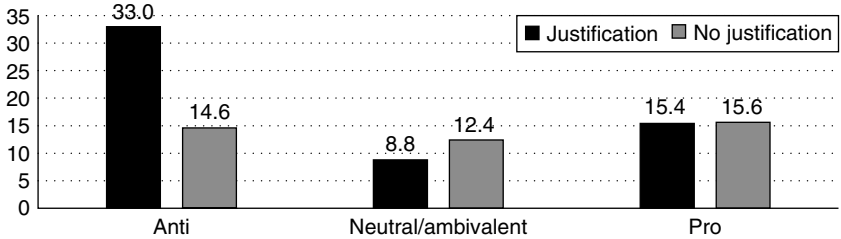

Figure 7.5 Justification versus no justification in comments with tonality towards refugees (%)

By looking at the justifications of solidarity statements more specifically, we find that commenters relied on a wide spectrum of arguments. As country differences in the use of justifications were neither significant nor did they show the expected correlations (e.g. the emphasis on religion in Poland), we will in the following compare the argumentative patterns of pro- with anti-refugee commenters.

What comes to our attention first is that anti-solidarity commenters engaged to a higher degree in justificatory practices than pro-solidarity commenters (Figure 7.5). We read the lower engagement of pro-solidarity commenters in justificatory practices as a mirror of a shared perception that solidarity with people in need does not need to be justified. Humanitarian assistance and the unconditional protection of human rights are in that sense seen as a socially desirable and universal rationale guiding human behaviour and interaction.

Secondly, our findings pointed out important differences between these two groups of commenters regarding the justifications they used to underline their pro- or anti-solidarity stances (Figure 7.6). In the anti-solidarity comments with a justification against solidarity with refugees, the most frequent argument used was that national citizens should be regarded first (welfare chauvinism, 16.1%). This was followed by references to the inappropriateness of migrants' behaviour (11.9%). Religious reasons ranked third on average at 9.7%. Comments with a positive stance towards refugees were less frequently justified (no justification found in 50.3% compared to 30.7% in the negative comments). In particular, Greece and Italy stood out as cases in which commenters posted frequently without

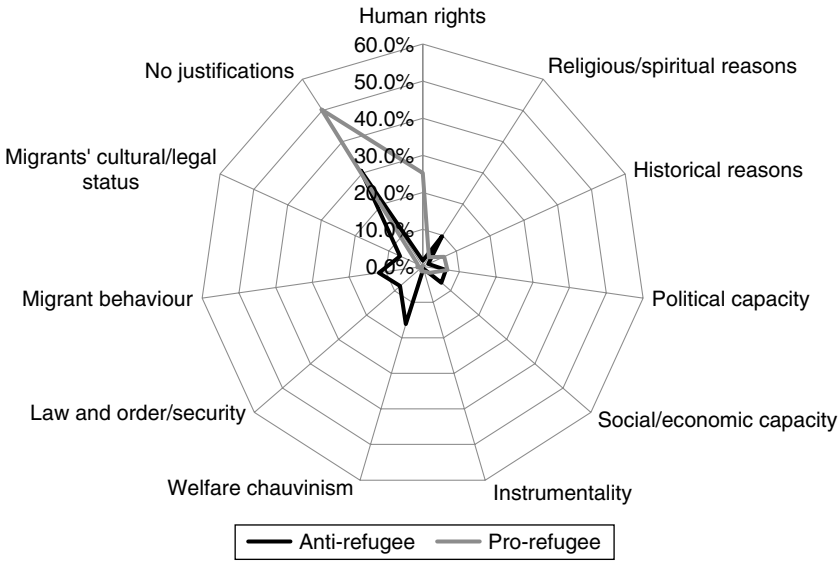

Figure 7.6 Justifications of solidarity of negative and positive comments compared

justifications (Greece 77.2% and Italy 56.9%). These were also the two countries in which commenters were, on average, more positive towards refugees. Pro-solidarity justifications most frequently referred to human rights and broader humanitarian aspects (25.2% of positive comments compared to only 1.6% in negative comments).

These findings further back the first scenario of an online civic sphere of solidarity contestation, especially with regard to the assumption of the building of critical capacities of online commenters. Taking sides on the question of refugee solidarity in user comments and engagement in a politics of fear or politics of pity creates a justification requirement. Following the pattern of social desirability, solidarity towards people in need of assistance is a mandatory response on social media news sites. The choice to reject solidarity towards those people in need, therefore, requires the proponent of a claim to engage in an explicit justification (Chouliaraki, 2013). The quite substantial presence of commenters with positive views on refugees and a positive attitude (often termed 'do-gooders' by negative commenters), further challenges the negative majority to engage in the formulation of arguments for their anti-solidarity choices. In other words, commenters feel urged to back their anti-solidarity opinions with arguments, i.e. explain why they are against

refugees. Pro-solidarity contestants instead speak in the name of a higher morality and of absolute values.

