

Transnational Solidarity in Times of Crises

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Ann-Kathrin Reinl, M.Sc.

aus

Ehringshausen

Referentin: Prof. Dr. Alexia Katsanidou

Korreferent: Prof. Dr. Eldad Davidov

Drittgutachterin: Prof. Dr. Zoe Lefkofridi

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Für meine Familie.
Diese Arbeit ist auch Eure Arbeit.

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Summary

This cumulative dissertation investigates *transnational solidarity in times of crises* in the context of the European Union (EU). In order to realize solidarity policies that are democratically legitimate, the EU requires the support of its population. To that end, the dissertation at hand takes an individual level approach. In three original articles, I empirically analyze transnational solidarity based on survey data and shed light on varying conceptual, state and stakeholder perspectives, which have remained unexplored in previous research. The first paper investigates a two-dimensional concept of transnational solidarity derived from the literature on national welfare states differentiating between risk-sharing and redistribution. Despite diverse levels of transnational solidarity in EU member states, citizens share a similar understanding of the overall concept. Therefore, it is feasible to compare transnational solidarity across borders. The following two papers build on this conceptual comparability and refer to the identified risk-sharing dimension during the European Sovereign Debt Crisis. The second paper examines the willingness of voters from a debt-ridden state to accept crisis bailout conditions, whereas the third paper studies politicians' perspectives on granting such monetary bailout. For both studies, I find that the individual's socio-economic attitudes as well as the EU attitudes matter. Moreover, the economic and information contexts individuals find themselves in play a direct and moderating role. These findings are in line with previous studies on support for EU-wide financial assistance in the broader EU population. Thus, voters and political elites from states in different crisis roles seem to base their preferences for transnational solidarity on similar considerations. This can be interpreted as a positive signal for further European integration and democratic representation alike.

Following from that, the overall findings of my cumulative dissertation are manifold and make important contributions to hitherto unexplored gaps in the literature. Firstly, the insights gained contribute to a more sophisticated conceptualization of transnational solidarity and demonstrate that citizens' understanding of the concept indeed is comparable between the EU countries studied. Secondly, my work sheds light on understudied state and stakeholder perspectives taken during the European Sovereign Debt Crisis, thus contributing to a deeper knowledge of transnational solidarity and underlying motivations at that time. In terms of current political debates, the EU has to decide how to jointly tackle current and future EU crises. Turning from a mostly economic community to a union of enacted values requires a common understanding of transnational solidarity as well as comparable mindsets of individuals from diverse state and stakeholder perspectives. The present dissertation supports the existence of both these preconditions.

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Preface and list of publications

This cumulative dissertation builds on three research articles, which make their contribution to scientific progress independently of each other, while at the same time addressing and complementing one another in terms of content. The following introductory section of my dissertation provides a framework to the topic of *transnational solidarity in times of crises*, before presenting the empirical studies. All three papers were submitted to peer-reviewed political science journals and are currently at different stages of the review process. The first study analyzes survey data for the years 2019/2020 and investigates a comprehensive concept of transnational solidarity, which draws on citizens' experiences made during both the European Sovereign Debt Crisis and the time of high numbers of incoming asylum seekers. The following two studies investigate a narrower concept of transnational solidarity: risk-sharing in a financial crisis scenario. To that end, data collected during the European Sovereign Debt Crisis from different state and stakeholder perspectives is employed.

Study I: Ann-Kathrin Reinl: Transnational Solidarity within the EU - Public Support for (Short-term) Risk-sharing and (Permanent) Redistribution. Under review at *Journal of European Social Policy*.

Study II: Alexia Katsanidou and Ann-Kathrin Reinl: Public Support for the European Solidarity Deal in EU Debtor States: The Case of Greece. Under second review (after R&R) at *Journal of European integration*.

Study III: Ann-Kathrin Reinl and Heiko Giebler: Transnational Solidarity Among Political Elites: What Determines Support for Financial Redistribution within the EU in Times of Crisis? Under Review at *European Political Science Review*.

Within the years of my doctoral studies, I have also worked on other contributions to the topic of transnational solidarity. However, since these additional publications either consider solidarity as an independent variable (Reinl 2020; Reinl et al. 2020a; 2020b) or apply experimental research designs (Katsanidou et al. 2019; Kuhn et al. 2020a), they tell a different story than the studies presented here. Hence, due to reasons of content-related coherence these additional papers were not included in this work but can be seen as complementary to my dissertation.

1. Introduction

“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”

(Schuman 1950).

This quotation is taken from the famous Schuman Declaration¹, held one year prior to the founding of the European Coal and Steel Community. Robert Schuman, the French foreign minister at the time, drew attention to the importance of solidarity as a value within the emerging community. However, already back then, the practical implementation of the value remained undefined. Solidarity’s conceptual vagueness continued throughout the years of European integration and while it was referred to solidarity in a number of follow-up treaties of the European Union (EU) as well as its predecessor organizations², no concrete actions were assigned to the term. An exception to this terminological ambiguity was represented by the introduction of the European Regional Development Fund in 1975: its intention was, and still is today, to harmonize EU regions over time (European Commission 2020c). In this case, solidarity is actively applied and integrated into real-life EU policies through financial redistribution.

Over the previous decade³, manifold crises, which are well-known triggers of solidarity among group members (Hatje 2015: 84; Kneip et al. 2018: 1; Koos 2019: 643), gave rise to more extensive solidarity policies within the EU. With the eruption of the European Sovereign Debt Crisis in 2010, EU member states actively sought for financial assistance from the EU and fellow member states for the first time. To jointly tackle the crisis, bailouts for financially stricken crisis states were adopted, thus dividing the EU states into donor and recipient countries of crisis aid. In the years that followed, the EU was additionally struck by several successive, partly overlapping, crises. In 2015 and 2016, more than 2.5 million refugees entered the EU (Eurostat 2020a), leading to distribution conflicts about incoming refugees and monetary involvement among the member states. To mitigate the economic consequences of this migration movement, new monetary redistribution mechanisms were established within the EU and between the member states (European Commission 2020a). Likewise in 2016, another event distressed the EU: the British majority vote in a public membership referendum to leave the EU. This decision can be understood as a rupture not

¹ For the whole declaration see https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration_en.

² The term solidarity was, among others, mentioned in the Single European Act (1986), the Treaty on the European Union (1992), the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) as well as in the Treaty of Lisbon (2007).

³ As described in the following sentence, whenever I talk about the “previous” or “past” decade, I refer to the time period since the outbreak of the European Sovereign Debt Crisis in 2010.

only of the country's EU membership, but also of the associated solidarity community. At the beginning of 2020, with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, EU solidarity was once again back on the table. To address the economic consequences following the pandemic, the EU adopted the largest budget since its foundation with a volume of over 1074 billion Euros (for the period 2021-2027). Moreover, the recovery fund "Next Generation EU" with a total amount of 750 billion Euros was agreed upon (European Commission 2020d).

But how did the EU population assess the solidarity policies implemented over the last decade and what are their visions about the future shape of European solidarity? As of January 2020, the EU is home to more than 447 million people (Eurostat 2020b). Since the EU describes itself as a democratic actor (European Union 2020), public support is a fundamental prerequisite for political legitimacy (for instance Fuchs et al. 1995; Inglehart 2003; Putnam et al. 1993). In this respect, my dissertation addresses the above research question and refers to this individual level perspective of solidarity as *transnational solidarity*. Entitled *transnational solidarity in times of crises*, my dissertation pursues three so far unexplored perspectives in the research field and analyzes survey data collected between 2013 and January 2020.

The first empirical study deals with the conceptualization of transnational solidarity. Derived from welfare state research, a two-dimensional concept of transnational solidarity distinguishing between risk-sharing and redistribution is introduced. The empirical analyses indicate that the same understanding of transnational solidarity exists among citizens across the three examined EU states. The following two contributions build on the knowledge gained in the first study and remain in the logic of transnational solidarity's risk-sharing dimension during the European Sovereign Debt Crisis. The second paper analyzes under which conditions voters in debt-ridden EU countries agree to implement austerity measures in return for monetary bailout. It becomes clear that voters are more likely to support implementing austerity policies in their country if they are a) economically right-wing, b) positive about EU membership, and c) see the economic necessity for these measures. The third paper changes the perspective to political elites and their preferences for granting financial aid. Politicians are willing to provide monetary assistance if they a) are economically left-wing, and b) have a positive attitude towards the EU. In addition, the effects found for political elites are moderated by the economic context and the allocation of blame for the crisis. Consequently, and in line with literature on the broader EU population, I find similar mindsets underlying support for cross-border solidarity policies for voters in crisis states as well as political elites.

Before further elaborating on the empirical studies, the following introductory section of my dissertation defines the two central concepts investigated in my work – solidarity and crisis – and establishes a link to the EU arena. Following this, I reveal the addressed research gaps and present the empirical studies in a summarized form. The last section entails the discussion and relates the overall results to the political realm and the future course of the EU. Attached to the introductory section are the three empirical studies.

2. Theoretical background

a. The notion of solidarity

The integration of my work on transnational solidarity into a broader theoretical context is not sufficiently reflected in the individual empirical studies of my dissertation due to the limited word count in scientific journals. To counteract this shortcoming, the value of the following paragraph is to strengthen the theoretical basis of my dissertation and to embed European solidarity within the broader framework of a long-standing line of research, namely on the notion of solidarity.

Solidarity is a contested concept⁴ with a controversial definition (Steinvorth 1999: 29). The roots of the concept of solidarity potentially go back to Roman law; “obligatio in solidum” was used here to describe a form of mutual liability (Bayertz 1998: 11; 1999: 3; Sangiovanni 2015: 340). Others see the origin of the current understanding of the term in French legal history (Scholz 2013: 4957), where it also developed from a legal to a political and sociological concept at the end of the 18th until the early 19th century (Sangiovanni 2018: 5; Stjernø 2004: 26-27; 2011: 156).

One can refer to solidarity as a kind of common morality and shared values holding a society together (Bayertz 1999: 5; Preuss 1999; Rosati 2000: 93-94; Scholz 2013: 4963; Thome 1999: 102). This kind of relation exists and has always existed in every form of community (Reshaur 1992: 723; Stjernø 2004: 25). Solidarity is the “inner cement holding together a society” (Bayertz 1999: 9). Durkheim (1984[1893]) distinguishes between two types of solidarity in his work namely mechanical and organic solidarity. Whereas the first type was present predominantly in former societies building on social similarities, the latter can be found in modern societies: due to the division of labor where everyone is dependent upon each other and takes a different role in the community.

⁴ “More simply, to use an essentially contested concept means to use it against other uses and to recognize that one’s own use of it has to be maintained against these other uses. Still more simply, to use an essentially contested concept means to use it both aggressively and defensively” (Gallie 1956: 172).

Solidarity is deeply integrated in the traditions of Christian (democratic), liberal, nationalist, socialist and social democratic parties in Europe (Sangiovanni 2015; 2018; Stjernø 2004; 2011). In its Christian (democratic) argument, solidarity builds on interdependence and mutual responsibility between human beings and aims at putting an end to all kinds of human suffering (Sangiovanni 2015; 2018; Stjernø 2011). Social democratic solidarity moves away from this idea of subsidiarity and emphasizes empathy and accepting one another's differences (Stjernø 2011). In contrast, (liberal) nationalist solidarity grounds on a common national identity (Sangiovanni 2015; 2018) and for the socialist tradition of solidarity, a person's structural position within society is of relevance (Sangiovanni 2015; 2018). In addition to these conceptualizations applied by political parties, numerous grassroots movements referred to the notion of solidarity. It is not only found reference in the French Revolution (Stjernø 2004: 26-27; 2011: 156), but also in current social movements like the "Metoo" or the "Black Lives matter" campaigns (Sangiovanni 2018: 1-2). Proceeding from this historical reappraisal and localization of solidarity within modern societies, the next step is to examine solidarity's underlying motivations.

Solidarity can be altruistically motivated and follow unidirectional paths without bearing the expectation of an immediate or future return (Bechtel et al. 2014; Stjernø 2004). In contrast, others agree that in its connotation, solidarity needs to be distinguished from related concepts like charity (Bayertz 1998: 49; Sangiovanni 2018: 24; Thome 1999: 126) or justice (Habermas 1986: 311; 2013: 9; 2014b: 25). In this latter line of research, solidarity is based on reciprocity between members of a group. It entails mutual dependence and standing up for each other (Bayertz 1998: 11; Habermas 1986: 311; Sangiovanni 2018; Scholz 2007; 2013; Stjernø 2004; 2011; Thome 1999; Wilde 2007: 171). Over the long run, solidarity should be "symmetrical, reciprocal, and omnilateral not asymmetrical, non-reciprocal, and unilateral" (Sangiovanni 2018: 24).

Solidarity usually takes place between groups or people on the horizontal level. However, it can also happen vertically, for instance from the state directed towards the citizenry. Political elites are known as the "guarantors of togetherness, as well as of specific co-operative arrangements" (Ferrera and Burelli 2019: 99). According to Stjernø (2004: 2) "solidarity can most fruitfully be defined as the preparedness to share resources with others by personal contribution to those in struggle or in need and through taxation and redistribution organised by the state". In this respect, solidarity requires the willingness to bear actual costs, like sharing monetary or human resources, in order to stand up for a cause together (Genschel and Hemerijck 2018: 2). This willingness depends largely on whether persons in need are

perceived to be responsible for their situation themselves or not. If individuals perceive others' personal self-responsibility as low, as is the case of older people needing assistance, solidarity is more likely to be demonstrated than if the situation appears to be self-inflicted, as in the case of unemployment (van Oorschot 1998).

For solidarity to occur, cooperation is essential (Scholz 2007: 42). Sangiovanni (2015; 2018) even goes so far that he sees the very basis of solidarity rooted in joint actions⁵ of group members. Solidarity can activate people and can also be an action itself, which creates strong feelings of togetherness (Sangiovanni 2015: 356; Scholz 2008: 17). In contrast to that, Taylor (2015: 131) identifies four prerequisites for the development of robust solidarity: common interests, group identity, understanding and two-way trust. In cases where one of these conditions is not met or is only met unilaterally, the author speaks of expressional solidarity.

Solidarity is an important value for every society, especially for democratic systems. No political community can exist without a certain degree of in-group solidarity (Ferrera 2017: 15). Moreover, solidarity has become an important norm within European societies, where the state is supposed to protect its population against external threats (Scholz 2013: 4962). Following from that, solidarity should also be existent within the EU community and across the national borders between the EU member states. Therefore, the subsequent section is explicitly dedicated to the character of solidarity within the EU and specifies the research interest of my work. It will show whether and how the concept of solidarity can also be applied transnationally.

b. Solidarity in the European Union

Solidarity is one of the base values underlying the European integration process (Sangiovanni 2013: 213). It is not only a prerequisite for integration, but also a target to be achieved (Hatje 2015: 76). Ever since the foundation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951, the first predecessor community of the EU, solidarity played a role in the European integration process. Even though the founding treaties of European integration did not explicitly refer to the concept of solidarity, solidarity has in fact been a core value underpinning many rules and policies ever since (Hartwig 2014: 170).

The term solidarity was mentioned in various EU treaties like the Single European Act (1986), the Treaty on European Union (1992), the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997), and the

⁵ These joint actions are built on shared goals of the actors involved, mutual commitment to the goals as well as mutual commitment to bear the fate of other actors. Moreover, every actor agrees to carry costs in order to achieve the common goal and to fulfil his or her part in the joint action (Sangiovanni 2015: 343; 2018: 19).

Treaty of Lisbon (2007) in which an entire section was even dedicated to the topic of solidarity, the so-called Solidarity Clause. The treaties address the issue of national solidarity as well as intergovernmental relations and solidarity towards countries outside the EU. According to the treaty texts the EU desires “to deepen the solidarity between their peoples while respecting their history, their culture and their traditions” (Treaty on European Union 1992: 1) and should “promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States” (Treaty of Lisbon 2007: 11). In times of unexpected crisis events such as disasters or terrorist attacks the Solidarity Clause calls upon that “the Union and its Member States shall act jointly in a spirit of solidarity” (Treaty of Lisbon 2007: 100).

In addition, the EU has recently started to launch campaigns to put solidarity more in the focus of common EU policies. Examples for this are the social media campaign “#ThisIsTheEU” initiated by the European Commission (European Commission 2020e; see also van Hoyweghen et al. 2020: 1) as well as the European Solidarity Corps creating the possibility for young people to get involved in solidarity projects all over the EU (European Youth Portal 2020). Moreover, national and EU politicians have frequently pointed to the relevance of solidarity for the EU in their speeches calling it for instance “the glue that keeps our Union together” (Juncker 2016) or when it comes to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic “Europe has now become the world’s beating heart of solidarity” (von der Leyen 2020).

Despite these recurring references to solidarity given within the EU framework, the term solidarity often remained undefined in its concrete nature and form (Kleger and Mehlhausen 2013). It is criticized that the EU is mainly limited to economic aspects of cooperation and rather weak in other areas (Domurath 2013; Ferrera and Burelli 2019). With the exception of a restricted budget for regional promotion and agricultural subsidies, so far, no kind of permanent redistribution scheme exists at the EU level (Ferrera 2017: 3).

In social science research, European solidarity has been defined as “an attitude and behaviour in support of other Europeans, regardless of their national origin” (Lahusen 2020: 11). Referring back to the theoretical literature on solidarity, the type of solidarity present in the EU falls into Durkheim’s definition of organic solidarity (see also Hartwig 2014: 167):

“The highly differentiated multi-level system is characterised by a division of labour, interdependence and cooperative law, as described by Durkheim’s concept of organic solidarity. A common identity or feeling is conceptualised here as a possible aspect, not a requirement for solidarity in the EU. Following Durkheim’s conception of organic solidarity, it is possible to apply the concept of solidarity to the European multi-level system” (Knodt and Tews 2017: 50).

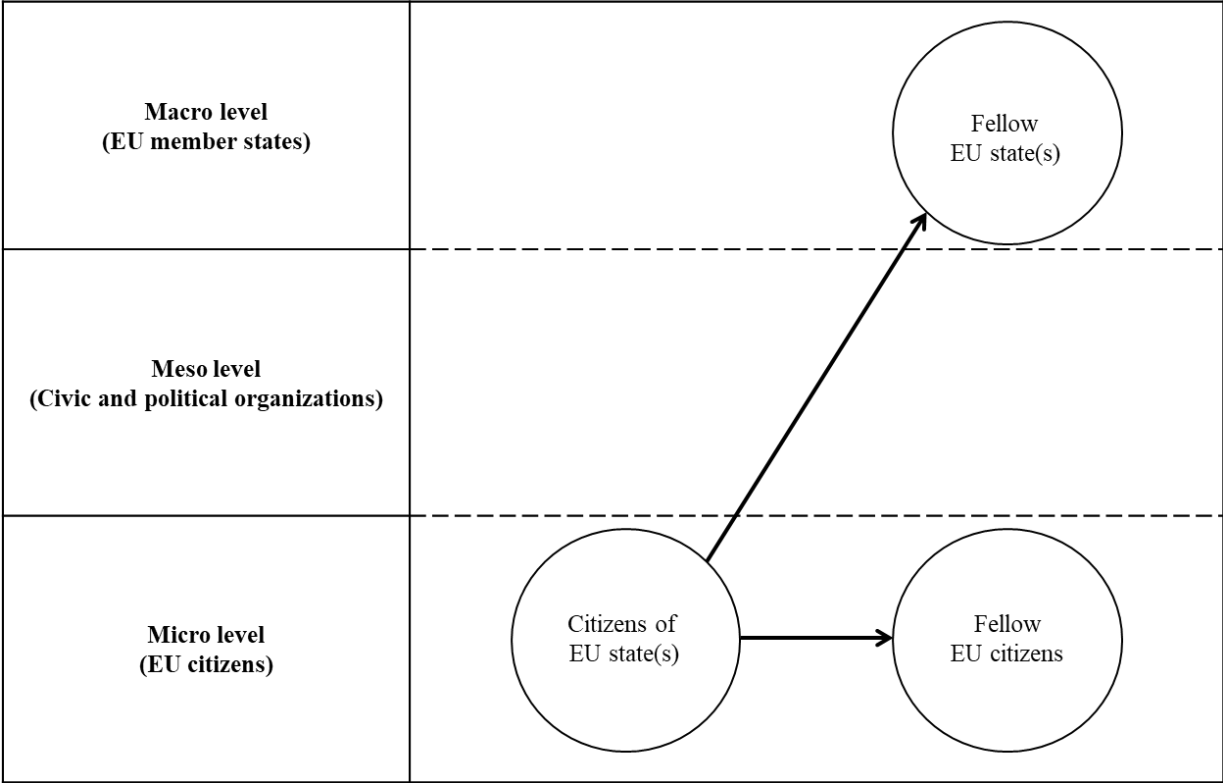
The EU is an opportunity for member states to improve their problem-solving abilities in the age of globalization while at the same time protecting each other against the challenges posed by European integration (Sangiovanni 2013: 218). European solidarity reaches its limits whenever the existence and functioning of the member states is endangered. This applies to both sides, the donors and recipients of solidarity aid (Hatje 2015: 82).

European solidarity occurs in the horizontal as well as in the vertical dimension of the multi-level community. Moreover, it can either focus on citizens actually living in the EU, organizations located at the meso level, or on the relations between member states at the macro level. To give some examples, Knodt and Tews (2017) distinguish between four different types of solidarity to be identified within the EU, namely transnational, supranational, international, and intergovernmental solidarity.⁶ In contrast to that, Sangiovanni (2013) limits his work on solidarity within the EU to three levels which are national solidarity, describing solidarity between citizens within a state, member state solidarity, referred to as mutual commitments between states, and transnational solidarity, defined as obligations between citizens of (different) EU countries. In Sangiovanni's understanding all three levels of European solidarity are based on the idea of reciprocal solidarity expecting a fair return from the solidarity commitment.

In my dissertation, I focus on citizens' solidarity preferences towards other EU member states and fellow citizens. Figure 1 graphically represents the research focus of my work.

⁶ Transnational solidarity happens horizontally among individuals living in EU countries based on similar conditions of living, whereas supranational solidarity is found vertically between citizens of the EU as such. With regard to collective actors, intergovernmental solidarity takes place vertically between EU states while international solidarity represents EU states' joint solidarity towards targets outside the EU at the horizontal level (Knodt and Tews 2017).

Figure 1: Transnational solidarity studied in this work



Source: Own presentation.

Annotation: The black arrows represent transnational solidarity to be found in the EU.

In this figure, three levels are identified, which are given attention in European solidarity research: the macro, meso and micro level. The actors investigated in my work are located at the micro level, i.e. citizens living in EU countries. I am, on the one side, interested in how individual actors relate to solidarity measures towards fellow EU citizens, such as the establishment of an EU-wide social system. While on the other side, I want to inquire about support for solidarity measures affecting entire fellow EU state(s) - such as economic redistribution policies between countries or monetary crisis aid. The solidarity relationships are portrayed unidirectionally in this figure since the illustration intends to emphasize the donor role of individual citizens as supporters and providers of solidarity. Consequently, my research interest rests on the definition of Gerhards et al. (2019) describing European solidarity as “a form of solidarity that goes beyond nation state containers and reflects a solidarity with other (European) countries and their citizens” (Gerhards et al. 2019: 18). However, since the authors use the generic term of European solidarity from individuals towards fellow EU states and citizens, I argue for another term in my work in order to refer specifically to the *sender* of European solidarity: **transnational solidarity**. Thus, in this dissertation, *transnational solidarity* comprises all forms of solidarity that are manifested in the preferences and actions of EU citizens towards other EU member states and/or their

populations. Both individual politicians and voters alike fall into this micro level approach of transnational solidarity since in both cases individual preferences for solidarity are at the forefront of interest. If, however, the collective interests of individuals in the form of, for instance, political parties or trade unions are analyzed, this is covered by the meso level approach and does not depict transnational solidarity.

c. Crises as catalysts for solidarity

In the same way solidarity is an ambiguous term, and concepts and measurements vary to a great extent, this is also the case with regard to the second relevant concept studied in this dissertation: crisis. Even though, the topic of crisis gained attention in the field of political science talking about “crisis of democracy” or “crisis of political legitimacy” (see for instance Merkel 2014; 2018; Zimmermann 1979), the term has so far only been insufficiently defined: “Particularly the question of when a crisis begins and when it ends remains unresolved. The dividing lines between a normal state of affairs and crisis are not specified” (Merkel 2018: 12).

The term “crisis” has its origins in Greek language where it was used as a synonym for judgment and today means something like instability or turning point (Merkel 2014: 17; Weiffen 2018). Over the years, the word crisis turned into a popular “catch-phrase” (Merkel 2014: 17). A crisis is “dramatic; it is newsworthy” (Heath 2010: 1) and referring to democratic theory, it can either emerge in the form of a longer-lasting transition process, a so-called latent crisis, or in the shape of a more urgent situation of danger, an acute crisis (Merkel 2014; 2018). Crises can take various shapes and are often used as a generic term for dramatic events of all kind:

“Crisis is an ‘umbrella’, under which resides a multitude of terms such as accidents, emergencies, fiascos, disasters, and catastrophes, as well as variations such as natural disasters, transboundary crises, and mega-crises. Yet the sheer diversity and frequent ambiguity among terms reflects the ‘politics’ of how societies and political actors seek to cope with and address extreme events, which often pose a mixture of threat and opportunity” (McConnell 2020: 1).

The socio-political consequences resulting from crises are not always clearly predictable and by no means always harmful. A crisis may on the one hand shake a society to its foundations and on the other hand might also bring about unforeseen opportunities for change (McConnell 2020: 2; Merkel 2018: 14). In a crisis situation, societal actors otherwise known to take opposing positions sometimes fight together for a unifying course (McConnell 2020: 9). In other words, crises can serve as natural catalysts for solidarity-based actions (Hatje 2015: 84;

Kneip et al. 2018: 1). Some even go so far as to say that the stability of a political system can only be tested in times of crisis (Svensson 1986: 137), whereas still others name crisis as a necessary though not sufficient condition for the emergence of solidarity (Koos 2019). To that end, the nature of a crisis plays a decisive role, depending on whether a crisis is home-made or has a natural origin, it has a significant impact on the perceived merit of solidarity (Koos 2019: 636). Such diametric effects resulting from crises on solidarity can also be observed in the context of the EU. The next section further elaborates on this aspect. To be more precise, the effects of two major crises on transnational solidarity within the recent history of the EU are discussed.

3. The last decade's European crises and transnational solidarity

“I have always believed that Europe would be built through crises, and that it would be the sum of their solutions”

(Monnet 1978: 417).

In 1978, Jean Monnet, one of the founding fathers of European integration, foresaw that the EU will grow closer together and be strengthened, especially in times of crises. Despite the numerous references and the use of the term solidarity in existing EU treaties and political speeches, many of the demands made so far remained in a dead space. What the Union's commitment to mutual solidarity really means, first became apparent over the outbreak of the European Sovereign Debt Crisis. Rarely ever before had the issue of European solidarity received so much attention and triggered such controversial discussions as during this time (Hatje 2015: 74).

Over the last decade, the EU has been plagued by numerous socio-political crises, the so-called polycrisis (Zeitlin et al. 2019). The collapse of the US Bank Lehman Brothers in September 2008, from which the global financial crisis developed, shook the European community. Emerging from this financial crisis, since 2010 the EU has been in a sort of permanent crisis mode: starting with the onset of the European Sovereign Debt Crisis in 2010, followed by the arrival of millions of refugees to the EU (climax in 2015/2016), the Brexit decision (June 2016) up to the current COVID-19 pandemic (from March 2020 onwards). As a result, the topic of EU integration returned to the political and social agenda (Mudde 2012: 200). Although it seems that these crises were mainly negative for the EU and its member states, it turned out that they have indeed represented both a challenge and a catalyst for the integration process and European solidarity (Koos 2019: 629; van Hoyweghen et al. 2020).

In this short review on the relationship between crises and solidarity in the EU context, I limit myself to the development of transnational solidarity during a) the European Sovereign Debt Crisis, and b) the period of increasing numbers of incoming asylum seekers, as these exceptional crisis situations directly affected (and still affect) large parts of the EU population. Moreover, the socio-political consequences of these two crises are already largely visible, whereas this cannot be conclusively assessed in terms of, for instance, the COVID-19 pandemic.

a. Transnational solidarity in times of the European Sovereign Debt Crisis

In a currency union, states are dependent upon each other and therefore share certain risks. In some situations, the problems of other member states must be balanced out, as otherwise there is a risk that crises will spread across the community (Schelkle 2017: 7-8). During the years of the European Sovereign Debt Crisis, a joint response to the crisis at the level of Eurozone and EU members proved to be difficult. Due to the diversity of states, there were many different approaches to managing the crisis, and opinions on solidarity measures differed greatly in some cases. The Debt Crisis revealed the weaknesses of the EU's social dimension and demonstrated the inadequacy of its current design for balancing state and market, but also national and EU governance (Ferrera 2014: 223).

As a political response to the crisis, for the very first time in history the EU introduced redistributive policies among its member states to defeat a common adversary. This attempt was described by many as an act of solidarity (Maillo and Corti 2015; Pantazatou 2015; Schelkle 2017; Stjernø 2011). In this case, solidarity equates with redistribution and was not altruistically motivated (Pantazatou 2015). The Sovereign Debt Crisis has created a new dimension of cross-border solidarity. Through the implementation of the European Stability Mechanism, EU member states and their people became a community of destiny. In fact, this was not only because individual states accepted high financial risks, but also because citizens in crisis-stricken states were willing to modify their lifestyles in return (Hatje 2015: 78; Stjernø 2011: 172-173).

