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SUMMARY: A Divided Europe? Solidarity contestation in the public domain during the 'refugee crisis'

Manlio Cinalli and Hans-Jörg Trenz

This integrated report of the Workpackage 5 of the TransSOL project is about transnational solidarity contestation in the public sphere during the so-called 'refugee crisis' of summer 2015 until spring 2016. Big fault lines had opened up across the European Union about the question of how this 'crisis' should be handled. What was the extent of these fault lines and the relationship between Europeanisation and divisions when thinking of European solidarity? We have focused on eight European receiving countries (Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Poland, and Switzerland), displaying very different attitudes with regard to the question of transnational solidarity and whether hospitality should be granted to the incoming refugees. Greece, which, together with Italy, was the first entry point to the European Union for most refugees, insisted on fair burden sharing with the rest of Europe. After a series of dramatic events at Europe's external borders and on the transit routes through the Balkans, Germany decided to suspend the Dublin Regulation at the end of August 2015, open its borders and accept asylum applications from refugees travelling from Greece. This open-door policy was heavily criticised by Denmark and Poland, but supported by France, which was, however, less affected by the inflow of refugees. Great Britain took almost an outlier position, but had an issue with France over the responsibility of refugees camping in Calais with the hope of crossing the Channel. Finally, Switzerland, as a non-EU country, but nonetheless apart of Schengen, also received increasing numbers of refugees from Syria, mainly entering through its southern borders with Italy.

In the light of these differences in terms of attitudes of hospitality and policies of control, security and solidarity, this integrated report has four main objectives: First, we identify the extent to which acts of solidarity towards refugees were granted public awareness and what claims on behalf of or against hospitality towards refugees were made, and by whom. Secondly, we reconstruct the dynamics of solidarity contestation in the public sphere in terms of competing interests and interpretations between EU-member states, their main lines of division and allegiances. Thirdly, we examine the discursive construction of European solidarity in terms of its underlying conceptions, ideas and norms that drive public debate, and how such different notions of solidarity are used in contestations between various allegiances (e.g., proponents and opponents of humanitarian solidarity, of national exclusive solidarity, or of populism and xenophobia). Fourthly, we trace the different dynamics of media-driven solidarity contestation from the perspective of public claims makers in the media who make the news, as well as from the perspective of citizens who read and comment on the news. These four main objectives intersect with a number of research questions that are at the core of this report. Accordingly, we look more specifically into the true fault line that opened up across Europe by assessing the extent to which processes of cross-national convergence (and which type of convergence, in particular) were subjacent to the development of the 'crisis' itself. At the same time, we assess the extent to which national debate followed similar dividing lines of governments, political

parties and civil society actors, in terms of both the positioning vis-à-vis refugees, and the way that these same actors justified (or not) solidarity with refugees.

Indeed, European integration has always been advanced as an expansive solidarity project: The European social model, the EU as a humanitarian power, free flows of labour, capital and people or inclusive notions of citizenship (Trenz, 2016). European solidarity, perceived as something expansive, embracing also other parts of the world, has now become redefined as something exclusive and protective. In this new constellation, the anti-solidarity contestation is often combined with an anti-European mobilisation. This leads us to explore more precisely the idea that solidarity contestations are driven by a new ideational divide that replaces traditional ideological cleavages and that juxtaposes so-called communitarians with cosmopolitans (De Wilde & Zürn, 2013; Kriesi et al., 2012). When looking at media contestation, it soon becomes clear that there is a wider connotation of the term 'refugee crisis', quintessentially not about refugees, but more focused on 'us' as Europeans. While one may disagree with the idea that the 'refugee crisis' was Europe's September 11 (Krastev 2017), it is nonetheless clear that the humanitarian disasters which unfolded on Europe's external borders in the Mediterranean and the Balkans stood out as a 'crisis' that encompassed several dimensions of public contestation. It was a crisis perspicuously related to war action and violence in Syria and other parts of the world, whose victims fled to Europe, forcing Europeans to assume at least some responsibility. It was also a crisis of conscience for Europeans regarding their choice of solidarity or not, together with moral implications of their choices. In fact, this report focuses on the 'refugee crisis' as a case study precisely because transnational solidarity contestation can be traced along two main dimensions, namely solidarity towards refugees as the primary object of solidarity, but also solidarity among the member states and among the people of Europe in dealing with the 'crisis'.

Public contestation starts with the use of the term 'refugee crisis'. Solidarity activists all over Europe have rejected this dramatising language because the term 'crisis' when collocated with refugees, seems to suggest that they are the creators of something evil, not the victims that need our special care and attention.¹ Language matters when creating an hospitable or hostile environment. Apart from political actors, who can be held responsible for their use of language, the collocation, 'refugee crisis' took place in the media. Despite the fact that the humanitarian crisis unfolded before our eyes, public opinion was definitively shaped by media frames and discourse. The media played a key role as the main provider of images of distant suffering and inhumanity, but also as the main transcriber of such images into representations of shared responsibility, civility and humanity (Silverstone, 2006: 25), or otherwise into a detached world which had little to do with us and which we only observed from a distance. The mediated image (or information) about (distant) suffering allowed for variable forms of 'moral spectatorship' —ranging from more to less intense— which were constitutive of whether solidarity relationships among strangers developed or not (ibid.). The public sphere carried, in this sense, the broader repertoire of meaning that allowed us to interpret the 'refugee crisis' and to identify ethically acceptable or normatively justifiable responses to it (Boltanski, 1999). Throughout this integrated report, we therefore talk of the alleged 'refugee crisis' when referring to the dramatic events of this period to account for the responsibility of the media (and of all actors accessing it) to construct perceptions and narratives that shaped public opinion.

¹ <https://theelders.org/article/refugee-crisis-how-language-contributes-fate-refugees>

Hence, the 'refugee crisis' stands out as the second most momentous issue to shake Europe post the financial crisis. In fact, the 'refugee crisis' can be considered to be even deeper and more extensive in its consequences than the financial crisis because it challenged the very foundations of Europe and the values on which our liberal and inclusive democracies are based. Since it radically changed our way of defining our historical role and the ideational foundations on which Europe is grounded, the 'refugee crisis' provides an invaluable field for appraising where exactly Europe stands today in terms of union and division. In particular, our approach has allowed us to reconstruct solidarity contestation in the media as a fight over public opinion. Propositions of, and opposition to different solidarity projects are taken as 'claims' that compete for salience in the public domain as represented by the media. As actors of these claims, claimants are expected to reflect the opening of new cleavages between cosmopolitans and communitarians, superseding old divisions of the pre-crisis era. Ultimately, we argue that the solidarity conflicts were carried out between a notion of exclusive national solidarity on the one hand, and, on the other, a notion of inclusive humanitarian solidarity. The ethnic solidarity obligations towards our fellow citizens, and the universal solidarity obligations towards humankind have increasingly been debated within national public spheres but such solidarity contestations have been carried out across Europe, such as the decision of one country to open its borders towards refugees potentially affecting all the others. What is at stake is the fact that solidarity relationships are not containable within one single country, but need to be re-negotiated between Europeans.

This integrated report on transnational solidarity contestation in Europe has three main parts. First, we recollect the general patterns and dynamics of 'claims' in the public sphere during the most intense crisis period between August 2015 and April 2016. Through our quantitative analysis of claims, we analyse the main protagonists and targets in the public domain, the main concerns expressed, as well as the degree of transnationalisation of debates, the various forms which claims took, the favourable or unfavourable positions that claimants had towards refugees, and the justifications given for either granting or rejecting solidarity. In the second part of this integrated report, we zoom in on one month of heightened attention during the so-called 'refugee crisis' and present the comparative data of our case study of public opinion and bottom-up citizens' contestations as expressed in social media commenting forums. This second part of the integrated report allows us to look at the reception site of political news and the selective attention and responsiveness of news readers who commented on news articles on the Facebook sites of our selected newspapers. Finally, in the third part of this integrated report, we gather together eight different national studies that provide a detailed and compelling interpretation of our findings for each contributing country.

Altogether, the three parts of this integrated report suggest a number of main points at the core of any systematic reflection about solidarity contestation over the 'refugee crisis' in Europe. Accordingly, we argue for the necessity to understand the European Union and divisions over the 'refugee crisis' as an extremely dynamic process. This dynamic process started with genuine European *momentum*, but then transformed through the re-appropriation of the 'refugee crisis' by national actors, who were often driven by concerns and positions of national politics. Solidarity contestation depends on particular moments, and certainly a moment for European solidarity was triggered by the dramatic events that unfolded throughout the summer of 2015, peaking in the month of September. Yet solidarity declined over time, leaving the space for national specificities to re-emerge and re-nationalisation to take place over the following months. These core points of our argument are tack-

led especially in the first and third part of this integrated report, where comparative data on re-nationalisation (problematising of national events, focusing on national policies, the visibility of national actors, etc.) are examined for the whole time period between September 2015 and April 2016.

At the same time, we argue that the media—in spite of their common role as the best tool for spreading populism— cannot be held solely responsible for promoting anti-solidarity and anti-refugee feelings, frames, and positions. Thus, the first and the third parts of this integrated report are especially relevant for emphasising 1) that the overall position of claims in the public debate was often favourable, rather than unfavourable, vis-à-vis refugees, 2) that some strong emphasis was regularly put on humanitarian issues and not just on security concerns, and 3) that civil society was particularly active within this field of contentious politics. Of course, our findings show that there was more solidarity outside the strict borders of the national public domain, but this was especially linked to the ‘European *momentum*’ of September 2015, after which solidarity simultaneously declined and re-nationalised. Most crucially, the second part of this integrated report is integral when showing that online claims were also favourable overall, although in this case, they often triggered negative comments from online readers. The positive posts that were often published on Facebook may well have accounted for the editorial strategy of newspapers -- to have posts that were more ‘commentable’; yet this engenders the risk of provoking backlash dynamics through readers’ usage of online comments. In fact, another core point of this integrated report is that further emphasis has to be put on the main internal differentiations of the public domain through claims-making via different media. While we do not engage with this point directly, our integrated report is grounded on the understanding that claims-making by organised publics is only one side of the public domain (Young, 2000), opening space for further research assessing the extent to which online comments can no longer be put aside in any systematic research of contentious dynamics in the public domain.

PART 1: Comparative report on claims over the ‘refugee crisis’ in the print media

Manlio Cinalli, Olga Eisele, Verena K. Brändle and Hans-Jörg Trenz

Claims-making in the public domain

In this first part, we focus on solidarity contestation in the print media. This analysis engages with many of the abovementioned objectives; we assess the extent to which claims of solidarity over the refugee crisis were granted public awareness, the main characteristics of claims on behalf of or against refugees, the dynamics of solidarity contestation, as well as the underlying contentiousness in terms of conceptions, ideas and norms in the public domain. Our focus on the print media allows for the study of interventions by organised publics in the public domain (Bassoli & Cinalli, 2016; Cinalli, 2004 and 2006; Cinalli & Giugni, 2013) providing a detailed cross-national overview of claims-making in Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Poland and Switzerland. Within the public domain, solidarity contestation was carried out by a large plurality of actors, whose claims were made selectively salient in the media: State actors and governments, political parties and powerful elites, as well as corporate actors, pressure groups, civil society organisations and movements. These different actors competed for attention in the media as a common arena for making public their positions, mutual conflicts, shared agreements, and so forth. While previous research on solidarity in Europe has dealt with the direct interactions between state and civil society actors on the one hand, and the objects of solidarity on the other (cf. also the deliverables of the TransSOL project), our current focus is on mediated relationships and mediated conflicts as they developed in the public domain. The latter is considered in its wider scope, including different types of “publics” that are at the same time the subject and the object of policy making; in fact, our conceptualisation of public domain also includes the Internet users who made use of online platforms to mobilise and gain visibility online (cf. the second part of this report).

In any large polity —whether about it is a specific city, a larger region, a national state, or the whole European community— it is impossible for all actors to interact face-to-face with each other. Consequently, they must rely to a considerable extent on the media to access the public domain, and be able to contribute to debates by expressing their own opinion, pondering on the pros and cons of different policy choices, or calling for action. This key role of the print media as a forum for public debate and opinion formation is confirmed by the literature on comparative media systems and journalism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Pfetsch et al., 2008), which is why we have selected print media as our primary source of analysis in the first part of this report. Our argument is that a more complete research design dealing with the public domain must allow for examination of the crucial discursive dynamics by which the plurality of claimants intersect with each other. We thus follow the example of a key body of literature that focuses on the crucial relationship between different types of actors, their interventions, and the public domain that is available through the various types of media acknowledging the plurality of modes of intervention that may be used (Sanders, 1997; Young, 2000). More specifically, we rely on the method of claims analysis so as to capture the main trends of ‘claims-making’ within the public domain. ‘Claims-making’ was born in scholarly field of contentious politics (Cinalli & Giugni, 2013 and 2016; Koopmans & Statham, 1999; Koopmans et al., 2005), and it consists of retrieving interventions in the public domain on a given issue (or range of issues), drawing

from media sources, and most often— in part also here—newspapers. Hence, claims-making is valuable to study the roles and positions in the public domain of all actors that formulated claims relating to the refugee crisis.

Our unit of analysis is the single claim, which is as an intervention, verbal or nonverbal, made in the public domain by any actor in the media (including individuals), which bears relation to the interests, needs or rights of refugees. In the quality of objects of the claims, these include refugees as individuals or as a collective group. Each claim by any actor is characterised by a typical structure, which can be broken down into a number of elements enquiring into the main characteristics of a claim (cf. TransSOL WP5 codebook). In particular, our cross-national analysis of print media here deals with six main comparative variables of all claims, including the ‘actor’ (who makes the claim), the ‘addressee’ (who is held responsible for the claim) the ‘issue’ (what the main concern is about), the ‘form’ (the action through which the claim is inserted in the public domain), the ‘position’ (whether the claim is unfavourable or favourable to refugees), and the ‘value’ (how claimants justify their interventions). The analysis can thus draw on the same comparative dataset, stemming from a systematic content analysis of newspapers in each of the countries under study. A complex procedure has been followed to gather the relevant content-analytic data, combining the advantages of automated search and selection of online media sources with the qualitative detail allowed by human coding.

In the first step, a representative number of national newspapers have been selected (available online through sources such as Lexis-nexis and Factiva). The choice of these newspapers has followed on from the need to ensure, as far as possible, a representative and unbiased sample: Thus we have included both quality newspapers and more tabloid-oriented newspapers, while at the same time considering newspapers from different political orientations as well as more “neutral” ones.² All articles containing any of the two words “refugee” (and its derivatives) and “asylum” have been selected and coded, to the extent that they referred to the current ‘refugee crisis’. We have created a comparative dataset by random sampling about 700 claims per country (for a total sample of 5,948 claims) pertaining to transnational solidarity over the ‘refugee crisis’ between 1st August 2015 and 30th April 2016. We have coded all articles which report political decisions, verbal statements, direct solidarity action or protest actions on a number of themes that refer explicitly or obviously to the ‘refugee crisis’. Claims concerning the activities of actors who claimed to be victims of the ‘refugee crisis’ have also been coded. We have coded all claims taking place in one of the countries of the EU and Switzerland, or addressing actors in the EU and Switzerland. Claims have also been included if they were made by or addressed at a supranational actor of which the country of coding is a member (e.g., the UN, the EU, the UNHCR), on the condition that the claim was substantively relevant for any country of the EU and Switzerland.

² In particular, *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, and *Le Parisien* were selected for France; *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, and *Bild* were selected for Germany; *Proto Thema*, *Ta Nea*, and *Kathimerini* were selected for Greece; *La Repubblica*, *Corriere della Sera*, and *Libero* were selected for Italy; *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Rzeczpospolita*, and *Fakt* were selected for Poland; *Politiken*, *Jyllandsposten*, and *BT* were selected for Denmark. The *Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, and *The Express* were selected for Great Britain; lastly, due to its regional specificities, the Swiss case relied on the examination of five newspapers (*Le Matin*, *Le Temps*, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *Tages Anzeiger*, *La Regione Ticino*), two of which are written in German, two in French, and one in Italian.

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

Data collection and analysis that have been carried out (comparatively, as well as in each country) have been based on common guidelines. Work started with a three-day training session with all national coders under the guide of experienced instructors in the method of claims analysis. Following this training, an exploratory pre-reliability test on the coding of claims (and on the coding of comments, for the second part of this report) was run on a small sample of claims (and comments, for the second part of this report) with the aim of identifying recurrent coding errors and remaining problems in the codebook. The feedback for these tests was used for one last thorough revision of the two codebooks (for claims and comments, respectively), and for adding more detailed instructions to them. The test results have also been used to organise targeted coaching of teams through intensive Skype feedback sessions and further regular e-mail exchanges with instructors. Having started the coding process, we ran a two-level test so as to assess the reliability and the validity of our coding both in terms of inter-teams’ test and intra-teams’ test. The TransSOL coding practices, a mixture of individual coding and team coding, reflected well in these results. Furthermore, we split the reliability and validity coding into two phases. Due to the challenges of identifying a claim as the unit of analysis in relevant newspaper articles, we first checked for teams’ coding regarding the identification of claims, then drawing on the latter, a set of claims was used to assess the validity and reliability of the variables coded for each claim.³

Europeanisation/polarisation of solidarity contestation in the public domain

By engaging in a cross-national overview of claims in the print media, we take the ‘refugee crisis’ as a field of public contestation that can tell us more about where Europe stands in terms of its union and divisions. While studying solidarity debates that unite, but also divide, European countries and their populations, our emphasis is thus put on a systematic analysis of patterns of Europeanisation on the one hand, and polarisation on the other. We start by considering the diachronic development of claims-making across the eight countries in order to assess the extent to which claims follow (or do not) a similar cross-national pattern over time. Hence, we appraise whether potential matching across countries can be related to variations of ‘grievance-based’ factors such as the number of asylum applicants. Given some crucial cross-national similarities in terms of asylum-seeking (O’Neill & Harcup, 2009, Harcup & O’Neill, 2016), it is unlikely to find strong cross-national variations in terms of whole volumes of claims-making. We also consider the potential impact of other domestic-based

³ For all details of common guidelines, readers can refer to the full report on methodological procedure delivered at the end of the TransSOL project.

factors given that any disruption of societal routines open up political space for many actors who are willing to redefine issues, policy reforms, and gain advantage on opponents (Boin et al., 2009: 82). In so doing, we engage with a long-standing tradition of scholarly debate that opposes 'grievance' and 'opportunity' theories in the field of contentious politics. If on the one hand we wonder whether grievance-based potential for conflict has a positive impact on claims, we are only too aware that other scholars have, contrastingly, argued that grievances do not necessarily lead to claims-making (Kriesi, 2004; Meyer, 2004). Under this viewpoint, given the nature of the 'refugee crisis' and its transnational implications, the main ambition is to enquire into the relationship between Europeanisation and 're-nationalisation' of solidarity contestations beyond an initial appraisal of similarities of debates across countries in terms of attention cycles.

Our engagement with Europeanisation vs. polarisation continues by appraising three main variables of claims which our codebook has scored directly in terms of their variations across the national/trans-national scope, namely, the actor, the addressee, and the issue. The variable 'actor' is especially useful for assessing the visibility of different claimants in the public domain, paying particular attention to the presence of national and supranational actors, respectively. The crucial role of the 'refugee crisis' for imposing some primary definers of debate against the others is evident when distinguishing between national and transnational actors, respectively. Obviously, the communitarian and securitising twists aforementioned suggest the likely absence of non-national actors among the primary definers in the public domain, whereas going with the cosmopolitan thesis of a European people that discuss matters of common interest leads us to expect some very high cross-national visibility of supranational actors in the public domain. We are also interested in appraising whether political actors in particular are still maintaining their inherent news value allowing for their more extensive coverage (Koopmans & Statham, 2010; Trench, 2009), or if the 'refugee crisis' is instead opening more space for the intervention of other actors, such as, for example advocacy groups challenging established policies or other potential claimants of change (Boin et al., 2009: 82). In addition, the specific salience of claims by civil society actors gives a more refined understanding of how much centrality the state is still holding in the refugee field through different types of actors. Afterwards, the same analysis can be repeated for the variable 'addressee', the main actor who is held explicitly responsible for acting with regard to the claim, or at whom the claim is explicitly addressed as a call to act. In particular, the two variables, actor and addressee, can be intersected in the discussion so as to have a more detailed view of cross-national variations of the public domain between the two polar configurations of 'domestication', whereby the field is dominated by national actors addressing other national actors, and 'supranationalism', whereby the field is dominated by supranational actors addressing supranational addressees (Balme & Chabanet, 2008; Della Porta et al., 2013). The 'issue' is the last variable which our codebook scores in terms of national/supranational variation. In this case, we can rely on some specific issues such as refugees' quota and borders' control that would indicate the importance of European policy-making through the strengthening of a national focus on European topics (Brüggemann & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2009; Boomgaarden et al., 2013; Königslöw, 2012).

Finally, we focus on three main variables, namely form, posit and frame, which do not score national-transnational variation directly, yet can provide some essential indicators for completing our argument on the opposition between Europeanisation and polarisation. The variable 'form' refers to the type of action that claimants use to enter the public domain, distinguishing between repressive measures (policing, courts' ruling, etc.), political decisions (law, governmental guideline, implementa-

tion measure, etc.), verbal statements (public speech, press conference, parliamentary intervention, etc.), protest actions (demonstration, occupation, violent action, etc.), humanitarian aid, and solidarity action (the latter as a direct act of providing help/assistance to others in need of support). In this case, it seems highly relevant to understand whether the ‘refugee crisis’ has transformed into a typical contentious field of European politics, or rather stands out as a more heterogeneous field where protests do not cross-nationally take over a larger variety of repertoires that cut across the standard distinction between ‘outsiders’ and ‘insiders’ (Tarrow 1994; Tilly, 1978). The variable ‘posit’ is obviously useful to enter the debate on the responsibility of the media for spreading populism in the public domain, with a view to checking for cross-national longitudinal increases of unfavourable positions. However, this variable is especially valuable to appraise whether anti-refugees claims-making is driven by salient divides about solidarity towards refugees, or instead whether media debates do converge on issues and positions about solidarity. In this case, we expect national debates to follow similar dividing lines of governments, political parties and civil society actors, especially when considering the favourable or unfavourable position of their claims vis-à-vis refugees. An assessment of polarising trends between favourable and unfavourable claims within the overall debate, also adds further understanding to the degree of contentiousness in the field, for example, allowing us to discuss the relationship between conflict and coverage (Boin et al., 2005; Heath, 2010; Boomgaarden et al., 2013; Van der Pas & Vliegenthart, 2016), as well as the relevance of the ‘backlash thesis’. Our last variable ‘value’ considers how different actors justify their opposing views on questions regarding solidarity with refugees. By connecting the positionality of claimants toward refugees with their justifications, i.e. criss-crossing ‘value’ with ‘posit’, our analysis aims to understand how, and to what extent, the humanitarian aspects of the ‘refugee crisis’ become visible. Most crucially, however, the analysis of values allows for a closer look at the core idea of whether solidarity contestations may be driven by a new divide replacing traditional ideological cleavages, and that juxtaposes the so-called communitarians with cosmopolitans in unmistakable terms, revealing that the ‘refugees crisis’ may put Europe first of all.

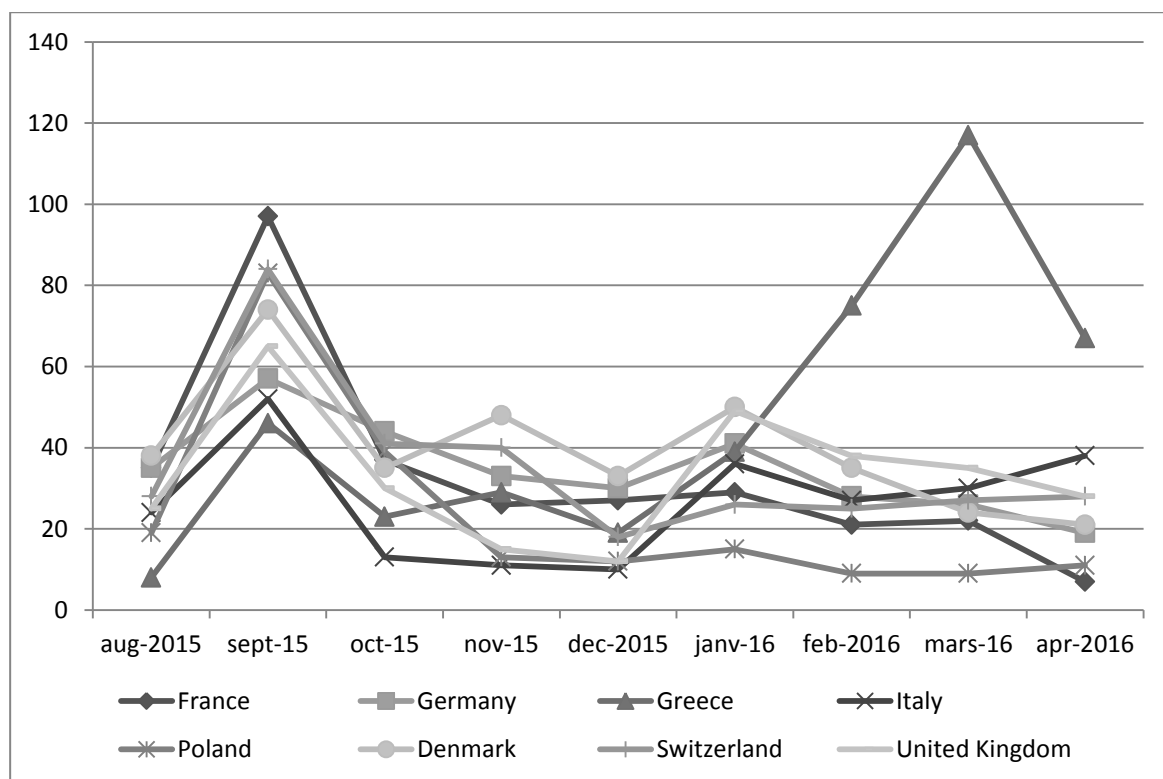
Europeanisation and diachronic dynamics

Starting with our research question on Europeanisation, an analysis of longitudinal dynamics is crucial to evaluate whether solidarity debates are nationally confined —leading us to expect a low degree of overlaps between attention cycles across countries— or whether attention cycles do peak cross-nationally at the same time. By tracing dynamics of solidarity contestation over time, we can thus detect a Europeanised public debate with similar attention cycles across countries, or alternatively, a re-nationalisation in how Europe discusses the ‘refugee crisis’ in each country distinctly. Figure 1 shows that Europe’s claims-making landscape stands out for a quite regular distribution over time of the total number of articles retrieved cross-nationally (see Figure 1). In particular, the months of September and January mark frequency peaks in covering the ‘refugee crisis’ across Europe, thereby matching the main calendar of important events in the field. The ‘refugee crisis’ was particularly salient in September 2015 given that the EU ministers voted on the EU Commission’s plan to redistribute 160,000 refugees across the EU member states. Salience has a second cross-national peak in the following December-January, though in this case, salience seems to follow more specific national dynamics owing to the traumatic experience of terrorism in France, the contentious ‘jewel-

lery law' in Denmark, the horrified reaction of public opinion in Germany to sexual abuse in Cologne, and so forth (cf. the third part of this integrated report focuses specifically on each national case).

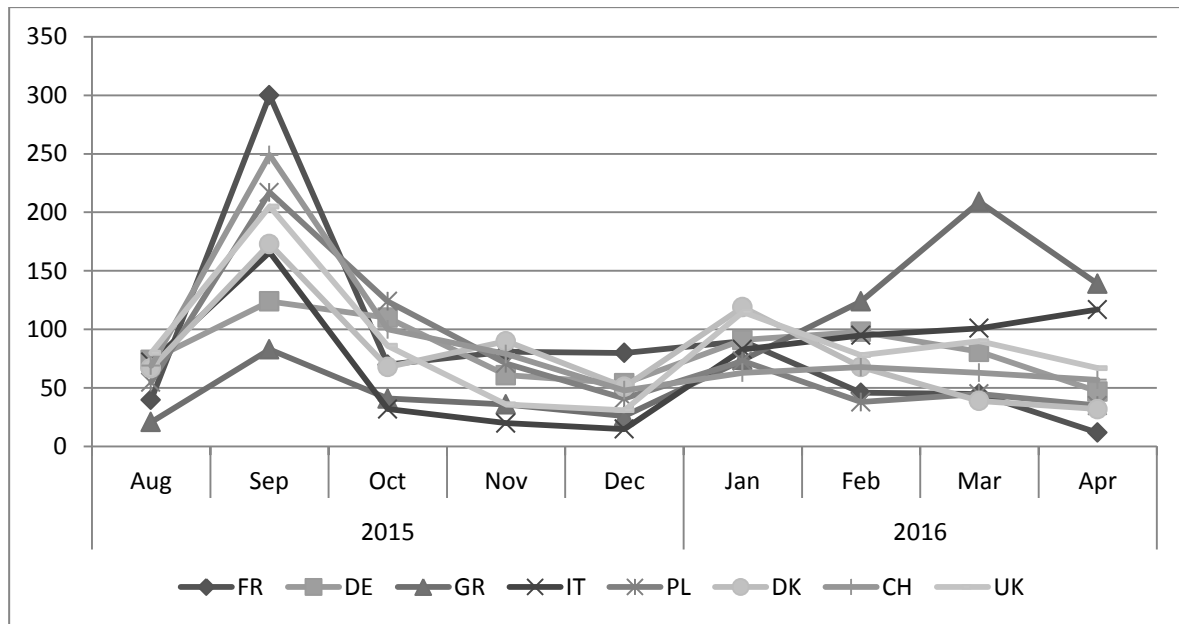
In fact, Greece is the only national case that departs from this ubiquitous trend, given that the increase of claims in January continues in the following months by contrast with the decreasing trend in all other countries, reaching a peak in March which is unparalleled throughout the whole period and across all countries. In Greece the first three months of 2016 were extremely important because there was a series of events, political decisions and debates which strengthened the 'refugee crisis' in the public discourse much more than in any other country. Suffice it to mention that there was the debate about the expulsion of Greece from the Schengen Agreement, the closing of the Balkan route, and the EU-Turkey agreement (cf. the analysis of the Greek case in the third part of this integrated report). Once again then, this finding underlines the potential re-appropriation of the transnational 'refugee crisis' that each national state performed from the end of autumn 2015 onward, in a way to fit the domestic dynamics of its own national politics. Simply put, our main argument is that the two peaks of September 2015 and January 2016 are profoundly different: The 'refugee crisis' had a common 'European momentum' in September 2015, which was lost in the 'renationalisation' of the public domain in the following months, thereby triggering national claims-making on follow-up events or political decisions by national governments.

Figure 1: Total number of articles over sample time period



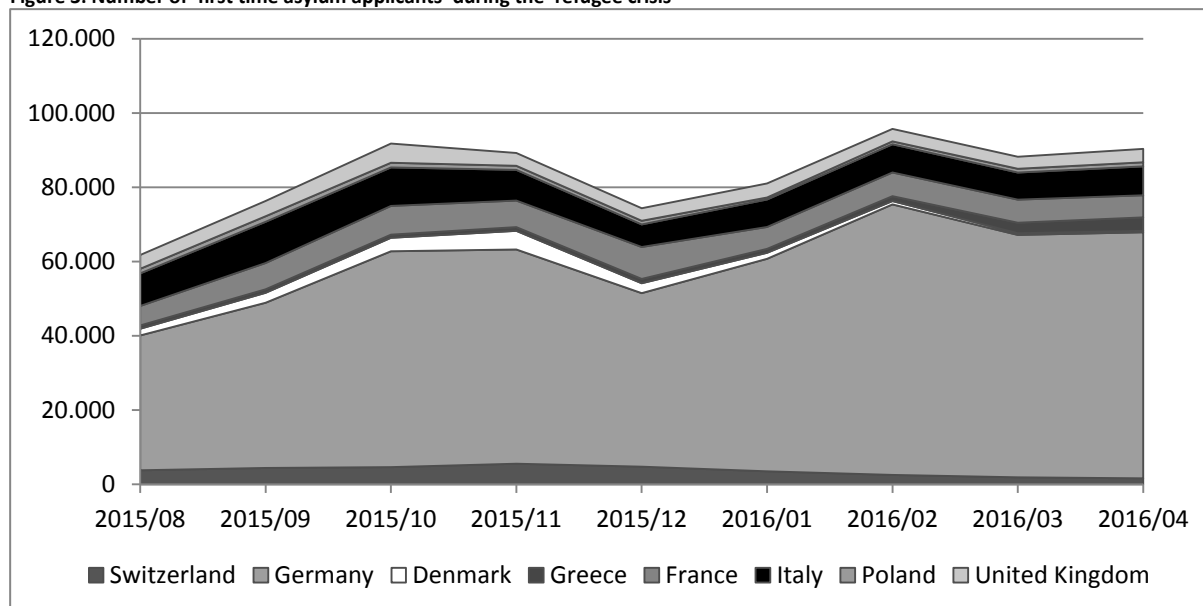
The frequency distribution of the sampled claims in Figure 2 confirms the existence of the European *momentum* of September 2015. Having peaked in September 2015, the European claims-making decreased in the following months, but then increased again in a new (minor) peak at the beginning of 2016. Once again we find that, by contrasting this with trends in other countries, claims in Greece continues to increase throughout the first trimester of 2016, reaching the highest peak only in March (though this peak in terms of claims-making is lower than the peak for articles in figure 1).

Figure 2: Total Number of Claims per Country



As said, a crucial analysis consists of matching this consistent diachronic trend across both articles and claims with the variation of a main 'grievance-based' factor, such as the number of asylum applicants. The idea is that higher numbers of asylum seekers stand for stronger feelings over refugees, thereby potentially leading to more claims and media coverage in general; by contrast, lower numbers of asylum seekers translate into low level of claims and media coverage, in general. Figure 3 shows numbers of 'first time asylum applicants'. It confirms the existence of very similar patterns of asylum-seeking across the eight countries, which in turn fit the expectation that a similar diachronic pattern should be found across them in terms of both articles and claims. Yet, while we have already noticed the existence of a similar diachronic pattern in terms of articles and claims, this hardly follows the same chronology of asylum requests in Figure 3. In particular, we can detect two peaks, but these peaks have a gentler slope than in Figures 1 and 2, following, rather than anticipating, the two peaks that were found in the public domain analysis.

Figure 3: Number of 'first time asylum applicants' during the 'refugee crisis'



Primary definers, targets and concern of claims

A detailed enquiry into Europeanisation can be furthered by the analysis of claims-makers as the primary definers of the 'refugee crisis' in the public domain. Accordingly, Table 1 shows the cross-national distribution of claims when looking at the main claimants, answering the simple question "Who makes the claim?" Findings are provided so as to distinguish the main actors of decision-making, such as the state and political parties, civil society groups and organisations of different kind,⁴ individual citizens, and, lastly, supranational actors in their role of major stakeholders in the public debate over the 'refugee crisis'.

Table 1: Actors of claims by country (percentages)

	State actors and political parties	Civil society groups/collectives	Individual citizens/activists	Supranational actors	Unknown	Total
France	64% (489)	23.2% (177)	6.4% (49)	6.4% (49)	0% (0)	100% (764)
Germany	63.5% (470)	15.8% (117)	13.5% (100)	7.2% (53)	0% (0)	100% (740)
Greece	63.1% (475)	20.6% (155)	5.6% (42)	10.5% (79)	0.2% (2)	100% (753)
Italy	64.5% (452)	21.4% (150)	6% (42)	8% (56)	0.1% (1)	100% (701)
Poland	58.8% (411)	26.9% (188)	7.9% (55)	6% (42)	0.4% (3)	100% (699)
Denmark	57.7% (408)	22.9% (162)	9.8% (69)	9.6% (68)	0% (0)	100% (707)
Switzerland	62.7% (499)	20.4% (162)	5.4% (43)	10.8% (86)	0.7% (6)	100% (796)
Great Britain	62.3% (491)	20.9% (165)	5.1% (40)	11.7% (92)	0% (0)	100% (788)

⁴ Under this category we have included a wide range of civil society actors, including welfare movements, charity networks, cooperatives, human rights organisations, citizens' initiatives, and different types of advocacy and policy-oriented groups.

The cross-national comparison (see Table 1) shows that state actors and political parties had the lion's share in all countries, with very little variation existing between countries with the highest (Italy) and the lowest (Denmark) percentages, respectively. The low cross-national variation is confirmed when dealing with civil society groups. With the exception of Germany, which stands out for a very low score of 15.8%, all other percentages varied between 20.4% for Switzerland and 26.9% for Poland. This relatively high salience of civil society further shows that the domestic debate was not state and government driven, but that many other groups, such as trade unions, advocacy groups and human rights organisations took part in the debate. Some larger cross-national variations can be noticed when dealing with individual citizens and activists since we can detect at least two poles of low presence (Great Britain, Switzerland and Greece) and high presence (Germany), respectively. However, most crucially for our argument, cross-national variation is evident when focusing on supranational actors. In this case, percentages doubled when moving from the lowest presence of supranational actors in Poland (6%) to the highest presence of supranational actors in Great Britain (almost 12%).

Table 2: Addressees of claims about the refugee crisis by country (percentages)

	State and political party	Civil society groups/collectives	Individual citizens/activists	Supranational actors (EU and UN)	No actor or unknown	Total
France	9.3%	1.8%	1.2%	3.7%	84.0%	100.0%
Germany	9.2%	0.9%	0.7%	1.9%	87.3%	100.0%
Greece	19.1%	10.4%	2.0%	6.1%	62.4%	100.0%
Italy	12.7%	5.8%	1.9%	3.9%	75.7%	100.0%
Poland	20.2%	5.2%	4.6%	2.3%	67.8%	100.0%
Denmark	15.7%	2.7%	1.1%	4.4%	76.1%	100.0%
Switzerland	17.5%	1.1%	3.5%	4.3%	73.6%	100.0%
Great Britain	14.8%	1.8%	0.8%	3.2%	79.4%	100.0%
Total	14.8%	3.7%	2.0%	3.7%	75.9%	100.0%

Hence, overall results seem to suggest that there is a wide distribution of voices across different categories of actors (even though voices are distributed unequally over different actor categories), which shows that refugee solidarity debate was quite plural and weakly polarised with no monopole of single actors. Even if visibility of political parties varied across countries (cf. the study of national cases in the third part of this integrated report), the share of state actors and parties was similar across countries. The same can be said about civil society in general, that is to say, regardless of specific distinctions made within this category (cf. third part). The proportions between state actors and parties on the one hand, and, on the other, civil society, are also useful when focusing on national specificities; thus, the true force behind the more generous stand that Germany took vis-à-vis the other European countries seems to originate particularly in the direct relationship between policy actors and individual citizens, with only a minor role left for 'client politics' (Freeman, 1995, 1998). However, overall comparative findings are sufficient to indicate that supranationalisation followed a different trend across countries, which is consistent with the idea that the European *momentum* of the first peak in Figures 1 and 2 was lost in the following months, while the second peak in the same

Figures may have been to do with the process of re-nationalisation of narratives within the public domain of various countries.

Moving on to the analysis of the addressee, Table 2 shows the cross-national distribution of claims when answering the question “Who is held responsible with regard to the claim?” Once again, findings are provided so as to distinguish the main actors/decision-makers, such as parties and the state, civil society groups and organisations of different kinds, individual citizens, and, lastly, supranational actors in their role as major stakeholders, hence a very likely target to be addressed by other actors.

The first overall finding is that only a minor percentage of claimants explicitly addressed another actor when intervening in the public domain. However, when focusing on the analysis of valid cases (almost a quarter of the whole sample) we find that state actors and political parties had, once again, the lion’s share across all countries. In this case, some higher variation distinguished countries with the lowest addressing of state and parties on the one hand (France and Germany), and on the other, countries with the most extensive addressing of state and parties on the other (Poland and Greece). While it is numerically grounded in the highest proportion of addressed actors in some countries but not in others, this difference between the two poles of the most- and the least-addressed respectively is somewhat confirmed when dealing with civil society groups (scarcely addressed in Germany, but extensively addressed in Greece).

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

As regards the analysis of the issue, Table 3 shows the cross-national distribution of claims when answering the question “What is the main concern about?” Findings are provided to help distinguish among a number of major issues that were in the public domain cross-nationally, namely, migration management, integration, the background of refugees, consequences of the ‘refugee crisis’, and public/civic initiatives. Overall, data show that the debate in Europe over the ‘refugee crisis’ focused in particular on migration management. This is consistent with both a national and overall European fit, given the ubiquitous contestation over borders in almost all countries, as well as for the direct engagement of the EU in the formulation of the ‘refugee quota scheme’. Yet, national specificities are once again present when focusing on other dominant issues after migration management: The concern about integration was especially prevalent in Denmark; the concern about the background of refugees was especially prevalent in Great Britain; the concern about the consequences of the ‘refugee crisis’ was especially prevalent in Germany; the concern about public/civic initiatives was especially prevalent in Switzerland. Simply put, overall findings once again fit the idea of a specific re-

appropriation of the ‘refugee crisis’ in each country, in spite of a strong overall supranational framework.

Table 3: Issues of claims about the ‘refugee crisis’ by country (percentages)

	Migration management	Integration	Background of refugees	Consequences of refugee crisis	Public/civic initiatives	Total
France	64.9%	5.2%	10.9%	11.9%	7.1%	100.0%
Germany	49.9%	8%	12.3%	16.2%	13.6%	100.0%
Greece	66.1%	2.9%	11.6%	11%	8.4%	100.0%
Italy	65.5%	2.6%	15.4%	7.1%	9.4%	100.0%
Poland	62.4%	4%	10.6%	9.9%	13.1%	100.0%
Denmark	66.5%	8.9%	7.6%	7.8%	9.2%	100.0%
Switzerland	66.1%	4.2%	8.4%	6%	15.3%	100.0%
Great Britain	68.1%	3.2%	15.9%	8.6%	4.2%	100.0%
Total	63.7%	4.9%	11.6%	9.8%	10%	100.0%

Solidarity divides across countries: Form, positionality and justification of claims

A key aspect to consider when focusing on solidarity contestations in the public domain refers to the analysis of forms of political intervention, in line with seminal literature debate within the scholarship field of contentious politics (Tilly, 1978). Accordingly, Table 4 provides data on the *repertoire* of mobilisation by answering the question “By which action is the claim inserted in the public domain?”. In this case, our systematic analysis refers to all potential forms of action over the ‘refugee crisis’, such as purely verbal statements (including public statements, press releases, publications, and interviews), protest actions (including forms such as demonstrations and political violence), humanitarian aid (including solidarity mobilisations), direct solidarity (including the provision of help and assistance to others in need of support) as well as other forms of intervention that were the prerogative of state and policy actors such as political decisions and repression. The hegemony of verbal statements is just one expected finding given the intense debate over the ‘refugee crisis’ spreading throughout Europe. Yet, beyond this homogeneous result, we find evidence for emphasising national specificities.

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

Table 4: Forms of claims about the refugee crisis by country (percentages)

	Political decisions	Direct solidarity	Humanitarian aid	Protest actions	Repressive actions	Verbal statements	Unknown	Total
France	20.5%	7.5%	2.0%	8.9%	0.9%	59.9%	0.3%	100.0%
Germany	10.7%	9.2%	1.8%	10.4%	0.5%	67.4%	0.0%	100.0%
Greece	12.7%	6.2%	2.9%	13.9%	2.3%	61.9%	0.0%	100.0%
Italy	15.3%	3.7%	1.9%	12.7%	5.0%	61.5%	0.0%	100.0%
Poland	11.2%	3.7%	2.4%	9.8%	0.6%	72.2%	0.0%	100.0%
Denmark	18.0%	3.8%	3.3%	8.1%	2.3%	64.6%	0.0%	100.0%
Switzerland	21.6%	6.3%	2.0%	9.7%	2.8%	57.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Great Britain	15.5%	1.8%	1.6%	9.4%	1.3%	70.4%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	15.8%	5.3%	2.2%	10.4%	1.9%	64.4%	0.0%	100.0%

Another key aspect to consider when focusing on solidarity contestations in the public domain regards the question: How do different actors position themselves towards the question of refugee solidarity? Regarding the overall position towards refugees as our object of solidarity, findings in Table 4 suggest that all countries were strongly divided about the question of refugee solidarity. Public claims-makers were generally disposed to granting solidarity to refugees with a slight majority of positive (39.7%) over negative voices (35.7%) (See Table 4). 24.6% of the claims were neutral or ambivalent. This rather even distribution between pro- and anti-solidarity claims in the media indicates a rather balanced coverage of different political opinions in all countries, but also underlines the lack of agreement among claimants regarding the question of how Europe should treat its refugees. It also suggests a relatively high degree of contestation given that positive and negative claims were more dominant, i.e. opinionated claims made up 75.4% of the claims (as opposed to 24.6% of neutral or ambivalent claims).

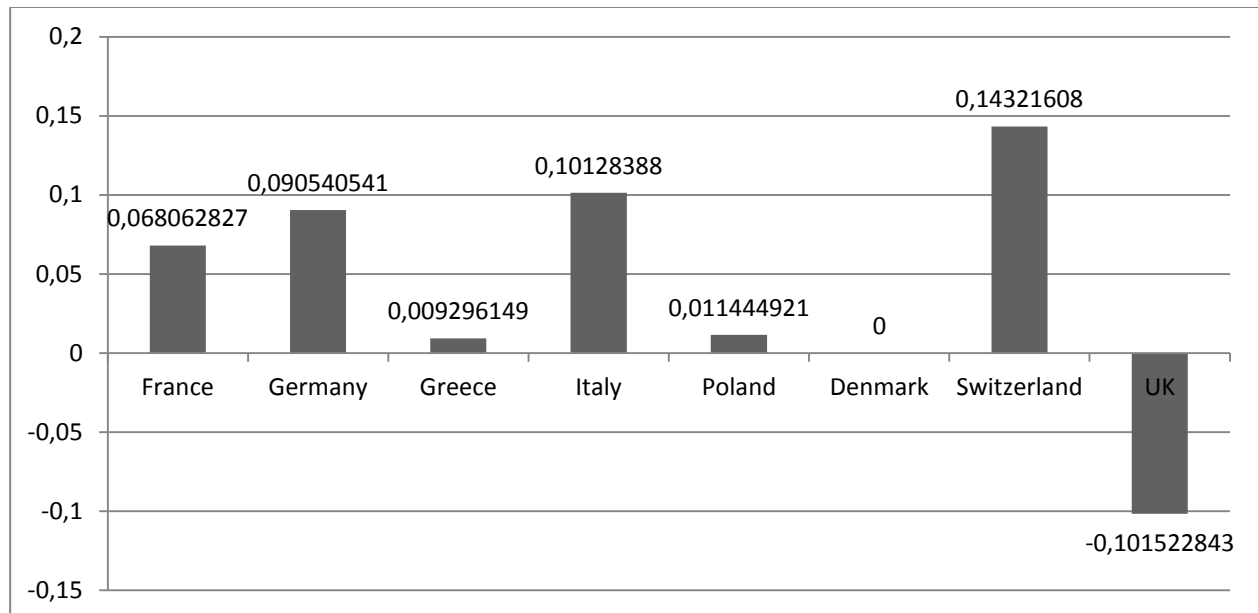
Table 5: Positions across Countries

	Negative	Neutral/ambivalent	Positive	Total
France	31.8%	29.6%	38.6%	100.0%
Germany	29.6%	31.8%	38.6%	100.0%
Greece	42.1%	14.9%	43.0%	100.0%
Italy	30.2%	29.4%	40.4%	100.0%
Poland	34.3%	30.2%	35.5%	100.0%
Denmark	40.0%	19.9%	40.0%	100.0%
Switzerland	33.2%	19.3%	47.5%	100.0%
UK	43.7%	22.8%	33.5%	100.0%
Total	35.7%	24.6%	39.7%	100.0%

When zooming in more closely to observe the different countries of Table 4, we find the lowest level of neutral claims, and thus the highest level of solidarity contestation, in Greece, arguably the one country in the sample which was affected most impacted by huge numbers of refugees landing on its coasts. Also Denmark shows a high degree of – balanced – contestation with only 20% of claims being neutral or ambivalent. Similarly for Switzerland, claims were mostly evaluative though quite clearly leaned towards the positive. The opposite is true for Great Britain where contestation was comparably high as well, but negative claims outweighed the positive ones. Positions seem rather

evenly distributed in Polish, French, German and Italian claims, but more positive overall for the latter three mentioned. Overall, then, positions seem to be covered rather evenly in the media, often (slightly) more positive, with the exception of Great Britain, where claims in the three largest newspapers were more often anti-solidarity claims. Nevertheless, findings in Figure 4 suggest that differences were not that big: average positionality ranges were between ca. 0.15 and -0.10.

Figure 4: Average positionality towards refugees per country



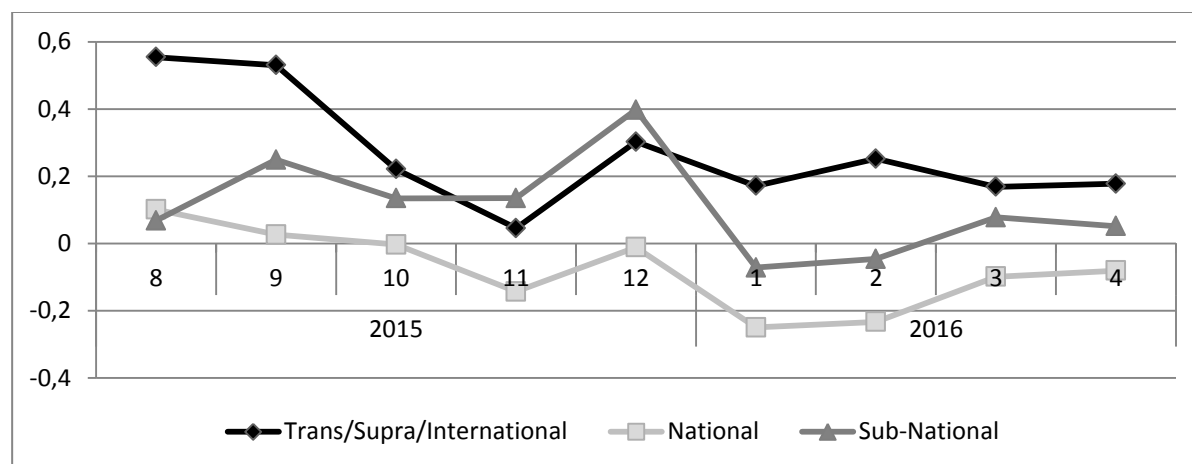
As discussed already, political actors were the most dominant claimants (see Table 1). This is, in itself, not a surprising finding since political actors tend to be the most dominant in the public space in general (e.g., Tresch, 2009). However, when dealing with positionality, findings in Table 6 show that they were particularly visible with negative claims where 26.2% of the negative stances towards refugees were expressed by the state and political party actors – as opposed to 4.6% by civil society groups and collectives actors. State and political actors also led the field in positive (19%) and neutral claims (16.9%), yet, negative claims were more prominent. Overall, our claims analysis neatly pictures the political contestation over how to treat refugees – not only between political actors and the more positive claimants from civil society, but also among the different categories of state and political party actors (table 6).

Table 6: Positionality across claimant types

Positionality	Percentages	Frequencies
Negative	35,7%	2122
State and political party actors	26.2%	1560
Civil society groups/collectives	4.6%	276
Individual citizens/activists	2.9%	173
Supranational actors	1.8%	107
No actor or unknown	0.1%	6
Neutral/ambivalent	24.6%	1465
State and political party actors	16.9%	1007
Civil society groups/collectives	3.6%	215
Individual citizens/activists	0.6%	35
Supranational actors	3.5%	206
No actor or unknown	0.0%	2
Positive	39.7%	2361
State and political party actors	19.0%	1128
Civil society groups/collectives	13.2%	785
Individual citizens/activists	3.9%	232
Supranational actors	3.6%	212
No actor or unknown	0.1%	4
Grand Total	100.0%	5948

In terms of the Europeanisation of solidarity contestation during the refugee crisis, one way to understand it is to look at the visibility of actors with different scopes and nationalities. Here, when pooled across countries, Figure 5 shows quite clearly that actors were on average the most negative when they had a national scope, whereas claimants with a scope beyond the national context were the most positive most of the time (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Average position of actors by scope across all countries over time

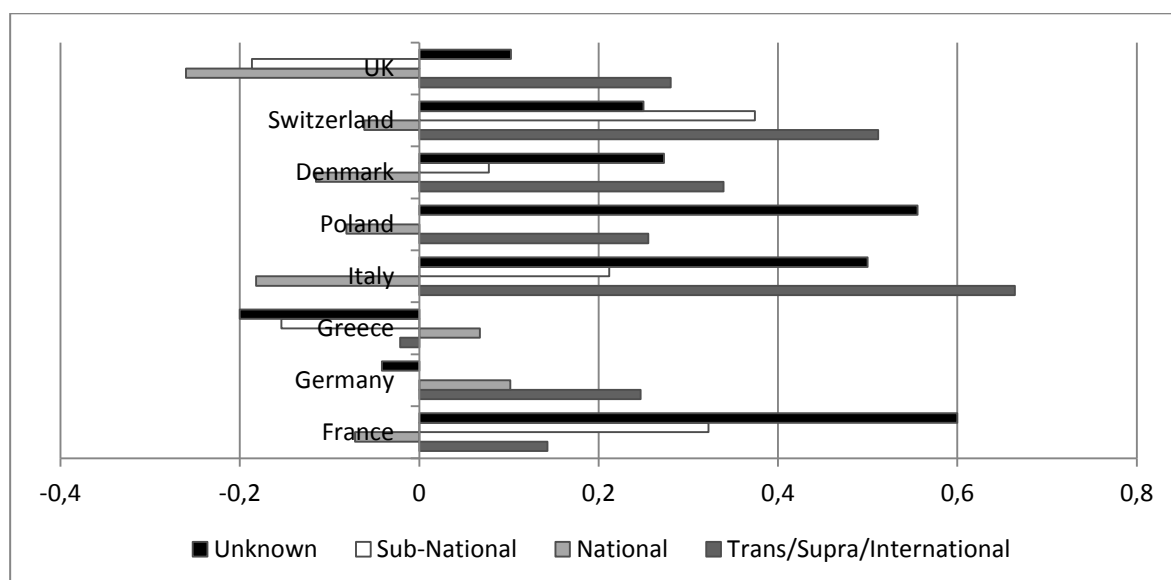


The average positionality of claims seems to follow similar trends across different scopes, though. This suggests that events like the Paris attacks in November 2015 and the sexual assaults that took place in Cologne over New Year, 2016 influenced the discourse about solidarity with refugees towards the negative. In addition, claimants with a greater-than-national scope were overwhelmingly positive regarding solidarity with refugees, in contrast to national scope claimants. This seems to

mirror the divide between national governments and EU actors where EU actors, favouring a European solution based on universal human rights, found themselves in opposition to national governments refusing to comply with EU resettlement schemes, for example.

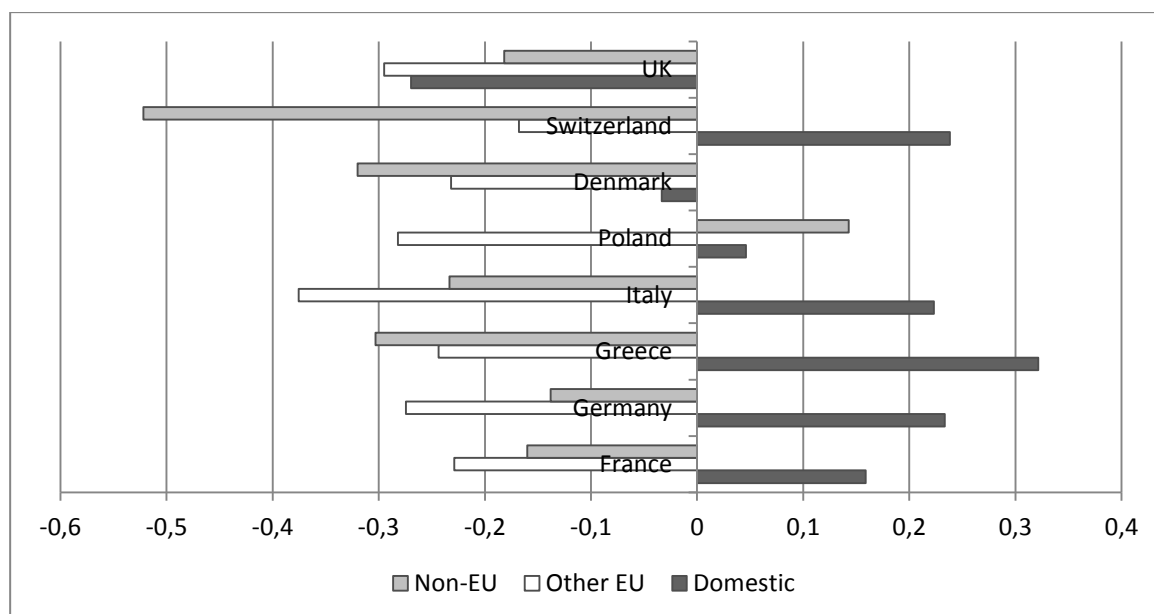
Looking into the average positionality of actors of different scopes by country reveals some remarkable differences. Figure 6 shows that Germany and Greece, for example, were the two countries in the sample where actors of national scope had, on average, made more positive claims about refugees, whereas in all other countries, national scope equalled negative tonality. Greece sticks out again when looking into the positionality of actors with a larger than national scope. Here, it seems to be the only country in the sample where newspapers published more negative claims put forward by trans-, supra- or international actors. Overall, solidarity claims in Greece seem to follow an opposite dynamic in terms of positionality and scope when compared to most of the other countries in our sample.

Figure 6: Average positionality of claimants by country/scope



The overwhelming majority of claims was made by actors with a national scope. However, this does not shed light on potential divides between different nationalities. Zooming in on the national category of actor scopes, again, reveals interesting differences between countries. First of all, in around 15% of our cases, nationalities could not be identified for the main claimant. Going back to our example of Greece, Figure 7 shows that Greek actors were responsible for the overall positive positionality of claims, while actors with other nationalities were negative on average. The same was true for all countries except Great Britain and Denmark, where all types of national-scope claimants were negative on average. Claimants with a national scope and nationalities from other European countries made more negative claims in all countries. Regarding non-EU nationalities, Poland was the only country in which such actors seem to have made more positive claims.

Figure 7: Average positionality of claimants with national scope by nationality



Moving on to consider the justification of claims, we should emphasise that the debate over the ‘refugee crisis’ was mainly about values and the morally defensible limits of humanitarian assistance (Bauböck, 2017: 141). With regard to our analysis here, the question then is whether and how claimants justified their respective stances on the question of solidarity with refugees. A first finding in Table 7 is that in the largest volume of claims (41.9%) were not provided with a justification. This share is followed by 34.9% of claims that were justified by using the Interest-based to give more rational or pragmatic reasons. A rights-based justification was used in 16.7% of cases whereas the identity frame was the least employed in explaining positive, neutral/ambivalent or negative positions.

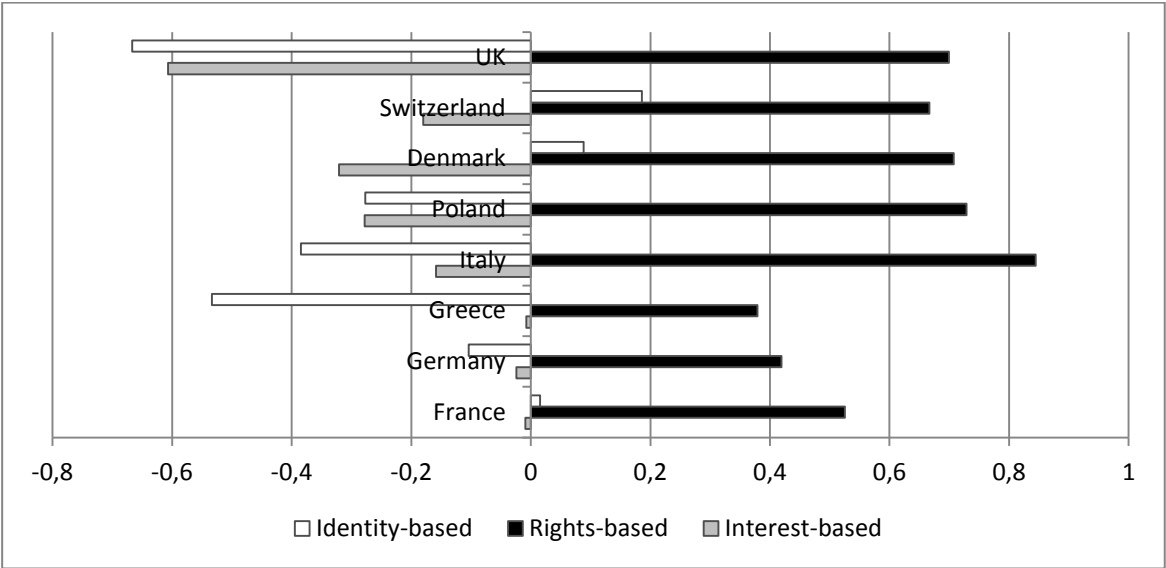
Table 7: Percentages of justifications by position and claimant

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

The interest-based justification seems to be reserved for political actors and their negative positions, rather than the other claimant groups which are, as already stated, more positive overall and used rights-based arguments to justify their opinions. It seems that non-political actors served as balancers of sorts for rather negative and (national) interest-oriented political actors.

Zooming in more closely on the different countries, Figure 8 shows that rights-based frames seem close to always employed when claiming solidarity with refugees. Findings also show that the opposite was true for interest- and identity-based frames, although the tendency towards the negative was not as spelled out. In Switzerland, Denmark, and France, identity was, on average, more related to positive stances which seems to suggest a more inclusive approach to solidarity, whereas claims in Great Britain and Greece more often conveyed a perception of an exclusive national identity in opposition to the identity of refugees. Interest-based positions were almost balanced in Greece, Germany, and France.

Figure 8: Frames and average positions in claims by country



PART 2: Comparative report on social media commenting over the ‘refugee crisis’

Hans-Jörg Trenz, Verena K. Brändle, Manlio Cinalli and Olga Eisele

‘Taking voice’ and ‘taking sides’: The role of social media commenting

In this second part of our integrated report, we focus on contestation in the social media. Bottom-up mobilisation is commonly measured in terms of civil society activists, affected citizens, communities and grassroots movements, who take voice against the government and their political representatives. In the case of solidarity contestation on Facebook, such bottom-up voice can be raised by citizens as potential donators of solidarity and by refugees as their recipients. We can further expect that bottom-up mobilisation is triggered by particular events and their interpretation in the media, such as the humanitarian disasters at Europe’s external borders that unfolded during the months of September 2015 (Triandafyllidou, 2017). The dramatic events which are brought into focus in this second part of our integrated report are particularly interesting because they were staged in many countries as direct confrontation between citizens and our objects of solidarity: Refugees. However, we go beyond the focus which the first part of our integrated report has put on the most visible side of the public space, where organised publics and clearly visible individuals are capable of placing their claims. Instead, our focus on social media allows for appraising more precisely which forces can motivate citizens to ‘take voice’ in this confrontation in the form of ‘taking sides’ and to position themselves in favour of or against solidarity towards refugees. Social media offer precisely this opportunity for citizens to ‘take voice’ or ‘take sides’, which is the precondition for any form of political mobilisation.