Finally, we need to discuss the idea of whether users' taking sides and witnessing human suffering translates into more open forms of user engagement and participation.[9] People who make use of online media channels when it comes to political affairs are, therefore, not to be regarded as representative of the whole population, but show a political interest, are probably younger and better educated and, as such, may be more likely to be politically active (see e.g. Vissers and Stolle, 2014; Mellon and Prosser, 2017), and more critical of how solidarity politics are practised in the EU (Brändle and Eisele, 2019). More specifically, we ask whether commenters in this particular debate constituted a politicised group of citizens that mobilise around solidarity contestation – either by showing activism in terms of readiness for political mobilisation or extremism in terms of more radical opinion (as compared to the claims-makers in the media).

Contrary to our assumption of bottom-up mobilisation in support of a politics of fear or a politics of pity, our analysis does not reveal high levels of political activism in online commenting. Among the comments just slightly more than a quarter called for action (27.4%), while in nearly three quarters of them (72.6%), no calls for action could be identified. Although it is difficult to say whether a quarter of comments calling for action is truly a small percentage (in the absence of comparative data with comments in other fields), we find that refugee debates in all countries were mainly fought verbally, and much less frequently linked to calls for protest or solidarity action. In addition, these calls for action mainly addressed the government as a legislator and did not try to mobilise fellow citizens. This is also in line with our claims-making analysis, which revealed a rather low salience of direct solidarity action as an element of news coverage. Among those with calls for action, as shown in Figure 7.7, direct action, such as protest and calls for solidarity, was even less visible in user comments than in the political news.

Even in countries like Germany, proud of its welcoming culture, the acts of welcoming were not made visible in the media. The commenting section on Facebook is not, in this sense, the place where political protest is mobilised, nor is it the place where solidarity action in the form of charity or humanitarian assistance is given support. On the contrary, the responsibility to take sides is delegated and the government/state is called upon to 'do something about it'.

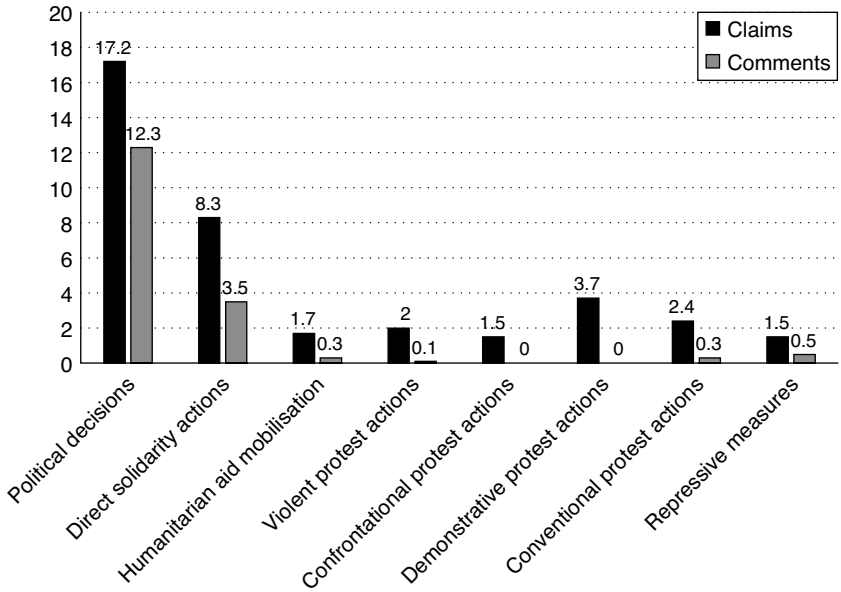

Figure 7.7 Form of call for action in printed claims and comments (%)

7.4 CONCLUSION: AN INTEGRATED SPHERE OF ONLINE SOLIDARITY CONTESTATION

The Facebook comment sections of mainstream newspaper sites offered an opportunity for focused debates about the 'refugee crisis'. Our comparative view on bottom-up solidarity contestation at the height of the so called 'refugee crisis' shows how citizen-users on Facebook all over Europe took the opportunity to take voice on an issue of shared concern. This voice was raised in the commenting sections of mainstream newspapers' public Facebook sites, and was informed and motivated by the witnessing of a humanitarian disaster and human suffering but also, and more dominantly, by diffuse feelings of fear in light of a seemingly uncontrolled influx of refugees. We found elements of a politics of fear and a politics of pity, which translated emotions into public speech in the form of political statements that took sides and positioned themselves on the question of whether solidarity with refugees should be granted or not.

These dynamics of bottom-up solidarity contestation are first of all found to be closely related to the dominant public and political discourse in a particular national country context. As such, the contentiousness around issues of (trans)national solidarity found in other chapters in this

volume in relation to civil society and political mobilisation is reflected here in the media behaviour of citizens. This confirms the centrality of the media public sphere (both online and offline) for solidarity mobilisation functioning in a way to balance different positions and exchange arguments about the deservingness of particular target groups of solidarity (Trenz, 2019). Our findings particularly offer fresh insights on the role of social media commenting, which might not necessarily be a place for an undifferentiated, angry user community, as is often assumed (the online bubble) (Flaxman et al., 2016). Looking at public Facebook sites of mainstream newspapers, we found a strong linkage between online news and online commenting. This points to an integrated public sphere of solidarity contestation, where primary definers (claims-makers such as politicians, stakeholders or intellectuals) in the news media set the agenda and the main frames for secondary definers of the debate in terms of-social media users' responses. In this debate by secondary definers, a plurality of issues is raised dominantly relating to security concerns, but highlighting also a plethora of other issues, such as the welfare state and aspects of civil society, or the destiny of refugees, their living conditions and personal stories of flight. Bottom-up solidarity contestation is most often verbally fought, and social media are not used for targeted political mobilisation in the sense of direct calls for protests or acts of solidarity.