The rigorous conditionalities linked to the allocation of financial aid attributed another characteristic to the concept of solidarity, namely that of reciprocal arrangement (Pantazatou 2015: 64). Therefore, the principle of solidarity applied also created obligations for the beneficiary, laid down in the form of conditions for crisis-stricken member states (Eriksen 2017; Hatje 2015: 80-81). The conditions were introduced due to reasons of diversity between EU member states as well as low levels of "common demos and ethos" (Pantazatou 2015: 70).

Solidarity requires trust from all parties involved that the respective other side will behave reciprocally in the future, but the already low level of trust within the EU was further weakened over the course of the crisis (Habermas 2014a: 87).

However, there was by no means a consensus among all parties involved that this crisis aid was actually about solidarity. Debates arose as to whether this type of conditional assistance can even be called solidarity, as it demands a great deal from crisis-ridden states and their populations. Conditional forms of solidarity are compatible with the Christian democratic and liberal traditions of solidarity but contradict the socialist and social democratic solidarity paradigms. Following the Christian democratic as well as the liberal line, there should be a balance between experienced assistance and personal commitment in any act of solidarity (Stjernø 2011: 173). Thus, the actual existence of solidarity during the European Sovereign Debt Crisis and its applied crisis management were highly contested. Resulting from the Sovereign Debt Crisis and policies implemented at that time, some people even started calling for completely rethinking EU solidarity policies (for instance Habermas 2013).

Introduced solidarity policies require that citizens in all EU states consider the conditions of distributive solidarity to be fair. Otherwise, politically approved solidarity measures on the European level fail due to problems of getting policies accepted at home (Kleger and Mehlhausen 2013: 66). *So what do we know about the socio-political consequences of the solidarity policies implemented in the wake of the European Sovereign Debt Crisis?*

On the one hand and focusing on solidarity within countries, so-called “self-help groups” committed to the goal of making life a little easier for the people in crisis enjoyed popularity and were increasingly active. This was particularly noticeable within crisis-affected states (Sotiropoulo and Bourikos 2014; Zamponi and Bosi 2018). For the Greek case “the economic crisis has functioned as a catalyst which has revitalized Greek civil society, particularly with regard to social solidarity, and has allowed new informal types of civic-minded activity to emerge” (Sotiropoulo and Bourikos 2014: 53). When it comes to transnational solidarity, public backing in the EU population for monetary crisis assistance was higher than generally assumed. According to diverse public opinion surveys conducted during the years of the debt crisis, the majority of respondents agreed on providing monetary assistance for fellow EU states facing financial and economic difficulties (among others Ferrera and Burelli 2019; Gerhards et al. 2019).

On the other hand, the implemented “solidarity-deal” between so-called debtor, bailout receiving, and creditor, bailout granting, states of the European Sovereign Debt Crisis

increased negative tensions within and between EU societies. With regard to the micro and meso level, calls for more solidarity to soften the social consequences of the crisis arose accompanied by massive protests against the implemented austerity policies (Closa and Maatsch 2014; Ferrera 2017: 6-7). Moreover, Eurosceptic forces gained power in both creditor and debtor states. In terms of relations across countries, new tension lines between net payers and beneficiaries of cross-country transfers emerged, like for instance between Germany and Greece (Ferrera 2014: 222-223; Ferrera 2017: 6-7; Jones 2012: 61).

b. Transnational solidarity in times of increasing numbers of asylum seekers

In view of the so-called “refugee or migration crisis”⁷ occurring immediately after the peak of the Sovereign Debt Crisis, distribution conflicts between the EU states once again broke out. While the countries on the southern external borders of the EU recorded a sharp increase in migration figures since 2015, this increase was much less noticeable in other states. The Dublin Regulation⁸ states that every asylum seeker must apply for asylum in the EU country he or she first arrives in (European Commission 2020b). Thus, the strain of increasing numbers of asylum seekers shifts to the shoulders of the countries at the EU’s external borders. In response to this, some member states such as Germany or Sweden, as an act of solidarity towards the refugees as well as the EU partners, opened their borders to asylum seekers in order to spread the burden of the Dublin Regulation more fairly (Steinvorth 2017: 12-13). However, not all EU countries followed this example: there were also contrary movements of national isolation, like we have seen for numerous Eastern European states (Estevens 2018; Postelnicescu 2016; Zaun 2018). As a consequence, instead of introducing a quota system to fairly redistribute the incoming refugees, compensatory payments between countries were introduced to relieve the financial stress placed on host countries (European Commission 2020a). This incapacity to achieve an EU-wide quota system for the distribution of refugees can be interpreted as an overall lack of European solidarity (Gerhards et al. 2019: 16-17). However, it should also be kept in mind that the reactions and attitudes of citizens and politicians in this second major crisis of the past decade may have been significantly influenced by the Sovereign Debt Crisis and its management. For example, if some actors did not agree with the solutions found during this previous crisis or even felt abandoned, this could have justified their reluctance to help during this second critical situation within a short period of time (Wallaschek 2018: 419).

⁷ Following the example of Mudde (2019), I use the terms “refugee or migration crisis” only in quotation marks, since the choice of the terms was a political decision and not an objective reality.

⁸ For more information on the Dublin Regulation see https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/examination-of-applicants_en.

Here too, the social and political consequences of the crisis and the adopted solidarity measures were felt within the EU citizenry. On the one hand, all kinds of solidarity actions originated during the years of a sharp increase in refugee numbers from helping refugees, over solidarity trade networks up to donations for people in need (Koos 2019: 630; for an overview see also Vandevordt and Verschraegen 2019). Moreover, the majority of citizens in most, but not all, EU member states would have supported the introduction of a refugee quota system (Gerhards et al. 2019: 209). On the other hand, once again, Eurosceptic parties, especially right-wing parties, experienced great support due to high migration figures, both locally and nationally (Dinas et al. 2019; Nicoli and Reinl 2020; Vasilakis 2018).

In summary, despite resistance within and across EU population(s) as well as in the ranks of political elites, EU solidarity has gained momentum over the past decade. Today, some ten years after the outbreak of the Sovereign Debt Crisis, there are comparatively more institutionalized solidarity mechanisms than before 2010, and the current COVID-19 pandemic is making another major contribution to this policy change. Even though solidarity measures have typically taken a long time to be implemented, were conditional, and of limited scope, one can nevertheless say that the EU has experienced a surge of solidarity over the previous years (Maillo and Corti 2015: E-IV). To that end, last decade's crises proved to be real catalysts for the progress of European solidarity policies.

The current state of research on solidarity focusing on the EU in times of crisis already offers insights into the behavior and preferences of EU citizens. The empirical studies of my dissertation build on the preliminary work in the research area and address hitherto unexplored conceptualizations of transnational solidarity as well as hidden state and stakeholder perspectives taken during recent crises. *Is transnational solidarity comparable across national borders? And what effects do individual attitudes and national contexts have on voters' and politicians' support for transnational solidarity?* The next section of this introductory framework provides answers to the proposed research questions.

4. Empirical Studies

I do now turn from this first definitional part of the introductory section to my empirical studies, which constitute the centerpiece of my dissertation. I give a brief literature review on already published studies on transnational solidarity in the EU, thus exposing the research gaps my work contributes to. Afterwards, I summarize my studies' research designs as well as their main findings and provide additional information not mentioned in the respective articles.

a. Targeted research gaps

Over the last decade and with the emergence of the European polycrisis (Zeitlin et al. 2019), solidarity has become a popular research topic. Based on publications listed in the database Scopus, Wallaschek (2019a: 17) shows that research mentioning the term solidarity in the title has increased considerably from 2005 onwards and this trend continued until the endpoint of his investigation period in 2018. The topic of solidarity in the EU context has recently been tackled from various angles and by the application of a variety of research and analysis methods. Studies look at European solidarity at the level of states (Ferrera 2014; Frieden and Walter 2019; Langford 2013; Târlea et al. 2019), the media discourse (Wallaschek 2020a; Wallaschek 2020b), parliamentary debates (Closa and Maatsch 2014; Hobbach 2019), party manifestos (Thijssen and Verheyen 2020) or from the perspective of civic organizations (Crepaz 2018; Sotiropoulo and Bourikos 2014). Notwithstanding these laudable and important research approaches, I will refrain from further commenting on them and will stick to the research focus of my dissertation. In the following, I provide an overview on studies researching transnational solidarity, in other words on studies that concentrate either on solidarity preferences or actions of individuals towards fellow EU states and citizens. In addition, I limit myself to studies that have a crisis reference.

As already mentioned, the topic of European solidarity has gained prominence in public debates and scientific research with the onset of the European Sovereign Debt Crisis in 2010. Most of these studies remain at the level of “ordinary citizens” and examine people’s willingness to show solidarity from the perspective of creditor states. To put it differently, numerous studies analyze public opinion via survey data where respondents are asked whether they would actually be willing to grant financial assistance for fellow EU states in an economic or financial crisis. In this respect, former publications either refer to individual countries (Bechtel et al. 2014; Lengfeld and Kroh 2016) or apply a comparative research design (Gerhards et al. 2019; Lahusen and Grasso 2018). Furthermore, transnational solidarity is considered as an independent (Hobolt and de Vries 2016; Reinl 2020; Reinl et al. 2020a; 2020b) as well as a dependent variable (Kuhn et al. 2018; Vasilopoulou and Talving 2020; Verhaegen 2018), with the latter studies drawing on explanatory factors at the micro and macro level (Ciornei and Recchi 2017; Kuhn et al. 2018; Vasilopoulou and Talving 2020; Verhaegen 2018). Findings on micro level impact factors show that citizens are keener to favor transnational solidarity policies when they are more left-wing on the socio-economic dimension (Díez Medrano et al. 2019; Meuleman et al. 2020), are favorable towards welfare state principles (Baute et al. 2019b), are cosmopolitans (Bechtel et al. 2014; Díez Medrano et

al. 2019; Kleider and Stoeckel 2019; Kuhn et al. 2018) and show a strong European identity or support for European integration (Baute et al. 2019a; Ciornei and Recchi 2017; Díez Medrano et al. 2019; Kuhn and Kamm 2019; Verhaegen 2018). What is more, solidarity payments are more popular in cases where they are directed towards people in a citizen's own country compared to other EU regions or countries outside the EU (Gerhards et al. 2019; Kuhn and Kamm 2019; Lahusen and Grasso 2018). With regard to the macro level the national economic performance (Kuhn et al. 2018; Vasilopoulou and Talving 2020) as well as the national welfare regime (Ciornei and Recchi 2017) proved their relevance for citizens' backing for EU-wide solidarity measures.

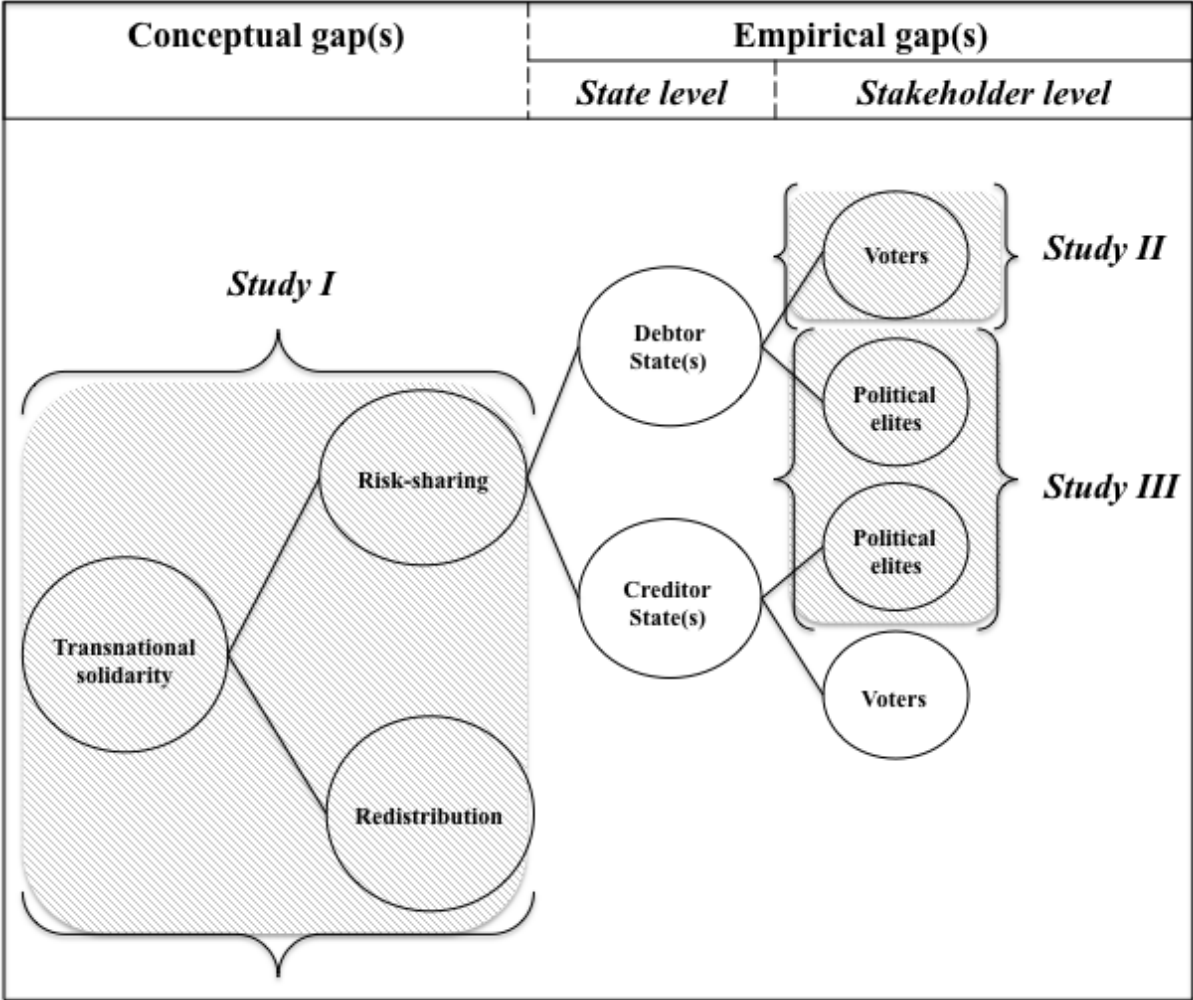
Moving on to the next major crisis, in the years 2015 and 2016 over 2.5 million refugees entered the EU (Eurostat 2020a). Most of the literature on solidarity during "the long summer of migration" (see for instance della Porta 2018) either analyzes solidarity from the angle of burden-sharing across EU states at the macro (state) level (Langford 2013; Zaun 2018), sticks to the research field of civic engagement (Crepaz 2018; della Porta 2018) or investigates media discourse (Wallaschek 2020a). Concerning transnational solidarity in this period, recently published studies demonstrate that citizens tend to be more in favor of EU-wide migration policies when they live in countries with a high share of illegal immigrants and asylum applicants (Basile and Olmastroni 2020; Gerhards et al. 2019; Lahusen and Grasso 2018) and have positive attitudes towards migrants (Basile and Olmastroni 2020; Gerhards et al. 2019). Moreover, burden-sharing supporters evaluate their country's EU membership positively, position themselves in the political left spectrum and are pro redistribution policies (Basile and Olmastroni 2020; Gerhards et al. 2019). Furthermore, the correlations found are moderated by public concerns towards migration as well as the overestimation of migration numbers (Basile and Olmastroni 2020).

Two other crisis situations, far less often associated with solidarity, are solidarity during the Brexit crisis (Baglioni et al. 2019) as well as the climate crisis (Knodt and Tewes 2017; Tosun 2014). Due to the (so far) limited practical and policy impact of these crises on the majority of the EU population, I will refrain from further discussing the studies dealing with these crises in greater detail. Instead, their existence is only mentioned here for the sake of completeness. In addition to the examination of solidarity in individual crisis scenarios, comparisons are made when it comes to citizens' transnational solidarity in diverse crisis events differentiating between solidarity preferences under a variety of circumstances (Díez Medrano et al. 2019; Genschel and Hemerijck 2018; Reinl 2020; Reinl et al. 2020a; 2020b). On top of that, more recent studies using original conjoint experiments investigate citizens' preferences for diverse

features of a European unemployment insurance scheme (Kuhn et al. 2020a; 2020b; Nicoli et al. 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic represents the latest EU crisis and even though the crisis just broke out in March 2020 (somewhat earlier in Italy), some literature is already published on public support for transnational solidarity in this time period. Findings demonstrate that the willingness to show transnational solidarity in a pandemic situation is higher compared to most other crisis scenarios (like in a hypothetical economic crisis or when a high number of migrants enters a country) (Bremer and Genschel 2020; Bremer et al. 2020). Moreover, people favor medical over financial solidarity across borders. If citizens, however, support financial crisis aid, help is more likely conditional and dependent upon the past fiscal and health policies of the injured countries as well as on the type and costs of the proposed solidarity measures (Koos and Leuffen 2020).

As this brief literature review reveals, transnational solidarity is an intensively studied concept in academic research. Nevertheless, the field of research still discloses some literature gaps, which so far remain unexplored. The empirical studies of my dissertation tackle at least four of them, which are based on different conceptual, state, and stakeholder levels.

Figure 2: Anticipated research gaps



Source: Own presentation.

Figure 2 graphically presents a part of the current research field of transnational solidarity at the EU level. The grey shaded areas mark the research fields in which my empirical studies are located and highlight the research gaps my work is contributing to. The upper section of the graph indicates the research gap(s) where the studies operate, whether the work is mainly conceptual or empirical and from which empirical state and actor perspectives the papers proceed. For the description of the graphic, I will work my way from the left- to the right-hand side.

Starting with the first study of my dissertation (**study I**), shown on the far left in the figure, the study reveals a comprehensive concept of transnational solidarity. A fine-grained study of transnational solidarity is of scientific relevance as it serves the transparency of its operationalization and thus sharpens the latent concept otherwise not directly measurable. Various manifestations of transnational solidarity are to be reconciled and, if possible, a concept of the latent construct is to be worked out that is applicable across EU states. Previous

studies on the theoretical concept of transnational solidarity or on related concepts like Social Europe have already investigated the constructs in depth, but only a handful of them have empirically engaged with its manifold dimensions. Exceptions to this depict the studies of Kankaraš and Moors (2009) as well as of Baute and colleagues (2018; 2019a; 2019b). These studies investigate the latent concepts of transnational solidarity and preferences for Social Europe via public opinion survey data running factor analyses and structural equation modelling. What separates my work from these previous approaches is the carried out two-dimensional distinction between risk-sharing and redistribution, which has previously been applied mainly in national welfare state research (among others Vandenbroucke 2020) and is now transferred to the EU level. To that end, my first study targets two research gaps in the literature. On the one hand, it applies a concept developed in the area of national welfare state literature to the EU level and, on the other hand, it tests for the comparability of this conceptual understanding of transnational solidarity across EU countries. Therefore, the study also contains an empirical element and carries out statistical analyses to test the theoretically derived concept. However, the analyses do not distinguish between state and stakeholder levels taken by the surveyed individuals.

Following this first empirical study supporting the comparability of transnational solidarity across EU borders, the other two papers draw on this basis and focus on the identified risk-sharing dimension introduced in **study I**. Even though **study II and III** do not explicitly address this classification and the verification of the two-dimensional concept of transnational solidarity is left to my first empirical study, the graphical integration of my remaining studies in the expected risk-sharing dimension serves to emphasize the complementary character of my work. **Study II and III** both conquer the risk-sharing dimension of transnational solidarity in the context of the European Sovereign Debt Crisis. The second presented theoretical dimension of transnational solidarity, that of redistribution, has already been examined in earlier studies on the topic (among others Gerhards et al. 2016; Gerhards et al. 2019) and will not be pursued any further in the present work accordingly.

What distinguishes the remaining two empirical studies (**study II** and **study III**) are the state as well as the stakeholder perspectives adopted at the empirical level. Following the outbreak of the European Sovereign Debt Crisis, a large number of studies has been published examining transnational solidarity at that time. Nonetheless, two perspectives of risk-sharing fall short on the individual-level and leave unexplored research fields of transnational solidarity.

As indicated in the literature review above, the perspective of voters in EU creditor countries during the European Sovereign Debt Crisis has already been sufficiently covered. However, apart from Walter et al. (2018), little attention has so far been paid to the perspective of voters in crisis-ridden countries during the European Sovereign Debt Crisis. During this time, intergovernmental financial aid was always linked to austerity policies and strict bailout conditions. Against this background I ask: *What role does the population in these countries play when we talk about the implementation of crisis bailout packages? Under which conditions are citizens living in debtor states actually willing to support austerity measures in return for monetary assistance?* These questions are addressed in the second empirical study (**study II**) of my dissertation using Greece (2015) as a case in point.

The third study (**study III**) looks at the concept of transnational solidarity on behalf of political elites. This has already been done for the event of a strong increase in incoming migrants (Basile and Olmastroni 2020), however, so far ignoring economic crisis scenarios. To that end, **study III** analyzes under which circumstances candidates running for office in a variety of EU states would agree on providing financial aid to other EU member states in times of an economic crisis. In comparison to the second empirical study of my dissertation, the focus of this paper thus shifts from the perspective of voters to politicians running for office as well as from indebted states to the perspective of both state groups.

In sum, my dissertation contributes to (at least) four understudied gaps in the literature:

- 1) *It tests for the existence of a theoretically derived model of transnational solidarity usually applied in the literature on national welfare states.*
- 2) *It examines whether this concept of transnational solidarity is comparable across EU states.*
- 3) *It provides insights on citizens' preferences for the implementation of austerity measures in return for bailout packages in crisis-ridden states.*
- 4) *It illuminates the perspective of politicians on financial assistance for fellow EU states in an economic crisis.*

b. Summaries

I will now briefly summarize each empirical study included in my dissertation before moving on to a joint discussion of the results afterwards. Table 1 gives an overview of the three articles.

Table 1: Overview empirical studies

| | Study I | Study II | Study III |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Title | <i>Transnational Solidarity within the EU - Public Support for (Short-term) Risk-sharing and (Permanent) Redistribution</i> | <i>Public Support for the European Solidarity Deal in EU Debtor States: The Case of Greece</i> | <i>Transnational Solidarity Among Political Elites: What Determines Support for Financial Redistribution within the EU in Times of Crisis?</i> |
| Research question | 1) Can the theoretically proposed two-dimensional structure of transnational solidarity be found in the countries considered? 2) Is the concept comparable across EU countries? | Under which conditions are citizens living in EU debtor countries willing to accept austerity measures as their country's part of the solidarity deal? | Are political elites guided by their attitudes towards socio-economic issues and the EU when developing preferences for transnational solidarity? Which role do contextual factors play for these relationships? |
| Dependent variable | No dependent and independent variables but indicators measuring latent dimensions (factors): Risk-sharing dimension: Support for financial assistance during... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ...national bankruptcy - ...increase in incoming migrants - ...natural disaster | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voting decision in the 2015 Greek bailout referendum | Consisting of two items measuring support for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU assistance for Eurozone states facing financial hardship - EU/ IMF provision of funds for economic growth |
| Main independent variables | Redistribution dimension: Support for... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU aim: solidarity between countries - Reduce disparities between countries - European welfare system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prospective evaluation of the national economic situation (next 12 month) - Attitude towards EU membership - Left-right positioning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attitudes on socio-economic issues (three items) - Attitudes on EU issues (two items) - Ascribed national responsibility (two items) - Economic misery index |
| Main data source | AUNTES online panel (Aichholzer et al. 2020), GESIS Panel (GESIS 2020), Solidarity and Populism survey (Katsanidou and Reintl 2020) | Collective Action of Indignant citizens in Greece (Marantzidis 2017) | Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS 2020), 2014 European Election Candidate Study (GLES 2017) |
| Main findings | The populations of the countries have the same idea of the two-dimensional concept of transnational solidarity, although the degree of willingness to show solidarity varies from one country to another. | The introduction of the conditional bailout package is more likely to be supported by citizens who are right-wing, have a positive attitude towards EU membership and are pessimistic about their country's economic future. | Transnational solidarity is more common among left-wing and pro-EU politicians. These effects are dependent on the responsibility ascribed to the debtor side and the national economy. |
| Authorship | Single-authored | Co-authored (with Alexia Katsanidou) | Co-authored (with Heiko Giebler) |
| Own contribution | | Joint work on the research design, the introduction, the theoretical argument and the discussion. Own composition of the literature review and the empirical analyses. | Joint work on the research design, the introduction, the theoretical argument and the discussion. Own conduction of the literature review. |
| Status | <i>Under review,</i> <i>Journal of European Social Policy</i> | <i>Under second review</i> <i>(after revise and resubmit),</i> <i>Journal of European Integration</i> | <i>Under review,</i> <i>European Political Science Review</i> |

Study I entitled *Transnational Solidarity within the EU - Public Support for (Short-term) Risk-sharing and (Permanent) Redistribution* addresses the first two research gaps mentioned above and explores whether a two-dimensional concept of solidarity derived from the literature on national welfare states can be transferred to the EU level. Additionally, it investigates whether this concept of transnational solidarity is comparable across the EU states studied. To that end, the single-authored paper runs multi-group confirmatory factor analysis in MPLUS. The existence of a two-dimensional model of transnational solidarity is examined with three indicators being used to measure each of the dimensions. The first dimension of (short-term) risk-sharing investigates citizens' preferences for crisis-related financial assistance for fellow EU states. To be more precise, the three indicators operationalizing this first dimension analyze support for financial assistance in times of a) a national bankruptcy b) an increase of incoming migrants c) a natural disaster. The second dimension corresponds to public backing for (permanent) redistribution and is measured via indicators on a) solidarity as an EU objective b) redistribution between EU countries from rich to poor and c) the establishment of a European welfare state. To my knowledge there is no publicly accessible survey data on transnational solidarity including all relevant aspects as well as encompassing all EU states. For this reason, I used data I collected in partnership with Alexia Katsanidou and Christina Eder in three EU countries within the framework of the BMBF-funded collaborative research project Solikris⁹. The optimal scenario would have been to collect data in all EU countries, but I had to renounce this objective due to financial constraints. Therefore, I chose countries representing different levels of crisis exposure during the major EU crises of the last decade. The three selected countries depict so-called extreme cases in terms of their experienced crises intensities. In Germany, the designed questionnaire was fed into the GESIS panel¹⁰ wave "gc" run in June/August 2019 (GESIS 2020). A similar strategy was adopted for the Austrian data collection and the questionnaire received a place in the AUTNES online panel study¹¹ wave "13" of January 2020 (Aichholzer et al. 2020). The third country analyzed is Greece. Through a successful project application for funding¹² from the *Leibniz Research Alliance 'Crises in a Globalised World'*¹³ a telephone survey was financed and fielded in June 2019. The collected survey data entitled "Solidarity and

⁹ Solikris is the abbreviation for *Change through Crisis? Solidarity and Desolidarization in Germany and Europe*. For more information on the research project see <https://www.gesis.org/en/projekte/solikris/home>.

¹⁰ For more information on the GESIS Panel see <https://www.gesis.org/gesis-panel/gesis-panel-home/>.

¹¹ For more information on the AUTNES study see <https://autnes.at>.

¹² Application for funding together with Alexia Katsanidou.

¹³ For more information on the research alliance see <https://www.leibniz-krisen.de/en.html>.

Populism: A data collection project” is archived in the GESIS SowiDataNet|datorium (Katsanidou and Reinl 2020)¹⁴.

The results of the empirical analyses show that, despite different degrees of willingness in the countries to show solidarity towards one another, there exists a comparable understanding of transnational solidarity across borders. This insight is not only interesting in retrospect to earlier crises in the EU but is also of immense relevance for the continued existence of the community and the future shape of EU solidarity. The paper is currently under review at the *Journal of European Social Policy*.

Study II named *Public Support for the European Solidarity Deal in EU Debtor States: The Case of Greece* contributes to the third research gap addressed in my work by examining under which circumstances citizens living in indebted EU countries are willing to implement austerity measures in return for financial bailout provided by the EU and fellow member states. The paper starts with a passage about solidarity in the EU and the implemented solidarity deal, which was negotiated between the two sides of creditor and debtor states in the wake of the European Sovereign Debt Crisis. It takes the perspective of the indebted parties and for the first time, sheds light on their point of view under the imprint of transnational solidarity. To that end, Greece is analyzed as a case in point using data provided by the “Collective Action of Indignant Citizens in Greece” project (Marantzidis 2017)¹⁵. Logistic regression analysis is carried out, with the dependent variable representing the election decision in the July 2015 bailout referendum. In this referendum the Greek electorate was asked to vote for or against a creditor rescue package coming along with harsh austerity measures. As main independent variables the economic left-right self-placement, the evaluation of EU membership, as well as personal assessment of the future economic situation in the country are included in the regression analysis. The results of the statistical analysis show that the introduction of the proposed rescue package receives more support amongst people who are economically more right-wing (pro-market oriented), when the country’s EU membership is considered to be positive and Greece’s economic future is assessed negatively. In other words, when people were concerned about Greece’s economic prospects, they were more willing to accept the claims of international creditors. The insights gained from this study help to track public opinion in EU states desperately calling for financial solidarity in times of crisis. They enable a better understanding of political attitudes and voting behavior in crisis-stricken states and provide the opportunity for politicians to take citizens’ thoughts and

¹⁴ For more information on the database see <https://data.gesis.org/sharing/#!Detail/10.7802/2075>.

¹⁵ For more information on the database see <https://data.gesis.org/sharing/#!Detail/10.7802/1529>.

considerations into account in future crisis scenarios, especially when it comes to communication about bailout packages and retrenchment policies to be implemented.