In particular, we conducted a systematic analysis of online commenting in order to assess the political expressions of selected citizen-users who decide to position themselves in debates about refugees. Social media dynamics in the mobilisation of support or opposition towards refugees were however not necessarily following the patterns of claims-making of political actors and representatives. We needed to acknowledge that citizens’ often very spontaneous responses to the witnessing of crisis or humanitarian disaster are not necessarily expressed in the form of a political claim, like the call for or the rejection of solidarity. An important element of the media story of a humanitarian crisis also consists of the expression of emotions such as sympathy or antipathy towards refugees (Chouliaraki, 2013). One (and possibly the most frequent) case for the use of emotions in media discourse on migration was the evocation of fear (Wodak, 2015). Refugees are, for instance, regularly portrayed in the media as threats and media coverage built on fear-appealing metaphors such as ‘flood’, ‘swarms’ or marauders, or on suffixes such as ‘unwanted’, ‘irregular’ or ‘illegal’. Another (and possibly more exceptional) case for the use of emotions in media discourse on the humanitarian crisis is what Boltanski (1999) calls a ‘politics of pity’. ‘Pity’, which is to be defined as an emotional reaction to the witnessing of human suffering, can be considered as an important element in the mobilisation of solidarity in the way it allows for rapid changes of opinion from indifference or even ‘antipathy’ towards the object of solidarity to attention and personal emotional engagement (to be followed by possible forms of individual or collective support action). In the case of the ‘refugee crisis’, for instance, one example for the solidarity effects of such a ‘politics of pity’ would be the so-called ‘welcoming culture’ that triggered spontaneous reactions of assistance either in the form of direct

aid or of financial assistance in countries like Germany and Sweden. Hospitality towards refugees was motivated here by mediated images of human suffering (such as the image of the drowned boy, Aylan Kurdi, on the Turkish beach), which contributed to rapid shifts in opinion in reception countries (Mortensen & Trenz, 2016). Put simply, our focus on social media dynamics in the mobilisation of support or opposition towards refugees serves as a perfect complement to complete the study of the public domain in the first part of this integrated report. While the study of claims-making also uncovered the voice of organised publics and powerful ‘clients’ that were capable of leading politics (Freeman, 1995 and 1998), online commenting well suited our aim to collect data on the more hidden side of the public sphere, where people may seize the chance to express deep emotions. This follows the fact that the refugee crisis inherently locked into the most emotive debates about ethnicity, culture, and threats to national security, while some actors reacted through ‘moral panic’ and xenophobic mobilisation (Thraenhardt, 1993; Husbands, 1994; Kaye, 1998).

However, our survey of online commenting is not meant as a systematic investigation of the role of emotions in political mobilisation.⁵ We are more interested in the way bottom-up solidarity seeks political expression. The emphasis is put on the translation of emotions such as ‘fear’ or ‘pity’ into a public statement of solidarity that ‘takes sides’. Consequently, we are focusing on debates that present themselves as a moral spectacle in which citizens became engaged in debating whether solidarity should be granted or not (see Mortensen & Trenz, 2016). We acknowledge that this is not the only possible response. Emotions can, for instance, also be translated into selfless acts of charity, which would remain private if the charity givers do not seek publicity, preferring instead to stay out of the field of political contestation. Such private acts of charity might become very relevant at one particular moment in time, like, for instance, when many individual forms of assistance characterised the welcoming culture in Germany and other countries in September 2015. Charity as a private act of humanitarian assistance remains in this sense distinguished from solidarity as an element of public contestation (Boltanski, 1999). We would, however expect that acts of charity are frequently and regularly turned into public speech. Through our combination of claims-making and reader commenting analysis, we can thus argue that fear or pity as expressed in strong emotions in media discourse was turned into public speech, i.e. used as an element of claims-making through which responsibility was ascribed and politicians were called on to act. The pre-political elements of pity and charity are, in this sense, not independent of political mobilisation. The question is rather how a ‘politics of pity’ interferes with a ‘politics of fear’ in media discourse, what contributes to the salience of ‘pity’ or ‘fear’ at any particular moment of the debate, and who defines and interprets ‘pity’ and ‘fear’ in media discourse and translates them into calls for or rejections of solidarity.

Our claims-making analysis has investigated the role of claimants as primary definers of solidarity towards refugees. Given the dominance of state actors in claims-making about refugees, it appears that the media were not the arena for bottom-up mobilisation, across countries and ideological divides. On the one hand, we found that a bottom-up pro-solidarity through the voice of civil society and of the many private acts of solidarity of individuals or groups of citizens was not made visible in media discourse. On the other hand, our findings also point to the relatively low salience of an anti-solidarity voice as mobilised by bottom-up right-wing groups or anti-immigrant initiatives. This is why we now turn to the recipients of media debates to learn more about the possibility for the expres-

⁵ These aspects are covered by della Porta (2018).

sion of the voice of citizens as an element of solidarity contestation. Social media offer an interesting opportunity for bottom-up contestation through direct reactions to news content. At the reception site, we can measure opinions in the form of general attitudes expressed towards refugees as shaped by media discourse. We can also measure responsiveness, either in the form of consenting or opposing claims raised in the media. And finally, we can measure voices in the form of political statements made by readers as citizens who intervened in the debate as 'secondary definers' of the events.

It is therefore all the more interesting to zoom in on solidarity contestation unfolding on Facebook at the peak of a heated debate, when media claims-making was most intense. User comments on Facebook news sites constitute a response (indirect or direct) of selected citizens to the top-down contestation by political actors. Questions can be answered such as how did citizens selectively pick up issues that were of concern to them, and support or oppose different categories of actors: Representative actors, such as governments and political parties, civil society actors or affected actors from the 'crisis', such as refugees? How did citizens voice their own concerns with regard to the 'refugee crisis'? And did they selectively amplify a 'politics of fear' or a 'politics of pity'?

What kind of public sphere? Civic and uncivic elements of online solidarity contestation

The democratic credentials of the 'online public sphere' that is constituted through news readers commenting practices is a controversy much discussed. Readers' commenting practices can be interpreted as part of an online civic culture that enriches the traditional top-down ways of political communication by facilitating horizontal exchanges among the citizens, making the media voice more plural and participatory, and thus facilitating a more inclusive sphere for the formation of public opinion (Dahlgren, 2013). Debating solidarity in a social media context is different, as we shall elaborate, for at least three interrelated reasons: First, the activation of critical capabilities, which put users' responses centre stage as part of the moral spectacle and its dynamic unfolding, secondly, the condition of public witnessing which puts individual user responses under scrutiny by other users, and thirdly, the various possibilities of 'taking action' and the new meaning attributed to such collective action in the social media context.⁶

Social media solidarity contestation is different because users can relate more directly to refugees who, in this way, become objects of solidarity. As objects of solidarity, they activate people's critical capabilities in judging whether or not solidarity should be granted. Such immediate, yet one-directional relationships are facilitated by opinion exchanges among users, or by relying on the more personal testimony that is shared through social media (such as the emotions raised by the picture of the drowned boy, Aylan Kurdi, on the beach or commenters personal encounters with refugees). The interpretation of such testimony is no longer left to journalists, but emotions or feelings of pity or hatred can be attached to the news media story by the readers on social media directly (also through the use of emoticons, which are not analysed in this second part of our integrated report). Social media users as online news readers can, in this sense, become secondary definers of the 'refugee crisis', not simply accepting or rejecting media frames, but also giving witness testimony, engaging in

⁶ These points are adapted from Mortensen & Trenz, 2016.

their own collective practice of interpretation of the situation and taking sides on the question of refugee solidarity.

In confronting the evidence of the 'refugee crisis', social media users enter into some sort of collective, interpretative work. They produce text in the form of comments that not only interpret the evidence but also ascribe political responsibility or reflect on political consequences. It is, of course, an exaggeration to say that these interpretations unfold in a completely autonomous way. Structures of meaning remain embedded and are influenced by the frames of interpretation used by political actors in the mainstream media, but, in addition to journalists, intellectuals and political actors as claimants, the users now contribute in significant ways to the generation of public discourse. To do this interpretative work, social media users need to put their critical capabilities to work. They need to come up with their own justifications as to why solidarity towards refugees is accepted or rejected.

The third innovative element of social media solidarity contestation is that such a positioning towards solidarity with refugees takes place in a public space and is visible to other users in the social media community. A person's own affirmation or rejection of solidarity towards refugees becomes thus observable and can be scrutinised by others. The news reader is then no longer anonymous and her views and opinions become public. Such a 'public positioning' towards solidarity imposes particular expectations on the social media user. The emotional reactions of users, for instance, are exposed to others but they can also be staged in particular ways to be seen by other users. In this sense, social media solidarity contestation becomes a public performance in which users manifest their sentiments, dispositions and motivations and make them mutually understandable. Crucially, not only do they get the chance to communicate their sentiments by expressing solidarity with refugees, but they also have moral demands imposed on them by the social media (and wider community) and can thus be controlled, and in some instances even sanctioned for how they react.

A fourth important consequence of both the immediacy and the publicness of the social media context of solidarity contestation is the possibility of 'taking action', or at least the possibility of discussing possible forms of action. This collective action orientation is marginalised in the classical mass media situation of passive and individualised reception of content. 'Taking voice' is in itself a form of collective action that constitutes social media audiences as publics of possible action (Chouliaraki, 2010: 612). The disjunction between the spectator and the object of solidarity is no longer insurmountable, not only because the potential victim (e.g. the refugee) might now live to us, but also because the collectivity of social media users is there to mobilise solidarity action or opposition. Social media commenting is therefore often paired with demands for collective action: 'We shall', 'let's do'. Users can motivate and encourage each other to swing towards commitment and to gather together around a cause. This does not mean that users necessarily become militant protesters, but they engage in public speech in a way that spreads alarm and calls for action and solidarity, not least because they wish that their strong feelings of pity, indignation or hatred shall be heard and received by political decision-makers.

At the same time, online participatory news formats and, in particular, the evolving forms of user commenting on social media and online news sites have become the object of a harsh normative critique. Online publics are often marginal and suffer from deficits of publicity: The online media can engage selected citizens, but these debates are detached from formal, decision-making contexts and

will have minimal impact on political outcomes or public opinion, in general (Givskov & Trenz, 2014). Apart from these formal aspects regarding the status of the online public in the democratic process, cyber-pessimists also express a more principled doubt regarding the capacities of online publics to express informed opinion, or to defend the values of social justice and solidarity. This refers to the symptoms of fragmentation and the increasing polarisation of online media debates. Many case studies on users' interactions in commenting forums in different national contexts have confirmed a preponderance of nationalist, xenophobic and racist discourse. There is a general tendency for online audiences to adopt what, in line with Benjamin Moffitt (2016), can be called a populist style in challenging the performance of democratic (representative) politics and to display and amplify, primarily, positions taken by populist parties in the electoral contest. The online 'uncivic sphere' unfolds in this sense through a populist style of user debates, which is characterised by the distortion of facts, the showing of disrespect to other users' opinions, the anti-elitist stances and the overall focus on the de-legitimation of political representatives. In terms of solidarity contestation, we would expect online publics to voice their discontent with established representative politics, to express preference for national over transnational and European solidarity, and to perceive refugees not as 'objects of solidarity' but as potential enemies.

Methods: a qualitative in-depth analysis on online solidarity contestation

This part of the study of solidarity in public discourse was conducted during the most intense time of the 'refugee crisis', with the highest number of refugees arriving (September 2015). We selected the five most commented Facebook posts from each newspaper (=15 news articles per country). We aimed to make the online newspapers selected identical with the newspapers selected for our claims-making analysis⁷ except where online editions were not available.

We used the Netvizz App for the retrieval of main posts and user comments on public Facebook sites. This app has been developed for scientific purposes of quantitative and qualitative text analysis and allows to import user comments from Facebook into Excel data sheets from where it can be further processed and coded. Data is accessed via the Facebook API and Netvizz runs on a server provided by the Digital Methods Initiative (www.digitalmethods.net). We only extracted data from public Facebook pages excluding user meta data (such as gender, user name, etc.). In these regards, our analysis does also not contain direct quotations from user comments and references to user names (even in cases of published content). This guarantees a maximum level of data protection. From the total number of Facebook posts and comments from this period, the samples were constructed by using keywords referring to refugees – taking into account grammar declination and spelling in the national languages. For each post, 20 comments were coded (with an absolute number of 300 comments per country divided per three newspapers. These 20 comments had to be the 20 most-liked top comments on Facebook in the form of primary statements of users and not replies to other user comments. In addition to the comments, the main posts (usually newspaper articles) were sampled.

⁷ This was not possible in the cases of Italy (Il Giornale exchanged for Libero Quotidiano), Switzerland (La Regione for Blick), Germany (Bild for Spiegel).

Our coding encompassed main article variables (claims raised in the main article to which online comments refer) and comment variables (comments that appeared under the text of the main article). Additionally, we also coded the claims in the posted news articles (hereafter 'online claims'). In that way, we are able to systematically link top-down solidarity contestations by claimants in the media with patterns of bottom-up mobilisation of user comments. Through inductive qualitative content analysis (Copenhagen and German teams) during the months of August and September 2017, an integrated tool for user commenting analysis was set up based on thick description and analysis of public contestations about European solidarity. This tool was made applicable for team coding and imported into SPSS.

The unit of analysis was the single user comment. User comments were used as an indicator for political opinion formation and contestation in the context of public debates on solidarity towards refugees. Given our sampling focus on posts with the most comments and the most liked comments, we were able to analyse solidarity contestation at its peak. The most 'popular' posts provided us with the most visible comments (top-comments). The sample is therefore not to be understood as representative for general public opinion, but enables us to analyse comments in combination with posts that became important definers regarding bottom-up mobilisation on Facebook. These more emotional responses (in comparison to political claims) provided a 'window' onto the hitherto unexplored ways in which people take sides regarding the question of solidarity with refugees. Our 'popularity' sample is therefore to be understood as a case study of opinion-formation around one of the most controversial issues in Europe. Our comparative data set, spanning eight countries, serves to generalise about opinion-formation among active citizen-users.

Comments are thematically related to the topic of European solidarity through the main news article – either in response to information given in the main article, as opinions expressed by political actors/journalists in the main news article, or as an independent statement/opinion/expression of sentiments in the general context of these debates. Responses to statements or opinions expressed by other user/commenters in the context of such debates were excluded, as well as all comments that were not thematically related to the topic of the 'refugee crisis' in its broad sense. Comments do not necessarily raise issues of solidarity with refugees. The degree to which user-commenters discussed our specific target groups as objects of solidarity varied and was open to investigation. Usually (but not necessarily) comments had at least an identifiable issue and expressed an opinion towards our object of solidarity (refugees). In user comments, such opinions were, however, often expressed in abbreviated forms and not given in the form of a full claim. For instance, the comment 'poor child' was considered as an opinion towards our object of solidarity (here a refugee child). We did not code any comments that were unrelated to political opinion formation or contestation. This included comments which were part of a general conversation between users without a political focus, or comments that asked for clarification ('can you explain this?'), for information or requests ('send me the link') as well as comments that simply tag other Facebook users.

In the following we will present the main findings of our comparative analysis and discuss their implications with regard to: a) the type of solidarity (national-transnational-European) made salient in online discussions, and b) the type of public sphere this speaks for (civic and uncivic elements of solidarity contestation, as well as the possible effects of segmentation and polarisation).

Findings

During the month of September 2015, media claims-making peaked in all countries under investigation in this survey. This allowed for focused attention on European solidarity contestations on Facebook news sites about the destiny of refugees in Europe, which was clearly visible in the practice of user commenting. We can assume that, at least, in the most popular posts, commenters on online platforms can be characterised as more active users who consider themselves to be relevant contestants regarding certain political issues (Brändle, 2017: 53). In this way, Facebook news sites offer platforms for these people to engage in the bigger debates and to respond to the claims in the posts curated by the newspapers. Facebook commenting sections reflect, in this sense, high degrees of user engagement.

We will approach the dynamics of bottom-up solidarity contestations from a comparative view in two steps. First, we will discuss the general patterns of the debates on the Facebook news sites during the given period. This will provide us with information on online contestation in the general context of the debate on the 'refugee crisis', especially with regard to the question regarding the concerns raised by citizen-users and how they relate to the content of political news. Secondly, we will focus on solidarity contestation, i.e. take a closer look at those cases where citizen-users 'took sides' on the question of solidarity towards refugees. This will provide us with insights into the question of whether a notion of extended European solidarity is supported in social media commentary and how such positions are justified.

Online contestation in the context of the 'refugee crisis': patterns of debate

As regards our first assumption about the innovative potential of social media solidarity contestation, we will investigate whether online news readers engage in an exchange of opinion about political news, act as secondary definers of the debate, relating to original content and interpretation and entering into a more direct relationship with the objects of solidarity.

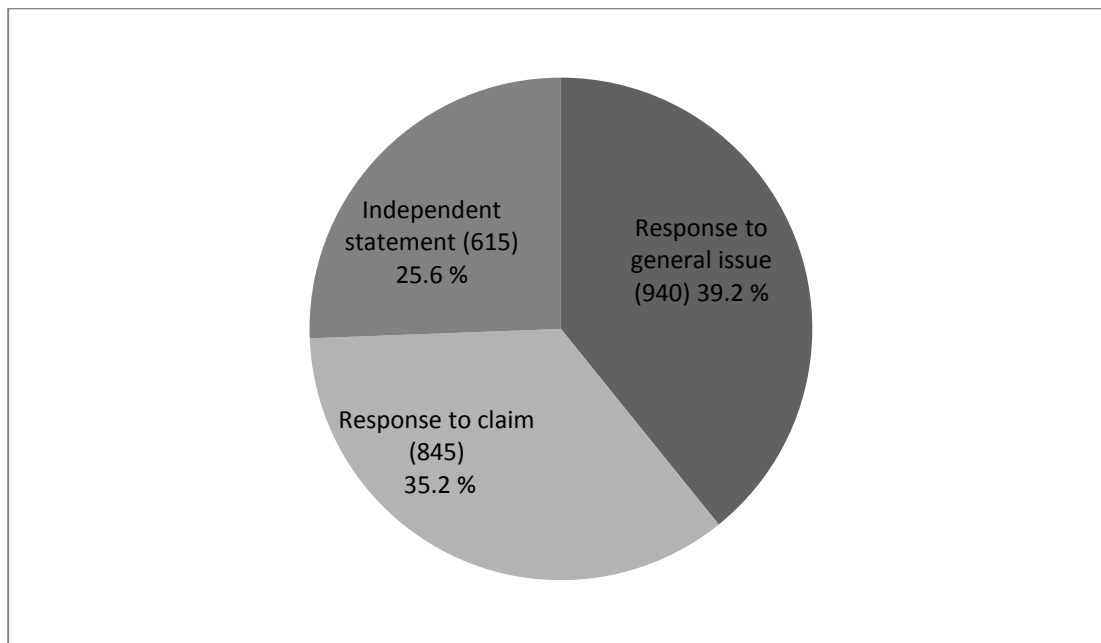
One important question is whether social media commenting practices lead to segmentation of refugee solidarity debates. As an indicator for segmentation, we can analyse how users connect their comments to mainstream media content. We speak of segmentation of solidarity contestation when user debates unfold independently of the news content provided by professional journalists and are unrelated to claims raised by political actors.

Considering the general relationship between news content and commenting on Facebook, we do not find confirmation for the thesis of a segmented online public sphere in the form of a 'bubble', a closed community, where users mainly exchange opinions among the like-minded (Rasmussen, 2014; Sunstein, 2009). To measure segmentation, we use the variable 'type of claim' as an indicator for the motivation of a commenter to place a comment. Commenting needs to be motivated/provoked as a form of engagement. We distinguish three forms of motivation: 1) to make a general contribution to the debate raised by the article, 2) to respond to a claim, and, 3) to make an independent contribution to the debate outside the thematic context of the article. The second form is obviously the most interdiscursive, but also the first and the third from a deliberative point of view can be considered as valid contributions to a political debate. We disregard non-discursive forms such as hate speech, as

they are considered as breaches of netiquette and, as such, are rarely found in our sample of most popular comments. This consequent absence of hate speech can be explained as an act of debate moderation by the site owners (the newspapers) and as a result of Facebook's popularity ranking (the most popular user comments are unlikely to contain elements of 'hate speech'). We have, of course, no information about the percentage of comments which breach netiquette or that are filtered out by the group moderators, but we would assume from existing studies that this number is low (the Guardian, in an internal survey, speaks of 2% of comments that breach netiquette in the commenting sections on their own news site⁸).

With regard to our starting assumption, we can conclude that the responsiveness of commenters on Facebook and thus the degree they enter into an exchange of opinion in response to the content of political news is high (see Figure 1): 74.4% of all commenters responded to news content on the refugee crisis and only 25.6% of the users posted unrelated independent statements (most of them, however, still within the thematic context of the refugee crisis). Among those comments, which related directly to news content, the majority (39.2%) responded to the general issue raised in the main article, but every third comment (35.2%) also responded to a claim raised by a political actor in the main article.

Figure 1: Comment type: in % and frequency in brackets



Our findings thus show that contrary to the cyber-pessimist assumption of an online bubble (Sunstein, 2009), there was a vivid exchange of content and information between news articles and user comments. The majority of users considered the information provided by political journalists as relevant for their own expression of opinion, or even responded directly to a claim raised by a political actor in the news media. This suggests that commenters form a group of engaged citizens who wish to express their voice on highly contentious issues. In other words, these findings show that a majority of the commenters 'talked back' to content and claimants in the media. This is only partially in line

⁸ See (<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/apr/12/the-dark-side-of-guardian-comments>).

with other research that suggests that Facebook news pages are dominantly used to voice more general political discontent and frustration, or that found that the level of interdiscursivity was low (Hille & Bakker, 2013).

By building on such elements of interdiscursivity, the debate about the refugee crisis is focused on actors' claims. Commenters seek to engage directly with contributions by political actors in the debate. They understand their comments as a contribution to a specific debate, or as being responsive to claims raised by political actors. The power of media claimants as primary definers of the debate is, in this sense, not challenged but rather confirmed by online commenting. The content and the claims raised in the news article set the context for user debates and their interpretations and expressions of opinions.

Given the 'reactive' nature of the comment sections (Reagle, 2015, p. 2), their responsiveness can be assessed further by relating comments back to the online claims raised in the main posts (generally the political news articles posted on Facebook). In order to understand how commenters 'talk back' to claims, i.e. whether they are mainly responding to posted media content in general, or refer more substantially to the mediated refugee debates, we further look into the online claims themselves, the issues commenters raised and to what extent they 'took sides' in the solidarity question.

We have therefore also coded those claims (referred to as 'online claims' hereafter). Table 1 shows the sample for these online claims across countries. Given that we have only coded articles in 15 posts per country, the online claims sample cannot be used for generalisation. Yet, it is possible to provide an overview of what kinds of claims commenters responded to. Furthermore, we will use the print claims from September as a way to better contextualise the comments.

Table 1: Online claims sampled, frequencies

	Number of online claims ⁹
France	39
Germany	42
Greece	42
Italy	24
Poland	13
Denmark	37
Switzerland	59
UK	38
Total	294

Table 2 shows the main claimants in these online claims. The dominance of domestic actors can be confirmed for the online claims as well (52%), followed by claimants from civil society (29.3%) on average. In Polish online claims, civil society claimants were more dominant, while in all other countries, the reverse trend is observed.

⁹ Includes claims which have been coded in the print analysis as well since in some countries, a few newspapers also posted articles in our print sample on Facebook: France, Switzerland and the UK.

Table 2: Main claimants in online claims

	State and political parties	Civil society groups/collectives	Individual citizens/activists	Supranational actors	Total
France	69.2%	15.4%	10.3%	5.1%	100%
Germany	61.9%	26.2%	7.1%	4.8%	100%
Greece	45.2%	28.6%	19.0%	7.1%	100%
Italy	54.2%	37.5%	8.3%	0.0%	100%
Poland	30.8%	53.8%	7.7%	7.7%	100%
Denmark	51.4%	21.6%	21.6%	5.4%	100%
Switzerland	39.0%	40.7%	5.1%	15.3%	100%
UK	57.9%	23.7%	7.9%	10.5%	100%
Total	52.0%	29.3%	10.9%	7.8%	100%

The online claims in the posted articles on Facebook from which comments were analysed show a similar picture regarding the strong focus on migration management (52.7%) (see Table 3). However, we find that the most popular posts contained claims which raised regarding refugees' personal backgrounds (16.3%) as well as civic initiatives (20.1%). The emphasis varied strongly, however, between countries for the latter issues.

Table 3: Issues in online claims

	Migration Management	Integration	Background/situation of refugees	Consequences of refugee crisis/influx	Issues regarding public/civic initiatives	Total
France	82.1%	0.0%	12.8%	0.0%	5.1%	100%
Germany	35.7%	0.0%	21.4%	35.7%	7.1%	100%
Greece	57.1%	0.0%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%	100%
Italy	33.3%	4.2%	37.5%	16.7%	8.3%	100%
Poland	53.8%	7.7%	0.0%	7.7%	30.8%	100%
Denmark	43.2%	0.0%	16.2%	2.7%	37.8%	100%
Switzerland	52.5%	0.0%	3.4%	0.0%	44.1%	100%
UK	57.9%	0.0%	28.9%	7.9%	5.3%	100%
Total	52.7%	0.7%	16.3%	10.2%	20.1%	100%

Although the sample size does not allow for more general observations, the online claims seem to a great extent to follow the broader patterns of print claims regarding main claimant and issue (see first part of this integrated report). We do not find much coherence across countries which suggests, first, that news sites follow different strategies about what kinds of articles to post on Facebook (Newman, 2011). This would require a more thorough investigation with a representative sample of online claims and posts. Secondly, however, given that the online claims reflected the most vivid Facebook debates per country in September 2015, this overview suggests that, while broader patterns of claims-making match with the representative sample of print claims in terms of dominance of issues and political claimants, less can be said about what mobilises commenters to respond to them to a high degree (35.2%, see Figure 1).

Therefore, by further analysing the positionality of online commenters towards issues or claims raised in the main article, we find that indeed the great majority of commenters (80.1%) took sides (see Table 4). Among those, 47% of responsive comments were in opposition to the general issues or claims in the main article, and only 33.1% expressed support. User commenting was, in this sense, found to be critical and not affirmative.

Table 4: The type of comment by position of commenter towards the issue/claim in the posted article (frequencies in brackets)¹⁰

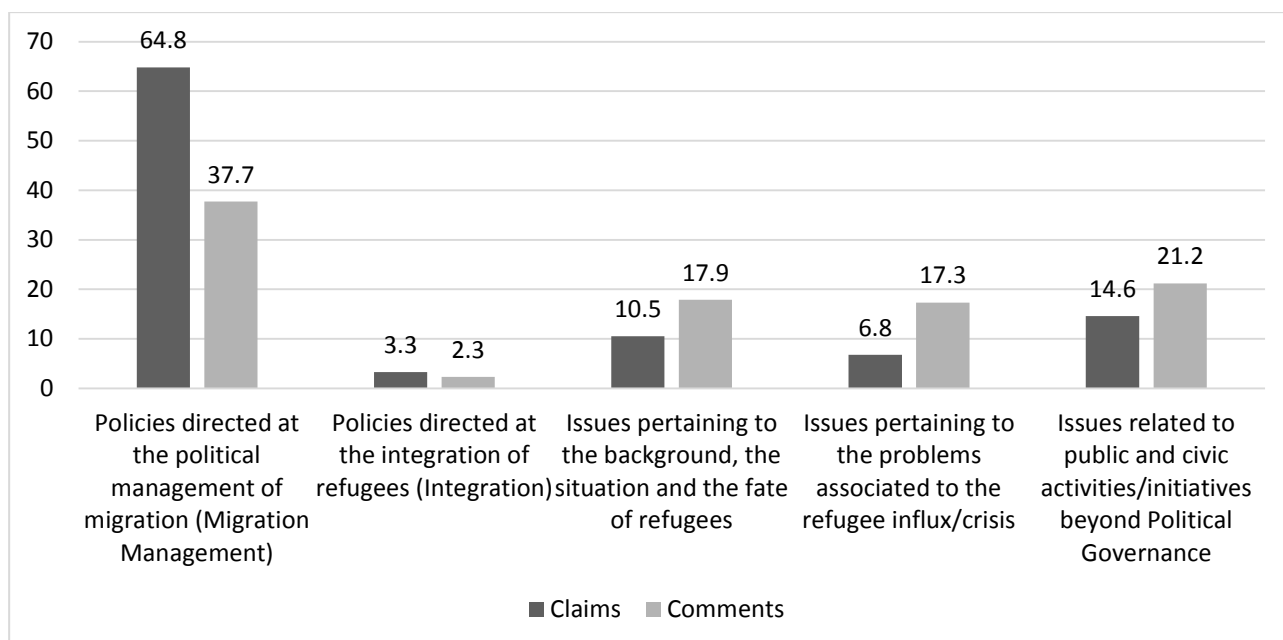
	Negative/opposing	Neutral/ambivalent	Affirmative/supportive	Total
Response to general issue in main article	29.6% (463)	10.1% (158)	14.3% (224)	54.0% (845)
Response to claim raised in main article	17.4% (272)	9.8% (154)	18.8% (294)	46.0% (720)
Total	47.0% (960)	19.9% (428)	33.1% (626)	100% (1565)

What issues or concerns were raised by online commenters, and did citizens-users raise a different agenda of issues as political claimants? Our analysis reveals that the issue agenda of news and the agenda of topics raised for debate in online commenting largely overlapped, yet with a slightly different emphasis put by online commenters that reflects a more bottom-up dynamic of mobilisation (see Figure 2). 37.7% of commenters raised issues regarding migration management, which was also the most salient issue in media claims-making. Citizen-users put, however, comparatively less emphasis on control policies and raised a more diverse mix of issues. Bottom-up mobilisation did not, in this sense, simply mirror the political agenda of news but added to the plurality of the debate and a more profound understanding of issues relating to refugee solidarity by highlighting, for instance, civic initiatives (21.2%) as well as the potential consequences of the influx (17.3%) and personal backgrounds of refugees and asylum seekers (17.9%) (see Table 5). This suggests a focus on more personal aspects regarding the 'refugee crisis' in which commenters shared their own experiences and views. In this sense, the comment sections also gave expression to bottom-up views on the 'refugee crisis'; and more precisely, offered a look into the concerns and demands of those more active citizen-users.

Despite the overall congruence of issues of concern in the refugee debate from a top-down and bottom-up perspective, we find important nuances in user commenting that speak for the expression of a plurality of issues and concerns in social media, and not a narrowing down of the news agenda. The power of claims-makers as primary definers of the debate is, in a sense, challenged by commenters, who as secondary definers of the debate, partly replicated the issue agenda of the news media but partly also shifted its emphasis.

¹⁰ Independent statements are subtracted from the total number of comments.

Figure 2: Main issues in claims and comments (%)



For our understanding of solidarity contestation across countries, it is of further interest to investigate whether commenters across countries focused on the same issues or whether attention was distributed unequally with different issues brought into focus by commenters in different countries. Table 5 shows no clear pattern in the cross-country distribution of issue attention, apart from an overall congruence of the agenda, which makes us conclude that from a bottom-up perspective, the ‘refugee crisis’ raised similar issues of concerns in all countries under investigation. Commenters in all countries focused on the ‘refugee crisis’ as a management problem that required the state to regain control and adopt adequate policies. There was, further, a concern regarding the general consequences of crisis and the problems created by refugees. Non-state civic activities also figured prominently, especially in Denmark and Switzerland. The background situation and the fate of refugees was also discussed to some degree, especially around the case of the drowned Syrian boy, Aylan Kurdi.

Table 5: Cross-country distribution of issues in comments

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

By comparing issue scope between claims-making and online commenting and across countries, we can investigate variations between top-down and bottom-up contestation, and whether commenting on social media in some countries is more europeanised than in others. Do commenters focus more on national and subnational issues? The analysis suggests here that commenters were more focused on local issues than claims in newspapers (see Table 6).

Table 6: Issue scope of claims and comments across countries

		Trans- /supra- /inter- national	National	Sub- national	Un- known/unclassifiable	Total
Claims	France	32.6%	41.7%	25.1%	0.6%	100%
Comments		28.3%	54.0%	0.7%	17.0%	100%
Claims	Germany	20.2%	69.3%	9.7%	0.8%	100%
Comments		67.3%	28.3%	1.0%	3.4%	100%
Claims	Greece	39.0%	53.7%	7.3%	0%	100%
Comments		9.3%	63.0%	27.7%	0%	100%
Claims	Italy	26.5%	29.5%	44.0%	0%	100%
Comments		17.0%	40.7%	23.3%	19.0%	100%
Claims	Poland	24.0%	58.2%	16.6%	1.2%	100%
Comments		27.7%	67.3%	0%	5.0%	100%
Claims	Denmark	41.0%	43.4%	15.6%	0%	100%
Comments		13.3%	73.4%	12.0%	1.3%	100%
Claims	Switzerland	26.9%	43.8%	25.0%	4.3%	100%
Comments		41.7%	56.7%	0%	1.6%	100%
Claims	UK	42.5%	45.5%	10.8%	1.2%	100%
Comments		30.7%	60.7%	7.6%	1.0%	100%
Claims across countries		31.0%	46.6%	21.3%	1.1%	100%
Comments across countries		29.4%	55.5%	9.0%	6.1%	100%

On average, claims more often referred to all three scopes, while comments focused strongly (55.5%) on national issues. One reason for this could be that the national level is easier for citizens to grasp, yet the main reason is that claimants are also non-domestic actors and represent other scopes as well.

Finally, we were able to differentiate between comments which directly or indirectly related to refugees as an object of solidarity, and comments which did not engage in this kind of solidarity contestation (see Table 7). The analysis shows that, across countries, the majority of commenters did indeed show engagement in solidarity contestation. Thus, commenters on the Facebook news sites on average strongly tended towards leaving comments directly related to refugees. They took sides on the question regarding solidarity for refugees. These dynamics of ‘taking side’ on refugee solidarity will be analysed in further detail in the next section.

Table 7: Comments relating to refugees / not relating to refugees as object

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

Taking sides: Bottom-up solidarity contestation on social media

Online Mobilisation: Calls for action

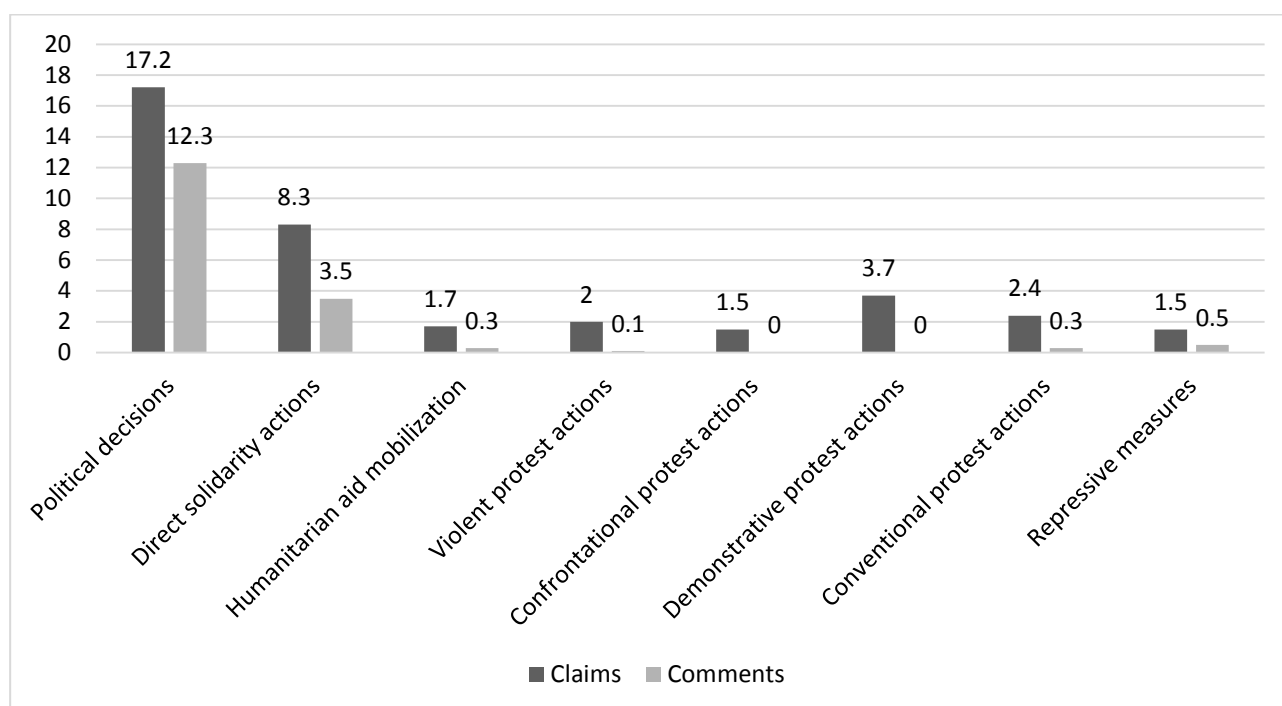
With regards to our starting assumptions about the innovative potential of social media solidarity contestation, we can test in this section whether online commenting a) activates users beyond talk and is more participatory; b) facilitates users to enter a more direct relationship with the objects of solidarity and, c) positions them in solidarity contestations to ‘take sides’ and critically justify their positions.

The idea of a switch from talk to action that would indicate more open forms of user engagement and participation cannot be clearly confirmed by the data, especially the question of whether Facebook activity fosters offline participation as well, which needs to be considered with caution as Facebook users cannot be regarded as representative of the whole population, but do show a political interest, are probably younger and better educated and, as such, may be more likely to be politically active offline (e.g., Mellon & Prosser, 2017; Vissers & Stolle, 2014). In our purposive sample of posts most commented on and most-liked comments, (we can ask whether commenters in this particular debate constituted a politicised group of citizens that stand up to contest refugee solidarity – either by showing activism in terms of readiness for political mobilisation or extremism in terms of more radical opinion (as compared to the claims-makers in the media).

Returning to the question of political polarisation and extremism in the next section, we will consider in the following how the refugee crisis prompts users to engage in direct calls for action. This analysis does not reveal higher levels of political activism. Among the comments, with refugees as objects, only a minority of comments called for action (27.4%), while in 72.6% of them, no calls for action could be identified. Overall, we find that refugee debates in all countries were mainly fought verbally, and only occasionally linked to calls for protest or solidarity action. In addition, these calls for action mainly addressed the government as a legislator and did not try to mobilise fellow citizens. This is in line with our claims-making analysis, which revealed a rather low salience of direct solidarity

action as an element of news coverage. As shown in Figure 3, direct action, such as protest and calls for solidarity, was even less visible in user comments than in the political news.

Figure 3: Form of / call for action in printed claims and comments (%)



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

Table 8: Calls for action across countries

	Policy/ legal action	Direct solidarity	Humanitarian aid mobilisation	Protest actions	Repressive measures	Online mobilisation	Other	No CfAction	Total
France	30.7%	2.6%	0.7%	1.8%	0.0%	9.1%	0.4%	54.7%	100%
Germany	10.9%	3.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	5.5%	79.6%	100%
Greece	4.3%	1.4%	0.0%	1.1%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	92.8%	100%
Italy	3.3%	8.8%	0.4%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	20.5%	66.1%	100%
Poland	8.4%	1.7%	0.0%	0.4%	0.8%	0.0%	3.8%	84.9%	100%
Denmark	17.2%	6.0%	0.0%	0.4%	1.7%	0.0%	8.2%	66.4%	100%
Switzerland	16.7%	4.4%	0.7%	0.3%	0.7%	0.0%	4.8%	72.4%	100%
UK	22.7%	5.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	1.5%	4.2%	65.4%	100%
Total	14.6%	4.2%	0.3%	0.6%	0.5%	1.5%	5.7%	72.6%	100%

Tonality of debate

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

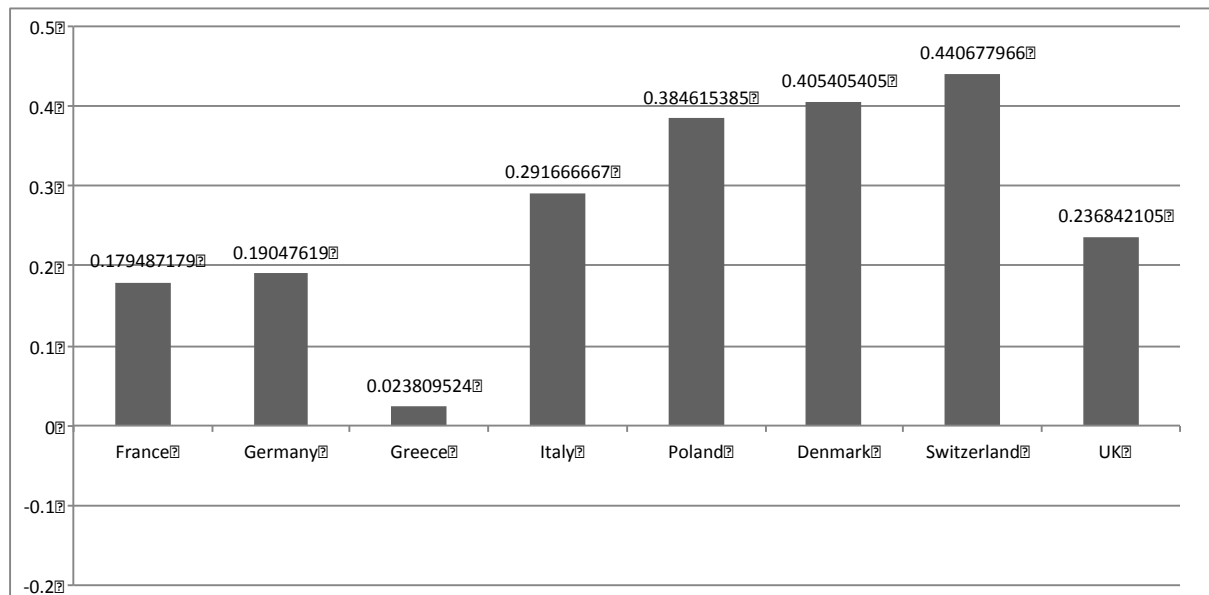
Generally, across all countries, we can see that even though the majority (47.7%) rejects solidarity with refugees, there was a substantial minority of supportive users (31.1%), while 21.3% remained neutral or ambivalent (see Table 9).

Table 9: Tonality of claims and comments across countries

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

Given that the comment sections are not politically mobilised as such, what encourages commenters to respond to the posted articles (and relate to their content to such a high degree)? As shown in Figure 4, the online claims in the most popular Facebook articles during September were, on average, more positive towards refugees. This was in stark contrast to all comment sections, except for the cases in Greece and Italy.

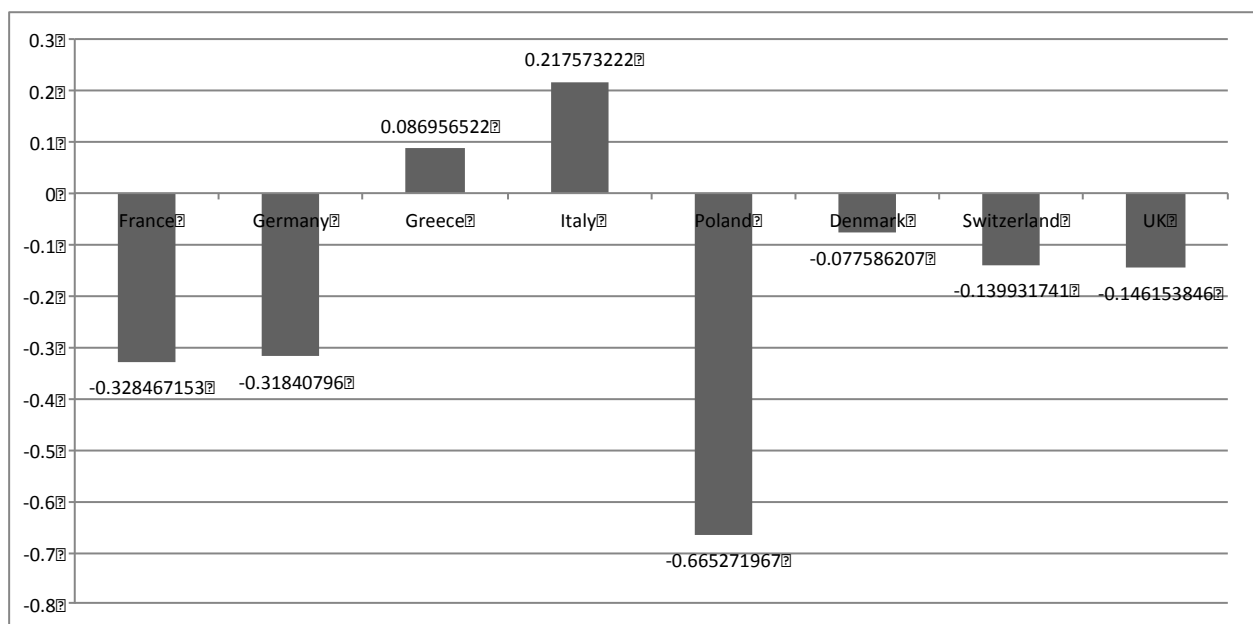
Figure 4: Average tonality in online claims



This is interesting from the viewpoint of understanding commenters in terms of ‘taking sides’ on the question of solidarity with refugees. Except for Greece and Italy, where online claims and commenters were positive, we found that commenters tended to be more negative than the claims in the online articles. We also found that commenters on Polish FB news sites were the most negative towards refugees, followed by commenters on French and German Facebook news sites (see Figure 5).

In other words, Figure 5 shows an interesting pattern across Europe, describing a paradox between being affected by the political consequences of the ‘refugee crisis’ and tonality across countries. While the commenters in countries with external borders that were crossed by refugees, Italy and Greece, were on average more positive toward refugees, the other countries were more negative. Poland, with the lowest number of asylum applications (9,490) in our sampling period from August 2015 to April 2016 (Eurostat, 2018), was the most negative country.

Figure 5: Tonality of commenters across countries



It is further noteworthy that negative and supportive commenters raised different issue agendas. In line with a ‘politics of fear’, the most salient issue of migration management was more strongly referred to by negative commenters (42.0%, see Table 7),¹¹ followed by issues relating to the consequences of increased migration influx to their countries (29.5%).

Positive commenters, instead, in line with a ‘politics of pity’ highlighted refugees’ personal backgrounds and situations (38.0%, compared to 11.6% in negative comments, see Table 8), followed by a focus on civic initiatives (30.2%). Hence, whenever the background situation or fate of the refugees was referred to (‘politics of pity’), this increased the likelihood of a positive positioning towards refugees. If instead an emphasis was put on crisis (‘politics of fear’), this was mostly done in the context of a negative statement towards the refugees. If governance and state policies were mentioned, this was mainly combined with negative attitudes towards refugees, while civic activities were related to positive statements.

¹¹ Similar for neutral or ambivalent commenters.

Table 7: Issues among commenters with negative stance towards refugees¹²

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

Table 8: Issues among commenters with positive stance towards refugees¹³

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

Consequently, we find different issue patterns between negative and positive commenters. The generally more personal focus on the comments in comparison to claims (see section 1) might derive from the more positive commenters. This group of citizen-users might therefore relate to refugees more directly (and personally) by highlighting their backgrounds and pathways to Europe. They also referred to (often local) initiatives beyond political governance. In this way, and possibly to a higher degree than claimants in the news media, positive commenters did not ‘dehumanise’ refugees. On the contrary, they focused on humanitarian issues in the ‘refugee crisis’.

Summing up this section, we can conclude that Facebook commenting on mainstream newspaper sites was not the place for a radicalisation of political opinion through the expression of xenophobia or hatred. At least among the most popular comments that were ranked highest on Facebook, refugee solidarity was debated in a rather balanced way, with a majority rejecting refugee solidarity,

¹² Displayed without category ‘unknown’, which amounts to 0.9% in total; Italy 10.6% and Poland, 1.1%.

¹³ Displayed without category ‘unknown’, which amounts to 0.5% in total; Switzerland: 2% and Denmark 1.1%

however, this anti-solidarity voice did not become hegemonic or disrespectful towards the opinions of others, or towards our objects of solidarity.

Justifications

Online commenting forums are not structured in a way to facilitate an exchange of arguments among users. Commenters rarely enter a dialogue with each other. Providing justifications by expressing one's opinions is therefore in no way self-evident, as opinions are often expressed in an abbreviated way by making use of more emotional language instead of rational argumentation.¹⁴ Our initial assumption has been, however, that a 'politics of pity' and a politics of fear' require citizens-users as witnesses of human suffering to translate their first emotional reactions into public speech. In line with this assumption, we found that a slight majority of commenters (57.3%) justified their stances regarding solidarity toward refugees, pointing thus to discursive contestation and engagement instead of plain opinion-stating. By making such a solidarity statement, the user-commenter thus *took side* and *decided* about the deservingness of the refugees as an object of solidarity.

To observe this 'translation practice' from first emotional reactions of 'pity' or 'fear' to political judgement in further detail, we have conducted an inductive qualitative coding of user comments, combined with a systematic reading of the political theory of solidarity (Alexander, 2014; Boltanski, 1999; Brunkhorst, 2005; Calhoun, 2002; Chouliaraki, 2013; Delanty, 2008; Kymlicka, 2015). Our list of justifications offers different alternatives for the typical ways in which the commenters defined, evaluated, and interpreted solidarity. The categories from this list can be considered as 'a generalised repertoire of arguments' or as 'orders of justifications' (Boltanski, 1999), on the basis of which participants in public discourse can position themselves towards an object of solidarity (the refugees). Such a judgement sets the condition for further thinking about political consequences and/or to ascribe political responsibility. To reconstruct this political practice of critique of the online user community, our inductive coding allowed us to distinguish between unconditional and conditional justifications of solidarity with refugees.

Unconditional justifications for the un-/deservingness of solidarity towards refugees typically built references to an absolute moral value, which claimed universal validity and thus needed to be followed by the members of the community under any circumstance. This excluded political contestation. The value was non-negotiable and applied to all cases irrespective of particular circumstances. From our inductive coding, we came up with the following list of items/justifications that were typically (but not exclusively) used to call for unconditional solidarity with refugees:

- human rights in terms of a categorical moral obligation to protect human lives and provide humanitarian assistance.
- religious duties (the 'duty of any Christian')
- historical responsibility (e.g. 'due to our past, we need to help', or 'we have always been a country open to others').

¹⁴ See Chouliaraki & Stolic (2017) and Triandafyllidou (2017) for an 'interpretative approach towards the refugee crisis as an event that triggered particular emotions.

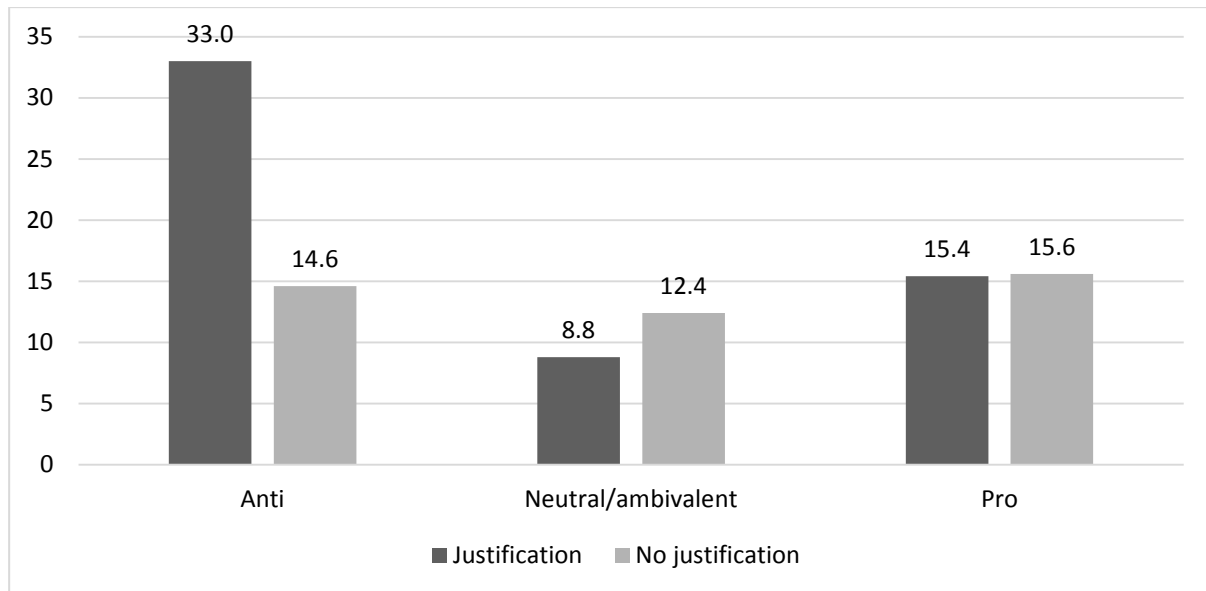
The rejection of solidarity towards refugees in a categorical way bore resemblance to the essentialist exclusion of foreigners in terms of primordial traits such as race. Such ‘racist’ statements were, however, often excluded from user comments by netiquette and moderation. We observed, with some regularity that users referred to justifications that ‘qualify’ solidarity. Such justifications that set conditions for the granting and or rejection of solidarity are, of course, an essential element of solidarity contestation. Typically, the conditionality of solidarity was explained by references to the following justifications:

- political capacities (e.g. ‘Our politicians/our political system is/are incompetent, corrupt, not able to handle the situation’; ‘Our political system is good enough to handle this/our democracy is strong to handle this’)
- social/economic capacities (e.g. bureaucracies overburdened/capable, (not) enough resources, ‘Integration of refugees is too difficult/possible because we are a small/big country, (not) enough jobs/places in schools),
- utility (assessing the ‘use’ of refugees for ‘our’ society) (e.g. we have (no) need for labour, diversity, demographic balance),
- welfare chauvinism (e.g. ‘We need to help our people first’; ‘What about our school kids, our elderly, our unemployed?’ ‘Why do we only look after ourselves?’),
- law and order/security (‘We will have security problems’; ‘We won’t be able to feel safe’; ‘If the police know how to deal with this, we can do this’)
- migrant/refugee behaviour (e.g. ‘They *behave* inappropriately; They don’t want to integrate; they only want our money and welfare; they are criminals’; ‘They can learn how to live here’; ‘Those who are willing to accept our rules and laws are welcome’)
- legal/cultural status (Differences between ‘real and bogus refugees’, e.g. ‘They are not real refugees’, ‘They are the rich among the refugees, otherwise they couldn’t afford to pay the traffickers’, ‘The educated refugees are in real need’)

We thus arrive at ten categories for the justification of refugee solidarity, which also underlie the coding scheme that was applied by our researchers in the comparative analysis. We find that in the overall distribution of justifications in comments, commenters relied on a wide spectrum of arguments. As country differences in the use of justifications were neither significant nor did they show the expected correlations (e.g. the emphasis on religion in Poland), we will in the following compare the argumentative patterns of pro- with anti-refugee commenters.

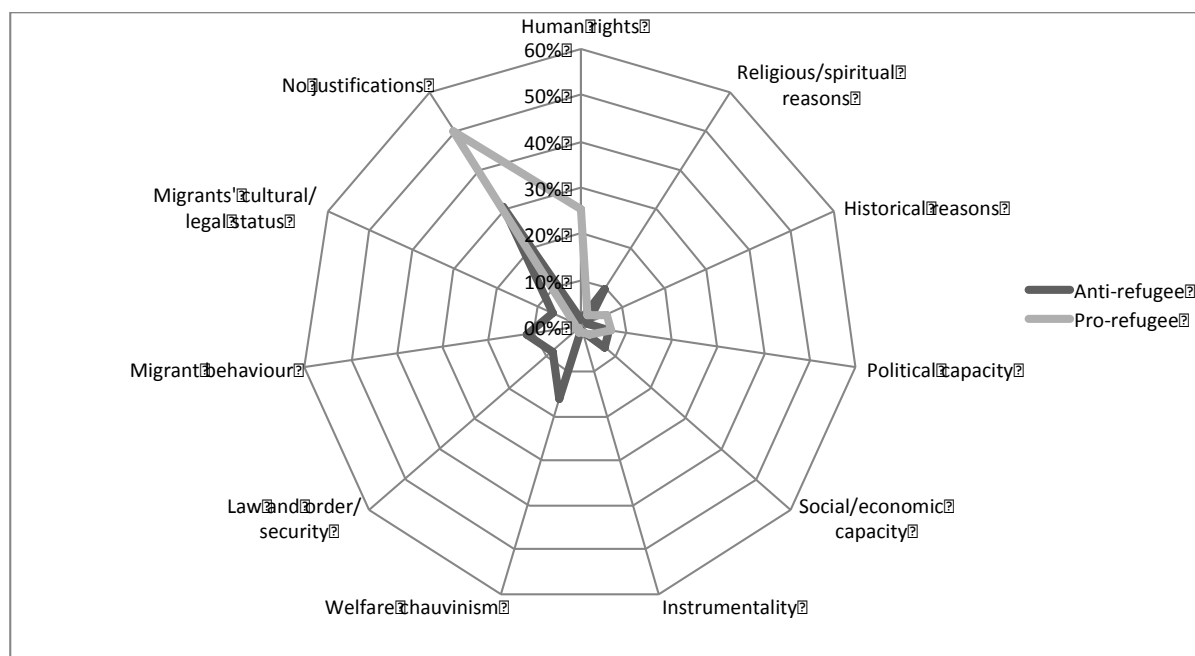
What comes to our attention first is that anti-solidarity commenters engaged to a higher degree in justificatory practices than pro-solidarity commenters. Our findings secondly pointed to important differences between these two groups of commenters regarding the justifications they used to underline their pro- or anti-solidarity stances (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Justification versus no justification in comments with tonality toward refugees (%)



A comparison between anti- and pro-solidarity comments showed their different ways to justify this tonality (see Figure 7). In the anti-solidarity comments with a justification against solidarity with refugees, the most frequent argument used was that national citizens should be regarded first (welfare chauvinism, 16.1%). This was followed by the impression that migrants' behaviour is inappropriate or a general mismatch (11.9%). Religious reasons ranked third on average at 9.7%. Comments with a positive stance towards refugees were less frequently justified (no justification found in 50.3% compared to 30.7% in the negative comments). In particular, Greece and Italy stood out as cases in which commenters posted without justifications most frequently (Greece 77.2% and Italy 56.9% without justifications). These were also the two countries in which commenters were, on average, more positive towards refugees, as mentioned before. Pro-solidarity justifications most frequently referred to human rights and broader humanitarian aspects (25.2% of positive comments as compared to only 1.6% in the negative comments). We explain this low engagement in justificatory practices with the unconditionality of pro-solidarity arguments. If solidarity is granted unconditionally (as in the case of human rights protection), it cannot further be contested and qualified.

Figure 7: Justifications of solidarity of negative and positive comments compared



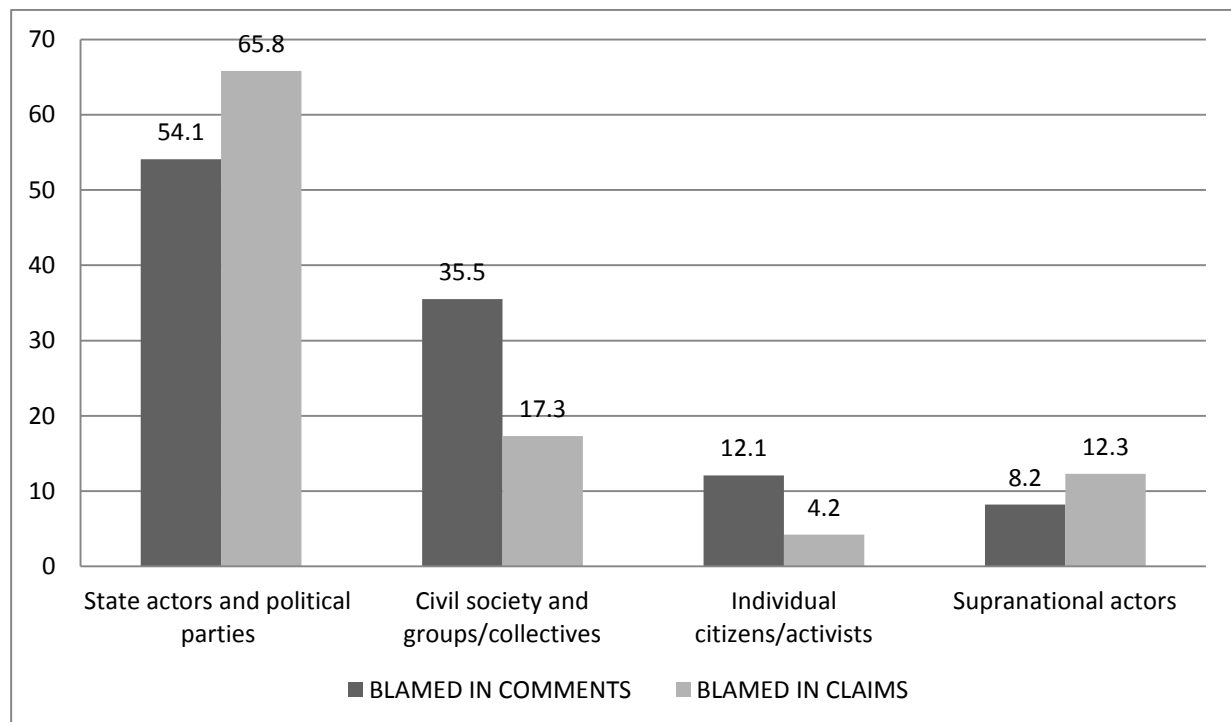
To sum up, these findings confirm our hypothesis of the building of critical capacities of online commenters. Following the pattern of social desirability, solidarity towards people in need of assistance is a mandatory response. The choice to reject solidarity towards those people in need, therefore, requires the proponent of a claim to engage in an explicit justification (Chouliaraki, 2013). The quite substantial presence of commenters with positive views on refugees and their attitude to what negative commenters often termed ‘do-gooders’, further challenges the negative majority to engage in the formulation of arguments for their anti-solidary choices. In other words, commenters feel urged to back their anti-solidarity opinions with arguments, i.e. explain why they are against refugees. Pro-solidarity contestants instead speak in name of a higher morality and of absolute values.