Looking more closely at the dynamics of taking sides, on the question of refugee solidarity, we find that opinions expressed by commenters were overall more negative than the opinions expressed by claims-makers in the news media, which were still balanced in most countries (except Poland) by a substantial minority, backing solidarity with refugees. In two countries (Italy and Greece), a positive view even prevailed over hostility. The comment sections of news sites on Facebook were, however, not used for the expression of political extremism, of xenophobia or of hate towards foreigners. Nor do we find the online voice to be particularly polarised. Again, it is likely that news sites moderate their Facebook pages as well as take preventive measures by selecting less controversial news content to be posted on Facebook.

Online users in all countries systematically related to the positions of claims-makers in the media and tended to be critical towards them, not affirmative. They did not, however, take fundamentally opposed views to the ones expressed by political representatives. In equal terms, their views expressed towards the refugees as our object of solidarity were balanced and they did not seek polarisation or direct confrontation. Three deviating countries – Italy, Greece and Denmark – are interesting, as the citizen voice here was, on average, more positive towards refugees than the voice of claims raised in the print news media. This is a significant finding,

which makes us aware how solidarity contestation towards refugees and the domestic contestation of the national political actors are interrelated. A negative view on national government can motivate a positive expression of solidarity towards refugees. In Germany and France, instead, where the governmental position towards refugee solidarity was positive during the month of September, the larger share of negative positioning of citizen-users towards refugee solidarity might also be explained as an implicit or explicit critique of national government.

The analysis of justifications used to back or reject refugee solidarity reveals an interesting dynamic of how solidarity was made conditional in public debates. Taking sides on the question of refugee solidarity generates a requirement to enter a justification of one's position. These requirements for justification are, however, spelled out differently depending on the pro- or anti-solidarity position one wishes to defend. While pro-solidarity commenters often relied on an unconditional form of justification such as the higher morality of human rights and absolute values, the anti-solidarity commenters most commonly defended a notion of conditional solidarity. This required them to spell out the conditions under which solidarity should apply or be withdrawn. The anti-solidarity voice in all countries generated, therefore, a higher amount of justifications than those comments that called for solidarity with refugees.

Coming back to the specific situation of humanitarian emergency in September and the controversial decisions by the German government to open its borders to refugees, we might ask to what extent our purposive sample of the most popular comments on news sites mirrors the switch of public opinions during that time from hostile to more supportive attitudes of the population towards refugees (Ditlmann et al., 2016). The so called 'welcoming culture' was more reflected in news claims-making, where every country's positivity peaked in the early months of our entire sampling period. Instead of unconditionally supporting the so-called 'welcoming culture', social media users, especially in Germany, remained more distanced and critical of the decision to open the borders to refugees. They thus displayed an attitude of critical scepticism indicating already that the solidarity momentum of September 2015 would remain short-lived and exceptional, in line with other research pointing to the trend of online users engaged in EU political affairs being more critical (Brändle and Eisele, 2019).

Our findings point in this sense to a much more complex picture of solidarity contestation than expected. Instead of a clear-cut divide between cosmopolitans in support of humanitarian solidarity towards refugees, and communitarians in support of nationally exclusive notions of solidarity, we find shifting agendas and discourses. We also do not find

an alliance between anti-refugee positions and anti-European positions; on the contrary, anti-solidarity claims were often raised in the name of Europe, and Europe is also seen by citizens in its role as a guarantor of security and exclusive solidarity. As there was a general responsiveness towards both issues and general claims raised in the news, the online user debate was mainly a general replication of the patterns of political debates found in the claims-making analysis, and not a segmented debate that followed its own logic, detached from the political mainstream. Overall, the main argument of this volume about the fragility of solidarity contestation across Europe is powerfully confirmed by this investigation of the social media sphere, where even at this exceptional moment of heightened attention towards humanitarian needs of refugees in September 2015, citizens displayed rather different attitudes across arenas and countries and on the whole remained rather critical and distanced with regard to the solidarity claims raised by political elites in mainstream media. Social media therefore remain fragile and contested arenas of solidarity. The solidarity momentum of September 2015 woke a short-lived compassion for refugees, but as evidenced by the rapid shifts of opinion in subsequent months, it was difficult to translate this into an enduring solidarity moment (Vollmer and Karakayali, 2017).