This second empirical study is co-authored by Alexia Katsanidou. We have prepared the main parts of the paper together and drafted it in consultation with each other. Besides the joint work on the research design, introduction, theoretical argument and discussion, I carried out the empirical analysis and composed the literature review whereas my co-author mainly took care of describing the case study. The paper is currently in the second round of the review process (after revise and resubmit) at the *Journal of European Integration*.

Study III adds to the fourth and therefore last research gap identified above. It carries the title *Transnational Solidarity Among Political Elites: What Determines Support for Financial Redistribution within the EU in Times of Crisis?* and explores attitudes towards financial assistance for fellow EU states in a financial crisis scenario. This time the focus changes from the perspective of voters to the perspective of politicians running for office. Previous research either stuck to public opinion data on the level of voters or analyzed parliamentary debates to gain insights on political elites. To that end, this third empirical study represents a first attempt to unite earlier research on voters and political parties. It tests whether findings ascertained from the level of voters can also be applied to politicians. The dependent variable consists of two components measuring support for different aspects of financial aid during the recent economic crisis. The independent variables are derived from public opinion research and include socio-economic and EU questions. It is expected that these direct effects are moderated by the economic situation in politicians' home countries, as well as who is perceived as being responsible for the financial crisis. The empirical data is taken from the Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS 2020) and the 2014 European Election Candidate Study (GLES 2017), thus considering politicians running for seats in European and national elections. The database includes candidates from nine EU member countries representing both creditor and debtor states of the European Sovereign Debt Crisis. The empirical findings depict that transnational solidarity is more common among left-wing, meaning pro-state intervention in the economy, and pro-EU politicians. What is more, these effects are dependent on the responsibility for the crisis ascribed to the debtor side and the performance of the own national economy.

This third paper is co-authored by Heiko Giebler. Both authors jointly worked on the study's research design, the introduction, the theoretical argument as well as the discussion. Moreover, I conducted the literature review of the study while my co-author mainly worked

on the statistical analysis. The paper is currently under review at the journal *European Political Science Review*.

5. Discussion and concluding remarks

The insights gained from my dissertation are enriching for the discourse on the topic of transnational solidarity in many ways. They advance scientific research in the academia, and provide important strategic insights for political elites. Previously unexplored angles on transnational solidarity are analyzed from several perspectives, thus contributing to a deeper and more exhaustive understanding of transnational solidarity in the EU context.

The findings of **study I** uncover that the concept of transnational solidarity indeed follows a comparable logic similar to the one applied within national welfare state research. The implemented two-dimensional concept distinguishes between a crisis-related risk-sharing dimension and a dimension aiming at more permanent redistribution within the EU. Moreover, the concept is comparable across countries. However, it would be a false deduction to conclude that citizens in all EU countries are in fact equally willing to show transnational solidarity. *Hence, which contributions can be expected from the acquired knowledge?* The basis of any discussion is the mutual understanding of applied theoretical concepts. Otherwise, the parties involved will talk at cross purposes, which might trigger feelings of misunderstanding. To that end, a mutual conceptualization of transnational solidarity will likewise strengthen the dialogue within the EU citizenry, as well as between voters and political elites. The future of the EU must be shaped together, and for this, common understandings of fundamental ideas are a necessary first step. Since the studied countries are so-called extreme cases of past crises, it remains to be conclusively examined whether the findings can also be transferred to other EU states, especially if a Nordic country with a strong welfare state or an Eastern European country with a shorter period of EU membership are included in the analysis.

Based on the assumption that the understanding of transnational solidarity is comparable across countries, the other two studies integrated in my dissertation refer to its risk-sharing dimension. Whereas the first empirical study of this dissertation examines societies in times of crises, the other two studies have a more direct crisis reference and relate to the European Sovereign Debt Crisis. The remaining studies (**study II** and **study III**) reveal that solidarity at the EU level during the Sovereign Debt Crisis was a two-sided coin. On the one side there were the crisis-struck states, so-called debtor states, and their citizens, demanding aid from the EU community and more solvent fellow states. On the other side so-called creditor-states

and their citizens had to make up their minds whether to financially support their fellow states in crisis and if so, under what conditions.

The two studies show that both voters and political elites seem to follow similar considerations when deciding for or against the support of proposed EU solidarity policies. Whereas the second empirical study (**study II**) discloses this for voters in an EU crisis state, namely Greece, the third study (**study III**) examines political elites in both creditor and debtor states of the European Sovereign Debt Crisis. It becomes clear that most EU citizens, despite diverse state and stakeholder levels, base their support for EU solidarity programs on their left-right self-placement, as well as on their attitudes towards European integration. Both studies show that citizens in favor of EU membership and further EU integration are more supportive towards the introduction of EU-wide solidarity mechanism. The main difference, however, is that voters in Greece are more likely to agree on the introduction of the proposed conditional bailout package if they are economically right-wing, whereas the other side of the coin, the granting of financial aid, is more likely to be approved by left-wing political elites. To that end, voters in indebted Greece support the introduction of austerity measures when they are pro-market oriented while politicians are willing to grant financial assistance in case they are in favor of more pronounced state interventions in the economy. What is more, the context in which the respondents are embedded also plays a decisive role. If respondents are pessimistic about their country's future economy (**study II**) or find their country currently in a poor financial situation (**study III**), this increases the support for proposed bailout policies. Another studied context factor is the attribution of blame. If blame attribution towards the indebted state is high, willingness to grant financial aid decreases among political elites (**study III**).

This means that to make a solidarity-deal between EU member states work all actors involved in democratic decision-making processes either need strong community feelings or a common goal, as for example overcoming an economic threat. Therefore, to enhance transnational solidarity it seems relevant to foster a positive image about the EU within the population and to provide both citizens and politicians with more information about actual crisis causes to a) enable them to take evidence-based decisions as well as b) prevent mutual prejudices and aversions. Following this strategy, the formation of a new societal cleavage between crisis' creditor and debtor states could be prevented. Even though it currently looks like such a cleavage might not occur in the short-run (Meuleman et al. 2020: 81-82), this is especially important in view of future crisis scenarios.

In addition, the observed similarities in the opinion-forming processes about transnational solidarity between voters and political elites from diverse countries are an overwhelmingly positive signal for political representation within the EU. If voters and their political representatives think in a similar way, the political communication between the levels can be noticeably improved and the future path of the EU can be shaped together in close cooperation between the responsible parties. Future research and political elites should always have the people of the EU in mind and listen to their worries, needs and ideas when the implementation of EU-wide solidarity programs is on the agenda. Only when the EU population supports solidarity measures these measures will be politically legitimized and can contribute to a successful and democratic community in many respects in the long run. Popular resistance can hardly justify the currently hesitant implementation of solidarity policies. Instead, a “silent majority” of citizens seems willing to intensify the solidarity ties between the EU and the Euro states (Ferrera and Burelli 2019: 105). Now, it is in the hands of the political elites to seize this opportunity, it is their task to take the first step into a more solidary future (Ferrera 2017: 18; Ferrera and Burelli 2019: 106). If, however, this discrepancy between citizens and political elites continues to be ignored, it could endanger the continued existence of the community (Habermas 2014b: 13).

Even though my empirical studies (**study II and study III**) repeatedly take up the problem of possible endogeneity between dependent and independent variables and counteract it with theoretically founded decisions and empirical tests, a reversed causality of the examined indicators cannot be completely excluded on the basis of cross-sectional data. Studies to come should try to expand research in the field of transnational solidarity, especially with regards to analyzed data types. In order to be able to look at longer-term patterns over time, panel data are needed to draw conclusions about causal relationships. This way would allow to actually examine under which conditions individuals are willing to show solidarity towards other EU member states and fellow citizens and to understand what conditions lead to an increase or decrease in this willingness (see also Wallaschek 2019b: 261-262). In addition, experimental research should be further developed to target a greater variety of aspects of transnational solidarity, thereby also advancing causal research in this respect. Finally, besides these quantitative approaches, the qualitative consideration of transnational solidarity needs to be promoted. Group discussions, for example, could be used to take up new aspects of transnational solidarity, which have not been discovered so far.

Furthermore and in addition to the future consideration of other data types, the findings of my dissertation offer further starting points for potential alleys of subsequent research. To give a

few examples at this point, for instance, two of my three empirical studies (**study II and study III**) have shown that EU support and transnational solidarity are closely linked. Regarding subsequent empirical studies, it should be examined whether there actually exists a latent construct spanning over preferences for transnational solidarity and EU attitudes. What is more, the approaches of my empirical studies should be transferred to other, future and past, crisis scenarios as well as to further member states of the community, which have not yet been covered in the analyses of my work. Such follow-up studies in different environments and at different points in time can serve to increase the robustness of my results and strengthen their generalizability.

To conclude the overall findings of my dissertation, crises are often seen and described as threatening for societies endangering the very existence of political communities. However, crises can also depict real chances for solidarity actions to grow and might serve as catalysts for hitherto existing solidarity policies (Hatje 2015: 84; Kneip et al. 2018: 1). This diametric relation between solidarity and crises can also be observed for the EU and its past decade's crisis experiences. Over the last ten years, the EU has been confronted more than ever with demands for varying levels of solidarity and is currently at a crossroad into an uncertain future. My dissertation entitled *transnational solidarity in times of crises* provides numerous so far unexplored insights into different groups of peoples' mindsets on transnational solidarity under the imprint of previous EU-wide crises. Deriving from that my findings also allow to make some initial assumptions about citizens' transnational solidarity in future crisis scenarios.

With the UK a rather Eurosceptic country exited the EU. Therefore, Britain's withdrawal from the community might represent both a setback as well as an opportunity for the EU to reorient itself and think about its future direction. Brexit could make it easier for the remaining member states to reach a consensus on planned solidarity policies and to consider solidarity more closely in the future integration process. To jointly fight the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic consequences, the biggest EU budget in history was adopted and a gigantic aid fund was set up (European Commission 2020d). Referring to the overall findings of my dissertation, the COVID-19 pandemic represents yet another crisis in the recent history of the EU, which features similarities to previous crises but is also clearly distinct from them. The results of my third empirical study (**study III**) point out that low levels of blame attribution increase transnational solidarity within the EU population. COVID-19 hit all EU countries without warning in March 2020 and confronts the EU with a more symmetric crisis exposure than experienced in previous times. This could lead to much weaker assignments of

guilt towards the crisis-stricken states. Consequently, we can already derive some initial ideas from the findings obtained in my doctoral thesis: the expression of transnational solidarity in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic should be more pronounced compared to previous crises. The question of whether my dissertation's findings can truly be transferred to the current crisis should, however, be examined in future studies.

Following this, the COVID-19 pandemic might constitute the biggest crisis for the EU since the end of the Second World War, but it may also represent the biggest opportunity so far for a more solidary union. Crisis management and future solidarity policies should not be discussed behind closed doors. Instead it is likewise up to the citizens of the EU to shape their future together. Citizens should have a decisive say in determining which path the former peace project EU should take, and no side should let this window of opportunity pass. As the findings of my dissertation demonstrate, neither the cross-border understanding of transnational solidarity nor the opinion-forming processes of citizens and political elites should prevent the collective creation of a more extensive solidarity community from happening.

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Appendix: Empirical studies

Study I

**Transnational Solidarity within the EU -
Public Support for (Short-term) Risk-sharing and (Permanent) Redistribution**

Single-authored paper

Under review at Journal of European Social Policy

Abstract

This paper analyzes citizens' preferences for EU-wide solidarity measures and aims to discover underlying, and as-yet hidden, distinctions in citizens' transnational solidarity. Building on literature on national welfare states, the paper's concept of transnational solidarity consists of two latent dimensions: First, public support for (short-term) risk-sharing among EU member states; and second, citizens' thoughts on (permanent) intra-EU redistribution. It is expected that all types of transnational solidarity examined in previous research can be ascribed to either one or the other dimension. To test this assumption empirically, I analyze data collected in Austria, Germany, and Greece in 2019/2020. The study runs multi-group confirmatory factor analysis to test whether the presented concept of transnational solidarity (a) holds and (b) is comparable between EU member states. The empirical analysis indicates that the outlined concept is indeed existent and comparable across the countries under analysis. This means, that the populations of the three countries share the same understanding of transnational solidarity even though the level of willingness to express solidarity with fellow EU member countries and citizens varies significantly between the states.

Keywords: Solidarity, Risk-sharing, Redistribution, European Union, Multi-group Confirmatory Factor Analysis, MPLUS

Introduction

Every community needs a certain degree of solidarity to exist (Ferrera, 2017: 15). The European Union (EU) is no exception to this and following a decade of crises, solidarity between EU member states has been demanded frequently, especially compared to non-crisis periods and to any other time period in the community's history. In view of the European Sovereign Debt Crisis¹⁶, EU member states and citizens were divided over the question of whether to provide financial assistance to fellow states suffering from monetary and economic difficulties. In addition, the EU faced a second continent-wide crisis, which partly overlapped the financial turbulences in time. In 2015 and 2016, more than 2.5 million refugees entered the EU. This so-called "migration crisis" represented a further test for the weakened union and for solidarity between its member states (Eurostat, 2020a). During both these crises, a gap between demand and supply of solidarity within the EU became apparent, where the demand side outweighed the supply side (Genschel and Hemerijck, 2018: 2).

Previous scholarly work has shown that, depending on the underlying concept of solidarity used in each study, one might receive divergent results regarding the level of public support for intra-EU solidarity. Whereas Lahusen and Grasso (2018) only find limited public backing for EU-wide solidarity actions, Gerhards and colleagues (2019) show that the majority of EU citizens is in favor of cross-country solidarity. Therefore, defining and operationalizing solidarity is key to understanding its EU-wide public support.

Preceding studies aiming at disentangling the concept of solidarity in the EU context empirically differentiated between public support for solidarity in various policy areas and crisis scenarios (Baute et al., 2018, 2019a, 2019b; Gerhards et al., 2019; Lahusen and Grasso, 2018). However, and despite these studies, we still lack an overarching concept of individual level EU solidarity, which prevents us from understanding how previous findings are interrelated.

This paper builds on national welfare state literature and tests for two underlying dimensions of European solidarity cross-cutting all previous classifications: risk-sharing provided for fellow EU member states in crisis and redistribution striving for a stronger embeddedness of solidarity in the overall European integration process. I assume risk-sharing to correspond to a short-term

¹⁶ By this term, I refer to the time period from 2010 onwards, when some member states of the European Union were not able to repay their government debt anymore.

crisis aid, whereas redistribution aims at a more permanent shift of resources.¹⁷ Moreover, I test whether and to what extent the two derived dimensions of solidarity speak to each other.

The article takes an individual-level perspective studying citizen's backing for EU-wide solidarity actions that is referred to as transnational solidarity. In addition, comparability between EU countries is often assumed but seldom tested (Kankaraš and Moors, 2009: 557). Since the EU is a union of countries that are heterogeneous in some respects, it is important to ensure that the concept studied is applicable across borders. For this purpose, I analyze survey data collected in Austria, Germany and Greece between June 2019 and January 2020, following the peaks of the European Sovereign Debt and the so-called "migration crises". Multi-group confirmatory factor analysis is performed in MPLUS in order to test whether the presented concept of transnational solidarity (a) holds and (b) is comparable between EU member states. The analysis reveals that the concept is indeed existent and comparable across the states under investigation. This implies, that citizens in the three countries share the same understanding of transnational solidarity even though the general willingness of showing solidarity towards fellow EU member countries and EU citizens varies significantly among the groups.

Transnational solidarity in the European Union

Solidarity is a fuzzy concept and therefore a clear demarcation is important to distinguish it from related ideas. Solidarity is not charity (Sangiovanni, 2018) and sometimes not even altruistically motivated (Stjernø, 2011). Instead, "[s]olidarity is costly. [...] Solidarity involves sharing in a real, material sense" (Genschel and Hemerijck, 2018: 2). Responsibility for one another (Lahusen, 2016: 8) and mutual dependence between individuals lie at the heart of every solidarity action (Sangiovanni, 2018: 17; Stjernø, 2011: 168-169). Thus, solidarity is not a one-way street. Instead, "[s]olidarity is symmetrical, reciprocal, and omnilateral not asymmetrical, non-reciprocal, and unilateral" (Sangiovanni, 2018: 24).

In the context of the EU, Lahusen (2016: 8) claims that "'European' solidarity is consequently any attitude and behaviour striving to help Europeans (be that residents or citizens) in struggle or in need, regardless of their national origin". In addition to that, Gerhards et al. (2018: 6) not only focus on citizens as recipients of solidarity-based actions, but also consider the country level in their conceptual definition: "By European solidarity, we understand a form of solidarity that goes beyond one's own nation state, and where the recipients of solidarity are other EU countries, or

¹⁷ Crises aid is mostly set up for a rather short time period to overcome an acute crisis and, if necessary, to carry out reconstruction. It could, however, under certain circumstances also be transformed into a more permanent aid program.

citizens of other EU countries”. This paper uses the definition developed by Gerhards et al. (2018) and focuses on the investigation of citizens’ preferences for EU-wide solidarity measures. To be more precise, I do not analyze whether citizens actually act in solidarity but whether their preferences show “signs of solidarity” (Gerhards et al., 2019: 23). Consequently, and in order to make a statement about the donor side of solidarity, I will refer to this type of solidarity as transnational solidarity.

Solidarity constitutes one of the core values of European integration (Sangiovanni, 2013: 213) and is explicitly mentioned in various EU treaties. Put into practice, solidarity has been implemented to various degrees within the EU depending on the issue area. It is strongest in socio-economic terms and still rather weak with regard to, for instance, environmental policies (Domurath, 2013). Over the course of the European Sovereign Debt Crisis, new mechanisms were implemented to financially assist debt-ridden states. The treaty establishing the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) was set up as a persistent source of financial assistance in September 2012 and refers to responsibility and solidarity within the Eurozone (ESM, 2020). Concerning the years of high migration numbers, the opening of the German and Swedish borders to refugees was interpreted as a sign of solidarity, as it briefly undermined the Dublin Regulation¹⁸ and relieved the burden of the countries at the EU’s external borders (Steinvorth, 2017: 12-13). This shows that solidarity in the EU context can have many facets and faces and is often evoked in response to immediate crises. Beyond that, and independent of any acute crisis scenarios, the funds set up by the EU to promote economic convergence across regions represent another practical implementation of EU-wide solidarity measures (European Commission, 2020b).

In empirical terms, transnational solidarity is a latent concept that cannot be measured directly by a single indicator but consists of various dimensions that become apparent depending on the respective situation and policy field. Literature studying solidarity in the context of the EU has already tried to disentangle the latent concept of transnational solidarity with its various dimensions (for instance Gerhards et al., 2019; Lahusen and Grasso, 2018). Nonetheless, and despite laudable efforts, most of these studies did not relate the single dimensions of transnational solidarity to each other but examined them separately. Until today, only a handful of studies considered the interplay between the single dimensions of transnational solidarity. In this respect, a study published by Kankaraš and Moors in 2009 stands out. The authors apply a

¹⁸ “The volume and concentration of arrivals has exposed in particular the weaknesses of the Dublin System, which establishes the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application based primarily on the first point of irregular entry” (European Commission, 2020a).

multiple-group latent-class factor analysis and capture the latent concept of solidarity via respondents' concerns about other people's living conditions. The results show that the EU member states are hardly polarized with regard to solidarity. About ten years later, Baute and colleagues (2018, 2019a, 2019b) publish several studies in which they disentangle public preferences for the latent concept of Social Europe, which is closely linked to my paper's idea of transnational solidarity. Their empirical findings indicate that, depending on the research interest of the respective contribution, Social Europe consists of various dimensions that cannot be limited to a single factor and are interrelated. In their 2018 paper, for instance, the authors find evidence for the existence of the following five dimensions of Social Europe: "European social citizenship, harmonization through social regulations, member-state solidarity, interpersonal solidarity and a European social security system" (Baute et al., 2018: 369).

Following this, although a limited number of preceding studies has already analyzed and connected the various dimensions of transnational solidarity, research on transnational solidarity carried out so far has consistently analyzed support for solidarity per individual crisis scenario or policy area without agreeing upon whether or not there are underlying dimensions driving similar results. While at the time of recent European crises it has indeed been important to focus on each individual crisis separately and to explore specific forms of solidarity, it is now time to go a step further and reveal existing, yet unexplored dimensions that lie behind the individual measured factors and put them in relation to each other.

This paper will fill the literature gap by drawing on a distinction made in national welfare state research. A reference to this strand of literature is reasonable considering that solidarity in the nation-state context has already been extensively researched and its conceptualization produces reliable results. Relating the findings in this field to the EU, I examine whether the logics applied by EU citizens in national welfare state matters can also be adapted to the EU level.

Vandenbroucke (2020: 8) uses the term "'welfare state solidarity' as an umbrella concept for redistribution and insurance". Both these types of welfare state solidarity intend to make a community fairer, yet they do so in different ways (Esarey et al., 2012: 686; Rothstein, 1998). Insurance, or risk-sharing, follows an insurance logic and provides protection against crisis situations whenever an unforeseeable event hits (Esarey et al., 2012; Pettersen, 1998; Vandenbroucke, 2020). In contrast, redistribution aims to systemically fight inequality, regardless of a crisis scenario (Esarey et al., 2012; Roller, 1998; Vandenbroucke, 2020). The following sections apply this distinction between risk-sharing and redistribution to the EU level to assess whether transnational solidarity is explained by a similar umbrella concept.

The two-dimensional concept of transnational solidarity

The EU's various crises over the last decade have served as tests for the practical implementation of solidarity (Grimmel and Giang, 2017: 2). In times of an economic crisis, welfare state policies can help to overcome economic decline through the installment of so-called "automatic stabilizers" which are designed to absorb the shocks as best as they can (Vandenbroucke, 2017: 157, 2018: 8). Whereas EU redistribution policies aiming to tackle economic inequality might lose their importance over time because economic standards are increasingly converging, so-called risk-sharing measures never lose their topicality since crises can shake the community at any time (Vandenbroucke, 2020: 36-37). In the context of the EU, these kinds of rather short-term risk-sharing policies mostly occur in the form of financial assistance provided for the party in crisis. Previous studies analyzed public support for financial assistance provided in scenarios of financial and economic difficulties (among others Díez Medrano et al., 2019; Ferrera and Pellegata, 2017; Genschel and Hemerijck, 2018; Gerhards et al., 2019; Lahusen and Grasso, 2018), high numbers of incoming migrants (Genschel and Hemerijck, 2018; Gerhards et al., 2019; Lahusen and Grasso, 2018; Reinl, 2020) or natural disasters (Díez Medrano, 2019; Genschel and Hemerijck, 2018). However, no study so far has put together all the different indicators of crisis related transnational solidarity.

EU citizens are believed to weigh up the costs and benefits of solidarity-based emergency aid in any possible crisis scenario. Rational cost-benefit calculations characterize all types of crisis aid and thus, (short-term) risk-sharing should form one overarching dimension of the latent concept of transnational solidarity. With any kind of crisis aid, the donor side does not expect immediate compensation from the recipient party. Even if financial aid is conditional, it remains open when and to what extent a reversed aid scenario will occur. Consequently, the donor side invests financial resources in any crisis scenario affecting another EU member state without knowing whether this aid is financially worthwhile for the own country. Thus, the risk of crisis is shared on several shoulders, at least in the short term.

Since public support for financial crisis assistance is expected to always follow the same logic, regardless of the origins of a crisis, (short-term) risk-sharing should form one overarching dimension of the latent concept of transnational solidarity.

H1: Indicators measuring support for (short-term) risk-sharing are all part of one underlying dimension of transnational solidarity.

The second presumed dimension of transnational solidarity speaks to more permanent redistribution. It is about the general idea of integrating solidarity in the EU integration process

and the consideration of solidarity as a higher purpose of the community. Within the European Union, this encompasses all kinds of policies that aim at reducing inequalities between EU member states and their populations in the long-run and which do not pursue the temporary goal of supporting another state in an occurring crisis (Vandenbroucke, 2020). How could such (permanent) redistribution look like? On the one hand, one could think of long-term oriented financial transfers to economically weaker EU regions. Examples for this are the European Structural and Investment funds aiming at speeding up economic development and convergence between EU member states (European Commission, 2020b). On the other hand, one could think of the set-up of a European welfare state. Even though the economic systems of EU nation states have become increasingly interconnected over the years, this development has not occurred with regard to welfare state policies (Ferrera, 2017; Pantazatou, 2015: 54-55). Consequently, as transnational solidarity in terms of (permanent) redistribution intends to make the community fairer in the long-run, its various facets are expected to address a second overarching dimension.

H2: Indicators measuring support for (permanent) redistribution are all part of one underlying dimension of transnational solidarity.

The aim of this study is to get as close as possible to the true concept of transnational solidarity. All types of transnational solidarity should be either assigned to (short-term) risk-sharing or the intention of making the EU more solidary in the long run via (permanent) redistribution. The dimensions cannot be mixed together to reflect transnational solidarity as one dimension. Instead, I argue that transnational solidarity is a two-dimensional concept with both dimensions being separate but covarying. This theoretically derived concept of transnational solidarity should also be empirically visible within the EU member states:

H3a: Transnational solidarity consists of two dimensions with one dimension capturing (short-term) risk-sharing and another one measuring support for (permanent) redistribution.

Despite known differences between EU member states in terms of public support for financial assistance in crisis scenarios (Domurath, 2013; Lahusen and Grasso, 2018) as well as regarding more deeply rooted (permanent) redistribution (Gerhards et al., 2016), the proposed concept is presumed to equally represent transnational solidarity across EU member states. I assume this, since all preferences for transnational solidarity, regardless the levels of support in the respective states, can still be assigned to one of the dimensions presented.

H3b: The concept of transnational solidarity is comparable between EU member states.

Data and operationalization

The analysis makes use of a novel data collection in three EU member states depicting extreme interests during both the European Sovereign Debt Crisis and the years of extraordinary high migration numbers: Austria, Germany and Greece. An analysis of extreme cases allows the widest possible range of countries to be analyzed without necessarily requiring information on all sample units. If similar results are found in the analysis of very different cases, the findings can most likely also be applied to other cases in the sample. However, in order to finally confirm this, it is necessary to verify the results in future analyses using data from other EU countries. Germany acted as the largest donor country over the course of the Sovereign Debt Crisis, whereas Greece received the largest bailout packages from fellow EU member states. Austria also represents a donor state during the Sovereign Debt Crisis and the country weathered the crisis well in macroeconomic terms.¹⁹ In contrast, over the years 2015/2016, all three states hosted a high share of refugees and hoped for more assistance provided by the rest of the EU community.²⁰

In Austria, data was collected via the online panel study of the Austrian National Election Study (AUNTES) in January 2020 (wave “13”) (Aichholzer et al., 2020). In Germany, the survey was conducted via the GESIS Panel (GESIS, 2020) from June to August 2019 (wave “gc”) and was carried out using both online (web-based) and offline (mail) interviews. In Greece, a telephone survey was taken in June 2019 (Katsanidou and Reinl, 2020) and the poll was funded by the Leibniz Research Alliance “Crises in a Globalized World”. After the data cleaning, the analysis sample contains 2,897 participants from Austria, 3,661 from Germany and 1,198 interviewees from Greece. (Short-term) risk-sharing is assessed using three survey questions regarding financial assistance in times of 1) a national bankruptcy; 2) a high influx of migrants into a country²¹; and 3) a natural disaster. For measuring citizens’ preferences for (permanent)

¹⁹ In Austria and Germany, unemployment rates dropped over the course of the Sovereign Debt Crisis. In Germany, the unemployment level in 2009 was 7.8% and it continuously decreased over the years of crisis. In 2013 5.2% of the German population were registered unemployed. In Austria, the unemployment rate in 2009 counted 5.3% and it reached its low point in 2011 with a value of 4.6%. Afterwards it slowly increased again to its pre-crisis level. For Greece I see a completely different picture. Whereas the state recorded an unemployment rate of 9.6% in 2009 it reached a level of 27.5% in 2013 (Eurostat, 2020b).

²⁰ In Germany, the number of first-time asylum applicants rose from 172,945 thousand in 2014 to a climax of 722,270 in 2016. The same applies to Austria. In 2014 the country counted 25,675 asylum applicants and one year later, in 2015, the number more than tripled. In contrast, for Greece the number of asylum applications continuously rose from 2014 until 2019. Starting with a number of 7,585 in 2014, the country counted 74,190 first time asylum seekers in 2019 (nearly tenfold) (Eurostat, 2020a). Consequently, in the Greek case the migration pressure was not yet over at the time the survey took place.

²¹ I am aware that providing financial assistance is not the only possible sign of solidarity in a migration crisis scenario and previous studies already studied other aspects of it (for instance Gerhards et al., 2019). However, granting financial assistance is, amongst other things, needed to help those states accommodating refugees to care for new arrivals.

redistribution the study uses three variables, which are becoming increasingly concrete in their statements, therefore following the logic of a Guttman scale. The first question asks about the general agreement on whether solidarity between states should be an important goal of the EU. The second question is about support for financial redistribution between EU countries, even if this means that richer countries have to contribute more. And the third variable asks for the introduction of a European welfare system, even if this might increase taxes. More detailed information on the question wordings can be found in the appendix (table A-1). All variables are measured via four-point Likert-scales. The response categories “don’t know/ don’t answer” were classified as missing values. For a better interpretation of the results, all variables were recoded so that the highest agreement is assigned the highest value. Table A-2 in the appendix provides an overview on the respective sample characteristics.²² Moreover, table A-3, also in the appendix, gives information on the correlations between the individual indicators.