Blamed actors and ascriptions of political responsibility

The practice of blaming responsibility can be used as an indicator for contention and mobilisation from below. Do commenters ascribe responsibility in a situation of crisis and humanitarian disaster by blaming and naming culprits? The findings show, first of all, that there are no significant differences between practices of top-down blaming in political claims-making and bottom-up blaming in user comments. Bottom-up blaming practices in comments were more frequent (28%) than top-down blaming practices by political actors in claims (20.1%). This indicates a slightly higher level of politicisation in user comments compared to claims. The voice of users was, however, not translated into a mobilisation that targeted a particular group as a scapegoat, as can be seen in Figure 8. The categories of blamed actors further varied widely, with state actors being the most targeted by both political actors as claimants and commenters. Blaming in user comments remained state-focused and direct blaming of refugees did not take place to a significant degree across the countries. There was a further low frequency in the practices of targeting supranational actors (12.3% in claims as compared

to 8.2% in comments) as responsible - or foreign governments¹⁵ (e.g. the German government, 2.8% in comments, 2.5% in print claims; the Hungarian government, 3.5% in comments, 2.3% in print claims).

Figure 8: Blamed actors in comments and print claims compared (%)



Final remarks

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

These dynamics of bottom-up solidarity contestation are first of all found to be closely related to the dominant public and political discourse in a particular national country context. Social media commenting sites are not, as is often assumed, the debate place of a fragmented and polarised user community (the online bubble). In section one of this second part of our integrated report, we did not find any evidence of segmentation, but rather a strong linkage between online news and online

¹⁵ Claimants included in the category ‘state actors and political parties’

commenting. This points to an integrated public sphere of solidarity contestation, where primary definers in the news media set the agenda and the main frames for secondary definers of the debate in terms of social media users' responses. In this debate, a plurality of issues is raised dominantly relating to security concerns, but highlighting also a plethora of other issues, such as the welfare state and civil society aspects, or the destiny of refugees, their living conditions and personal stories of flight. Bottom-up solidarity contestation is most often verbally fought, and social media are not used as a place for targeted political mobilisation in the sense of direct calls for protests or acts of solidarity.

Looking more closely at the dynamics of 'taking sides', on the question of refugee solidarity, we find that opinions expressed by commenters were overall more negative than the opinions expressed by claims-makers in the news media, which were still balanced in most countries, except Poland, by a substantial minority, backing solidarity with refugees. In two countries (Italy and Greece), a positive view even prevailed over hostility. The comment sections of news sites on Facebook were not the place for the expression of political extremism, of xenophobia or of 'hate' towards foreigners. Nor do we find the online voice to be particularly polarised. Again, it is likely that news sites moderate their Facebook pages as well as expect that with more positive claims in the posted articles, more contestation (thus traffic/click-bait) will occur on their sites. We draw these conclusions with an eye to the context of September 2015 which, as we had intended to capture, presented a case study for solidarity contestation in the refugee debates.

Online users in all countries systematically related to the positions of claims-makers in the media and tended to be critical towards them, not affirmative. They did not, however, take fundamentally opposed views to the ones expressed by political representatives. In equal terms, their views expressed towards the refugees as our object of solidarity were balanced and they did not seek polarisation or direct confrontation. Three deviating countries, Italy, Greece and Denmark, are interesting, as the citizen voice here was, on average, more positive towards refugees than the voice of claims raised in the news media. This is a significant finding, which makes us aware how solidarity contestation towards refugees and the domestic contestation of the national political actors are interrelated. A negative view on national government can motivate a positive expression of solidarity towards refugees. In Germany and France, instead, where the governmental position towards refugee solidarity was positive during the month of September, the larger share of negative positioning of citizen-users towards refugee solidarity might also be explained as an implicit or explicit critique of national government.

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

Coming back to the specific situation of 'humanitarian emergency' in September and the controversial decisions by the German government to open its borders to refugees, we might ask whether our purposive sample of the most popular comments on news sites is a good indicator for public opinion during that time. This question should be further investigated in future research. Our sample did not show signs of extremism or political radicalisation in the expression of opinion possibly also due to the news sites' Facebook administrators. Country differences, as well, followed the expected patterns of public opinion with Poland being most negative towards refugees and Italy and Greece being most positive. The so called 'welcoming culture' was more reflected in news claims making, where in every country's positivity peaked in the early months of our entire sampling period. User comments, especially in Germany, remained more distanced and critical of the decision to open the borders to refugees. Such an attitude of critical scepticism was, however, paired with many spontaneous expressions of solidarity.

Our findings point in this sense to a much more complex picture of solidarity contestation than expected. Instead of a clear-cut divide between cosmopolitans in support of humanitarian solidarity towards refugees, and communitarians in support of nationally exclusive notions of solidarity, we find shifting agendas and discourses. We also do not find an alliance between anti-refugee positions and anti-European position, on the contrary, anti-solidarity claims were often raised in the name of Europe, and Europe is also seen by citizens in its role as a guarantor of security and exclusive solidarity. As there was a general responsiveness towards both issues and general claims raised in the news, the online user debate was mainly a general replication of the patterns of political debates found in the claims-making analysis, and not a segmented debate that followed its own logic, detached from the political mainstream.

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France

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Introduction

This chapter examines the French public debate between August 2015 and April 2016 in order to identify and discuss the main characteristics of the public debate over the ‘refugee crisis’. Our focus on the refugee crisis has enabled us to deal with a highly resonant topic in the public sphere which has taken central stage regarding concerns about the state, policy-makers, civil society, and the wider citizenry alike. Accordingly, our aim is to analyse the main dynamics such as the role that French citizens have had in the definition of the issue, the specific grids by which refugees have been framed (for example as victims or as a threat), the degree to which organised publics have engaged with solidarity actions on behalf of the refugees, the main level shaping the public sphere (national, transnational, subnational), looking both at the print media and online comments. Of course, the first thing to emphasise is the fact that all these dynamics have taken place within a highly sensitive context, following the Charlie Hebdo shooting on 7 January 2015 and the Paris terroristic attacks of November 2015. Since then, regrettably, albeit understandably in view of the bloodshed by its citizens, France has been absorbed in a deeply emotional debate. The France of the refugee crisis thus bears very little resemblance to what it was just one year before: at the time of the refugee crisis France was ravaged by draconian measures of public emergency; it was burdened by the economic and political legacy of the economic crisis and wars in Iraq, Syria and Libya; and it underwent intense party competition (with the primary elections of Republicans) and growing popular support for the extreme right.

Our analysis follows an operationalisation of the public sphere that draws on ‘claims-making’ (Koopmans and Statham 1999, Cinalli and Giugni 2013). By relying on two main quality newspapers (*Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*) and a popular tabloid (*Le Parisien*), we aim to shed light on various dynamics of interventions in the public domain in line with choices and procedures that have been followed for the treatment of other national cases in this third part of the TransSOL WP5 integrated report. At the same time, we have taken a further look at contestation on Facebook during September 2015, during a crucial time period when large numbers of refugees transited from Italy toward the North of Europe, indeed with the potential threat of entering France in great numbers. During this period, the Franco-Italian borders at Ventimiglia become once again a main symbol of exclusion of, but also divisions within, ‘Fortress Europe’, offering just another venue for strengthening public contestation between pro-solidarity and anti-solidarity actors in France.

The refugee crisis in the media: Chronology of debate

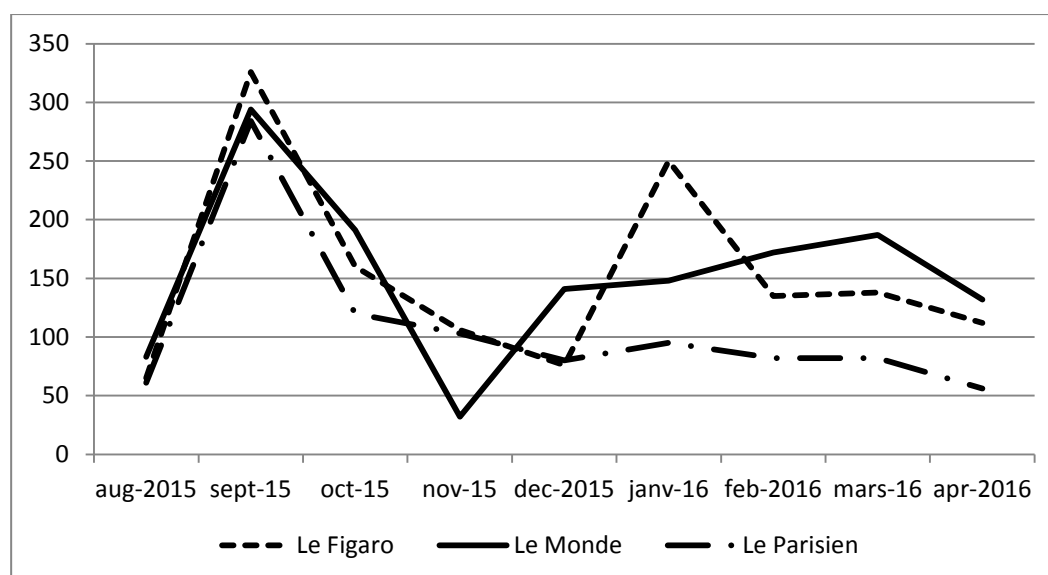
Table 1 shows that, overall, 301 articles have been identified for our study of the French case. This figure means an average of ca. 2.5 claims per article, resulting into 764 claims for our analysis.

Table 10: Sampling of claims in print versions

Month of publication	Le Figaro	Le Monde	Le Parisien
August 2015	65	83	61
September 2015	326	294	284
October 2015	160	191	120
November 2015	106	32	103
December 2015	76	141	80
January 2016	250	148	95
February 2016	135	172	82
March 2016	138	187	82
April 2016	112	132	56
Total number of articles	1368	1380	963
Number of articles retrieved (average sample)	101	105	96
Number of articles coded (i.e. of articles in which claims occurred)	79	81	141
Number of claims	250	264	250
Total number of claims in FR analysis of print	764		

Figure 1, however, shows that the diachronic distribution of the total number of articles retrieved in our three media outlets follows a similar trend only in the first part of the period, that is, between August and November 2015. In fact, a truly overlapping trend can be noticed only for the month of September, which stands out as the peak in terms of public coverage the refugee crisis across the three French newspapers.

Figure 1: Total number of articles over sample time period



When moving on to study the diachronic pattern of claims-making, figure 2 provides further details for assessing the specific rhythm of the French debate (also cf. claims in table 2). Findings proves that the highest peak (within an otherwise quite similar pattern) refers to the strong public impact of the support of the French President Hollande in favour of the establishment of a refugees' quota system: the distribution of claims shows that this peak occurred in September 2015, when the EU ministers

voted on the Commission's plan to distribute 160,000 refugees across member states, and the French President Holland announced his intention to receive 24,000 refugees. Afterwards, the share of claims decreased until April 2016, though less consistently so in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in Paris on November.

As regards differences between different newspapers, *Le Parisien* reported more claims in September compared to *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*. We also find that the *Le Monde* and *Le Parisien* follow a more similar patterns when comparing with *Le Figaro*. This latter shows two different peaks, first in September 2015 and later in January 2016. Hence, we find that the 'refugee crisis' is particularly salient in September 2015, and then also in the aftermath of November terroristic attacks, at least when dealing with *Le Figaro*.

Figure 2: Number of claims over sample time period

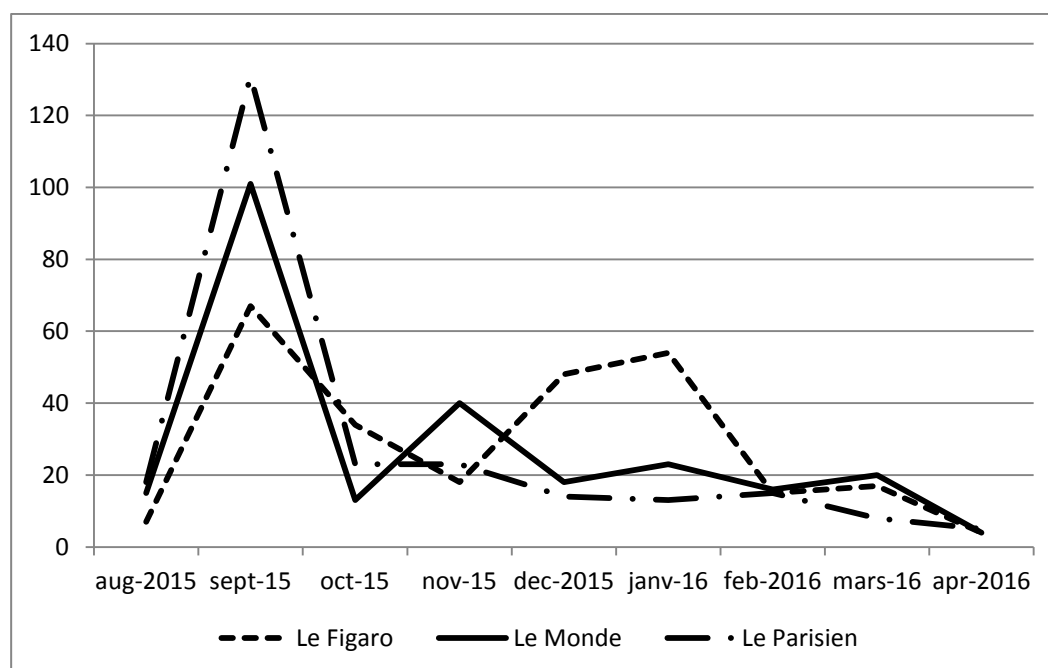


Table 2: Distribution of claims over the time span (August 2015-April 2016)

	Frequency	%
August 2015	40	5.21
September 2015	300	39.27
October 2015	70	9.14
November 2015	81	10.60
December 2015	80	10.46
January 2016	90	11.76
February 2016	46	6.00
March 2016	45	6.00
April 2016	12	1.56
Total	764	100

Actors: who are the proponents and opponents of solidarity towards refugees?

Our analysis shows that state actors led more than half of the total claim-making. Behind numerical figures, we find that Merkel was a prominent actor in the French public debate, even more so than the French President Hollande. This corresponded to the decision of the German Chancellor to accept the largest number of refugees in Europe in spite of tough internal and external opposition. Looking behind the general figures, it is important to note that claims by state actors included guidelines for the welcoming of refugees (which the national government gave to subnational governments), official visits by the Greek Prime Minister to help the Greek government, as well as maintaining an open dialogue with controversial state leaders such as Orban and Erdogan.

The prominence of state actors was then followed by that of political parties, which included mainly representatives of the Socialist Party, the Republicans and the National Front. Emphasis should be put on the relatively low visibility of ‘group-specific organisations and groups’, civil society and human rights organisations’, as well as on ‘advocacy and policy-oriented groups’; together, they initiated less than 16% of the overall claims.

Table 3: Main actors by newspapers, % (frequencies in brackets)

	Le Monde	Le Figaro	Le Parisien	Total
State actors	46.0 (121)	61.0 (153)	52.0 (129)	53.0 (403)
Political parties	12.0 (31)	13.0 (32)	9.0 (23)	11.0 (86)
Professional organisations and groups	9.0 (23)	6.0 (16)	4.0 (10)	6.0 (49)
Labor organizations and groups	1.0 (3)	0.0 (0)	1.0 (2)	0.7 (5)
Group-specific organizations and groups	9.0 (25)	4.0 (10)	4.0 (10)	5.9 (45)
Civil society and human rights organizations	6.0 (16)	2.0 (4)	13.0 (32)	6.8 (52)
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	3.0 (7)	2.0 (6)	4.0 (11)	3.1 (24)
Other actors	6.0 (17)	2.0 (4)	11.0 (28)	6.4 (49)
Supranational actors	8.0 (21)	10.0 (25)	2.0 (5)	6.7 (51)
Total	100 (264)	100 (250)	100 (250)	100 (764)

It is important to notice that the presence of a given actor went together with that of some particular narratives. Accordingly, state actors often led a neutral discourse about the refugee crisis and the role of land of transit which France played in the crisis. Not surprisingly, the extreme right stood out for its tough anti-refugee position, calling for the end of all welcoming plans, while the Republicans took a mild position by calling for tougher controls at French borders, together with major plans for international aid.

As regards nationality, French actors (300) were prevalent; they were followed by German actors (127), and then Turkish actors (25). This was in line with the centrality of Germany during the refugee crisis, as well as with the agreement which the EU had reached with Turkey for tougher controls at its borders. French newspapers almost never reported on interventions by Italian actors in spite of Italy's centrality throughout the crisis, and the sharing of highly contentious borders between France and Italy at Ventimiglia.

Table 4: Nationality of main actors

Nationality	Frequencies	%
France	300	45.3
Germany	127	19.2
Turkey	25	3.8
Greece	23	3.5
Sweden	19	2.9
Syria	17	2.6
Hungary	16	2.4
Luxembourg	12	1.8
US	12	1.8
Poland	9	1.4
Austria	9	1.4
Slovenia	8	1.2
Denmark	7	1.1
Italy	6	0.9
Libya	6	0.9
United Kingdom	5	0.8
Netherlands	4	0.6
Croatia	3	0.5
Slovakia	3	0.5
Macedonia	3	0.5
Iraq	3	0.5
Cyprus	2	0.3
Czech Republic	2	0.3
Belgium	2	0.3
Finland	2	0.3
Lebanon	2	0.3
Afghanistan	2	0.3
Tunisia	2	0.3
Switzerland	1	0.2
Spain	1	0.2
Portugal	1	0.2
Romania	1	0.2
Serbia	1	0.2
Russia	1	0.2
Morocco	1	0.2
Other	24	3.6
Total	662	100

The French nationality dominated among state actors (177), political parties (54), civil society and human rights organisations (27) and professional organisations and groups (13). When looking at organisations of specific groups, the Syrians scored the highest figure (15).

As regards the scope of actors, the figures in Table 5 show that the national level was strongly predominant for state actors, political parties, professional groups and labour organisations. Beyond the obvious case of supranational actors, group-specific organisations provided the only instance when the transnational level was stronger than the national level. Lastly, the sub-national level was strong (though not predominant) for civil society and human rights organisations, especially for advocacy and policy-oriented groups.

Table 5: Scope of main actors, % (frequencies in brackets)

	Trans-/supra-/inter-national	National	Sub-national	999	Total
State actors	7.9 (32)	65.8 (265)	26.3 (106)	0.0 (0)	100 (403)
Political parties	5.8 (5)	72.1 (62)	22.1 (19)	0.0 (0)	100 (86)
Professional organizations and groups	18.4 (9)	69.4 (34)	12.2 (6)	0.0 (0)	100 (49)
Labor organizations and groups	20.0 (1)	80.0 (4)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	100 (5)
Group-specific organizations and groups	48.9 (22)	44.4 (20)	6.7 (3)	0.0 (0)	100 (45)
Civil society and human rights organizations	21.2 (11)	42.3 (22)	34.6 (18)	1.9 (1)	100 (52)
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	16.7 (4)	41.7 (10)	41.7 (10)	0.0 (0)	100 (24)
Other actors	12.2 (6)	42.9 (21)	44.9 (22)	0.0 (0)	100 (49)
Supranational actors	98.0 (50)	2.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	100 (51)
Total	18.3 (140)	57.5 (439)	24.1 (184)	0.1 (1)	100 (764)

Addressees

As regards the addressees, the first noticeable figure in Table 6 is the fact that claims most often did not refer to any addressee (84.3% of claims had no addressee at all). There are, however, two main additional findings when focusing solely on claims that do refer to an addressee. First, we find a particularly large presence of state actors, such as the French government, mayors, deputies, senators, ministers, prefectures and communities, as well as other foreigner state actors, governments and world-wide leaders. Second, we find a particularly large presence of supranational actors, mainly

European, who intervened in a wide range of issues such as asylum policy, the Schengen area and the quota system for refugees.

Table 6: Actors Addressed

	Frequency	Per cent
State actors	56	7.2
Political parties	6	0.8
Professional organizations and groups	2	0.3
Labour organizations and groups	2	0.3
Group-specific organizations and groups	4	0.5
Civil society and human rights organizations	2	0.3
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	6	0.8
Other actors	9	1.0
Supranational actors	29	3.8
EU Member States (any/some/all of them)	7	0.9
Unknown / Unspecified	1	0.1
No Addressee	642	84.0
Total	764	100

Positioning

When considering whether actors take a favourable, or unfavourable position vis-à-vis refugees, Table 7 shows that, in general, pro-refugees claims outnumbered anti-refugees claims (39.1% against 31.4 %), while nearly one third of claims were simply neutral or ambivalent. As regards the position that various types of actors took, not surprisingly we find that civil and human rights organisations most often stood out for their pro-refugee position. Perhaps more surprisingly is the fact that political parties stood out as the actors who more often took an anti-refugee stand. This finding is important because it indicates that, on the eve of both legislative and presidential elections in 2017, the issue of refugees had been a central one among political parties, and that political parties had gone through a radical change of positioning throughout the prior decade, given the pro-migrant position which they had held, at least compared to many other political parties in Europe, until the 2000s (Koopmans et al., 2005).

Table 7: First actor position of claim toward the object, i.e. refugees (frequencies in brackets)

	Anti-object	Neutral Ambivalent	/ Pro-object	999	Total
State actors	31.0 (125)	28.0 (113)	40.7 (164)	0.3 (1)	100 (403)
Political parties	55.8 (48)	17.4 (15)	26.7 (23)	0.0 (0)	100 (86)
Professional organizations and groups	32.7 (16)	44.9 (22)	22.4 (11)	0.0 (0)	100 (49)
Labor organizations and groups	20.0 (1)	40.0 (2)	40.0 (2)	0.0 (0)	100 (5)

CONTINUED

Group-specific organizations and groups	13.3 (6)	53.3 (24)	33.4 (15)	0.0 (0)	100 (45)
Civil society and human rights organizations	11.6 (6)	30.7 (16)	57.7 (30)	0.0 (0)	100 (52)
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	50.0 (12)	16.7 (4)	33.3 (8)	0.0 (0)	100 (24)
Other actors	28.6 (14)	16.3 (8)	55.1 (27)	0.0 (0)	100 (49)
Supranational actors	23.6 (12)	41.2 (21)	36.2 (18)	0.0 (0)	100 (51)
Total	31.4 (240)	29.5 (225)	39.1 (299)	0.1 (1)	100 (764)

Issues: which topics are raised by solidarity contestants in the media?

Another crucial aspect consists of the issues which claims addressed. In this case, figures in Table 8 firstly show that 'migration management policies' took the lion's share with ca. two thirds of all claims. (65.3%), followed by 'problems associated with the refugee influx', then the 'background, situation and fate of refugees'. Only a small minority of claims referred to 'civic activities' and 'integration policies'. The fact that integration policies were so rarely addressed in a country of strong republican and 'integratory' tradition shows the absence of any long-term commitment with refugees in France. The poor connection between refugees' policies and integration policies is also evident in the absence of educational facilities in reception centres for asylum seekers¹⁶.

Table 8: Main Issue of the Claim

	Frequencies	%
Migration management policies	499	65.3
Integration policies	40	5.2
Background, situation and fate of refugees	83	10.9
Problems associated to the refugee influx	90	11.8
Civic activities/initiatives beyond political governance	52	6.8
Total	764	100

Further light can be shed on issues when they are criss-crossed with our two variables of actor and scope, respectively. Starting with the matching of issues and actors, Table 9 shows that state actors and political parties are the ones who talked the most about policies aimed at the political management of migration. As regards policies aimed at the integration of refugees, state actors once again were central regarding making reference to this issue. At the same time, group-specific organisations

¹⁶ Centre d'accueil pour demandeurs d'asile (CADA)

referred mostly to issues related to the background, situation and destination of refugees. Problems associated with the refugee influx were mostly referred to by state actors and professional organisations and groups. Finally, in the area of civic activities and initiatives beyond the government, civil society took the lion's share.

Table 9: Summary of first actor and main issues (frequencies in brackets)

Main Issue of the Claim	State actors	Parties	Professional organizations and groups	Labour organizations and groups	Group-specific organizations and groups	Civil society and human rights organizations	Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	Other actors	Supranational actors	Total
migration management policies	62.7 (313)	11.4 (57)	4.0 (20)	0.8 (4)	2.8 (14)	5.0 (25)	2.2 (11)	2.2 (11)	8.8 (44)	100 (499)
integration policies	62.5 (25)	5.0 (2)	12.5 (5)	2.5 (1)	2.5 (1)	2.5 (1)	2.5 (1)	7.5 (3)	2.5 (1)	100 (40)
background, situation and fate of refugees	25.3 (21)	9.6 (8)	6.0 (5)	0.0 (0)	25.3 (21)	14.5 (12)	4.8 (4)	13.3 (11)	1.2 (1)	100 (83)
problems associated to the refugee influx	41.1 (37)	15.5 (14)	18.9 (17)	0.0 (0)	4.4 (4)	1.1 (1)	3.3 (3)	12.3 (11)	3.4 (3)	100 (90)
civic activities/initiatives beyond political governance	13.5 (7)	9.6 (5)	3.8 (2)	0.0 (0)	9.6 (5)	25.0 (13)	9.6 (5)	25.0 (13)	3.9 (2)	100 (52)
Total	52.7 (403)	11.3 (86)	6.4 (49)	0.7 (5)	5.9 (45)	6.8 (52)	3.1 (24)	6.4 (49)	6.7 (51)	100 (764)

Solidarity contestations in the public sphere

Our analysis also needs to consider what the main forms of public interventions for refugees were. In this case, figures in Table 10 show that there was a strong domination of verbal statements, which

were then followed by political decisions. Also, fewer than 10% of actions were in the direct solidarity category which remained well below the 10% threshold, while other forms, including humanitarian aid mobilisation, protested in general, and repressive protest actions only played a marginal role.

Table 10. Form of Action

	Frequency	%
Political decisions	153	20.0
Direct solidarity	54	7.1
Humanitarian aid mobilization	15	2.0
Demonstrative protest actions	21	2.7
Confrontational protest actions	13	1.7
Violent protest actions	19	2.5
Conventional protest actions	14	1.8
Repressive measures	6	0.8
Verbal statements	467	61.1
999	2	0.3
Total	764	100

Findings in Table 11 also suggest that there were some relevant differences across newspapers. For example, "verbal statements" were more evident in *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro* than they were in *Le Parisien*. In the latter, by contrast, the most frequent actions were political decisions, in line with the more sensational tabloid newspapers, which tended to engage more with current decisions and events (also cf. the high score for solidarity actions) than with the overall reasons and arguments around the refugee crisis.

Table 11: Form of first action by newspaper, % (frequencies in brackets)

	Le Figaro	Le Monde	Le Parisien	TOTAL	%
Political decisions	27.5 (42)	30.1 (46)	42.4 (65)	100 (153)	20.0
Direct Solidarity	0.0 (0)	20.0 (11)	80.0 (43)	100 (54)	7.1
Humanitarian aid mobilization	13.3 (2)	0.0 (0)	86.7 (13)	100 (15)	2.0
Violent protest actions	31.6 (6)	47.4 (9)	21.0 (4)	100 (19)	2.5
Confrontational protest actions	15.4 (2)	30.8 (4)	53.8 (7)	100 (13)	1.7
Demonstrative protest actions	38.1 (8)	14.3 (3)	47.6 (10)	100 (21)	2.7
Conventional protest actions	71.4 (10)	0.0 (0)	28.6 (4)	100 (14)	1.8
Repressive measures	16.7 (1)	16.7 (1)	66.6 (4)	100 (6)	0.8

CONTINUED

Verbal Statements	37.9 (177)	40.7 (190)	21.4 (100)	100 (467)	61.1
999	100 (2)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	100 (2)	0.3
TOTAL	32.7 (250)	34.6 (264)	32.7 (250)	100 (764)	100

Blamed Actors

As regards actors that may have been blamed for their conduct over the refugee crisis, Table 12 shows first of all that the overwhelming majority of claimants did not mention any actor. Working on the basis of these low percentages, we find that three types of actors in particular were blamed, namely, state actors, advocacy and policy-oriented groups, and supranational actors. Overall, these findings seem to indicate that there are four main dimensions in the attribution of blame. The first dimension was transnational: It put emphasis on the direct responsibilities of the EU in setting refugees' quota without appreciating in full the overarching risks for the "European Project". The second dimension was national: It pointed especially to the French Presidency as responsible for amplifying the negative implications of the refugee' crisis within the national borders. The third dimension referred to the sufferance of refugees at the borders and detention centres, and the violent attacks of the extreme right. The last dimension was about the criminal role of human traffickers and terrorist groups. Simply put, migration was an easy target for those bent on working against refugees and the whole democratic project.

Table 12: Main actors and blamed actors, % (frequencies in brackets)

		Main actor					148		999		Total	
		State actors	Group-specific organizations and groups	organiza- Civil society and human rights organizations	Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	Other actors						Supra-national actors
Actor blamed in the claim												
State actors	5.2	0.7		0.2		1.9		0.5	2.0	0.7	88.6	100
	(21)	(3)		(1)		(8)		(2)	(8)	(3)	(357)	(403)
Political parties	5.8	4.7		0.0		4.7		1.2	3.5	0.0	80.2	100
	(5)	(4)		(0)		(4)		(1)	(3)	(0)	(69)	(86)
Professional organizations and groups	8.2	2.0		0.0		2.0		4.1	0.0	0.0	83.7	100
	(4)	(1)		(0)		(1)		(2)	(0)	(0)	(41)	(49)
Labor organizations and groups	0.0	0.0		0.0		0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	100	100
	(0)	(0)		(0)		(0)		(0)	(0)	(0)	(5)	(5)
Group-specific organizations and groups	4.4	0.0		0.0		2.2		0.0	0.0	0.0	93.33	100
	(2)	(0)		(0)		(1)		(0)	(0)	(0)	(42)	(45)
Civil society and human rights organizations	7.7	3.8		0.0		1.9		0.0	1.9	0.0	84.7	100
	(4)	(2)		(0)		(1)		(0)	(1)	(0)	(44)	(52)
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	4.2	8.3		0.0		12.5		0.0	0.0	0.0	75.0	100
	(1)	(2)		(0)		(3)		(0)	(0)	(0)	(18)	(24)
Other actors	10.2	2.0		2.0		4.1		2.0	2.0	0.0	77.7	100
	(5)	(1)		(1)		(2)		(1)	(1)	(0)	(38)	(49)
Supranational actors	3.9	2.0		0.0		0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	94.1	100
	(2)	(1)		(0)		(0)		(0)	(0)	(0)	(48)	(51)
Total	5.8	1.8		0.3		2.6		0.8	1.7	0.4	86.6	100
	(44)	(14)		(2)		(20)		(6)	(13)	(3)	662	(764)

Justifying solidarity in the media

We move on now to consider the way that solidarity towards refugees is justified, evaluated and interpreted by the actor. The solidarity frame is directly connected to position of claims. We distinguish between three main dimensions on the basis of which solidarity is granted or rejected, namely, interest-based/utilitarian justifications, rights-based justifications, identity-based justifications. The first finding to be stressed is that a large majority of claims had a frame: Among those claims, Table 14 shows that interest-based/utilitarian justifications represented 41.49%, rights-based justifications represented 12.95% and identity-based justifications represented 8.63%. In addition, Table 13 shows an interesting variation across different newspapers since *Le Monde* is the newspaper that most often avoids reporting a solidarity frame, while *Le Parisien* almost always does so. This finding is somewhat counter-intuitive since one would expect more complete information over claims in higher quality newspapers than in tabloids. Yet it is in line with the major effort that tabloid-style newspapers made to show that the refugee crisis touched the core of interests, rights, and identities of European citizens in general.

Table 13: Solidarity frames by newspapers, % (frequencies in brackets)

	Le Figaro	Le Monde	Le Parisien	TOTAL
Interest-based/utilitarian justifications	33.4 (106)	18.0 (57)	48.6 (154)	100 (317)
Rights-based justifications	22.2 (22)	21.2 (21)	56.6 (56)	100 (99)
Identity-based justifications	36.4 (24)	19.7 (13)	43.9 (29)	100 (66)
No value	34.8 (98)	61.3 (173)	3.9 (11)	100 (282)
Total	32.7 (250)	34.6 (264)	32.7 (250)	100. (764)

Lastly, Table 14 shows that there is a clear distinction between solidarity frames in terms of positions towards objects. Two thirds of rights-based justifications supported general or universal principles in favour of refugees, whereas over 40% of identity-based justifications rejected solidarity towards refugees. Interests-based/utilitarian justifications showed a balanced situation of anti-object and pro-object positions.

Table 14: Solidarity frames by position towards the object of solidarity, % (frequencies in brackets)

	Anti-object	Neutral /ambivalent	Pro-object	Total
Interest-based/utilitarian justifications	37.5 (119)	25.2 (80)	37.3 (118)	100 (317)
Rights-based justifications	19.2 (19)	12.1 (12)	68.7 (68)	100 (99)
Identity-based justifications	42.4 (28)	13.6 (9)	44.0 (29)	100 (66)
No value	26.5 (74)	44.2 (125)	29.3 (83)	100 (282)
Total	31.4 (240)	29.6 (226)	39.0 (298)	100 (764)

Case Study, September 2015: The social media debates

So far, we have examined how dominant actors deal with solidarity. However, to fully understand if solidarity is collectively supported or contested in France, it is important to comprehend citizens' views, perceptions and positions. For this purpose, we also conducted a case study for September 2015, when refugees became the subject of intense debate throughout the country. In the following section, we consider comments by citizens on online media, namely Facebook and measure online commenters' positions towards refugees, the actors involved in their discussions, the general topics, and concerns they express with reference to within the context of the crisis. Lastly, we exhibit the specificity of online discussions in France and the most important elements raised in the discussion in the frame of the refugee-crisis debates.

Our study included 300 Facebook comments in response to 13 newspaper articles related to the refugee crisis over the period of September 2015. Data was extracted from Facebook using the online application Netvizz. This tool allowed us to collect all comments responding to media articles for *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde* and *Le Parisien* in September 2015, with numbers of likes, shares and replies. This first step involved the selection of posts (links to newspaper articles) that related to the research object. The final sample included a total of five posts for *Le Figaro*, five posts for *Le Monde* and three for *Le Parisien*, with 20 user comments coded for each. Since certain comments fell short of the sampling criteria, a total of 97 comments were coded for posts published by *Le Figaro*, 100 for *Le Monde*, and 103 for *Le Parisien*.

The distribution of posts related to the refugee crisis during September 2015 showed the topic slowly gaining relevance on online media. In contrast to the newspaper attention devoted to refugees, the topic was partially reflected by Facebook posts. According to our findings, from a total of 189 Facebook posts in the official newspapers' profiles, 11% addressed migrants or refugees as a main topic. The picture is more interesting when the sample is examined more closely. The right-wing or more conservative newspaper dedicated five Facebook posts to the topic; the tabloid focused on refugees or migrants in three posts; and the progressive newspaper shared 14 links related to the refugee crisis, with many related to the typical day in the life of migrants. From the total 22 Facebook posts dedicated to refugees and/or the refugee crisis, seven were dedicated to refugee stories, accounts of migrants' journeys, or shared experiences of migrants and/or refugees.

Refugees as subject of debate

Our findings show that refugees were the subject of debate for 91.3% of Facebook comments. This indicates that the refugee crisis was a relevant topic for public opinion, since it raised debates by influential actors in newspapers and by citizens in online media.

Table 15: Subject discussed in comment

	Frequency	Percentage
Other	26	8.7
Refugees	274	91.3
Total	300	100

Table 16: Type of Comment

	Frequency	Percentage
Response to general issue in main article	144	48
Response to claim raised in main article	57	19
Independent statement, opinion	99	33
Total	300	100

Comments frequently mentioned refugees as a general issue, while responses to claims or claimants in articles – for instance political actors – were scarcer. Most French commenters (48%) responded to general issues raised by the newspaper article, and only a few (19%) answered a claimant or claim in the newspaper article. Users who make independent statements placed second, representing 33% of comments. This indicates that Facebook commenters seldom confronted or supported claims raised by influential actors in the media, and preferred to share a general opinion or make independent statements instead.

Responsible, credited and blamed actors

Comments rarely engaged actors, whether to apportion blame or acknowledge their actions. Only 18.7% of commenters addressed one or multiple actors, 25.7% blamed an actor in their statement, and 6.3% of Facebook users referred to actors for their positive actions. Therefore, what predominated was a negative narrative around the topic, where actors were more frequently blamed than accredited. This seems to indicate that French Facebook commenters acknowledged the responsibility, capacity or power to act of specific actors in response to the refugee crisis. Blamed actors were, for the most part, the national executive institutions and the national government. In commenters' views, this related namely to France's role in the war and to the government's social policies (representing 8% of comments). European countries were placed in second position as blamed actors, accused usually of political incapacity and mismanagement of the refugee crisis.

Inversely, the distribution of comments relating to credited actors placed supranational actors in first place. Other European States were more frequently mentioned for their positive actions, e.g. Germany as a model of asylum policies, whereas the French government was rarely congratulated by commenters.

Table 17: Blamed vs Credited Actors

Blamed Actors			Credited Actors		
	Freq.	%		Freq.	%
State Actors	40	13.33	State Actors	5	1.67
Political Parties	4	1.33			
Professional organisations and groups	2	0.67	Professional organisations and groups	2	0.67
Group-Specific Organisations and groups	2	0.67	Group-Specific Organisations and groups	1	0.33
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	9	3.00	Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	2	0.67
Other actors	2	0.67	Other actors	1	0.33
Supranational actors	7	2.33			
Specific countries	11	3.67	Specific countries	8	2.67
No blamed actor	223	74.33	No credited actor	281	93.67
Total	300	100.00	Total	300	100

As regards the actors who were called upon to act, i.e. addressees, most often state actors, namely the French government which was addressed by 7.3% of comments. Supranational actors followed in second place (4.3%), namely the European Union, Europe and Europeans. It is noticeable that political parties were pertinent only as addressees, mentioned by 3.7% of commenters.

Table 18: Addressees

	Frequency	Percentage
State Actors	22	7.33
Political Parties	11	3.67
Professional organisations and groups	2	0.67
Group-Specific Organisations and groups	1	0.33
Other actors	3	1.00
Supranational actors	13	4.33
Specific countries	4	1.33
No addressee	244	81.33
Total	300	100.00

In the analysis of addressees, blamed and credited actors reveal that French Facebook users considered that the French government, Europe and Europeans play a main role in the refugee crisis. We can confirm by the evaluation of these variables that French commenters identified the refugee crisis as a political issue that concerned both national and EU-level interests.

Position of French commenters towards refugees

Facebook users' reactions revealed the predominance of negative position towards refugees. With a mean of -.328, the study shows that French people did not express solidarity with the newcomers. Often, French Facebook users were opposed to welcoming refugees, granting refugee status and asking for border closure. In second position are placed those who expressed neutral attitudes: They questioned politicians, values of French citizens, and/or the way the media presented events (i.e. media manipulation). Only a minor proportion of the French Facebook users expressed solidarity

with the refugees in their comments. In their statements, they often defended refugees, reminding readers of the human perspective, supporting open asylum policies and stressing that refugees' lives were in danger in their home country.

Table 19: Position towards refugees

	Total	Percentage
Opposes refugees	146	53.2
Neutral position towards refugees	72	26.2
Supports refugees	56	20.4
Total	274	100

An in-depth look at the distribution of support in newspapers proves that three out of five readers of conservative newspaper did not express solidarity with refugees. In contrast, the readership of the progressive newspaper expressed a more equal distribution between those who showed negative, neutral and positive positions regarding refugees. Users of *Le Parisien* showed equal distribution between positive, neutral and negative positions, yet displayed similar levels of support as *Le Figaro*.

Table 20 Position toward refugees by newspaper

	Mean	Standard Error	Confidence Interval
Overall Position	-.328	.048	-.422 -.233
Le Monde	-.157	.0837	-.324 .008
Figaro	-.505	.076	-.656 -.353
Le Parisien	-.317	.0865	-.489 -.144

Note: distribution of frequencies and percentages where (-1) means oppose refugees, (0) is neutral, (+1) support refugees

It is thus noteworthy that audiences were fragmented between newspapers. Not unsurprisingly, Facebook users followed the newspaper that related to their personal ideological opinion, thus users' positions varied when comparing the three newspapers.

Solidarity Frames

What is equally of value for this study were the justifications used to frame solidarity. In first position were those who did not present a justification for their position towards refugees (22%). According to our results, French commenters referred firstly to chauvinism (16%), followed by individuals who questioned the social or economic capacity of France to host refugees (10.3%). Justifications built around philanthropic reasons, i.e. human rights, however, represented only 10% of Facebook users.

Table 21: Values and Positions

	Positive	Negative	Percentage
Human Rights	21	4	16.0
Religious/Spiritual Reasons	4	6	6.4
Historical reasons	3	7	6.4
Political capacity	4	15	12.2
Social or economic capacity	3	21	15.4
Instrumentality	5	0	3.2
Chauvinism	5	35	25.6
Law and Security	1	8	5.8
Migrants or refugee behaviour	2	8	6.4
Legal or Cultural Status	2	2	2.6
Total	50	106	

We observe thus that chauvinism was highly relevant across debate. When users dialogued, it was often to defend or oppose each other's anti-immigrant attitudes. Some commenters showed clear anti-immigrant values in their comments, which can be understood as traditional chauvinism, while others opposed users for their extremist positions, defending refugees' rights. Proportionally, the second most important justification was human rights. In this frame, we found that being human, or humanity was used to express solidarity towards the refugees or call for their protection. It was in this context that French Facebook users expressed feelings of empathy towards Aylan and people who escaped the war.

Issues

The main concerns of French Facebook commenters related to political management and public policies on migrant and refugees. This finding is not surprising, firstly because discussions in September 2015 evolved around France, the European Union and the political decisions taken at national and/or European level to deal with the crisis. Secondly, we observed that newspapers and Facebook posts (from newspapers) were mainly related to these topics. As we have observed for claims, most of the comments expressed concern about border management and asylum policies, e.g. ending the Schengen agreement or granting refugee status. The analysis also proved to what extent French people worry about how Europe will manage – e.g. economically – the growing numbers of newcomers. Moreover, from those who questioned the State's or Europe's economic or social capacity to host refugees, an important proportion (22%) expressed concern about the unresolved economic and social problems in the country.

Table 22: Positions and Issues

	Anti-refugee	Neutral	Pro-refugee	Total
Policies directed at the political management of migration	31.3	7.8	9.3	48.4
Policies directed at the integration of refugees	2.0	1.3	0.5	3.8
Issues pertaining to the background, the situation and the fate of refugees	2.5	4.5	3.5	10.5
Issues pertaining to the problems associated with the refugee influx/crisis	11.0	5.0	3.8	19.8
Issues related to public and civic activities/initiatives beyond Political Governance	5.8	6.3	5.5	17.5
Total	52.6	24.8	22.6	100.0

N=399

Discussions on political management and public policies were followed by debates on the problems associated with the refugee crisis, for which the economic and political consequences took centre stage. For instance, economic consequences referred to the financial crisis or questioned how refugees would be granted priority over French people. Typically, these were homeless, unemployed, young or vulnerable people whose problems were unsolved. Up to 20% of Facebook users showed concern about the State's economic capacity to cover the financial costs related to the refugee influx.

Following those who questioned the State's capacity to manage the refugee influx, also an important number of individuals (10%) pointed out the political problems related to the refugee crisis. Very often, they denounced how the refugees were used for electoral purposes, or how that controversial

topic deepened socio-political cleavages in France. Facebook users opposing refugees often claimed that other categories of French citizenry in distress should be granted priority over refugees (11%). This came as no surprise. In 2012, the last official census on homeless people in France unveiled 81,000 people sleeping on the streets, with 103,000 eating at State-run canteens (INSEE, 2013). As concerns unemployment, in the 2010-2015 period, the number of unemployed reached 2.9 million in 2015 (INSEE, 2018a). From these figures, the numbers of young males had significantly increased over the five-year period (INSEE, 2018b).

As we can see, in the period studied, there was widespread concern regarding the social and economic situation of the country. The refugee influx increased this debate on social policies, particularly on who deserved what. Also, for commenters the debate was often of a territorial nature: If there were already people living in France who needed help from the State (“us”), why then should France come to the assistance of refugees from abroad (“them”)? When refugees were perceived as outsiders, it was mainly when solidarity was contested. This observation has two implications for the study: refugees were seen as a challenge for the French State, economy and society (e.g. when their integration was discussed). It equally implied a cost-benefit logic, in which France spent resources or lost cohesion when welcoming more refugees.

Conclusion

When summing up our results, a first crucial finding is that the French public debate over the refugee crisis has mainly been led by state actors and political parties. Among these latter, we have found the prevalence of the French Socialist Party, leading an overall neutral discourse about the refugee crisis and the role of France in relation to the crisis. The National Front stands out of a strong anti-refugee discourse, as the party has been calling for an end to any welcoming plan. As regards the Republicans, they have occupied an intermediate position, as they have demanded tougher controls at French borders while at the same time calling for more extensive plans of international aid. Altogether, however, we have found that political parties take a position that is generally unfavourable to the interests, demands, and rights of refugees.

Another interesting finding is that, while the majority of actors intervening in the public domain are French, there is a strong presence of German actors. This is in line with similar findings in other national reports that have referred to the importance of Germany in the public debate across Europe. In particular, we have found a clear distinction between state actors (whose scope is mostly national and sub-national) and categories such as ‘group-specific organisations’, ‘civil society and human rights organisations’ and ‘professional organisations and groups’ (which are characterised by both international and sub-national scopes). Furthermore, the majority of claimants neither address other actors nor do they blame (or credit) them. As regards the specific issues at the centre of claim-making, we expected a stronger presence of ‘problems associated to the refugee crisis’ owing to the terroristic attacks that France endured just at the same time of our analysis. However, findings have revealed that migration management policies stand out at the core of public domain, especially at the national level and referring to ‘asylum policies and accommodation of refugees’.

When looking at forms of claims, we have found that verbal statements stand out for their prevalence. Yet, some noticeable specificities can be distinguished across different newspapers: thus ver-

bal statements are dominant in the pages of *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*, while political decisions have the lion's share in *Le Parisien*. By contrast, we have found only some weak involvement in humanitarian aid mobilisation and protest actions in general. At the same time, our findings have shown that claimants in the French debate follow a family-based normative principle of deservingness, since refugee women, refugee young people, and indeed refugee families are mostly framed in a positive way. When looking at the way that solidarity is framed, we have also found a clear distinction between solidarity frames in the way that each of them takes a typical position vis-à-vis refugees. In particular, the strong majority of rights-based justifications support universal principles in favour of refugees, followed by the identity-based justifications that reject solidarity towards refugees (while interest-based justifications show a more balanced positioning).

Most crucially, the analysis of comments by citizens on online media during the month of September 2015 has been useful to corroborate a number of main points, and first of all, the fact that the refugee crisis has been a highly relevant topic for public opinion in France, raising debates by influential actors in newspapers and by citizens in online media alike. However, emphasis should be put on the fact that online commenters have rarely confronted or supported claims raised by influential actors. While there was an overly negative narrative around the topic of refugees (whereby blaming was more frequent than crediting), comments rarely identified a clear division between blamed and credited actors. Our findings have also confirmed the predominance of negative position towards refugees, proving that French people overall did not express solidarity with the newcomers. In addition, the main concerns of online commenters related to political management and public policies on migrant and refugees drawing on a widespread concern regarding the social and economic situation of the country. Lastly, our findings have confirmed that there is a tight relationship between certain types of justifications on the one hand, and the positioning vis-à-vis refugees on the other; accordingly, the defence of refugees comes together with a strong emphasis on a human perspective, supporting open asylum policies and stressing that refugees must be protected in the name of fundamental human rights.

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The Quest for Solidarity with Refugees: Investigating the Case of Germany Reflected in Public Claims and Comments during the ‘Refugee Crisis’

Olga Eisele and Filip Perfler

Introduction

During the so-called ‘refugee crisis’, among all the European Union (EU) member states, Germany stood out as the European country receiving most asylum seekers in absolute numbers. On a political level, Germany, and especially its chancellor Angela Merkel, played a highly significant role in this time of crisis. During her appearance on a prime time TV show on 28 February 2016¹⁷, for example, she posited: ‘I did not open the borders in September 2015; I just did not close them’. This is remarkable against the backdrop of closed border rulings enacted by some European neighbours, and the fact that the perceived immediate externalities of this decision led to a growing contestation of Germany’s role, contributing to turning the ‘refugee crisis’ into yet another litmus test for European solidarity.

At the European level, Germany tried to act as a leader in response to the crisis, emphasising that the EU’s failure on the question of refugees would destroy its close connection with universal civil rights (Guardian, 2015)¹⁸. However, this initial welcoming approach did not remain undisputed. Merkel and her government were ‘not able to get the rest of Europe to follow ... [the] lead’ (Matthijs, 2016: 150). Merkel grew to a more and more contested public figure among European neighbours, nurturing very mixed and ambivalent reactions. Those ranged from the celebration of Germany as a bulwark of human rights, to making Merkel’s open borders policy responsible for refugee surges, often relating Germany’s response to its fascist history and its desire to clear its conscience (e.g., Conrad and Aðalsteinsdóttir, 2017). Merkel’s policies, it was argued, set incentives for economic refugees to come and, in doing so, played into the hands of populist right-wing parties, capitalising on an overwhelmed administration struggling to accommodate the huge numbers of arriving people in need. With increasing worries about Germany’s absorptive capacities, Merkel’s critics started characterising her decision not to close the border as ‘naïve and foolish’ (Matthijs, 2016: 149). Furthermore, Merkel’s position also grew more and more contested within her own party (Holmes and Castañeda, 2016: 14).

Overall, the initial response to the refugee crisis in Germany was welcomed both on a governmental and at a societal level. The oft-cited ‘Willkommenskultur’ (‘Welcoming Culture’) with people welcoming refugees at the train stations of Munich and elsewhere, and Merkel’s now famous sentence ‘Wir schaffen das’ (‘We can do it’) most prominently illustrate this initially positive German response (e.g., Hamann and Karakayali, 2017). The early enthusiasm, however, was diminished, not only by worries about Germany’s absorptive capacities, but also by several events in the ensuing months. First of all, the attacks in Paris of 13 November, 2015 played on security narratives of refugees as potential secu-

¹⁷ See, for example: <https://www.hna.de/politik/talkshow-angela-merkel-anne-will-talkshow-fluechtlinge-politik-6165426.html> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rAliNx6qW2o>.

¹⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/02/refugees-welcome-uk-germany-compare-migration>

rity and terror threats. The feeling of immediate emergency was possibly best summarised by the comment of Bavarian finance minister, Markus Söder, who in the aftermath stated that ‘Paris changes everything’ (Holmes and Castañeda, 2016: 18). Another event that exploited similar concerns was New Year’s Eve 2015/2016 in Cologne, which impacted even more than the Paris attacks, becoming ‘...a touchstone in debates about refugees in Germany’ (Weber, 2016a: 80; also Weber, 2016b).

Findings from other studies analysing the media representation of refugees in Germany seem to confirm how the discussion took a turn for the worse after the events on New Year’s Eve in Cologne. Conrad and Aðalsteinsdóttir (2017), for example, analyse the framing of refugees in three German broadsheet newspapers, and show how the ‘opportunity’ frame yielded to a media framing of refugees as a burden or risk in the course of the second half of 2015 until March 2016. Overall, studies on the German case seem mainly to have focused on the representation of refugees in the media, often considering the influence of external events in and the volatility of the German discourse (also Vollmer and Karakayali, 2017; Tryandafillidou, 2017; Wallaschek, 2017).

Research Questions and Expectations

Against this background, this chapter analyses public claims in newspapers and online comments about solidarity with refugees for three German newspapers. The guiding question refers to how external events like Cologne or Paris shaped this political discourse, and how the diagnosed volatility of the German discourse was mirrored in political contestation. Expectations regarding the prominence and type of such claims are rooted in (1) considerations of how democratic regimes respond to crises on the one hand, (2) how media cover crises and, in the broadest sense, crises management on the other hand.

(1) Political actors will engage in public claims-making in proportion to the salience of an issue. This may be because it is expected from them as part of their portfolio, i.e., the chancellor or the minister of the interior (e.g., Boin et al., 2005). Public claims are also formulations of demands or blame attribution in response to a perceived unfair or critical situation. Here, the salience and intensity of the ‘crisis’ situation, in addition to external shocks, is expected to influence the dynamics of claims-making (e.g., Holmes and Castañeda, 2016; Weber 2016a+b; Conrad and Aðalsteinsdóttir, 2017). (2) The media will cover claims if they respond to certain news values (O’Neill and Harcup, 2009): that is, if they have the potential to cause a conflict or add to a conflictive debate; if they refer to something salient and relevant which is affecting the lives of a greater audience; if they come from powerful claimants, i.e., politicians or other known individuals with political, economic or societal influence, to name but the most important. In addition, (3) our online comments analysis is designed in a more inductive and qualitative way. This is set against the background of our interest in understanding the online contestation of solidarity rather than the motivations for commenter engagement in an online discussion, for example (Ksiazek et al., 2016). One interesting point in this respect will be the quality of the discourse and the degree of interactivity in terms of the interrelation of messages (Schulz, 1999), e.g., the connection of comments with posted articles, or claims raised in them.

As Bauböck (2017: 141) states while discussing Europe’s commitments and failings in response to the refugee crisis, the central political and societal ‘disagreement is fundamentally about values’, with contestation revolving around the central question of the morally defensible limits of humanitarian assistance. Going from a welcoming culture to a perception of refugees as burdensome, Germany

seems a case in point to inspect this disagreement in more detail. For this purpose, we look into the visibility of actors and issues, the forms of actions, positions in terms of degrees of solidarity with refugees, and the reasons which claimants referred to when taking a certain stance. In addition, we are interested in different dynamics of contestation in different public spaces which is why we have opted to focus on a traditional claims-making analysis of newspapers spanning a period of nine months (August 2015–April 2016), and a case study of September 2015 with a focus on Facebook comments. This enables us to investigate the interactive features of the discourse in terms of claims as top-down contestation and the responses to these claims as bottom-up contestation of solidarity with refugees on social media.

Solidarity Claims in the German News Media

The following section is dedicated to the analysis of claims coded in newspapers, spanning the period of August 2015 to April 2016. Starting on a more technical note, to make the sampling and data retrieval transparent, we go on to discuss some key variables to shed light on the above-formulated research interests.

Data Selection and Retrieval

The selection of newspapers for the claims-making analysis was guided by considerations of their output, i.e., distribution, and was also informed by other studies with similar research interests. (e.g., Gattermann, 2013; Koopmans and Statham, 2010). Accordingly, the *Bild Zeitung*, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)* and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)* were selected. To maintain comparability, we only selected articles when they were part of the edition for the whole of Germany, not just the Munich section in the Munich-based *SZ*, for example. When an article featured prominently on page one and was then continued later on, the continuation was included in the coding. Articles were retrieved via the database of the Austrian Press Agency (APA) using the following Boolean search string: ‘*Flücht** OR *Asyl**’. Overall, our coders coded a total number of 740 claims in 264 articles, giving us an average number of 2.8 claims per article (see Table 11).

Table 11: Number of Hits, Coded Articles and Claims in the German Print Sample

	Hits in the database ¹⁹	Coded articles	Coded claims	Ø Claims/article
Bild	7265	105	249	2,4
FAZ	6632	75	244	3,3
SZ	19034	84	247	2,9
Total	32931	264	740	2,8

Tabloid newspapers generally tend not to engage in political discussions to a great extent (e.g., Örnebring and Jönsson, 2004), while crises as such are regarded to have inherent news value due to their appeal to people’s emotions, especially their fears (Heath, 2010: 1). Thus, while one could also expect crises to be a popular topic for the more sensationalist-oriented tabloid newspapers, our find-

¹⁹ Note: For *Bild* and especially the *SZ*, this includes a high number of irrelevant articles (double entries, regional editions, supplements, etc.) which was retrieved since they could not be unticked in the database search form. Therefore, these numbers are not comparable.

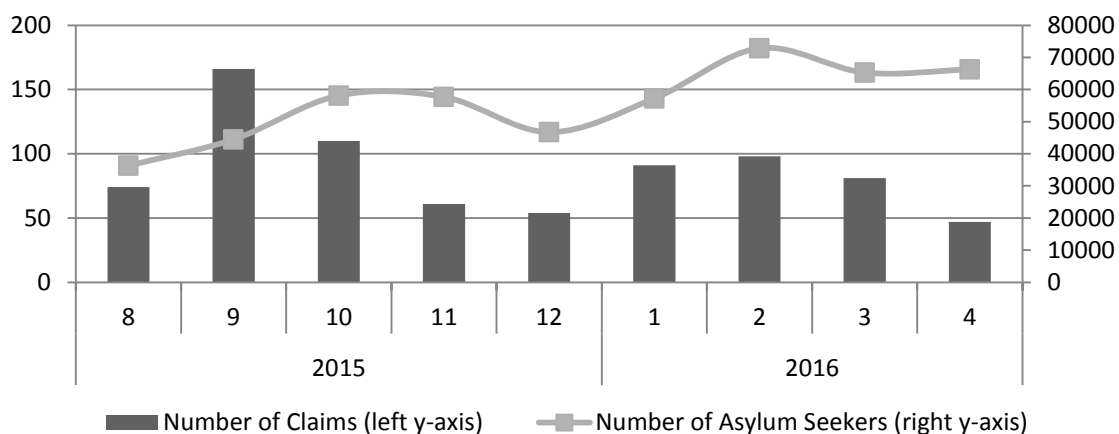
ings show that the contestation of solidarity with refugees as measured in claims is less visible in the *Bild* than in the included broadsheet newspapers. Accordingly, the average number of claims is lowest in the *Bild Zeitung* and more articles needed to be coded to reach the threshold of 234 (700/3) claims per newspaper.

Distribution of Claims

Taking the number of first-time asylum seekers, as indicated in Eurostat statistics, as a proxy for the intensity or salience of the ‘crisis’, the curve of media salience seems to follow slightly different trends in the beginning (see Figure). However, ‘an application for international protection shall be deemed to have been lodged once a form submitted by the applicant or a report prepared by the authorities has reached the competent authorities of the Member State concerned’ (Regulation (EU) No 604/2013). Therefore, while it is still deemed a good measure, numbers on first-time asylum seekers also mirror the administration being overwhelmed by an unexpected workload, with numbers lagging behind the actual developments²⁰.

The peak in September in terms of claims may, on the one hand, be explained in relation to the discussion of news values highlighting how elements of ‘newness’ or surprise usually increase newsworthiness of an event (O’Neill and Harcup, 2009). On the other hand, the high numbers of incoming refugees also presented an immediate challenge to the politically responsible and society at large, causing discussion and contestation of how to accommodate a commitment to universal human rights and the principle of solidarity with vital economic interests touched by such questions of redistribution. This corresponds with the expectations formulated earlier.

Figure 1: Number of Claims and Number of First-Time Asylum Seekers

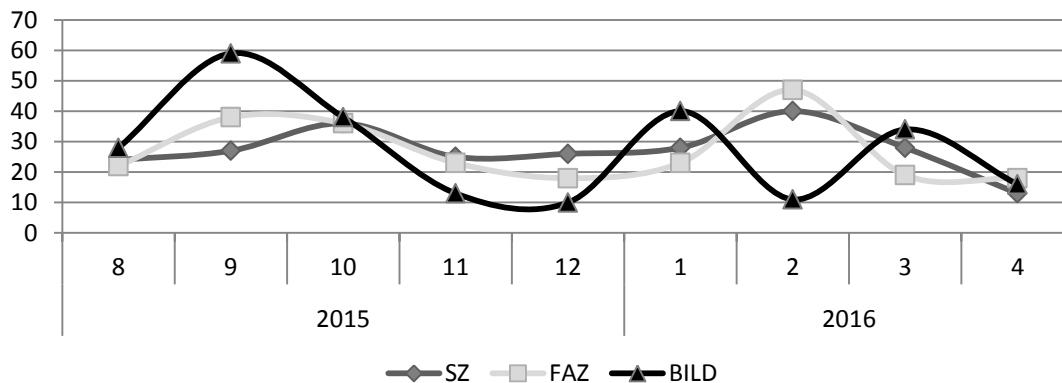


Regarding the overall curve of salience across newspapers, we can only draw tentative conclusions against the background of our relatively small sample; we only coded 700/3 claims per paper. In addition, these claims were only coded in news articles as opposed to editorial articles conveying the opinion of newsmakers themselves more explicitly. Still, newspapers showed quite similar trends (see Figure); however, it seems that the *Bild Zeitung* was a little more extreme: Whenever there was

²⁰ See, for example: <http://www.zeit.de/2016/35/grenzoeffnung-fluechtlinge-september-2015-wochenende-angela-merkel-ungarn-oesterreich>, for a reconstruction of the developments in early September 2015.

a peak or a dip in media salience of solidarity claims, it was higher/lower than in the other two newspapers. An important exception seems to be the month of February: Here, the January peak of the *Bild Zeitung* had worn off already whereas it seemed to build up in the others. A possible explanation may be the more sensationalist approach of the tabloid, tailoring news to a freshly emotionalised public after the Cologne attacks in January 2016, whereas quality papers, while also covering solidarity claims in January, were engaging more deeply in the political contestation and calls for policy changes that ignited consequentially.

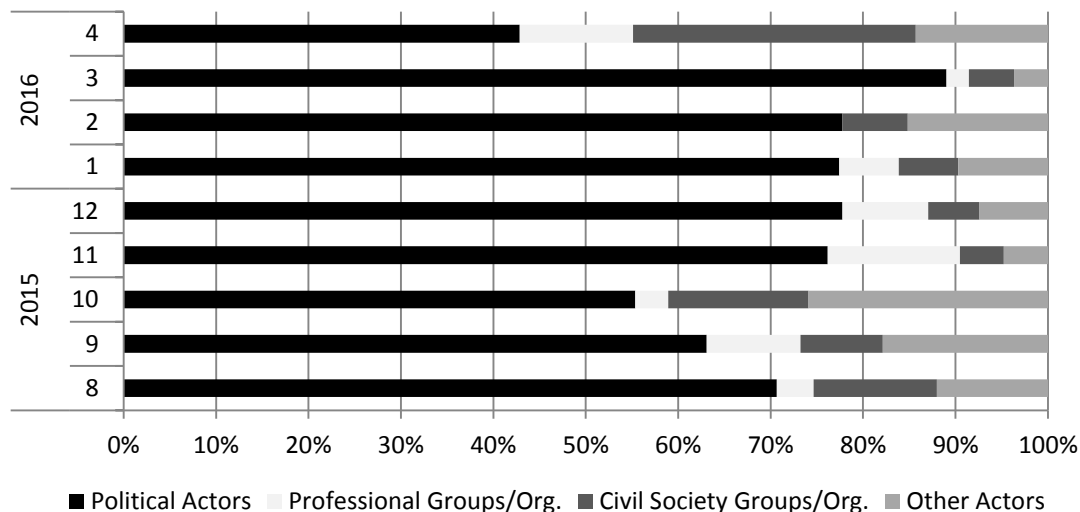
Figure 2: Distribution of Claims over Period of Analysis across Newspapers



Claimants

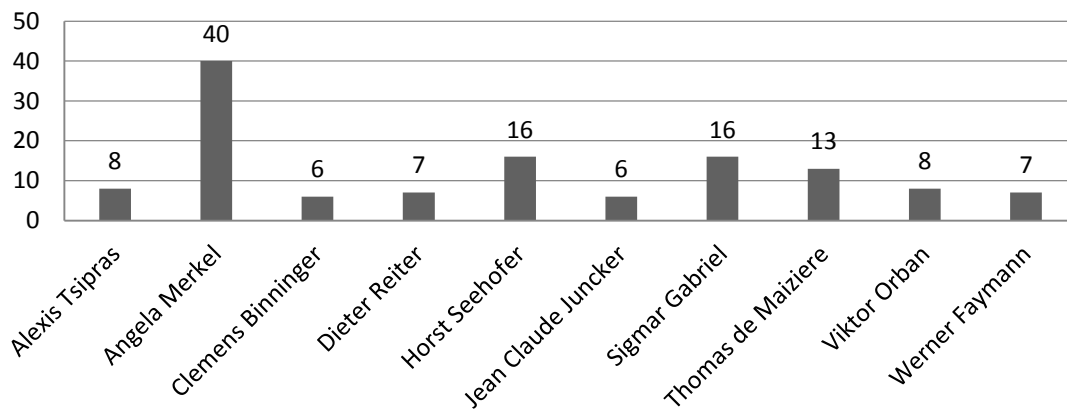
Regarding the claimants of solidarity with refugees in the German newspapers under study, there is a strong bias towards political actors that were the most visible across the whole period of analysis (see Figure); such actors include parliamentary and governmental actors at the national and international level, as well as state agencies, political parties and individual politicians. This is a plausible finding against the background that the media dedicate much space to political actors in general (e.g., Tresch, 2009).