NOTES

1. The country cases and online newspapers selected are identical with the newspapers selected for our claims-making (France: *Le Monde*, Le Figaro and *Le Parisien*; Germany: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Spiegel* instead of *Bild*; Greece: *Proto Thema*, *Ta Nea* and *Kathimerini*; Italy: *La Repubblica*, *Corriere della Sera* and *Il Giornale* instead of *Libero Quotidiano*; Poland: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Rzeczpospolita* and *Fakt*; Denmark: *Politiken*, *Jyllandsposten* and *BT*; UK: *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph* and *The Express*; Switzerland: *Matin*, *Le Temps*, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *Tages Anzeiger* and *Blick* instead of *La Regione* – five newspapers here due to language specifities).
2. See https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/apr/12/the-dark-side-of-guardian-comments.
3. Independent statements are subtracted from the total number of comments.
4. Note, the tonality measures do not lend themselves to further interpretation and should be taken with a pinch of salt since the actual difference between countries are low decimals and the claims sample of posted news articles in this chapter is not representative but selected after contestation (see p. 155).
5. Similar for neutral or ambivalent commenters.
6. Displayed without category 'unknown', which amounts to 0.9% in total; Italy 10.6% and Poland 1.1%.
7. Displayed without category 'unknown', which amounts to 0.5% in total; Switzerland 2% and Denmark 1.1%.
8. See Chouliaraki and Stolic (2017) and Triandafyllidou (2018) for interpretative approaches towards the refugee crisis as an event that triggered particular emotions.
9. A direct link between online and offline participation cannot be measured with these data.

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8. Conclusion: the entangled paths towards European solidarity

Christian Lahusen

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Solidarity is a lived experience in Europe, if we consider attitudes and practices of European citizens (e.g., donations, volunteering or protest participation), civil society initiatives and campaigns (e.g., cooperatives, self-help groups, social enterprises or time banks), and social rights and public policies of redistribution by the modern welfare state. European solidarity, however, is a much more contested and fragile phenomenon. The principle of solidarity inspires the treaties of the European Union, but it is weakly entrenched in European legislation, and policy initiatives devoted to interstate solidarity are exposed to contestation and counter-mobilisation within the public sphere. Civil society organisations are committed to sustaining solidarity within their immediate environment and invest considerable energy in organising related activities, but they are limited in their ability to establish cross-national platforms and patterns of work. And public opinion polls show that European citizens engaged in solidarity practices towards fellow citizens also support the rights of other Europeans, but even these citizens tend to prioritise other targets, and thus are less engaged in supporting the causes of other Europeans.

In these broad terms we can summarise some of the main findings of the yearlong research work leading to this book. Findings emanate from an EU-funded project that was committed to a systematic analysis of transnational solidarity in times of crises. The mission of TransSOL was to take a careful look at the state of (European) solidarity, and thus to look beyond potential appearances. In fact, most people will much more likely subscribe to the idea of solidarity in its broader sense. Hence, it is necessary to dig into issue- and target-specific forms of solidarity in order to obtain a more nuanced and authentic picture. Our assumption was that citizens, organisations and policy-makers would prioritise specific groups or issues; they might even have clear ideas of who does and does not deserve support. With this backdrop in mind, we centred our analysis

on various target groups, both in terms of vulnerable groups (people with disabilities, the unemployed, and immigrants and asylum seekers) and spatial entities (own country, Europe and the non-European world). Additionally, the research aimed at painting a comprehensive picture of practised solidarity by arguing that solidarity is constructed and organised at various levels of aggregation, namely the levels of citizens, civil societies and nation-states. Consequently, TransSOL was committed to mapping and analysing (European) solidarity dispositions and practices at each of these levels, with regard to practices of interpersonal support within and beyond borders; with a focus on organised forms of solidarity in terms of citizens' groups, initiatives and associations, and their webs of transnational solidarity work within and beyond borders; and finally, with regard to institutionalised forms of solidarity in terms of social rights and entitlements, and public discourses about solidarity within and beyond borders. The European coverage of our research (Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Switzerland and the UK) allowed us to map solidarity in all these dimensions, and in very diverse national contexts. The multinational composition of the research team enabled us to engage in a comparative analysis of factors and forces promoting or inhibiting solidarity within Europe.

Our research was guided by a number of assumptions that build on the analytic framework presented and developed in Chapter 1 of this volume. With regard to the various levels of analysis, however, there was a need to be more specific with the factors impinging on European solidarity. In fact, what emerged recurrently from our analysis was an apparent contentiousness and fragility of European solidarity. Understanding levels, forms and prospects of European solidarity thus required an informed analysis of those forces and factors that further or limit it. Based on previous research, we developed a number of assumptions that guided our empirical analyses.

First, it was argued that individual solidarity would most probably be patterned along socio-demographic traits and constituencies. In particular, we assumed that the propensity to support others (including, in particular, other Europeans) would be more diffused among people with a higher social class status, stronger shares in bridging social capital, post-materialist values, and political orientation towards the left. Second, our research built on the proposition that civil society organisations provide arenas and opportunities for the mobilisation and reproduction of solidarity, and that European solidarity is thus dependent on an organisational field with a related supply chain. On this analytical level, we assumed that European solidarity would most probably be limited by the uneven development of civil societies across the eight countries under analysis, and by the more local and national outlook of established organisational fields.