To empirically test the formulated research hypotheses, this paper runs multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA) via MPLUS (version 8.4) to evaluate whether the empirical data speaks to the theoretically derived dimensions of transnational solidarity and in order to find out whether the understanding of the concept of transnational solidarity is comparable between EU countries (see for instance Brown, 2006; Davidov et al., 2014). For the handling of missing data, instead of opting for listwise deletion, the performed analysis uses full information maximum likelihood (FIML), which allows including respondents in the analysis who did not provide information on all items considered.²³

Results

Descriptive results

Before turning to the paper’s MGCFA, I first descriptively present the dimensions of transnational solidarity in each country. Figure A-1 in the appendix visualizes public support for (short-term) risk-sharing in the three countries under investigation (see also table A-2 in the appendix). For all the three states, citizens’ willingness to provide financial assistance is highest in the scenario of a natural disaster. In Germany, I find almost equal support for risk-sharing in the case of a national bankruptcy (2.27) and a migration crisis scenario (2.34) whereas in Greece,

²² The German sample is on average older than the respondents in the other two countries. The Greek respondents are evenly distributed over the age groups and in Austria comparatively few older people were interviewed. These different age distributions could be due to the unequal survey modes applied, as online surveys, for instance, tend to reach younger people (Austria). With regard to sex, the samples are very similar. When it comes to socioeconomic left-right positions of the respondents, Greek respondents tend to be more right-wing compared to Austrian and German interviewees.

²³ For more information on the method see for instance Olinsky et al. (2003) or Schafer and Graham (2002).

public approval for fiscal solidarity is higher regarding a national bankruptcy compared to a high influx of migrants. For Austria support for financial assistance is lowest in the case of a national bankruptcy, even though support in a migration crisis scenario is only marginally higher (+0.13). Regarding a national bankruptcy, the cross-country discrepancy might be due to the diverse history of the countries over the recent European Sovereign Debt Crisis. In contrast, all states accommodated a large share of refugees during the so-called “long summer of migration” (see for instance della Porta, 2018) and therefore support rates might vary to a lesser extent in this crisis scenario.

With regard to the (permanent) redistribution dimension of transnational solidarity, figure A-2 in the appendix graphically shows the distributions of indicators per country (see also table A-2 in the appendix). In all three states, support is highest for the least specific statement saying that solidarity should be a value of priority within the EU. It also is apparent that support for redistribution decreases when policies become more costly. For all states, I find the lowest level of support for the introduction of a common European welfare state that might come along with tax increases. In general, public backing for more (permanent) redistribution within the EU is highest in Greece followed by Germany and Austria. This difference might be due to the fact that Greece would most likely profit from (permanent) redistribution, whereas respondents in Germany and Austria could smell a losing bargain. Moreover, respondents in Austria and Germany are probably already more satisfied with their national welfare state and therefore, do not expect the introduction of a European social system to improve their own situation (Gerhards et al., 2019: 154). About the (small) discrepancy between Germany and Austria, compared to Germans, people in Austria are generally known to be more critical towards the EU (Schulmeister et al., 2019), which could also be reflected in public support for (permanent) redistribution programs within the community.

Multi-group confirmatory factor analysis

Following these first descriptive analyses, I go a step further and look at the overall concept of transnational solidarity in the countries under investigation (H1, H2 and H3a). Moreover, I test whether the concept is comparable between the states (H3b). I run MGCFA opting for measurement invariance, which is described as a necessary condition for comparing theoretical concepts across groups (for instance Davidov et al., 2014).²⁴ To that end, I follow the stepwise

²⁴ “Measurement invariance is a necessary precondition for a meaningful comparison of data across groups. It does neither suggest that the results obtained across the various groups are identical nor that there are no differences between the groups regarding the measured construct. Instead, it implies that the measurement operates similarly

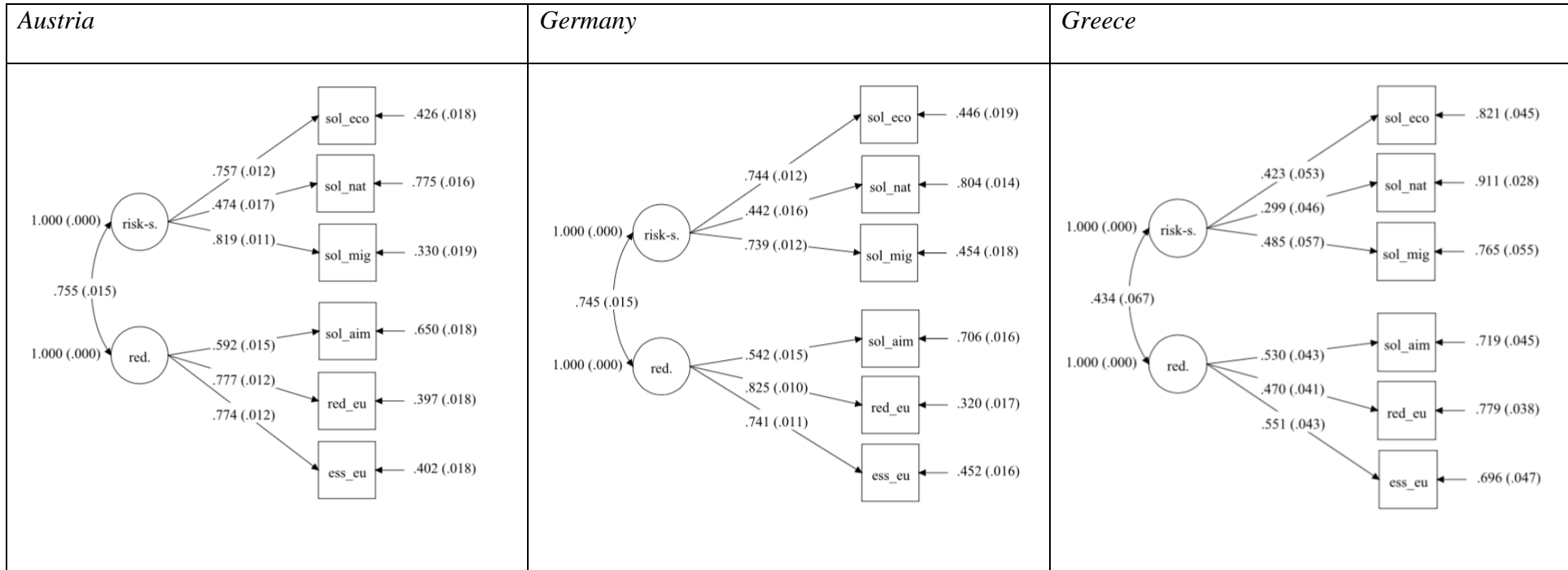
approach described by Kleinke et al. (2017). In the analysis carried out, the assumed theoretical dimensions are represented by so-called factors making them empirical measurable. I will first consult the measurement models separately per country to test for the existence of configural measurement invariance (equal number of factors and factor loading patterns). Provided that configural measurement invariance is present, I will then estimate the baseline model, which serves as a comparison model for the verification of metric (equal factor loadings) and scalar (equal intercepts) measurement invariance.

To test for configural measurement invariance, the variance of the latent variables is set to one to freely estimate the factor loadings of the indicators. Figure 1 graphically presents the configural model per country. For all the three countries and for both latent factors the factor loadings exceed the critical value of 0.3 (Brown, 2006: 130) or are at least close to this cutoff point (see also Hooper et al., 2008). Hence, the results support the above formulated research hypotheses 1 and 2. The indicators in use to capture transnational solidarity do reflect the latent factors (short-term) risk-sharing and (permanent) redistribution.²⁵ In addition, the two latent factors covary. The factors of risk-sharing and redistribution are closely linked in Austria (0.755) and Germany (0.745), whereas the relation is much weaker in the Greek case (0.434). Moreover, for all the countries under investigation the model fit indices (see table A-4 in the appendix) show a very good fit indicating that the data does support the theoretically derived model. As a result, configural measurement invariance is confirmed and I identify equal factor structures across the studied EU states. In line with that, the data supports research hypothesis 3a as for all countries transnational solidarity exists of two dimensions with one dimension capturing (short-term) risk-sharing and another one measuring support for (permanent) redistribution. In other words, both theoretically derived dimensions are present in citizens' concept of transnational solidarity.

across the various groups to be compared and, therefore, that the results of the measurement can be meaningfully compared and interpreted as being similar across groups" (Cieciuch et al., 2016: 629).

²⁵ As an additional robustness check I run confirmatory factor analysis separately per country and compare the results to an alternative model, which only consists of one instead of two latent factor(s). I compare two models with competing attitude structures by means of the model quality indices. Following this, for all the three countries the theoretically derived model fits the data significantly better compared to the alternative model consisting of one instead of two latent factors.

Figure 1: Configural model



Annotation: Estimator: ML; Parameter estimates (standardized). Model fit indices: Austria (N=2897): $X^2=94.424$, $df=8$, $RMSEA=0.061$, $SRMR=0.026$, $CFI=0.983$; Germany (N=3661): $X^2=133.888$, $df=8$, $RMSEA=0.066$, $SRMR=0.032$, $CFI=0.977$; Greece (N=1198): $X^2=3.495$, $df=8$, $RMSEA=0.000$, $SRMR=0.010$, $CFI=1.000$. All parameters are significant at the $p<0.001$ level. Standard errors in parentheses. **For a list of abbreviations see table A-2 in the appendix.**

In the next step, I test whether the theoretical derived model of transnational solidarity also shows metric (equal factor loadings) as well as scalar (equal intercepts) measurement invariance. To evaluate whether metric or scalar measurement invariance are established, the more constrained model fit indices are compared to the indices of the respective less restrictive models (Chen, 2007).

In the event metric invariance is established, the latent construct of transnational solidarity retrieves the same content in the three countries (Davidov et al., 2011: 152). Metric invariance allows for the comparison of regression coefficients across groups. In this case, a one-unit change in the latent construct means the same in all groups under investigation (Davidov et al., 2015: 248-249). To confirm the existence of metric measurement invariance, the model fit indices of the metric model are compared with those of the baseline model to see whether the model significantly worsens once the factor loadings are constrained to be equal between the groups. In addition to performing Chi-square difference tests, model fit indices can be compared across models.²⁶ The model fit indices confirm the presence of metric measurement invariance (see table A-4 in the appendix). Although metric measurement invariance is not supported regarding the Chi-square difference test²⁷, changes in the model fit indices CFI, RMSEA and SRMR are within the permissible degrees of change (Chen, 2007). Subsequently, the latent concept of transnational solidarity presented taps the same content in Austria, Germany, and Greece.

Once metric invariance is confirmed, one can test for the existence of scalar invariance. In the case of scalar measurement invariance in addition to factor loadings, intercepts are comparable across groups and respondents in the countries under investigation use equal scale origins (Davidov et al., 2011: 152). To that end, the model fit indices of the metric measurement model serve as a baseline against which the more constrained scalar model is compared. I do not find full scalar invariance for my model. Therefore, instead of setting all factor loadings and intercepts to be equal across groups, some constraints might be relaxed (Byrne et al., 1989). MPLUS provides information about equality constraints, which might be released in order to improve the overall model fit (Cieciuch and Davidov, 2016). However, since I only have a maximum of three indicators per latent factor, the scope for improving the models' quality is limited. To reach partial measurement invariance at least two indicators per factor must show

²⁶ For more information on this aspect as well as model fit cut-off criteria see for instance Chen 2007.

²⁷ The Chi-square difference test can provide significant results very quickly for large sample sizes. Therefore, in cases analyzing larger samples it is advisable to refrain from interpreting the Chi-square values and instead rely on other model quality criteria (Chen, 2007).

invariance across groups (see for instance Cieciuch and Davidov, 2016; Davidov et al., 2015; Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1998). The modification indices indicate to freely estimate two intercepts: the one for *financial solidarity in a migration crisis scenario* and the other one for the item asking if the *EU should promote solidarity between its member states*. As a result, I release the equality constraints for one intercept per factor. The comparison of the model fit indices (metric to partial scalar) shows that the changes in RMSEA as well as in SRMR are within the permissible range. For the CFI change, the value of 0.012 is only slightly higher than the cut point of 0.01 and thus, still lies within the acceptable range (Byrne and Stewart, 2006). Consequently, I find both metric and (partial) scalar measurement invariance for my theoretically derived model, which implies that not only the factor loadings, but also the intercepts are comparable across countries. Substantively, this means that citizens in the three EU countries do not only have the same understanding about the dimensions of transnational solidarity but also retrieve the same content and scales. Figure A-3 in the appendix graphically presents the partial scalar invariance model.

In summary, the empirical model provides support for research hypothesis 3b: The concept of solidarity is comparable across the countries under analysis. In addition, the achieved level of partial scalar measurement invariance allows for comparing the mean scores of the latent factors across countries (Davidov et al., 2015). The cross-country comparison shows that the mean values of both factors are significantly different between the countries. With Germany as a reference group, Austrian respondents show significantly ($p < 0.001$) less agreement on both the risk-sharing (-0.759) and the redistribution (-0.347) dimension, whereas the Greek sample reports significantly ($p < 0.001$) higher mean values on the two respective dimensions (risk-sharing=1.084; redistribution=1.119). This means, therefore, that the populations of the three countries share the same understanding of transnational solidarity, but the willingness to show solidarity with fellow EU member countries and EU citizens varies significantly between the groups of people interviewed in each country. It shows that Greece, as a country that has benefited greatly from solidarity during the past crises, is also the country with the most positive attitude towards it. Austria, on the other hand, is even more critical of EU-wide solidarity efforts than its German neighbor, which could be due to their in general greater skepticism towards the entire EU integration project (Schulmeister et al., 2019).

Discussion

This paper intensively studied the latent concept of transnational solidarity. To that end, I approached transnational solidarity through an individual level perspective using novel survey data collected in Austria, Germany and Greece in 2019/2020. The goal of this study was to test whether transnational solidarity in the context of the European Union consists of two latent dimensions 1) citizens' preferences for (short-term) risk-sharing and 2) public support for (permanent) redistribution and if this concept is comparable across EU member states.

The results of my multi-group confirmatory factor analysis reveal three main things. First, the defined concept of transnational solidarity empirically holds. Second, its existence is evident in all three countries, and third the concept of transnational solidarity presented is comparable across states.

Why is the presence of measurement invariance an important finding for the understanding of transnational solidarity and the future of European integration? The results of this study show that although there are national differences in the levels of public support for intra-EU solidarity measures, a comparable conception of transnational solidarity among EU populations can be observed. A shared idea about the concept of transnational solidarity is desirable for several reasons. On the one hand, it is important for a community to share similar understandings of fundamental values. In the case of personal communication across national borders, it is relevant to refer to the same conceptual comprehensions. On the other hand, a common concept of transnational solidarity is of major importance, as it is needed to ensure political legitimacy. When citizens and EU politicians come to understand the same about European solidarity, the politically relevant dialogue between citizens and political elites in Brussels (Vandenbroucke, 2020: 38) could improve considerably.

In a nutshell, despite the crises of the past decade transnational solidarity is relatively strong and consistent across countries. The countries under consideration largely share the same ideas and values with regard to transnational solidarity. This notion seems reassuring, especially in view of the coronavirus pandemic and the ensuing financial crisis. Even though public support for transnational solidarity is supposed to vary from time to time, depending on the political situation, the concept of transnational solidarity presented in this paper should still be relevant. Future research should test whether the presented concept of transnational solidarity also holds when other indicators of EU level risk-sharing and redistribution are integrated in the empirical model. Moreover, the paper has shown that there is a shared concept of transnational solidarity

across countries, even though the studied EU states are known to be quite different in respect to public backing for European integration as well as the countries' respective roles in previous European crises. However, since this study only analyzed three countries, the findings are not generalizable for all EU member states. To that end, this work should serve as a template for future studies analyzing transnational solidarity. In this respect, it would be particularly interesting to test the concept in EU accession countries of later enlargement rounds (e.g., Eastern European countries) or in countries that have survived previous European crises largely unscathed and are home to excellent welfare states (e.g., Denmark).

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Appendix

Tables

Table A-1: Variable list

| Dimension | Variable | Survey question | Recorded response categories |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| (short-term) Risk-sharing | Financial assistance national bankruptcy | My country should provide financial assistance to other EU countries in the event of a national bankruptcy. | 1 Totally disagree 2 Rather disagree 3 Rather agree 4 Totally agree |
| | Financial assistance natural disaster | My country should provide financial assistance to other EU countries in the event of a natural disaster (eg. floods, earthquakes). | 1 Totally disagree 2 Rather disagree 3 Rather agree 4 Totally agree |
| | Financial assistance sharp increase incoming migrants | My country should provide financial assistance to other EU countries in the event of a sharp increase in incoming migrants in their territory. | 1 Totally disagree 2 Rather disagree 3 Rather agree 4 Totally agree |
| (permanent) Redistribution | EU promote solidarity | The EU's aim should be to promote solidarity between member states. | 1 Totally disagree 2 Rather disagree 3 Rather agree 4 Totally agree |
| | Reduce disparities between countries | The economic disparities between rich and poorer EU countries need to be reduced, even if this means that richer countries pay higher contributions. | 1 Totally disagree 2 Rather disagree 3 Rather agree 4 Totally agree |
| | European welfare system | The EU needs a European welfare system for all European citizens, even if this means tax increases. | 1 Totally disagree 2 Rather disagree 3 Rather agree 4 Totally agree |

Table A-2: Descriptive statistics (per country)

| Variable | Abbreviation | Austria | Germany | Greece |
|---|--------------|--|--|---|
| Financial assistance national bankruptcy | sol_eco | N: 2742 mean: 1.898 sd: .885 | N: 3341 mean: 2.274 sd: .817 | N: 1086 mean: 2.951 sd: 1.089 |
| Financial assistance natural disaster | sol_nat | N: 2799 mean: 3.040 sd: .791 | N: 3564 mean: 3.416 sd: .651 | N: 1182 mean: 3.698 sd: .629 |
| Financial assistance sharp increase incoming migrants | sol_mig | N: 2734 mean: 2.027 sd: .946 | N: 3348 mean: 2.340 sd: .878 | N: 1146 mean: 2.412 sd: 1.181 |
| EU promote solidarity | sol_aim | N: 2665 mean: 3.045 sd: .803 | N: 3468 mean: 3.347 sd: .637 | N: 1144 mean: 3.702 sd: .641 |
| Reduce disparities between countries | red_eu | N: 2624 mean: 2.365 sd: .926 | N: 3322 mean: 2.570 sd: .797 | N: 1097 mean: 3.368 sd: .924 |
| European welfare system | ess_eu | N: 2650 mean: 2.167 sd: .932 | N: 3274 mean: 2.406 sd: .878 | N: 1112 mean: 2.962 sd: 1.116 |
| (Short-term) risk-sharing | risk-s. | | | |
| (Permanent) redistribution | red. | | | |
| Additional sample characteristics | | | | |
| Age | | 15-29: N=540(18.6%) 30-39: N=464(16.0%) 40-49: N=538(18.6%) 50-59: N=591(20.4%) 60-69: N=642(22.2%) 70-100: N=122(4.2%) | 15-29: N=237(6.7%) 30-39: N=367(10.4%) 40-49: N=539(15.3%) 50-59: N=881(25.0%) 60-69: N=794(22.5%) 70-100: N=707(20.1%) | 15-29: N=247(20.6%) 30-39: N=212(17.7%) 40-49: N=204(17.0%) 50-59: N=181(15.1%) 60-69: N=147(12.3%) 70-100: N=207(17.3%) |
| Female | | Female: N=1448(50.2%) Male: N=1439(49.9%) | Female: N=1751(49.3%) Male: N=1805(50.8%) | Female: N=611(49.0%) Male: N=587(51.0%) |
| Left-right self-placement (0: Left - 10: Right) | | N: 2565 mean: 4.880 sd: 2.170 | N: 3493 mean: 4.718 sd: 1.911 | N: 1104 mean: 5.602 sd: 3.131 |

Annotation: Instead of using a continuous variable representing respondents' age I opted for age categories as the original coding differed considerably between the countries. Moreover, since the educational level of respondents was surveyed differently in the respective countries, it is not possible to compare the groups with regard to this characteristic. Weighted presentation: For Germany and Austria, the weights provided by the survey programs are applied, whereas the Greek sample is weighted by age and sex.

Table A-3: Correlation matrix

| | Financial assistance national bankruptcy | Financial assistance natural disaster | Financial assistance sharp increase incoming migrants | EU promote solidarity | Reduce disparities between countries | European welfare system |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Financial assistance national bankruptcy | 1.0000 | | | | | |
| Financial assistance natural disaster | AT: 0.32 DE: 0.31 GR: 0.07 | 1.0000 | | | | |
| Financial assistance sharp increase incoming migrants | AT: 0.62 DE: 0.55 GR: 0.21 | AT: 0.39 DE: 0.33 GR: 0.15 | 1.0000 | | | |
| EU promote solidarity | AT: 0.30 DE: 0.34 GR: 0.08 | AT: 0.34 DE: 0.31 GR: 0.08 | AT: 0.36 DE: 0.35 GR: 0.08 | 1.0000 | | |
| Reduce disparities between countries | AT: 0.45 DE: 0.46 GR: 0.06 | AT: 0.29 DE: 0.27 GR: 0.07 | AT: 0.47 DE: 0.44 GR: 0.09 | AT: 0.47 DE: 0.44 GR: 0.25 | 1.0000 | |
| European welfare system | AT: 0.47 DE: 0.41 GR: 0.11 | AT: 0.28 DE: 0.23 GR: 0.06 | AT: 0.48 DE: 0.39 GR: 0.10 | AT: 0.45 DE: 0.37 GR: 0.30 | AT: 0.61 DE: 0.61 GR: 0.28 | 1.0000 |

Annotation: For Germany and Austria, the weights provided by the survey programs are applied, whereas the Greek sample is weighted by age and sex. AT: Austria (N=2310); DE: Germany (N=2806); GR: Greece (N=887).

Table A-4: Goodness of fit indices

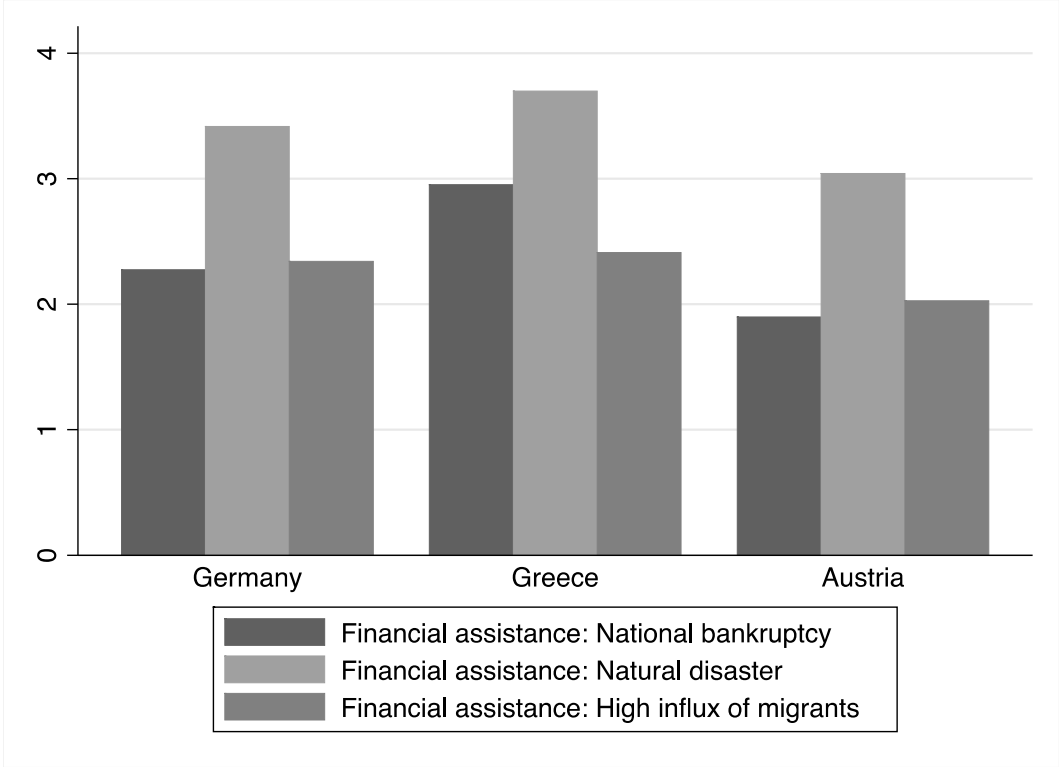
| Model | Chi-sq. | df | CFI | Δ CFI | RMSEA | Δ RMSEA | SRMR | Δ SRMR |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------|------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| Configural (Austria) | 94.424 | 8 | 0.983 | | 0.061 | | 0.026 | |
| Configural (Germany) | 133.888 | 8 | 0.977 | | 0.066 | | 0.032 | |
| Configural (Greece) | 3.495 | 8 | 1.000 | | 0.000 | | 0.010 | |
| Baseline | 231.808 | 24 | 0.981 | | 0.058 | | 0.028 | |
| Metric | 272.194 | 32 | 0.978 | 0.003 | 0.054 | 0.004 | 0.037 | 0.009 |
| Scalar | 814.807 | 40 | 0.928 | 0.050 | 0.087 | 0.033 | 0.069 | 0.032 |
| Partial Scalar | 402.122 | 36 | 0.966 | 0.012 | 0.063 | 0.009 | 0.048 | 0.011 |

(Free intercepts sol_mig & sol_aim)

Annotation: Estimator: ML. Chi-sq.=Chi-square (X^2); df=degrees of freedom; CFI=Comparative fit index; RMSEA=Root mean square error of approximation; SRMR=Standardized root mean square residual; Δ fit index change relative to the previous model.

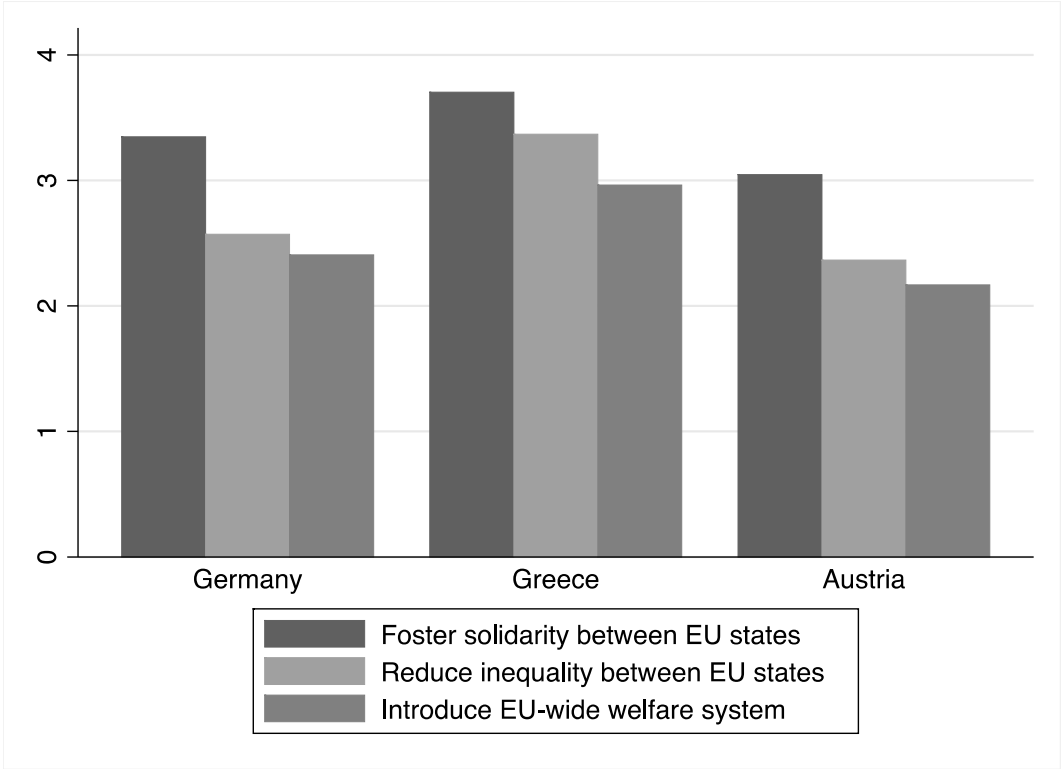
Figures

Figure A-1: Support for (short-term) risk-sharing



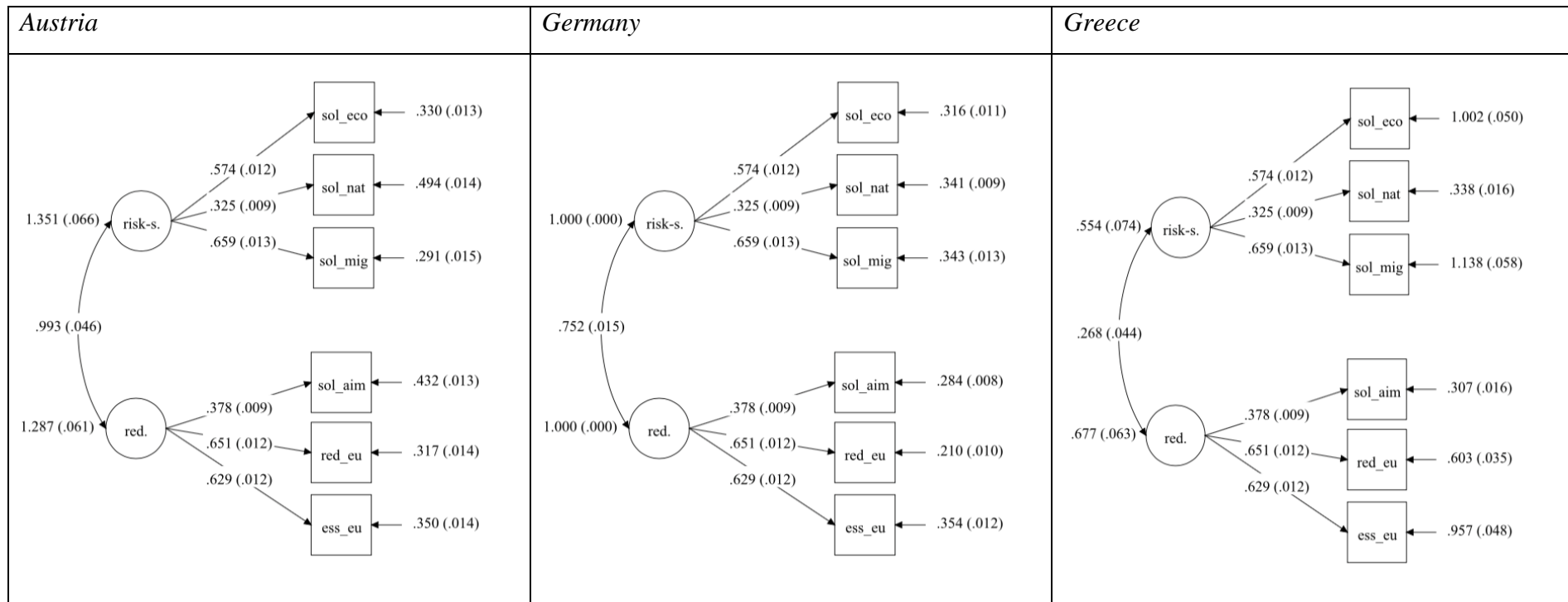
Annotation: Average support per country. All variables range from 1 (totally disagree) – 4 (totally agree). Weighted presentation: For Germany and Austria, the weights provided by the survey programs are applied, whereas the Greek sample is weighted by age and sex.