Figure 3: Types of Claimants



Within this group of political actors, some personalities stood out, making up about 17% of all claims (see Figure). The most prominent was, not surprisingly, the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, who alone appeared as a claimant in 40 claims, which is about every 20th claim (5.4%). Her media visibility as a claimant can be partly explained by her central role in the early stages of the crisis and her role at the European level, including the ongoing contestation of her positions. Furthermore, the public expectations of a leader to respond to a perceived crisis (e.g., Boin et al., 2005) and the way in which Merkel successfully resumed that role may have contributed to the fact that she was by far the most visible claimant in the German sample.

Figure 4: Top Ten of Political Claimants



As previously mentioned, Merkel also faced criticism within her own party and her governing coalition. The then leaders of her coalition parties, Horst Seehofer (CSU) and Sigmar Gabriel (SPD) were both highly prominent actors – a fact explained by their contestation of Merkel’s positions. Both appeared as claimant in 16 instances; additionally, both played a dual role: Seehofer was not only the leader of his party, but also the Prime Minister of Bavaria, the German state where most refugees arrived in the late summer and autumn of 2015. He was also one of the most outspoken internal critics of Merkel’s refugee policy. Gabriel’s dual role was party leader of the SPD, as well as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Also, Interior Minister De Maizière played an important role as a claimant, which can be related to the responsibilities of his ministry in the handling of refugees. Clemens Binninger, a member of Merkel’s conservative party and a member of the German Bundestag also appeared as her strong opponent which explains his prominence among the political claimants.

Mirroring the European scope of the migration crisis, moreover, it was not only the domestic level that was covered in terms of claims. Also, claimants from other European countries, most prominently Viktor Orban, who opposed the German response to the crisis, and neighbouring Austria’s Faymann, as well as the Greek Prime Minister Tsipras appeared as claimants somewhat frequently in the German newspapers. Similarly, at the European level, Jean-Claude Juncker was among the most prolific claimants. Interestingly, also the mayor of Munich, where many refugees initially arrived, was one of the actors with the most claims. This mirrors the different scopes of the issue – beyond national, national and regional, which we will come back to later in this section.

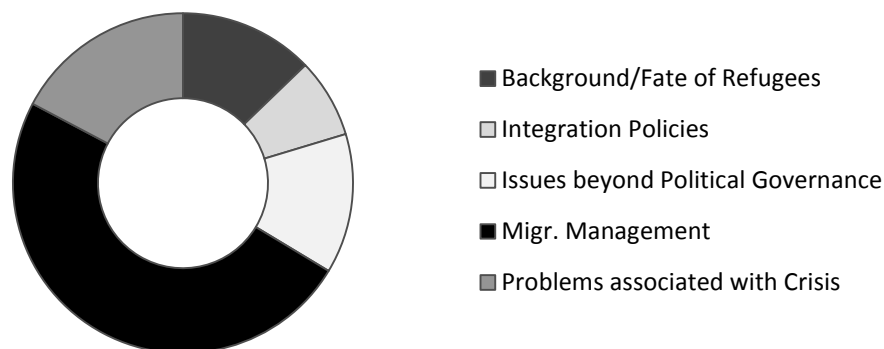
Issues and Scope

Overall, the literature on crisis communication highlights how:

‘[c]rises typically generate a contest between frames and counter-frames concerning the nature and severity of a crisis, its causes, the responsibility for its occurrence or escalation, and implications for the future. Contestants manipulate, strategize and fight to have their frame accepted as the dominant narrative’ (Boin et al., 2009: 81).

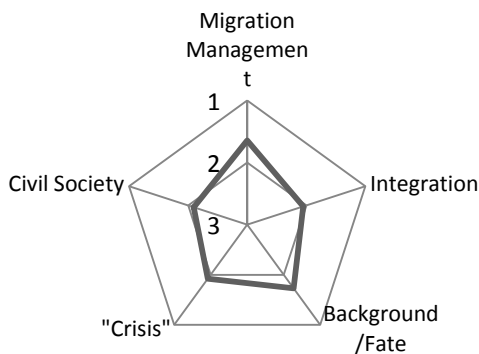
Thus, what is mirrored in the German sample is this contestation between political actors on how the crisis should have been managed. This becomes clear also when looking into the issue of claims. Regarding these topical contexts, there seems to have been a heavy emphasis on migration management policies, e.g., border management, asylum policies, budgetary issues, the accommodation of refugees or deals with non-EU countries in tackling the crisis. Such issues were discussed in almost half of all claims (see Figure). Another important issue is the broader category of problems associated with the crisis, such as economic consequences, problems of internal security, religious, societal or cultural incompatibilities or social segregation. Thus, it seems, the discourse was mainly tied to the issue of borders and how refugees could be managed, whereas the issue of integration in terms of social, health, labour, education or anti-discrimination policies, for example, seemed to be discussed rarely. Taken together with the general category of problems associated with the crisis, this seems to indicate that refugees were discussed mainly as a problem in need of a political solution by responsible actors. Another important topic discussed issues other than political governance including direct solidarity actions such as volunteering, for example. This was plausible against the discussions of the German welcoming culture.

Figure 5: Issues discussed in Solidarity Claims



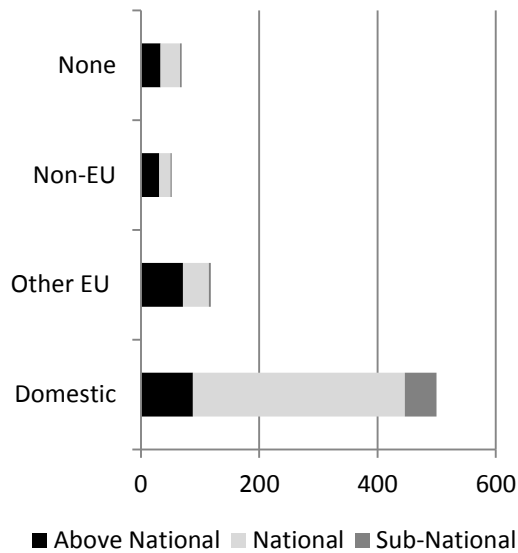
Regarding the scope of issues (see Figure), one could expect that migration as a border-crossing phenomenon would transcend beyond national borders. However, while migration management and claims about the background or causes of migration, and the fate of refugees, were the two issues with greater transnational scope than the others, it still seemed largely confined to the national context.

Figure 6: Scope of Issues on Average



Note: 1= Above National, 2=National, 3=Sub-National

Figure 7: Nationality of Claimants and Scope of Issues They Discussed



Cross-tabulating scopes with the nationality of claimants, we see that this national focus was largely maintained by domestic political actors (see Figure). Domestic actors were also most dominant in the discussion of issues beyond the national scope. This result seems surprising given the transnational aspect of migration, but nonetheless in line with media content analyses on EU coverage more generally that regularly find EU news to have a strong national bias in *Europeanised* public spheres – as opposed to an overarching European one, that are structured along national borders (e.g., Gattermann, 2013; Brüggemann and Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2009).

Referenced Actors

Furthermore, our coding allowed for identifying the addressees, i.e., actors that were explicitly requested to do or not do something related to solidarity with refugees, and the actors that were blamed or credited. All three actors were rarely coded: Addressees appeared in 12.7% of all claims, actors were blamed in 21% of claims while they were credited in only 7% of claims (see Figure). Calculating the ratio of blamed in comparison to credited actors (number of blamed/number of credited actors) results in a value of 3.02 indicating a three times higher presence of blamed actors. While this is only indicative of the minority of claims, it still shows a high degree of contestation within the political discourse. The greater prominence of blamed actors and the lower presence of credited actors in comparison to addressees seems to mirror the high degree of contestation in the debate but also the feeling of ‘crisis’ and being overwhelmed: Criticism tended to be more destructive in blaming others, without constructively showing alternatives regarding how the crisis should be handled or what the political elites should do. This is also mirrored in the distribution of the three actor variables over time: While addressees’ and credited actors’ visibility was rather low in the course of the investigated period of analysis, especially during the ‘crisis month’ September and the following October, blame was attributed in over 100 instances (see Figure). A similar trend is also visible in January and February, most likely as a result of the heated debate after the attacks in Cologne. Overall, the visibil-

ity curve of blamed actors is converging with the overall salience of the claims coded, indicating a rather regular appearance of blame attribution in the discourse.

Figure 8: Visibility of Addressees, Blamed and Credited Actors over Period of Analysis



Combining the three types of referenced actors allows us to better understand communication dynamics. Hence, when looking only into such claims in which other actors were referenced (35% of all claims), i.e., called upon for action, blamed or credited, it is not too surprising that political actors are mainly talking to themselves: In the overwhelming majority of such claims, political actors called upon other political actors for action, or blamed and credited each other. Figure visualises these communication flows, overall highlighting again the dominance of political actors in the contestation of solidarity. Political actors were also most often targeted by the other claimant groups. Much less attention was dedicated to civil society actors in terms of reference, which is still the most visible category in comparison to the other two. This may be a mirror of the ‘culture of welcome’ and the civil society groups maintaining it. Again, this supports the observation that the German discourse was dominated by contestation among the politically responsible.

Figure 9: Communication Flows between Claimants (left) and Referenced Actors (right)

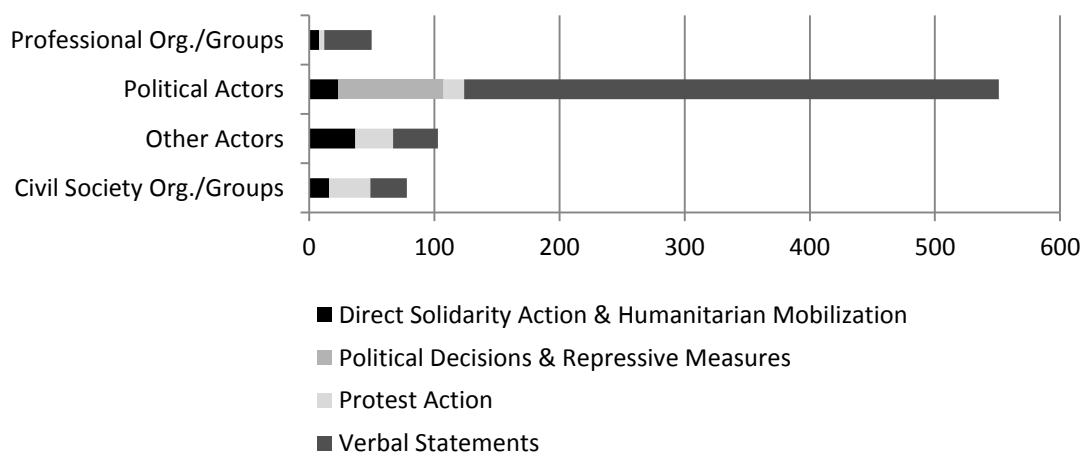


Forms of Action

Turning to the form which claims-making about solidarity with refugees can take, our codebook allowed us to include not only verbal claims, but also concrete actions such as attacks on refugees, volunteering, political decisions or repressive measures by the police. Amongst all codable forms, verbal statements are the most dominant form in the German sample which seems to set a focus on debate, rather than concrete action. Ultimately, however, this can also be understood as a mirror of how democracies arrive at political decisions, namely by constant debate – in parliament and in public. This result also echoes the state of crisis in which political actors first have to find a common denominator regarding shared normative standards and implications of the situation and how to master it, before they can go on to make decisions and implement agreed policies.

The finding is plausible against the background of what we just discussed, namely that political actors are by far the most dominant actors making claims about solidarity with refugees, and also the ones making the most verbal claims (see Figure). This relates to the discussion of newsworthiness on the one hand which ascribes an ‘inherent news value’ to state actors in general because their decisions affect citizens’ everyday lives most immediately (e.g., Tresch, 2009; O’Neill and Harcup, 2009). On the other hand, we can relate this to the discussion on issues: Migration management is a political task; it has dominated public discourse in Germany which took in the highest absolute number of refugees during our research period. Therefore, the contestation of solidarity with refugees, as measured in claims, is mostly visible as a debate between responsible decision-makers who needed to manage the ‘crisis’. On a more abstract level, thus, the arrival of refugees was made visible as an issue fundamentally challenging the functioning of the German state and the principles on which it is built, referring this challenge to the responsible political elites who took centre stage.

Figure 10: Forms of Action arranged by Actors

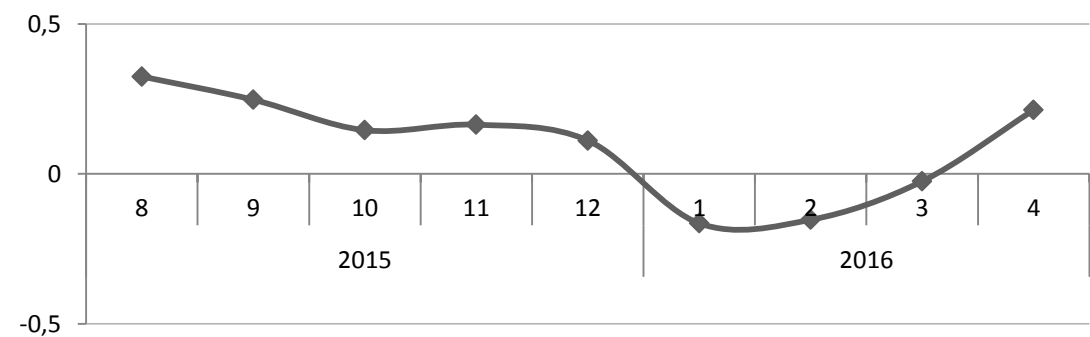


Positions and Frames

While we have until now mostly focused on the visibility of actors, issues and forms of claims-making, in the following we will take a closer look at the tone of claims – the central variable to assess the degree of solidarity with refugees. Regarding the overall position towards refugees, the average tone (aggregate value at monthly level) was slightly positive at 0.095, while the average tone over the whole period of analysis shows how the events on New Year’s Eve in Cologne tipped the debate into

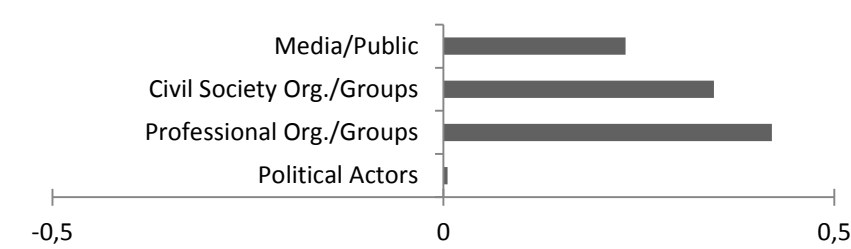
the negative zone. This is in line with the literature (see Figure ; e.g., Conrad and Aðalsteinsdóttir, 2017; Weber, 2016a+b), confirming the strong influence of external events causing a certain degree of volatility in the German discourse. The trend, however, seems positive again by the end of our research period. While we cannot, of course, predict its longevity, this sketches a picture of an overall welcoming climate which was interrupted by external shocks creating room for anti-refugee concerns to be voiced. Such voices, then, seem to have been countered, lifting the overall curve of tonality back to positive.

Figure 11: Overall Average Position towards Refugees in Solidarity Claims



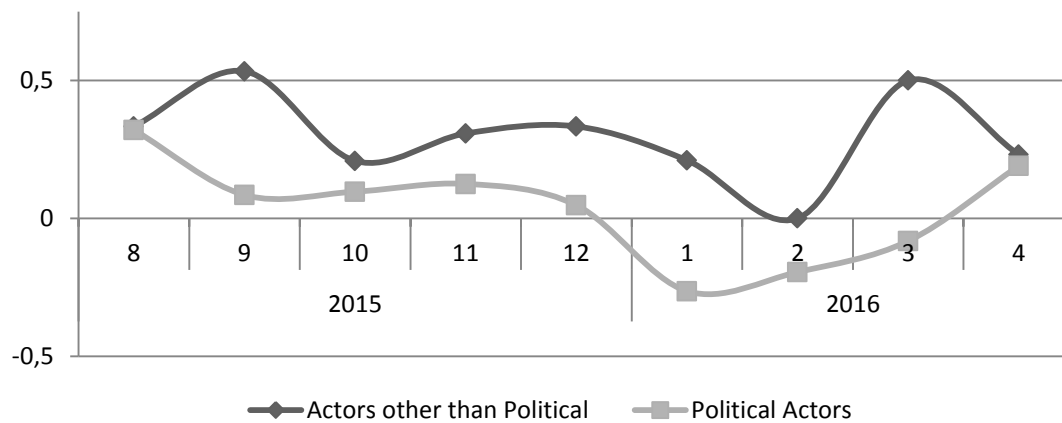
As stated before, the contestation of solidarity in the German news contents appeared to be a debate dominated by state actors and migration management as an issue for which the state was responsible. For this reason, it seems important to also look into the tone of each claimant category to understand the dynamics in each category (see Figure). Against the backdrop that the contestation of solidarity by state actors was the dominant topic of the debate, it is interesting to see that, regarding the tone of claims political actors were the most balanced while the other categories were, on average, more positive.

Figure 12: Average Tone by Claimant



Zooming in more closely on how the position of political actors developed over time reveals that, since they are the most dominant group of claimants, their position drives the overall trend discussed in Figure . Also here, the drop in support of refugees after the events in Cologne played a major role, tipping the balance towards the negative, while the trend was a return to the positive side by the end of our research period. Overall, then, political actors are still mostly balanced, also implying that the political spectrum is rather evenly represented in the media and different positions cancel each other out. In that respect, the average position of political actors is at 0.01 with a standard deviation of 0.77 indicating a high number of positions deviating from the mean. Put differently, we find a close to normal distribution with most claims by coding the political actors as neutral (224); the numbers coded for negative (162) and positive (165) were almost the same.

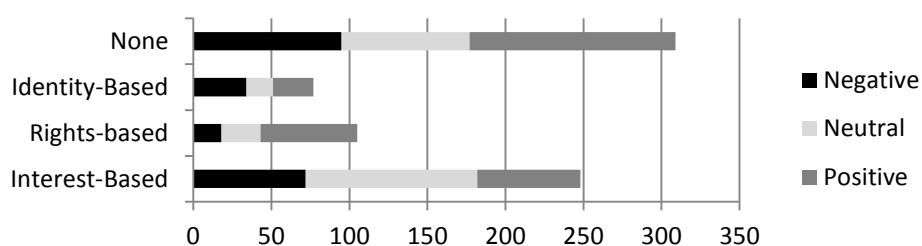
Figure 13: Comparison of Position of Political and Other Claimants



A crucial interest lies in the justifications of these positions since such underlying patterns of frames reveal the deeper normative structures and expectations embedded in the discourse about solidarity with refugees (see Figure) and reveal the stances towards the question of the morally defensible limit of humanitarian assistance (Bauböck, 2017). In addition, the presence of arguments and reasons in contrast to ‘mere’ positions is often regarded a criterion of the ‘higher’ quality of a discourse in normative political theory that focuses on deliberation (see, e.g., Steenbergen et al., 2003; Lord and Tamvaki, 2013 for an operationalisation in the form of a Discourse Quality Index building on an Habermasian ideal of ‘good’ deliberation).

In that respect, when cross-tabulating positions with frames, a first finding is that in 42% of coded claims, there were no reasons, i.e., no frame, made explicit. In the category of claims in which positions were identified, but not frames, we can see a slight positive bias towards the positive. While the lack of frames could indicate a ‘poor’ discourse in which actors merely express positions without giving arguments, this may be explained by the social desirability of solidarity as such, making an explicit justification as to why solidarity with refugees is in order obsolete. To illustrate, many positive claims were about citizens or celebrities helping refugees. Often, no explicit reason was given since it seemed to have been a matter of course to help these people in need. In that sense, such claims build on a perceived strong consensus in German society regarding solidarity as a natural concomitant of a democratic society. And thus, while giving a final answer to this question is beyond the scope of this analysis, the lack of frames may simply be a mirror of the specific issue of solidarity we are analysing. A similar logic may be at play for rights-based frames in which actors with positive stances most often referred to human rights as a universal argument for why people in need should be helped and protected. The interest frame in which claimants referred to economic capacities, for example, is more often referred to in claims with neutral or ambivalent positions. Otherwise, positions appeared slightly more negative, but quite balanced in total.

Figure 14: Frames and Positions in Solidarity Claims



Case Study September 2015: Two Directions of Solidarity Contestation

Given the dominance of political actors in claims-making about refugees, it seems that other claims made by non-state actors have been a little pushed aside. It is therefore all the more interesting to zoom in on the solidarity contestation which evolved on Facebook constituting the second part of our analysis. It is dedicated to, first, another claims analysis of news articles posted on Facebook and, second, the comments they received by Facebook users. This part of the study of solidarity in public discourse was conducted for one of the most intense months of the refugee crisis (September 2015). This was also visible in the salience curve of newspaper claims which reached the highest peak in September. We will, in the following, first briefly elaborate on the more technical details of data selection and retrieval. We will then go on to look into patterns of contestation regarding issues, positions and frames, and compare them with newspaper claims. The most interesting aspect, however, is how this form of bottom-up contestation is connected to newspaper claims as a top-down communication diffused by news media.

Data Selection and Retrieval

Regarding the sample of newspapers selected for analysis, we used *Spiegel* instead of *Bild* and therefore used a slightly different sample than for the newspaper analysis. This was due to the fact that a preliminary search for our key terms returned no results for articles posted on the *Bild Zeitung's* Facebook page. We therefore resorted to *Spiegel* as a tabloid substitute. Table 12 gives an overview of how many claims were coded per posted article on average, how many comments were posted in response to those 15 articles and how many 'likes' comments received.

Table 12: Number of Claims in Posted Articles and Average number of Comments and Likes on Comments

	Ø Claims/Article	No. of Comments	No. of Likes on Comments
Spiegel	1.6	7,732	22,905
FAZ	4	1,947	6,033
SZ	2.8	4,629	11,871
Total	2.8	14,308	40,809

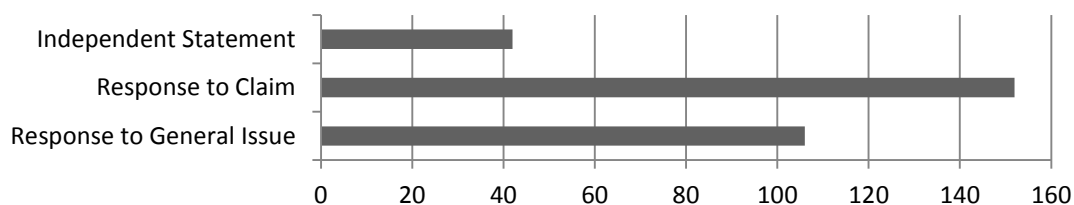
Studies occupied with the analysis of Facebook data have stressed that Facebook users should not be regarded as representative of the whole population. Facebook users are usually younger, better educated, more liberal and more attentive to politics; in addition, Facebook activity seems to foster offline participation, as well (e.g., Mellon and Prosser, 2017; Vissers and Stolle, 2014).

In that respect, differences between newspapers are interesting regarding the number of comments and likes, mirroring different audiences and even audience fragmentation on social media (e.g., Webster and Ksiazek, 2012). One aspect here is that we coded most claims for the *FAZ* and the least for *Spiegel*, while *Spiegel* received the most and the *FAZ*, the least comments and likes. This could relate to the fact that the *FAZ* is regarded as an establishment newspaper.²¹: Speculating about possible causes for different commenting behaviours, then, members of the political elite in the *FAZ* audience could have expressed their opinion in their own public claims, and not in Facebook comments; another possible explanation could be the differences in commenting cultures with the *FAZ* readers regarding comments as something trivial. In contrast, *Spiegel* seems to cover the least claims but has a more active and responsive readership on Facebook. While this is an interesting observation, especially against the background of the spill-over effects of political participation on Facebook to offline participation, our sample size is too limited and focused on the refugee crisis at a specific period. More detailed analysis is needed to shed light on this aspect to better understand the behavioural differences of different newspaper audiences.

Comment Types and Issues

Regarding the types of comments coded, we identified them in terms of their connection to the article as such (response to claim or general issue discussed in the article) in contrast to independent statement on the broader topic of migration or refugees.

Figure 15: Comment Types in the German Sample



Overall, comments were mostly linked to the article under which they were posted (see Figure). Comments reacted more often to specific claims than the issues discussed in articles. Thus, top-down and bottom-up elements were usually directly linked, sketching an image of direct and interrelated contestation by commenters – in contrast to a discussion detached from the explicit political discourse which would be mirrored in independent statements. While we can only assess the inter-relatedness of claims and comments thus far, it suggests a high level of interactivity in the online discourse on refugee solidarity.

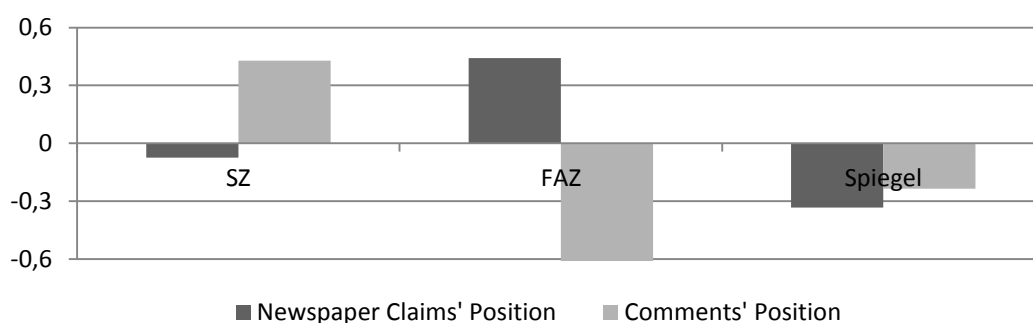
Relating back to the quality of discourse already briefly discussed for newspaper claims, another interesting aspect is if comments contained solidarity claims or not: This, it is argued, can help us shed light on how developed arguments in this contestation of solidarity are, ranging from commenters' simple opposition to the posted newspaper article or claims in it, to more nuanced discussions with commenters making their own claims about solidarity (e.g., Steenbergen et al., 2003). Here, our cod-

²¹ For numbers on the composition of the *FAZ* audience, see, for example: <http://www.faz.media/medien/frankfurter-allgemeine-zeitung-fuer-deutschland/die-faz-ist-die-lektuere-fuer-top-entscheider/>

ing scheme probed to see whether commenters were referring to and/or making claims about refugees as objects. If they were, coders coded a claim based on almost the same variables as for our claims-making analysis. For the German case, two thirds of the comments coded included claims of solidarity with refugees.

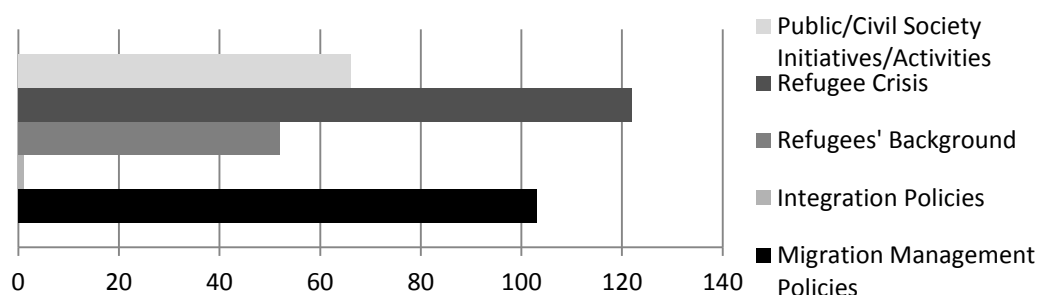
Furthermore, looking deeper into the dynamics between comments in which we found solidarity claims which were answering directly to claims in the articles, it is interesting to understand degrees of solidarity as reactions to positions in posted articles. In that respect, the positions of referenced claims and the positions in claims in comments show a rather different face across the three newspapers under study. Overall, the *SZ* audience seems to represent the most positive stance in the five coded articles, whereas the *FAZ* commenters, while commenting least (see Table 2), are the most negative. Interestingly, the distance in positions between the *FAZ* newspaper claims and comments' response to it is also the greatest. Thus, this seems to be somewhat of a backlash mirrored in counter solidarity claims. In this respect, the *Spiegel* audience seems to be more in line with the claims reported in *Spiegel*. If we connect this to what we discussed earlier in this section, one could speculate that commenters of the *FAZ* target political elites more fiercely than the other two – especially because it is regarded as an outlet for the elites. On the other hand, the *FAZ* received the least comments responding to claims in the article (34%, as opposed to 61% in the *SZ* and 57% in *Spiegel*). In addition, we also need to be conscious of the fact that this is only a small sample of claims and reactions to it. Thus, such trends should not be over-interpreted. Overall, however, results of our analysis sketch the picture of a rather developed discussion mirrored in the most popular comments included in our sample.

Figure 16: Positions towards Refugees in Newspaper Claims and Comment Claims



Regarding the issues discussed in comments, the trends were quite similar compared to the issues covered in newspaper claims. In line with what we discussed earlier, we see also here that it was mostly the political management of migration and problems and consequences associated with the refugee crisis in particular, such as economic or political consequences that took centre stage. In addition, activities by civil society and the public, and the background of refugees were important issues when it came to welcoming culture and volunteering, but also refugees' deservingness of solidarity in a discussion about 'real' and bogus refugees. The similarities in the issues of newspaper claims and comments are related to the fact that comments were most often connected to the issues and claims in articles. Thus, they often mirror them directly, also indicating the interests of commenters in issues debated in public discourse and, again, confirming the interactive feature of the online debate.

Figure 17: Issues discussed in Online Comments



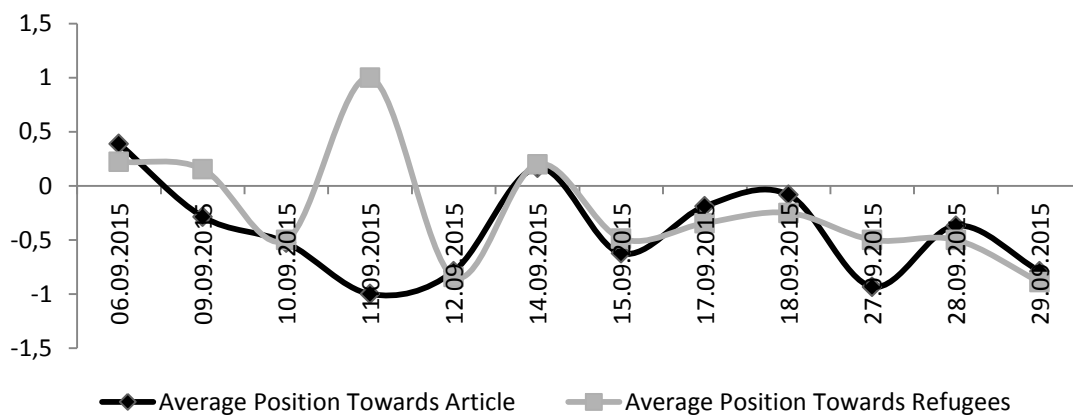
Positions and Frames

Another way to assess at least a trend in the quality of a discourse is by looking at the positions and the frames conveyed in comments – while keeping in mind the specific social expectations in terms of desirability connected to solidarity. Here, apart from the position towards refugees conveyed in claims – along with the frames referred to as a justification of the opinion, we also measured the position of the commenter towards the posted article, which included references to the article as such (e.g., ‘this is bad journalism’), as well as negative opinions about issues raised in the article (e.g., ‘this woman should not be chancellor!’).

Comparing first the two position variables, it becomes clear that commenter tone in opinions towards the article and towards refugees followed very similar, negative trends, which clearly deviated from our results for September 2015 in the newspaper claims analysis. Thus, it seems that while the top-down communication in the form of claims covered in newspapers conjures up the image of the overall positive, welcoming approach of German politics and society, other voices being raised bottom-up on social media become most popular and publicly acknowledged when taking negative stances. This result can also be related to more general discussions about the diagnosed hostility in online discussions which are perceived to be ‘undermining the deliberative potential of online interaction’ (Ksiazek et al., 2015: 850).

A remarkable counter-example to negativity in comments is an article posted on 11 September (see Figure) on the Facebook page of the SZ, a newspaper traditionally described as more liberal. Here, positions have the maximum distance of 2 points (-1 to 1). Zooming in more closely on this example, we see that it is about a camera operator in Hungary who kicked refugee children and a father carrying his son who came running towards her. Positions towards the article mirror the outrage in the face of such behaviour which, again, is mirrored in the positive stances towards refugees. Thus, in both variables, positions express solidarity with refugees, directly and indirectly, via opposition to a perceived lack of solidarity.

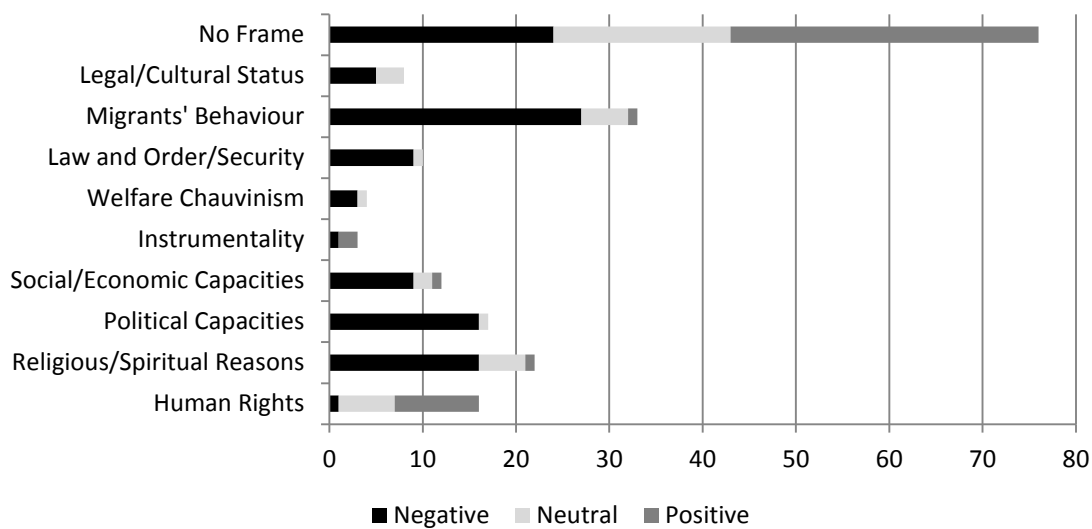
Figure 18: Positions towards Posted Article and Towards Refugees Compared



In relation to positions towards refugees, we also coded the underlying justifications in a frame variable to assess the arguments behind such positions. In line with the analysis of newspaper claims discussed earlier in this chapter, numerous claims in comments did not explicate justifications for their positions (see Figure ; around 25% for category 'No Frame'). Connecting positions towards refugees with frames, the tone of claims without frames seemed quite balanced when compared to such claims in which frames were made explicit.

Frames referring to the behaviour of migrants as well as religious/spiritual reasons were used most often. The overwhelming majority of these frames was used for justifying negative stances towards refugees – thus to justify why refugees do not need/deserve solidarity. This, it was argued, was because they did not behave themselves; because they are not compatible for religious or spiritual reasons, i.e., because they are mostly Muslim, do not accept Christians or Jews, or have an incompatible understanding of the status of women and their rights. The only frame which was employed more often for justifying positive positions was the 'Human Rights' frame, implying that refugees should be helped as an imperative derived from the simple fact that they are fellow human beings (see Figure). The latter finding is in line with our analysis of newspaper claims, while the strong negative bias of comments clearly differs from the rather balanced picture regarding the positions of solidarity claims in newspapers discussed in September 2015.

Figure 19: Frames and Positions towards Refugees in Online Comments



The Most Contested Claims and Their Reactions

Most literature engaging with the analysis of online user comments takes a quantitative stance. However, a qualitative analysis of comments can ‘...contribute to a richer understanding of interactive engagement practices, how these practices relate to news content, and begin to address questions about the nature and quality of comments and conversations’ (Ksiazek et al., 2016: 515). In addition to the results discussed already, we will therefore now turn to a qualitative analysis of the most contested claims in articles posted on Facebook and the comments referring to them. This will help us to understand the dynamics in interactive discourse in which Facebook commenters engage with political claims covered in newspapers and add to the research on solidarity with refugees by zooming in on the most popular voices raised by commenters in the ‘shortened social space’ (Schmitz Weiss and De Macedo Higgins Joyce, 2009: 593) online, allowing for a closer relationship with the audience.

Most contested in this context refers to the claims that commenters referenced when expressing their opinions. As we briefly discussed earlier, such types of comments (response to claim raised in the article) were the majority of coded comments in the German sample.

Table 13: Overview of Top Three of Contested Claims

Claim No.	Newspaper	Comments Received	Date	Topic
1	SZ	20 (100%)	11/9/15	Hungarian camera operator gets fired after kicking refugees and writes an open letter to apologise. Also expresses her shock regarding the hateful reactions she got.
2	SZ	16 (80%)	10/9/15	David reports hate speech against refugees to commenters’ employers and police. Courageous or irresponsible?
3	FAZ	16 (80%)	14/5/15	Andrea Nahles, German minister of labour, claims that it will be difficult to integrate refugees into the Labour market due to lack of professional skills.

As aforementioned, across newspapers, the *SZ* got most responses to claims and the *FAZ*, the least. The three most contested claims we shall discuss now come from the *SZ* and the *FAZ* (see Table 13). All three claims were posted on the respective Facebook pages in the middle of September 2015.

(1) A Hungarian camera operator wrote an open letter to apologise and explain why she kicked a refugee carrying his child and children who came running towards her. In her letter she explains that she is sincerely sorry and regrets what happened. At the same time, however, she also expresses her shock about the reactions to her behaviour: Refugees had broken through police lines and she feared she was being attacked. As a result, she panicked, made the wrong decision and, therefore, does not deserve to be threatened and stigmatised as a heartless racist kicking people in need.

In response to this claim, commenters are quite clear in positioning themselves against the camera operator, condemning her behaviour as incomprehensible and racist. Arguments are, for example, that: The situation was not that threatening; she was unprofessional; panic is no excuse for hitting children; the recorded material speaks a different language; she could obviously still record the scene while being in panic; she got what she deserved when she was fired from her job. Overall, the camera operator had clearly overstepped a boundary in the eyes of commenters. Taking into account the possibility that the homogeneous negative stance towards the claim may have been due to the fact that the *SZ* is most probably read by a more leftist-liberal audience, there was a very clear position mirrored in these comments. Commenters were clearly in favour of solidarity with refugees and refused and condemned any attempt to downplay this attack.

(2) David unmask people on Facebook that have uttered hate speech or agitated against refugees. He ironically calls himself a 'Social Justice Warrior'. Ever since he visited a refugee camp, he has documented the most drastic examples of agitation against refugees. Most people he investigates indicate their real name and information about family, friends, and employers on their Facebook profile. Thus, he argues, they obviously do not mind standing with such opinions in public. He filed complaints with the police and in some cases also contacted employers. In some cases, commenters were even fired due to his practice of 'digital pillorying'. Since he got threatened in response to his activities, he prefers to remain anonymous, i.e., without family name and photo.

The spectrum of positions represented in the comments for this claim is rather balanced, but also shows the potential for polarisation on this issue (average tone=0.06, 6 negative, 3 neutral, 7 positive comments). The negative and neutral comments mainly discussed and questioned how David as a whistleblower defines racism, calling into question his ability to judge who is racist and who is not, or making jokes about him as a 'Do-Gooder'. Positive comments are supportive, in praise of his courage, pointing out the failure of the state or Facebook to persecute hate speech more effectively, and that such behaviour, especially in the public domain, should be persecuted. Most of the comments (13 out of 16) did not contain a claim; the three that did represent all three possible value labels for this variable (-1, 0, 1) gave a balanced picture of opinions regarding solidarity with refugees. In sum, then, the comments responding to this claim were less about refugees, as such. They were about how to judge actions or people in their quest for solidarity with refugees.

(3) Andrea Nahles, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of the Social Democrats (SPD) at that time, talked about the integration of refugees into the labour market in Germany. In her speech in the German Bundestag, she pointed out that she would need more financial resources since most of the

refugees she wanted to integrate swiftly did not have the necessary qualifications: 'The Syrian doctor is not the rule'. She also pointed out that this should be remembered the following year when assessing the unemployment statistics – that higher numbers of unemployed refugees were not proof of failed policies, but rather related to a lack of qualifications. In terms of integration, refugees should become friends and neighbours fast, also an opportunity for Germany because of the demographic challenges it is facing.

Comments responding to this claim were either neutral or negative. They mainly referred to Andrea Nahles as a person: that she stated the obvious, that refugees would bring growth – but only regarding the number of unemployed. Some expressed their surprise that Nahles was the one making such a 'reasonable' statement because their opinion of her political abilities or the Social Democrats as a party was not very high. Only four solidarity claims were contained in the comments, which were mostly negative. They gave general statements about the lack of professional qualifications of refugees in general, while the only positive one lamented refugees' difficulty accessing the labour market. Overall, this post and the comments related to the perceived problematic consequences of the 'crisis', focused on political actors and their migration policies, rather than the refugees themselves. In that sense, it related directly to what we already discussed about the claims-analysis, namely that the discussion was mainly one of how that migration flow was or should have been managed by political elites.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, the discussion about solidarity with refugees in Germany as measured in newspaper claims focused on the contestation amongst political elites, the management of refugees and the possible problematic consequences of the large numbers arriving. The political contestation and the focus on managing the crisis implied a perception of refugees as a 'problem that needs a solution'. However, the discourse as measured in newspaper claims amongst the dominant political actors did not reveal bias towards more or less solidarity. The external shock of the events in Cologne hit German society in its core, causing feelings of betrayal by those that were welcomed quite unconditionally in their hour of need. While this strongly influenced the trend in tone towards the negative, it moved up again towards the end of our research period, indicating that fears about criminal refugees, at least as mirrored in the dominant newspaper discourse, were not generalised in the form of negative opinions about solidarity.

In sum, this analysis sketches a rather balanced picture of the German political discourse on solidarity with refugees during the crisis when it comes to political actors. Other actors are reported with more positive opinions overall. Angela Merkel is the central figure in the discourse, followed by other central responsible figures and her opponents. Thus, we find supportive evidence for the expectation that a relevant portfolio increases visibility. Regarding news values, conflict plays a significant role which is, however, a news value inherently present in a claims-making analysis with its focus on contestation; power and influence are important for explaining the media's interest in Angela Merkel and her political colleagues.

While the welcoming culture is strongly echoed in an overall positive tone of claims in September 2015, the discussion unfolding in Facebook comments draws a more negative picture. Relating this to

the results that issues are mirrored in comments and comments often relate to claims in articles directly, it seems that commenters interactively engaged with political claims communicated top-down but in a sort of backlash. Nonetheless, the discussion does not seem to be reduced to mere opposition; commenters also formulated claims of their own, including justifications for their positions. Often, it seems that it is not solidarity with refugees as such but the way that people engage in expressing solidarity or how politicians manage the crisis that matters. Studies occupied with the analysis of online commenting have stressed a high degree of hostility in discussions (Ksiazek et al., 2015). This may also be related to a broader discussion about the decline in trust in democratic governance, the rise of populist parties capitalising on crises, and social media as a sort of outlet to vent frustration and find similar-minded others (e.g., Alvares and Dahlgren, 2016). More generally speaking, analyses of Facebook data imply that Facebook users should not be seen as representative of the whole population. In addition, another finding is that a study like ours, 'sampling only politically vocal social media users, is likely to have even less representative samples' (Mellon and Prosser, 2017: 6). Therefore, we need to stress that the case study of September 2015 is but a glimpse into the public discussion about solidarity with refugees unfolding online, and can therefore not 'tarnish' the dominating radiant image of volunteers welcoming refugees at Munich's main station that month. Still, it provides important insights regarding the perceptions of commenters and their otherwise probably unheard or even secret views on solidarity and migration as one of the most challenging and salient issues – not only for the European Union, but for today's democratic societies at large.

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Greece

Maria Paschou and Angelos Loukakis

The refugee crisis and the media in Greece

Due to its geographical location, Greece is one of the main gateways from the Middle East to Europe. Being a frontline country for refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Iran, it recorded about 880,000 arrivals in 2015²², a year marked by a sharp increase in waves of refugee to the Syrian war. Given that this flow of refugees occurred during a period of indebtedness and harsh austerity, it fuelled the political scene with additional tension and media debate. Despite its financial inability to meet the needs of transit populations, Greece welcomed a disproportionate number of refugees (Dullien, 2016). Long existing political controversies on immigration issues made it harder for the SYRIZA-ANEL coalition government of that time to deal with it (Kaitatzi-Whitlock and Kenterelidou, 2017: 133), while low standards in asylum procedures and legal protection of refugees, which have traditionally characterised the country, further complicated the management of the increased flow of refugees (ibid: 5).

The landmarks of the period under study which triggered political debate as identified by scholars in studies of media coverage of the refugee flow in 2015-16 in Greece (Fotopoulos and Kaimaklioti, 2016; Kaitatzi-Whitlock and Kenterelidou, 2017; Boukala and Dimitrakopoulou, 2017) are:

- the image of a three-year old Syrian boy who washed up drowned on a Turkish shore, which became a tragic viral image in early September, 2015
- the debate over excluding Greece from the Schengen area (January 2016)
- the closure of the Balkan route (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and FYROM) at the end of February/ early March 2016 which resulted in refugees being stranded at the Greek-FYROM crossing point of Idomeni
- the EU-Turkey agreement at the end of March 2016

In the meantime, while these events were particularly significant in the Greek context, media attention was tied to events which accelerated public discourse Europe-wide such as the fence built at the Hungarian border with Serbia in mid-September, the initial widespread welcoming rhetoric (Sept.-Oct. 2015) in Germany and Austria, and the Cologne incident on New Year's Eve when women were assaulted by foreign-looking men, triggering the closure of the Austrian borders (and the subsequent

²² For a detailed account of both the arrivals at the Aegean islands and land borders in the years 2015-2016, see the "Refugee Crisis Fact Sheet" published by the Hellenic Republic General Secretariat for Media and Communication in January 2017, available at: <http://mindigital.gr/index.php/pliroforiaka-stoixeia/946-refugee-crisis-fact-sheet-jan-2017>

closure of the whole Balkan route) (Triantafyllidou, 2017a). Georgiou and Zaborowski (2017) also identified the November 2015 Paris terrorist attacks as a key event which shook Europe and shifted public discourse on migrants and refugees towards fear and securitisation.

In addition, recent research by the Greek press over a short period in early 2016 highlights the living conditions in the refugee camps, together with procedural/administration issues concerning migration e.g. transfer and registration- as the most frequently reported issues (Fotopoulos and Kaimaklioti, 2016). Furthermore, evidence from comparative research suggests that Greece, alongside other frontline countries, scored significantly higher in humanitarian action as opposed to the military securitisation in its media narratives, giving a louder voice to refugees when compared to other Western European countries (Georgiou and Zaborowski, 2017:10).

The political discourse in Greece adopted two competing interpretive frames to make sense of the refugee flow: One of European unity through proclaimed loyalty to its long-standing humanitarian tradition, and one of European division through blaming Western European governments for their fragmentary response, which were reconciled predominantly through a frame of rationalisation (Triantafyllidou, 2017a: 14-15). Hence, the political appeal to European collaboration when the country was accused of ineffective control of its borders, and threatened with expulsion from Schengen, was at the same time a complaint about the unjust distribution and the burdensome nature of the refugee flow (Boukala and Dimitrakopoulou, 2017: 9), with direct criticism escalating when Western Balkan countries closed their borders (Šabić & Borić, 2016: 17-18).

These contrasting frames do, nevertheless, have ideological roots. On the one side, a disposition towards Euroscepticism during the overall period of the generalised – i.e. economic- refugee- legitimisation- crisis kept pace with xenophobic manifestations and public anti-immigrant stances as reflected in increased support of the extreme right (Sekeris and Vasilakis 2016; Galarotis et al., 2017). On the other side, anti-racist attitudes inscribed in media rhetoric, against the backdrop of discriminating actions of the Golden Dawn political party, largely contributed to a sympathetic outlook and an emphasis on the “Greek paradigm of philoxenia-xenophilia” (Kaitatzi-Whitlock and Kenterelidou, 2017) with the refugee solidarity movement (Oikonomakis, 2018) disseminating good practices of grassroots solidarity in the public discourse.

This report presents the findings of a study of the main traits – e.g. actors, issues and forms - of claims-making in the Greek public sphere from August 2015 to April 2016, a period which is identified as the peak of the recent refugee crisis.

With respect to case selection, three newspapers have been selected based on their circulation rates, the aim of which is to ensure ideological diversity and access to their articles: The liberal centre-right, *Kathimerini*²³, the liberal centre-left, *Ta Nea*²⁴ and the tabloid/populist right newspaper, *Proto Thema*²⁵ Table 1 presents the main statistics of the Greek sample for each newspaper.

²³ *Kathimerini* is the oldest centre-right newspaper with the first issue published in 1919, and the highest in circulation (on average, 14,000 on a daily basis and 61,225 for the Sunday edition); source: Argos press distribution agency: <http://www.argoscom.gr/eng/index.php>

Table 1: The Greek Sample

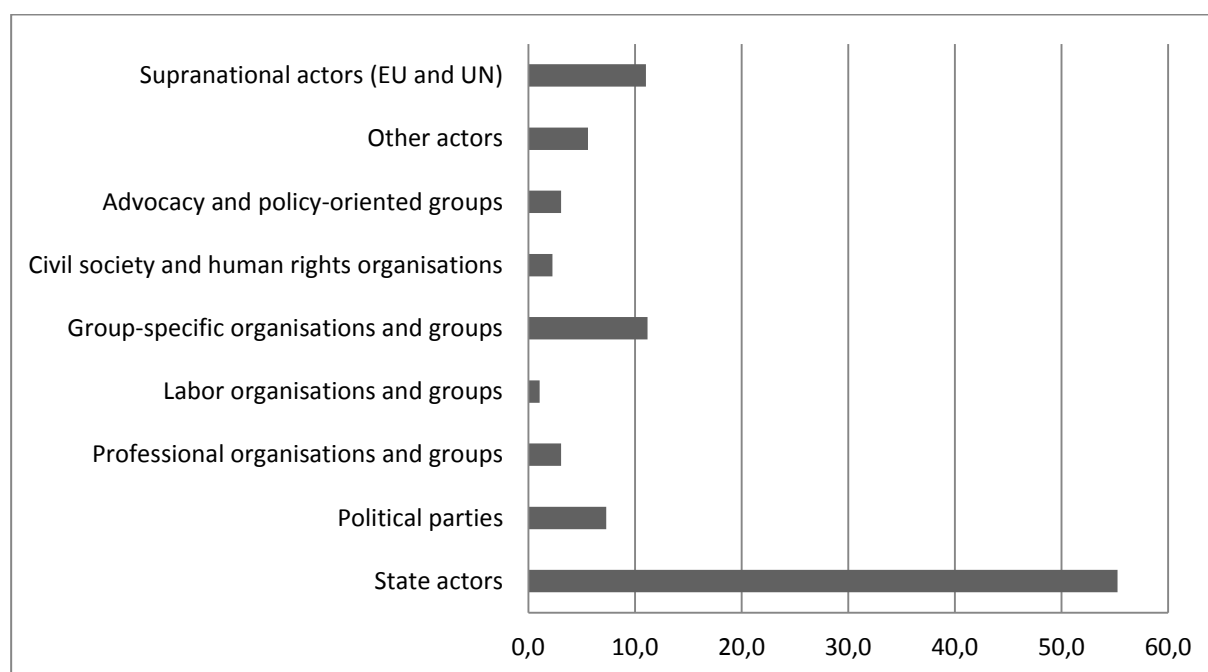
Newspaper	Articles retrieved	Articles selected	Articles coded	Claims retrieved
Kathimerini	3,828	372	135	252
Ta Nea	5,482	315	152	253
Proto Thema	7,338	335	136	248
Total	16,648	1.022	423	753

Transnational solidarity in the public sphere: Structure of claims-making in Greece

Visibility and inclusiveness

The most salient actors in the public sphere from August 2015- to April 2016 were state-related actors such as government, parliament and police who had produced almost half of the total claims (416 claims) reported in the media, with group-specific organisations following – such as migrants’ or refugees’ organisations and NGOs- and supranational actors -including EU and UN bodies- as seen in Fig.1.

Figure 1: Types of Claimants (%)



As for the nationality of the claimants, almost half of them were Greek (55.6%) followed by German and Austrian claimants (15.1% and 5.9% respectively). Our study does not, however, confirm high

²⁴ *Ta Nea* has the highest circulation of centre-left newspapers in Greece (13,500 on average for the daily edition) which started its operation in 1939; source: Argos press distribution agency: <http://www.argoscom.gr/eng/index.php>

²⁵ *Proto Thema* is a tabloid newspaper, published every Sunday (printed edition), which is also the newspaper with the highest circulation in Greece (on average 76,500 issues); source: Argos press distribution agency: <http://www.argoscom.gr/eng/index.php>

visibility of refugees in the Greek media (Georgiou and Zaborowski, 2017), since only 2.5% of the claims were made by actors from Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq.

With respect to the salience of the different types of claimants across newspapers, there were no notable differences recorded, except for the fact that group-specific and civil society in the Proto Thema occupied more space compared to the other two newspapers.

Table 2: Types of Claimants by Scope

Claimants	Scope of Claimant (%)				Total	
	Trans-/national	supra	National	Sub-national		Unknown
State actors	5.3		85.1	9.6	0.0	100.0
	[22]		[354]	[40]	[0]	[416]
Political parties	14.5		72.7	12.7	0.0	100.0
	[8]		[40]	[7]	[0]	[55]
Professional organisations and groups	4.3		56.5	30.4	8.7	100.0
	[1]		[13]	[7]	[2]	[23]
Labour organisations and groups	0.0		87.5	12.5	0.0	100.0
	[0]		[7]	[1]	[0]	[8]
Group-specific organisations and groups	58.3		9.5	29.8	2.4	100.0
	[49]		[8]	[25]	[2]	[84]
Civil society and human rights organisations	52.9		29.4	17.6	0.0	100.0
	[9]		[5]	[3]	[0]	[17]
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	30.4		47.8	21.7	0.0	100.0
	[7]		[11]	[5]	[0]	[23]
Other actors	21.4		9.5	69.0	0.0	100.0
	[9]		[4]	[29]	[0]	[42]
Supranational actors (EU and UN)	98.8		1.2	0.0	0.0	100.0
	[82]		[1]	[0]	[0]	[83]
Unknown/unspecified	50.0		0.0	0.0	50.0	100.0
	[1]		[0]	[0]	[1]	[2]
Total	25.0		58.8	15.5	0.7	100.0
	[188]		[443]	[117]	[5]	[753]

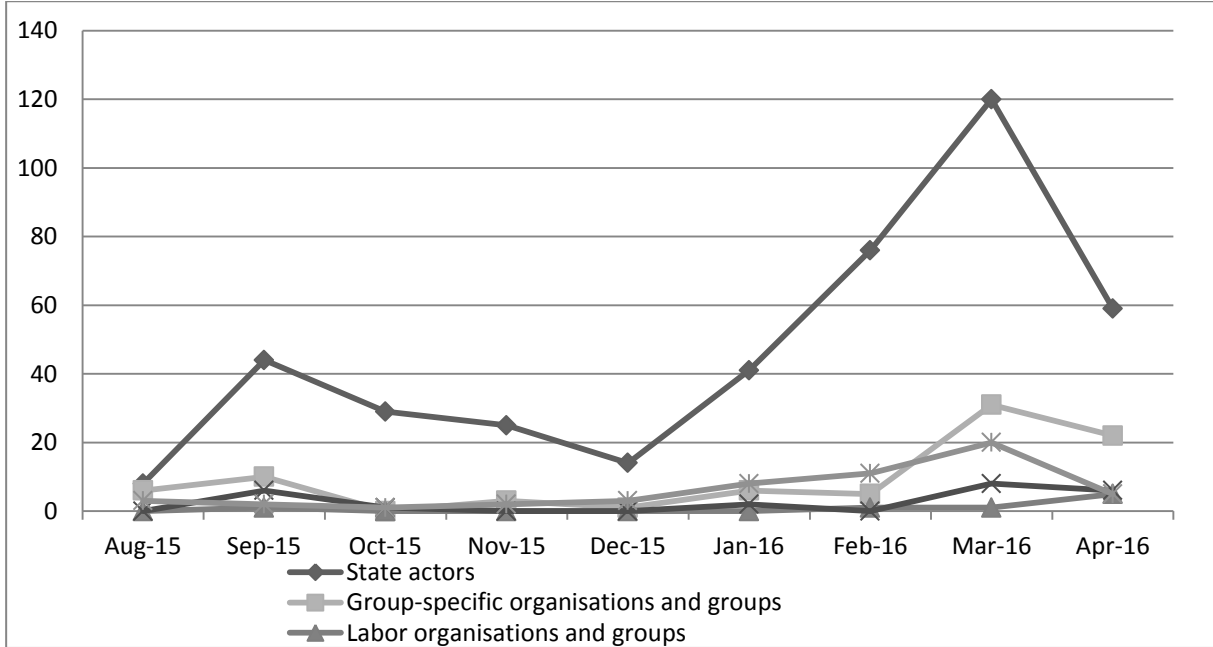
* Number of cases in []

Looking at the scope of claimants, Table 2 shows that most claimants were active at the national level (58.8%) followed by actors active at the transnational level (25%) with a minority being active at the sub-national level (almost 15%). In more detail, state actors, political parties and labour organisations had overwhelmingly national scope, while supranational actors had transnational scope. Group-specific organisations, most of the times, illustrated a transnational scope as well, while they were less usually active at the subnational level and rare at the national level. Both professional organisations and advocacy groups had national scope most of the time, but differed in that the first had more often sub-national scope and much less often, they had a trans-national scope compared to the latter. Finally, other actors, such as individual activists, celebrities, local communities or elites, most of the time represented the subnational (or local) level. Thus, the observed field structure across levels contributed to a better understanding of the profile of actors involved in the debate. While

state and political actors at the national level have traditionally occupied the lion’s share in the public sphere, transnational civil society actors gained increased levels of publicity during this period when the international humanitarian response to the Mediterranean refugee crisis was at its most overwhelming. At the same time, other actors who raised claims with respect to the refugee inflow seemed to be those who had some interests at stake due to their proximity to the issue, i.e. acting at the sub-national and local level.

Figure 2 depicts the percentages of the claims made by each actor over time. It clearly identifies two peak periods, one in September 2015 and a second one, with the highest density in claim production, in March 2016. This graph confirms our expectations with respect to claim acceleration in the public sphere as a response to the events that shaped the political agenda (mainly the closure of the Balkan route and the pressures of stricter entry controls) as described in the Introduction of this report. Identical two-peak patterns held true for all actors, while the second peak was particularly sharp for state and political actors, linked to the predominant “blame game” discourse of that period, as identified by Boukala and Dimitrakopoulou (2017), and related to the escalation of the overcrowding in the camp of Idomeni (ie. close to the borders with FYROM) as a humanitarian crisis, the European Council meeting, with Turkey’s participation on March 17 and the EU-Turkey agreement on March 19 which significantly reduced refugee flows.

Figure 2: Number of claims by types of claimant over time period



N= 416

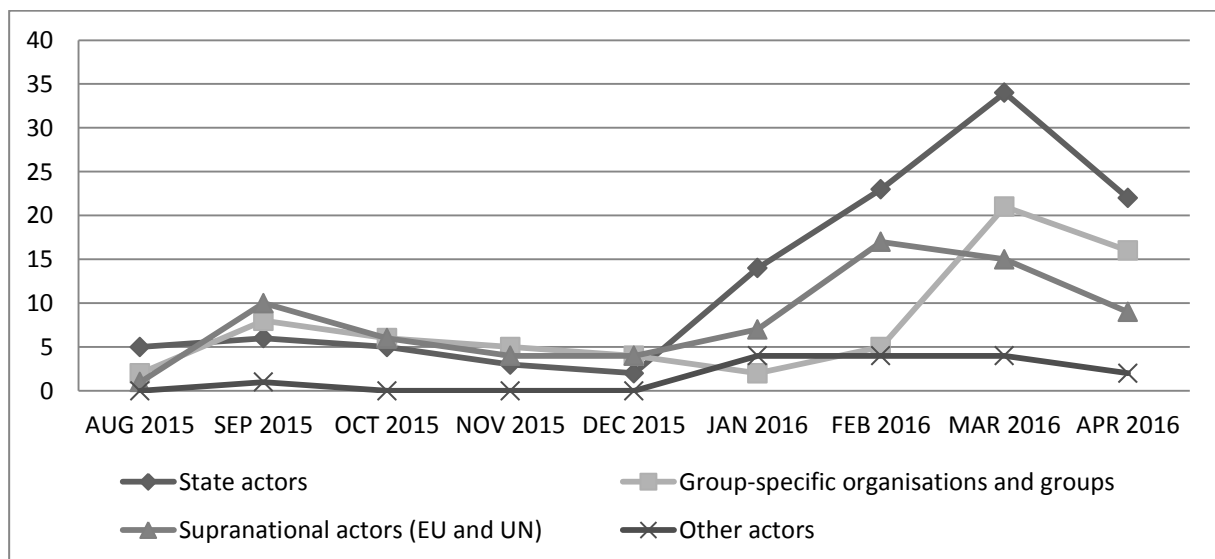
Addressees

As regards the addressees of the claims, i.e. the actors held responsible for acting with respect to the claim, or at whom the claim was explicitly addressed as a call to act, our findings attest to an absence of addressees in 62% of the coded claims. In the remaining cases, actors’ share was similar to the one

observed in the claimants' category, with the most frequent addressees being state actors (40%), followed by supranational actors and group specific organisations (approx. 25% for each category, respectively). With respect to the scope of addressees across the different actor types, the pattern was similar to that of the scope of claimants, with state actors, political parties and labour organisations being active most frequently at the national level, supranational actors, group specific organisations and civil society organisations acting at the transnational scope with other actors having subnational scope most of the time. What distinguished, however, the addressees of public debate as compared to the claimants was that overall most of them had a transnational scope, the national scope followed (50% and 40%, respectively) and actors with a subnational scope were rarely addressed – though they appeared more often as claimants. The predominance of addressees with a transnational scope could be seen under the light of a generalised plea for international support and cooperation in the management of the refugee inflow during the event-rich period. Finally, with respect to the addressees' nationality, most of them were Greek (56%) followed by Germans (15.6%), Turkish and Syrians (5.7% apiece).