Third, the research work followed the assumption that solidarity is not only dependent on an organisational supply, but also on the institutional and legal frameworks established by the nation-states and the European Union. In this regard, we argued that the institutionalisation of solidarity is marked by an unbalanced situation, according to which solidarity is overall weakly established at the EU level, while being much more forcefully institutionalised at the national level. This situation most probably discourages transnational forms of solidarity at the level of citizens and civil societies, because the latter is contained and constrained by a national frame of reference. However, it was expected that the specific timeframe would yield new challenges and opportunities for civic solidarity. In times of accelerating crises and emergency situations, the fact that citizens and civil society organisations become more active could not be excluded, particularly in countries with growing grievances and accelerating needs.

8.2 THE FRAGILE AND CONTESTED NATURE OF (EUROPEAN) SOLIDARITY

The findings presented in the previous chapters paint a nuanced picture of the state of solidarity within Europe. Some of the previously listed assumptions had to be refuted or reformulated. One the one hand, solidarity turned out to be a relevant issue across different population groups, organisational fields and policy domains. On the other hand, solidarity is affected by a number of conditioning factors that tend to vary across country and fields. Overall, however, the contested and fragile nature of solidarity is confirmed at each level of analysis: the micro, meso and macro.

In regard to the individual level, in late 2016 we conducted an online survey among a representative sample of residents. Although our own findings confirm results from previous research, we can highlight some interesting deviations (see Grasso and Lahusen, Chapter 2 in this volume). In the first instance, we note that Europeans largely approve of redistributive policies geared at reducing income inequality (Burgoon, 2014). In our own survey, almost three-quarters considered the reduction of big income inequality as an important public policy goal. Additionally, a strong majority endorse the attempts of the EU to help countries outside Europe in fighting poverty and promoting development. Interestingly enough, the share of people engaged in personal acts of solidarity is higher than some previous studies have shown. While comparative analyses have shown that only every fifth European citizen had donated time or money to non-profit organisations (Bauer et al., 2013), and every third had joined an unconventional protest such as signing petitions or boycotting products

(Hafner-Fink, 2012), our own survey shows that almost every second respondent reports having engaged in solidarity activities for people in their country, including donating money or time and/or protesting and engaging in voluntary associations. This seems to be a consequence of the crisis, given that levels of support for fellow citizens are highest in Greece, while support for refugees and asylum seekers is strongest in Greece and Germany. Greece has been severely affected by the Great Recession and/or the so-called refugee crisis, Germany in regard to the latter.

It becomes evident that Europeans support solidarity as a private and public virtue. As our findings show, however, this picture has to be disaggregated, because people tend to prioritise between groups when solidarity is at stake. Our respondents are most engaged in the support of people in their own country, and least supportive of fellow Europeans; in addition, they report more practices of solidarity towards the disabled, and the least with refugees. For many, solidarity is restricted to specific groups or entities (Hunt and Bendford, 2004; Stets and McCaffree, 2014), which they consider more deserving (van Oorschot, 2000, 2006). Moreover, solidarity seems to be closely tied to the notion of citizenship (Miller, 2000; Keating, 2009; Supiot, 2015). In fact, our respondents prefer to grant access to social benefits only to fellow citizens, and to migrants only under the condition that they work and pay taxes, and thus contribute to the country's well-being. In both cases, solidarity is highly conditional, and tied to norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness (see also Wheeless, 1978; Thielemann, 2003; Lengfeld et al., 2015).

The identification of constituencies delivered interesting findings, partially disproving our initial assumptions. Further analyses published recently (Lahusen and Grasso, 2018) show that solidarity practices are rather evenly distributed within the population. In fact, socio-demographic traits and social structural resources do not really help to dissociate the active from the inactive citizens across countries, thus disproving the general role of gender (Neill and Gidengil, 2006), age (Beyerlein and Bergstrand, 2013; Grasso, 2013), education (Bauer et al., 2013; Grasso, 2013) or occupational and class status (Wilson, 2000). While these factors do play a role in individual countries, they are not relevant per se; solidarity seems to belong to the routine activities of very different groups of people. More important are attitudinal dispositions like interpersonal trust and religiosity. Political motivations play a role, but there is no consistent pattern, thus highlighting that solidarity is, for many, a more social than political act. Finally, a notable difference was found between active and inactive citizens: respondents engaged in support of one target are most probably committed to furthering the cause of other groups as well, while inactive people tend towards consistent inactivity. These findings highlight

that European solidarity is not necessarily in competition with solidarity towards fellow citizens, but rather compatible with the latter. Still, citizens tend to prioritise national solidarity to the detriment of European solidarity. We might interpret this peculiarity as a consequence of the predominance of national conceptions of solidarity and an implicit notion of subsidiarity: Other European citizens might be needy, but respondents feel less responsible for them as they assume that other nation-states and citizens will provide help for them.