Figure A-2: Support for (permanent) redistribution



Annotation: Average support per country. All variables range from 1 (totally disagree) – 4 (totally agree). Weighted presentation: For Germany and Austria, the weights provided by the survey programs are applied, whereas the Greek sample is weighted by age and sex.

Figure A-3: Partial scalar model



Annotation: Estimator: ML; Parameter estimates (not standardized). Overall model fit indices (Austria: N=2897; Germany: N=3661; Greece: N=1198): $\chi^2=402.122$, $df=36$, RMSEA=0.063, SRMR=0.048, CFI=0.966. Standard errors in parentheses. **For a list of abbreviations see table A-2 in the appendix.**

Study II

**Public Support for the European Solidarity Deal in EU Debtor States:
The Case of Greece**

With Prof. Dr. Alexia Katsanidou

(GESIS Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences and University of Cologne)

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Abstract

This paper defines the solution to the European Sovereign Debt Crisis as a European solidarity deal and analyzes it from the perspective of citizens in an EU debtor state. To be more precise, we test the conditions under which citizens living in an indebted state support their country's part of the solidarity deal, namely the introduction of austerity measures to overcome the crisis. Using Greece in the peak of its drama as a case in point, we find that the belief in the necessity of the deal due to pessimistic economic evaluations, citizens' support for their country's EU membership as well as economic right-wing positions were clear determinants for citizens' vote in favor of the introduction of austerity measures, otherwise known to be highly unpopular.

Keywords: European Solidarity, Conditional Solidarity, European Sovereign Debt Crisis, Debtor States, Greece, Austerity, Referendum

Introduction

Since the early days of European integration, solidarity laid the foundation for the union of states that we know today as the European Union (EU). The term solidarity appeared as early as May 9, 1950, in the famous Schuman Declaration. Robert Schuman, then French foreign minister, recommended the foundation of a European Coal and Steel Community and underlined the importance of solidarity among the member states of this community: “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” (Schuman, 1950). Since then, the term solidarity has appeared in various EU treaties. In general, European solidarity can be defined as “any attitude and behavior striving to help Europeans (be that residents or citizens) in struggle or in need, regardless of their national origin” (Lahusen, 2016: 8).

Put into practice, European solidarity was mostly operationalized, in earlier days, as support provided by EU institutions to economically weak EU regions via regional development funds (European Commission, 2020). In the late 2000s, the EU experienced one of the most extensive threats since its foundation: the European Sovereign Debt Crisis. At this time, European solidarity was put to the test. Whereas some countries weathered the global economic crisis nearly unscathed, the economic downturn was particularly visible in Southern European countries. Some member states lost their ability to secure affordable loans from credit markets and had to ask for financial assistance from the EU and fellow member states. As there was no precedent for such a situation, a new mechanism had to be invented whereby financially stronger countries could lend funds to weaker economies. This was done under the condition that the recipient countries would implement policies specifically designed to address the underlying economic problems and remove the threats that these problems posed to the rest of the Euro area (Crum & Merlo, 2020). The result was the emergence of an agreement between EU states granting financial aid from the so-called creditor states to the beneficiaries of the grants, the debtor states. In this agreement, both groups had to do their part to show mutual responsibility and to secure the stability of the Eurozone. We describe this negotiated state of affairs as a solidarity deal between the EU states based on the principles of reciprocity and conditionality.

Even though public support for intra-EU solidarity policies has been intensively studied over the past decade, studies on citizens’ agency in the European solidarity deal have focused mainly on public backing for providing monetary bailouts. In other words, the literature has investigated under which conditions citizens are willing to grant financial aid to indebted

states (see for instance Bechtel et al., 2014; Kuhn et al., 2018; Lahusen & Grasso, 2018; Vasilopoulou & Talving, 2020; Verhaegen, 2018). In contrast, public endorsement of the European solidarity deal – and specifically of the conditions attached to it – within the debtor states has been much less investigated (see for instance Walter et al., 2018). For debtor states’ governments, the decision of whether to accept the conditions attached to the solidarity deal or face de facto bankruptcy was not a real choice (Crum & Merlo, 2020). For the citizens of those countries, however, the choice was more genuine and allowed some time for reflection, as citizens’ preferences become relevant only at times of elections or referenda.

Austerity measures are deeply unpopular and, for many, could not be called a component of solidarity. It is a curiosity that parts of the population supported such measures not only indirectly with votes in national elections for parties that vowed to implement them, but also directly in referenda on bailout conditions such as the one seen in Greece. This paper contributes to this stream of literature on population preferences over austerity measures in debtor countries. Specifically, the paper analyzes pro-austerity preferences through the prism of European solidarity using Greece as a case in point. More precisely, we refer to voting behavior in the 2015 Greek bailout referendum. This allows us to ask *under which conditions citizens living in EU debtor countries are willing to accept austerity measures as their country’s part of the solidarity deal?*

We find that voters in debtor states are more likely to endorse their country’s part of the deal when they support their country’s EU membership and position themselves on the economic right. What also increases this likelihood is sharing the opinion that without austerity measures, the national economic situation will not improve.

In what follows, we start with an overview of the literature on European solidarity. We then move to the European solidarity deal and frame it within the bounds of representative democracy. In the next step, we introduce our case study, data, and methodology. After presenting our findings, the paper ends with a discussion of the results and their connection to existing scholarly debates.

The European solidarity deal

One of the best-known definitions of solidarity is from Stjernø (2004: 2): “solidarity can most fruitfully be defined as the preparedness to share resources with others by personal contribution to those in struggle or in need and through taxation and redistribution organised by the state”. Rationales for solidarity can be derived from different traditions, such as the Christian, liberal, nationalist, socialist and social democratic traditions, all of which are

present within the European political landscape (Sangiovanni, 2015; 2018; Stjernø, 2004; 2011). Solidarity can be unilateral, as in the case of altruistically motivated charitable assistance to the needy, when nothing is expected in return from the recipient (among others Bechtel et al., 2014; Stjernø, 2004). Solidarity can also be reciprocal when building on mutual assistance within a community. In this latter case, those who engage in solidarity actions have feelings of responsibility towards each other, leading to the expectation of a fair return from the beneficiary side (Sangiovanni, 2013: 217). This reciprocity does not have to be simultaneous but can follow at a later date (Sahlins, 1965). For reciprocal thinking to emerge, mutual trust is key (among others Taylor, 2015). In the EU arena, solidarity among member states in times of crisis has not been of the altruistic kind. The contribution of this paper is therefore to understand the form of reciprocal solidarity applied within the EU framework.

Reciprocal solidarity is central for national welfare states (Vandenbroucke, 2018: 16) and usually has strong insurance components, with public support for these components being mainly based on self-serving liability in the event of damage. Citizens need to be sure that every member benefitting from welfare policies contributes to these programs so that the burden is equally shared among the participants (Roosma et al., 2013: 237; Rothstein, 1998). Low levels of social trust lead to fears among donors that their contributions will be misused and that they might not enjoy reciprocity. In such cases, the welfare system can provide corrective mechanisms in the form of insurance components, linking the provision of solidarity to the fulfillment of certain conditions. Conditions attached to financial assistance—for instance, requirements that citizens take a job after a certain time in unemployment—are a binding way to ensure reciprocity among parties willing to act in solidarity.

Since trust between EU partners was low and actually worsened over the course of the debt crisis (Habermas, 2014: 87), it was difficult to implement crisis mechanisms built on unconditional donations or to rely on expectations of reciprocity without insurance (Pantazatou, 2015). Therefore, an analogous mechanism of conditional solidarity was established to address the European Sovereign Debt Crisis in the form of conditional bailout packages for member states facing financial difficulties. On the creditor side, the rescue packages were motivated not only by the willingness to rescue the very fate of the European single currency, but also by self-interest in regard to not losing money invested in existing loans. To do their part, indebted states had to adhere to austerity measures in the short term to receive the next installment of the promised deal (see for instance Stjernø, 2011: 172-173).

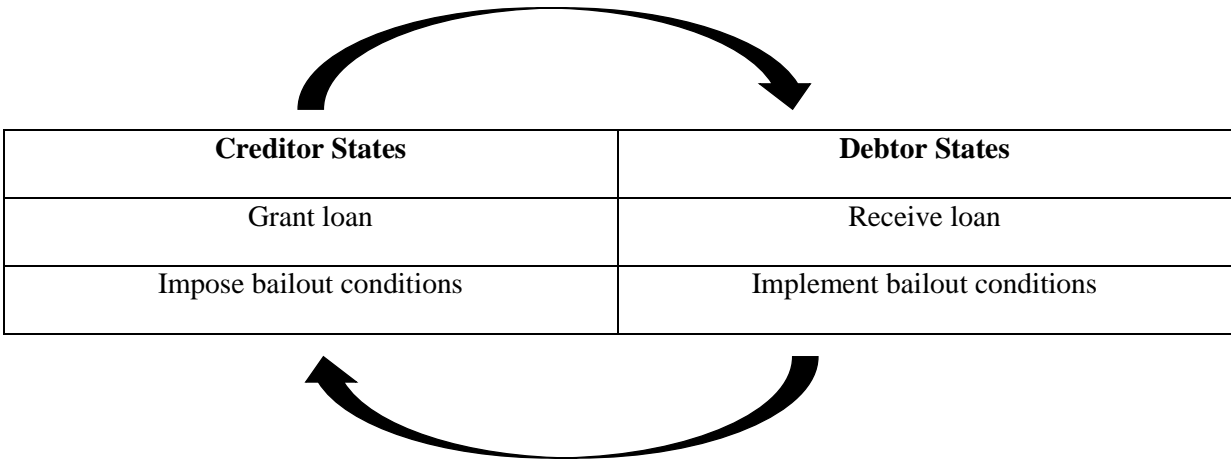
Therefore, the form of solidarity applied during the debt crisis was conditional, motivated by a high degree of self-interest on the part of donors and by no means altruistically motivated.

Can this conditional type of crisis bailout even be defined as solidarity? In the case of Greece, this issue was highly politicized. The Eurosceptic left in both creditor and debtor states criticized the conditions attached to the deal and called for more genuine solidarity, putting an end to retrenchment policies (Closa & Maatsch, 2014). Following from that, we opt to describe the situation between donor and recipient states as a solidarity deal because each side had to fulfill its role to ensure the common goal of saving the Eurozone and preventing damage to the European community. The conditional form of assistance neither reduced the actions' redistributive character nor influenced the essence of solidarity of the implemented policies (Pantazatou, 2015: 64-65; Stjernø, 2011: 172-173).²⁸

Financially struggling EU member states received loans from the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund as well as from more-solvent EU member states. In return, the receiving states needed to ensure the common goal by implementing austerity measures to improve their economic performance and to pay back the debt at some point in the future. Hence, both parties to the deal had to be prepared to act in solidarity with each other without ignoring their obligations (Featherstone, 2016: 57). The economic adjustment programs and austerity measures were laid out in so-called memoranda of understanding (Sacchi & Roh, 2016: 361; Theodoropoulou, 2015: 29-30). Figure 1 schematically presents the described European solidarity deal. Both sides had to engage in reciprocity for the deal to be enacted. This by no means implies that the people in both state groups perceived this deal as a solidarity deal but rather that each party to the deal was expected to fulfill its obligations.

²⁸ Conditionality as a component of reciprocal solidarity is not new in intergovernmental relations. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is the archetypical example of this type of solidarity, and the EU borrowed its model. The IMF imposes loan conditions adapted to countries' needs and specific situations. The goal is to prevent future crises, and the uncertain environment surrounding such negotiations allows political and bureaucratic factors to influence the outcome (Caraway et al., 2012). Conditions range from general quantitative performance criteria (examples are cuts to government spending and debt ceilings) to structural adjustments that reshape the economy in the long run (Beazer & Woo, 2016).

Figure 1: The European solidarity deal



Public support for the European solidarity deal

The support of the public is crucial for the legitimacy and success of reciprocal solidarity deals. It is decisive to have a popular majority supporting the European solidarity deal based on “reciprocity, fairness, trustworthiness and deservingness” (Lahusen & Grasso, 2018: 260) all over the EU as well as within each individual member state (Gerhards et al., 2019: 29). The reason for this is simple: Both EU creditor and debtor states have to fulfill their obligations under the deal with the backing of their populations. If citizens on either side feel that the conditions of reciprocal solidarity are not fair, the solidarity deal will come apart (Kleger & Mehlhausen, 2013: 66). In the aftermath of the European Sovereign Debt Crisis in the years 2016 and 2017, a reciprocal form of financial assistance was supported by a large share of EU citizens (Lahusen & Grasso, 2018: 260-261).

Previous studies on public approval for granting financial assistance to indebted states analyzed factors that increase the willingness to show solidarity towards fellow countries in crisis. Higher levels of European identity (Lahusen & Grasso, 2018; Verheagen, 2018), support for EU membership (Baute et al., 2019; Lahusen & Grasso, 2018), cross-border practices (Ciornei & Recchi, 2017), cosmopolitanism (Bechtel et al., 2014; Díez Medrano et al., 2019; Kleider & Stoeckel, 2019; Kuhn et al., 2018), economic self-interest (Kleider & Stoeckel, 2019) and an economically left-wing orientation (Kleider & Stoeckel, 2019; Meuleman et al., 2020) enhance public support for granting financial assistance. Moreover, previous studies have explicitly controlled for differences between citizens living in economically strong and weak countries in their statistical analyses of support for EU-wide redistribution policies (Vasilopoulou & Talving, 2020; Verhaegen, 2018). One study found a

suggestive impact of the combination of welfare state regime types and economic performance (GDP change) on transnational solidarity (Ciornei & Recchi, 2017).

Citizens in creditor states may fear the misuse of monetary aid as well as free-riding by debtor states (Featherstone, 2016: 57; Gerhards et al., 2019: 246) and need to be assured that debtor states will not use the provided bailout packages to enjoy higher levels of welfare than those of creditors themselves (Pantazatou, 2015: 64-65). The rights and fears of voters in creditor states have to be balanced against those of people in debtor countries (Featherstone, 2016: 57).

This balancing act, which is a component of reciprocity in a solidarity deal, goes against the interests of citizens in debtor countries, who in turn have to implement harsh austerity measures. The question we therefore pose is the following: *Under which conditions are citizens living in EU debtor countries willing to accept austerity measures as part of the obligations imposed within the solidarity deal?*

Citizens in debtor states have to implement strict austerity measures to fulfill their part of the solidarity deal. Such conditions can certainly raise significant resistance among the populations of debtor states. We suspect that citizens are more willing to support the implementation of austerity policies if they a) see such policies as being in the national self-interest b) have a positive attitude towards the European community and c) are economically right-wing. The following paragraphs explain the rationales behind these expectations.

We know from the literature on other IMF bailouts that austerity measures attached to bailout packages are by nature unpopular, as citizens have to endure salary cuts and tax increases; thus, it is natural to expect that people will oppose them (Dornbusch & Edwards, 1991; Rodrik, 1996). Borrowing from research on welfare state policies, citizens support policy programs only if the policies serve their intended purpose (Roosma et al., 2013; Rothstein, 1998). This literature can also provide insights into the conditions that make citizens in debtor states more willing to embrace austerity measures. Citizens may accept such measures if they believe that their country is facing a severe crisis that requires an immediate solution (Grindle & Thomas, 1991) and that austerity measures will lead to better economic performance in the future (Fernández-Albertos, 2006). In other words, this rationale is based on utilitarian self-interest, not in terms of personal economic benefit but rather in regard to macroeconomic progress, which in turn could also have positive long-term effects on individuals' own financial situation. We describe a situation in which citizens compare the current state of affairs to possible future developments. The result is a "benchmarking" against alternative

scenarios (de Vries, 2018). In this vein, and similarly to a study on support for Social Europe, the present study also expects national economic self-interest to play a major role (Meuleman et al., 2020), with the only difference being that we consider benchmarking against future expectations from the perspective of bailout receiving states, which is currently an understudied field.

In a rational world, citizens of debtor states may accept conditions attached to financial aid only if the benefits of the loan exceed the costs of adopting the conditions attached to it (Featherstone, 2016; March & Olsen, 1989). It is therefore logical to expect that individual voters who are optimistic about the economic future of their country would be less likely to accept the need for the conditions attached to the European solidarity deal. We expect citizens in EU debtor states to be willing to implement austerity measures when they are pessimistic about the future development of the national economy. We formally hypothesize the following:

H1: If citizens in debtor countries are pessimistic about the national economic future, they are more likely to support the implementation of austerity measures.

Another factor is support for the idea of EU membership. Since the European solidarity deal was negotiated with major EU institutions, the visibility of the EU increased over the course of the Sovereign Debt Crisis. It has been shown that high levels of support for European integration enhance people's transnational solidarity (Baute et al., 2019; Kuhn et al., 2018; 2020; Lahusen & Grasso, 2018) and vice versa (Reinl, 2020). In contrast, if citizens are less favorable towards European integration, their willingness to fight together for a common goal and bear the costs for other member states or the union as a whole might decrease. In EU debtor countries, blame was focused mainly on the EU in public narratives, making it the symbol of austerity for the affected populations (Capelos & Exadaktylos, 2017). Austerity became entangled with attitudes towards the EU both in the minds of voters and for political parties (Katsanidou & Otjes, 2016). Therefore, voters' willingness to accept retrenchment policies might be more likely to depend on their attitudes towards the EU, than on their more stable feelings of European identity, which proved to be of major importance for citizens' views on the solidarity deal from the perspective of creditor states (for instance Lahusen & Grasso, 2018; Verheagen, 2018). The more voters support their country's EU membership, the more likely they are willing to pay a price to save the single currency and accept painful cuts to their welfare state. We thus hypothesize the following:

H2: If citizens in debtor countries endorse their country's membership in the European Union, they are more likely to support the implementation of austerity measures.

A third factor in citizens' preferences over the solidarity deal in EU creditor states is their left-right economic self-placement. Research shows that people who are generally in favor of greater financial redistribution within societies and who advocate greater state intervention in the economy also tend to support transnational solidarity (Kleider & Stoeckel, 2019; Meuleman et al., 2020). *However, what shapes preferences on implementing austerity policies within one's own country?*

According to the literature on different solidarity traditions within European societies, conditional solidarity policies implemented during a crisis can be reconciled with only two schools of thought on solidarity: the Christian democratic and the liberal traditions. In contrast, cuts to welfare state benefits are incompatible with socialist and social democratic notions of solidarity (Stjernø, 2011: 173).

In national parliamentary debates on the introduction of the European Financial Stability Mechanism (EFSF), anti-austerity rhetoric was predominantly used by Eurosceptic parties on the left that opposed the mechanism – for instance, the German left party as well as Syriza politicians. In the opinion of such parties, the EFSF violated principles of solidarity (Closa & Maatsch, 2014). Based on this line of argument, we expect that citizens keen to introduce austerity measures are more economically right-wing than left-wing. Therefore, our third hypothesis reads as follows:

H3: If citizens in debtor countries espouse right-wing economic attitudes, they are more likely to support the implementation of austerity measures.

The case of Greece

To identify the determinants of public support for austerity measures in EU debtor states, we use the most extreme case of EU intervention, that of Greece. It is one of the five countries that received bailout loans from the EU during the debt crisis. The greater severity of the crisis and the much harsher conditions imposed on the granting of financial aid in Greece than in any other debtor state at that time mark the country as an extreme case (Featherstone, 2016; Katsanidou & Lefkofridi, 2020). There are merits in employing an extreme case for the test of a new theory as it is designed as an exploratory analysis (Seawright & Gerring, 2008: 302).

Our results based on this extreme case may serve as a template for further research, showing the maximum limits when generalized to other debtor countries.

The story of the Greek crisis shows that in 2010, a relative majority of Greek citizens believed that austerity measures were necessary to overcome the crisis. As the crisis became more politicized a year later, voters no longer backed the bailout conditions and slowly started to turn their backs on the governing parties (Karyotis & Rüdiger, 2015). The Eurosceptic left-wing party Syriza won the January 2015 election against the incumbent center-left Samaras government on an anti-austerity program and built a coalition government with the right-wing Eurosceptic party Independent Greeks (ANEL), which promised an end to the era of painful retrenchment policies (Tsakatika, 2016).

The newly elected government's attempts to renegotiate the austerity measures were seen as unacceptable by Greece's EU counterparts. This disagreement led to a public referendum on the introduction of a bailout package in Greece that took place on the 5th of July 2015. However, for many observers and for voters themselves, it was not entirely clear whether the referendum was about austerity measures or the country's membership in the EU and the Eurozone, as political actors framed the issue differently (Crespy & Ladi, 2019: 878; Walter et al., 2018). The two governmental parties, Syriza and ANEL, clearly advised voters to choose the no option in the referendum to send a signal to creditors trying to "blackmail" the Greek people (Crespy & Ladi, 2019: 880; Featherstone, 2016: 54; Walter et al., 2018). Every voter supporting the yes option was accused of allying with Europe and especially Germany and betraying her own nation (Gartzou-Katsouyanni, 2020: 182). In contrast, New Democracy, PASOK and other parties shared their concerns that a no vote could mean leaving the Eurozone or even the European Union and therefore, recommended that citizens opt for the yes option (Crespy & Ladi, 2019: 880; Tsatsanis & Teperoglou, 2016; Walter et al., 2018). Antonis Samaras, the leader of New Democracy at that time, described the voting decision in the referendum as "essentially yes or no to Europe" (The New York Times Online, 2015). In addition to the domestic campaigns around the July referendum, international political elites also commented on it. Politicians from fellow EU states and officials from EU institutions warned the Greek electorate about voting against the proposed austerity measures (Aslanidis & Kaltwasser, 2016: 1085-1086; Crespy & Ladi, 2019: 880). The then EU Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker presented how a no result in the referendum would be interpreted abroad: "It's the moment of truth I'd like to ask the Greek people to vote yes No would mean that Greece is saying no to Europe" (The Guardian Online, 2015). Overall, the referendum wording as well as the government campaign framed the

referendum as a for-or-against question on the bailout agreement, while opposition forces and EU officials expanded this narrow framing by connecting the country's position in the EU and Eurozone to the bailout agreement itself.

The austerity referendum took place only one week after its announcement in a highly polarized political climate and was criticized from many perspectives. Its instrumental purpose of strengthening the government's bargaining position was criticized, while its unclear formulation and the listing of the no answer ahead of the yes option on the ballot raised doubts about the legitimacy of the result (Crespy & Ladi, 2019; Featherstone, 2016: 54-55; Sygkelos, 2015). The no vote gained 61.3% showing that a majority of the Greeks did not support the current solidarity deal with its austerity plan and were not willing to uphold their part of the agreement. In contrast, only 38.7% opted for the yes option and supported the political course laid out in the solidarity deal (Ministry of Interior, 2015).

Previous studies on the 2015 austerity referendum have shown that the vote shares for the no option were highest in regions with high levels of unemployment and poverty (Artelaris & Tsirbas, 2018) as well as on the Greek islands (Hansen et al., 2017). Walter and colleagues (2018) demonstrate that voters who expected that a non-cooperative referendum result would lead to renegotiations of the bailout conditions were more likely to vote against the proposed austerity measures than people who feared Greece's exit from the Eurozone as a consequence of a popular rejection of the referendum question. Therefore, yes votes were more likely among those voters who supported their country's membership in the Eurozone (Walter et al., 2018), who in general remained a relatively large share of voters throughout the economic crisis (Karyotis & Rüdiger, 2015: 125-126). This finding points in the same direction as our hypothesis but captures a more utilitarian perspective on support for the EU, as the study focuses solely on Eurozone membership. The paper at hand moves away from this purely rational macroeconomic dimension of Eurozone membership and examines approval of EU membership more generally.

To sum up our research hypotheses, we expect voters to be more willing to pay the price of austerity if they are pessimistic about the future of their national economy, support EU membership and are economically right-wing. These aspects have not been covered in former research and applying an extreme case allows us to understand under which circumstances individuals agree to harsh austerity conditions when the government asks their opinion directly (rather than in opinion polls only).

Data

This article analyzes post-election data provided by the study *Collective Action of Indignant Citizens in Greece* collected in autumn 2015 shortly after the September 2015 national election, and three months after the referendum (Marantzidis, 2017). The survey was administered to 1356 respondents in a very polarized political climate. The survey used a CATI design, with a representative sample drawn through multistage sampling of the Greek population aged eighteen years or older. The response rate was 14%.

Our dependent variable captures respondents' reported vote choice in the Greek bailout referendum. If voters voted in favor of the bailout conditions, we interpret this as willingness to fulfill their country's part in the European solidarity deal. To empirically test our hypotheses, we run a logistic regression analysis.

To test our first hypothesis, we need an evaluation of the country's economic situation. For this purpose, we use respondents' prospective evaluation of the national economic situation in the next 12 months. If an individual believed that the economic situation of the country would worsen, she held a fear of economic decline and, based on our discussion, will be keener to accept the conditions attached to the European solidarity deal and opt for the yes option in the bailout referendum.²⁹

To test our second research hypothesis, we include respondents' attitudes towards EU membership in our empirical model. We predict that if respondents were in favor of continuing Greece's EU membership, they should have been more likely to support the introduced bailout package with their vote.

Third, we measure whether respondents' self-placement on the economic left-right dimension affected their vote in the bailout referendum. In contrast to public opinion researchers who have identified support for granting monetary bailouts mainly among left-wing voters, we expect that more economically right-wing respondents are rather likely to have voted yes in the referendum.

In addition, we test for effects of a set of control variables. For this, we include socio-demographic variables (age, education, gender, income, and religiosity). Even though it has been shown that anti-austerity feelings are found across all ideological divides and socio-demographic groups (Karyotis & Rüdiger, 2015; Walter et al., 2018) and therefore, such

²⁹ Based on a small section of the sample that was part of a panel, we know that sociotropic evaluations of yes voters were rather stable before and after the referendum (mean of change = 0.008), which speaks against an endogenous relationship with the dependent variable.

variables should not explain much of the variance in our dependent variable, we assume that older and more highly educated voters are more likely to vote in favor of the proposed austerity measures, as they represent the group that benefits most from European integration. In regard to income, previous research has shown that individual economic self-interest seems to be a crucial factor in explaining support for EU redistribution policies. If economic welfare is comparatively high, people tend to be more supportive of EU solidarity and vice versa (Kleider & Stoeckel, 2019). We expect to find similar effects in our case study, as economically better-off respondents are more likely to depend less on the welfare state, which was one of the main targets of austerity measures, and thus be more willing to agree to cost-cutting in this area. With regard to religiosity, studies on solidarity have shown that more religious people tend to be more in favor of solidarity policies and charitable donations (Kiehl et al., 2018; Maggini, 2018). We test whether these insights are also transferable to borrowing parties in the European solidarity deal. A list of all the variables included in our models appears in the appendix (table A1). To enable a direct comparison of the regression outcomes, we standardize the continuous independent variables. To do so, we follow Gelman (2008) by dividing the values by two standard deviations.