Looking at the evolution of claims over time with respect to their addressees (Figure 3), some interesting findings arise. Supranational actors were the most salient addressees during the first peak of claims-making in September 2015. This can be best understood when one takes into consideration the Greek governments' efforts to "Europeanise" and "internationalise" the massive refugee flow. These efforts were hooked on events such as the UN's September Plenary, the Bratislava Summit and the summit of the Southern European state leaders which all took place in September 2015 and during which the Greek government called upon collective transnational support (Kaitatzi-Whitlock and Kenterelidou, 2017: 314-5). National addressees began to gain ground in the public sphere from December 2016, a period characterised by heightened debate between the national political forces marked by the closure of the Balkan route, and debate over excluding Greece from Schengen (Boukala and Dimitrakopoulou, 2017).

Figure 3: Number of claims by addressee type, 8/2015-4/2016



N= 271

When the scope of actors is cross-tabulated with the scope of addressees (Table 3), we notice that supranational actors almost equally addressed supranational and national actors, while national actors mainly addressed supranational actors (approx. 56%), and less often national actors (almost 40%). This finding again reflects the Greek actors' attempts to present the refugee crisis as a transnational issue, expressed through their appeal to supranational actors as being more responsible to act. Sub-national actors were mostly involved in subnational debates, nonetheless, and infrequently addressed actors who were involved at the national or transnational levels.

Table 3: Scope of Addressees by Scope of Claimants

Scope of Claimants	Scope of Addressees (%)			Total
	Trans-/supra-/inter-national	National	Sub-national	
Trans-/supra-/inter-national	50.0 [40]	47.5 [38]	2.5 [2]	100.0 [80]
National	55.8 [91]	39.3 [64]	4.9 [8]	100.0 [163]
Sub-national	27.8 [10]	30.6 [11]	41.7 [15]	100.0 [36]
Total	50.7 [142]	40.4 [113]	8.9 [25]	100.0 [280]

* Number of cases in []

Positioning of actors: Proponents and opponents of solidarity

Moving to the position of the claims towards refugees, overall most of the Greek claims held a neutral position or a slightly positive attitude (mean of total number of claims = 0.01). Looking across actors reveals that state actors, advocacy organisations and supranational actors made claims which were in favour of refugees on the whole (means > 0), contrary to political parties, professional organisations, group specific and other organisations who made claims with a negative position towards refugees (means < 0). The claims by labour organisations and civil society organisations were generally neutral (means = 0). The fact that state actors were on the same page as advocacy organisations reflects the predominance of a solidarity discourse in Greek society which nevertheless led to the accusation of the state by the European Commission for *neglecting the obligations to control the external frontier of Europe* (Boukala and Dimitrakopoulou, 2017: 8). Notable, however, alongside top-down and bottom-up solidarity manifestations, there was a concurrent increase in anti-refugee and xenophobic stances which were connected to the unprecedented flow of refugees and which were particularly relevant for the municipalities that had been more exposed to the sudden influx of refugees (Sekeris and Vasilakis, 2016). Hence, our findings provide some further justification for the tensions that characterised the Greek public sphere in that period between the nationalist discourse of fear and the humanitarian discourse of solidarity. This polarisation is reflected in our data, with a standard deviation of about 1 around the mean scores of scope for all actor categories.

Looking into the differences between newspapers, Table 4 shows that 'Proto Thema' was the newspaper in which the highest frequency of claims were against the refugees (48%), unsurprisingly given its populist discourse which "*activates the readers' xenophobic reflexes*" (Boukala and Dimitrakopoulou, 2017: 17). This can also be understood by the fact that this newspaper displayed a higher share of claims by civil society and group specific organisations, which held either pro- or anti-refugee atti-

tudes, with the latter outweighing the former. In contrast, the highest frequency of claims found in ‘Kathimerini’ and ‘Ta Nea’ were in favour of the refugees (49.2% and 42.3% respectively). The latter newspaper was the one which held a more neutral position compared to the other two newspapers; this may be an indication of a greater emphasis on the political aspects of the crisis instead of the humanitarian ones, similar to the trend observed by Boukala and Dimitrakopoulou (ibid) with respect to the newspaper *Efimerida ton Syntakton*, a quality newspaper (offspring of *Eleftherotypia*) with a left-wing orientation.

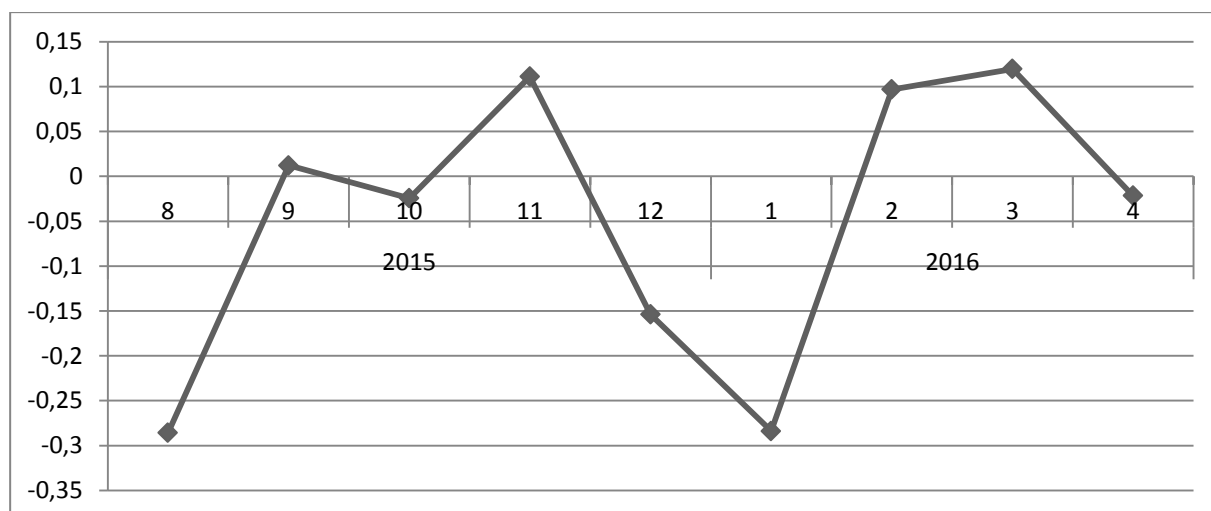
Table 4: Positioning of the Claimants by Newspaper in which the claim was found

Positioning of actors	Newspaper in which the claim was found (%)			
	Proto Thema	Ta Nea	Kathimerini	Total
Anti-object	48.0 [119]	38.3 [97]	40.1 [101]	42.1 [317]
Neutral / Ambivalent	14.5 [36]	19.4 [49]	10.7 [27]	14.9 [112]
Pro-object	37.5 [93]	42.3 [107]	49.2 [124]	43.0 [324]
Total	100.0 [248]	100.0 [253]	100.0 [252]	100.0 [753]

* Number of cases in []

As for the evolution of the debate during the period under examination, our findings demonstrate the following: At the beginning of the period under study, i.e. in August 2015, anti-object claims were slightly higher than pro-object ones, which mirrors the relative advance of a nationalist intolerant public discourse over the voices of refugee support, and can be attributed to the successive, sharp and seemingly uncontrollable inflow of refugees. In September 2015, a month which was aptly characterised as a period of “*ecstatic humanitarianism*” (Georgiou and Zaborowski, 2017:8), the positive positioning of claims outweighed the negative one, while during the following couple of months and until the end of that year, pro- and anti- refugee claims underwent constant changes, reflecting the tensions and controversies in the public sphere. The turning point was January 2016, when anti-refugee claims significantly outweighed pro-refugee claims, which can be mostly attributed to the immediate response to the threat of expulsion from Schengen (Boukala and Dimitrakopoulou, 2017), while the reversed pattern of the following two months can be seen in relation to the wrath towards the successive and definite closure of borders along the Balkan route which the state vigorously resisted and which was reflected in the overwhelming dominance of humanitarian values and solidarity in the public discourses.

Figure 4: Evolution of the Positioning of Claims over time



N= 753

Issues: which topics were raised by solidarity contestants in the media

Moving to the issue of the claims, the vast majority of claims concerned “policies directed at the political ‘management’ of migration” (66%). Other issues mentioned frequently were related to “the background, the situation and the fate of refugees” and with “problems associated with the refugee influx/crisis” (about 11% for each category). Moreover, Table 5 presents the issues raised by claimant category. More specifically, state actors, political parties and supranational actors most frequently raised issues related to the political management of the crisis (76%, 93% and 88%, respectively), while all the other actors seemed to be more or equally interested in issues beyond political governance, such as the background and the fate of refugees or, less frequently, public and civic initiatives. Interestingly, group specific organisations (together with professional organisations, which were, nevertheless, underrepresented in our sample, and the general category “other” actors) recorded a relatively high share in claims referring to the problems associated with the influx of refugees, which could explain to some extent why the position of their claim was negative towards refugees (i.e. as mentioned in the previous section).

Table 6 provides information about the scope of the different types of issues. Overall, surprisingly enough, the majority of the issues raised had transnational scope (44.5%) followed by issues of national and sub-national scope (32.5% and 23%, respectively). Hence, in the Greek public discourse, the refugee crisis was a problem that required a transnational solution, as reflected in the predominantly transnational scope through which the policies directed at the political management of migration were discussed. Even the policies about the integration of refugees had a transnational scope some of the time, despite the fact that this issue mainly concerned the national level. This transnationalisation of the issue can be seen in relation to Greece’s role in hosting refugees which was linked to its geopolitical location as a frontline country and as a passageway instead of a final destination for migrants and refugees. It can also be related to the appeal made by Greek political actors to the European Union and the international community to undertake responsibility and share the burden of refugee management. Finally, concerning all other issues – i.e. public and civic activities beyond political governance, the background and the fate of refugees and the problems associated

with the refugees' influx - they mostly adhered to a sub-national scope, reflecting their contextualisation at the local level where refugees were hosted.

Table 5: Type of Claimants by type of Issues

Claimants	Issue Categories (%)					Total
	Policies directed at the political 'management' of migration	Policies directed at the integration of refugees	The background, the situation and the fate of refugees	Problems associated with the refugee influx/crisis	Public and civic activities/initiatives beyond Political Governance	
State actors	76.0 [316]	4.1 [17]	8.2 [34]	6.5 [27]	5.3 [22]	100.0 [416]
Political parties	92.7 [51]	0.0 [0]	1.8 [1]	3.6 [2]	1.8 [1]	100.0 [55]
Professional organisations and groups	13.0 [3]	4.3 [1]	17.4 [4]	34.8 [8]	30.4 [7]	100.0 [23]
Labour organisations and groups	37.5 [3]	0.0 [0]	25.0 [2]	12.5 [1]	25.0 [2]	100.0 [8]
Group-specific organisations and groups	36.9 [31]	1.2 [1]	28.6 [24]	26.2 [22]	7.1 [6]	100.0 [84]
Civil society and human rights organisations	23.5 [4]	5.9 [1]	47.1 [8]	0.0 [0]	23.5 [4]	100.0 [17]
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	21.7 [5]	4.3 [1]	17.4 [4]	17.4 [4]	39.1 [9]	100.0 [23]
Other actors	27.3 [12]	2.4 [1]	9.5 [4]	34.1 [15]	28.6 [12]	100.0 [44]
Supranational actors (EU and UN)	88.0 [73]	0.0 [0]	7.2 [6]	4.8 [4]	0.0 [0]	100.0 [83]
Total	66.1 [498]	2.9 [22]	11.6 [87]	11.0 [83]	8.4 [63]	100.0% [753]

* Number of cases in []

Table 6: Types of Issues by their scope

Issues Categories	Scope of Issue (%)			Total
	Trans-/supra-/inter-national	National	Sub-national	
Policies directed at the political 'management' of migration	53.8 [268]	34.5 [172]	11.6 [58]	100.0 [498]
Policies directed at the integration of refugees	22.7 [5]	59.1 [13]	18.2 [4]	100.0 [22]
The background, the situation and the fate of refugees	35.6 [31]	16.1 [14]	48.3 [42]	100.0 [87]
Problems associated with the refugee influx/crisis	26.5 [22]	28.9 [24]	44.6 [37]	100.0 [83]
Public and civic activities/initiatives beyond Political Governance	14.3 [9]	34.9 [22]	50.8 [32]	100.0 [63]
Total (*No. of cases in [])	44.5 [335]	32.5 [245]	23.0 [173]	100.0 [753]

Solidarity contestations in the public sphere

Forms of action

Moving to the action forms of the claims, overall claims most frequently took the form of verbal statements (almost 60%) followed by political decisions (15%). Claims expressed through protest actions - either conventional, violent, demonstrative or confrontational - covered 13% of the total claims, while direct solidarity action claims were met only in 6.2% of the cases. Focusing on the action forms across types of claimants, our findings can be summarised in the following. First, policy-oriented claimants such as state actors, political parties, supranational actors and advocacy and policy-oriented groups, mostly expressed their claims through verbal statements (more than 60% each) and less often through political decisions (between 12%-25% each). Second, professional organisations, labour organisations and civil society organisations also made claims most frequently in the form of verbal statements (approximately 50% of cases), but relatively lower than policy-related actors did. However, the second most frequent action form in their claims was direct solidarity actions (ranging between 25% - 42% each). Third, group-specific organisation claims referred more frequently to confrontational and violent protest actions (41.7% and 22. respectively). These findings do not come as a surprise given the institutional roles of the policy-oriented and professional civil society actors on the one hand, and the activities of the informal groups, such as refugee or anti-refugee groups, on the other, which abstain from institutionalised and conventional forms of political deliberation and raise their claims in the public sphere through some high degree of contentious politics

Table 7: Forms of claims by actor type

Forms of Claims	Types of Claimants (%)											Total
	State actors	Political parties	Professional organisations and groups	Labour organisations and groups	Group-specific organisations and groups	Civil and rights organisations	society human organi-	Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	Other actors	Supranational actors (EU and UN)	Unknown/unspecified	
Political decisions	18.8 [78]	12.7 [7]	0.0 [0]	0.0 [0]	2.4 [2]	0/0 [0]		13.0 [3]	2.4 [1]	25.3 [21]	50.0 [1]	15.0 [113]
Direct solidarity actions	4.6 [19]	1.8 [1]	26.1 [6]	37.5 [3]	3.6 [3]	41.2 [7]		4.3 [1]	11.9 [5]	2.4 [2]	0.0 [0]	6.2 [47]
Humanitarian aid mobilisations	3.6 [15]	0.0 [0]	0.0 [0]	0.0 [0]	2.4 [2]	0.0 [0]		0.0 [0]	7.1 [3]	2.4 [2]	0.0 [0]	2.9 [22]
Violent protest actions	0.5 [2]	0.0 [0]	13.0 [3]	0.0 [0]	22.6 [19]	0.0 [0]		8.7 [2]	11.9 [5]	0.0 [0]	50.0 [1]	4.2 [32]
Confrontational protest actions	0.5 [2]	0.0 [0]	0.0 [0]	0.0 [0]	41.7 [35]	0.0 [0]		4.3 [1]	4.8 [2]	0.0 [0]	0.0 [0]	5.3 [40]
Demonstrative protest actions	0.0 [0]	0.0 [0]	4.3 [1]	12.5 [1]	4.8 [4]	0.0 [0]		8.7 [2]	19.0 [8]	0.0 [0]	0.0 [0]	2.1 [16]
Conventional protest actions	1.7 [7]	1.8 [1]	4.3 [1]	0.0 [0]	1.2 [1]	11.8 [2]		0.0 [0]	9.5 [4]	1.2 [1]	0.0 [0]	2.3 [17]
Repressive measures	4.1 [17]	0.0 [0]	0.0 [0]	0.0 [0]	0.0 [0]	0.0 [0]		0.0 [0]	0.0 [0]	0.0 [0]	0.0 [0]	2.3 [17]
Verbal statements	66.3 [276]	83.6 [46]	52.2 [12]	50.0 [4]	21.4 [18]	47.1 [8]		60.9 [14]	33.3 [14]	68.7 [57]	0.0 [0]	59.6 [449]
Total	100.0 [416]	100.0 [55]	100.0 [23]	100.0 [8]	100.0 [84]	100.0 [17]		100.0 [23]	100.0 [42]	100.0 [83]	100.0 [2]	100.0 [753]

* Number of cases in []

Blamed/credited actors:

This section deals with blaming and praising practices. Our data reveal that attribution of responsibility was rare in the claims made in the Greek public sphere with respect to the refugee crisis for the period under study. Whereas the act of praising an actor was found in only 6% of claims, blaming others was recorded at the higher, yet still comparatively low, frequency of 15.3%. Despite representing a small subsection of our sample, the findings have allowed us to discern a pattern of responsibility attribution in which both the claimants, as well as blaming and praising addressees, were predominantly state actors, unsurprisingly, given that the political management of the crisis for which state actors were primarily accountable was apparently at the epicentre of the public debate. Specifically, state actors were blamed in 10% of the total number of claims, and 67% of claims which included a blamed actor. Nearly a quarter (23.5%) of the 27 claims were foreign governments, while the remaining 76.5% were national state actors. State actors from Austria totalled seven blames and German actors followed with 6 claims. A small amount of credits came from supranational actors who mostly praised state actors. They tended to be EU officials congratulating Greek authorities on their handling of the refugee crisis.

Objects of solidarity

Looking at how refugees, as objects of solidarity, were described in the three newspapers, the general picture shows that most of the times (82.5%), they were mentioned without any social or national specification, while in approximately 12% of the claims the refugees were implicitly mentioned. The gender or age of the refugees was very rarely mentioned, i.e. in about 1% of claims, which deserves further attention inasmuch as it contradicts the findings of a similar study according to which refugees were described with considerable attention to their gender and age in the Greek press, with frequencies higher than 20% (Georgiou and Zaborowski, 2017: 12), i.e. above the European average found in this study.

With respect to the nationality of the refugees, this information was once again absent in most claims, with less than 10% of claims mentioning the nationality of refugees, which was largely Syrian.

Justifying solidarity in the media

Finally, this first part of the report explores the justification which claimants used to support their claims. Justifications were related to the issue raised and appeared in approximately half of the claims. In more detail, 70% of the claims that involved a justification had an interest-based or utilitarian justification (such as political or economic calculations). Rights-based justifications (e.g. human rights, democracy, equality) followed with 25%, while identity-based justifications (such as nationality, religion, race and tradition) rarely appeared in our sample (4%). Focusing more on the distribution of justifications across the three Greek newspapers, some interesting observations were made. “Ta Nea” is the newspaper in which most of the claims (78%) were justified, contrary to “Kathimerini” which showed less than 30% of its claims as justified. “Proto Thema” lies in the middle with 42%. Furthermore, “Kathimerini” and “Proto Thema” more frequently used interest-based and identity-based justifications compared to “Ta Nea”, which used rights-based justifications more often than the other two newspapers.

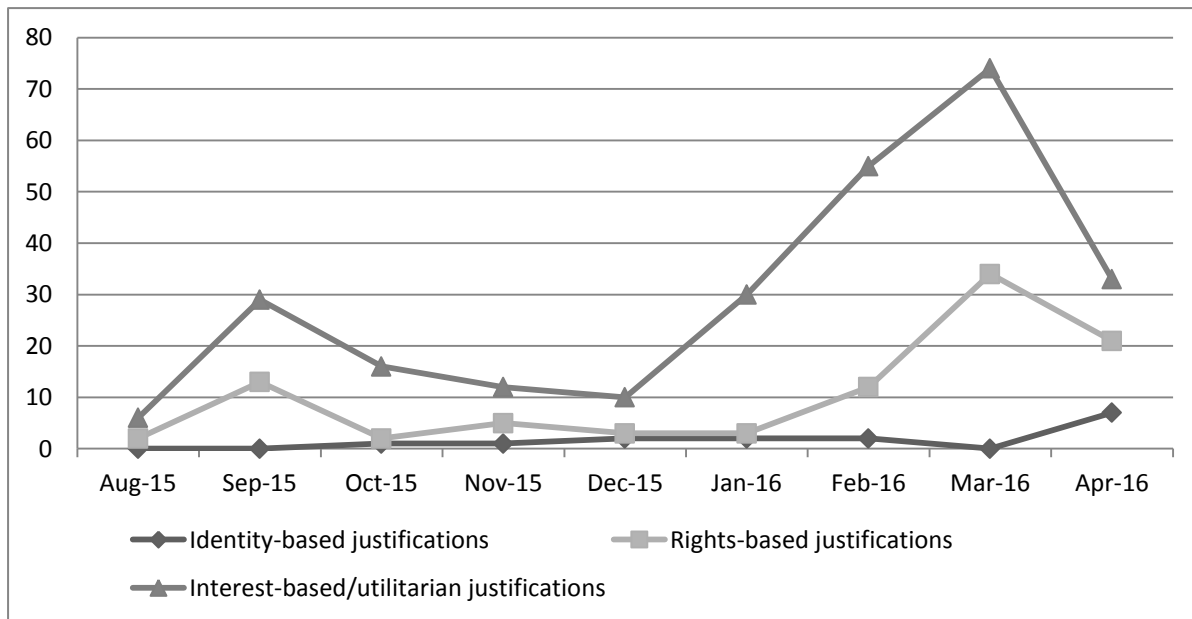
Table 8: Type of Justification by Newspaper in which the claim was found

Justifications	Newspaper in which the claim was found (%)			Total
	Proto Thema	Ta Nea	Kathimerini	
Interest-based/utilitarian justifications	73.8 [76]	67.7 [134]	74.3 [55]	70.7 [265]
Rights-based justifications	21.4 [22]	29.8 [59]	18.9 [14]	25.3 [95]
Identity-based justifications	4.9 [5]	2.5 [5]	6.8 [5]	4.0 [15]
Total	100.0 [103]	100.0 [198]	100.0 [74]	100.0 [375]

* Number of cases in []

Looking into the evolution of justifications across time in Figure 5, their distribution follows the general distribution of claims which had two peaks, one in September 2015 and the other in February-March 2016, which was less sharp and more gradual, indicating that the intensification of the debate in the social media began earlier than in the press. Interest-based justifications prevailed throughout the whole period. This seems to confirm Triantafyllidou's assertion on the predominance of a "rationalisation" discourse to balance the opposing tendencies that were taking place with respect to how others –Europe/Western European countries or refugees - were being portrayed in the mediated political debates in Greece (2017a: 14-15).

Figure 5: Types of justification across time



N=375

Table 9 depicts the relation between justification of the claims and the position of the claimants. More specifically, interest-based/utilitarian justifications were almost equally used to support claims both in

favour of and against refugees. Moreover, rights' based justifications were mostly used in order to support pro refugees claims (64.2%). On the other hand, despite the low N, identity-based justifications were, in the vast majority, used to offer support to claims against the refugees.

Table 9: Justification of the Claims by Claimant Position

Position	Justifications (%)			Total
	Interest-based/utilitarian justifications	justi-Rights-based justifications	justi-Identity-based justifications	
Anti-object	40.4 [107]	26.3 [25]	73.3 [11]	38.1 [143]
Neutral / Ambivalent	20.0 [53]	9.5 [9]	6.7 [1]	16.8 [63]
Pro-object	39.6 [105]	64.2 [61]	20.0 [3]	45.1 [169]
Total (* No. of cases in [])	100.0 [265]	100.0 [95]	100.0 [15]	100.0 [375]

As for the justification type that each claimant category chose to use, policy-related actors such as state actors, political parties and supranational actors tended to emphasise interest-based and utilitarian justifications while group-specific organisations, civil society organisations and advocacy groups mostly use rights-based justifications.

Table 10: Justification of the Claims by Type of Claimants

Claimants Category	Justifications Type (%)			Total
	Interest-based/utilitarian justifications	Rights-based justifications	Identity-based justifications	
State actors	77.1 [165]	19.2 [41]	3.7 [8]	100.0 [214]
Political parties	84.4 [27]	12.5 [4]	3.1 [1]	100.0 [32]
Professional organisations and groups	71.4 [10]	28.6 [4]	0.0 [0]	100.0 [14]
Labour organisations and groups	60.0 [3]	20.0 [1]	20.0 [1]	100.0 [5]
Group-specific organisations and groups	26.1 [6]	73.9 [17]	0.0 [0]	100.0 [23]
Civil society and human rights organisations	16.7 [1]	83.3 [5]	0.0 [0]	100.0 [6]
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	20.0 [3]	53.3 [8]	26.7 [4]	100.0 [15]
Other actors	41.2 [7]	52.9 [9]	5.9 [1]	100.0 [17]
Supranational actors (EU and UN)	87.8 [43]	12.2 [6]	0.0 [0]	100.0 [49]
Total (* No. of cases in [])	70.7 [265]	25.3 [95]	4.0 [15]	100.0 [375]

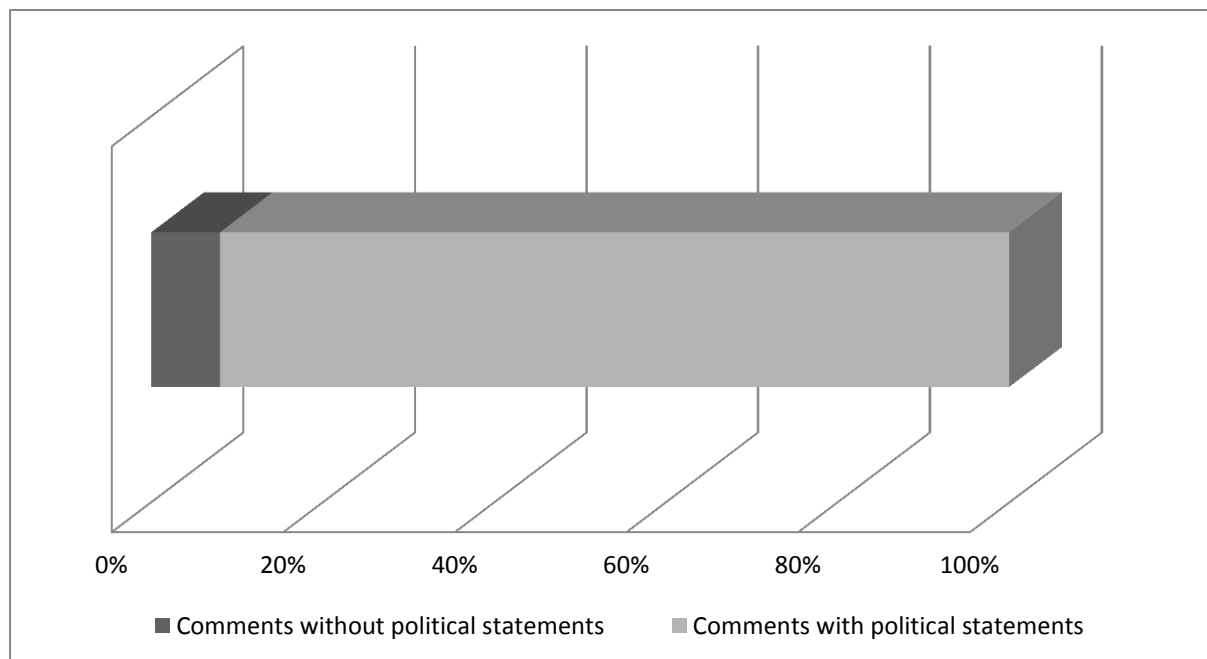
Case Study: Confronting media claims-making with citizens' responses

General overview in Greece:

General relation claims-comments

In this second part of the report, we present the analysis of comments made in response to posted articles on the Facebook (FB) pages of the same three newspapers during September 2015. In our analysis we used a total of 300 comments: 129 from “Proto Thema”, 107 from “Kathimerini” and 64 from “Ta Nea”²⁶. Overall, as seen in Figure 6, the comments of Greek Facebook users in the vast majority of cases took the form of political claims, with 92% of comments implicitly or explicitly mentioning refugees.

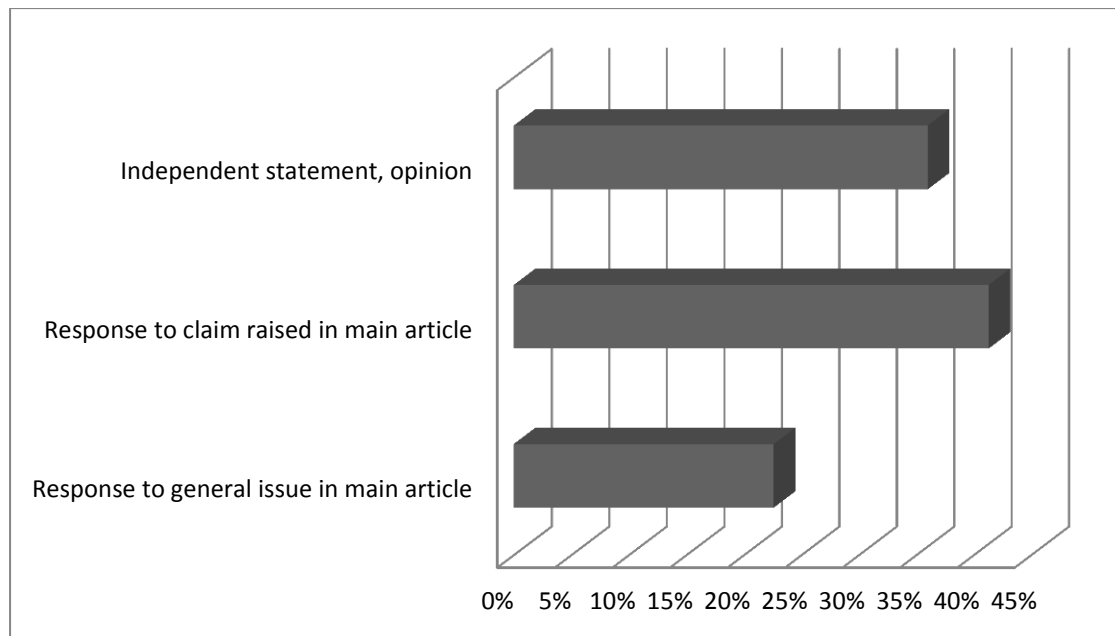
Figure 6: Frequency/relation of comments with political statements to comments without political statements



As for the type of comments, illustrated in Figure 7, (N=276), almost 40% of comments were a reply against or in support of the claim that was raised in the main article, 36% were an independent statement/ political opinion by the author, and 20% were a response to the general issue of the main article.

²⁶ There are fewer Facebook comments in “Ta Nea” because September of 2015 was an election month for Greece. The refugee crisis was not among the most-discussed issues during the pre-election period in this newspaper Facebook page. Thus, we increased the number of comments that we analysed from the two other newspapers.

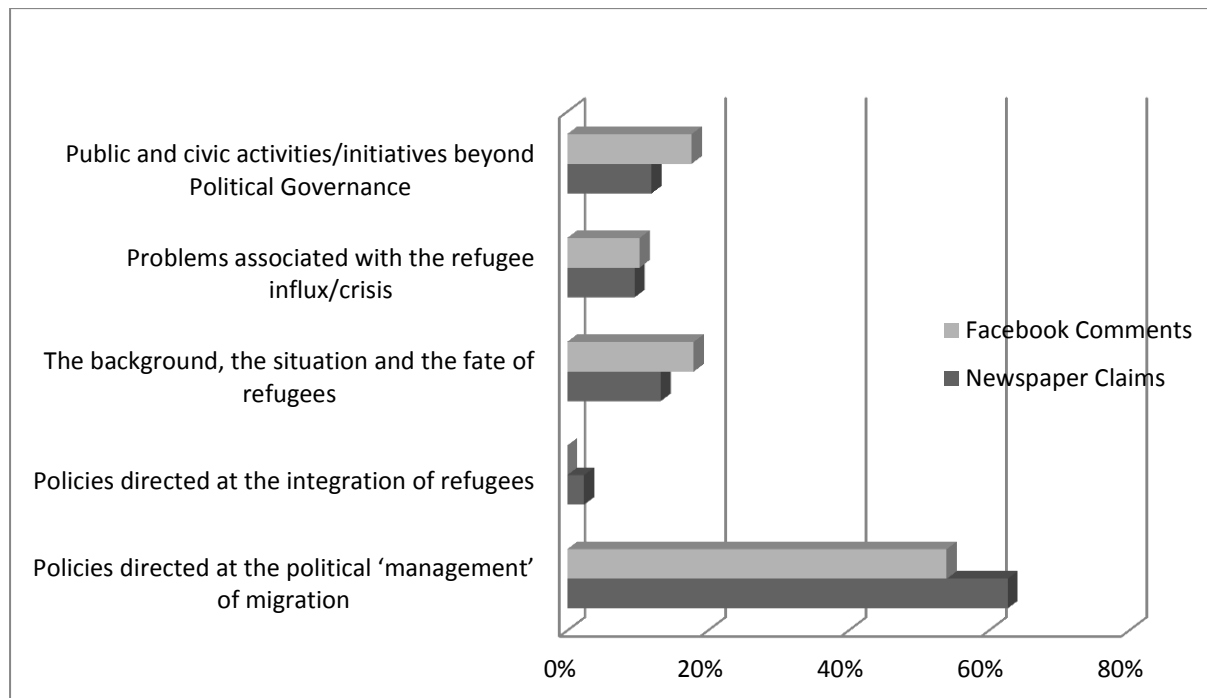
Figure 7: Type of Comments



Specific relationship between comments and claims

Trying to investigate the specific relationship between top-down and bottom-up media discourse, we can compare a series of variables such as the issue, the addressee and the position towards the object of solidarity as raised by commenters (n=300) and claimants in the newspapers (n=83). Starting with the issues, the prevalent theme concerned the policies directed at the political 'management' of migration in both outlets, though with a higher frequency in newspapers (62.7% and 54% in newspapers and FB comments, respectively). It seems that political claimants and commenters shared the same issues of concern, which reconfirms the power of political claimants as primary definers of the debate, whereas the commenters as secondary definers did not come up with alternative agendas. The background, the situation and the fate of refugees, as well as the public and civic activities/initiatives beyond political governance followed in both media but this time with a higher frequency in the comments on FB, revealing that FB claims tended to focus less on policies and more on humanitarian and contextual aspects. Some interesting differences appeared when the scope of issues was examined. In more detail, whereas in both media types, the issues discussed were national, FB claims recorded a higher percentage in this category (63% compared to 43% in newspapers) highlighting sub-national issues as being the second most important ones instead of transnational issues, which were portrayed more frequently in the press.

Figure 8: Issues raised by newspaper claims and Facebook comments during September 2015



N Facebook=300, N newspapers =83

With respect to the addressee of the claims, our findings suggest that Facebook users avoided mentioning an addressee in their claims, with a percentage as low as 7% of FB comments' claims mentioning an addressee. This figure is even lower for the claims found in the newspaper articles (4%). Thus, neither claims nor comments were excessively 'targeted', albeit claims were marginally more so. In both cases, the addressees mentioned were state actors in the majority. Moving to the position of claims towards refugees, there were quite significant differences, as seen in Table 11. Newspaper claims almost equally adopted positive or negative positions towards refugees (with 1% precedence of the positive ones) and much less often adopted a neutral or ambivalent position (14.5%). FB claims on the other hand, were neutral or ambivalent in the majority, with the pro-object positioning of the claim following and the anti-object positioning being in third place, with less than 25%. Thus, the commenting section has not been reconfirmed, as is often assumed, to be the space for xenophobic or hate expression. It might also be the case that the target of bottom-up contestation is mainly the government, not the refugees.

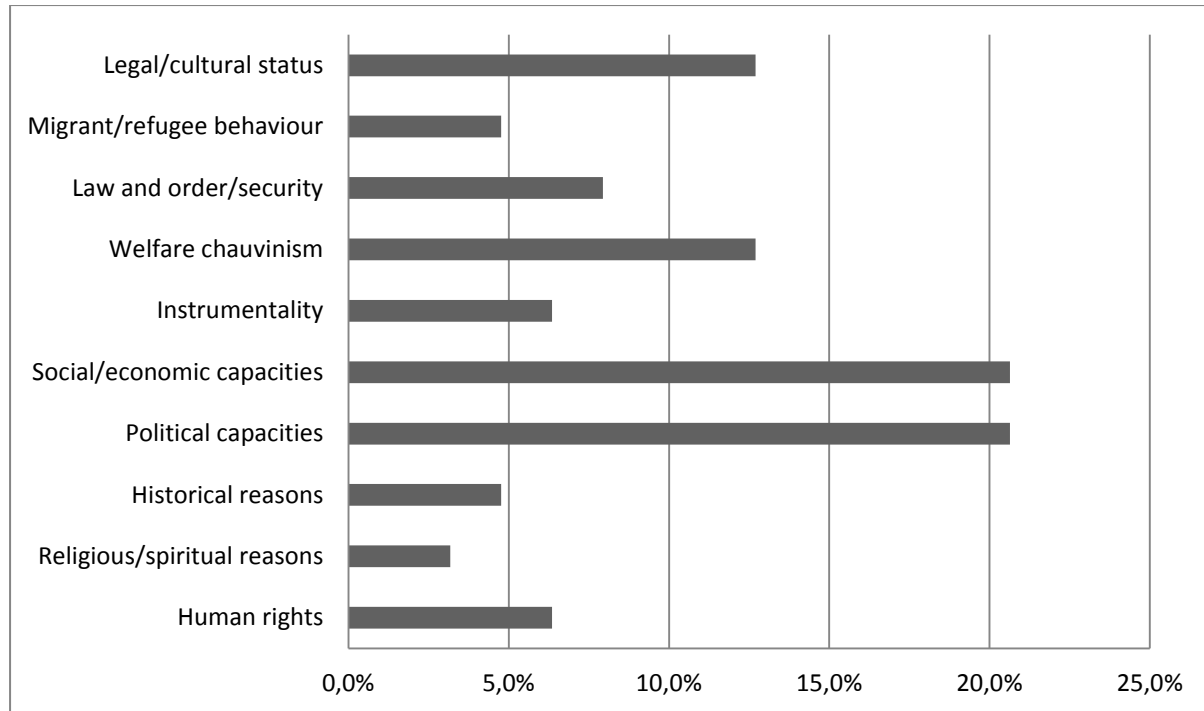
Table 11: Position towards refugees in Facebook comments and Newspaper Claims (%)

Position	Newspaper Claims	Facebook Comments
anti-object	42.2 [35]	24.6 [68]
neutral/ambivalent	14.5 [12]	42.0 [116]
pro-object	43.4 [36]	33.3 [92]
Total	100.0 [83]	100.0 [276]
Means (* No. of Cases in [])	0.1	0.09

Solidarity justifications

Finally, regarding the justifications used, the findings underline that only a minority of Facebook commenters (21%) used it to support their claim. This indication, together with a qualitative evaluation of the comments, reveals that commenters used this virtual space to criticise the government and the management of the refugee crisis and not to discuss this issue per se. When a justification is used, it is most often grounded either in political capacities or in social/economic capacities, as seen in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Types of justifications by Facebook Commenters



N=63

Discussion

Our integrated study of the different public spheres (Print, Online media, Comments) highlights the main traits of the mediated political debate in Greece for the period under study. It underscores the refugee crisis as an issue in which state actors were the protagonists of the debate, acting both as the predominant claimants and addressees, and who most often discussed policies on the political management of the refugee inflow in their claims.

Moreover, the refugee crisis was discussed both as a national and as a transnational issue. While the actors portrayed in the press predominantly discussed the refugee crisis as a transnational issue – which may connect to their appeal to the European community for solidarity and cooperation evidenced by the claims made by the Prime Minister himself on Twitter particularly during the second peak of the period

under study (Boukala and Dimitrakopoulou, 2017:9-12)- the claims raised in the online media and their commentaries over-emphasised the national scope, thus contributing to a “*discursive resurgence of national imaginaries*” (Boukala and Dimitrakopoulou, 2017: 8). In addition, while the transnational dimension follows in the footsteps of the top-down claims of the electronic media, subnational narratives were met more frequently in bottom-up claims. This could be explained by the fact that Greek citizens narrowed down the discussion to the level of their everyday local experience, possibly occupied with refugee hosting and transit issues. With respect to the main actors, both claimants and addressees were of Greek nationality in the online media and their commentaries. In the press media, the same held true only for the claimants, with supranational addressees outweighing the national ones.

Furthermore, with respect to the position of the claim toward refugees, the balance between pro- and anti-refugee claims in the articles posted in FB can be interpreted in the light of the contrasting frames adopted to make sense of the refugee flow (Triandafyllidou, 2017a, see introduction). Hence, while the mediated political debate was divided between positive and negative portrayals of refugees and related recommendations, public opinion was not solidified at that time as reflected in the prevalence of the neutral/ambivalent positioning of FB comments. Furthermore, the overall picture suggests that positive portrayals of refugees prevailed in the Greek public sphere, since the pro-refugee claims and commentaries outweighed the anti-refugee ones in all three media studied.

Conclusion

Greece, as the frontline country of refugee arrivals, has been at the epicentre of the refugee crisis. A series of events during August 2015 and April 2016 triggered political debate and induced a discursive shift from seeking to manage the refugee inflow at the beginning of this period to its “construction” as an effective emergency at its end (Triandafyllidou, 2017b: p. 9-10).

Concerning the main traits of the debate, state-related actors have been the most salient actors in the three different spheres studied – print media, online media and FB users’ commentaries. As for their nationality, most of them were Greeks, followed by German claimants. Refugees themselves rarely made claims in the Greek public sphere, with only 2.5% of claims being made by actors from Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq. Interestingly, the majority of claims in the three media did not have an addressee, i.e. they did not explicitly name the actor held responsible with respect to the claim, or who should have acted respectively, but when they did, they mainly addressed state actors, who had national scope in online media transnational scope in the press. Furthermore, an evaluation of the position of claims towards refugees as objects documented rather ambivalent or divided public discourse, with the pro-refugee claims taking a minor precedence. Moreover, concerning the forms of claims, more than half of them were expressed as verbal statements, followed by political decisions. Moving to the issue of the claims, the vast majority of claims concerned “policies directed at the political ‘management’ of migration”, followed by “the background, the situation and the fate of refugees” and “problems associated with the refugee influx”. When a justification frame was used, it was mostly based on rationalisation.

As regards the evolution of the debate, two peak periods were identified, the first in September 2015 and the second one, with the highest density in claim production, in March 2016. National actors prevailed throughout the whole period. With respect to the addressees of claims, supranational actors were the most salient addressees during the first peak of September 2015, which is understandable given the government's attempt to "Europeanise" and "internationalise" the discourse during this period of huge inflow (Kaitatzi-Whitlock and Kenterelidou, 2017: 314-5), while national addressees began to gain ground in the public sphere in December 2016, when the threat over expulsion from Schengen and the subsequent closure of the Balkan route triggered political controversies at the national level (Boukala and Dimitrakopoulou, 2017). Regarding the evolution of positive and negative stances towards refugees, the former overthrew the latter in September 2015, a month aptly characterised as a period of "ecstatic humanitarianism" (Georgiou and Zaborowski, 2017:8), and in February 2016, when humanitarian and solidarity discourses against the closure of the Balkan route prevailed.

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Introduction

The 'European refugee crisis' has particularly affected Italy, as the key entry point to the EU, positioned at the centre of several migration routes in the Mediterranean Sea. According to UNHCR estimates, the total number of sea arrivals registered a record in 2016, when 181,000 migrants reached the Italian coasts; an 18% increase compared with 2015 (154,000). Several thousand people perished at sea. In 2016 alone, the number of people who lost their lives was 5,022. Since 2013, however, many migrants were rescued by the operations 'Mare Nostrum'²⁷ or 'Frontex's Triton'. Finally, 2016 data also highlight Italy's record for the number of landings in the Mediterranean: Half of more than 361,000 migrants arriving by sea into Europe landed on the Italian coast, with 174,000 arrivals occurring in Greece (48% of the landings). The increased inflow of refugees from Syria and other regions affected by war, and the inability of the EU institutions and its member states to establish a coordinated asylum policy and mechanisms of admission and integration, put solidarity under pressure, increasing press attention on the refugee situation with daily media coverage. As stressed by some scholars (Colombo, 2017: 1), "...the expressions 'European migrant crisis' and 'European refugee crisis' have been widely used, especially after the drowning tragedies in the Mediterranean Sea that shocked public opinion in April 2015, producing diverse and contradictory political, media, and popular discourse". Indeed, the refugee crisis issue became very controversial in Italian politics and media, questioning many aspects, such as the Italian government's capacity in handling the refugee influx, the fairness of the quota system for distributing refugees among EU countries, EU responsibility in the drowning tragedies and, more generally, the existence of solidarity between EU member states. During the refugee crisis period, Matteo Renzi, leader of the centre-left Democratic Party, led the Italian government. The government adopted an open position towards refugees as regarding rescue boat missions and their ensuing welcome, but did not change a restrictive law on citizenship. Conversely, anti-immigration positions were taken by right-wing political parties, such as the Northern League and to a certain extent by the centre-right *Forza Italia* and the anti-establishment Five Star Movement, as well.

The goal of this report is to give a picture of how solidarity was contested in Italy in relation to refugees during the crisis period, tracking claims pertaining to (transnational) solidarity over the refugee crisis between 1st August, 2015 and 30th April, 2016.

The overarching structure is two-fold and oriented toward the period for which we have collected data. On the one hand, we are able to provide detailed information on (most relevant) attributes of claims over solidarity across the timespan from August 2015 to April 2016. On the other hand, the report will have a detailed look at September 2015 as a particular period during which the 'refugee crisis' can be understood

²⁷ The initiative was unilaterally launched and financed by the Italian government in October 2013 and ended in December 2014 to rescue migrants in the Mediterranean.

not only through the claims of powerful actors that can more likely reach the public domain, but also through Facebook comments of ordinary citizens on these same claims. The structure of the report, therefore, enables both a broader perspective of solidarity in the public domain over time as covered by the media, as well as a zooming in on the bottom-up dynamics of citizens' views. The underlying idea is that discursive opportunities and constraints, as shaped by the interventions of both policy makers and civil society actors in the public space, can have an impact on solidarity actions towards refugees, similar to what has been shown in previous literature on claims-making in the field of migration and ethnic relations politics (Giugni and Passy, 2006; Koopmans et al., 2005; Koopmans and Statham, 1999). Studies on framing processes in the field of social movement have shown that not only is the institutional dimension of political context relevant, but public discourse matters, too (see Cinalli and Giugni, 2011; Benford and Snow, 2000; Snow, 2004).

Claims have been coded by random sampling 701 claims selected from three different newspapers: *Il Corriere della Sera*, *La Repubblica* and *Il Giornale*. The first two are the most relevant newspapers in Italy: the first (*Corriere della Sera*) traditionally represents the moderate Italian bourgeoisie, while the second (*La Repubblica*) has a progressive, centre-left orientation. Finally, *Il Giornale* is a conservative newspaper (owned by Silvio Berlusconi). As for the 300 Facebook comments, we have selected the same newspapers, with the exception of *Il Giornale*, that has been replaced by *Libero*, a right-wing newspaper with a tabloid style.²⁸ The choice of newspapers has ensued from the need to ensure as representative and unbiased a sample as possible. Therefore, we included both quality newspapers and more tabloid-orientated newspapers. Furthermore, we considered newspapers from different political orientations as well as more politically-neutral ones. The articles were harvested from numerous newspaper sections using Factiva archive and the following keywords: *rifugiati* (refugees) or *profughi* (refugees) or *richiedenti asilo* (asylum seekers). The total number of articles is 1896 for *Corriere della Sera*, 1124 for *La Repubblica* and 1103 for *Il Giornale*. Then, we randomly selected 351 articles from the three newspapers, before settling on 241 articles for coding. Among the latter, as previously mentioned, we coded 701 claims (235 for *Corriere della Sera* and *La Repubblica* and 231 for *Il Giornale*).

Looking at the distribution of claims over the time span (see Table 1), we can notice that the peak was in September 2015 (23.7% of claims), thus confirming that selecting this month as a specific case study for the analysis of the European refugee crisis is a reasonable choice from an empirical standpoint. After September 2015, the share of claims decreased until the beginning of 2016, when it increased again, reaching a second peak in April 2016 (16.7%). This is consistent with the new record of sea arrivals registered in 2016, as aforementioned.

²⁸ In Italy there are no real tabloid newspapers as in UK, but *Libero* uses a sensational language emphasizing crime stories and to some extent gossip columns, according to a tabloid-style. Nevertheless, for the claims-making analysis we selected *Il Giornale* instead of *Libero* because the latter was not in the Factiva archive. Anyway, both journals have a very similar conservative political connotation.

Table 1: Distribution of claims over the time span (August 2015-April 2016)

	Frequencies	%
Aug-15	72	10.3
Sep-15	166	23.7
Oct-15	32	4.6
Nov-15	20	2.9
Dec-15	15	2.1
Jan-16	83	11.8
Feb-16	95	13.6
Mar-16	101	14.4
Apr-16	117	16.7
Total	701	100

Transnational solidarity in the public sphere: Structure of claims-making in Italy

Visibility and inclusiveness

Actors: who are the proponents and opponents of solidarity with refugees?

We have focused on a wide range of actors and their interventions over refugee crisis, including policy makers, governmental and other state actors, as well as the organised publics at large. This latter category not only refers to the usual protest event analysis actors (social movement organisations, NGOs, etc.), but also to an additional number of various stakeholders (employers' and employees' associations, professional associations, etc.) that are capable of accessing the public space through the insertion of their claims in the media.

Salience of actors

The most relevant actors of solidarity claims across the timespan from August 2015 to April 2016 were state actors (in particular governments) and political actors. Indeed, as shown in Table 2, state actors were by far the most frequent actors of claims in the three selected newspapers, followed by advocacy and policy-oriented groups in articles from *La Repubblica*, and political parties in articles from *Il Corriere della Sera* and *Il Giornale*. This means that government and state actors seem to have the biggest framing power and political party contestation was low during this period. Among political parties, the most frequent ones were Northern League (26 times) and Forza Italia (9 times), the right-wing populist party led by Matteo Salvini and the centre-right party led by Silvio Berlusconi, respectively. Thus, among political parties, the most frequent actors were Italian parties with negative attitudes towards refugees. Interestingly, among the three most frequent political parties, there was also Angela Merkel's CDU, signalling a certain relevance of non-Italian actors in the Italian public discourse. Furthermore, foreign governments prevailed

over the Italian government and its executive actors (39%), with Germany as the most frequent nationality (13.1%) after Italy.

Table 2: Main actors by newspapers, % (frequencies in brackets)

	Repubblica	Corriere	Giornale	Total
State actors	54.9 (129)	41.7 (98)	67.1 (155)	54.5 (382)
Political parties	4.7 (11)	15.3 (36)	10.0 (23)	10.0 (70)
Professional organisations and groups	0.4 (1)	8.9 (21)	0.0 (0)	3.1 (22)
Group-specific organisations and groups	7.2 (17)	7.2 (17)	7.8 (18)	7.4 (52)
Civil society and human rights organisations	6.8 (16)	4.3 (10)	0.9 (2)	4.0 (28)
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	10.2 (24)	8.1 (19)	2.2 (5)	6.9 (48)
Other actors	6.4 (15)	8.9 (21)	2.6 (6)	6.0 (42)
Supranational actors	9.4 (22)	5.1 (12)	9.5 (22)	8.0 (56)
Unknown/unspecified	0.0 (0)	0.4 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.1 (1)
Total	100 (235)	100 (235)	100 (231)	100 (701)

This figure is confirmed when we look at the nationality of the main actors (see Table 3): 46% are Italian, but the majority is not. Among the latter, the most salient (again) are German actors (10.7%), followed by Austrian (6%) and Greek (4.5%) actors. This is not surprising if we consider the relevance of Germany in the EU and the active and prominent role of Merkel's government during the refugee crisis, which opened its borders to more than one million refugees from Syria. In the time span considered, furthermore, Austrian border policies became relevant in the public discourse on Italian media because of the tensions between Italian and Austrian governments when the latter decided to close its border with Italy to stop the refugee influx. Moreover, the refugee influx in Greece during this period was significant, too.

As for the scope of actors (Table 4), there is a clear distinction between state actors, whose scope was mostly national, and group-specific organisations and groups, civil society and human rights organisations, advocacy and policy-oriented groups, which are characterised by both trans-supra-international scopes and sub-national scopes. In other words, civil society groups were either focused at the local level, or had scopes beyond national borders.

Table 3: Nationality of main actors

Nationality	Frequencies	%
Italy	275	46.0
Germany	64	10.7
Austria	36	6.0
Greece	27	4.5
Other	26	4.4
Hungary	21	3.5
France	19	3.2
Belgium	13	2.2
Macedonia	11	1.8
Slovenia	10	1.7
Croatia	10	1.7
Turkey	10	1.7
Poland	8	1.3
United Kingdom	8	1.3
Czech Republic	8	1.3
Denmark	6	1.0
Switzerland	5	0.8
Netherlands	5	0.8
Bulgaria	4	0.7
Luxembourg	4	0.7
Slovakia	4	0.7
Sweden	4	0.7
Syria	4	0.7
Serbia	3	0.5
US	3	0.5
Iraq	3	0.5
Cyprus	1	0.2
Estonia	1	0.2
Ireland	1	0.2
Russia	1	0.2
Afghanistan	1	0.2
Libya	1	0.2
Tunisia	1	0.2
Total	598	100

Table 4: Scope of main actors, % (frequencies in brackets)

	Transnation- tion- al/supranati onal	National	Sub-national	Unknown	Total
State actors	3.1 (12)	75.1 (287)	21.7 (83)	0 (0)	100 (382)
Political parties	4.3 (3)	47.1 (33)	48.6 (34)	0.0 (0)	100 (70)
Professional organisations	18.2 (4)	54.6 (12)	27.3 (6)	0.0 (0)	100 (22)
Group-specific organisations and groups	40.8 (20)	12.2 (6)	44.9 (22)	2.0 (1)	100.0 (52)
Civil society and human rights organizations	57.1 (16)	7.1 (2)	35.7 (10)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (28)
Advocacy and policy-oriented organizations	39.6 (19)	16.7 (8)	43.8 (21)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (48)
Other actors	19.1 (8)	19.1 (8)	61.9 (26)	0.0 (0)	100 (42)
Supranational actors	98.2 (55)	1.8 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	100 (56)
Unknown/unspecified	0 (0)	0 (0)	100 (1)	0 (0)	100 (1)
Total	19.6 (137)	51.2 (357)	29.1 (203)	0.1 (1)	701 (100)

Addressees

Regarding the addressees of claims (Table 5), half of them were state actors, 18% were group-specific organisations and groups (especially refugees and migrants), and around 16% were supranational actors. There were no significant differences between newspapers, with a greater presence of state actors and supranational actors in claims from *Corriere della Sera* and a greater presence of groups in claims from *La Repubblica*. Nevertheless, the most important feature to stress was that 75.5% of claims had no addressees at all. Hence, most of claimants did not explicitly call on other actors to act.

The addressed actors were mainly Italians, followed by German and Greek addressees, confirming the pattern previously noticed for main actors. Most addressees were located at the national level, except for groups (composed mainly of migrants and refugees) which were mainly located at subnational and transnational levels. Finally, state actors usually addressed other state actors, whereas political parties did not address other political parties, but called on state actors (especially governments) to act. The same oc-

curred as for supranational actors. A certain number of state actors also called supranational actors and groups-specific organisations and groups to act.

Table 5: Addressees by newspapers, % (frequencies in brackets)

	Repubblica	Corriere	Giornale	Total
State actors	42.9 (21)	50.0 (44)	60.0 (21)	50.0 (86)
Political parties	0.0 (0)	3.4 (3)	0.0 (0)	1.7 (3)
Professional organisations	0.0 (0)	1.1 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.6 (1)
Group-specific organisations and groups	34.7 (17)	8.0 (7)	20.0 (7)	18.0 (31)
Civil society and human rights organisations	0.0 (0)	3.4 (3)	0.0 (0)	1.7 (3)
Advocacy and policy-oriented organisations	4.1 (2)	4.6 (4)	0.0 (0)	3.5 (6)
Other actors	4.1 (2)	11.4 (10)	2.9 (1)	7.6 (13)
Supranational actors	14.3 (7)	15.9 (14)	17.1 (6)	15.7 (27)
Unknown/unspecified	0.0 (0)	2.3 (2)	0.0 (0)	1.2 (2)
Total	100 (49)	100 (88)	100 (35)	100 (172)

Positioning of actors

The positioning of claims is a crucial aspect when trying to detect positive or negative attitudes towards refugees. In this regard, we created an indicator of the position of claims based on a simple scoring system. All claims whose realisation implied deterioration of the rights or position of refugees received code -1. All claims whose realisation implied an improvement to the rights and position of refugees (minor or major) received code +1. Neutral or ambivalent claims, not necessarily related to any deterioration or improvement to refugees' position or rights and did not express a clear attitude with regard to refugees, received code 0. By averaging the scores thus attributed across all claims by main actors, we obtained raw data that was nonetheless a helpful indicator of the discursive context in this field (Table 6).

According to the overall measure of standard deviation (0.032), attitudes were not so polarised, and on average, positive attitudes slightly prevailed. Looking at our eight actors, three groups emerge. First, we have actors overall showing a relatively open and positive attitude (civil society and human rights organisations, advocacy and policy-oriented groups, group-specific organisations and groups, professional organisations and groups). Second, there were claimants (supranational actors and other actors) that were more closed, but still on the positive side.

Table 6: Average position of claims

	Mean	Standard deviation
State actors	-0.12	0.040
Political parties	-0.39	0.096
Professional organisations and groups	0.55	0.143
Group-specific organisations and groups	0.65	0.095
Civil society and human rights organisations	0.89	0.060
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	0.75	0.092
Other actors	0.40	0.137
Supranational actors	0.38	0.070
Unknown/unspecified	-1.00	.
Total	.10	0.032

Third, state actors and especially political parties had closed and negative attitudes towards refugees. Thus, refugees faced very different discursive contexts depending on the type of claimants, with a clear demarcation between hostile state and political actors on the one side, and favourable civil society actors on the other. As previously seen, most of the claimants in Italy during the refugee crisis were state actors and political parties, entailing that public discourse regarding refugees in Italy was shaped mostly by hostile actors, a case in point which might have influenced the refugees' capability for social, political and cultural integrations. In addition, positions were more polarised among certain actors than among others, as indicated by the standard deviation. Specifically, claims-making in this field seems to be the most polarised among professional organisations and groups, and least so among state actors, where a larger consensus seemed to emerge with a negative stance towards refugees.

Issues: Which topics are raised by solidarity contestants in the media?

Besides who intervenes in the public domain on the refugee crisis topic, which claimants call for action and claimants' positions towards refugees, another crucial aspect lies in the issues that are addressed, as well as looking at what is conveyed by such intervention.

Mapping issue salience

First of all, it is important to map issue salience, looking at frequencies of the main issues raised by solidarity contestants in the media we selected (Table 7). We can make distinctions among five main issue fields in this regard: 1) migration management policies (e.g. border policies, asylum policies, accommodation of refugees, distribution policies, etc.); 2) integration policies (e.g. labour and employment policies, rights, civil liberties, anti-discrimination policies, etc.); 3) background, situation and fate of refugees (e.g. journey of refugees, human trafficking, inhumane conditions, etc.); 4) problems associated with the refugee influx (e.g. problems of internal security, economic consequences of refugee crisis, religious (in)compatibilities, etc.); 5) civic activities/initiatives beyond political governance (e.g. volunteering during

the crisis, meeting basic needs, political activism/demonstrations against refugees, political participation on behalf or by refugees, etc.).

Table 7: Main issue of the claim

	Frequencies	%
migration management policies	459	65.5
background, situation and fate of refugees	108	15.4
civic activities/initiatives beyond political governance	66	9.4
problems associated to the refugee influx	50	7.1
integration policies	18	2.6
Total	701	100

The relative weight of these five issue fields is unbalanced: The vast majority of claims (65.5%) dealt with migration management policies, followed by claims dealing with the background, situation and fate of refugees (15.4%). Fewer than 10% of claims were on civic activities beyond political governance, or on problems associated with the refugee influx. Finally, it is worth stressing that very few claimants dealt with integration policies. This signals how the public discourse in Italy was focused on short-term public policies handling the emergency of refugee influx (accommodation issues, border control, distribution of refugees within Italy or across EU countries), or on the emergency situations of refugees in the sea and human trafficking, rather than on long-term policies directed towards the integration of refugees. Public discourse in Italy was shaped by the emergency that was unfolding, rather than discourse on long-term programmes.

Who talks about what and where?

In order to know which actors were talking about the aforementioned issues and where, I have cross-tabulated the main actors with the main issues (see Table 8) and then the issues with their scope (see Table 9).

As for the first aspect, it is worth noticing that group-specific organisations and civil society and human rights organisations showed a different pattern compared to other actors. Indeed, such groups and organisations talked mostly about the background, situation and fate of refugees, whereas the majority of actors talked about migration management policies. The latter is true especially for supranational actors (migration management policies represented 89.3% of issues they talked about), state actors (78%), political parties (72.9%) and professional organisations (63.6%). Finally, advocacy and policy-oriented groups showed a certain specificity, with civic activities and initiatives as the second issue they dealt with (31.3%), immediately after migration management policies (33.3%).