The organisational analyses reflect this finding. The two chapters on the organisational fields at the grassroots and the national/European levels show that most citizens' groups, associations and networks are active at the local and national levels. Among the sample of grassroots groups, only every tenth organisation reports being active within Europe – both at the supranational level of the EU and/or in other countries (see Kousis et al., Chapter 3 in this volume). Among national organisations, the share of groups being active at the EU level is higher – i.e., almost every second organisation indicated this (see Baglioni and Montgomery, Chapter 4 in this volume). But once we ask for activity types, funding and membership in consultative bodies, the numbers drop considerably. Hence, also in this regard, the main ambit of operation is the country of birth and/or the most immediate surroundings. In this regard, our initial research assumption is corroborated. Civil societies are still strongly contained by the nation-state (Anheier and Salamon, 1999; Baglioni and Giugni, 2014), given the prevalence of nationally defined public policies, funding schemes and established consultation procedures, and probably the urgency of country-specific problems and needs to be addressed, as well. Additionally, there are also marked differences between countries in the degree of European activities: Countries with more established civil societies seem to provide a more beneficial background for the development of European solidarity activities than countries with a less developed sector – as the comparative analysis of TransSOL data revealed (Lahusen et al., 2018).

Findings of our organisational analysis, however, do not suggest that European solidarity activism is altogether absent. Indeed, we have noted that civil society organisations from a number of very different countries are active at the EU level for very specific aims (e.g., funding, consultation, mobilisation). More importantly, however, we have to redirect our view away from the arena of EU governance and take it back to the grassroots level. A closer look at the data suggests that European solidarity is a matter of a specific organisational pattern: the activism is decentralised and localised, and it follows soft forms of transnationalism via cooperation and diffusion. This finding complements results from previous studies on the Europeanisation of civil societies and social movements. On the

one hand, scholarly writing has been interested in the different scales of activities – from the local to the European. Studies have testified to the emergence of a European field of civil society (Smismans, 2006; Kröger, 2008; Kohler-Koch and Quittkat, 2013; Kutay, 2014), because the EU attracts local and national civil society organisations by providing funding, access to legislative processes and consultations and thus an arena of influence-taking (Kousis, 1999; Císař and Vráblíková, 2013; Sanchez Salgado, 2017). However, it is well known that these 'European' associations and networks have had problems mobilising their members' support at the local level (Della Porta and Tarrow, 2005; Petrova and Tarrow, 2007; Tarrow, 2011, 191–3). This resistance is also to do with the fact that the EU-governance system exerts accommodative pressures on civil society actors, many of which they are unwilling to adopt, given a more contentious action repertoire and a stronger orientation towards the grassroots level (Rucht, 2001; Balme and Chabanet, 2008). Hence, civil society organisations interested in furthering solidarity might thus willingly opt against a vertical Europeanisation, and thus against a scale shift towards the EU (Tarrow and McAdam, 2005). In these cases, activists might opt for a horizontal Europeanisation: local and national organisations expand their area of activities into other European countries mainly by means of cooperation with civic groups and organisations from other European nation-states (Lahusen et al., 2018).

We can thus assume that the organisational field of European solidarity is marked more strongly by a horizontal and transnational orientation. Additionally, this orientation goes along with a decentralised structure of organisation and activism. Both aspects are well-known in a social movement analysis (Imig and Tarrow, 1999; Della Porta and Caiani, 2009) that describes and explains mobilisation waves across space and time. The study of transnational protest waves has placed particular emphasis on the processes of diffusion of protest activities at the grassroots level. The strength of social movements resides more often than not in their ability to promote the diffusion of ideas and practices from one country into another (Della Porta and Tarrow, 2005; Tarrow, 2005). Findings show that global and/or EU-level associations and networks play an important role in the diffusion and coordination of transnational protest activities (Smith et al., 1994; Keck and Sikkink, 1999; Smith, 2002; Ruzza and Bozzini, 2008). Following a conceptual distinction by Tarrow (2012), who distinguished between thick and thin diffusion, we thus propose speaking about soft and strong forms of transnational solidarity activities. In regard to organised European solidarity, soft forms of diffusion prevail when compared to strong ones. That is, strong forms of transnational solidarity place more weight on an organisation and formalisation of solidarity campaigns and

activities in terms of formalised European platforms, networks and/or campaigns; soft forms of diffusion rest more strongly on a decentral web of loosely coupled (local, national) initiatives and organisations, engaged in information exchange, cooperation and ad hoc campaigning (Tarrow, 2012; Mattoni and della Porta, 2014).

The strength of civic solidarity in Europe does not reside, against this backdrop, on the ability of citizens to set up formal organisations with professionalised staff, hierarchical decision-making procedures and mass constituencies. On the contrary, activists seem to privilege forms of soft transnational solidarity with a clearly decentralised structure, rooted in specific localities and tied to specific constituencies. The former model might be more visible from the outside, as it resides in big, formal and professional working groups. But the latter might be more effective in its ability to mobilise support and further solutions in an extended range of localities. Its strength – and its weakness – reside thus in its ability to mobilise local support and maintain cross-national networks of exchange and cooperation throughout Europe.