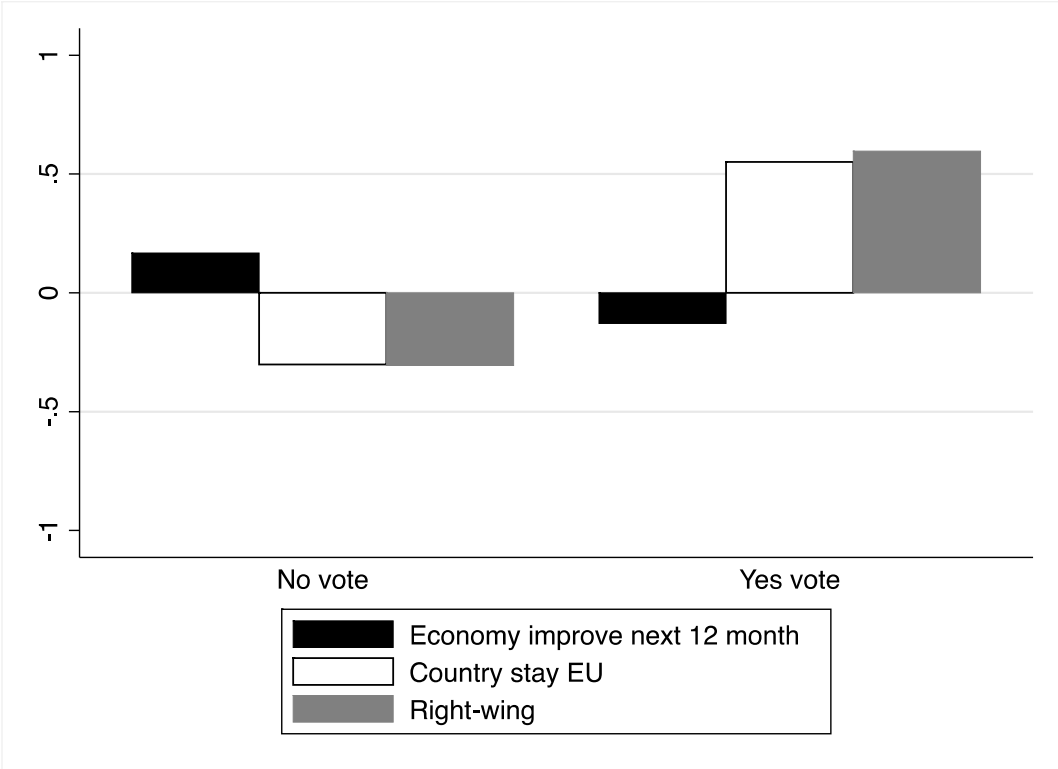
Results

First, before we turn to the results of our logistic regression analysis, we examine the distribution of our dependent variable and compare it with the actual referendum outcome. In the consulted survey, 61.85% of the participants with valid responses opted for the no option, whereas 38.15% voted in favor of the austerity measures. These numbers are very close to the official results, with a minimal deviation of just +/-0.55 percentage points³⁰, which confirms the representativeness of our data also for the referendum outcome.

Figure 2 examines the reported voting behavior in the austerity referendum subdivided according to respondents' assessment of the national economic situation, support for EU membership and left-right self-placement. Those respondents who opted for the no option on average are more positive about the country's future economic course, are less in favor of Greece remaining in the EU and are rather left-wing. In contrast, those respondents voting in favor of the bailout conditions are pessimistic about the future national economic trend, are positive towards their country's EU membership and are right-wing.

³⁰ In comparison, Walter et al. (2018) find a deviation of 3.3% from the actual election results in their pre-election survey data.

Figure 2: Distribution of the independent variables presented separately according to referendum vote

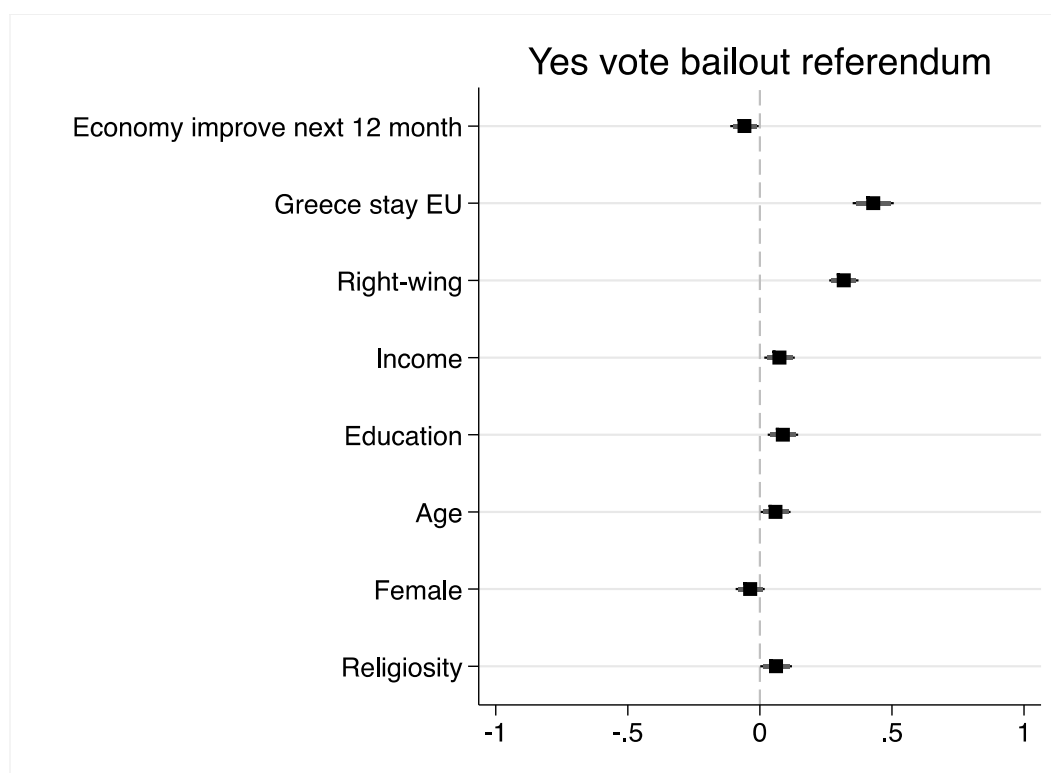


Note: Z-standardized values. Weighted presentation: weighted by age and gender.

These first descriptive results are in line with our hypotheses. The graphical presentation reveals that sociotropic evaluations of the economy seem to divide voter groups less than the other two factors. Consequently, attitudes towards the EU and economic left-right positioning could also play a greater role in the regression analysis introduced next.

Figure 3 presents the results of our logistic regression analysis. The results are presented in the form of average marginal effects with 90% and 95% confidence intervals shown. If the confidence intervals of the variables cross the vertical zero line, the effects on the dependent variable are not significant. However, if the intervals do not touch the vertical axis, the variables have a significant impact. As all the continuous variables in the model have been standardized (following Gelman, 2008), we can compare the effects directly in our interpretation. The regression table on which the graph is based appears in the appendix (table A2) and shows both the logistic regression coefficients (log odds) and the pictured marginal effects.

Figure 3: Marginal effects for predicting votes in the bailout referendum



Note: Results are based on a logistic regression model (table A2 in the appendix). Coefficients represent average marginal effects and 90%/95% confidence intervals.

Those voters more optimistic about the future economic development of their country had a lower probability of voting for the yes option. When a person is more optimistic about the country's future economic course the probability of voting in favor of the bailout package drops. This is in line with our first research hypothesis (H1), which states that if citizens in debtor countries are pessimistic about the national economic future, they are more likely to support the implementation of austerity measures. This effect is rather weak but significant at the 95% confidence level (see also table A2 in the appendix). In contrast, support for Greece's EU membership increased the probability of voting yes in the austerity referendum. This effect is highly significant (99.99% confidence level) and empirically supports H2. Respondents generally supporting EU integration are more willing to bear the burdens of austerity measures to remain part of the community and strengthen it. Turning to our third hypothesis, we do indeed find that right-wing respondents were more likely to opt for the yes option in the referendum. This is in line with the finding in the solidarity literature that conditional forms of redistribution are more compatible with Christian democratic or liberal parties (Stjernø, 2011: 173), which fall on the right side of the economic left-right spectrum.

If we now directly compare the effects of the three variables, we find the strongest influence on voting behavior in the positioning towards EU membership. In second place but still

strongly influential is respondents' positioning on the left-right axis. In contrast, the effect of future sociotropic evaluation is only marginal and almost negligible.

Respondents are more likely to have voted for the yes option if they are older, more religious, have a higher income and are more educated. These findings support our previous assumptions and are in line with the existing literature. In contrast, being female does not impact respondents' voting behavior.

Moreover, we run an additional robustness check to test whether our results might change once we control for voting behavior in the January 2015 election. Previous studies have found significant effects of vote choice in the latest national election on voting behavior in the Greek austerity referendum (Hansen et al., 2017; Walter et al., 2018). However, according to Teperoglou and Tsatsanis (2014), party identification in Greece dropped significantly after the onset of the debt crisis, and a new cleavage between pro- and anti-austerity supporters emerged. Therefore, instead of including dummy variables for each political party in our model, we integrate a variable differentiating between voters for parties campaigning in favor of and against the proposed austerity measures³¹. Our findings do not change once we control for respondents' voting behavior in the January 2015 election (see figure A1 in the appendix). This finding is in line with previous research showing that the July 2015 referendum was not about party identification but rather “tapped onto a more fundamental divide in Greek politics between, on one side, hardline Eurosceptic and leftist, anti-austerity Eurocritical groups and, on the other, market- friendly and pro-European political forces” (Tsatsanis & Teperoglou, 2016: 436).

Discussion

Over the course of the European Sovereign Debt Crisis, the EU, in cooperation with the IMF, installed bailout packages for member states to ensure their solvency in the short term and stabilize the single currency in the long term. In this paper, these low interest loans are described as a solidarity deal between more-solvent EU member states and those facing financial difficulties. Taking this deal as our point of departure, we venture to analyze the perspective of voters in debtor states. To date, previous research has mainly focused on voters' perspective on tax-payer money supporting other EU nations (for instance Gerhards et al., 2019; Vasilopoulou & Tavling, 2020; Verhaegen, 2018). Only a few attempts have been

³¹ Parties that supported the yes option in the referendum include the following: Nea Dimokratia, Pasok, Dimar, To Potami, Kidisio, and Enosi Kentroon. Parties that advised voters to opt for the no option were as follows: Syriza, ANEL, Golden Dawn, KKE, Teleia, and Laos. In our analysis, KKE and Laos are categorized as campaigning for the no option even though the parties were against the referendum altogether.

made to analyze debtor state citizens' perspective on the European solidarity deal at the time of the European Sovereign Debt Crisis (see for instance Walter et al., 2018).

As “the people” are never one homogenous mass but display nuances, this paper examined the conditions under which citizens in debtor countries were willing to support the solidarity deal and its harsh austerity measures. Our results show that citizens are willing to accept austerity measures if they believe that the policies are necessary steps for overcoming an economic crisis, if they want their country to remain an EU member state and if they hold more right-wing economic positions. Those who are optimistic and believe that the country's economy will recover naturally are less willing to support bailout packages tied to conditions. Our explanation for this is that these citizens do not see the necessity for austerity measures and, based on this conclusion, want to avoid painful retrenchment policies. The same applies to voters who would rather see their country exit the European Union and thus do not see the need to apply austerity measures to overcome the crisis and stabilize the community in the long run. In regard to citizens' positioning on the economic left-right spectrum, reciprocity and conditions attached to solidarity policies are more features of the Christian democratic or liberal traditions of solidarity. In contrast, socialist and social democratic ideas of solidarity are incompatible with the retrenchment policies introduced in Greece (Stjernø, 2011: 173). Left-wing parties in Greece also took up this view, opposing the 2015 Greek bailout package on the grounds of a lack of solidarity and taking anti-austerity stances (Closa & Maatsch, 2014).

In addition to the knowledge gained from this work, the paper also displays some weaknesses, primarily attributable to data quality. Due to the lack of inclusion of relevant items in the survey, we were not able to control for the level of identification with the EU and opted for support for EU membership in our statistical models instead. While both attitudinal dimensions have been considered in previous research and the EU support measure has some advantages for analyses of support for the solidarity deal in EU debtor states, studying the effect of European identity would also have been an interesting angle. Feelings of identity do not change as quickly as support for a community. Consequently, we face problems of inverse causality with our EU support measure that probably could have been avoided if European identity had been considered instead. Moreover, we cannot take into account whether respondents regarded the fulfillment of the solidarity deal as a moral duty or whether such considerations played no role. Subsequent studies should consider this aspect if possible.

Our results are based on the case of Greece in a very dramatic moment of its recent history. We are fully aware that this is a significant limitation of this study, as it presents an extreme case. However, this study may serve as a template for further lines of inquiry. The analysis is useful for understanding how citizens behave in extreme conditions and what elements can convince them to support even the most difficult austerity measures. New publications have shown an increased interest in conditional solidarity (Lengfeld & Kley, 2020), and current and future crises might force the EU to look further into this type of risk sharing.

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Appendix

Tables

Table A1: List of variables

| |
|---|
| Vote referendum- July 2015: What did you vote at the July 2015 Referendum? 0. no 1. yes |
| Economy improve next 12 month: What do you think about the economic perspectives of our country in the next 12 months? 1. Will worsen a lot - 5. Will improve a lot |
| Greece stay EU: In the last 5 years, there is a lot of concern about staying or leaving the EU. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 accounts for “leaving EU” and 10 accounts for “staying in the EU”, where would you place yourself? 0. Should leave the EU - 10. Should stay in the EU |
| Left-right self-placement: In politics, we commonly talk about ‘Right’ and ‘Left’. Where would you place yourself on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means ‘Left’ and 10 means ‘Right’? 0. Extreme Left - 10. Extreme Right |
| Female: 1. Male 2. Female |
| Age: 1. 18-24 2. 25-34 3. 35-44 4. 45-54 5. 55-64 6. 65+ |
| Education: 1. Without any degree 2. Primary school education 3. Secondary school education 4. High school education 5. Technical school education 6. Institute of Vocational Training 7. University degree 8. PhD |
| Income: 1. < 500 Euro 2. 501 - 1000 Euro 3. 1001 - 1500 Euro 4. 1501 - 2000 Euro 5. 2001 - 3000 Euro 6. 3001 - 5000 Euro |
| Religiosity: Regardless of the religion you belong to, how religious do you think you are? On a scale from 1 to 10, with 0 being “not religious at all” and 10 being “totally religious”. 0. Not religious at all - 10. Totally religious |

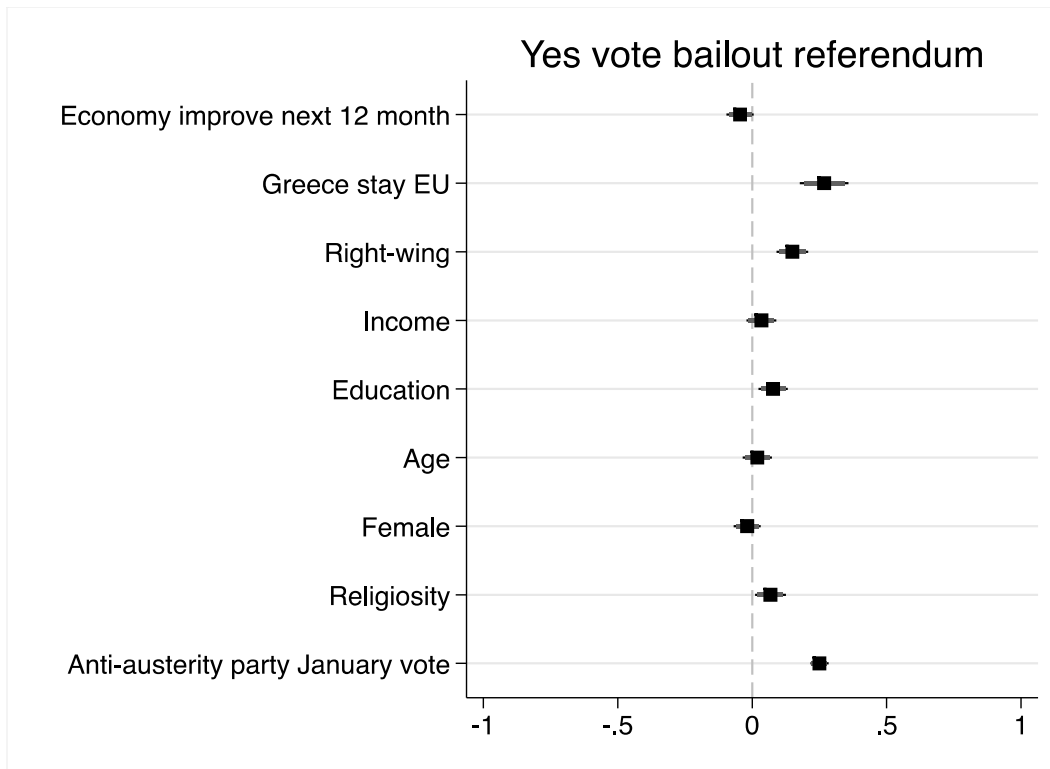
Table A2: Results of the logistic regression analysis

| | Model results | Average marginal effects |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Economy improve next 12 months | -.421 (.201)* | -.058 (.028)* |
| Country stay EU | 3.097 (.355)*** | .429 (.040)*** |
| Right-wing | 2.293 (.262)*** | .318 (.028)*** |
| Income | .536 (.216)* | .074 (.029)* |
| Education | .629 (.218)** | .087 (.030)** |
| Age | .429 (.211)* | .059 (.029)* |
| Female | -.264 (.203) | -.037 (.028) |
| Religiosity | .443 (.223)* | .061 (.031)* |
| Constant | -7.861 (0.872)*** | |
| Pseudo R ² | 0.368 | |
| N | 733 | 733 |

Note: Dichotomous dependent variable, 1 = yes vote, 0 = no vote; Left side: Log odds and standard errors in brackets; Right side: Average marginal effects; Significance: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p<0.001; Average marginal effects (right side) are used to calculate the values for figure 3.

Figures

Figure A1: Robustness check



Note: Results are based on a logistic regression model. Coefficients represent average marginal effects and 90%/95% confidence intervals.

Study III

**Transnational Solidarity Among Political Elites:
What Determines Support for Financial Redistribution within the EU in Times of
Crisis?**

With Dr. Heiko Giebler

(WZB Berlin Social Science Center and Freie Universität Berlin)

Under review at European Political Science Review

Abstract

As a consequence of the European Economic Crisis, the European Union (EU) has implanted mechanisms to assist fellow member states facing severe economic difficulties. Despite an increasing academic interest in studying public preferences for such intra-EU solidarity measures, research has so far ignored individual characteristics that could possibly influence politicians' views. In this paper, we look at politicians' preferences for transnational solidarity and argue that these preferences depend primarily on general attitudes regarding socio-economic issues as well as attitudes related to the EU. Moreover, we hypothesize that the relationship is moderated by responsibility attribution and the economic situation in the respective politician's home country. Using survey data of about 4000 politicians running for office in nine EU countries, we find that transnational solidarity is more common for socio-economically left-wing and pro-EU politicians but also that these attitudinal effects are constrained as attitudinal differences cease to matter under certain circumstances.

Keywords: Solidarity, European Union, Politicians, Economic Crisis

Introduction

Solidarity is and always has been a fundamental value underlying the process of European Integration (Sangiovanni, 2013: 213). However, for decades, the meaning of the term and the nature of transnational policies associated with solidarity remained rather vague. This situation changed involuntarily since the late 2000s. The European Union (EU) had to face numerous consecutive economic and political crises, sometimes even referred to as the “polycrisis” (Zeitlin, Nicoli and Laffan, 2019), which turned out to be severe tests but also real catalysts for solidarity among member states. With the beginning of the polycrisis, the onset of the European Economic Crisis,³² a renewed discussion of the term practically became unavoidable – among citizens, politicians as well as scholars.

Throughout the European Economic Crisis, the EU was divided over its political course to solve economic and financial difficulties. Due to the organizational structure of the EU as a community of autonomous states, the introduction of support and bailout programs for fellow states required the approval of national governments and, in most cases, national parliaments. Besides the Greek referendum on bailout conditions in 2015, citizens had little say when it came to the implementation of EU-wide solidarity mechanisms. Instead, national parliamentarians had a strong impact on intra-EU redistribution policies.

So far, only a few publications have investigated politicians’ positions on transnational solidarity in the years of the European Economic Crisis (Closa and Maatsch, 2014; Maatsch, 2014; Wendler, 2014; Maatsch, 2016). Moreover, some studies analyzed the attitudes and decisions of national governments at that time (for instance Târlea, et al., 2019). These studies, however, focus on parliamentary debates or votes instead of going deeper and studying the underlying attitudes of politicians and their willingness to support transnational solidarity within the EU. Consequently, these studies do not offer an unbiased depiction of politicians’ preferences, since politicians’ speeches and voting behavior in parliament are strongly restrained by their party affiliation and the expected loyalty to the party line.

Existing research on popular preferences for economic assistance during the European Economic Crisis shows that citizens’ preferences are governed by two dimensions of political conflict, namely socio-economic and EU issues (Baute, Abts and Meuleman, 2019; Kleider

³² We use the term ‘European Economic Crisis’ to describe the events and developments following the collapse of the US subprime mortgage market in 2007. Clearly, the crisis is multi-dimensional and can be split into different phases (for an overview, see Hodson and Puetter, 2013), which means that many different terms are used to describe the crisis (e.g., banking crisis, financial crisis, debt crisis or Euro crisis). The interconnectedness of these different phases makes it very difficult to distinguish them properly. Hence, we picked (European) Economic Crisis as the most universal term.

and Stoeckel, 2019; Kuhn, Nicoli and Vandebroucke, 2020). Citizens showing a socio-economically left-wing and more pro-EU profile support measures of transnational solidarity. Congruence between citizens and elites is crucial in representative democracy – not just in terms of preferences but also on their underlying factors. In our study, we translate these explanatory approaches to the level of political elites to see if they also hold for politicians.

We build on the work of Bartels (2003), Zaller (1992) and others to distinguish between general attitudes and specific preferences for transnational solidarity that are influenced by these general attitudes. However, as we argue below, this relationship depends on an individual's environment and the resulting perceptions and experiences.

Are political elites guided by their attitudes towards socio-economic issues and the EU when developing preferences for transnational solidarity? Which role do contextual factors play for these relationships? We answer these questions using data provided by the Comparative Candidates Survey (CCS) and the 2014 European Election Candidate Study (EECS). The dataset holds information on electoral candidates' support for transnational solidarity for close to 4000 individuals. We combine this survey data with information on parties, public opinion and the economic situation of a country. In total, we cover nine EU member countries and politicians running in 12 elections for a total of more than 50 different political parties.

We run multilevel linear regression analyses to validate our theoretical arguments. Indeed, politicians' attitudes towards socio-economic and EU issues determine preferences for transnational solidarity – with more left-wing and more pro-European politicians being more in favor of solidarity measures. We also find that contextualization matters: if the receiving state is held responsible for its economic crisis, solidarity levels decrease. At the same time, when the politician's own country is facing economic problems, we see significantly higher levels of support. Finally, and in addition to these direct effects, we also find that the impact of attitudes on preferences is moderated: differences in attitudes only play a role if politicians perceive the receiving state as being responsible for its economic crisis. Similarly, different attitudes do not lead to different preferences regarding transnational solidarity if economic misery is high in the respondent's country.

Our findings are similar to those of studies on popular attitudes. Thinking about representation and accountability in democratic systems, this is clearly an encouraging sign and a positive implication of our study. We also show that a mere focus on political parties and their stances misses out on a lot of variation of preferences. Considering the important role politicians play in democracies – and that their relevance seems to increase continuously

due to the personalization of politics and the (social-media induced) individualization of political communication – this implies the necessity to analyze the supply-side of politics in a more differentiated way.

Transnational solidarity and the European Economic Crisis

In broad and general terms, when we refer to solidarity within a political community, we talk about “the preparedness to share resources with others by personal contribution to those in struggle or in need and through taxation and redistribution organised by the state” (Stjernø, 2004: 2). For the EU, even though numerous treaties mention solidarity between member states, the term still lacks a precise definition in public as well as scientific debates (Kontochristou and Mascha, 2014; Pantazatou, 2015; Lahusen and Grasso, 2018b).

Solidarity within a member state is often referred to as *national or social solidarity* (Pantazatou, 2015). When it comes to solidarity between EU member states on the state level, earlier research has introduced the terms *international, inter-state or member-state solidarity* (Pantazatou, 2015; Ciornei and Recchi, 2017; Baute, Abts and Meuleman, 2019). In reference to the European Economic Crisis and financial assistance given to fellow member states, the term *fiscal solidarity* gained prominence as well (Lahusen and Grasso, 2018a; Vasilopoulou and Talving, 2020). Gerhards and colleagues (2018) distinguish two types of solidarity recipients and they do not limit the substantive nature of solidarity, e.g., as being focused on fiscal issues or social rights: “By European solidarity, we understand a form of solidarity that goes beyond one’s own nation state, and where the recipients of solidarity are other EU countries, or citizens of other EU countries” (Gerhards, et al., 2018: 6). Closely related but focusing on the level of individuals, solidarity between individuals living in member states or the promotion of cross-border social rights have usually been labeled *transnational solidarity* (Ciornei and Recchi, 2017; Baute, Abts and Meuleman, 2019).

Our study focuses on individual members of the political elite and their willingness to support solidarity measures towards other EU countries and their citizens in need. Consequently, we refer to the addressed definition of European solidarity given by Gerhards and colleagues (2018). However, to clarify the level of investigation already in the naming of the concept, we use the term *transnational solidarity* when referring to measures that are meant to bring relief during the European Economic Crisis.

Scientific research is divided on the question whether EU states have really shown solidarity or if their actions depicted quite the opposite, namely a lack of solidarity. Since the introduction of bailout packages for debt-ridden member states was bound to the

implementation of harsh austerity measures, some researchers do not see much solidarity in this type of assistance (Habermas, 2013: 11). In contrast, other studies categorize the actions of the EU and its member states as acts of solidarity. It is argued that even though the creation of some instruments to tackle the crisis was not based on “altruism in the contributing states, but on the feeling of common destiny and common interests” (Stjernø, 2011: 172), they can still be classified as expressions of solidarity.

Scholarly work on European solidarity during the European Economic Crisis focuses on different actors. For representative democracies, we can distinguish between demand- and supply-side actors embedded in a specific institutional setting. On the demand-side, there are the voters and interest groups, while the supply-side refers to parties and politicians. These actors find themselves in different relationships (Katz, 2014). Citizens, on the one hand, influence the supply-side but citizens’ preferences are also shaped and structured by demand-side actors (for instance Druckman, Peterson and Slothuus, 2013; Hobolt and de Vries, 2015; Stoeckel and Kuhn, 2018). Politicians, on the other hand, set the party's political course, but in return must also adapt their stances and behavior, i.e., they follow the prescribed party discipline (Bøggild, 2020). At the same time, parties form governments and thereby shape policies, which are supposed to represent the interests of their voters, but without a doubt have an impact on the society at large.

A number of studies have been published mapping the macro level of European solidarity on the supply-side, that is, the reactions of governments, states and political institutions (for instance Frieden and Walter, 2019; Târlea, et al., 2019; Wasserfallen, et al., 2019). However, the research strand that dominates the field examines public support for EU redistribution policies (among others Lengfeld, Schmidt and Häuberer, 2015; Lahusen and Grasso, 2018a; Gerhards, et al., 2019). Most of these studies analyzed the preconditions for support of fellow EU states and named European identity (Ciornei and Recchi, 2017; Verhaegen, 2018), cosmopolitanism (Bechtel, Hainmueller and Margalit, 2014; Ciornei and Recchi, 2017; Kuhn, Solaz and van Elsas, 2018; Kleider and Stoeckel, 2019), economic orientation (Kleider and Stoeckel, 2019) and support for EU membership (Lahusen and Grasso, 2018a) as motivations.

In contrast, only few publications have addressed the positions of parties or parliamentarians on solidarity measures, which limits our understanding of elite preferences. Regarding the nation state, left-wing political parties are well known proponents of strong welfare states (see for instance Amable, Gatti and Schumacher, 2006; Kiess and Trenz, 2019) whereas right-wing parties favor a more “exclusive” form of solidarity (Lefkofridi and Michel, 2017).

With regard to political parties and solidarity at the EU level, research either is based on media content (Bremer, 2018) or relies on parliamentary debates. Concerning the latter, Maatsch (2014) studied the positioning of parties on anti-crisis measures. Her findings suggest that in addition to parties' location on the economic dimension, being a recipient state of bailout programs affects the positioning on austerity measures. Despite their economic ideology, right-wing parties from debtor countries advocated Keynesian instead of neoliberal policies. Moreover, Maatsch (2016) as well as Closa and Maatsch (2014) investigated the stance of political parties towards European economic governance: political parties more likely support EU-wide anti-crisis mechanisms if they are Europhile and currently in government. These findings are supported by the work of Wendler (2014) for Germany who argues that both the government-opposition distinction as well as the positioning on the economic left-right dimension determined party stances during the European Economic Crisis.

What is missing in previous research, however, is an unbiased investigation of political elites and their preferences for transnational solidarity. Despite the important findings with regard to parliamentary debates, these do not allow conclusions to be drawn about preferences of politicians. Similar to votes in parliament, plenary contributions as well as media appearances are affected by party discipline. With the exception of some descriptive insights on preferences for transnational solidarity among politicians (Ferrera and Pellegata, 2019), there is no comprehensive attempt to identify motives for transnational solidarity within political elites. This constitutes a relevant research gap since the importance of political elites' attitudes and preferences in representative democracies is very high – not to the least concerning issues of representation.

Obviously, political parties rely on their organization, but they also rely on their personnel when it comes to fulfilling their role in the democratic process (Gunther and Diamond, 2003). Politicians are also crucial in communicating with citizens, either directly or via the media (Kitschelt, 2000; Römmele, 2003; Matsubayashi, 2013). Depending on the electoral system, individual politicians – or, more precisely, their background and policy positions – are the main focus of citizens' voting decisions (e.g., Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1992). Even in less candidate-centered electoral systems, politicians are the face of a party and form the group of individuals from which representatives are selected (Mitchell, 2000). Hence, a better understanding of how preferences towards transnational solidarity relate to other characteristics of politicians can help to understand the formation of party or even government positions.

While there exists a potential gap between preferences and behavior, it seems necessary to not only focus on decisions by governments, roll-call votes of MPs or party stances but also on individual politicians. Behavior is always the result of preferences and contextual factors that constrain them. Therefore, it seems reasonable to take a step back and to examine politicians' preferences towards transnational solidarity. The following section discusses the attitudinal bases of political elites' transnational solidarity and the role of context.