Table 9: Issues talked about by main actors, % (frequencies in brackets)

Issue	Actor								Un- know n/uns peci- fied
	State actors	Par- ties	Profes- sional organisa- tions	Group- specific organisa- tions	Civil socie- ty/human rights organisa- tions	Advoca- cy/policy- oriented organisa- tions	Other actors	Supra- nation- al ac- tors	
migration man- agement	78.0 (298)	72.9 (51)	63.6 (14)	17.3 (9)	35.7 (10)	33.3 (16)	23.8 (10)	89.3 (50)	100.0 (1)
integration	2.9 (11)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	5.8 (3)	7.1 (2)	2.1 (1)	2.4 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
background, situation	9.4 (36)	2.9 (2)	9.1 (2)	53.8 (28)	46.4 (13)	14.6 (7)	35.7 (15)	8.9 (5)	0.0 (0)
problems asso- ciated with refugee influx	4.5 (17)	12.9 (9)	13.6 (3)	7.7 (4)	7.1 (2)	18.8 (9)	11.9 (5)	1.8 (1)	0.0 (0)
civic activi- ties/initiatives	5.2 (20)	11.4 (8)	13.6 (3)	15.4 (8)	3.6 (1)	31.3 (15)	26.2 (11)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
Total	100 (382)	100 (70)	100 (22)	100 (52)	100 (28)	100 (48)	100 (42)	100 (56)	100 (1)

Interestingly, the two most frequent issues (migration management policies and the background, situation and fate of refugees) were not only addressed through a national perspective, but also had a scope mostly beyond national borders (47.5% of migration management issues and 60.2% of issues related to the background, situation and fate of refugees). These data are consistent with the attention Italian media dedicated to supranational issues such as border control of the EU and the distribution of refugees within the EU, and to rescue boat missions anti-smugglers operations in the Mediterranean Sea, in addition to stories about the transnational journeys of refugees.

Table 9: Scope of issues, % (frequencies in brackets)

	Scope			Un- known/unspecifi ed	Total
	Trans/supra/inte rnational	National	Sub-national		
Issue					
Migration man- agement	47.5 (218)	31.8 (146)	20.7 (95)	0.0 (0)	100 (459)
Integration	0.0 (0)	44.4 (8)	55.6 (10)	0.0 (0)	100 (18)
background, situation	60.2 (65)	16.7 (18)	22.2 (24)	0.9 (1)	100 (108)
problems associ- ated to refugee influx	18.0 (9)	50.0 (25)	32.0 (16)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (50)
civic activi- ties/initiatives	6.1 (4)	18.2 (12)	74.2 (49)	1.5 (1)	100.0 (66)
Total	42.2 (296)	29.8 (209)	27.7 (194)	0.3 (2)	100.0 (701)

Solidarity contestations in the public sphere

Claims-making builds on protest event analysis as developed in the field of social movements and collective action (Koopmans and Rucht, 2002), but moves beyond its brief to include to include speech acts and political decisions. We have thus analysed all forms of public interventions in the field, including purely discursive forms (such as public statements, press releases, publications, and interviews), conventional forms of political action (such as litigation and petitioning), and protest forms (such as demonstrations and political violence). In so doing, we have acknowledged the plurality of modes of political communication that different actors use.

Forms of action

As was previously noted, actors may intervene in the public domain in different ways. We can therefore focus on variations of forms of actions across our three newspapers (Table 10).

A first finding is that verbal statements and political decision were the two most frequent actions regardless of which newspaper, with a clear predominance of verbal statements. Indeed, on average, 61.5% of claims were verbal statements, whereas 15.3% of claims were political decisions. Differences between newspapers depended especially on the use of repressive measures (which, by definition, together with political decisions, only state actors opted to use), showing that claims took this form of action in the two newspapers with an opposite political orientation (*La Repubblica* and *il Giornale*), whereas they were al-

most absent in the *Corriere della Sera*. Similarly, violent protest actions and demonstrative protest actions were much less frequent in the *Corriere della Sera*.

Table 10: Forms of actions by newspapers, % (frequencies in brackets)

	Repubblica	Corriere	Giornale	Total
Political decisions	13.2 (31)	14.0 (33)	18.6 (43)	15.3 (107)
Direct solidarity actions	3.4 (8)	6.8 (16)	0.9 (2)	3.7 (26)
Humanitarian aid mobilisation	0.0 (0)	5.1 (12)	0.4 (1)	1.9 (13)
Violent protest actions	3.8 (9)	1.7 (4)	5.2 (12)	3.6 (25)
Confrontational protests	0.4 (1)	1.3 (3)	2.2 (5)	1.3 (9)
Demonstrative protests	8.5 (20)	3.8 (9)	6.1 (14)	6.1 (43)
Conventional protests	0.0 (0)	3.4 (8)	1.7 (4)	1.7 (12)
Repressive measures	6.0 (14)	0.9 (2)	8.2 (19)	5.0 (35)
Verbal statements	64.7 (152)	63.0 (148)	56.7 (131)	61.5 (431)
Total	100 (235)	100 (235)	100 (231)	100 (701)

Conversely, it was noticeable that direct solidarity actions and humanitarian aid mobilisation clearly prevailed in this newspaper. In general, however, little attention was dedicated to solidarity actions related to the refugee crisis. Protest was another interesting form of intervention in the public domain. Although we observed some variations across the newspapers, the degree of contentiousness was relatively limited, too. This is perhaps surprising, particularly if we consider how controversial migration-related issues were from a political standpoint. However, we have to consider that most actors were state actors (such as governments) and political parties, which tend to express contentiousness through verbal statements, rather than through protest. Indeed, most of the claims by state actors and political parties were verbal statements. Not surprisingly, the other two most frequent forms of action for state actors were political decisions and repressive measures. Violent protest actions were monopolised by group-specific organisations and groups, which were also used to engage in demonstrative protest actions, similar to advocacy and policy-oriented groups and other actors (such as people/citizens and single pro/anti-migrants activists). Advocacy and policy-oriented groups, people/citizens and single pro-migrants activists were also engaged in direct solidarity actions.

Blamed and credited actors

As for actors potentially credited for a certain behaviour in relation to the refugee crisis, the overwhelming majority of claimants (93.7%) did not mention any actor. This percentage decreased for blamed actors, but was still high (75.6%). Hence, most of the claimants did not explicitly mention other actors neither to credit them nor to blame them. Looking at the relationship between the main actors and the blamed actors (Table 11), the most important figure is that the most blamed actors were state actors (especially governments), who are used to being blamed especially by other state actors and political parties. The latter also criticised other political parties of different political orientations. Group-specific organisations and groups (especially migrants) and supranational actors (especially the EU) were the second and third most blamed actor.

Table 11: Main actors and blamed actors, % (frequencies in brackets)

	Main Actors								Total
	State actors	Political parties	Professional org.	Group-specific org.	Civil society/human rights org.	Advocacy/policy-oriented groups	Other actors	Supranational actors	
Actor blamed in the claim									
State actors	60.0 (42)	71.1 (27)	46.2 (6)	66.7 (6)	57.1 (4)	54.6 (6)	62.5 (10)	100.0 (7)	63.2 (108)
Political parties	5.7 (4)	21.1 (8)	23.1 (3)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	18.2 (2)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	9.9 (17)
Professional organisations	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	7.7 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.6 (1)
Group-specific organisations	17.1 (12)	5.3 (2)	7.7 (1)	11.1 (1)	0.0 (0)	9.1 (1)	12.5 (2)	0.0 (0)	11.1 (19)
Civil society and human rights	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	7.7 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	9.1 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	1.2 (2)

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Advoca- cy and policy- oriented	1.4 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	11.1 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	6.3 (1)	0.0 (0)	1.8 (3)
Other actors	4.3 (3)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	6.3 (1)	0.0 (0)	2.3 (4)
Suprana- tional actors	11.4 (8)	2.6 (1)	7.7 (1)	0.0 (0)	42.9 (3)	9.1 (1)	12.5 (2)	0.0 (0)	9.4 (16)
Un- known/u nspeci- fied	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	11.1 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.6 (1)
Total	100 (70)	100 (38)	100 (13)	100 (9)	100 (7)	100 (11)	100 (16)	100 (7)	100 (171)

Objects of solidarity: Refugees as objects of solidarity contestation

The object of a claim is the group whose interests, rights and/or identity are affected (positively or negatively) by the realisation of the claim. Ultimately, refugees were always the object in this field. However, the object can be categorised in different ways. The distribution of objects of claims (Table 12) shows, first, that refugees/asylum seekers/etc. were mostly mentioned as objects of claim through a general reference to refugees (72.3%), or they were implicitly acknowledged (20%), without differences across claimants. Finally, 4% of refugees were migrant-specific (e.g. ex-refugees, undocumented) and 1.4% were children. The other categories were below 1%. Furthermore, 90.7% of objects had no specific nationality, meaning that most claimants referred to refugees in general, without specifying their nationality. The most mentioned nationality, not unsurprisingly, is Syrian (56.9%). This gives us an indication of the saliency in the public domain of the refugee crisis in Syria that was caused by war and terrorism. It is noteworthy that state actors mostly mentioned Syrian refugees, suggesting that the Syrian crisis is something addressed especially by governments rather than by civil society actors, whose claims about refugees were made without their specifying nationality.²⁹

²⁹ By cross-tabulating objects of the claims with main actors, we detected no differences across actors: refugees as general category are at centre stage according to all main actors, followed by refugees as obviously acknowledged. The only specificity is that migrant-specific category is mostly observed among claims by state actors

Table 12: Objects of claims and their nationality

	Frequencies	%
Object of claim		
Refugees/asylum seekers/etc. (general)	507	72.3
Refugees (implicitly acknowledged)	140	20.0
Refugees/asylum seekers/etc. (migrant-specific, e.g. ex-refugees, undocumented)	28	4.0
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (children)	10	1.4
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (women)	4	0.6
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (men)	4	0.6
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (young)	4	0.6
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (families)	P 3	0.4
Other refugees/asylum seekers/etc.	1	0.1
Total	701	100
Nationality of object		
Syrian Arab Republic	37	56.9
Other	5	7.7
Eritrea	4	6.2
Afghanistan	4	6.2
Tunisia	4	6.2
Pakistan	3	4.6
Somalia	3	4.6
Iraq	2	3.1
Nigeria	1	1.5
Morocco	1	1.5
Ethiopia	1	1.5
Total	65	100

However, the object can be framed in different ways, positively or negatively (or in a neutral/ambivalent way). The distribution of objects of claims according to the position of claimants (Table 13) shows that positions vary according to the object category.

Indeed, 44.2% of refugees as a general category were framed in a positive way (and 28.8% in a negative way). Similarly, 80% of claims about children were positive and no one was negative. Conversely, the relative majority (38.6%) of claims about refugees as obvious or implicit objects was neutral or ambivalent, followed by negative claims (33.6%). Finally, migrant-specific claims were definitely negative (57.1%), with only 10.7% of positive claims towards migrants. All this suggests that claimants in the Italian public discourse followed a criterion of deservingness: Refugees, children in particular, were mostly framed in a positive way, whereas migrants were framed in a negative way, and were considered as less deserving of help.

Table 13: Objects of claims by position of claimants, % (frequencies in brackets)

	Anti-object	Neutral /ambivalent	Pro-object	Total
Refugees (implicitly acknowledged)	33.6 (47)	38.6 (54)	27.9 (39)	100 (140)
Refugees/asylum seekers/etc. (general reference)	28.8 (146)	27.0 (137)	44.2 (224)	100 (507)
Refugees/asylum seekers/etc. (families)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (3)	100 (3)
Refugees/asylum seekers/etc. (women)	0.0 (0)	25.0 (1)	75.0 (3)	100 (4)
Refugees/asylum seekers/etc. (men)	50.0 (2)	50.0 (2)	0.0 (0)	100 (4)
Refugees/asylum seekers/etc. (children)	0.0 (0)	20.0 (2)	80.0 (8)	100 (10)
Refugees/asylum seekers/etc. (young people)	0.0 (0)	25.0 (1)	75.0 (3)	100 (4)
Refugees/asylum seekers/etc. (migrant-specific, e.g. ex-refugees, undocumented)	57.1 (16)	32.1 (9)	10.7 (3)	100 (28)
Other refugees/asylum seekers/etc.	100.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	100 (1)
Total	30.2 (212)	29.4 (206)	40.4 (283)	100 (701)

Justifying solidarity in the media.

We are interested in the way solidarity with refugees is granted or rejected and the way this is justified, evaluated and interpreted by the actor. The solidarity frame is directly connected to the position of claims. We distinguish between three main dimensions on the basis of which solidarity is granted or rejected (Table 14): Interest-based/utilitarian justifications, rights-based justifications, identity-based justifications. The first finding to be stressed is that the absolute majority of claims had no frame: There was no underlying value according to which solidarity with refugees was granted or rejected. Among claims with a clear frame, interest-based/utilitarian justifications and rights-based justifications represented a similar share (19.8% and 21.1%, respectively). Only 5.6% of claims, conversely, were framed through identity-based justifications. There was a certain variation across newspapers. Indeed, identity-based justifications were observed especially in the two newspapers with opposite political connotation (*La Repubblica* and *Il Giornale*), whereas rights-based justifications characterised claims by the two mainstream newspapers (*La Repubblica* and *Corriere della Sera*). Moreover, interest-based/utilitarian justification were observed in a moderate mainstream newspaper (*Corriere della Sera*) followed by a right-wing newspaper (*Il Giornale*).

Table 14: Solidarity frames by newspapers, % (frequencies in brackets)

	Repubblica	Corriere	Giornale	Total
Interest-based/utilitarian justifications	10.6 (25)	28.1 (66)	20.8 (48)	19.8 (139)
Rights-based justifications	28.5 (67)	24.3 (57)	10.4 (24)	21.1 (148)
Identity-based justifications	8.1 (19)	2.6 (6)	6.1 (14)	5.6 (39)
No value	52.8 (124)	45.1 (106)	62.8 (145)	53.5 (375)
Total	100 (235)	100 (235)	100 (231)	100 (701)

Table 15: Main actors and solidarity frames, % (frequencies in brackets)

	Actors								
	State actors	Parties	Professional organisations	Group-specific organisations	Civil society and human rights organisations	Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	Other actors	Supra-national actors	Unknown/unspecified
Interest-based/utilitarian justifications	20.2 (77)	38.6 (27)	36.4 (8)	3.9 (2)	3.6 (1)	6.3 (3)	11.9 (5)	28.6 (16)	0 (0)
Rights-based justifications	12.8 (49)	14.3 (10)	36.4 (8)	34.6 (18)	57.1 (16)	45.8 (22)	38.1 (16)	16.1 (9)	0.0 (0)
Identity-based justifications	4.7 (18)	10.0 (7)	4.6 (1)	5.8 (3)	3.6 (1)	12.5 (6)	2.4 (1)	3.6 (2)	0.0 (0)
No value	62.3 (238)	37.1 (26)	22.7 (5)	55.8 (29)	35.7 (10)	35.4 (17)	47.6 (20)	51.8 (29)	100 (1)
Total	100 (382)	100 (70)	100 (22)	100 (52)	100 (28)	100 (48)	100 (42)	100 (56)	100 (1)

Looking at the relationship between actors and solidarity frames (Table 15), it is remarkable that among civil society organisations, advocacy and policy oriented organisations, political parties and professional organisations, the majority of claims was framed according to an underlying value, contrary to the claims by the rest of the actors. In particular, 57.1% of claims by civil society and human rights organisations and 45.8% of claims by advocacy groups showed rights-based justifications, whereas 38.6% of claims by political parties were characterised by utilitarian justifications. Conversely, among professional organisations there was the same share (36.4%) of utilitarian and rights-based justifications. As for the most frequent actors (i.e. state actors), after the “no value” category, the most frequent values were interest-based justifications (20.2%), followed by rights-based justifications (12.8%).

Finally, there was a clear distinction between solidarity frames in terms of position towards the object of solidarity (Table 16): 87.2% of rights-based justifications supported general or universal principles in favour of refugees, whereas 61.5% of identity-based justifications rejected solidarity with refugees. Interests-based/utilitarian justifications showed a less polarised situation, with a prevalence of anti-object positions (41%) over pro-object positions (25.2%).

Table 16: Solidarity frames by position towards the object of solidarity, % (frequencies in brackets)

	Anti-object	Neutral /ambivalent	Pro-object	Total
Interest-based/utilitarian justifications	41.0 (57)	33.8 (47)	25.2 (35)	100 (139)
Rights-based justifications	2.7 (4)	10.1 (15)	87.2 (129)	100 (148)
Identity-based justifications	61.5 (24)	15.4 (6)	23.1 (9)	100 (39)
No value	33.9 (127)	36.8 (138)	29.3 (110)	100 (375)
Total	30.2 (212)	29.4 (206)	40.4 (283)	100 (701)

Case Study: Confronting media claims-making with citizens' responses

General overview

As mentioned in the introduction, around 24% of claims in the printed sample were raised in September 2015, the highest peak over the time period we considered. Hence, it is important to have a detailed look at September 2015 as a particular period during which the ‘refugee crisis’ can be understood not only through the claims of powerful actors that can more easily reach the public domain, but also through the Facebook comments of ordinary citizens on these same claims.

General relation between claims and comments: do commenters refer to posted articles?

The first point to stress is that around 80% of the selected Facebook comments had refugees as their object. Therefore, they are relevant to our analysis. Among these comments about refugees (see Table 17), around 90% were responses either to claims raised in the main article (71.1%), or to the general issue of the main article (17.2%). This means that commenters were definitely referring to the posted articles' contents avoiding independent statements. In other words, Facebook commenters engaged with content and arguments provided by the news media. They were 'responsive' to political claimants and there was a strong interrelation between claims-making and users commenting on the contestation of the refugee crisis. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Facebook commenters showed confrontational attitudes towards claimants, with 82.4% of responses to claims showing a negative position towards the claim in the posted article. Negative stances prevailed for issues raised in the posted articles, but to a lesser extent (see Table 18).

Table 17: The type of comments on Facebook

	Frequencies	%
Response to general issue in main article	41	17.2
Response to claim raised in main article	170	71.1
Independent statement, opinion	28	11.7
Total	239	100

Table 18: The type of comment by position of commenter towards the issue/claim in the posted article, % (frequencies in brackets)

	Position of commenter towards the issue/claim in the posted article			Total
	nega- tive/opposing	neutral/ambivalent	affirma- tive/supporting	
The type of comment				
Response to general issue	56.1 (23)	39.0 (16)	4.9 (2)	100 (41)
Response to claim	82.4 (140)	7.7 (13)	10.0 (17)	100 (170)
Total	77.3 (163)	13.7 (29)	9.0 (19)	100 (211)

In general, we noticed that actors who raised claims regarding refugees usually attracted the attention of people with opposing views. As the results from Table 19 indicate, 87.5% of anti-refugees commenters took a negative position towards the claim raised in the posted articles, and 87.8% of pro-refugees commenters did the same. We can speculate that pro-refugee commenters took negative positions towards anti-refugee claimants, whereas anti-refugee commenters took negative positions towards pro-refugee claimants. This was exactly what we observed when looking at the articles addressed by commenters.

Hence, there was a clear polarisation of the public debate on Facebook when refugees were the topic of discussion.

Table 19: Position towards refugees by position of commenter towards the claim in the posted article, % (frequencies in brackets)

Position towards the object of soli- darity	Position of commenter towards the claim in the posted article			Total
	negative/opposing	neutral/ambivalent	affirmative/supporting	
anti-object	87.5 (35)	10.0 (4)	2.5 (1)	100 (40)
neutral/ambivalent	59.4 (19)	28.1 (9)	12.5 (4)	100 (32)
pro-object	87.8 (86)	0.0 (0)	12.2 (12)	100 (98)
Total	82.4 (140)	7.7 (13)	10.0 (17)	100 (170)

Another interesting figure is that attitudes of Facebook commenters were clustered according to the newspaper they were reading (Table 20): There was a strong distinction between commenters of *La Repubblica's* posts (79.6% had positive attitudes towards refugees) and commenters of *Libero's* posts (62.1% had negative attitudes towards refugees, while only 3% had positive attitudes). Commenters of *Corriere della Sera's* had more mixed views, but with a prevalence of positive attitudes (52.5%) over neutral and negative ones. This differentiation is perfectly consistent with the political orientation of the newspapers, signalling that Italy probably has to be characterised as a prototype of a segmented public sphere: Ideological preferences still significantly matter in the choice of news source.

Table 20: Position of commenter towards refugees by newspaper, % (frequencies in brackets)

	Repubblica	Corriere	Libero	Total
anti-object	8.6 (8)	21.3 (17)	62.1 (41)	27.6 (66)
neutral/ambivalent	11.8 (11)	26.3 (21)	34.85 (23)	23.0 (55)
pro-object	79.6 (74)	52.5 (42)	3.0 (2)	49.4 (118)
Total	100 (93)	100 (80)	100 (66)	100 (239)

Specific relationships between comments and claims

The aforementioned segmentation of the public sphere according to newspapers' political orientation was much less pronounced when claims in the printed press were taken into account. Indeed, in the same

period of September 2015, the position of claims towards refugees depended less on the political connotation of the newspapers, even if there were still differences (Table 21). In particular, among claims on *Il Giornale*, negative positions towards refugees (35.5%) definitely prevail over pro-refugees positions (23.4%), but the largest category was represented by neutral/ambivalent positions (41.1%). Similarly, among claims on *La Repubblica*, positive positions towards refugees (41.7%) clearly prevailed over anti-refugees positions (28.5%), but to a lesser extent compared to Facebook comments over the same time span. Conversely, positions of the claims reported by *Corriere della Sera* followed a very similar pattern to that of Facebook comments for the same newspaper. This means that Facebook audiences of newspapers with a clear political bent (right-wing or left-wing) share the newspaper's political orientation much more than the actors claiming in the printed press versions.

Table 21: Position of claimants towards refugees by newspaper in September 2015, % (frequencies in brackets)

	Repubblica	Corriere	Il Giornale	Total
Anti-object	28.5 (67)	26.8 (63)	35.5 (82)	30.2 (212)
Neutral /Ambivalent	29.8 (70)	17.5 (41)	41.1 (95)	29.4 (206)
Pro-object	41.7 (98)	55.7 (131)	23.4 (54)	40.4 (283)
Total	100 (235)	100 (235)	100 (231)	100 (701)

Commenters on Facebook, thus, expressed strong political views about the refugee crisis issue, and were characterised by their engagement in contentious debates, i.e. they did not post single and decontextualised statements but they engaged with content and arguments raised previously in the debate by political actors (with a certain number of commenters using rough, and sometimes insulting, language). This points to an agenda setting and framing power of news media, as the content of the news article remains the main reference point of the debate. Moreover, this contentiousness was well exemplified by the number and type of blamed actors by Facebook commenters compared to the amount and type of blamed actors in the printed sample's claims: In the printed sample, 75.6% of claims did not blame a specific actor, whereas among Facebook comments this percentage fell to 17.6%. Among the blamed actors, there was a clear distinction between the two samples (Table 22): State actors were definitely the most blamed in the claims' sample (63.2%), with all other actors showing low percentages; conversely, among Facebook comments professional organisations (23.9%, mostly media and journalists³⁰) slightly prevailed over state actors (22.3%) and political parties (20.3%), followed by "other actors" (15.2% - especially ordinary citizens, celebrities). A certain number of commenters also blamed advocacy groups and specific groups (especially migrants). This not only related to institutions such as the government and the EU, but

³⁰In particular, most commenters blame Petra Laszlo, the Hungarian reporter who kicked a migrant fleeing with his child near the border between Hungary and Serbia.

also political parties, civil society organisations, groups and fellow citizens were held responsible and criticised.. Significantly, the credited actors were few in number, as in the printed sample. Again, all this unveils how the public discourse about the refugee issue on Facebook was characterised by contentiousness and aggressive stances.

Table 22: Blamed actors by claimants and commenters in September 2015

	Claims' sample		Comments' sample	
	Frequencies	%	Frequencies	%
State actors	108	63.2	44	22.3
Political parties	17	9.9	40	20.3
Professional organisations and groups	1	0.6	47	23.9
Group-specific organisations and groups	19	11.1	17	8.6
Civil society and human rights organisations	2	1.2	0	0
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	3	1.8	18	9.1
Other actors	4	2.3	30	15.2
Supranational actors	16	9.4	1	0.5
Unknown/unspecified	1	0.6	0	0
Total	171	100	197	100

Similarly, Facebook commenters not only blamed more actors compared to claimants in the printed sample, but also explicitly addressed a higher number of actors, calling on them to act. In fact, in the printed sample, 75.5% of claims did not address a specific actor, whereas among Facebook comments this percentage decreased to 59.4%. Among those addressed, there was a clear distinction between the two samples once again (Table 23): State actors were definitely the most addressed among claimants (50%), with other actors showing lower percentages; conversely, among Facebook commenters professional organisations (24.7%) slightly prevailed over “other actors” (especially ordinary citizens, celebrities), followed by state actors (19.6%) and political parties (13.4%).

Table 23: Actors addressed by claimants and commenters in September 2015

	Claims' sample		Comments' sample	
	Frequencies	%	Frequencies	%
State actors	86	50	19	19.6
Political parties	3	1.7	13	13.4
Professional organisations and groups	1	0.6	24	24.7
Group-specific organisations and groups	31	18.0	12	12.4
Civil society and human rights organisations	3	1.7	0	0.0
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	6	3.5	5	5.2
Other actors	13	7.6	23	23.7
Supranational actors	27	15.7	0	0.0
Unknown/unspecified	2	1.2	1	1.0
Total	172	100	97	100

Solidarity frames

Previously, we mentioned the strong polarisation of the public debate on Facebook around the refugee crisis issue. This was confirmed when looking at solidarity frames, i.e. the ways in which the commenters defined, evaluated and interpreted solidarity. Indeed, the three most frequent solidarity frames were “human rights/humanitarian crisis” (e.g. ‘we need to protect human lives and provide humanitarian assistance’, ‘they have lived /have not lived through war, which is why we need to help/should not help’, etc.), “political capacities” (e.g. ‘our politicians/our political system is/are incompetent, corrupt, not able to handle the situation’; ‘our political system is good enough to handle this/our democracy is strong to handle this’, etc.) and “welfare chauvinism” (e.g. ‘we need to help our people first’, ‘what about our school kids, our elderly, our unemployed?’, ‘why do we only look after ourselves?’, etc.). The first and the third frame had opposite directions (see Table 24): All human rights based frames had a positive position towards refugees, whereas no comment framed under welfare chauvinism was pro-refugees. Compared to these frames, commenters who shared the “political capacities” frame had more mixed stances towards refugees, but with a prevalence of positive (60.9%) positions over negative ones (26.1%). Contrary to the expectation that social media commenting often displays a populist logic, i.e. with commenters supporting populist parties and expressing hostile attitudes towards foreigners, it is interesting to note that the absolute majority of commenters did not show an explicit frame and most of them took a positive position towards refugees (44.1%), followed by those with neutral/ambivalent positions (34.6%). Our findings pertaining to the Italian case do not support assumptions of social media being a space for only hate speech.

Table 24: Solidarity frames by position of commenter towards refugees, % (frequencies in brackets)

	anti-object	neutral/ambivalent	pro-object	Total
Human rights/humanitarian crisis	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (36)	100 (36)
Religious/spiritual reasons	14.3 (1)	0.0 (0)	85.7 (6)	100 (7)
Historical reasons	100.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	100 (1)
Political capacities	26.1 (6)	13.0 (3)	60.9 (14)	100 (23)
Social/economic capacities	0.0 (0)	100.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	100 (1)
Welfare chauvinism	90.0 (18)	10.0 (2)	0.0 (0)	100 (20)
Law and order/security	100.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	100 (1)
Migrant/refugee behaviour	70.0 (7)	10.0 (1)	20.0 (2)	100 (10)
Legal/cultural status	75.0 (3)	25.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	100 (4)
No frame	21.3 (29)	34.6 (47)	44.1 (60)	100 (136)
Total	27.6 (66)	23.0 (55)	49.4 (118)	100 (239)

Discussion: Top-down (claims-making) and bottom-up (comments) contestations of solidarity

So far, we have stressed how bottom-up contestation of solidarity is polarised around two main frames: Positive attitudes towards refugees led by humanitarian values and negative attitudes towards refugees fostered by welfare chauvinism. Moreover, positive frames prevail over negative frames. This latter point was less pronounced than top-down (claims-making) contestations of solidarity in September 2015 (see Table 25). Again, an overwhelming majority of rights-based justifications was pro-refugees (87.1%), but the greater share of negative positions (compared to the Facebook sample) was due not only to identity-based justifications, but also to the utilitarian justifications (mainly about efficiency/functionality and security), which were mostly anti-solidarity (41%). Significantly, public discourse in the printed media is less polarised and aggressive, but less favourable towards refugees compared to the Facebook debates.

Table 25: Solidarity frames by position of claimants towards refugees in September 2015, % (frequencies in brackets)

	Anti-object	Neutral /ambivalent	Pro-object	Total
Interest-based/utilitarian justifications	41.0 (57)	33.8 (47)	25.2 (35)	100 (139)
Rights-based justifications	2.7 (4)	10.1 (15)	87.2 (129)	100 (148)
Identity-based justifications	61.5 (24)	15.4 (6)	23.1 (9)	100 (39)
No value	33.9 (127)	36.8 (138)	29.3 (110)	100 (375)
Total	30.2 (212)	29.4 (206)	40.4 (283)	100 (701)

Another sharp difference is the level at which solidarity was contested (Table 26): Commenters on Facebook dealt with issues that had a national scope (49.4%), followed by sub-national issues (28.3%). Conversely, issues on the printed newspapers were mostly sub-national (44%), whereas national and transnational issues showed a similar share (29.5% and 26.5%). This means that national newspapers gave much space to local issues, such as the theme of welcoming refugees in cities and municipalities. This is consistent with the Italian model for the accommodation of refugees, centred on the SPRAR (Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees) system, with the direct involvement of local governments in the migration management.³¹ Around this topic, there have also been local conflicts and protests triggered by

³¹ The SPRAR system was created by Law No 189/2002 and consists of the network of local institutions that set up and implement reception projects for forced migrants. It is financed by the Ministry for the Interior through the National Fund for Asylum Policy and Services. Its aim is to support and protect asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants who fall under other forms of humanitarian protection. At local level, the local institutions, in cooperation with voluntary sector organisations, undertake 'integrated reception' interventions going beyond the simple distribution of food and housing, also providing complementary services such as legal and social guidance and support, and the development of individual programmes to promote socioeconomic inclusion and integration.

neo-fascist movements and right-wing populist parties like the Northern League. Transnational issues (such as EU quota system, rescuing operations at sea, the refugee influx caused by the war in Syria, the EU-Turkey deal to stop the Balkans' migratory route) gained a certain attention among claimants in the newspapers, whereas Facebook commenters were more focused on national (or sub-national) issues. Solidarity was contested within national borders when bottom-up contestations were taken into account. Finally, it is important to stress that there were no sharp differences between news debates and user commenting debates for the issues dealt with, except for a greater presence of issues related to the background, fate and situation of refugees among Facebook comments, and a greater presence of issues related to the migration management for the claims in the printed sample.

Table 26: Scope of issues addressed by claimants and commenters in September 2015, % (frequencies in brackets)

	Trans/supra/international	National	Sub-national	Unknown/unspecified	Total
Claims' sample	26.5 (44)	29.5 (49)	44.0 (0)	0.0 (73)	100 (166)
Comments' sample	20.6 (51)	49.4 (122)	28.3 (70)	1.6 (4)	100 (247)

Conclusion

To sum up the most important findings, first it is worth mentioning that the debate over refugee crisis was mainly carried forward and framed by state actors (in particular governments) and political parties. Among the latter, actors with anti-immigrant stances such as the right-wing populist Northern League prevailed. This is not surprising, because public discourse on immigration in Italy has been characterised by an increasing politicisation of immigration (Colombo, 2017), becoming a central issue of the political agenda similar to many other European countries (Krzyzanowski & Wodak, 2009). Indeed, the Northern League have put immigration at the centre of the Italian political agenda since its first electoral success at the beginning of the 1990s, thereby shaping the debate under populist claims (see Richardson & Colombo, 2013). However, the pre-dominance of the Northern League among political parties might also be explained by the Democratic Party (PD) being in government at that time, i.e. many PD actors were coded as government and not political parties.

In general, discursive framing about refugees varied in accordance with the type of claimants, with a clear demarcation between hostile state and political actors on the one side, and favourable civil society actors on the other. In addition, positions were more polarised among professional organisations and groups, and less so among state actors, where a larger consensus seemed to emerge towards a negative position against refugees.

Another interesting result is that the majority of actors were not Italians, signalling a certain internationalisation of the debate, with a clear distinction between state actors, whose scope is mostly national, and group-specific organisations and groups, civil society and human rights organisations and advocacy/policy-oriented groups, which are characterised by both international and sub-national scopes. Furthermore, most of claimants did not explicitly address other actors and did not explicitly blame or credit any actor.

Regarding the specific issues at the centre of the debate, the public discourse in Italy focused on short-term public policies when handling the emergency nature of the refugee influx (accommodation issues, border control, distribution of refugees within Italy or across EU countries), or on the emergency situations of refugees at sea and human trafficking, rather than on long-term policies directed towards the integration of refugees. The two most frequent issues (migration management policies and the background, situation and fate of refugees) were not only addressed through a national perspective, but also had a scope which mostly went beyond national borders. These data are consistent with the attention Italian media had dedicated to supranational issues such as border control of the EU, the distribution of refugees within the EU, and the rescue and anti-smugglers operations on the Mediterranean Sea, in addition to stories about transnational journeys of refugees.

As for the forms of action, verbal statements and political decision were the two most frequent actions regardless of the newspapers, with a clear predominance of the first ones. In general, little attention was dedicated to solidarity actions related to the refugee crisis. Another important feature is that claimants in the Italian public discourse followed a criterion of deservingness: Refugees and in particular, children, were mostly framed in a positive way, whereas migrants were framed in a negative way, and were considered less deserving of help.

Moreover, there is a clear distinction between solidarity frames in terms of claims' positions towards refugees: Most rights-based justifications supported general or universal principles in favour of refugees, whereas most identity-based justifications rejected solidarity with refugees. This is consistent with the evolution and polarisation of the public debate on migration-related issues over time. On the one hand, right-wing political actors, such as the Northern League, have constantly mobilised against immigration and multiculturalism by promoting an ethnic view of citizenship. On the other hand, the centre left and the Catholic parties, together with NGO associations, have tended to support humanitarian positions. Interest-based/utilitarian justifications show a less polarised situation, with a prevalence of anti-object positions over pro-object positions. Under these types of justifications, indeed, we can detect both security discourses supported by extreme-right and populist parties, but also, to some extent, by centre-left parties (Colombo, 2013; Richardson & Colombo, 2013), and utilitarian discourses based on economic interests. As regards the latter, centre-left and centre-right parties have essentially accepted "the functionalist case for immigration (necessary in terms of labour market shortages)—a position also held by key economic actors such as employer associations" (Bigot & Fella, 2008: 306).

In this regard, there was a certain variation across newspapers: Identity-based justifications were observed especially in the two newspapers with opposite political orientations (the progressive *La Repubblica* and the conservative *Il Giornale*), rights-based justifications characterised claims in the two mainstream newspapers (*La Repubblica* and *Corriere della Sera*) and, finally, interest-based/utilitarian justifications were observed in the moderate mainstream newspaper (*Corriere della Sera*), followed by the right-wing newspaper (*Il Giornale*).

Regarding bottom-up solidarity contestations as measured by the analysis of Facebook comments, user-commenters definitely referred to the posted articles' contents avoiding independent statements and showing confrontational attitudes towards claimants, with a certain number of commenters using rough

language. This indicates a clear polarisation of the public debate on Facebook: Actors claiming in favour of refugees produced the reaction of those opposing the refugee influx, whereas actors claiming against refugees produced the reaction of those with positive attitudes towards refugees. Furthermore, commenters were not only mobilised, but their mobilisation was targeted, as exemplified by the variety of blamed actors: Institutions such as government and the EU, as well as political parties, civil society organisations, groups and fellow citizens. Similarly, Facebook commenters not only blamed more actors compared to claimants in the printed sample, but also explicitly addressed a higher number of actors, calling them to act.

In addition, the analysis shows a segmentation of the online public sphere: People have a tendency to comment on the news outlets that share their political views. Facebook audiences of newspapers with a clear political connotation (right-wing or left-wing) share the newspaper's political orientation much more than the actors making claims in the printed articles of such newspapers.

Finally, the refugee crisis was not discussed in terms of identity conflicts, but rather material interests (welfare chauvinism) or security. Indeed, bottom-up contestation of solidarity was polarised around two main frames: Positive attitudes towards refugees led by humanitarian values, and negative attitudes towards refugees fostered by welfare chauvinism. Ultimately, positive frames prevailed over negative ones. Significantly, public discourse on the printed media was less polarised and aggressive, but less favourable towards refugees compared to the Facebook comments. A final difference is that national newspapers gave the lion's share of space to local issues, such as the subject of accommodating refugees in cities and municipalities, and paid less attention to transnational issues (such as the EU quota system, rescuing operations at sea, the EU-Turkey deal to stop the Balkans' migratory route, etc.). Solidarity was, however, clearly contested within national borders when bottom-up contestations on Facebook were taken into account.

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Poland

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Introduction

The public debate in Poland regarding the inflow of people applying for refugee status in the European Union between 2015 and 2016 was shaped by both foreign events (such as casualties among people migrating to Europe, as well as about the terrorist attacks of 2015) and a by our unique domestic context. Among the country cases covered in this report, Poland stands out as the country that took in the lowest number of refugees: 3.5 thousand non-EU asylum applicants in 2015 (and 2.0 in 2017), compared to 249 thousand in 2015 (and 524 thousand in 2017) in Germany (Eurostat, 2017). Refugees numbering 348 were granted permission to stay (167: subsidiary protection; 49: tolerated stay) in 2015, 108 (150: subsidiary protection; 49: tolerated stay) in 2016, whereas in 2017 - 150 got official permission to stay (340: subsidiary protection; 49 tolerated stay) (Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców, 2018). In 2015, most people who obtained international protection in Poland came from Syria (206 people), but in 2016 and 2017, the largest groups were people from Ukraine, Russia and Tajikistan.

The refugee crisis in Europe occurred simultaneously with a political campaign preceding the Polish parliamentary election in October 2015. This contributed to the politicisation of the issue. In July 2015, the Polish government declared its readiness to welcome 2000 refugees into Poland. This was, however, highly criticised by the opposition. In September 2015 Jarosław Kaczyński (Law and Justice party leader, in opposition) claimed in Parliament that “under foreign pressure and without the consent of the Polish people, the government does not have the right to take decisions which are highly probable to negatively affect our life (...) the number of foreigners will increase and then they will stop respecting our laws and customs (...) would you like us to quit being hosts in our country? He also proposed what he called *ordo caritatis* – an order of compassion which means: First the closest ones, then the nation and then the others” (Narkiewicz, 2017). The significance of this term--first the closest ones, etc.-- needs to be emphasised, as it reveals an attempt to establish a kind of ‘natural hierarchy’ of solidarity relations. The underlying idea also seems to be that such a hierarchy is dictated by religion or the church, even though is clearly contradicts Catholic doctrine. Kaczyński’s claims went further in October 2015 when he said that “migrants have already brought diseases like cholera and dysentery to Europe, as well as all sorts of parasites and protozoa, which (...) while not dangerous in the organisms of these people, could be dangerous here” (Politico 2017). After Law and Justice’s victory in the parliamentary election in October 2015, this point of view, together with a widespread narrative of citizens’ protection, Polish sovereignty, and an obligation to care for Polish Catholic tradition became hegemonic. This was the rationale for opposing the refugee relocation system in the EU, although some scholars (Pochyły 2017) claim that Polish foreign policy towards the refugee issue did not change that much between 2014 and 2016.

Public debate about refugees mirrored the cleavage in Polish civil society and the Catholic Church. On the one hand, the voice of the radical right-wing organisations, such as the ONR (the National Radical Camp)

or Młodzież Wszechpolska (All-Polish Youth) or nationalists in general grew more visible. E.g. Jacek Międlar, a former priest, thus addressed a massive gathering in November 2015 in Warsaw: “2015 is just like 1944 when we were also told to welcome soviet occupants and: not Islamic and not laic but great Poland is Catholic”. On the other hand, some Polish church representatives, including Stanisław Gądecki, the president of Polish bishops, called for help for refugees in Poland and proposed that each Polish parish should create facilities to host refugees. Furthermore, social movements and organisations helped establish support for immigrants and refugees, and some municipalities (e.g. Gdańsk) contributed to social innovations and broad partnerships providing inclusive social policies for immigrants.

Transnational Solidarity in the Public Sphere: Structure of Claims-Making in Poland

In order to investigate political claims related to the issue of refugees, expressed in the Polish public sphere, we selected three country-wide distributed newspapers that cover the whole ideological spectrum:

- “Fakt” - a tabloid, the newspaper with the highest circulation in Poland (272,000 readers on average),
- “Gazeta Wyborcza” - a centre-left newspaper with 133,000 readers on average (third place in terms of circulation in Poland)
- “Rzeczpospolita” - a centre-right oriented newspaper with a focus on financial and legal issues (ca. 52,000 readers on average, fourth place in terms of circulation in Poland (Wirtualne Media).

Our three media sources differed slightly in the way claims were presented and in their degree of coverage. The articles in Fakt were shorter and contained fewer claims than the others. Table 1 shows the number of articles containing our keywords for each media outlet during the time frame we were interested in, as well as the number of articles selected randomly and the actual number of articles that were coded.

Table 1 Retrieved and coded articles

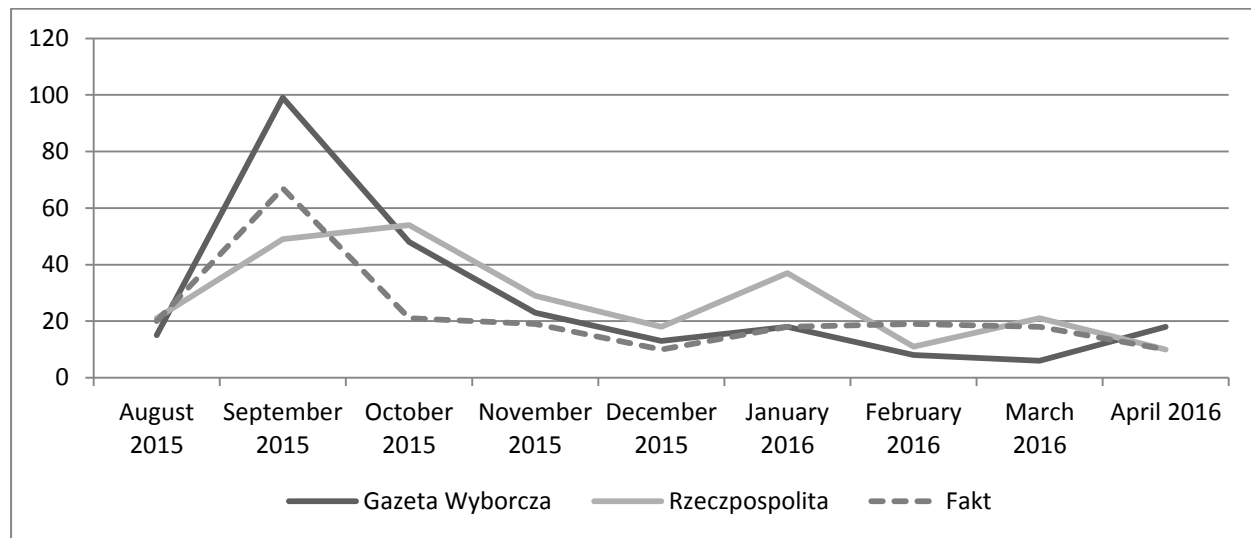
	Gazeta Wyborcza	Rzeczpospolita	Fakt
Number of articles with keywords	905	785	310
Number of articles selected randomly	255	105	183
Number of articles coded	124	86	105

Overall, our team coded 250 claims from our centre-right media outlet “Rzeczpospolita”, 248 from our centre-left media outlet “Gazeta Wyborcza”, and 202 claims from our tabloid “Fakt”. Table 2 and Figure 1 depict September 2015 as the peak month when each of our three media outlets had their highest number of claims, and the drop off in figures afterwards.

Table 2: Number of claims over time in analysed newspapers

		Aug 2015	Sep 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	Apr 2016	total
News- paper in which the claim is found	Gazeta Wyborcza	15	99	48	23	13	18	8	6	18	248
	Rzecz- pospolita	21	49	54	29	18	37	11	21	10	250
	Fakt	20	67	21	19	10	18	19	18	10	202
Total		56	215	123	71	41	73	38	45	38	700

Figure 1: Claims over time in analysed newspapers



Visibility and inclusiveness

Actors: Who are the proponents and opponents of solidarity towards refugees?

We found that 46% of all of researched claims were made by state actors. As previously noted, the discourse with regards to the refugee crisis in Poland was a heavily political topic coinciding in time with the presidential elections. State actors, as well as political parties and individual politicians, were debating and proposing new resolutions to the refugee crisis affecting Europe in order to win votes. Civil society and human rights organisations were authors of only 1.6% of claims – this is probably related to the fact that the number of refugees in Poland during the time frame of our study was very low. Therefore, the main issue during the time of our study was about the political situation rather than the practical resolutions to refugee crisis-related problems in the country. In Table 3 we can see the actors of claims in the media outlets.

Table 3: The structure of actors making claims

	N	percent
State actors	324	46.3%
Political parties	79	11.3%
Professional organisations and groups	83	11.9%
Group-specific organisations and groups	44	6.3%
Civil society and human rights organisations	11	1.6%
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	50	7.1%
Other actors	54	7.7%
Supranational actors	42	6.0%
EU member states	10	1.4%
Unknown	3	0,4%
Total	700	100.0%

Table 4 shows the structure of our actors' scope over the time frame between August 2015 and April 2016. In each month from August 2015 to April 2016, the highest share of claims was consistently expressed by national actors, in some months up to four times higher than claims at all remaining levels. 58% of all of our actors were national in their scope, while transnational/supranational/international actors and subnational actors tied at 20%. In almost half of the claims, the actors were Polish (which is in accordance with the fact that most of our actors were national in scope), while the second highest coded actor nationality was German. As seen in Table 5, few claims were expressed by actors from any of the remaining nationalities.

Table 4 Structure of actors' scope over time

	August 2015	Sep- tember 2015	Octo- ber 2015	Novem- ber 2015	Decem- ber 2015	January 2016	Februa- ry 2016	March 2016	April 2016	Total
Trans-/ Supra- /inter- national	18%	18%	19%	31%	20%	12%	13%	27%	20%	20%
National	71%	56%	55%	48%	51%	69%	68%	65%	53%	58%
Sub- national	9%	26%	27%	21%	27%	15%	16%	9%	8%	20%
Unknown/ Unclassifi- able	2%	1%	0%	0%	2%	4%	3%	0%	3%	1%
Total (100%)	56	215	123	71	41	73	38	45	38	

Table 5 Nationality of first actor

	N	Per cent
Polish	356	50.9%
German	92	13.1%
Hungarian	20	2.9%
Swedish	15	2.1%
French	10	1.4%
British	10	1.4%
Italian	9	1.3%
Austrian	9	1.3%
Greek	7	1.01.0%
Belgian	7	1.01.0%
Turkish	7	1.01.0%
Other	54	7.7%
Unknown	104	14.9%

Addressees

Many of the claims we coded across all three newspapers did not have an addressee: 68% of our claims were not addressed at anyone and were not calling for any specific action. When claims makers did address someone to act, it was usually state actors (16%). In Table 6 we can see the structure of the addressees of the claims. This could lead us to think that although media discourse with regards to the refugee crisis was visibly present in Polish newspapers, a significant share of claims consisted in general of accusations, pointing out problems and conflicts rather than proposing solutions or calling on others for specific actions. Many of the claims were opinions, political ideas or personal beliefs about the refugee crisis and its related problems.

Table 6: The structure of claims' addressees

	N	Percent
State actors	115	16.4%
Political parties	13	1.9%
Professional organisations and groups	10	1.4%
Group-specific organisations and groups	9	1.3%
Civil society and human rights organisations	2	0.3%
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	15	2.1%
Other actors	32	4.6%
Supranational actors	16	2.3%
EU member states	13	1.9%
No addressee	475	67.9%
Total	700	100.0%

Positioning of actors

Table 7 presents the position of the actors' claims towards the object, while Table 8 shows the average position (on a scale from -1 anti-object, 0 neutral and +1 pro-object) of different actors' claims. We found that claims reported in Polish newspapers were as anti-refugee as they were pro-refugee, with neutral and ambivalent claims being just slightly behind. Interestingly enough, however, both state actors and political actors were leaning towards anti-refugee attitudes meaning that although the claims makers seemed to be divided in terms of their positioning, there was a slightly larger anti-refugee attitude. The balance for pro-refugee attitudes came from civil society and human rights organisations, group specific organisations and professional organisations.

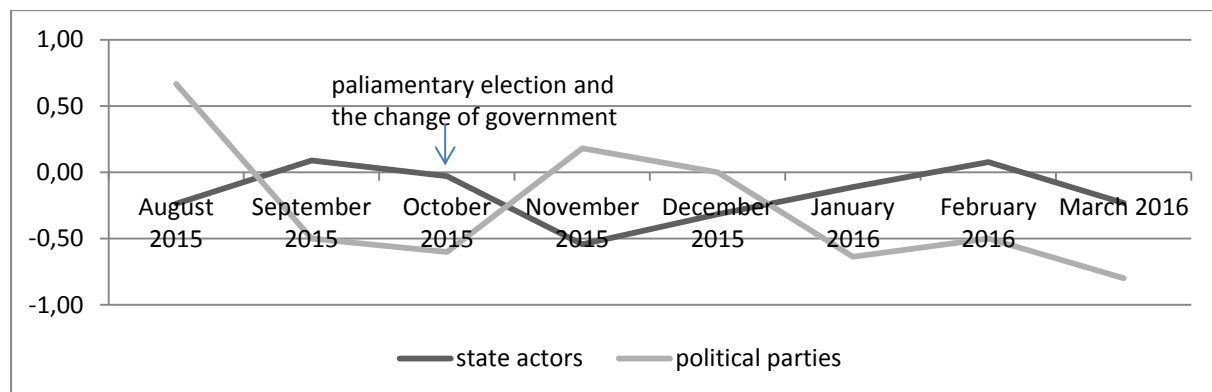
Table 7: Position of claim towards the object

	N	Percent
Anti-object	240	34.3%
Neutral / ambivalent	212	30.3%
Pro-object	248	35.4%
Total	700	100.0%

Table 8: Average position of claim by different actors

	Mean	N
State actors	-0.11	324
Political parties	-0.39	79
Professional organisations and groups	0.36	83
Group-specific organisations and groups	0.39	44
Civil society and human rights organisations	1	11
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	0.26	50
Other actors	-0.06	54
Supranational actors	0.24	42
EU member states	-0.6	10
Unknown	0.67	3
Average in total	0.01	700

Figure 2: Average position of claims towards refugees (+1 positive, 0 neutral, -1 negative) by month



The average position of claims towards refugees was on the change during the researched period. In particular, there was a strong difference between state actors and political parties (mainly the opposition). As presented in Figure 2, the position of political parties became anti-immigrant in the period immediately before the parliamentary elections of October 2015. Thus, since November 2015, the increase in the anti-refugee position of state actors followed the change of governing party (from liberal Civic Platform to populist Law and Justice). Interestingly, though, since November 2015, a trend towards less anti-immigrant political claims made by state actors has been present. This was however parallel to the significant growth of anti-immigrant claims made by political parties. The overall process depicts politicisation of the refugee issue in Poland and, to some extent, political cleavages constructed around this topic.

Issues: Which topics were raised by solidarity contestants in the media

Mapping issue salience

Not surprisingly, seeing how Poland at the time of our media analysis and up to now has not provided active help in the ongoing refugee crisis, the majority of claims were related to the political management of migration (62% of claims). Few of the researched claims were related to themes such as the integration of refugees, or the problems of refugee inflow. The themes of our claims can be seen in Table 9.

Table 9 Themes of the claims

	N	Percent
Political management of migration	437	62.4%
Integration of refugees	28	4.0%
Background and fate of refugees	77	11.01.0%
Problems of refugee influx	66	9.4%
Public and civic activities	92	13.1%
Total	700	100.0%

Who talks about what and where?

Claims made by state actors were 80% related to the political management of migration, this being a main theme for political parties (66%) and EU member states (90%). Again, during a time of heavy political debate before upcoming presidential elections, the political management of the refugee crisis was a hot topic. Individual politicians, state actors and political party representatives were proposing new ideas and expressing opinions about the correct way to manage the refugee crisis at all levels of actor scope. Civil societies and human rights organisations, as well as group specific organisations and professional organisations were more likely to address the theme of public and civic activities or the background and fate of refugees. These actors more directly addressed the individual situation of refugees and focused on possible ways to help refugees overcome problems on a more personal level. Table 10 provides an overview of the structure of claims' issues by our actors.

Table 10: Structure of claims' issue by actors making claims

	State actors	Political parties	Professional organisations and groups	Group-specific organisations and groups	Civil society and human rights organisations	Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	Other actors	Supranational actors	EU member states	Unknown
Political management of migration	80%	66%	30%	41%	36%	34%	24%	88%	90%	67%
Integration of refugees	3%	3%	11%	5%	9%	2%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Background and fate of refugees	6%	10%	18%	9%	36%	22%	20%	7%	10%	0%
Problems of refugee influx	5%	18%	14%	9%	0%	16%	19%	2%	0%	33%
Public and civic Activities	5%	4%	27%	36%	18%	26%	33%	2%	0%	0%
N (100%)	324	79	83	44	11	50	54	42	10	3

Solidarity contestations in the public sphere

Forms of action

A very large percentage of our forms of action were verbal statements (72%), followed by political decisions as the second most popular form of action (11%). Table 11 provides an overview of the forms of claims for the entire sample. The case for this is likely, as previously mentioned, to be the fact that Poland never directly experienced the inflow of refugees. Political discourse on the topic was substantial and many things were said and decided, however there was not much room for action such as direct solidarity or humanitarian aid mobilisation in the country (as might have been the case for countries such as Greece or Italy, directly experiencing the troubles associated with the refugee inflow).

Table 11: Forms of claims

	N	Percent
Political decisions	78	11.1%
Direct solidarity	26	3.7%
Humanitarian aid mobilisation	17	2.4%
Violent protest actions	16	2.3%
Confrontational protest actions	12	1.7%
Demonstrative protest actions	31	4.4%
Conventional protest actions	10	1.4%
Repressive measures	4	0.6%
Verbal statements	506	72.3%
Total	700	100.0%

As expected, prior to the parliamentary elections occurring in the country, the majority of forms of actions by our actors were verbal statements or political decisions. The only group of actors who had a higher percentage in any other category were group-specific organisations and groups who showed a higher number of demonstrative protest actions as their form of action. The complete list of forms of claims divided into actor categories is presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Forms of claims by actors

	Politi- Cal decisions	Direct solidarity	Huma- Nitar Nitar aid mobili- sation	Violent protest actions	Con- Fron Tatio Nal protest actions	Demon- stra tive protest actions	Conven- ven- tional protest actions	Repres- pres- sive measur- es	Verbal state- ments	Total (100 %)
State actors	20%	2%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	74%	324
Political parties	3%	1%	1%	3%	3%	4%	3%	0%	84%	79
Professional organisations and groups	2%	6%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	87%	83
Group-specific organisations and groups	0%	9%	9%	7%	7%	34%	5%	0%	30%	44
Civil society and human rights organisa- tions	0%	9%	9%	0%	0%	0%	9%	0%	73%	11
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	2%	10%	8%	8%	6%	8%	0%	0%	58%	50
Other actors	0%	7%	4%	11%	0%	13%	4%	0%	61%	54
Supranational actors'	17%	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	79%	42
EU member states	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	90%	10
Unknown	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	33%	0%	0%	67%	3

Blamed and credited actors

Just as our claimants were not too eager to address other actors to act in response to the refugee crisis, similarly few blamed or credited other actors for their actions. The percentage of actors who did not blame anyone when making claims in the media was 81%. The largest percentage of blamed actors were state actors, which could suggest that state actors were blaming state actors in a heated political debate prior to the elections. Table 13 provides an overview of the actors explicitly blamed in claims by our actors. Furthermore, 97.6% of our actors did not credit any other actors and only 1% of actors that did credit someone for their actions credited other state actors.

Table 13: Actors explicitly blamed in the claim

	N	Percent
State actors	74	10.6%
Political parties	10	1.4%
Professional organisation and groups	6	0.9%
Group-specific organisation and groups	5	0.7%
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	15	2.1%
Other actors	10	1.4%
Supranational actors	8	1.1%
EU member states	2	0.3%
No blamed actor	570	81.4%
Total	700	100.0%

Objects of solidarity: Refugees as objects of solidarity contestation

A large majority of our claims were directed at refugees as an implicitly acknowledged category, or as refugees/asylum seekers in general as seen in Table 14. Very few of our claimants pointed to more specific categories, such as men, women or families. Furthermore, 88% of our “objects of the claim” were unclassifiable when it came to nationality, which means claimants understood refugees overall as one category and did not pay much attention to individual characters. Table 15 shows us the nationality of people referred to by actors making claims. Although few people whose situation was addressed in claims could be categorised as women, children, young people or families, there was an overall more positive position of claims towards these groups of refugees. The category “Refugees/asylum seekers/etc. (migrant/ex-refugees, e.g. sans papiers, clandestin, Wirtschaftsflüchtlinge)” unsurprisingly, received comparatively high anti-object positions. The position of claimants with regards to different groups/objects can be seen in Table 16.

Table 14: Object of claim

	N	Percent
Refugees (implicitly acknowledged)	116	16.6%
Refugees/asylum seekers/etc. (about refugees as a full category)	544	77.7%
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (families)	6	0.9%
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (women)	2	0.3%
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (men)	3	0.4%
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (children)	2	0.3%
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (young people)	3	0.4%
Refugees/asylum seekers/etc. (migrant/ex-refugees, e.g. Sans papiers, clandestin, Wirtschaftsflüchtlinge)	11	1.6%
Other refugees/asylum seekers/etc.	13	1.9%
Total	700	100.0%

Table 15: Nationality of object

	N	Percent
Pakistani	1	0.1%
Iraqi	1	0.1%
Somalian	2	0.3%
Afghanistani	3	0.4%
Syrian	71	10.1%
Libyan	1	0.1%
Lebanese	2	0.3%
Other	3	0.4%
Unclassifiable	616	88.0%
Total	700	100.0%

Table 16: Position of claims in regard to different groups of refugees ('objects')

	Anti-object	Neutral Ambivalent	/ Pro-object	Total (100%)
Refugees (implicitly acknowledged)	46%	39%	16%	116
Refugees/asylum seekers/etc. (about refugees as a full category)	31%	30%	40%	544
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (families)	0%	17%	83%	6
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (women)	50%	0%	50%	2
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (men)	100%	0%	0%	3
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (children)	50%	0%	50%	2
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (young people)	0%	0%	100%	3
Refugees/asylum seekers/etc. (migrant/ex-refugees, e.g. Sans papiers, clandestin, wirtschaftsflüchtlinge)	82%	18%	0%	11
Other refugees/asylum seekers/etc.	54%	23%	23%	13

Justifying solidarity in the media

In about half of the claims, actors openly referred to values; in 23% of claims they provided utilitarian justifications for their refusal or acceptance of solidarity, in 15% of claims they provided rights-based justifications and in 12% of claims, they provided identity-based justifications. The values underlying the justification of solidarity in the media can be seen in Table 17. Almost half of our claim makers did not provide a value for their claims. It is difficult to tell however, if the actors did not provide such a justification or if the media outlets were not reporting on the reasons behind specific statements and solidarity claims. As mentioned earlier, a high percentage of claims were given utilitarian justifications which provide an instrumental conception of rationality. Since in-depth political debate was taking place in Poland at the time of claims making, due to the upcoming elections, it is likely that typical problem-solving/interest justification can be identified. Actors referred often to specific advantages or disadvantages of solidarity actions, or fact based necessity for offering or denying help. Actors' claims were full of political, economic, cost-benefit and functionality and efficiency calculations. Less often reported values were those of the rights of the refugees and of identity based values.

Table 17: Values underlying claims

	N	Percent
Utilitarian justifications	162	23.1%
Rights-based justifications	107	15.3%
Identity-based justifications	84	12.0%
No value	347	49.6%
Total	700	100.0%

Case study: Confronting media claims-making with citizens' responses

Introduction

Facebook pages offer broader visibility to users' opinions than newspapers, where only the main political actors and organised publics can easily publish. An exemplification of this fact could be found in the 2015 Polish presidential elections. According to a recent study of Chmielewska-Szlajfer (2018) in Poland, all the polls were in favour of Bronisław Komorowski. But it was his opponent, Andrzej Duda, who won. The study showed that Facebook interactions proved more accurate in predicting the final results. They explained this by revealing what they called, 'in-between' rationality and emotion and 'in-between' publicness and privacy during the 2015 presidential elections. The latter emerged in people's Facebook activity on candidates' Facebook fan pages where the voice of the voters were articulated which, in turn, translated into election results. Thus, the analysis of Facebook comments is expected to reveal crucial additional information about the Polish attitude of solidarity towards refugees and the rest of Europe in times of crisis and about the ways solidarity is contested by citizens.

The comments uncover the opinions of the users but also affect their attitude. Our study suggests that the opinion on a given topic was not formed by the message coming from the television but by discussion with other viewers (Troidahl & van Dam, 1965). Today, the same role as discussion in 60s plays comments on the Internet (Napiórkowski, 2018). Moreover, the Internet can be dominated by extreme attitudes. Piwoni and Toepfl analysed comments on news websites as a reaction to the hegemonic mainstream public sphere in Germany. The study revealed the overrepresentation of views expressed by proponents of the radical right-wing AfD party in debates on European issues. In the material reviewed by scientists, as much as 75% of all comments published right before the election supported the party, which then received only 4.7% of the vote (Piwoni & Toepfl, 2015). Analysed comments were posted by users active on the Facebook fan pages of three (presented in part A) Polish newspapers: Centre-left “Gazeta Wyborcza” (number of coded comments: n=100), centre-right “Rzeczpospolita” (n=100) and the tabloid, “Fakt” (n=100) (see Table 18).

Table 18: Newspaper/FB page where the respective article (i.e. for comment) was posted

	frequency	percent
Gazeta Wyborcza	100	33.3%
Rzeczpospolita	100	33.3%
Fakt	100	33.3%
Total	300	100.0%

Coded comments were reactions to articles published between 1st and 30th of September 2015. The data was extracted from Facebook using Netvizz application in standard Excel tabular file format. The sample was then constructed by using keywords referring to refugees - taking into account Polish grammar, declination and spelling: *uchodźcy, uchodźca, uchodźców, uchodźcami, migranci, migracja, imigracja, imigranci, migrant* etc. Then the five most commented on Facebook posts from “Fakt” and “Gazeta Wyborcza” newspaper were selected and for each, 20 comments were coded. Due to fewer comments in “Rzeczpospolita” the coded comments are retrieved from 8 articles – then rounded up to 100 comments. The selecting criterion was popularity, i.e. only the most liked comments were coded. Table 19 gives an overview of the articles that the analysed comments were taken from.