This observation leads us to the final level of our analysis. Research has also been committed to analysing the role of solidarity as a legal principle and as a component of public policies in each of our eight countries, and within the legal framework of the EU. Moreover, we were interested in public debates about solidarity within the mass media, in order to grasp how far the notion of solidarity has been constructed and/or eroded within the public sphere. It is here that policy-makers and stakeholders deliberate about the political consequences of social problems and upcoming crises, and it is here that they form the 'publicised' public opinion that might influence the choices of their citizens. In fact, this macro level is important to better understand the political context within which civil society organisations and citizens operate.

The relevance of this legal, institutional and political context is corroborated by the findings presented in our previous chapters in two respects (see Federico, Chapter 5 in this volume). In the first instance, our analyses have shown that the principle of solidarity is very unevenly institutionalised within the constitutional frameworks and public policies, when comparing both national and European levels. Our findings (see also Federico and Lahusen, 2018) highlight that solidarity is part of the nation-state's legal framework in all eight countries, when looking at constitutional text, court rulings and public policies in the three policy fields under analysis (disabilities, unemployment, migration and asylum). While the levels, forms and rationales of welfare provision and social security are very different between countries (Esping-Andersen, 1990, 1996; Castels, 2004), the analyses have shown that solidarity is a common constitutional principle

everywhere (also Ross, 2010). The situation is quite different, however, once we move to the European level, because the principle of solidarity is much less prominent there. EU treaties refer to this value in general terms (Art. 3 of the TEU), and as a goal in the area of asylum and immigration (Art. 80) and economic and energy policy (Arts 122 and 194 of the TFEU), but it is lacking in other areas. Moreover, member states and EU institutions have had problems meeting the expectations of this principle. Even though they are called on to respect the principle of solidarity, their incapacity to agree on shared responsibilities for the growing number of refuges immigrating to Europe since 2015 has demonstrated that solidarity is a marginal factor in factual EU policy-making.

This imbalance in the institutionalisation of solidarity seems to impact on the uneven organisation of solidarity within civil societies. As we have seen above, citizen groups, non-profit organisations and welfare associations operate mainly within the nation-state, while being Europeanised only to a lesser degree. This reflects institutional and legal parameters: the EU might be engaged in attracting civil society organisations to the European level by means of funding schemes and consultation procedures, but the social competencies of the EU are too weak to restructure nationally segmented civil societies into pan-European platforms and activities. Additionally, we have seen that citizens are primarily engaged in acts of solidarity within their own country and locality, both in terms of personal practices of support, and as members of civil society organisations. This national and local outlook makes sense, given that solidarity is strongly institutionalised within the nation-state. Nation-states establish social rights and entitlement, they administer funds for service delivery and they provide forums of political contestation and legal litigation. Hence, citizens' groups will most probably direct their appeals to their local, regional or national governments and public authorities. At the same time, citizens seem to be less encouraged to get active on a personal level in support of other Europeans, possibly because the national model of solidarity is deeply enshrined in individual citizens: Citizens seem to expect that everybody is taken care of by their own government, national civil society organisations and fellow citizens.

These observations, however, are not fully correct, because our findings show that citizens are active in support of other Europeans, both in individual terms and as part of civic groups and organisations. In structural terms, we might expect that the predominance of national solidarity discourages citizens and civil society organisations from engaging in transnational, European solidarity. However, in times of crises, this imbalance seems to generate contrary effects: The solidarity gap within the constitutional framework of the EU, its public policies and interstate

bargains seem to call citizens and civil society organisations into action, when severe social grievances across national borders emerge. Citizens and civil society organisations tend to compensate for the deficiencies of public policies, both at the national and European level. This observation is not restricted to current times, because citizens and civil society groups have long been committed to combatting social problems and grievances, in part aggravated by ongoing processes of welfare retrenchment and policies of austerity (Pierson, 1994, 1996; Bonoli et al., 2000; della Porta, 2015). But this observation seems to apply in particular to our own times. In fact, our findings show that citizens and civil society organisations have been active since the start of the Great Recession which began in 2008, as well as during the so-called refugee crisis (2015) – another event which spawned a definitive reaction to the inability of member states to find solutions within their own territory, and the shared incapacity of national governments to agree on joint European solutions.

In this sense, European citizenry has been Europe's fire brigade in times when governments have had trouble coming to terms with rampant area fires. We find empirical evidence for this emergency relief in the mushrooming numbers of newly founded citizen groups in the area of unemployment during the periods of mass unemployment during the 1990s, and the subsequent Great Recession since 2008, but also in the strong increase in civil society initiatives responding to the heavy influx of refugees since 2015.

Moreover, the momentum of civic solidarity was palpable in public debates devoted to the refugee crisis in 2015, as our analysis of mass mediated news coverage shows strong initial support for the German 'welcoming culture' (see Cinalli et al., Chapter 6 in this volume). In the beginning, claims and activities of civil society had a great deal of influence on public debates within the media. Claims frequently addressed the causes of forced migration and commented on citizens' activities and volunteering. These voices were overwhelmingly positive, stressing the importance of solidarity. However, this moment of solidarity and unity within the public arena was not long lived – in reaction to violent incidents (e.g., the terror attacks in Paris, the sexual assaults on New Year's Eve in Cologne) political contestation against migration started to conquer the public arena, thus discontinuing this important momentum. Debates were spearheaded by political actors and centred on issues of migration management (e.g., border management, registration of asylum seekers, relocation of refugees, or cooperation with non-EU countries such as Turkey over retaining refugees in their country) and the problems of long-term integration of refugees, a more negative tone evident with regard to refugees and notions of solidarity towards them.