Attitudinal base of transnational solidarity and potential constraints

In this paper, we follow Bartels' (2003) distinction of attitudes – relatively stable psychological leanings – and preferences – particular and situational expressions (see also Kuklinski and Peyton, 2009: 8). This study pursues the idea that attitudes that are more general influence specific preferences (Sniderman, Brody and Tetlock, 1991; Stevens, Bishin and Barr, 2006). This is related to research on belief systems (e.g., Kuklinski and Peyton, 2009), assuming a certain interrelatedness of attitudes and preferences, and to the idea of heuristics (e.g., Kahneman and Tversky, 1982), which are used to form preferences while ignoring complexity.

We expect that attitudes regarding important dimensions of political competition,³³ in this case the socio-economic and EU dimension, determine preferences regarding transnational solidarity. Hence, we assume that patterns identified for citizens can also be translated to the level of political elites.³⁴ In this regard, more recent literature on the so-called European “migration crisis” can be consulted. Voters' and political elites' preferences for cross-border burden-sharing are both shaped by feelings of identity, attitudes towards migrants and more general support for redistribution (Basile and Olmastroni, 2020).

Comparable to support for redistributive policies within a nation state, such as the expansion of the welfare state, preferences for transnational solidarity during the European Economic Crisis should also be based on the politician's placement on the socio-economic left-right dimension. The consideration of economic left-right orientations is crucial for studying public

³³ For many decades and even still today, political competition in democracies has been conceptualized and measured as a conflict on a single left-right dimension (e.g., Adams, 2012). However, there are strong arguments for a multi-dimensional approach to political competition, distinguishing a socio-economic, a socio-cultural and a European dimension of political conflict (Kitschelt, 1994; Marks, et al., 2006; Kriesi, et al., 2008). This is further underlined by research indicating that these dimensions cannot easily be reduced to a single dimension and that the meaning of left-right varies between contexts and individuals (e.g., Inglehart and Klingemann, 1976; de Vries, Hakhverdian and Lancee, 2013; Giebler, Meyer and Wagner, 2019). Hence, this paper does not simply rely on left-right positions.

³⁴ If there were differences, we would expect an even stronger relationship for elites than regular citizens, since elite beliefs are even more strongly structured than mass beliefs (Peffley and Rohrschneider, 2007).

conflicts over fiscal transfers (Kleider and Stoeckel, 2019). In fact, research on public support for transnational solidarity has shown that economically more right-wing citizens tend to be opposed to financial redistribution between countries (Baute, Abts and Meuleman, 2019) whereas “people on the left were more in favour of increasing the amount of assistance for crisis-affected countries” (Gerhards, et al., 2019: 85). Therefore, our first research hypothesis reads as follows:

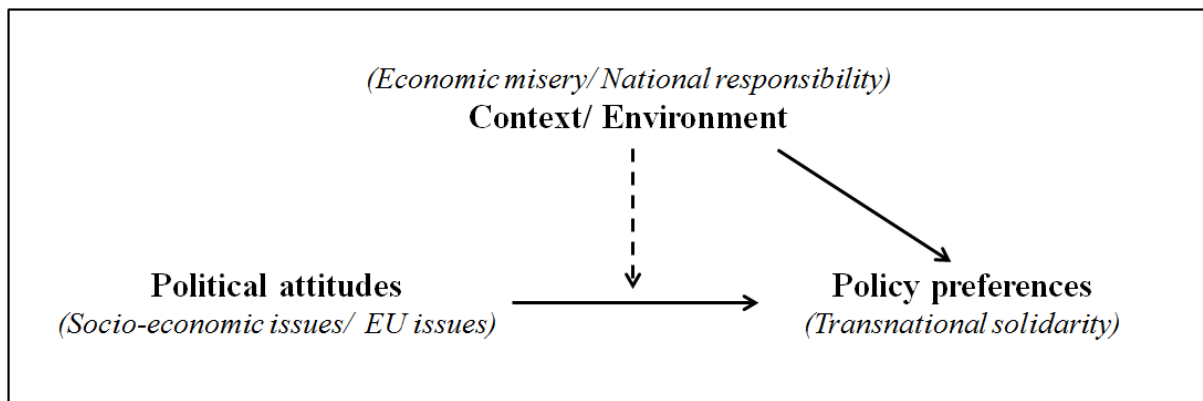
H1: The more socio-economic left-wing attitudes are held by politicians, the stronger the preferences for transnational solidarity.

By definition, transnational solidarity goes beyond the national context. Hence, attitudes towards international cooperation should be of relevance. In the European context, attitudes towards the EU fit perfectly with this assumption. When European integration policies are generally rejected, willingness to financially invest in the stability of the community or to assist fellow states in crisis should also be low. In the citizenry, Eurosceptic sentiments correlate with feelings of low transnational solidarity (Baute, Abts and Meuleman, 2019; Reinl, 2020) and Eurosceptic parties tend to vote against anti-crisis measures (Maatsch, 2016). In contrast, those citizens who identify with the European Union are more likely to favor financial emergency relief (Gerhards, et al., 2019: 88). We therefore also expect to find more support among politicians holding positive attitudes towards the EU and European integration.

H2: The more pro-EU attitudes are held by politicians, the stronger the preferences for transnational solidarity.

Political preferences vary according to people’s social and political environment (Zuckerman, Kotler-Berkowitz and Swaine, 1998; Bartels, 2003). Therefore, in addition to the direct effects of politicians’ attitudes on transnational solidarity, we assume that their impact is conditional. Zaller (1992) argues that expressed attitudes strongly depend on the (informational) environment. These insights are in line with Sniderman, Brody and Tetlock (1991) revealing that preferences depend on political predispositions and are context-dependent. Hence, figure 1 illustrates that, in addition to the already discussed effect of general attitudes, context has both a direct and a moderating effect (dashed arrow).

Figure 1: Theoretical argument



Obviously, the number of contextual factors or characteristics of the environment influencing a politician's preference formation is very high. However, a meaningful selection has to be made. We have decided to follow the same strategy as applied when identifying general attitudes that influence solidarity preferences: again, we draw on research on public opinion. Not only does this allow us to test the general argument of conditionality, but also to evaluate whether there are similar mechanisms at work when looking at the supply- and demand-side.

Kuklinski and Peyton (2009: 10) claim that people start updating their beliefs if conditions start to change. Changes in the national economic performance constitute such a situation. Individuals living in countries with a good and stable economic performance show more support for intra-EU financial transfers (Kleider and Stoeckel, 2019; Vasilopoulou and Talving, 2020). In contrast, when national financial resources are limited, voters prefer to spend the money on national affairs rather than distributing it within the EU (Lengfeld, Schmidt and Häuberer, 2015). In simple terms, this kind of transnational solidarity has its price and the willingness to pay this price increases if societies are better off.

However, if we follow the rational choice paradigm, we would instead assume that politicians favor financial redistribution policies if their country benefits as a recipient state. This has already been shown in studies of regional redistribution programs within countries (Heinemann, et al., 2014; Balcells, Fernández-Albertos and Kuo, 2015) as well as with regard to public support for solidarity actions between EU states. Debtor states are much more in favor of intra-EU financial redistribution policies than creditor states, which usually have to pay (more) for such measures (Genschel and Hemerijck, 2018; Gerhards, et al., 2019: 89-91). Moreover, the stronger the national economy the less citizens tend to support European economic governance in general (Kuhn and Stoeckel, 2014). All in all, it seems more plausible to expect more support for transnational solidarity if a country's economic performance is poor or deteriorating.

Finally, despite their more market-oriented political orientation, even right-wing parties from debtor states favored European redistribution policies (Maatsch, 2014). We therefore assume conditional effects for the national economic performance on the impact of attitudes on transnational solidarity. Depending on the country a politician lives in, s/he may be in favor of financial redistribution policies despite a socioeconomically right-wing or anti-EU position if economic misery is high. National economic self-interest outweighs the impact of attitudes.

Previous research has also shown that whether people are responsible for their current plight constitutes an important criterion for deserving solidarity (van Oorschot, 2000). Whether a politician believes that a country deserves solidarity can be described in our framework as the result of information processing. The outcome of this process influences how general attitudes are transformed into policy preferences, as it constitutes the informational environment (Zaller, 1992). This argument is consistent with research conducted by Bartels (2003) who underlined the importance of additional information for the development of preferences.

Many citizens living in better off creditor states such as Germany have negative preconceptions about their “lazy” fellow EU citizens in Southern Europe (Stjernø, 2011: 172; Kontochristou, 2014). Gerhards and colleagues (2019: 246) presume that citizens become more skeptical towards inter-country redistribution policies when they get the impression that state administrations in the receiving countries are misusing monetary bailout. Indeed, according to a comparative survey in the context of the European Economic Crisis, one-third of respondents states that no financial aid should be given to countries that have handled money poorly in the past (Lahusen and Grasso, 2018a: 260-262). In line with this, we expect that politicians tend to be less supportive of transnational solidarity if they believe that the recipient states themselves are responsible for the crisis.

Again, we also expect the impact of attitudes on the willingness to support transnational solidarity to be conditioned by the attribution of responsibility. Even though politicians may support redistribution policies because of their general attitudes, they should oppose transnational solidarity if they believe that the receiving states are in a self-imposed situation.

Hence, for both factors discussed – namely national economic misery and ascribed national responsibility – we expect to find direct and indirect effects on politicians’ preferences concerning transnational solidarity:

H3: The greater the economic misery in a politician's home country, the stronger the preferences for transnational solidarity.

H4: The lower the ascribed national responsibility, the stronger the preferences for transnational solidarity.

H5: The impact of attitudes on preferences for transnational solidarity is conditioned by economic misery and ascribed responsibility.

Data and operationalization

While there are several data sources and ways to measure policy positions of political parties – ranging from hand- or machine-coded documents to expert judgements – information on individual politicians is rather scarce. This becomes even more problematic when, as in this paper, the researchers are not merely interested in top politicians such as party leaders or presidential candidates, but in a comprehensive coverage of party elites.

We rely on candidate surveys to identify politicians' policy positions. Specifically, we use data from the Comparative Candidates Survey (CCS, 2020), which applies a common core questionnaire very similar to the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (cses.org). Furthermore, the 2014 European Election Candidate Survey (GLES, 2017) provides information for some additional countries and elections, since it uses a more or less identical core questionnaire.³⁵ Politicians running for office in the national or European Parliament constitute mid- to high-level political elites who play a major role in shaping the (national) political arena.

The countries included in this study represent a heterogeneous group of EU member states, which differ from each other in many respects, such as national economic performance, the country's status during the European Economic Crisis (with Greece, Portugal and Romania as receiving countries) or the duration of EU membership. Moreover, we cover different welfare regimes, different levels of democratic quality as well as countries with and without a socialist past. In other words, while we are unable to conduct a large-N comparison on the country level, our findings allow for some generalization.

As our dependent variable measures *transnational solidarity* in the context of the European Economic Crisis, we use two survey items for which the respondents' agreement was

³⁵ We are well aware that national and European Parliament elections differ in many regards. However, for the purpose at hand, we do not expect these aspects to be an issue for our analyses. Nevertheless, we add an indicator distinguishing between national and European elections as a control in all our statistical models.

measured on a five-point Likert scale: (1) ‘*The EU should continue to support all current members of the Eurozone facing major financial crises*’ and (2) ‘*The EU and/or IMF should provide funds for more investment to stimulate economic growth*’. In combination, from a conceptual and a methodological standpoint, these items provide a valid measure of transnational solidarity. We calculate the mean value for each respondent; high values indicate more support for transnational solidarity. Finally, we grand-mean center the values applying post-stratification weights which means that positive values refer to above-average support of transnational solidarity.³⁶

As we argued above, specific preferences towards transnational solidarity should depend on general attitudes on two core dimensions of political conflict – *socio-economic issues* and *EU issues*. The surveys provide several items related to these two dimensions. There are three items to measure the socio-economic dimension: the intervention of the government in the economy, the provision of social security by the government, and the government’s role in reducing income differences. There are two suitable indicators to measure attitudes on the EU dimension: evaluation of EU membership and preferences for more or for less European integration. The general attitudes are calculated as the mean values of the respective items;³⁷ high values indicate a socio-economic left-wing or pro-EU position.

We use two items to measure *ascribed national responsibility* for the European Economic Crisis. The first asks about the responsibility of national politicians and governments, while the second refers to all of the people in the country. Combining these items, we cover cultural issues and failures of political elites that were present in debates during the European Economic Crisis. Again, we calculate the mean values of both items, which are measured on five-point Likert scales; high values represent higher ascribed national responsibility.

As a second constraining factor, we add an *economic misery index* as a macro-level predictor. Originally introduced as the Economic Discomfort Index in the 1960s and later rebranded as the Economic Misery Index by the Reagan administration (Lovell and Tien, 2000), the index is calculated as the sum of the unemployment rate and the inflation rate, which we took from Eurostat (2019a; 2019b). Such an index is often used as a proxy for the overall economic situation influencing political attitudes and behavior, e.g. in the context of economic voting

³⁶ More information regarding these and all other items used in this study can be found in the supplementary material (table S1 and S2).

³⁷ The EU items are measured on different scales. Hence, we standardized the items to make them comparable before calculating the mean (Gelman, 2008).

(Lewis-Beck, 2006).³⁸ To incorporate the lingering effect of economic situations, we use the average value for the period of two to four years before the politicians were surveyed.

We also incorporate several control variables at the micro, meso and macro level. At the individual level, we differentiate between politicians on the basis of their role and experience by introducing a binary indicator of *being a Member of Parliament (MP)*. We also control for a person's *gender* (2 = female), *age* (measured in years) and *educational attainment* (1 = low, 2 = medium and 3 = high).

Moreover, other factors should also impact the person's preference regarding transnational solidarity. First and foremost, this preference should be influenced by the party's position on the two dimensions of political conflict. We measure party positions using data from the MARPOR group (Volkens, et al., 2018). Building on work by Volkens and Merz (2018), we selected coding categories that best fit the two dimensions of political conflict. Following common practice to transform these frequency scores into positional values for *party positions regarding socio-economic* and *EU issues*, we rely on logit-transformed scales (Lowe, et al., 2011). High values indicate a socio-economic left-wing or pro-EU position. In addition, whether or not a respondent's party is in government constitutes another relevant factor to control for. Data to construct this binary indicator (1 = party is in government; 0 = party is not in government) is taken from the GovElec database (WZB, 2019). *Government participation* is determined at the time when the elite surveys were in the field, which is not always directly after an election has taken place.

On the country level, we add a measure of *public opinion regarding transnational solidarity* in a country. Here, we use data provided by the 2014 European Election Study (Schmitt, et al., 2016) and rely on average positions of citizens as it is commonly done in research on party positions or positional shifts (e.g., Adams, 2012; Hobolt and de Vries, 2015).³⁹ We also control for whether the respondent stood as a candidate at a national or European election. This should allow us to pick up systematic bias due to the *election type*.⁴⁰

All in all, this allows us to conduct our analysis for candidates of 12 elections in nine different countries. This set of elections covers more than 50 different political parties and we have

³⁸ As a robustness check, we additionally control for being a debtor country during the crisis or not (see table S4 model 2 in the supplementary material). This has no effect on our results.

³⁹ We calculated a variable identifying national means of public opinion on transnational solidarity using the following question: "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: In times of crisis, it is desirable for (OUR COUNTRY) to give financial aid to another EU Member State facing severe economic and financial difficulties." The response scale runs from *totally agree* (1) to *totally disagree* (4) (for more information, see Schmitt, et al., 2016). To facilitate the interpretation of the results, we reversed the scale.

⁴⁰ Table S2 in the supplementary material provides an overview of descriptive statistics for all the variables used in this study.

valid data for 3990 politicians. While the large data requirements result in substantive limitations – e.g. the MARPOR dataset only includes parties with parliamentary representation – this nevertheless constitutes the most comprehensive approach to measuring and explaining elites’ positions on transnational solidarity as of now.⁴¹

We use linear multilevel models to predict transnational solidarity. In doing so, we acknowledge the hierarchical and complex data structure with respondents nested in parties nested in elections. The resulting three-level model does not only correct for correlated error terms by cluster, but also provides meaningful standard errors for explanatory variables on the two higher levels. Furthermore, we run the estimation model on weighted data. More precisely, parties are weighted based on their vote share in the last national election, while we also add weights to ensure equal importance for all elections covered. Both decisions help to control for unequal numbers of candidates as well as response rates, while also considering the political reality in each context. Finally, we have standardized all continuous independent variables following Gelman’s (2008) approach to standardization, which allows for direct comparison between all variables including categorical predictors.

Results

We start the presentation of our empirical results by looking at differences between countries and elections (figure 2); negative values indicate less support for transnational solidarity than average. Transnational solidarity is seen very positively in Greece, Portugal or Romania, but not so much in Finland, the UK, and especially the Czech Republic. There seems to be quite some variation between countries and elections, but also a fairly clear pattern: countries that actually benefit from transnational solidarity between EU member states and received financial bailout over the course of the European Economic Crisis are more in favor of such measures. Countries less affected by the European Economic Crisis or which are in general better off in terms of unemployment rates and inflation, do not support solidarity that strongly – probably because they would potentially have to pay for adopted solidarity measures. However, countries such as Denmark, Germany or Sweden would not have benefited directly from such solidarity measures either, but rather occupy an intermediate position. Finally, there does not seem to be a temporal trend in the sense that surveys conducted closer to the high times of the crisis led to less support.

⁴¹ A full list of elections, parties and the number of politicians per party can be found in table S3 in the supplementary material.

Figure 2: Transnational solidarity by country



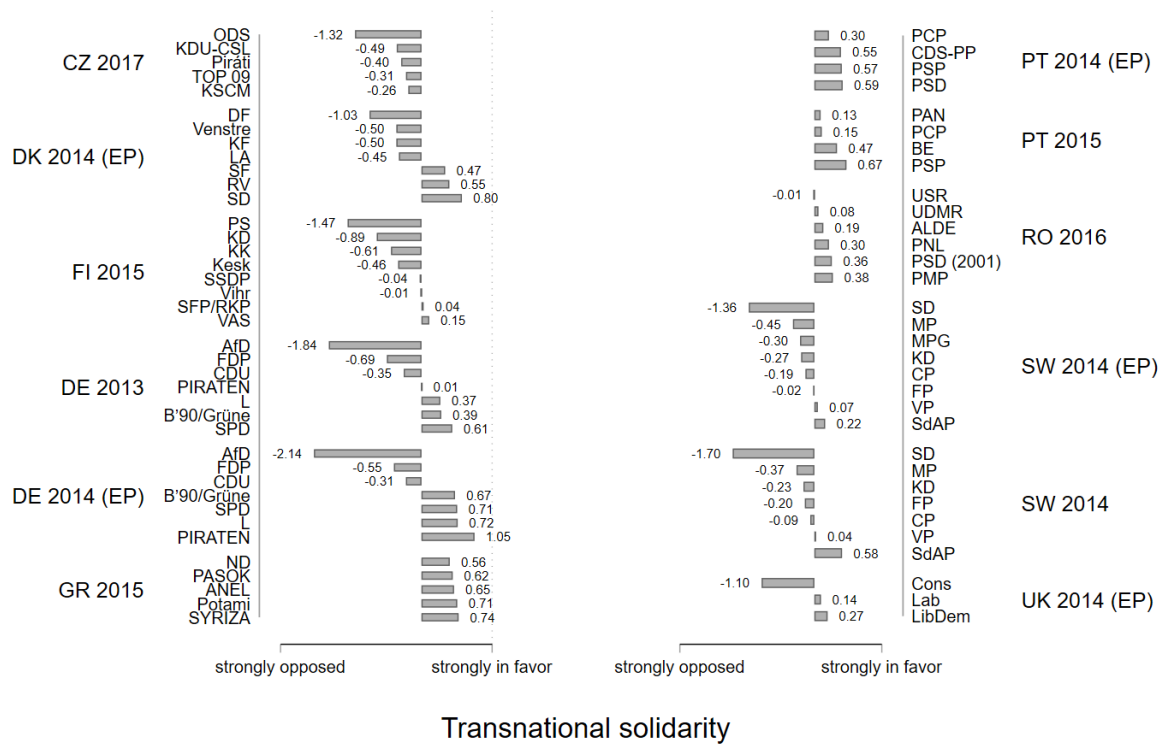
Note: Values represent country means with weights applied. Means have been sorted by country means (from lowest to highest). The scale endpoints refer to the theoretical endpoints of the scale; a value of zero represents the overall mean, as the variable has been grand-mean centered.

If we look at the differences between parties, we see even more variation (figure 3). With the exception of Greece and the two Portuguese elections, which show only positive values for all parties, and the Czech Republic with unanimously less than average support, there are positive and negative values in all countries and for all other elections. There seems to be a clear pattern, as parties of party families traditionally associated with more left-wing socio-economic positions are much more prone to transnational solidarity. For example, looking at the two studies from Germany, we find that candidates of socio-economically more right-wing parties, in this case the CDU (including its sister party CSU), FDP and AfD, reject solidarity measures more strongly than the overall average, while socio-economic more left-wing parties such as the Left, the Greens or the SPD show positive values. This also applies to the UK: The Conservatives are opposed to solidarity measures, while the Liberal Democrats and Labour are in favor of such measures.

Thinking about the second dimension of general attitudes, there also seems to be a pattern – but somewhat weaker. For all countries, more EU-sceptic parties, such as the various (radical) right-wing populist parties included in our study (for example, the German AfD, the Swedish SD or the Danish DF), show rather large, negative averages. However, if one considers that

skepticism towards the EU is also to be found on the left (Marks, et al., 2006), the position of leftist parties' candidates seems to be mainly driven by their socio-economic and not their EU issue positions.

Figure 3: Transnational solidarity by party



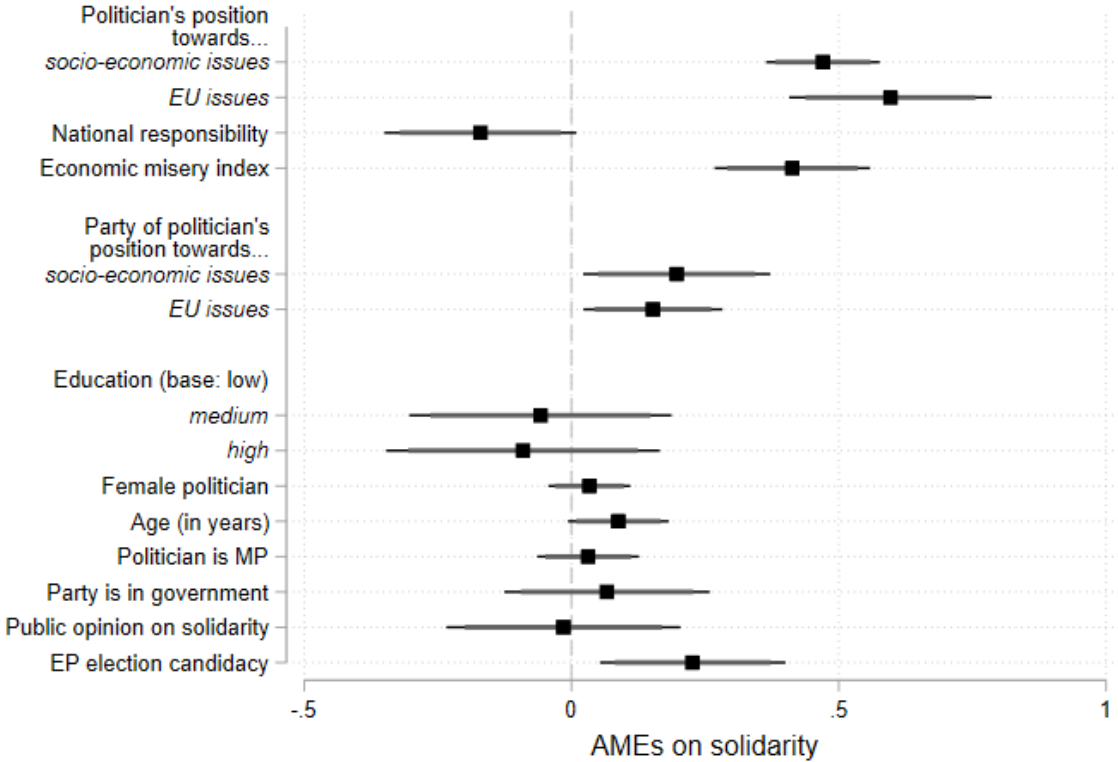
Note: Values represent party means with weights applied. Means have been sorted first by country name and then by party means (from lowest to highest). The x-axis endpoints refer to the theoretical endpoints of the scale; a value of zero represents the overall mean as the variable has been grand-mean centered.

All in all, there are substantive differences on the meso and macro level and there seem to be certain patterns underlying these differences. In regard to our hypotheses, this provides some indication that politicians from countries facing economic misery are more supportive of transnational solidarity (H3). At the same time, assuming that socio-economically more left-wing and more pro-EU parties are represented by electoral candidates with similar attitudes, H1 and H2 could also prove to be valid. However, we are primarily interested in micro-level differences in preferences for transnational solidarity.⁴² Are there also systematic patterns when looking at individual politicians' attitudes? And, can we validate our hypotheses regarding the role of socio-economic and EU issue attitudes as well as factors conditioning their impact?

⁴² Figure S1 in the supplementary material also shows substantial variation on the micro level of politicians' preferences.

The findings of our multi-level regression model are presented in figure 4, which depicts the average marginal effects (AMEs) as well as the 90 and 95 per cent confidence intervals.⁴³ If the confidence intervals do not cross the dashed vertical line, we find a significant effect at the corresponding level. As all continuous independent variables have been standardized, we can compare effect sizes directly.

Figure 4: Marginal effects for predicting transnational solidarity



Note: Results are based on a multi-level regression model (table A1 in the appendix). Coefficients represent average marginal effects and 90/95 per cent confidence intervals. Interaction terms are part of the model, but not presented here.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 are both supported: general attitudes determine specific preferences. Socio-economically more left-wing and more pro-EU politicians do indeed support transnational solidarity significantly strongly. This means that there are similar patterns for citizens and political elites, as these findings are consistent with public opinion studies cited above. In comparison to the other independent variables, we also see that the effect is quite substantive for both predictors, but slightly stronger for attitudes towards the EU.

Hypotheses 3 and 4 claim that contextual/environmental effects play a direct role in explaining preferences. As figure 4 shows, this assumption is more or less confirmed. If a politician perceives the potentially receiving country to be responsible for the crisis,

⁴³ The full regression table can be found in the appendix (table A1).

preferences for transnational solidarity measures decrease substantively. However, this effect is only significant on the 90 per cent level of confidence. With regard to economic misery, we find the expected positive effect, as poor economic conditions in the politician's home country are linked to being more in favor of solidarity. This effect is also substantially bigger than the effect of ascribed responsibility.

Before moving to the hypothesized indirect effects, we first look at our set of controls. We find a significant effect for parties' positions regarding socio-economic issues as well as EU issues. Even with all the other predictors included, candidates of more left-wing and more pro-EU parties still have significantly stronger preferences for transnational solidarity. This calls for more attention in future studies: It might be that the party context should also be understood as a conditioning factor determining how preferences are formed. It seems obvious that politicians of one and the same party share policy positions and have similar attitudes. Assuming that politicians and party organizations are not driven solely by office-seeking, overall party stances should be a function of these attitudes, and this should result in a substantive correspondence between the positions of a party and the politicians. However, our results suggest that the role of parties is not only to provide a platform for politicians with similar attitudes, but to also foster certain preferences. Having said that, the respondents' attitudes have a much larger effect than party stances which indeed calls for a dynamic perspective on politicians and their party platforms.

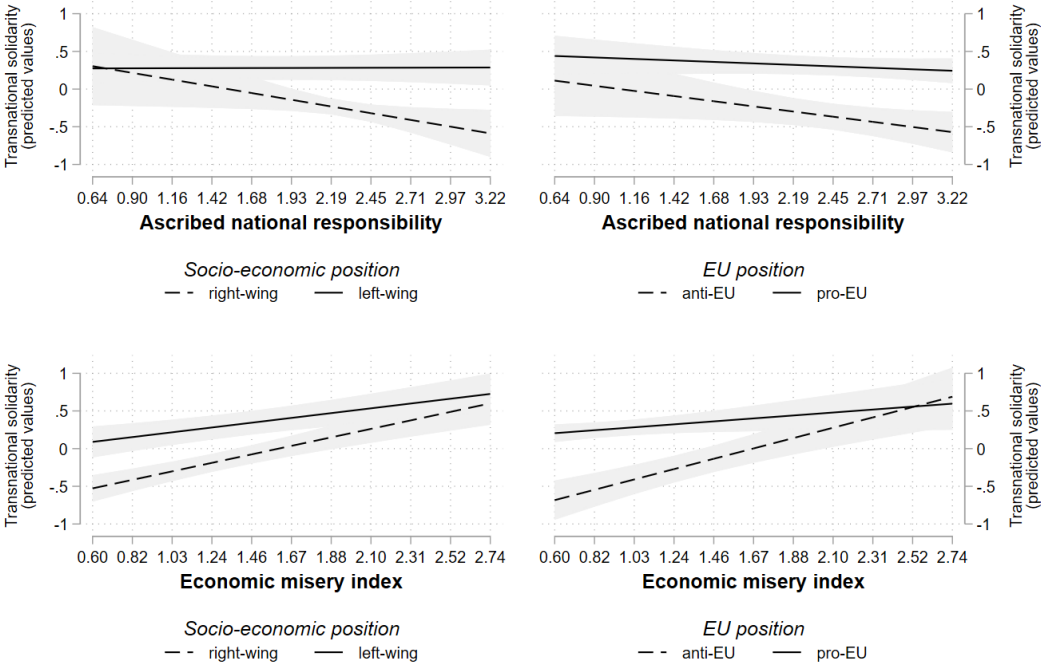
Whether the party an electoral candidate is running for is in government or whether the candidacy won a mandate has no impact on transnational solidarity. We also do not find an effect for educational attainment or gender – but there seems to be some indication that older politicians are more supportive for financial aid. Politicians' transnational solidarity is also not driven by public opinion. In contrast, having run for office in an EP election actually increases transnational solidarity, which is quite surprising after controlling for all the other factors. Whether this is due to specific selection criteria for candidates in different political arenas, variation in issue salience or due to entirely different reasons is very difficult to say and goes beyond the focus of this paper. Similar to our findings on party positions, this might constitute a fruitful avenue for future research.