Table 19: Newspaper/FB page in which the respective article (i.e. for comment) was posted

newspaper	article's title	Frequency
Gazeta Wyborcza	Czy Polacy jeszcze wiedzą, co to jest Człowiek? <i>Do Poles know what a human being is yet?</i>	20
	Janina Ochojska: Nie patrzmy na siebie przez pryzmat hejterów <i>Janina Ochojska: Let's not look at each other through the prism of haters</i>	20
	Jestem gdańszczanką od pokoleń, patrzę i oczom nie wierzę! <i>My family goes back for generations in Gdańsk and I can't believe what I'm seeing</i>	20
	Szariackie szarże prezesa PiS w Sejmie. Jak jest naprawdę? <i>Shariat attack of Law and Justice leader in parliament. What's real?</i>	20
	Tak konkretnie możesz pomóc uchodźcom <i>This is how you can help refugees</i>	20
	Total	100

Rzeczpospolita	"Kontrolować granice. Inaczej jest to najazd"	9
	<i>"Control the borders. Otherwise it's conquering"</i>	
	"Nie można grać na emocjach ws. uchodźców"	10
	<i>You can't play on our emotions regarding the refugees</i>	
	3-latek z Syrii utonął w drodze do rodziny	17
	<i>A 3-year old from Syria sunk on his way to family</i>	
	Polska już nie z Wyszehradem	12
	<i>Poland does not go anymore with Visegrád</i>	
	Polska nie ma argumentów w sprawie uchodźców	13
	<i>Poland has no argument regarding the refugees</i>	
	Uchodźcy o Finlandii: Zimno i nudno	11
	<i>Refugees on Finland: Cold and boring</i>	
	Uchodźcy to szansa dla Polski	20
	<i>Refugees are an opportunity for Poland</i>	
Fakt	Wiceszef KE: Uchodźcy będą nam towarzyszyć przez lata	8
	<i>Vice-president of the EC: refugees will be with us for years</i>	
	Total	100
	Głośne demonstracje przeciw uchodźcom	20
	<i>Loud demonstrations against refugees</i>	
	Kolejne rodziny imigrantów uciekły z Polski.	20
	<i>Immigrant families ran away from Poland</i>	
	Niemcy przywrócili kontrole na granicy	20
	<i>Germans return border controls</i>	
	Polska przyjmie 10 tys. uchodźców? Niech Kopacz to wyjaśni!	20
	<i>Poland will take 10 thousand refugees? Kopacz should explain this!</i>	
	Prawicowa dziennikarka skopała dzieci uchodźców	20
	<i>Right-wing journalist kicks refugee' children</i>	
	Total	100

Structure of debate

239 out of 300 coded Polish Facebook comments referred to refugees. Mostly (in 67.9% of cases) authors of the comments answered the general issue in the main article. This means that users added their opinions to the main subject discussed in the article rather than responding to specific claims raised in it, which was the case in only 13% of coded comments. Almost one-fifth of all comments (19.2%) included a general presentation of authors' opinions on refugee issues in general, with no connection to the main article. The structure of the type of comments was similar in all studied newspapers (see Table 20).

Table 20: The type of comment by newspaper

			Newspaper/FB page in which the respective article (i.e. For comment) is posted				Total
			Gazeta borcza	Wy- Rzecz Pospolita	Fakt		
The type of comment	Response to gen- eral issue in main article	N	57	54	51		162
		% of total	23.80%	22.60%	21.30%		67.80%
	Response to claim raised in main arti- cle	N	0	19	12		31
		% of total	0.00%	7.90%	5.00%		13.00%
	Independent statement, opinion	N	21	10	15		46
		% of total	8.80%	4.20%	6.30%		19.20%
Total	N		78	83	78		239
	% of total		32.60%	34.70%	32.60%		100.00%

Among the few comments (n=31) that responded to claims raised in the article, most users (74.2%) did not agree with the claimants (see Table 21). This means that more often, when the position of the claim was pro-object or neutral - the commenter position towards the claim was negative. Commenters referred to nine claims. Four of them were pro-object, four were neutral and only one was anti-object. For pro-object or neutral position of the claim, there were 21 negative reactions, while only seven were supportive or neutral to supportive claims. There were only two cases where the position of the claim towards refugees was negative and commenters did not agree with the claim. Therefore, in our sample, Facebook users' attitude towards refugees was more negative than the actors making claims presented in the articles.

Table 21 Position of commenter towards claim

Claim ID	Position of claim to- wards the refugees (1=pro-object; 0 – neu- tral; -1= anti-object)	Position of commenter fill-in position towardss claim (number of cases)		
		negative/opposing	neutral/ambivalent;	affirmative/supportive
252	0	2	0	1
253	0	1	0	0
254	1	6	1	0
255	1	2	0	0
256	-1	2	0	0
257	1	1	0	0
259	1	6	0	2
260	0	3	0	0
261	0	0	0	4
Total	n/a	23	1	7

Actors, mostly represented by the government or activists who wanted to accept refugees, were in favour of EU quotas and presented the individual stories of migrants, etc. As noted in the introduction, in September 2015 it was the Civic Platform party that was the governing party, thereby leading a government (led by Ewa Kopacz) which agreed to EU relocation quotas and in general was in favour of refugees.

Therefore, if the actor in the article claimed to accept refugees – Facebook users who commented were against it. They accused the government of not knowing what refugees really meant for the country, how aggressive they were and what kind of danger they would bring. Users often put their social needs above the refugees’ needs. If the actor of the claim stated that Poland should accept refugees, users often referred to it by saying that Poland - or even themselves - was poor, had small houses, did not have enough social support, etc., therefore the government should first take into account the situation of the Poles and only later the citizens of other countries, even though they needed emergency help. This follows Kaczynski’s concept of “*ordo caritatis*” exactly. Only one of those comments was neutral towards the claim and seven were positive. In all those seven cases, users praised the government’s decisions to accept EU quota on refugees. In general, claims retrieved from the articles were more in favour of refugees than the comments.

Solidarity contestation in users’ commenting including positioning, issues, calls for action and framing

The position of claim in comments towards refugees reflects the general opinion of Poles towards refugees. According to the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS, 2017a), Poles were generally opposed to accepting refugees. In 2017, 74% of respondents were against accepting refugees from Africa and the Middle East. The vast majority (70%) of respondents were opposed to accepting refugees from Muslim countries into Poland. Thus, Poles were consistently sceptical about the relocation of refugees arriving in the European Union from the Middle East and Africa. This reluctance increased from year to year, compared to 67% of disagreements towards refugees from those regions in 2016 (CBOS, 2017b). Comments showed that users were rather anti-refugee. In 239 of cases where the object was refugees, 75.3% (n=180) were anti-object, while 15.9% (n=38) were neutral and only 8.8% (n=21) spoke favourably of refugees.

Table 22 Position of a comment towards refugees

	Frequency	Percent
Anti-object	180	75.3%
Neutral/ambivalent	38	15.9%
Pro-object	21	8.8%
Total	239	100.0%

The position of the comments towards refugees did not differ significantly among newspapers. The anti-immigrant narrative dominated and spread to the comments of various newspapers. Bearing in mind the unwillingness of Poles to refugees, and possible hate speech, “Gazeta Wyborcza” shut down comments on its articles on refugees on the main portal. Thus, the users commented only on the Facebook fan page. 80% of comments on the “Gazeta Wyborcza” fan page were anti-refugee compared to 77% of tabloid “Fakt” commenters and 69% of “Rzeczpospolita” users (see Table 23). But one can see clearly the difference among newspapers’ claims as well as claims and comments. The claims referred to in newspapers were much more in favour of refugees, especially in “Gazeta Wyborcza”, where 54% of all claims were pro-object and only 29% raised claims were anti-object. In “Rzeczpospolita”, the distribution of this variable was almost equal (34% of anti-; 33% of neutral and 33% of pro-refugee positions). The tabloid “Fakt”

was the newspaper where claims were much more often anti- (44%) than pro-refugee (only 15% of all claims). Thus, in all three newspapers, the authors of comments on Facebook less frequently expressed their pro-refugee attitude than in newspaper claims.

Table 23 Position of claims and comments towards the object; by newspapers

			Claims in articles		Facebook comments	
			N	%	N	%
Gazeta borcza	Wy-	Anti-object	72	29%	63	80%
		Neutral / Ambivalent	41	17%	5	7%
		Pro-object	135	54%	10	13%
Rzeczpospolita		Anti-object	86	34%	57	69%
		Neutral / Ambivalent	82	33%	19	23%
		Pro-object	82	33%	6	8%
Fakt		Anti-object	82	41%	60	77%
		Neutral / Ambivalent	89	44%	13	16%
		Pro-object	31	15%	5	6%

Among issues most often raised in comments, we found especially (in more than 20 comments) those connected to problems of internal security, general political climate / public discourse regarding the refugee crisis, border management/policies religious in/compatibilities (emphasis on Islam / Muslims, Christianity) and social policies. Table 24 provides an overview of these issues.

Table 24 Specific issues which appeared in at least ten comments

	frequency	percent
Problems of internal security (e.g., sexually motivated violence, attacks against/by refugees, terrorist attacks, etc)	36	12.0%
General political climate / public discourse regarding refugee crisis	31	10.3%
Border management/policies (e.g., border control, securing of borders, fence-building, FRONTEX, Schengen borders, etc.)	29	9.7%
Religious in/compatibilities (emphasis on Islam / Muslims, Christianity)	25	8.3%
Social policies (e.g., access to social benefits such as health insurance, employment benefits, social services)	22	7.3%
Violence towards refugees (e.g., arson, destruction of housing, etc.)	17	5.7%
Distribution and relocation of refugees outside the country (e.g. inter-state agreement, EU quota system)	16	5.3%
Accommodation of refugees (e.g., managing the influx, administrative capacities, housing infrastructure, etc.)	15	5.0%
Other issues pertaining to the background, the situation and the fate of refugees	14	4.7%
Other issues pertaining to the problems associated with the refugee influx / crisis	13	4.3%
Media behaviour (e.g., biased discourse, lying press, etc.)	12	4.0%
Journey of refugees (including stories on crossing the sea)	10	3.3%

As was stated before, an effect of agenda setting appeared - since newspapers are primary definers of user debates, and the comments most often referred to in response to general issues in claims. As far as independent statements and opinions are concerned, users most often wrote comments on the general political climate and public discourse on refugee crisis, border policies, as well as problems with internal security (see Table 25).

Table 25 Main issue or first mentioned issue of the comment and the type of comment

	Type of comment			
	Response to general issue in main article	Response to claim raised in main article	Independent statement, opinion	Total
Border management/policies (e.g., border control, securing of borders, fence-building, FRONTEX, Schengen borders, etc.)	16	4	9	29
Accommodation of refugees (e.g., managing the influx, administrative capacities, housing infrastructure, etc.)	10	4	1	15
Distribution and relocation of refugees outside the country (e.g. inter-state agreement, EU quota system)	10	4	2	16
Social policies (e.g., access to social benefits such as health insurance, employment benefits, social services)	19	0	3	22
Journey of refugees (including stories on crossing the sea)	6	0	4	10
Violence towards refugees (e.g., arson, destruction of housing, etc.)	9	5	3	17
Other issues pertaining to the background, the situation and the fate of refugees	14	0	0	14
Problems of internal security (e.g., sexually motivated violence, attacks against/by refugees, terrorist attacks, etc.)	27	0	9	36
Religious in/compatibilities (emphasis on Islam / Muslims, Christianity)	18	0	7	25
Other issues pertaining to the problems associated to the refugee influx / crisis	8	2	3	13
General political climate / public discourse reg. refugee crisis	19	1	11	31
Media behaviour (e.g., biased discourse, lying press, etc.)	5	3	4	12

Table 26 Call for action in comments

	frequency	percent
Call for policy/legal action or decision	20	8.4%
Call for direct solidarity (support/assistance/help) actions	4	1.7%
Call for violent protest actions	1	0.4%
Call for repressive measures	2	0.8%
Call for other actions	9	3.8%
No call for action	203	84.9%
Total	239	100.0%

However, people who commented on articles were not eager to call for any specific action. It was the case in only 15.1% of comments where refugees were the “object” of a comment (that is, 36 out of 239 coded comments). In most of those cases (N=20), users called upon the government or other politicians to take

action, less frequently than they called for other citizens'/NGOs', groups' action. Calls for violent actions, protests, direct solidarity, and repressive measures constituted a marginal share of all comments (see Table 26).

72% of commenters provided justification frames. It needs to be emphasised that even if users referred to solidarity, more often than not, they rejected solidarity rather than granted it. In Table 27 one can see that the way in which the commenters defined, evaluated or interpreted solidarity was when justifying negative positions towards refugees. The users' position towards the object was more negative than neutral or favourable.

Table 27 The justification/frame for supporting and opposing solidarity in Facebook comments

	Position of claim in comment towards the object, i.e. refugees			Total
	anti-object	neutral/ambivalent	pro-object	
Human rights	0 0.0%	1 0.4%	1 0.4%	2 0.8%
Religious/spiritual reasons	29 12.1%	1 0.4%	3 1.3%	33 13.8%
Historical reasons	3 1.3%	2 0.8%	6 2.5%	11 4.6%
Political capacities	9 3.8%	2 0.8%	1 0.4%	12 5.0%
Social/economic capacities	5 2.1%	5 2.1%	2 0.8%	12 5.0%
Instrumentality	2 0.8%	1 0.4%	0 0.0%	3 1.3%
Welfare chauvinism	26 10.9%	8 3.3%	0 0.0%	34 14.2%
Law and order/security	16 6.7%	7 2.9%	0 0.0%	24 10.0%
Migrant/refugee behaviour	31 13.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	31 13.0%
Religious/cultural in-/compatibility	3 1.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 1.3%
Legal/cultural status	5 2.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	5 2.1%
Humanitarian crisis	1 0.4%	0 0.0%	1 0.4%	2 0.8%
No frame	50 20.9%	10 4.2%	7 2.9%	67 28.0%

The most often invoked rationale connected to refugees was: Welfare chauvinism (14.2%), religion (15.2%), migrant/refugee behaviour (13%) and law and order/security (10%). Welfare chauvinism appeared in comments where users complained of the inadequacy of Polish social policy and the poverty of the country. They claimed that first the government should help Polish citizens. In those comments, users often referred to populist slogans showing especially poor single mothers, children or elderly people in comparison to rich young men fleeing their countries. This reflected the aforementioned "order of com-

passion” proposed by Jarosław Kaczyński, according to which one should firstly take care of family, then community and the nation and only finally – others.

The second most frequent justification given referred to religious and spiritual reasons or religion incompatibility. It is interesting how in a Catholic country, religion is used not in an inclusive way to justify solidarity with refugees, but rather as a conditional argument to demarcate the boundaries of the solidarity community against Islam. Muslims evoked fear and were considered as totally different from European, Christian culture. They were presented as aggressive (often “Muslim” is used as a synonym of “terrorist”, someone who will kill people), posing a threat to the state. Polish users often forewarned against the danger of the “Islamification” of Europe, and the possibility of loss of identity and religion in the countries that accepted refugees. Only 3 out of 36 comments referring to religion as a solidarity frame were in favour of the refugees, referring to Christian values and obligation to help people in need.

As regards migrant and refugee behaviour, users’ positions towards refugees were negative. They were presented as aggressive people, who will become (or already are) terrorists, who will kill, rob or, at best, have too high expectations. In “law and order/security” value, evoked in 10% of the cases, refugees were most often identified with Muslims (from other cultures and religions), young, aggressive men - which means for most of the users - terrorists. Refugees were considered a threat for public safety, and people worried about their children and themselves. In some cases users called to mobilise forces to control documents and secure borders. They also complained that the European Commission was pretending not to see how many refugees were entering Europe illegally, which showed their lack of respect for EU member state sovereignty, safety and the defence of borders. Users wanted to send the refugees back to their countries, and if help could be granted, it should be conditional, and only to women and children.

Conclusions

Political claims presented in the researched newspapers were most frequently expressed by state actors (46% of claims) and professional organisations (18% of claims). In most cases they were made at the supra/transnational or international level/s by Polish actors and less often by German actors. The highest share of claims (68%) pointed to no specific addressee. Thus, in most cases, claims presented general ideas, statements, and accusations, rather than specific practical suggestions. Similarly, in 88% of political claims, refugees were referred to in a generalised and essentialising manner – no specific subcategories were pointed to. The most frequent theme (62% of claims) was political management of immigration, and only 4% were related to issues of integration. This is consistent with framing of the claims – in the case of 49% of claims, no value was referred to, whereas the most frequent frame was utilitarian values. In the case of 81% of the researched claims, no one was blamed for the “refugee crisis”.

The study of claims revealed a stark polarisation of the Polish political scene regarding the refugee issue and politicisation of this theme prior to the parliamentary election in 2015. Overall, there was almost equal share (ca. 35%) of political claims which were pro-refugee and anti-refugee. Surprisingly, claims made by state actors presented on average a negative position (-0.11 on the scale from -1 to +1), whereas political parties revealed an even more negative attitude (position of claims: -0.39 on average), in particu-

lar – before the parliamentary election in October 2015. In contrast, civil society actors' claims presented a positive orientation towards refugees.

Researched Facebook comments also presented a large volume (in this case, 68% of comments) of general ideas and attitudes, rather than a response to a specific political claim referred to in a newspaper article. The most frequent theme of the comments was that of security, consistent with frames used by commenting authors, namely: Welfare chauvinism (14.2%), religion (15.2%), and migrant/refugee behaviour (13%). Overall the attitude of commenters towards refugees was even more negative than in the case of political claims. Moreover, although there were visible differences between newspapers in terms of the average position of claims towards refugees (e.g. political claims published in "Gazeta Wyborcza" were in most cases pro-refugee, in comparison to "Fakt"), there was no difference in the structure of comments. Irrespective of which outlet's article was commented on on Facebook, 80% of comments to each newspaper presented a negative attitude towards refugees. It seems there is perfect consistency between some strong political narratives, such as "ordo caritatis" in a version presented by Kaczyński, and the nature of comments posted by Facebook users.

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Solidarity contestation in Danish media: A national escape from transnational crisis

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Introduction

At the peak of the so-called 'refugee crisis' in autumn 2015, Denmark was among the most inhospitable countries in the European Union. The welcoming culture that was sparked in neighbouring Sweden and Germany in the initial weeks of August and September 2015, mobilising substantial parts of the population in solidarity action towards Syrian refugees, did not extend to Denmark. Rather, the Danish government insisted on the strict application of the Dublin Regulation, rejecting the asylum applications of refugees who entered via its southern borders with Germany (Olsen, 2015). By early September 2015, the Danish government had even placed advertisements in Lebanese newspapers, warning refugees that they would encounter harsh measures, including detention and deportation, if they decided to come to Denmark (Gormsen, 2015). At the same time, the Danish government allowed refugees to transit to Sweden providing only minimal assistance during their journey through Denmark, and considering their stay only temporary. Nevertheless, Denmark experienced a considerable increase in asylum applications in 2015, accepting a total of 21,000 refugees, which ranks it number 10 among the EU countries with the highest intake of refugees per capita of the population (though seven times less than neighbouring Sweden and two to three times less than Germany).³²

The Danish government's harsh approach to the European crisis fuelled national debate and resulted in demands for more solidarity by its European partners. The formal opt-out from the EU Justice and Home Affairs did not mean that Denmark could also opt-out from crisis.³³ Public attitudes of solidarity towards refugees were not found to be particularly hostile in Denmark compared to other European countries. On the contrary, the harsh policies by the Danish government resulted in 18.1% of the population believing that Denmark should admit higher numbers of refugees from Syria.³⁴ A substantial part of the population also expressed embarrassment of their government's lack of solidarity towards refugees. During September and October 2015, tens of thousands of people took part in pro-refugee rallies in all the major cities of Denmark and civil society all over the country organised private action in support of incoming refugees (Sand, 2015).

However, the substantial minority of Danes favouring more liberal asylum policies stands in opposition to the large majority of those asking for even more restrictive policies (26.1%) or those categorically opposed to the intake of refugees (16.3%). These overwhelmingly negative attitudes towards refugees reflect a

³² <http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/08/02/number-of-refugees-to-europe-surges-to-record-1-3-million-in-2015/>

³³ See also (Adler-Nissen 2014: 66) on the many informal ways, the Danish government participates in Justice and Home Affairs cooperation.

³⁴ The Danish population is, according to our own 2018 TransSOL WP3 survey, the most favourable with regard to the question of taking in refugees from Syria. The average level of support among the 8 countries included in the survey is 12,3%.

general European trend and, according to our own TransSOL WP3 survey, the Danish population is slightly more tolerant of Syrian civil war refugees than Germans, French, Italians, Greeks and Poles.

Despite the majority of Danes supporting the restrictive governmental policies of autumn 2015, in our previous research on solidarity action in Denmark we collected evidence for an increasing polarisation of Danish society on questions regarding immigration, multiculturalism and international human rights obligations (Trenz & Grasso, 2018). As such, solidarity becomes increasingly contested with two opposite poles along a right-communitarian and left-cosmopolitan axis. The right-communitarian pole is formed by the Danish People's Party (*Dansk Folkeparti, DF*) defending an exclusive notion of national solidarity based on strong ethnic ties and new forms of civic mobilisation. DF is Denmark's second largest party, having gained 21.1% of the vote in the 2015 general elections and supporting the current right-liberal minority government in Parliament. The left-cosmopolitan pole is represented by the Red-Green Alliance (*Enhedslisten*), garnering 7.8% of the vote in the 2015 elections, but also by many civil society initiatives appealing to the moral obligations of inclusive, humanitarian solidarity, globally. Given the strong mobilisation power of the *DF* with its potential to reach the whole population (as was the case during the 'refugee crisis'), such forms of enhanced solidarity contestation mark an important shift from the consensus orientation that has traditionally characterised political culture in Scandinavia. In contrast to its neighbouring country, Sweden, immigration debates in Denmark have been always fought in a highly controversial way, categorically rejecting multiculturalism as a model for Danish society and expressing a clear preference for a restrictive control of incoming migrants and refugees (Green-Pedersen & Krogstrup, 2008; Hedetoft, 2010).

Our media analysis covers the period of heightened contestation from August 2015 until April 2016 in which new austere policies opposing solidarity with refugees were adopted. These new asylum policies confirm a long-term trend in Danish migration policies to put an emphasis on deterrence instead of reception. Nevertheless, they surprised in terms of their hard-headedness at a time when European solidarity was requested. We took a further look at contestation on Facebook during September 2015 during a particularly crucial time period when large numbers of refugees transited from Germany to Sweden. During this period, the Danish media were transmitting images of refugees who, due to the lack of assistance, were forced to cross the Southern Danish borders on foot. These events led to spontaneous solidarity mobilisations and questioned the austere policies of the government. How can we expect the Danish media debate to unfold in such a polarised climate?

The debate culture in the Danish media is traditionally characterised by moderate levels of conflict. In particular, with regard to Denmark's position in the EU, governmental positions are hardly challenged in the media, and journalists typically defend a unified vision of Danish interests or Danish identity in opposition to Europe (De Vreese, 2003; Trenz, Conrad, & Rosén, 2007). The question we are going to investigate in this report is whether this unified and consensual view of solidarity at home against Europe as a 'strange land' is upheld in the media. Do Danish claimants in the media externalise the refugee crisis and support the deterrence policies of their government? Or do the media open an arena for challenging the anti-solidarity position of the government, giving voice to opposition parties and pro-refugee civil society

movements? The question, in short, is whether the ‘refugee crisis’ potentially triggered a polarisation and Europeanisation effect in the media sphere. Polarisation is measured by assessing the extent to which the unitary position of government is challenged by claimants who call for solidarity with refugees. Europeanisation is measured by assessing the extent to which European and transnational dimensions of solidarity are made visible in the debates and to what extent the ‘welcoming cultures’ in neighbouring Sweden and Germany resonate in the Danish debates. User commenting adds another layer of contestation to the solidarity debate around refugees and its polarisation dynamics. It enables us to grasp how people who share feelings of political dissatisfaction and social marginalisation relate to the national debate regarding solidarity with refugees in Denmark.

The refugee crisis in the media: Chronology of debate

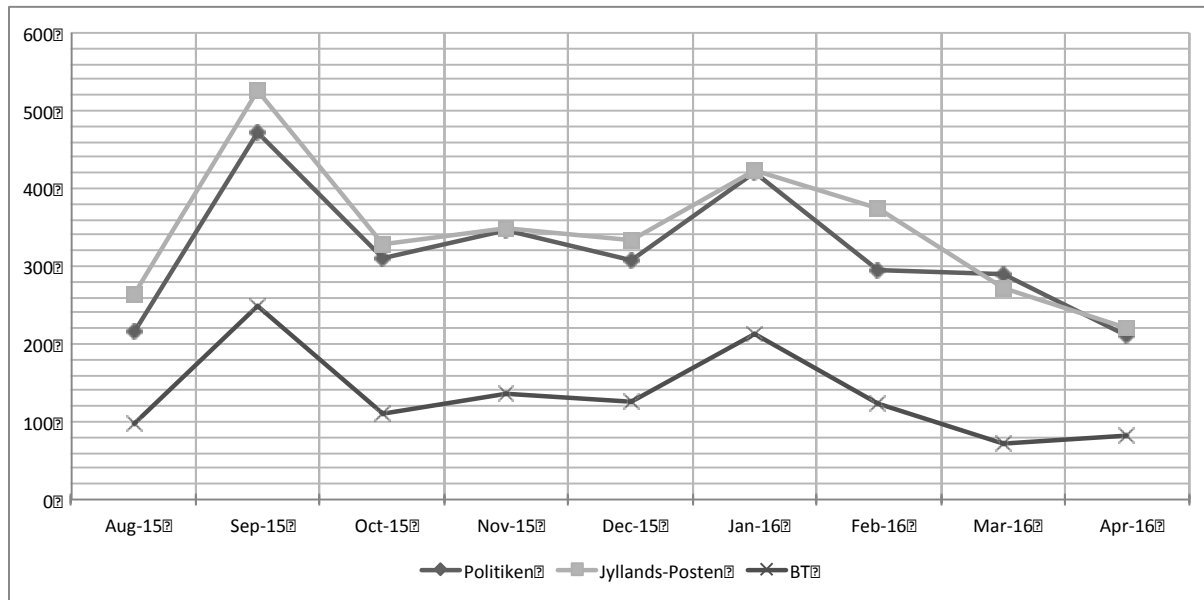
Denmark’s media landscape is characterised by a wide distribution of newspapers which reach a broad readership and therefore occupy an influential place in political debate. The three nationally distributed newspapers, namely *Jyllands-Posten*, *Politiken* and *Berlingske*, uphold standards of quality journalism and guarantee wide-ranging coverage of political events both nationally and internationally. We include *Jyllands-Posten* and *Politiken* in our sample as the two Danish newspapers with the widest circulation (Slots- og Kulturstyrelsen, 2017: 5). *Jyllands-Posten* is considered to be more government friendly, representing conservative readership (Hjarvard, 2007), while *Politiken* is considered to be more critical of government, representing a liberal-left leaning readership. The two nationally distributed tabloids, *Ekstra-bladet* and *BT* play a minor, though not insignificant role. We include *BT* in our sample because it has the largest readership of the two tabloids and we expect it to be supportive of the governmental restrictive policies towards refugees. The sample for the claims-making analysis comprises 707 claims (see Table 1).

Table 14: Sampling of claims in print versions

Month of publication	Politiken	Jyllands-Posten	BT
August 2015	216	263	98
September 2015	473	526	249
October 2015	311	328	110
November 2015	346	350	135
December 2015	309	334	125
January 2016	421	423	213
February 2016	296	374	123
March 2016	291	271	71
April 2016	211	220	82
Total number of articles	2874	3089	1206
Number of articles retrieved	380	343	386
Number of articles coded (i.e. of articles in which claims occurred)	109	108	141
Number of claims	235	236	236
Total number of claims in DK analysis of print	707		

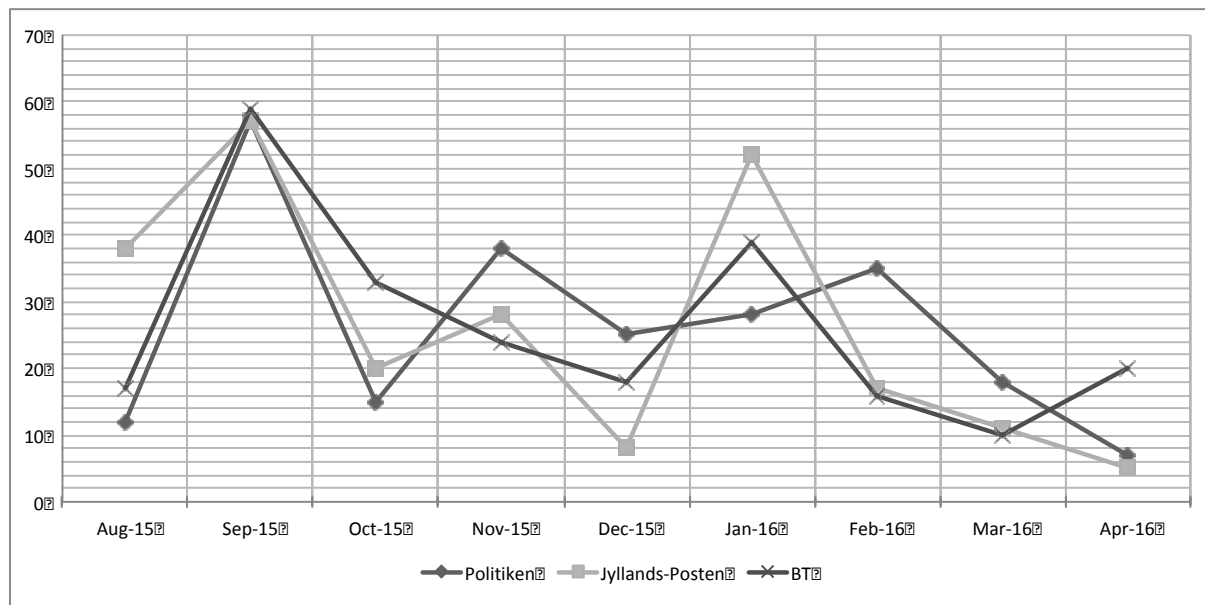
The distribution over time of the total number of articles retrieved in these three media outlets shows a similar trend (see Figure 1): The months of September and January mark frequency peaks in covering the ‘refugee crisis’. Even for *BT*, for which the number of sampled articles is lower, the frequency distribution over those two months is similar.

Figure 3: Total number of articles over sample time period



An overview of the frequency distribution of the sampled claims further emphasises the salience of the refugee crisis in September (see Figure 2). The months from November onwards show more or less similar courses of claims peaking in the early months of 2016. Claims in *Politiken* follow a slightly different frequency pattern than in *BT* and *Jyllands-Posten*. It is, however, difficult to determine whether these divergences point to differences in the news reporting between the newspapers, or whether they emerge as a result of the randomisation in the sampling procedure.

Figure 4: Number of claims over sample time period



By looking at the chronology of the debate in the Danish media, the peaks shown in articles and claims frequency (Figures 1 and 2) correspond to a few decisive political decisions and developments regarding the influx of asylum-seekers to Denmark and its neighbouring Germany and Sweden. Almost parallel debates across newspapers indicate a relatively unitary public sphere with focused debates. Generally, the hard-line approach to refugees was upheld by the government during the entire time period. We find that the 'refugee crisis' is particularly salient in September 2015 and January 2016 and news coverage and claims reflect and resonate some of the events during those months. In September 2015, the EU ministers voted on the Commission's plan to distribute 160,000 refugees across member states. In Denmark, in early September, the Danish Integration Ministry published announcements in Lebanese newspapers warning potential migrants against coming to Denmark. In the same month, the southern borders to Germany caught the public's eye as refugees and asylum-seekers made their way on foot along highways towards Denmark, most of them aiming to reach Sweden (Gormsen, 2015). Many Danish citizens mobilised to help them to transit through Denmark.

With the Swedish government deciding to introduce border controls in November 2015, Denmark was no longer a 'transit country' for refugees. Responding to its neighbouring country, in the first week of January 2016, the Danish government implemented border controls itself. Later that month, the government announced its highly provocative 'jewellery law', which allowed for the seizure of assets from refugees upon arrival in Denmark. These harsh measures caused an international outcry, but were also discussed as controversial within Denmark.

Patterns of political claims-making: The denial of transnational solidarity

The patterns of political claims regarding solidarity towards refugees point to an overall emphasis on management and political control. The refugee influx is presented as a problem of national government

that requires domestic measures of security and border control, and not an externally coordinated action in a European humanitarian framework. Four dominant trends underline these results. First, a focus on domestic state actors as most salient claimants; second, issue salience of policies directed at managing the influx of refugees, rather than integration or humanitarian action; third, a focus on political decisions as the main form of action backed by verbal statements, mainly by state actors; and fourth, often interest-based, more pragmatic justifications in political debates following mainly negative state actors as claimants.

Actors: a national focus of claims-making

As Table 2 indicates, state actors (42.3%), followed by political parties (15.1%), present the most dominant group among main claimants³⁵ in the sample. Together, these actor categories represent more than half of the claimants (57.4%). Civil society actors, as well as the voices of ordinary citizens (within category “Other actors”) together make up 32.8% of the claimants. EU member states (as a claimant group) as well as supranational actors (e.g. EU institutions, NATO, the UN) form only 9.9% of claimants.

Table 15: Main claimants

	Frequency	Percent
State actors	299	42.3%
Political parties	107	15.1%
Civil society	231	32.7%
Supranational actors (the EU and the UN)	68	9.6%
Others/unknown ³⁶	2	0.3%
Total	707	100%

We can therefore speak of a trend in Danish newspapers to debate refugees mainly from a state-centred, top-down perspective with an emphasis on control instead of solidarity, while opposition in support of solidarity is mainly mobilised in the form of civil society’s voice and less often by political parties. Foreign or European actors appear in approximately every 10th claim, which clearly downplays the European and transnational dimension of the ‘crisis’, and, above all, the appeals for solidarity by neighbouring countries such as Germany and Sweden.

This state-centred top-down perspective regarding solidarity contestation is further corroborated by the scope variable (see Table 3). Almost two thirds of the main claimants have a national scope (63.9%). The regional (18.2%), and in particular, the ‘above national’ dimensions (16.3%) of contestation are clearly

³⁵ With ‘main claimants’ we refer to the variable of the main actor. We use the terms ‘actor’ and ‘claimant’ interchangeably.

³⁶ This category includes ‘EU member state(s) (any/some/all of them)’

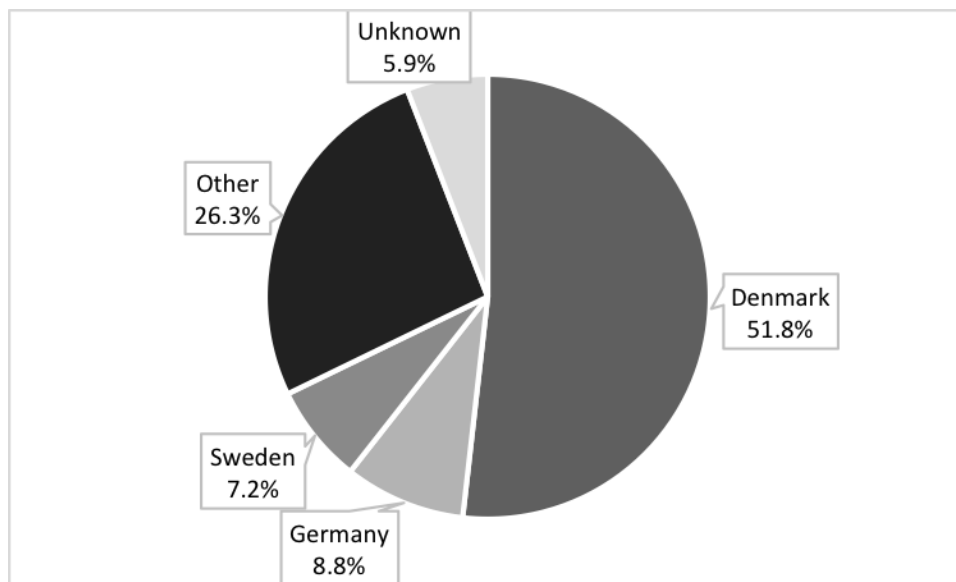
underrepresented, even though the ‘refugee crisis’ is per se a transnational issue. Civil society organisations reach out more frequently beyond national boundaries.³⁷

Table 16: Main claimants and scope

	Above national	National	Sub-national	Unknown
State actors	1.6%	33.5%	7.2%	0%
Political parties	0.4%	13.2%	1.7%	0%
Civil society	4.7%	16.9%	9.3%	1.6%
Supranational actors	9.6%	0%	0%	0%
Others/unknown	0%	0.3%	0%	0%
Total	16.3%	63.9%	18.2%	1.6%

The overall dominance of national-domestic voice over foreign or European voice points to a low level of Europeanisation of the refugee debate in the media. Furthermore, in terms of nationality, we find that more than half of the claimants are Danish (51.8%, see Figure 3).

Figure 5: Nationality of main claimant



The large share of Danish claimants in the sample can be explained by a general media nationalism in selectively giving voice to domestic actors over foreign and European actors, found to be dominant in EU news coverage and in Europeanised public debates (Koopmans, 2010; Trenz, 2015). In the context of the refugee debate, this result of a strong national focus of the Danish debate is still noteworthy given the inevitably transnational dimension in the discussion of the causes and effects of flight, the wider European

³⁷ Regarding the subcategories in this category: ‘Refugees and migrants (individuals)’ occur 20 times and dominates thereby 36,4% in the main category. The subcategory ‘refugee-crisis formal initiatives supporting refugees’ occurs 17 times which makes 30,9% of the main category.

repercussions of the crisis, and the European-international context of cooperation within which possible solutions to ‘crisis’ were debated.

We nevertheless find a substantial share of approximately half of the claims raised in the Danish media are foreign. A look at these voices from other countries given selective salience in the Danish debate reveals a regional preference with a strong focus on Denmark’s neighbouring countries, Germany (8.8%) and Sweden (7.2%) (see Figure 3). Both the German and the Swedish governments took in considerably higher numbers of refugees than Denmark and their more liberal policies had direct repercussions on Denmark as a transit country between Germany and Sweden. The Danish debate is instead not informed by claimants from the countries of origin during the ‘refugee crisis’, or from the first countries of transit (Turkey 1.3% and Greece 2.7%) (see Table 4). Apart from the supranational (EU) actors, the standout foreign actors that were given voice in the media were: Civil society groups, formal and informal organisations and/or initiatives specifically engaged with the refugee situation stand out.

Table 4: Nationality of main claimants

	Frequency	Percent
France	14	2%
Germany	62	8.8%
Greece	19	2.7%
Italy	4	0.6%
Poland	11	1.6%
Denmark	366	51.8%
Switzerland	3	0.4%
United Kingdom	7	1%
Austria	9	1.3%
Slovenia	2	0.3%
Hungary	21	3%
Bulgaria	1	0.1%
Croatia	1	0.1%
Luxembourg	3	0.4%
Netherlands	5	0.7%
Belgium	2	0.3%
Slovakia	4	0.6%
Sweden	51	7.2%
Finland	8	1.1%
Macedonia	3	0.4%
Turkey	9	1.3%
Syria	10	1.4%
US	1	0.1%
Iraq	4	0.6%
Afghanistan	1	0.1%
Unknown	86	12.1%
Total	707	100%

Among the political party actors (see Table 5) which drive the debate in Denmark, the Danish People's Party (the *DF*), the second largest party in Denmark, strictly opposed to refugee solidarity, represents most claimants. The main opposition party, and Denmark's largest political party, the Social Democrats (*Socialdemokratiet*, *SD*) ranks second among the claimants. The *SDs*, however, were not explicitly opposed to the government's restrictive policies towards refugees and did not propose a more inclusive solidarity agenda. *Venstre*, the governing party on the centre-right, is the third most frequent claimant in the media. It is noteworthy how these three parties dominate the debate. Other parties who defend a solidarity agenda with refugees, such as *Enhedslisten*, are hardly ever given voice in the debate with a mere four claims. In this way, the *DF* gains visibility in the media by means of provocation and the expression of hostile attitudes toward refugees. As research suggests, conflict gains media attention (Vliegenhart et al., 2011: 92-110).

Table 5: Danish parties and positions towards refugees³⁸

	Anti-object	Neutral/ambivalent	Pro-object	Total
Other parties	2	0	0	2
Alternativet	0	0	2	2
Dansk Folkeparti	33	5	0	38
Det Konservative Folkeparti	8	0	1	9
Enhedslisten	0	0	4	4
Liberal Alliance	0	1	0	1
Radikale Venstre	0	2	6	8
Socialdemokratiet	3	12	8	23
Socialistisk Folkeparti	0	1	4	5
Venstre	8	5	3	16
No political party	80	48	130	258
Total	134	74	158	366

Issues: low salience of solidarity and focus on management and control

The high visibility of domestic actors who reject a European agenda of solidarity with refugees lead us to conclude that issues relating to refugee solidarity are given low salience in the media. The most salient issues raised in the debate relate indeed to policies directed at 'Migration Management', that is, aspects touching upon asylum policies, border controls and other ways to control, secure or administer the influx of refugees and asylum-seekers (see Figure 4).³⁹ This issue is mainly raised by political actors (state actors 32.8%, political parties 12.9%, supranational actors 8.5%).

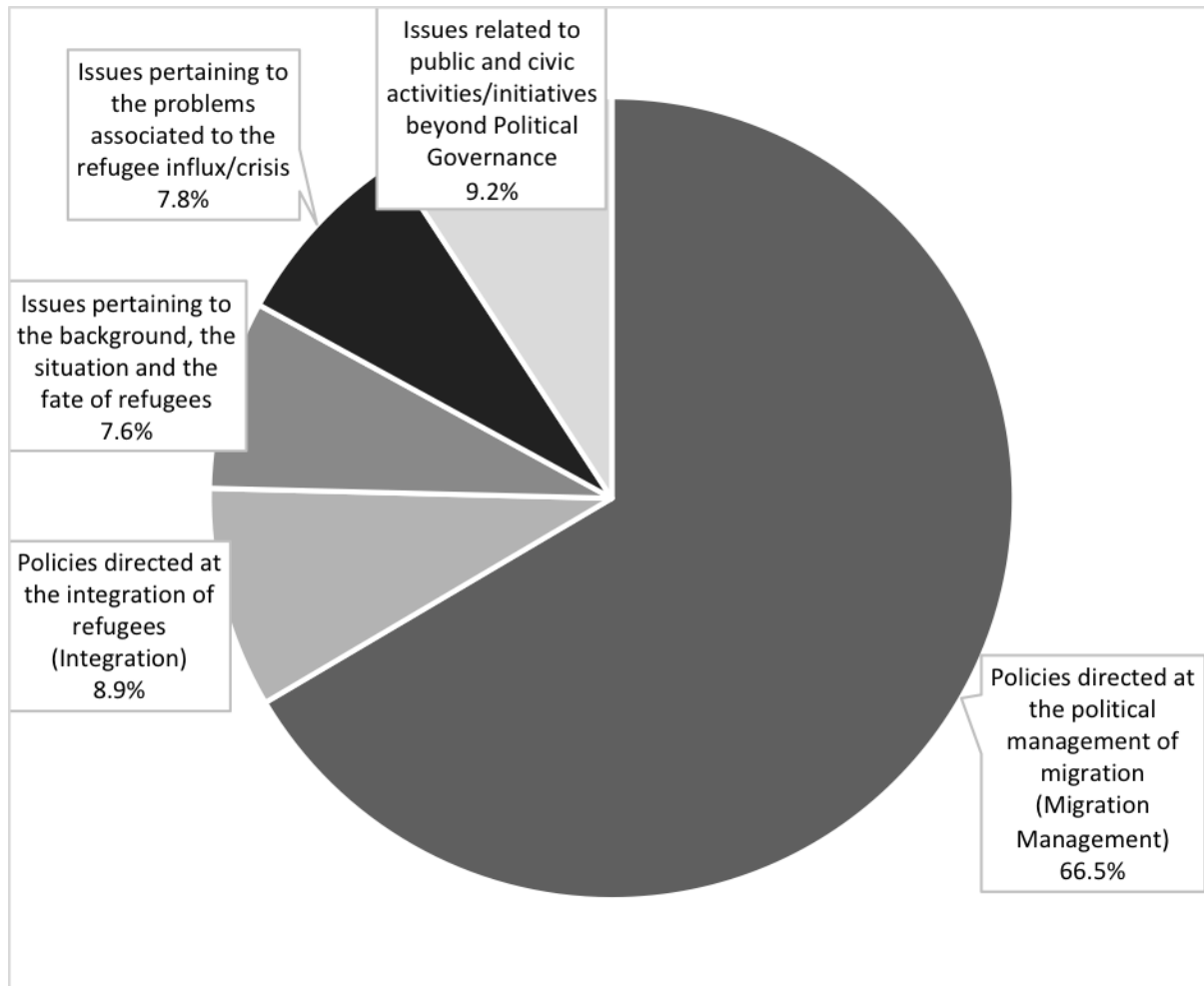
At 66.5%, such security and control issues take up most space in the debate, leaving minimal room for raising alternative agendas in support of refugee solidarity. In fact, only every 11th claim raises a solidarity

³⁸ Non-Danish party claimants are marginal in the data, therefore not included.

³⁹ Of all the claims, the three most salient subcategories are found in this main category: 'asylum policies' accounts for 26,3%, 'border management' for 15% and 'accommodation' for 6,6%.

issue regarding the integration of refugees (8.9%) and only every 13th claim thematises experiences of flight or personal needs of refugees (7.6%).⁴⁰

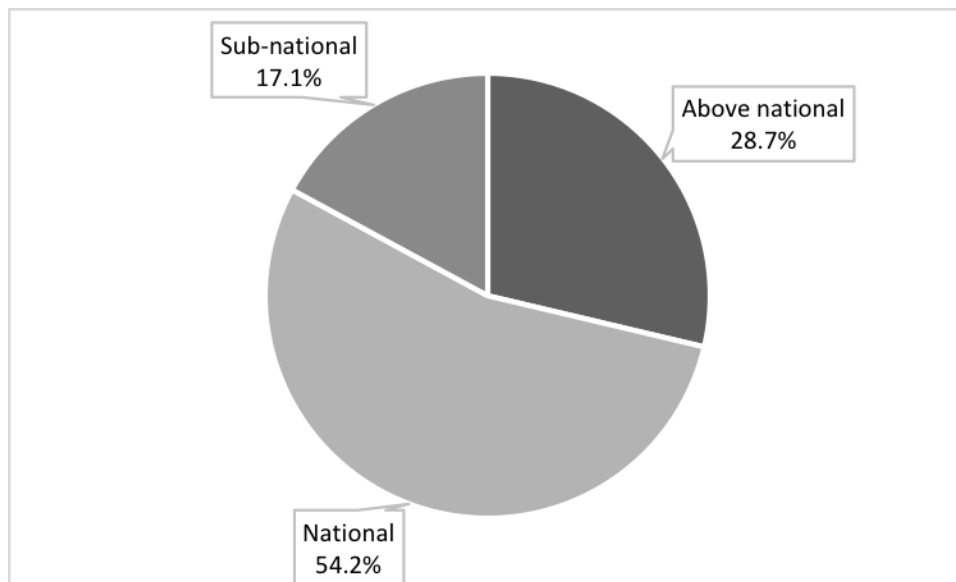
Figure 6: Distribution of main issue



This trend of overemphasising a domestic perspective on the ‘refugee crisis’ as a question of security, control and border management, and externalising its humanitarian dimension is further supported by the scope within which these issues are debated (see Figure 5). Of all the issues raised in the debate, 71.3% are of purely national or subnational scope, i.e. do not look beyond the borders of Denmark. Less than one third of the claims touch upon the European and transnational ramifications of the refugee crisis.

⁴⁰ Looking separately at the main issue category ‘migration management’, 56,4% (264 claims in total) of these issues cover a national scope, 33,6% (160 claims in total) an above national scope, and 10% (46 claims in total) a sub-national scope.

Figure 7: Scope of main issue



On the one hand, the focus on border control and asylum, i.e. the managing of migration influx, lies in the competencies of political decision-makers. The issue salience of 'migration management' goes hand in hand with the salience of Danish political state actors as main claimants in the mainstream media. National news is therefore a product of agenda-setting and selection that follows criteria of national relevance. On the other hand, in the EU context, the control over national borders has partially been handed over to the supranational level. In this way, the issue of salience in the category of migration management reflects the conflict between national and supranational decision-making over EU member states' borders. In other words, this particular constellation of claims suggests that in the Danish media, the 'refugee crisis' is to a high degree carried out as a conflict of limited national decision-making power within the EU immigration regime.

Addressed and blamed actors in Danish solidarity contestation

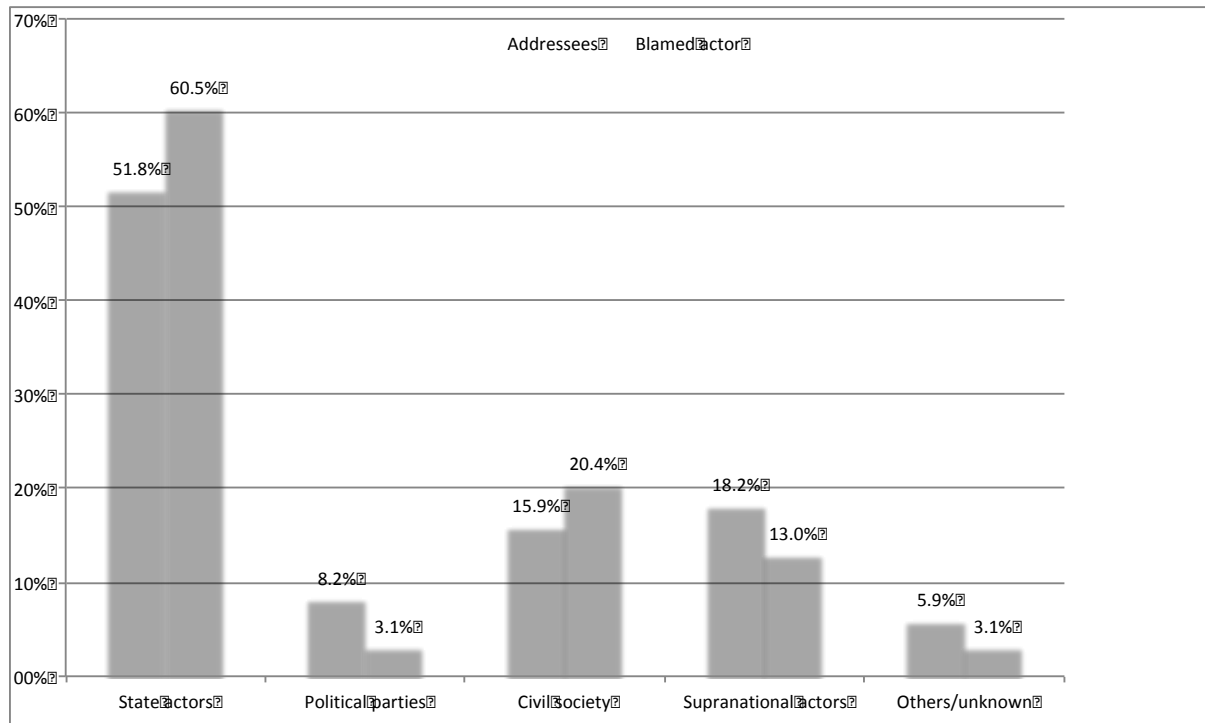
Claims-making analysis allows us to confirm our picture of a dominantly national scope of solidarity contestation by looking first at claims which address specific actors with a direct call to take action (variable addressee); and secondly, claims which hold other actors responsible for a problem associated with the 'refugee crisis' (variable blamed actor).

In 24% (170 instances) of claims, an addressee is present. In general, 51.8% of these addressees are state actors, while 1.2% of addressees are supranational actors (see Figure 6). Confirming a focus on national debates, 44.1% of the addressees are Danish.⁴¹

⁴¹ The remaining shares are rather inconclusive: A large number of addressees' nationality is not further specified or unknown, which is why we will not go into further detail here.

In 162 claims (22.9%), a responsible actor is blamed.⁴² Hereby, state actors present the most salient category again, accounting for 98 blamed actors (60.5% of all blamed actors). Supranational actors are blamed 21 times (12.9%) (see Figure 6). The most salient nationality of the blamed actors is Danish, accounting for 42.6% of all blamed actors⁴³, and 59.9% of all blaming actors have a national scope.

Figure 6: Addressed and blamed actors



State actors are those who most frequently address other actors (37.6%), almost a third of those being other state actors (23 times). Political parties rank second in addressing other actors (20.6%), also addressing mainly state actors. Similar patterns can be observed when looking at claimants who blame: State actors are those who most blame other actors (26.5%) followed by political parties (21.6%). This shows the power of state actors and political parties in agenda-setting: They decide about the significant other to be addressed and about the attribution of political responsibility. In so doing, they move horizontally, addressing or blaming mainly fellow state actors or parties. Interactions across levels, e.g. in the form of addressing or blaming supranational actors, are less frequent. While there are signs of debates between actors across supranational and national, as well as between state actors and civil society, one can neither speak of Europeanised (neither vertically nor horizontally) debates in the media; nor do the claims suggest frequent exchanges between political actors and civil society. Addressees and blamed actors mostly belong to the same political scope as the claimant, while exchanges beyond this scope are not as visible.

⁴² While only 5,9% of total claims refers to credited actors.

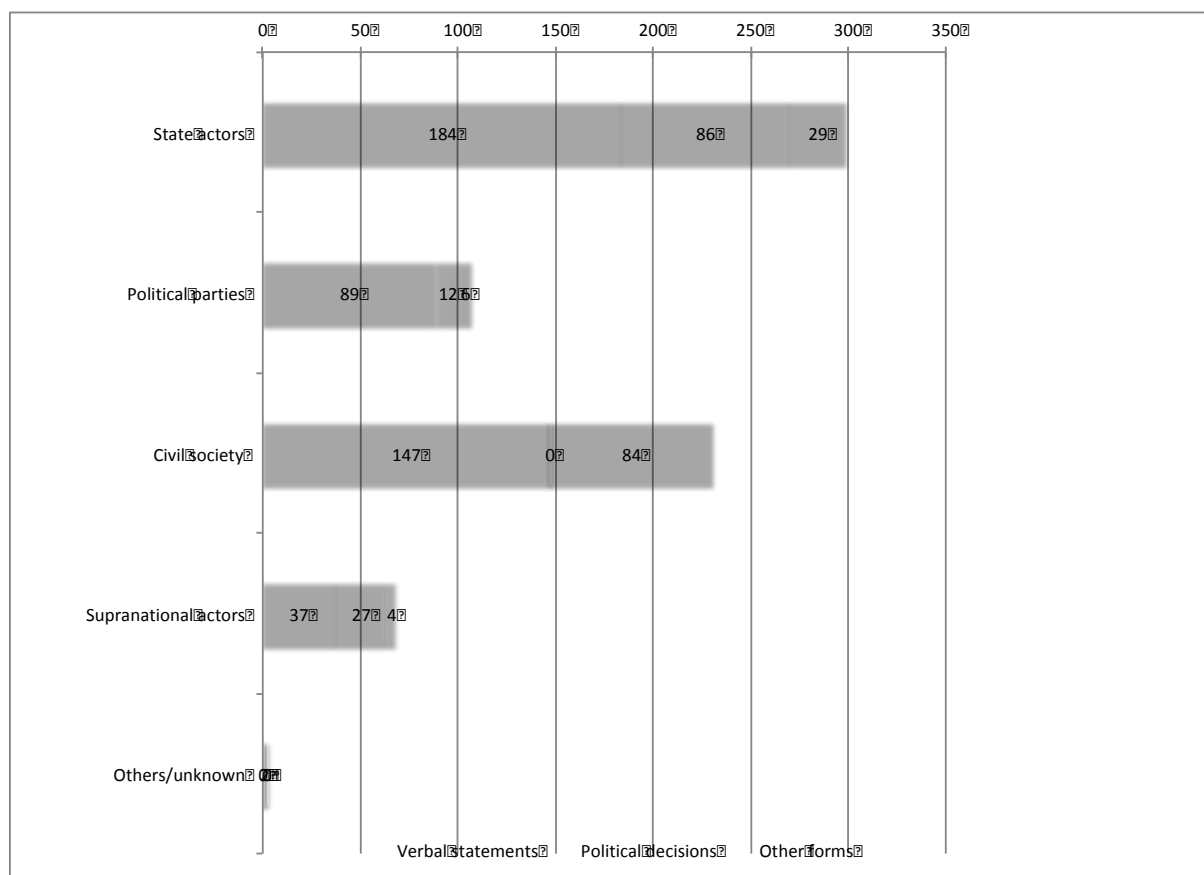
⁴³ Again, other data on nationality are inconclusive here.

Forms of actions in Danish solidarity contestation

Having assessed who the main claimants are, which issues they raise and how far they direct their claims at others, the form of action of the claim further informs how solidarity contestation takes place in the Danish sample. The most frequent form of action in the claims are verbal statements (nearly two thirds; 64.6%), such as informal proposals by state actors, during interviews or press conferences. Political decisions rank second at 17.9%.

The cross-tabulation of main claimants with forms of action shows that state decision-makers are given ample room in the public debates (see Figure 7). The dominance of verbal statements and political decisions points to a top-down perspective in the interpretation of the ‘refugee crisis’ through the authoritarian voice of the state and not through civil society or opposition parties. Solidarity contestation is further confined to the official arena of state and party politics, and there is not so great a focus on solidarity action or protest.

Figure 7: Forms of action across claimants (frequencies)



In sum, the ‘refugee crisis’ is mainly contested verbally, with most of these statements being made by state actors as the main contestants of solidarity. The news gives an official account of how decisions are taken, but leaves out protest actions and direct solidarity actions (such as providing resources to refugees directly). In this way, the focus on top-down decision-making and contestation is made visible. The main

opposition voice is mobilised by civil society and grassroots organisations, or NGOs, and not by political parties, and as such, receives considerably less attention in the news reporting. Polarisation takes place between state and civil society, not along ideological lines between political parties.

Solidarity divide in Denmark: Political actors versus civil society

Our initial assumption of an increasing polarisation of Danish society along the lines of inclusive humanitarian solidarity orientations towards others and exclusive national solidarity is thus confirmed when looking at the constellation between state/governmental actors and civil society. Civil society representatives appear in the media not simply as care-takers or charity actors, but as actors in opposition to the government. The refugee crisis leads in this sense to a politicisation of the civil society sector. This confirms the bipolar patterns of refugee solidarity in Denmark, which we also found in our survey of civil society solidarity action (TransSOL WP2; Duru, Spejlborg Sejersen & Trenz, forthcoming): While on the one hand, the refugee crisis has mobilised many Danish people in support of refugee solidarity as well as engaging them in charity action and political protest, there is, on the other hand, a widespread attitude of welfare chauvinism paired with anti-immigrant attitudes.

The lively Danish civil society in support of refugee solidarity, however, is not plot for news stories in the media. Danish citizens' engagement in voluntary work is only marginally dealt with as part of the news coverage of the 'refugee crisis'. This holds for the group of main claimants, issue salience and forms of action as reported in the previous section. This dominance of Danish state actors and political parties opposed to representatives of civil society has become important when looking at claimants' positions toward refugees.

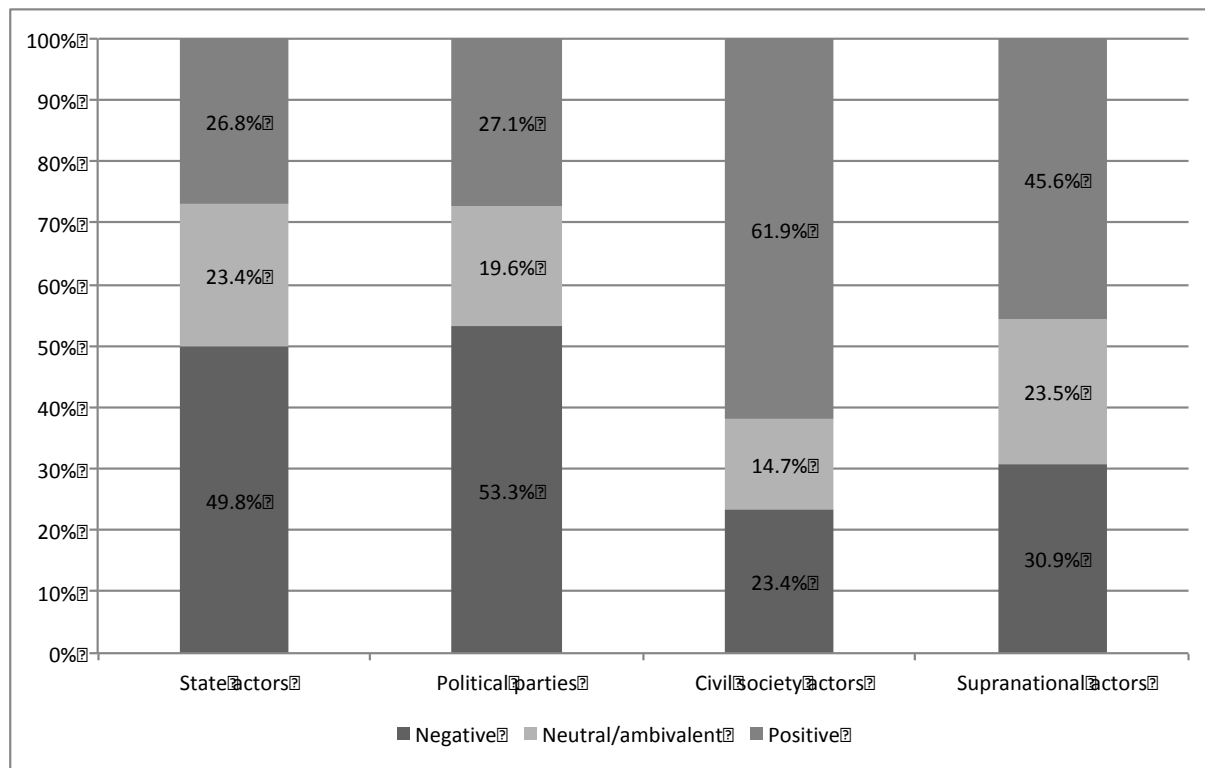
In the following, we will analyse whether there is a polarisation effect in the tonality of claims-making, i.e. in the way refugee solidarity is supported or rejected by claimants in the media. The analysis suggests a sharp solidarity divide between a dominant anti-solidarity majority voice expressed by state actors and political parties, and a pro-refugee minority voice expressed by ordinary citizens and claimants from civil society.

The overall distribution of pro- and anti-solidarity claims towards refugees reflects a sharp polarisation of the debate dividing the claimants in half: Positionality towards solidarity on average is distributed between 40% negative, 40% positive and 20% neutral claims regarding refugees, with no significant difference in the positioning between the newspapers. Politicisation is thus high since 80% of the claimants take an explicit stance on refugee solidarity. Generally, political actors hold the main share in negative positions towards refugee solidarity. 72.8% of all negative attitudes expressed towards refugees originate in statements by state actors (52.7%) and political parties (20.1%).⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Followed by 'other actors', mostly local citizens, with 10,6% and 'supranational actors' with 7,4%, while the other actor categories are below 4%.