The analysis of Facebook comment sections of mainstream newspapers highlights that bottom-up debates among media users do not diverge strongly from the picture painted by the analysis of reported claims in newspaper articles (see Trenz et al., Chapter 7 in this volume). Little affected by hate speech, user comments provide opportunities to contest news coverage and voice personal opinions. Findings show that commentators are generally more critical of refugees and immigration policies, when compared with the claims of policy-actors and stakeholders reported by the press articles. However, data reveal that solidarity is a highly contentious topic also within this arena. Commentators supporting refugees and immigration policies justify their opinion with reference to universal and unconditional solidarity, while opposing commentators centre on the priority of national solidarity and conditional help for non-nationals. We thus see that citizens are engaged in defining the meaning of solidarity, and that their participation in these online platforms is geared to impact on the collective understanding of this core value. The analysis of comments thus highlights that citizens themselves are well aware that public discourses are symbolic contentions about the interpretation and definition of values, and that the outcome of public debates might thus impact on the behaviour of collective and individual actors.

8.3 AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE?

The future of European solidarity seems thus to be uncertain. Findings of the TransSOL project presented in this book show that solidarity is deeply enshrined in the legal frameworks of Europe, in the values cherished by its citizens, and in the activities of civil society organisations. Hence, European solidarity seems to be sufficiently developed to endure and overcome moments of crisis (see also Gerhards et al., 2019). And even if Europe does not seem to be the primary target and reference point for solidarity among citizens and civic associations, this must not necessarily be a crucial point of concern. Solidarity might rank less highly in the prioritisation of European citizens, but there are indications to assume that there is not inevitably antagonism between national, European and global solidarities. The main division is between those engaged in solidarity and those who are inactive. This division seems to mirror political and cultural orientations, given that supporters of right-wing populist parties are less engaged in solidarity practices even towards nationals (Kiess and Trenz, 2019), while proponents of an open and inclusive conception of European citizenship are more active (Kurowska et al., 2019; Lahusen and Theiss, 2019). European solidarity might thus benefit from any type

of solidarity activity, as it involves citizens in activities that confront the grievances of others.

The complementarity of solidarity is also a lesson to be drawn from the analysis of civil societies and social movements. Citizens' initiatives and civil society organisations seem to be committed mainly to local constituencies and tasks, but our findings suggest that the organisational field adapts quite quickly to upcoming crises and grievances and spurs considerable transnational activity through horizontal forms of diffusion and cooperation at the grassroots level (della Porta, 2009, 2015; Lahusen et al., 2018). Taking these insights seriously acknowledges that the best way of promoting organised European solidarity might not reside in the development of hierarchical, formalised and supranational platforms and associations, but rather in decentralised forms of cooperation, diffusion and engagement at the grassroots level.

What is rather an issue of concern is the regressive tendencies in the social, political and legal environment of civic solidarity. Citizens and civil society organisations have been responding to the dramatic emergency situations after the Great Recession since 2008 and the so-called refugee crisis of 2015. But the momentum of public solidarity lacked longevity in both cases, because European solidarity cannot reside in the voluntary and spontaneous engagement of European citizens. It requires institutional responses and public policies. The analysis shows, however, that policy responses are rather dominated by stagnation and regression, both in general terms and in view of the three issue fields under analysis. Schemes of unemployment and disability protection have been weakened with reference to fiscal and market imperatives, and solidarity with migrants and refugees has been limited due to security concerns – even in cases where solidarity is strongly entrenched in law. The crises might have aroused considerable solidarity from European citizens in terms of short-term relief, but they have reduced the strength of solidarity as a legal and political principle in the long term.

Given these contextual developments, it is very probable that European solidarity will remain highly contentious, dynamic and fragile. This is regrettable. Citizens do not seem to be against European solidarity per se. On the contrary, they tend to cherish the idea of solidarity, and this support does not exclude – in most cases, it actively includes – a European element. Disagreement emerges in the manner of organising and institutionalising solidarity in terms of rights, entitlements and benefits within Europe. Political institutions thus have to do their homework. A similar indication is applicable to the level of civic solidarity. As we have seen, there is a considerable number of Europeans who are ready to commit personally to solidarity with the needy, both within their country and

beyond. But disengagement is very probable when political institutions are unable to find solutions, and counter-mobilisations seize the moment within the public sphere. Fragility also prevails at the organisational level of civil society. Groups and organisations are committed to furthering their specific goals in their circumscribed environment, but European networks and circuits of mutual support are more difficult to sustain in times of welfare retrenchment and national antagonism. Organisations committed to furthering European solidarity require moral, political and legal support. If European solidarity is such a highly valued force, it is imperative that more care be given to nurturing it.

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