Finally, the model is quite well able to explain variance in preferences for transnational solidarity (see also table A1). Following the approach by Raudenbush and Bryk (2002), the overall R^2 is 0.48, while the level-specific R^2 -values vary substantively. On the level of individuals, we explain slightly more than 14 per cent of the variance, while this value

increases to more than 94 per cent (party level) and 82 per cent (election level). This clearly indicates that additional factors on the level of individual politicians should be considered in future studies.

To evaluate whether the effects of socio-economic and EU issue positions are moderated by the economic context and ascription of responsibility (H5), we estimate interactions in our multi-level model. All interaction terms are significant with an error probability below (at least) 5 per cent (see Table A1) – which is already a strong argument in favor of confirming our last hypothesis. However, graphical representation makes it easier to interpret interactions. Figure 5 presents the predicted values of our dependent variable for different combinations of the attitudinal as well as the potentially moderating factors. All other independent variables are set to their empirical mean.

Figure 5: Conditioning the effects of attitudes on preferences



Note: Results are based on a multi-level regression model (Table A1). Estimations represent predicted values with 95 per cent confidence intervals. The solid line refers to an attitudinal value equal to the empirical mean plus one standard deviation, while the dashed line refers to an attitudinal value equal to the empirical mean minus one standard deviation.

The interpretation of the sub-plots is straight-forward. The plots on the left differentiate between socio-economically left- and right-wing politicians, while the plots on the right differentiate between politicians with anti- and pro-EU attitudes. Right-wing and anti-EU positions (dashed line) are defined as the mean position minus one standard deviation, and

left-wing and pro-EU positions are defined by adding one standard deviation to the mean. Hence, we present predicted values for politicians with different attitudes moderated by the level of ascribed national responsibility (upper plots) and economic misery (lower plots).

Unsurprisingly, we find that, overall, economically more right-wing politicians and respondents with less favorable opinions regarding the EU support transnational solidarity to a lesser degree. This is very much consistent with our theoretical argument and the results above. However, the figures indicate that the relationship of attitudes and preferences is substantially moderated by context and environment. Responsibility ascription seems unimportant for left-wing and pro-EU politicians – they support transnational solidarity regardless. The picture is very different for politicians with right-wing and anti-EU attitudes as they follow their general attitudes much more closely if they perceive the national actors to be responsible for the crisis. Similarly, if politicians reside in a country facing severe economic misery, differences between respondents with left-wing and right-wing as well as pro- and anti-EU attitudes decrease or even disappear. All in all, we interpret this as a validation of Hypothesis 5. Without a doubt, the impact of attitudes on preferences is moderated and constrained by contextual/environmental factors.

We also run a couple of robustness checks (see supplementary material, model 2 to 4 in table S4 and figures S2 as well as S3). As the specified interactions in our main model are quite complex, we also estimated regressions with separate interactions for each context factor and the two attitude measures. Moreover, we also added a dummy variable controlling for being a debtor country or not. While this is a cruder indicator than our economic misery index, one might still argue that the logic is primarily based on such a binary distinction. However, none of these additional models contradicts the interpretation of our main findings.

Discussion

For the EU and its member states, a certain level of transnational solidarity must be standard. Without solidarity it would be impossible to form or to keep alive a stable and institutionalized union of nation states. In fact, solidarity has been at the heart of the European integration process but it has never been as severely tested as it has been during the last 15 years.

Focusing on consequences of the European Economic Crisis, this paper investigated drivers of elite opinion regarding transnational solidarity. While there are some studies on public opinion, political parties or government action, comparative research on political elites in a broader sense is quite scarce. We contribute to the literature by analyzing data of close to

4000 politicians of more than 50 different political parties. In our theoretical argument, we postulate that general attitudes toward socio-economic issues and the EU determine preferences for or against transnational solidarity. However, these preferences are also influenced by contextualization. In our empirical model, we test both for a direct effect of economic conditions and the ascription of responsibility, as well as the moderating effects of these factors. We argue that differences in general attitudes are more or less important depending on the contextualization.

Our results show that both left-wing attitudes in terms of socio-economic issues and more pro-EU attitudes lead to higher levels of transnational solidarity – confirming our first two hypotheses. Furthermore, we find that politicians who ascribe responsibility for the Economic Crisis to national actors or who do not live in a country that also suffers from poor economic conditions oppose transnational solidarity (H3 and H4). Finally, it turns out that the latter two factors also have an indirect effect – differences in attitudes do not always lead to differences in preferences. As our fifth hypothesis proclaimed, ascribed responsibility and economic misery condition the effect of general attitudes.

Relating our findings to research on public support for transnational solidarity, we conclude that there are very similar patterns in terms of underlying motivations. It goes without saying that this is a positive sign for representative democracy. Such similarities between supply- and demand-side are a precondition for meaningful electoral competition, vote choice and accountability mechanisms. This paper also shows that the traditional political conflict about redistribution – at least when viewed from a transnational perspective – is still significant. At the same time, the results echo the (increasing) importance of EU issues for national politics, as EU attitudes determine support for transnational solidarity. It would be interesting to see whether our findings travel to other contexts calling for transnational solidarity among EU member states – e.g. regarding the distribution of refugees and immigrants as well as with regard to solidary actions across borders during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Combating the international pandemic and its economic consequences confronts the European states probably with their greatest challenge since the end of the Second World War. The knowledge gained from research on transnational solidarity in the wake of the European Economic Crisis can help to better reflect the current concerns, opinions and behavior of European citizens and politicians alike. Considering both sides of the representative model in policy-making processes equally could also be an important step towards building a more representative democracy in the EU.

This study focuses only on preferences and not on actual behavior. In other words, we now have a better understanding of the factors that determine elite opinions regarding transnational solidarity. At the same time, however, we do not know whether politicians, and especially elected politicians, also act in accordance with their preferences. There are many potential reasons for such a preference-behavior gap and future research should investigate whether this gap actually exists regarding transnational solidarity. It seems reasonable to assume that a stronger focus on conditioning factors and, thus, an expansion of the approach presented here could be key.

Trying not to sound alarmist, a better understanding of political elites' attitudes and preferences regarding transnational solidarity constitutes a crucial task for future research. Given Brexit and its consequences, the climate crisis, illiberalization of democracy in Eastern Europe, populists in power in several EU member states and COVID-19 pushing the capacities of the member states, it is easy to imagine that transnational solidarity in the EU will be as (con-)tested as it will be necessary as the glue between states and societies.

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Appendix

Table A1: Multi-level regression results

| | Model results | | Average marginal effects | |
|---|---------------|--------|--------------------------|--------|
| Socio-economic issue position | 0.03 | [0.35] | 0.47 *** | [0.05] |
| EU issue position | 0.77 *** | [0.17] | 0.60 *** | [0.10] |
| National responsibility | -0.46 * | [0.22] | -0.17 + | [0.09] |
| Education (base level: low) | | | | |
| medium | -0.06 | [0.13] | -0.06 | [0.13] |
| high | -0.09 | [0.13] | -0.09 | [0.13] |
| Female politician | 0.03 | [0.04] | 0.03 | [0.04] |
| Age (in years) | 0.09 + | [0.05] | 0.09 + | [0.05] |
| Politician is MP | 0.03 | [0.05] | 0.03 | [0.05] |
| Socio-economic position (party) | 0.20 * | [0.09] | 0.20 * | [0.09] |
| EU position (party) | 0.15 * | [0.07] | 0.15 * | [0.07] |
| Party is in government | 0.07 | [0.10] | 0.07 | [0.10] |
| Economic misery index | 1.15 *** | [0.31] | 0.41 *** | [0.07] |
| Public opinion: transn. solidarity | -0.02 | [0.11] | -0.02 | [0.11] |
| EP election data | 0.23 * | [0.09] | 0.23 * | [0.09] |
| <i>INTERACTIONS</i> | | | | |
| Socio-economic issue position # National responsibility | 0.35 * | [0.16] | | |
| EU issue position # National responsibility | 0.19 * | [0.09] | | |
| Socio-economic issue position # Economic misery index | -0.23 * | [0.10] | | |
| EU issue position # Economic misery index | -0.46 ** | [0.17] | | |
| Intercept | -1.68 ** | [0.54] | | |
| <i>RANDOM PART</i> | | | | |
| var(individual) | 0.45 *** | | [0.04] | |
| var(party) | 0.02 ** | | [0.01] | |
| var(election) | 0.01 | | [0.01] | |
| <i>R²</i> | | | | |
| Individual level, N = 3990 | | 0.14 | | |
| Party level, N = 71 | | 0.94 | | |
| Election level, N = 12 | | 0.82 | | |
| Total | | 0.48 | | |

Standard errors in brackets; post-stratification weights are applied; average marginal effects are used to draw figure 4; model results are used to calculate values for figure 5.

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Supplementary Material

Tables

Table S1: Overview of items, coding and data sources

| Variable | Items | Coding |
|--|---|--|
| Level of politicians | | |
| <i>Transnational solidarity</i> ^a | The EU should continue to support all current members of the Eurozone facing major financial crises. | Average of items; high values indicate stronger support for transnational solidarity; values have been grand-mean centered |
| | The EU and/or IMF should provide funds for more investment to stimulate economic growth. | |
| <i>Socio-economic issue position</i> ^a | Governments should abstain from intervening in the economy. | Average of rescaled items; high values indicate left-wing positions |
| | Providing a stable network of social security should be the prime goal of government. | |
| | The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels. | |
| <i>EU issue position</i> ^a | Some say European unification should be pushed further. Others say it already has gone too far. What is your opinion? Please indicate your views using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means unification 'has already gone too far' and 10 means it 'should be pushed further'. What number on this scale best describes your position? | Average of rescaled items; high values indicate pro-EU positions |
| | Generally speaking, do you think that [country's] membership of the European Union is a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad? (Tick one box only.) | |
| <i>Ascribed national responsibility</i> ^a | Following the international financial crisis that started in 2007, the economy in many countries has experienced serious problems. How responsible for the crisis in these countries would you say each of the following is? | Average of items; high values indicate more ascribed national responsibility |
| | ...the governments and politicians in the countries suffering from the economic crises ...the people/everybody in these countries | |
| <i>Politician's gender</i> ^a | Gender of the politician | 1 = male; 2 = female |
| <i>Education</i> ^a | Educational attainment (school) based on ISCED | 1 = low; 2 = medium; 3 = high |
| <i>Age</i> ^a | Age measured in years at time of election | High values indicate older politicians |
| <i>Member of parliament</i> ^a | Was the politician elected to parliament? | 0 = politician is not a MP; 1 = politician is a MP |
| Level of parties | | |
| <i>Socio-economic position (party)</i> ^b | Left-wing categories: per403, per404, per412, per413, per504, per701, per409 Right-wing categories: per401, per402, per505, per702, per414 | Positions are calculated based on Lowe et al. (2011); high values indicate socio-economically more left-wing positions |

| Variable | Items | Coding |
|--|--|---|
| <i>EU issue position (party)</i> ^b | Pro-EU categories: per108, per107, per602 Anti-EU categories: per110, per109, per601 | Positions are calculated based on Lowe et al. (2011); high values indicate more pro-EU positions |
| <i>Government party</i> ^c | Was the politician's party part of the government after the surveyed election? | 0 = no; 1 = yes |
| Level of elections | | |
| <i>Economic misery index</i> ^d | Has the politician's country suffered economic misery (high unemployment and high inflation) in the last two to four years before the survey? | Sum of unemployment rate and inflation; high values indicate stronger economic misery |
| <i>Public opinion: transnational solidarity</i> ^e | To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: In times of crisis, it is desirable for (OUR COUNTRY) to give financial help to another EU Member State facing severe economic and financial difficulties. | Country means; rescaled item; high values indicate stronger public support for transnational solidarity |
| <i>EP election candidacy</i> ^a | Was the politician surveyed as a candidate in a national of European parliament election? | 0 = politician was surveyed as a candidate in national election; 1 = politician was surveyed as a candidate in EP elections |

Note: Items were reverse-coded for calculating combined measures if necessary.
Sources: ^a = CCS/EECS; ^b = MARPOR; ^c = GovElec; ^d = Eurostat; ^e = EES 2014.

Table S2: Descriptive statistics

| <i>Level</i> | <i>Continuous Variables</i> | min | max | mean | Sd |
|--------------|------------------------------------|--|-------|-------|-------|
| Individual | Transnational solidarity | -2.70 | 1.30 | -0.05 | 0.91 |
| | Socio-economic issue position | -2.90 | 1.08 | 1.65 | 1.08 |
| | EU issue position | 0.35 | 1.78 | 1.37 | 0.43 |
| | National responsibility | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.26 | 0.83 |
| | Age (in years) | 17 | 83 | 47.37 | 13.02 |
| Party | Socio-economic position (party) | -1.79 | 9.67 | 1.24 | 1.66 |
| | EU issue position (party) | -9.17 | 8.80 | 1.39 | 4.06 |
| Election | Economic misery index | 5.50 | 24.97 | 11.74 | 5.37 |
| | Public opinion: transn. solidarity | 2.12 | 3.05 | 2.54 | 0.33 |
| <i>Level</i> | <i>Categorical Variables</i> | Coding and distribution | | | |
| Individual | Member of parliament | 0 = no (79.93%); 1 = yes (20.07%) | | | |
| | Politician's gender | 1 = male (63.52%); 2 = female (36.48%) | | | |
| | Education | 1 = low (1.79%); 2 = medium (20.61%); 3 = high (77.60%) | | | |
| Party | Government party | 0 = no (52.15%); 1 = yes (47.85%) | | | |
| Election | EP election data | 0 = no (54.57%); 1 = yes (45.43%) | | | |

Descriptive statistics are limited to cases used in the analysis. Values have been calculated after the standardization outlined in the main text. Post-stratification weights have been applied.

Table S3: Overview of elections, parties and number of politicians

| Election | Party Name | Initials | N |
|-----------------|---|-----------------|----------|
| CZ 2017 | Christian Democratic Union - Czech People's Party | KDU-CSL | 29 |
| | Civic Democratic Party | ODS | 33 |
| | Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia | KSCM | 40 |
| | Czech Pirate Party | Piráti | 44 |
| | Tradition Responsibility Prosperity 09 | TOP 09 | 32 |
| DK 2014 (EP) | Conservative People's Party | KF | 5 |
| | Danish People's Party | DF | 3 |
| | Danish Social Liberal Party | RV | 4 |
| | Left, Denmark's Liberal Party | Venstre | 5 |
| | Liberal Alliance | LA | 2 |
| | Social Democrats | SD | 4 |
| | Socialist People's Party | SF | 9 |
| FI 2015 | Centre Party of Finland | Kesk | 34 |
| | Christian Democrats | KD | 37 |
| | Finnish Social Democratic Party | SSDP | 37 |
| | Finns Party | PS | 28 |
| | Green League | Vihr | 45 |
| | Left-Wing Alliance | VAS | 61 |
| | National Coalition | KK | 27 |
| | Swedish People's Party | SFP/RKP | 23 |
| DE 2013 | Alliance 90/Greens | B'90/Grüne | 161 |
| | Alternative for Germany | AfD | 117 |
| | Christian Democratic Union | CDU | 135 |
| | Free Democratic Party | FDP | 131 |
| | Pirate Party Germany | PIRATEN | 165 |
| | Social Democratic Party of Germany | SPD | 174 |
| | The Left | L | 134 |
| DE 2014 (EP) | Alliance 90/Greens | B'90/Grüne | 11 |
| | Alternative for Germany | AfD | 8 |
| | Christian Democratic Union | CDU | 63 |
| | Free Democratic Party | FDP | 43 |
| | Pirate Party Germany | PIRATEN | 4 |
| | Social Democratic Party of Germany | SPD | 58 |
| | The Left | L | 6 |
| GR 2015 | Coalition of the Radical Left | SYRIZA | 46 |
| | Independent Greeks | ANEL | 45 |
| | New Democracy | ND | 56 |
| | Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement | PASOK | 63 |
| | The River | Potami | 80 |
| PT 2014 (EP) | Portuguese Communist Party | PCP | 1 |
| | Portuguese Socialist Party | PSP | 15 |
| | Social Democratic Center - Popular Party | CDS-PP | 2 |
| | Social Democratic Party | PSD | 7 |

Table S3: Overview of elections, parties and number of politicians (continued)

| Election | Party Name | Initials | N |
|-----------------|--|-----------------|----------|
| PT 2015 | Left Bloc | BE | 51 |
| | People-Animals-Nature | PAN | 26 |
| | Portuguese Communist Party | PCP | 40 |
| | Portuguese Socialist Party | PSP | 66 |
| RO 2016 | Alliance of Liberals and Democrats | ALDE | 30 |
| | Hungarian Democratic Alliance of Romania | UDMR | 11 |
| | | | 2 |
| | National Liberal Party | PNL | 56 |
| | People's Movement Party | PMP | 31 |
| | Save Romania Union | USR | 80 |
| | Social Democratic Party | PSD (2001) | 42 |
| SW 2014 (EP) | Centre Party | CP | 83 |
| | Christian Democrats | KD | 13 |
| | | | 1 |
| | Green Ecological Party | MPG | 20 |
| | | | 5 |
| | Left Party | VP | 23 |
| | | | 6 |
| | Liberal People's Party | FP | 19 |
| | | | 3 |
| | Moderate Party | MP | 22 |
| | | 8 | |
| | Social Democratic Labour Party | SdAP | 20 |
| | | 2 | |
| | Sweden Democrats | SD | 15 |
| SW 2014 | Centre Party | CP | 18 |
| | Christian Democrats | KD | 17 |
| | Left Party | VP | 15 |
| | Liberal People's Party | FP | 9 |
| | Moderate Party | MP | 23 |
| | Social Democratic Labour Party | SdAP | 11 |
| | Sweden Democrats | SD | 3 |
| UK 2014 (EP) | Conservative Party | Cons | 10 |
| | Labour Party | Lab | 12 |
| | Liberal Democrats | LibDem | 18 |

Party names and initials are taken from the MARPOR dataset.

Table S4: Additional multi-level regression results

| | MODEL 1 | MODEL 2 | MODEL 3 | MODEL 4 |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Socio-economic issue position | | 0.02 [0.36] | -0.29 [0.31] | 0.83*** [0.13] |
| EU issue position | | 0.76*** [0.17] | 0.12 [0.33] | 1.23*** [0.23] |
| National responsibility | | -0.46* [0.22] | -0.51+ [0.26] | -0.19+ [0.10] |
| Economic misery index | | 1.00** [0.32] | 0.37*** [0.06] | 1.25*** [0.36] |
| Socio-economic issue position # National responsibility | | 0.34* [0.16] | 0.37* [0.16] | |
| EU issue position # National responsibility | | 0.19* [0.09] | 0.22+ [0.12] | |
| Socio-economic issue position # Economic misery index | | -0.22* [0.10] | | -0.27* [0.11] |
| EU issue position # Economic misery index | | -0.45** [0.17] | | -0.50** [0.19] |
| Socio-economic position (party) | | 0.20* [0.09] | 0.24* [0.11] | 0.19* [0.09] |
| EU position (party) | | 0.13* [0.06] | 0.14* [0.07] | 0.14+ [0.08] |
| <i>Education (base: low)</i> | | | | |
| medium | | -0.06 [0.12] | -0.05 [0.12] | -0.06 [0.13] |
| high | | -0.10 [0.13] | -0.08 [0.12] | -0.09 [0.14] |
| Female politician | | 0.03 [0.04] | 0.03 [0.04] | 0.04 [0.04] |
| Age (in years) | | 0.09+ [0.05] | 0.08+ [0.05] | 0.11+ [0.06] |
| Politician is MP | | 0.03 [0.05] | 0.02 [0.05] | 0.02 [0.06] |
| Party is in government | | 0.07 [0.10] | 0.10 [0.10] | 0.08 [0.11] |
| Public opinion: transn. solidarity | | 0.04 [0.12] | -0.00 [0.11] | 0.01 [0.11] |
| EP election data | | 0.26** [0.08] | 0.24** [0.09] | 0.18+ [0.09] |
| Debtor country | | 0.23+ [0.13] | | |
| Intercept | 0.05 [0.16] | -1.79** [0.58] | -0.68 [0.66] | -2.49** [0.78] |
| var(individual); N = 3990 | 0.52*** [0.05] | 0.46*** [0.04] | 0.45*** [0.04] | 0.46*** [0.04] |
| var(party); N = 71 | 0.34*** [0.11] | 0.02** [0.01] | 0.03* [0.01] | 0.02** [0.01] |
| var(election); N = 12 | 0.06 [0.07] | 0.01 [0.00] | 0.01 [0.01] | 0.01 [0.01] |

Standard errors in brackets; post-stratification weights are applied; model results are used to calculate values for figure S2 and S3.

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Figures

Figure S1: Distribution of preferences for transnational solidarity (histogram, N = 3990)

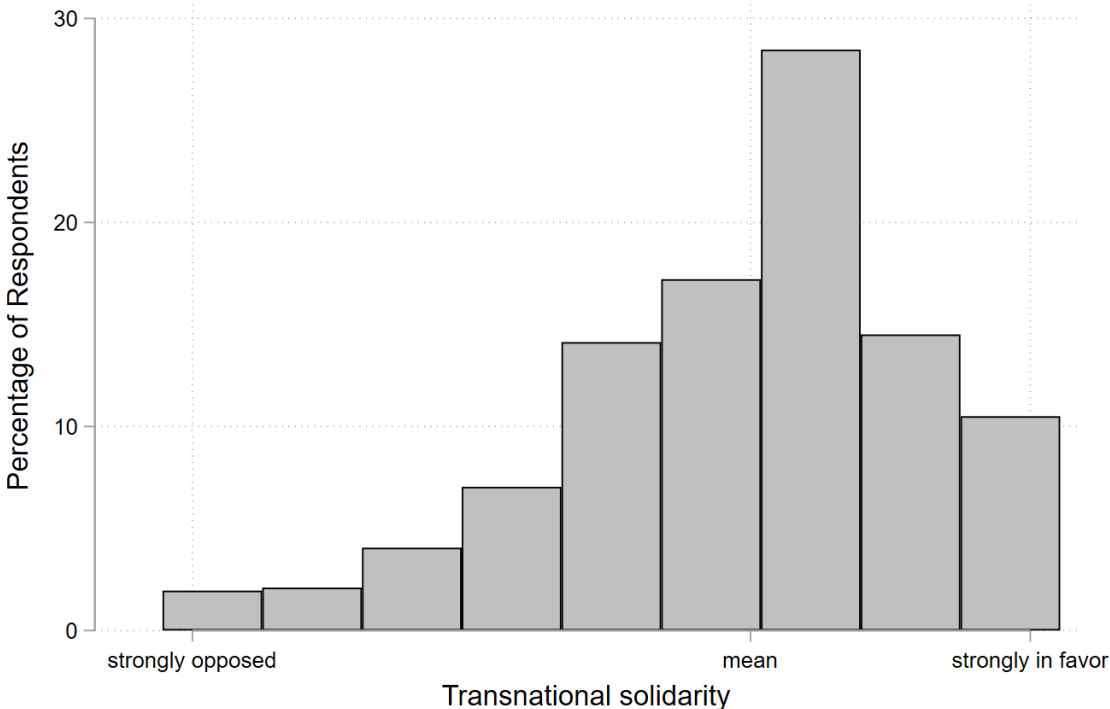
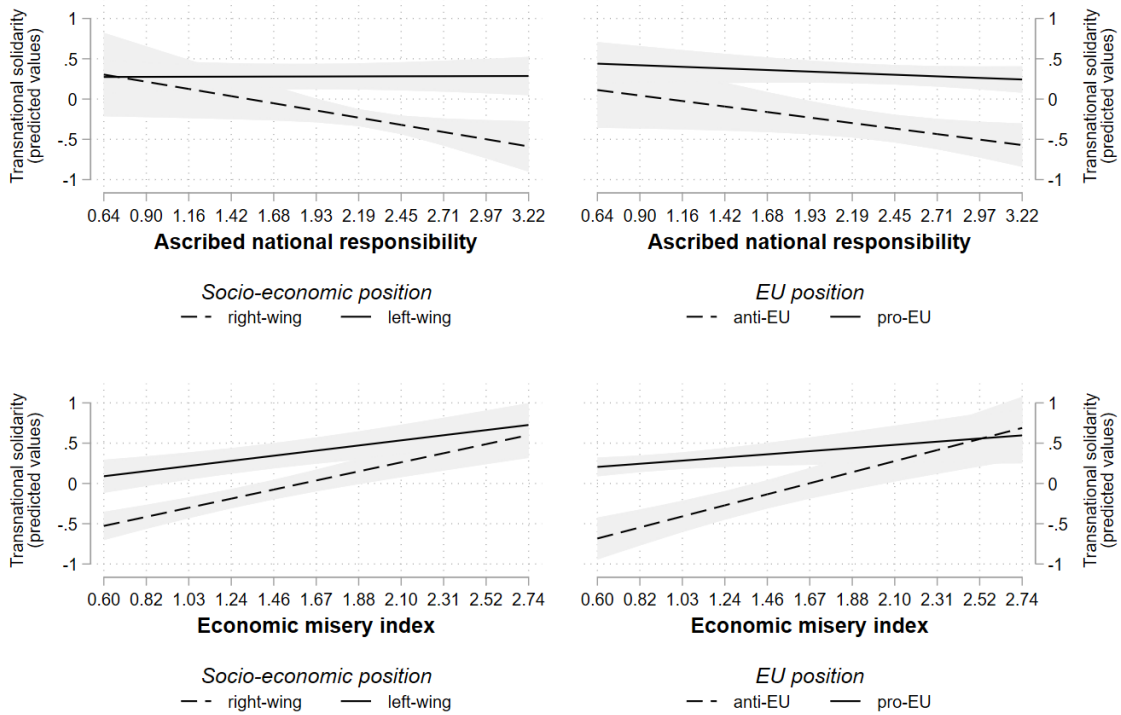
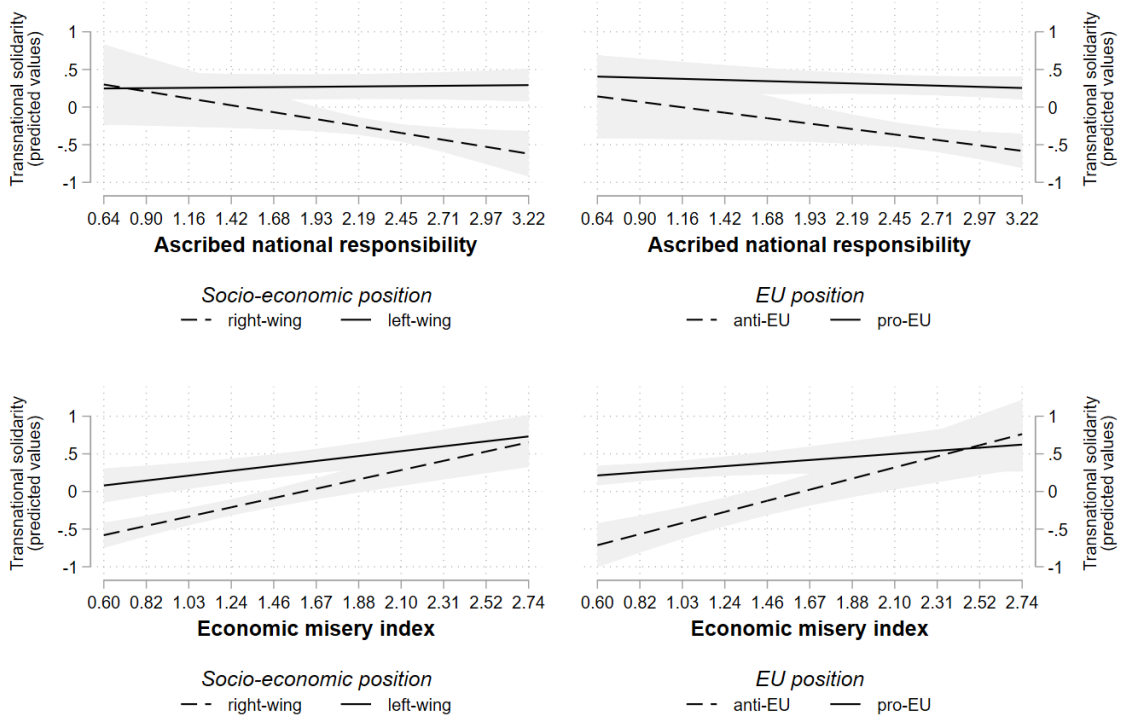


Figure S2: Conditioning the effects of attitudes on preferences (model 2, table S4)



Note: Estimations represent predicted values with 95 per cent confidence intervals. The solid line refers to an attitudinal value equal to the empirical mean plus one standard deviation, while the dashed line refers to an attitudinal value equal to the empirical mean minus one standard deviation.

Figure S3: Conditioning the effects of attitudes on preferences (model 3 and 4, table S4)



Note: Estimations represent predicted values with 95 per cent confidence intervals. The solid line refers to an attitudinal value equal to the empirical mean plus one standard deviation, while the dashed line refers to an attitudinal value equal to the empirical mean minus one standard deviation.