When looking at the positioning of single claimant categories (see Figure 8), state actors are dominantly negative with 49.8% against, 26.8% positive. Negativity is expressed to a higher degree among political parties with 53.3% against, 27.1% positive. While it is not unexpected for state actors to defend the official restrictive stance of the Danish government, it is surprising that political party contestations are not more balanced. Opposition towards the government's anti-solidarity agenda is only expressed by a minority of actors. This contrasts sharply with positions taken by civil society actors, 61.9% of whom are supportive of refugees, while only 23.4% are negative. Supranational actors, among them mainly representatives of the EU, are also generally more favourable, with 45.6% expressing support for refugees, thus in opposition to the official position of the Danish government.

Figure 8: Positions of actors toward refugees⁴⁵



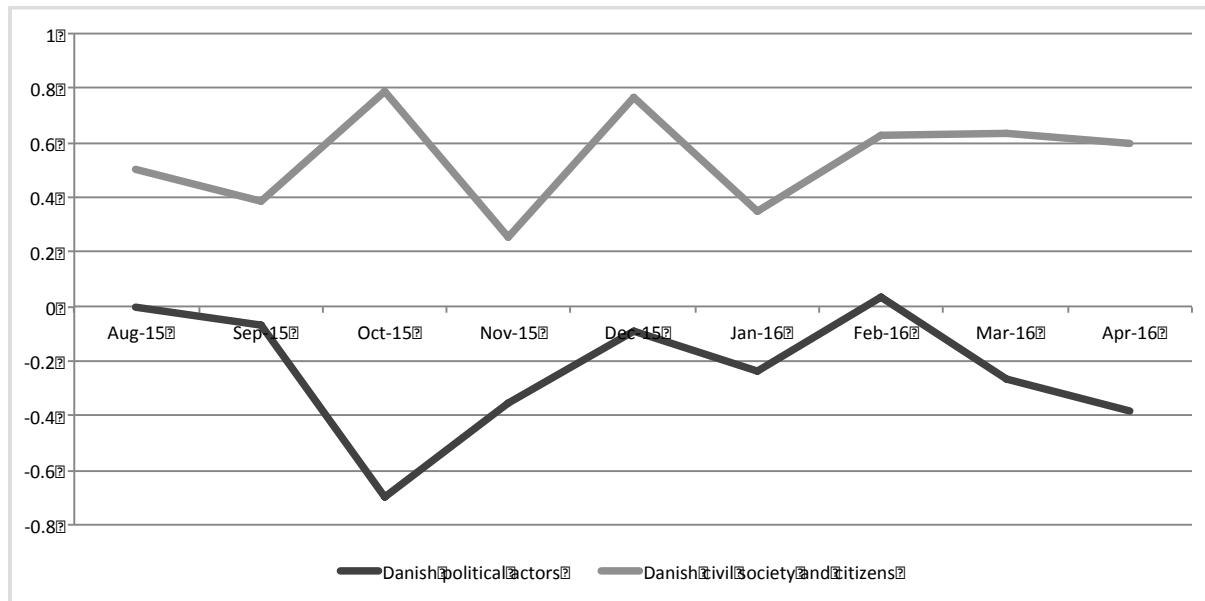
When we look more closely at the distribution of positionality across claimants and time, we find huge variation confirming the patterns of a bipolar constellation of Danish society regarding the question of refugee solidarity between top down, political actors and bottom-up civil society (see Figure 9).⁴⁶ We can notice a decline in solidarity toward refugees in the months of August and September in the heat of the crisis. This regards, in particular, the positioning of political actors while civil society claimants remain positive. There is thus a widening gap between two types of claimants: Top-down decision-makers and their

⁴⁵ The category 'Other/unknown' refers to only a small number of claims. With less than 5 claims, this actor category will be disregarded.

⁴⁶ The category 'political actors' comprises both domestic, beyond national as well as subnational political actors. The category of 'civil society' aggregates a broad range of professional organisations and institutes, NGOs, other formal and informal initiatives, local people and (refugee) activists.

increasingly restrictive attitudes towards refugees, and bottom-up actors who insist on refugee solidarity without compromise.

Figure 9: Position of Danish claimants over time period



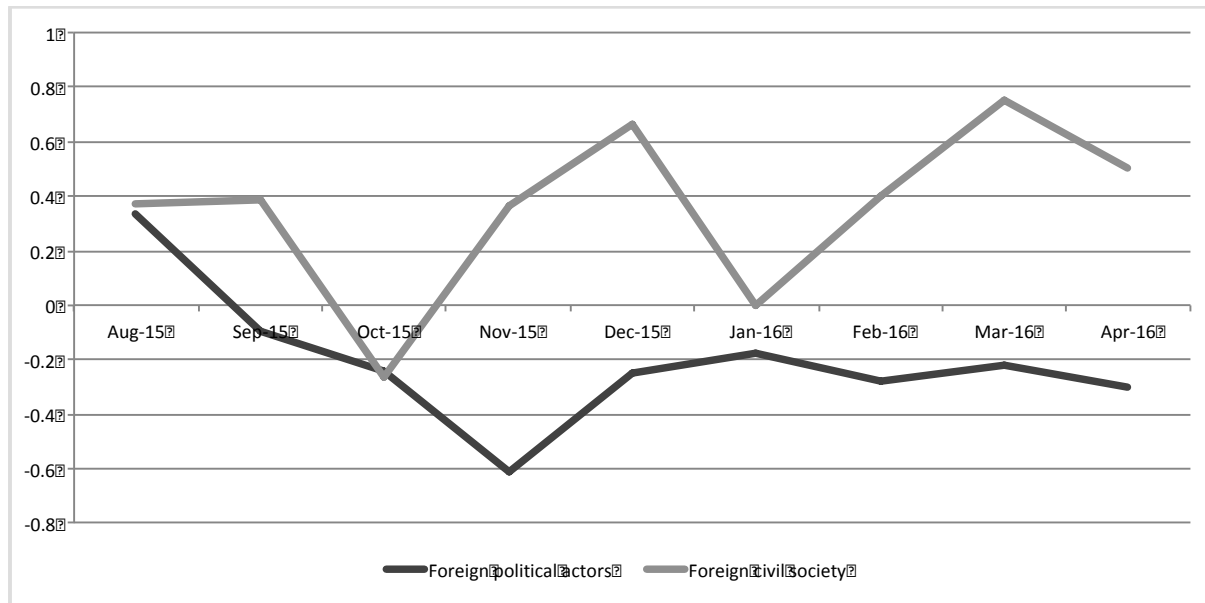
These debates resonate in the Danish news media in the sense of making a government opposition voice more salient. Danish political actors' claims became more confrontational during this time (December to February), contesting the rather harsh political decisions taken and mitigating it through a more positive stance towards refugees (which also partly reflects the harsh international criticism of the 'jewellery law', for example).⁴⁷

As shown above, 51.8% are Danish claimants, 42.3% are foreign, and 5.9% are unknown. A look at foreign claimants' positionality can therefore provide insight into whether this divide between political actors and civil society applies especially to Danish actors. Comparing Danish claimants' positionality over time with foreign claimants finds claimants from civil society generally more positive towards refugees than political actors (see Figure 10).⁴⁸ In the case of foreign actors' positioning, we thus find a similar divide between political actors and civil society. Even though this division seems to be more dynamic, it is not as stable as among Danish actors. October and November mark definitive negative stances among political actors, which might be due to the general repositioning of European governments during these months with Sweden introducing border controls and other countries reacting to the Paris terrorist attacks of November 13.

⁴⁷ Since civil society actors present only a small share as claimants, it is not possible to interpret their variation in positionality over time shown in figure 9 any further.

⁴⁸ Due to the low number of civil society actors, these data reflect trends only.

Figure 10: Position of foreign claimants over time



Looking more specifically at the justifications that are given in support of or in opposition to refugee solidarity, we find an overall pattern of state actor dominance, with their emphasis on restriction and control once more confirmed. Table 6 shows two aspects: The share of justifications in relation to positionality within actor types (rows), and the share of justification types across actor types (columns).

Table 6: Types of justification regarding support or rejection of solidarity toward refugees

	Interest-based	Rights-based	Identity-based	No justification	Total (actor and related positionality)
Danish political actors	36.9%	14.2%	1.6%	10.9%	63.7%
Negative	22.7%	1.6%	0.5%	5.2%	30.1%
Neutral/ambivalent	8.7%	2.7%	0.3%	3.6%	15.3%
Positive	5.5%	9.8%	0.8%	2.2%	18.3%
Danish civil society	13.7%	13.7%	2.2%	6.8%	36.3%
Negative	4.1%	0.5%	0.8%	1.1%	6.6%
Neutral/ambivalent	3.3%	0.8%	0%	0.8%	4.9%
Positive	6.3%	12.3%	1.4%	4.9%	24.9%
Total (justification type across actor type)	50.5%	27.9%	3.8%	17.8%	100%

The most frequent justification is based on rational interests (50.5%), followed by justifications referring to rights (27.9%). Interest-based justifications are used as the rationale to deny solidarity with refugees (emphasis on security and control), while rights-based justifications are used almost exclusively in support of refugee solidarity. A detailed look at the claimants and their stances regarding refugees reveals that Danish political actors are not only more negative (30.1%) than positive (18.3%); they also justify their

mostly negative stances toward solidarity for refugees based on interests. Danish civil society uses both interest and rights justifications (both 13.7%) mostly in defence of refugee solidarity.⁴⁹

In this way, Danish political actors in general are most salient (63.7%). While this might follow the general logic of news selection in national media with a focus on political decision-making, such a selective logic means on the other hand that expressions of solidarity toward refugees become marginalised. Indeed, the negative voice of Danish political actors (30.1%) is almost as visible as the total number of claims from Danish civil society (36.3%). The rather low share of claims with no justifications at all in both claimant categories (17.8% in total) makes the argumentative or opinionated character of the refugee debates in the media visible: 82.2% of the claimants gave reasons why they reject or support solidarity towards refugees. This underlines the aforementioned politicisation of the 'refugee crisis' in the Danish context.

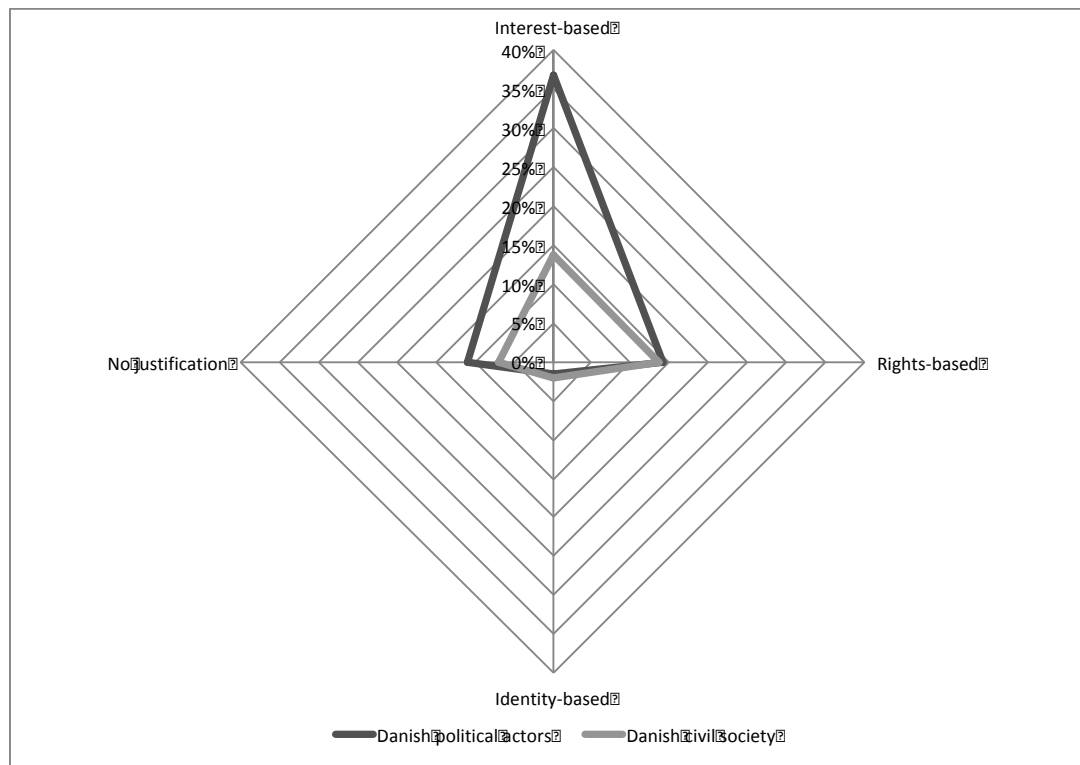
It somewhat surprises that identity-based justifications do not figure prominently in public debate. The refugee crisis is apparently not contested in terms of conflicting identities. This disproves assumptions about the salience of new identity conflicts in public discourse about migration (Larsen, 2008). National identity could have assumed to play a bigger role then, also given the fact that anti-immigration sentiments are often related to strong identification with a national community, traditions or practices (Hansen, 2002; Niklasson, 2018). At least with regard to refugees, there rather seems to be a confrontation between material national interests and universal/humanitarian concerns (see also Figure 11). Danish political actors frame the refugee debate pragmatically – and in ways of rejecting solidarity – focus on management instead of collective identities.

Taken together, the claims-analysis delivers both expected as well as surprising insight into the ways in which solidarity debates regarding the 'refugee crisis' in the Danish media have unfolded during its peaks from August 2015 to April 2016. The three Danish newspapers, *Politiken*, *Jyllands-Posten* and *BT*, displayed a rather unison focus on a debate that was conducted across different media formats. The most salient voices and issues follow the expected patterns of news-making and selection in a national context, with Danish state and governmental actors being prevalent, followed by political parties, who in their majority are supportive of government.

The analysis has also shed light on a newly emerging political cleavage between supporters of nationally exclusive solidarity and supporters of humanitarian solidarity. This cleavage is not so much visible between newspapers on different political spectrums, but has polarised Danish political actors as opponents of refugee solidarity, and Danish civil society as supporters.

⁴⁹ Note that the number of civil society actors in the sample is too low to interpret the results here. Yet, the data allows for comparing patterns of which justifications are used by these actors notwithstanding.

Figure 11: Types of justification for Danish political actors and civil society



A month of contestation on Facebook: Commenters' responses to the solidarity debate

In the following, we are interested in the question of how online news readers as commenters on Facebook reacted to the positions of claims raised in the newspapers: Did they support or challenge particular groups of actors (state, political party and civil society)? This focus will provide further insight into the polarisation over the solidarity question by adding a different perspective. Although often overlooked in public debate, commenters on Facebook and on other online platforms can be understood as mobilised, dissatisfied parts of society by making themselves visible online (Brändle, 2017; Coleman, 2013). Did they raise their voice in support of or in opposition to refugee solidarity, and how did they justify their political preferences?

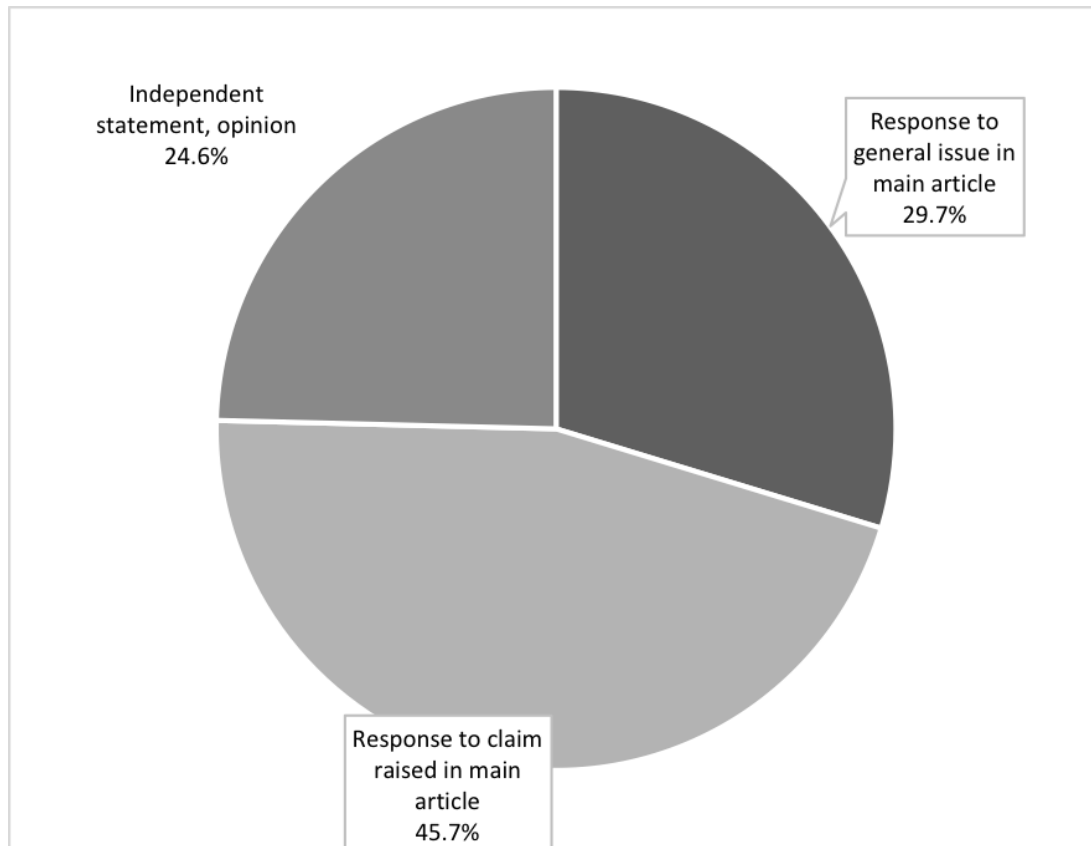
The commenting landscape, particularly on Facebook, has proven to be difficult to categorise and the potential of commenting for ordinary citizens to 'talk back' to elites or to participate in public debate remains controversial (Baaden & Springer, 2014; Domingo et al., 2008; Toepfl & Piwoni, 2015). Our research design of claims-making is original in this regard as it allows for measuring interdiscursivity regarding the degree to which commenters on social media make explicit reference to claims raised by political actors in the media. We are thus able to measure how far commenters actually read and engage with news posted on Facebook by media outlets.

The online sample for the comment analysis consists of 300 comments from the 15 most commented posted articles on the Facebook pages of *Politiken*, *Jyllands-Posten* and *BT*, and 37 claims in these posted

articles. Out of the 300 comments, 232 comments referred to refugees. This means that 77.3% of commenters explicitly or implicitly referred to refugees as potential recipients of solidarity. The following analysis will focus on this exact percentage of comments.

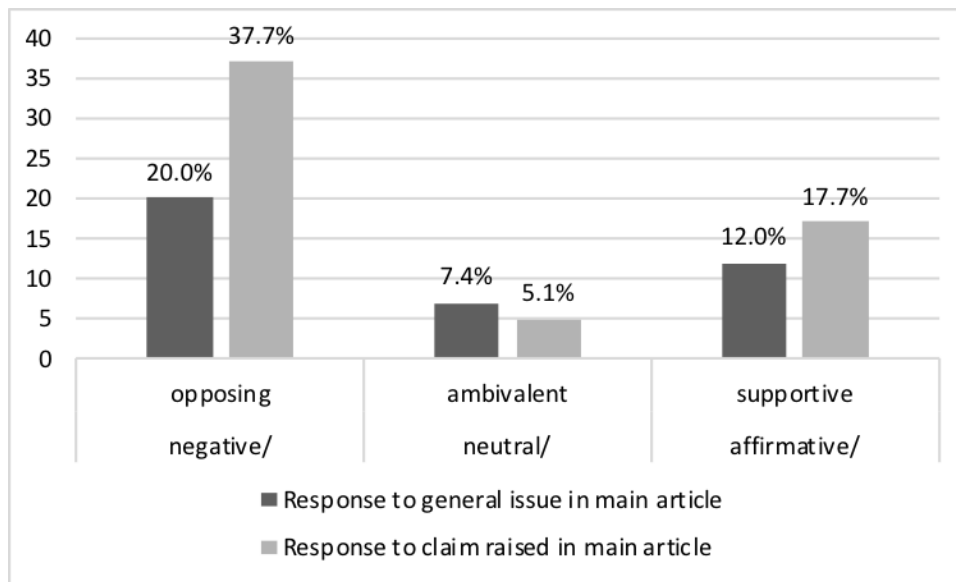
The responsiveness of commenters on Facebook to the content of political news was high (see Figure 12): 75.4% of all commenters responded to news on the refugee crisis, while only 24.6% of the users posted unrelated independent statements (most of them, however, were still within the thematic context of the refugee crisis). We further distinguish between a more general way to respond to the issues raised in the main article and a specific way to respond to claims raised by actors in the main article.

Figure 12: Claims and comments relation



The results show that the debate was strongly actor-focused and that commenters sought to engage directly with contributions by political actors in the debate. More precisely, the analysis suggests that commenters were dominantly negative toward the posted articles (see Figure 13). 37.7% opposed an issue in the posted article in general and still higher numbers, i.e. 20% of posters, rejected the claims in the posted articles.

Figure 13: Position of commenters towards claim or issue



This suggests that the commenters in the sample formed, in essence, a group of engaged users in the refugee question in Denmark. In other words, these findings show that a majority of the commenters ‘talk back’ to claimants in the media by opposing their views. This is only partially in line with other research that suggests that Facebook news pages are dominantly used to voice more general political discontent and frustration, or which found the level of interdiscursivity to be low (Hille & Bakker, 2013).

Another important dimension to understand solidarity contestation regarding the ‘refugee crisis’ is whether commenters support or oppose the positions expressed by the main claimants in the news media and how they position themselves in solidarity towards refugees. In order to trace how commenters ‘talk back’ to these posts, we need to consider both the positionality of the 232 comments and the 37 claims in the posted articles (visualised in Figure 14). We do not differentiate between actor types and nationality of the claimants in the posts.⁵⁰

As opposed to the claim-analysis in the previous section, we find that the five most commented articles posted by *Politiken*, *Jyllands-Posten* and *BT* respectively on their Facebook pages contained more positive claims than negative ones. Almost two thirds of the claimants in these articles were positive towards refugees, 59.5% (22 claims). 21.6% (8 claims) were ambivalent or neutral, while negative claimants had the lowest share at 18.9% (7 claims). In other words, across the three Facebook pages in September, 2015, article posts with dominantly positive stances towards refugees triggered the most comments.

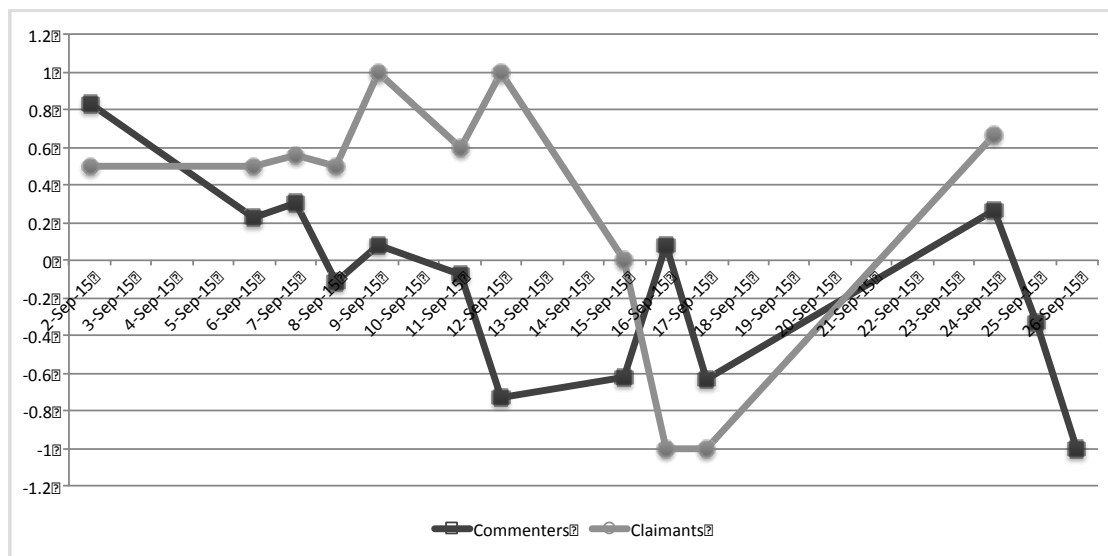
In contrast, when looking at the positionality of commenters, the analysis reveals that they tend to reject solidarity towards refugees. 47.8% of Danish online commenters that were included in the analysis (232

⁵⁰ Claimants in posted articles are mainly Danish (25 out of 37) and national in scope (24 out of 37). State actors are the most frequent claimants, yet the share of claimants from civil society is relatively bigger than in the print sample of claims. Due to the small number of posted articles and claims in the sample, we abstain from drawing conclusions from these data here.

comments) raised their voice on Facebook to speak out against refugees directly. 39.7% were supportive of solidarity toward refugees, while 12.5% remained neutral or ambivalent.

This rejection of pro-solidarity claims becomes further visible when looking at both claimants' and commenters' positionality over time. Figure 14 shows how the positionality of claimants and comments unfolded during the days when the articles and comments were posted.⁵¹ In this way, we can observe how commenters tend to relate to the claims in the posts directly. The analysis shows that particularly when claimants were positive (mid-September), commenters were negative towards refugees. Less distinctly, yet nevertheless visible, this dynamic was also evident in reverse order in the second half of September when more positive comments related to negative claimants.

Figure 14: Commenters' and claimants' positionality toward refugees in September

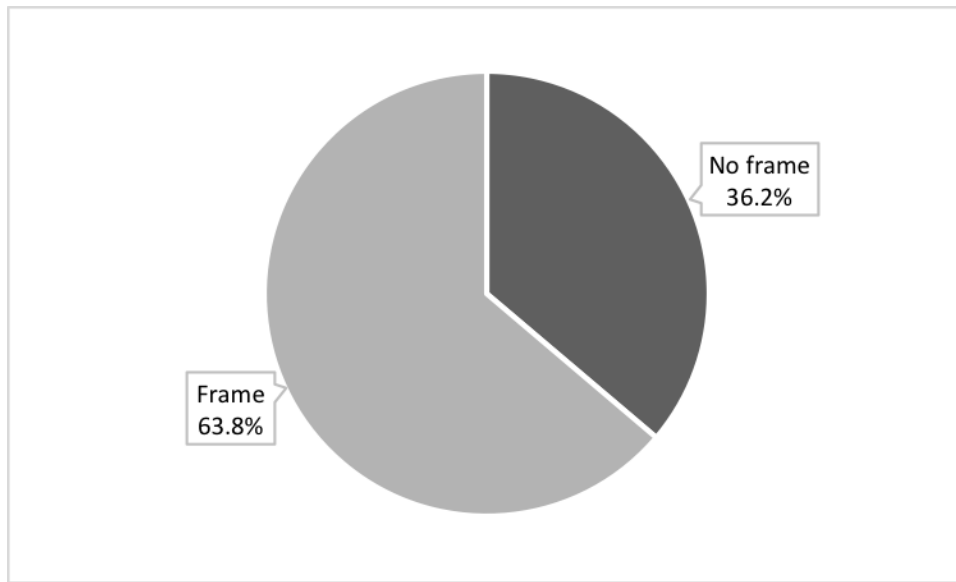


Consequently, we can speak of the Facebook comments as a form of backlash to the opinions of the claimants in the posts. However, this is only partially in line with other research which describes commenters as 'counter-publics' mobilised by shared notions of immigration as a threat, as research suggests (Toepfl & Piwoni, 2015). Rather, our analysis suggests that Facebook also enables pro-refugee commenters to engage against anti-solidarity claims.

Furthermore, commenters also justified their stances regarding solidarity toward refugees, again pointing to discursive contestation and engagement instead of plain opinion-stating. A great majority of commenters (68.3%) built their arguments around interpretative frames that allow their reasoning to be categorised (see Figure 15). This number of framed comments was higher when users related their statements back to issues and claims raised in the article, i.e. spoke in discursive and interpretative contexts about the news.

⁵¹ This is different from the claims-analysis where we referred to the date at which the claim was made.

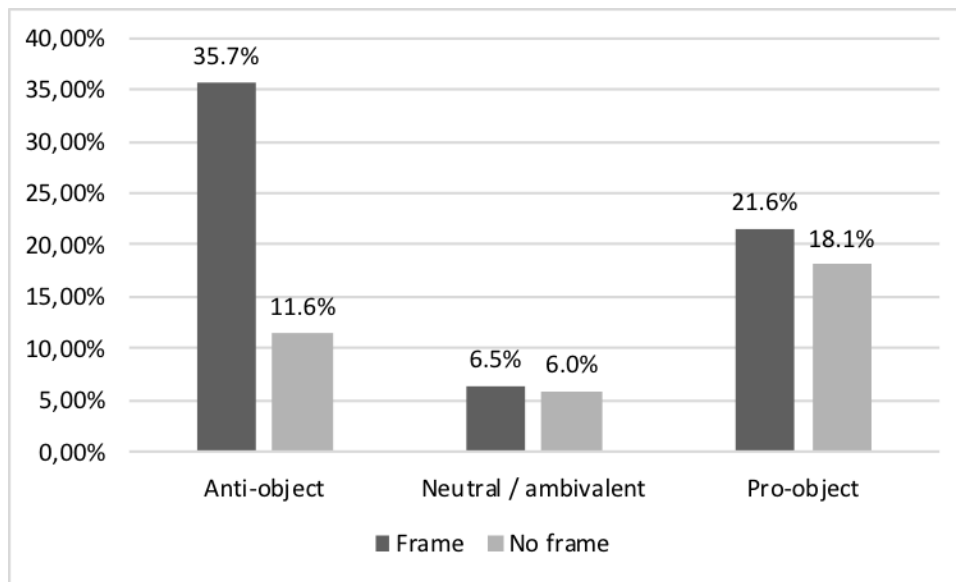
Figure 15: Frame in comments



The presence of frames and justifications to underline one's stance on the solidarity question suggests not only the discursive engagement with the news in this regard, but also speaks for the contestation in the Facebook comments in which, as mentioned earlier, negative positions prevailed, yet did not dominate the sample.

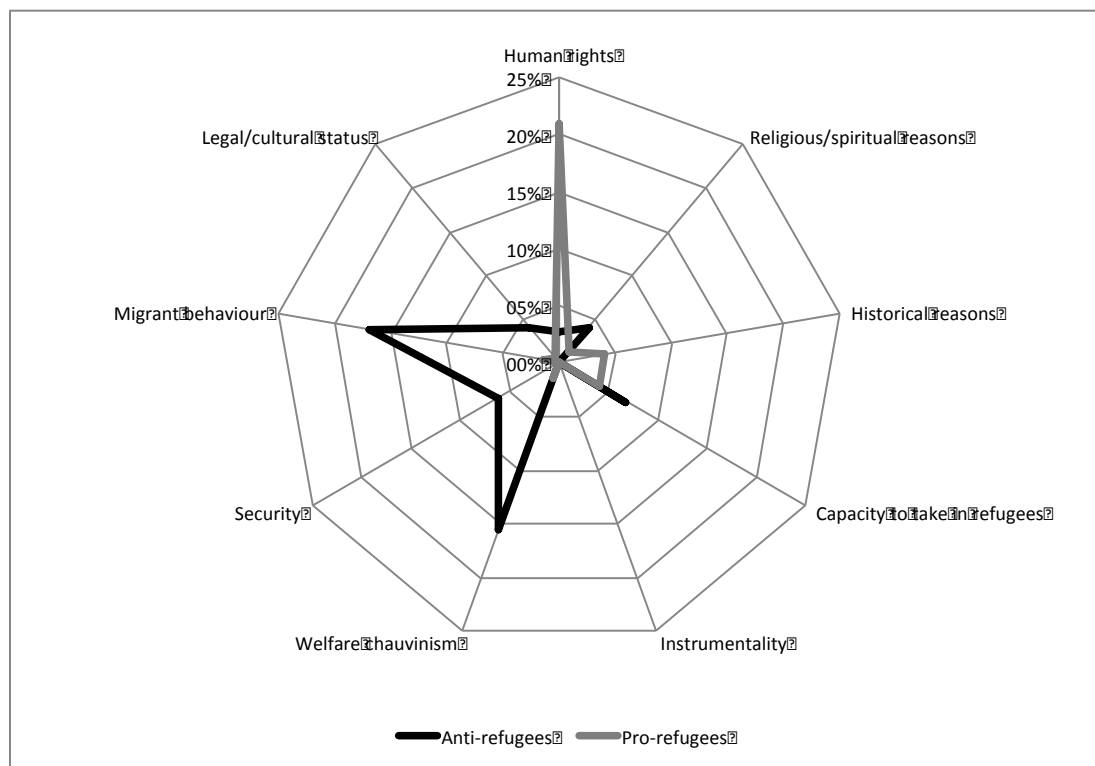
Following the pattern of social desirability, solidarity towards people in need of assistance is a mandatory response. The choice to reject solidarity towards those people in need, therefore, requires the proponent of a claim to engage in an explicit justification (Chouliaraki, 2013). The quite substantial presence of commenters with positive views on refugees and their attitude to what negative commenters often term 'do-gooders', further challenges the negative majority to engage in the formulation of arguments for their anti-solidary choices. This assumption is confirmed as comments with negative stances toward refugees contained more frequently (35.7%) frames than positive comments (see Figure 16). In other words, commenters felt the urge to back their anti-solidarity opinions with arguments, i.e. explain why they were against refugees.

Figure 16: Position and frame of comments



The need for justification of anti-solidarity positions is expressed in different frames (see Figure 17). Out of the 232 comments, commenters with negative and positive stances used different frames. Commenters against solidarity with refugees justified their stances by referring to migrants' inappropriate behaviour, i.e. 'not fitting' into Danish society (16.9%) and welfare chauvinism (15.5%). Pro-refugee commenters argued by referring to human rights.

Figure 17: Frames used in comments



Discussion: A national escape from crisis

Danish news media tend to cover the international and European 'refugee crisis' from a rather narrow national perspective. They give ample floor to the majority position of the government and its supporting parties in their attempts to externalise the effects of crisis as something that does not affect Denmark. The minority oppositional voice of support of refugee solidarity cannot gain high media salience. A polarisation of debates, for instance, in the form of a confrontation between governmental and opposition actors, does not take place in the media. The analysis, however, suggests that there might be a solidarity divide between political actors rejecting solidarity and civil society actors in support of solidarity. There is also little space for actors seeking confrontation, for instance, by challenging the highly controversial positions taken by the government, nor is the European position on solidarity made known and defended by the media.

The Danish debate is in this sense characterised by what can be called a 'national escape from crisis' through distancing from the causes of increased migration and insisting on control in a situation of national emergency. A more fundamental debate about the foundations of solidarity in Europe does not take place. Questions such as why does Denmark not show more solidarity in Europe and how are these deterrence policies in line with the Danish self-understanding of universal welfare and human rights commitment are avoided, or only brought up by minority voices in the media.

The country is divided on refugee solidarity, but this division is underplayed by the media. Rather, there is an overall salience of Danish political actors discussing the 'refugee crisis' in terms of political management of borders and asylum policies. This is concerning not only because the pro-solidarity voice is misrepresented in media claims-making, but also because the dominant image of anti-solidarity measures might distract from the actual humanitarian crisis which still forces millions of people to flee to safer areas. Solidarity polarisation becomes even less visible in news reader comments where there seems to be an unspoken alliance between Danes who speak out in the media and against their government. In particular, the populist strategy of political actors is successful and well supported in the online comment section.

In light of these results, we have found that the Danish media in the sample rather uncritically reflect Denmark's position in Europe, promoted by the government, and construct an image of wide-spread negativity. Officially, Denmark did not join the cord of refugee solidarity in September. The government ignores criticism of other European member states and the media fail to pick up on critical voices from other countries. This invisibility of contestation in the media is likely to have hindered the establishment of a welcoming culture beyond bottom-up initiatives which, in their engagement for people in need, was forced to remain resilient against a powerful top-down culture of rejection.

Conclusion

In this report, we have investigated how the 'refugee crisis', triggering polarising questions regarding solidarity across Europe, unfolded in Danish media debates from August 2015 to April 2016. Looking at *Jyllands-Posten*, *Politiken* and *BT*, we were particularly interested in whether the solidarity question would

make cleavages and divides visible in Danish society which is commonly known for its consensual approach towards problems across different social and political actors and political spectrums.

Our analysis supports findings in previous reports, suggesting polarisation between bottom-up solidarity initiatives and top-down rejection of solidarity by political actors (see WP 2 and WP4). Yet, this polarisation is not conveyed in the news as such, where news-selection criteria might be partially responsible for the wide-spread rejection of solidarity due to the high visibility of these (mostly negative) political decision-makers.

Furthermore, our case study for the month of September, regarding solidarity contestation on Facebook, adds to the understanding of polarisation. Being able to relate user comments to posted articles on the newspapers' Facebook pages, our analysis points to an understanding of comments as backlash against claimants, particularly if these claimants take positive stances toward refugees.

Taken together, mediated debate in Denmark conveys a dominantly negative position on the question of solidarity toward refugees. Our previous research on patterns of transnational solidarity in Denmark (WP 2, 3 and 4) found an increasing polarisation of Danish society along two opposing orientations of nationally exclusive and transnational, humanitarian solidarity. While positive opposition is present, 'hardliners', both in print and on Facebook, have the potential to mainstream this rejection of solidarity.

At the same time, and in line with this mainstreaming of debate, we do not find manifestations of right-wing extremism or xenophobia against refugees. The right-wing populist Danish People's Party appears as the most frequent claimant in the Danish debate but claims raised by their political representatives focus mainly on security issues, and not on questions of a protective culture or identity. Solidarity with refugees is, in this sense, not questioned by what extremist parties or right-wing populists say, but by what mainstream political actors do not say. The absence of a European solidarity agenda appears to be a deliberate omission by state and mainstream party actors and their attempts to narrow down the agenda and to discuss the 'refugee crisis' from a purely national perspective. This reflects a general attitude of escaping from crisis as something external, something that falls outside the parameters of 'our responsibility'.

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Discursive Opportunities Country Report Transnational Solidarity Action Claims - Switzerland

Eva Fernández

Introduction

The following report examines which identities, norms and practices are associated with transnational solidarity towards refugees in Switzerland. For this purpose, we have analysed 796 public claims-making within the mainstream mass media, and 300 Facebook comments within the online media. Through this analysis, we dive into the dynamics of solidarity (inclusion and exclusion), based on the categorisation of the recipients' groups in the public sphere. We aim at reconstructing the contentious debates about transnational solidarity within the refugee crisis period of 2015-2016. In this manner, our solidarity claim-units are all target-specific (refugees). However, we seek to understand how these claims are related, on the one hand, to humanitarian and generalised forms of solidarity, as rights' based conceptions and, on the other hand, to utilitarian conceptions and exclusionary identity frames.

In the Swiss case, we gave high importance to the state cultural and linguistic diversity, first, to account for the internal heterogeneity of the Switzerland and, second, to analyse how the three major linguistic regions of the country diverge or converge within the collective identities and stereotypes that impinge upon public opinions about transnational solidarity towards refugees. In Switzerland, the regional media have strongly contributed to the public discourse differentiation between the Swiss-French, Swiss-German and Swiss-Italian regions. First, the lack of a federal newspaper fostered the development of subnational media referentials for each linguistic-area, and empowered the role of regional newspapers as pseudo-national media. In addition, the impact of the German, French and Italian newspapers on the Swiss media needs to be taken into consideration as well. Neighbours' media have influenced the Swiss newspapers, and Swiss readers were accounted with political and cultural events from the nearest country of linguistic reference, as well as to their solidarity discourse towards refugees.

The specific event media-claims studied in this report refers mainly to the "Syrian refugee crisis" which gained increasing attention in the daily media coverage both inside and outside Switzerland over a 3-year period, when an increasing number of refugees journeyed to the European Union (EU) by travelling across the Mediterranean Sea, or through southeast Europe. However, the increasing number of refugees did not affect Switzerland. On the contrary, the number of asylum requests declined compared to the 1990s and 2000s. That said, the overall situation of the asylum-seeker flow into the EU reached its peak between April 2015 and August 2016, impacting as well the domestic media coverage on the issue. During this period, the issue of the refugees' immigration became most controversial and a source of political polarisation.

The expressions "migrant crisis" and "refugee crisis" have been widely used in Swiss politics and media, especially after the drowning tragedies in the Mediterranean Sea that shocked public opinion, such as the

reactions to Aylan’s body washed ashore on a Turkish beach in September 2015, producing diverse and contradictory political, media and popular discourse on borders controls and humanitarian responsibility. The most common words and issues treated by Swiss journalists, politicians and civil society actors in the public arena could be clustered into four major groups:

- 1- “Undocumented”, “illegal migrants”; “asylum chaos”, “border control” and “threat”, accounting for refugee flow as a security and cultural threat, widely used by the extreme right-wing parties (e.g. SVP).
- 2- “Swiss humanitarian tradition”, “solidarity”, “human dignity” and “responsibility” accounting for the responsibility to act on behalf of Swiss tradition, mainly expressed by federal authorities, left and centre parties (PDC, PS) and civil society.
- 3- “Asylum protection”, “asylum procedures”, “support demands by cantons at the federal level” and “accommodation and housing”, highlighting the tensions between the various administrative levels about the efficiency and functionality of the asylum procedures.
- 4- “Frontex”, “EU quotas system”, “EU authorities’ abuse” and “EU border control”, focusing on the EU responsibility and actions to cope with the crisis, views shared by the civil society organisations, public authorities, entrepreneurs or individual citizens and journalists.

This report is based on five newspaper sources that represent the three major linguistic regions of the country. In the Swiss case, no tabloid press was coded. Instead, we decided to increase regional representation by coding a Swiss-Italian journal, as well. For each journal, we coded a minimum of 150 claims. We extracted claims for the Swiss-French region from the following newspapers: For the Swiss-German region we used: Neue Zürcher Zeitung and Tages Anzeiger; for the German-speaking region, Le Matin and Le Temps for the French-speaking region; and La Regione for the Swiss-Italian region.

The most widespread newspapers in the country are in the German-speaking region (Table 1), and the largest share of articles addressing refugees and asylum seekers were retrieved in the Swiss-German newspapers. The Swiss newspaper media universe addressing refugees and asylum seekers during the period from August 2015 to April 2016 contained 7019 newspaper articles (Table 2), from which we sampled 602 articles (Table 3). With regard to the highest peak of sampled articles on refugees and asylum seekers, 31% of all the solidarity claims (249) were made in September 2015, whereas the month with the lowest number of solidarity claims (48) was December 2015 (Figure 1).

Table 1: Selected newspapers

Newspaper	Circulation strength
NZZ	133073
Tages Anzeiger	149368
Le Matin	58849
Le Temps	41535
La Regione Ticino	34804

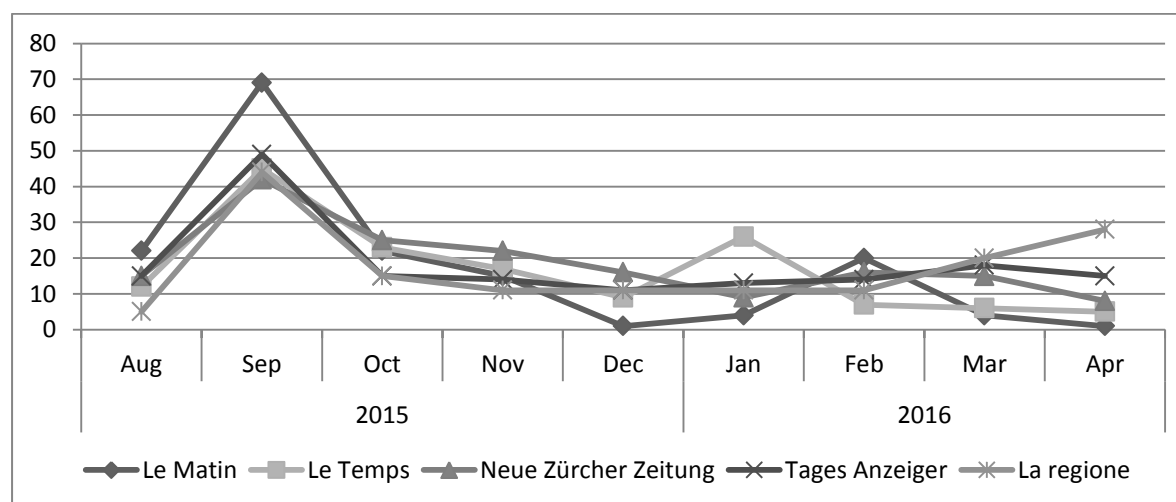
Table 2: Selected articles by newspaper

	Neue Zürcher Zeitung	Tages Anzeiger	Le Matin	Le Temps	La Regione
Aug 2015	241	170	90	135	64
Sep 2015	418	300	133	226	99
Oct .2015	363	219	76	184	65
Nov 2015	368	202	76	127	68
Dec 2015	246	167	70	117	29
Jan 2016	299	144	98	128	73
Feb 2016	262	159	56	112	57
Mar 2016	270	160	86	136	59
Apr 2016	239	164	78	112	74
Total	2706	1685	763	1277	588

Table 3: Selected claims by newspaper per round

Sampled articles	1st round	2nd round	3rd round
Neue Zürcher Zeitung	60	80	17
Tages Anzeiger	60	38	16
Le Matin	58	42	21
Le Temps	60	35	NN
La Regione	60	55	NN
Total			602

Figure 1: Selected claims by newspaper per month



Transnational solidarity in the public sphere: structure of claims-making in Switzerland

Visibility and inclusiveness

Actors

State actors were by far the main proponents of solidarity towards refugees in Switzerland, with political parties following at a distance (Table 5). Thus, institutional actors shared over 60% of the solidarity claims. Civil society actors were markedly less visible in the media. Only professional organisations and groups, as well as group-specific organisations and groups gained some visibility. We should note, however, that about 10 percent of all claims were made by supranational actors (EU or UN), showing the role of such actors in political claims-making in this field.

Table 5: Actors proponents and opponents of solidarity towards refugees

Actor of claim	N	%
State actors	389	48.9
Political parties	110	13.8
Professional organisations and groups	55	6.9
Group-specific organisations and groups	59	7.4
Civil society and human rights organisations	20	2.5
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	28	3.5
Other actors	43	5.4
Supranational actors (EU and UN)	86	10.8
Unknown/unspecified	6	0.8
Total	796	100

Table 6: Actors proponents and opponents of solidarity towards refugees by newspaper

Actor of claim (%)	Neue Zeitung	Zürcher Tages- zeiger	An- Le Matin	Le Temps	La Region	Total
State actors	19.3	21.6	17.2	22.6	19.3	100.0
Political parties	17.3	22.7	21.8	20.0	18.2	100.0
Professional organisations and groups	43.6	21.8	12.7	18.2	3.6	100.0
Group-specific organisations and groups	18.6	32.2	20.3	10.2	18.6	100.0
Civil society and human rights organisations	5.0	15.0	45.0	10.0	25.0	100.0
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	17.9	21.4	25.0	3.6	32.1	100.0
Other actors	30.2	11.6	32.6	14.0	11.6	100.0
Supranational actors (EU and UN)	23.3	11.6	8.1	23.3	33.7	100.0
Unknown/unspecified	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	100.0
Total	21.1	20.6	18.8	19.9	19.6	100.0

There were some no variations in the visibility of actors across newspapers and time period. Concerning the first aspect, the five newspapers gave different priority to different actors. In particular, the quality

newspaper, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, gave more space to professional organisations and groups, while the more tabloid-style Le Matin prioritised civil society and human rights organisations (Table 6). Concerning the second aspect, all actors peaked in September 2015, with one exception: Advocacy and policy-oriented groups (Table 7). The latter made more claims two months later, in December 2015.

Table 7: Actors proponents and opponents of solidarity towards refugees by time period

Actor of claim (%)	Aug-15	Sep-15	Oct-15	Nov-15	Dec-15	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	Total
State actors	7.5	27.5	12.6	13.9	4.9	9.3	9.3	8.2	6.9	100.0
Political parties	16.4	33.6	13.6	5.5	5.5	3.6	7.3	7.3	7.3	100.0
Professional organisations and groups	7.3	36.4	14.6	7.3	10.9	12.7	1.8	3.6	5.5	100.0
Group-specific organisations and groups	6.8	49.2	5.1	8.5	3.4	10.2	3.4	6.8	6.8	100.0
Civil society and human rights organisations	5.0	40.0	15.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	15.0	10.0	10.0	100.0
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	7.1	17.9	10.7	3.6	25.0	7.1	14.3	0.0	14.3	100.0
Other actors	9.3	32.6	20.9	9.3	7.0	7.0	9.3	0.0	4.7	100.0
Supranational actors (EU and UN)	7.0	31.4	11.6	5.8	4.7	3.5	11.6	17.4	7.0	100.0
Unknown/unspecified	16.7	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	16.7	100.0
Total	8.7	31.3	12.6	9.9	6.0	7.9	8.5	7.9	7.2	100.0

Actors of claims also varied depending on a number of other criteria, such as the nationality of the object of claims, and the scope of actors. First, we observe a sizeable share of claims involving Syrian people as their object (Table 8). State actors, political parties and in part also professional organisations and groups were particularly focused on this kind of object. People from Eritrea were also quite often the object of claims, in particular by the very same actors as well as by advocacy and policy-oriented groups. It should also be noted that state actors often dealt with many different objects, while other actors tended to focus on a single or a couple of objects.

Second, more than half of all claims were made by actors with a national scope (Table 9). Moreover, if we also consider sub-national claims, we can see that only a relatively small share of them reached beyond the national level. Claims by state actors tended to have a national or sub-national scope, while those by other actors were more homogeneously distributed across all levels of scope, with the obvious exception of supranational actors, which almost always focused on the transnational, supranational or international level. The latter was also quite often the scope of claims by various civil society actors (group-specific organisations and groups, civil society and human rights organisations, advocacy and policy-oriented groups).

Table 8: Actors proponents and opponents of solidarity towards refugees by object of claim nationality

Actor of claim (%)	Pakistan	Nigeria	Eritrea	Afghanistan	Syrian Arab Republic	Other	Total
State actors	5.3	5.3	31.6	5.3	42.1	10.5	100.0
Political parties	0.0	0.0	23.1	0.0	76.9	0.0	100.0
Professional organisations and groups	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	100.0
Group-specific organisations and groups	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Civil society and human rights organisations	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	100.0
Other actors	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Supranational actors (EU and UN)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Total	2.2	2.2	26.1	2.2	58.7	8.7	100.0

Table 9: Actors proponents and opponents of solidarity towards refugees by actor's scope

	Trans-/supra-/inter-national	National	Sub-national	Unknown/unclassifiable	Total
State actors	1.0	77.9	20.6	0.5	100.0
Political parties	0.0	89.1	10.9	0.0	100.0
Professional organisations and groups	12.7	47.3	34.6	5.5	100.0
Group-specific organisations and groups	28.8	17.0	47.5	6.8	100.0
Civil society and human rights organisations	25.0	35.0	40.0	0.0	100.0
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	25.0	7.1	60.7	7.1	100.0
Other actors	9.3	20.9	51.2	18.6	100.0
Supranational actors (EU and UN)	98.8	1.2	0.0	0.0	100.0
Unknown/unspecified	0.0	0.0	16.7	83.3	100.0
Total	16.21	57.29	23.49	3.02	100

Actors in claims-making often addressed other actors. However, only about one third of all claims had an explicit addressee (Table 10). Most of them targeted state actors, followed by supranational actors (EU or UN) at some distance. Other addresses were targeted significantly less often.

Table 10: Addressees of claims on solidarity towards refugees

Addressee of claim	N	%
State actors	132	62.6
Political parties	6	2.8
Professional organisations and groups	3	1.4
Labour organisations and groups	1	0.5
Group-specific organisations and groups	1	0.5
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	4	1.9
Other actors	28	13.3
Supranational actors (EU and UN)	34	16.1
EU member state(s) (any/some/all of the)	1	0.5
Unknown/unspecified	1	0.5
Total	211	100.0

Addressees of claims on solidarity towards refugees varied across newspapers (Table 11). State actors were more often targeted in the two German-speaking and in the Italian-speaking newspapers, while the two French-speaking newspapers prioritised other actors, such as political parties, advocacy and policy-oriented groups, but in part also supranational actors. The latter were quite often mentioned as addressees in all newspapers, with the partial exception of Le Matin.

Table 11: Addressees of claims on solidarity towards refugees by newspaper

Addressee of claim (%)	Le Mat- in	Le Temps	Neue Zeitung	Zürcher Tages Anzei- ger	La gione	Re- Total
State actors	12.9	11.4	21.2	27.3	27.3	100.0
Political parties	16.7	50.0	16.7	16.7	0.0	100.0
Professional organisations and groups	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Labour organisations and groups	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Group-specific organisations and groups	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	75.0	100.0
Other actors	14.3	7.1	21.4	17.9	39.3	100.0
Supranational actors (EU and UN)	11.8	26.5	23.5	17.7	20.6	100.0
EU member state(s) (any/some/all of the)	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Unknown/unspecified	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total	12.8	14.7	20.4	25.1	27.0	100.0

Addressees of claims on solidarity towards refugees also varied according to their scope (Table 12). In this regard, a focus on the national level was noted in the case of group-specific organisations and groups and on the sub-national level when it came to professional organisations and groups. State actors were mostly targeted nationally and to some extent also sub-nationally. Supranational and international actors, by contrast, were obviously most often transnational, supranational or international addressees.

Table 12: Addressees of claims on solidarity towards refugees by actor's scope

Addressee of claim (%)	Trans-/supra-/inter- national	Nation- al	Sub- national	Unknown/ unclassifia- ble	Total
State actors	0.0	88.6	11.4	0.0	100.0
Political parties	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	100.0
Professional organisations and groups	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Labour organisations and groups	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
Group-specific organisations and groups	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	0.0	0.0	75.0	25.0	100.0
Other actors	3.6	53.6	32.1	10.7	100.0
Supranational actors (EU and UN)	97.1	2.9	0.0	0.0	100.0
EU member state(s) (any/some/all of the)	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Unknown/unspecified	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
Total	16.1	65.4	15.6	2.8	100.0

If we cross the actors of claims with their addressees, we can see that most actors addressed state actors, including state actors themselves (Table 13). However, it is worth noting the very low share of claims by advocacy and policy-oriented groups targeting state actors. When they made claims on solidarity towards refugees, these actors seemed to prioritize other addressees, such as other advocacy and policy-oriented groups, for example, in something akin to mobilisation-counter-mobilisation dynamics.

Table 13: Addressees of claims on solidarity towards refugees by actor of claim

	State tactors	ac-	Political parties	Profes- sional organisa- tions and groups	Labour organisa- tions and groups	Group- specific organisa- tions and groups	Advocacy and policy- oriented groups	Other actors	Suprana- tional actors (EU and UN)	EU mem- ber state(s) (any/some /all of the	Unknown/ unspeci- fied	Total
State actors	58.0		2.5	0.0	0.0	1.2	1.2	6.2	30.9	0.0	0.0	100.0
Political parties	80.0		8.9	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	2.2	0.0	0.0	100.0
Professional or- ganisations and groups	44.4		0.0	0.0	5.6	0.0	0.0	44.4	5.6	0.0	0.0	100.0
Group-specific organisations and groups	57.1		0.0	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	28.6	7.1	0.0	0.0	100.0
Civil society and human rights organisations	75.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	8.3		0.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	25.0	41.7	8.3	0.0	8.3	100.0
Other actors	57.1		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	28.6	14.3	0.0	0.0	100.0
Supranational actors (EU and UN)	83.3		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.3	3.3	0.0	100.0
Total	62.56		2.84	1.42	0.47	0.47	1.9	13.27	16.11	0.47	0.47	100

The position of actors towards objects is a key aspect of political claims analysis as it refers to whether a given claim is in favour or against the interests and rights of its object. In this regard, fewer than a half of the claims on solidarity towards refugees in Switzerland during the period considered were pro-object, while about a third were anti-object and about one fifth were neutral or ambivalent (Table 14). State actors and political parties tended, on average, to be more anti-object, while civil society actors were much more pro-object. This suggests the presence of a divide between institutional and non-institutional actors in the discursive context of solidarity towards refugees.

Table 14: Positioning of actors proponents and opponents of solidarity towards refugees

Actor of claim (%)	Anti-object	Neutral/ambivalent	Pro-object	Total
State actors	42.4	23.4	34.2	100.0
Political parties	50.9	11.8	37.3	100.0
Professional organisations and groups	9.1	14.6	76.4	100.0
Group-specific organisations and groups	6.8	5.1	88.1	100.0
Civil society and human rights organisations	5.0	5.0	90.0	100.0
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	25.0	3.6	71.4	100.0
Other actors	23.3	11.6	65.1	100.0
Supranational actors (EU and UN)	16.3	36.0	47.7	100.0
Unknown/unspecified	33.3	16.8	50.0	100.0
Total	33.2	19.4	47.5	100

The positioning of actors proponents and opponents of solidarity towards refugees varied only to a limited extent across newspapers (Table 15). The percentages of pro-object, anti-object and neutral or ambivalent claims remained more or less the same in the five newspapers, with *Le Matin* being somewhat more favourable, and the *Tages Anzeiger* and *La Regione* being somewhat more hostile.

Table 15: Positioning of actors proponents and opponents of solidarity towards refugees by newspaper

Newspaper (%)	Anti-object	Neutral/ambivalent	Pro-object	Total
<i>Le Matin</i>	28.0	19.3	52.7	100.0
<i>Le Temps</i>	35.4	16.5	48.1	100.0
<i>Neue Zürcher Zeitung</i>	33.9	18.5	47.6	100.0
<i>Tages Anzeiger</i>	36.6	18.9	44.5	100.0
<i>La Regione</i>	31.4	23.7	44.9	100.0
Total	33.2	19.4	47.49	100

Issues

Beyond actors of claims and their position towards objects, what matter are also the issues, that is, which topics were raised by solidarity contestants in the media. Most claims in the period considered

dealt with policies directed at the political management of migration or, in other words, with migration management (Table 16). Other issues were raised less often, with the partial exception of issues relating to public and civic activities/initiatives beyond political institutions. This reflects the prevailing citizenship model of Switzerland, which prioritise the regulation of migration flow with respect to minority integration issues, but it also has to do with the specific group at stake, namely the refugees.

Table 16: Issues of claims on solidarity towards refugees

Issue of claim	N	%
Policies directed at the political management of migration (migration management)	526	66.08
Policies directed at the integration of refugees (integration)	33	4.15
Issues pertaining to the background, the situation and the fate of refugees	67	8.42
Issues pertaining to the problems associated with the refugee influx/crisis	48	6.03
Issues related to public and civic activities/initiatives beyond political institutions	122	15.33
Total	796	100

If we cross the issues of claims and the actors making them, we can see who talks about what. Migration management issues were most often raised by state actors (Table 17). The same also applied to issues pertaining to the problems associated with the refugee influx/crisis and, to a lesser extent, to integration issues and issues pertaining to the background, the situation and the fate of refugees.

Table 17: Issues of claims on solidarity towards refugees by actor

Issue of claim	State actors	Political parties	Professional organisations and groups	Group-specific organisations and groups	Civil society and human rights organisations	Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	Other actors	Supranational actors (EU and UN)	Unknown/unspecified	Total
Policies directed at the political management of migration (migration management)	59.5	15.8	2.1	2.5	1.9	1.0	2.1	14.6	0.6	100
Policies directed at the integration of refugees (integration)	33.3	18.2	33.3	3.0	0.0	0.0	9.1	0.0	3.0	100

CONTINUED

Issues pertaining to the background, the situation and the fate of refugees	32.8	11.9	14.9	13.4	6.0	9.0	3.0	6.0	3.0	100.
Issues pertaining to the problems associated with the refugee influx/crisis	60.4	14.6	6.3	10.4	0.0	2.1	0.0	6.3	0.0	100.
Issues related to public and civic activities/initiatives beyond Political Institutions	11.5	4.9	16.4	25.4	4.9	13.1	22.1	1.6	0.0	100.
Total	48.9	13.8	6.9	7.4	2.5	3.5	5.4	10.8	0.8	100.

The issues raised in claims-making also varied in their scope. In general, nearly half of all claims on solidarity towards refugees in Switzerland referred to national-level issues, a little less than one third to transnational, supranational or international issues, and slightly more than one fifth to sub-national ones (Table 18). Such a scope, however, depends on the specific issues at hand. Thus, integration issues, as well as issues pertaining to the problems associated with the refugee influx/crisis, and to some extent migration management issues, were more nationally focused (the latter two more often had a sub-national scope), whereas only issues pertaining to the background, the situation and the fate of refugees reached beyond the national level.

Table 18: Issues of claims on solidarity towards refugees by scope

Issue of claim	Trans-/supra-/inter-national	National	Sub-national	Unknown/unclassifiable	Total
Policies directed at the political management of migration (migration management)	32.2	54.6	12.9	0.2	100
Policies directed at the integration of refugees (integration)	9.1	54.6	36.4	0.0	100
Issues pertaining to the background, the situation and the fate of refugees	59.7	9.0	31.3	0.0	100
Issues pertaining to the problems associated with the refugee influx/crisis	22.9	62.5	14.6	0.0	100
Issues related to public and civic activities/initiatives beyond Political Institutions	14.2	20.8	60.8	4.2	100
Total	30.3	46.1	22.9	0.8	100

Solidarity contestations in the public sphere

Forms of action

Claims can take different forms. In general, claims on solidarity towards refugees in Switzerland took a variety of forms, either verbal or non-verbal. Moreover, the forms of claims varied significantly across newspapers and time frames. Concerning the first aspect: The Neue Zürcher Zeitung put more emphasis on confrontational and violent actions than the other newspapers; the Tages Anzeiger focused more on humanitarian aid mobilisation; Le Matin reported a higher share of direct solidarity actions; Le Temps reported more confrontational forms, and La Regione, strikingly, did not mention violent protest actions at all (Table 19). Concerning the second aspect, the claims followed different trajectories over time depending on the form at hand (Table 20). We note in particular a large share of direct solidarity actions, but also violent protest actions, early on and more specifically in September 2015. That month also saw a peak of political decisions and repressive measures. Humanitarian aid mobilisation and demonstrative protest actions, in contrast, peaked in February 2016.

Table 19: Form of claims on solidarity towards refugees by newspaper

Form of claim (%)	Neue Zürcher Zeitung	Tages Anzeiger	Le Matin	Le Temps	La Regione	Total
Political decisions	20.3	15.7	17.4	25.0	21.5	100.0
Direct solidarity actions (support/assistance/help)	24.0	10.0	42.0	4.0	20.0	100.0
Humanitarian aid mobilisation	18.8	43.8	12.5	0.0	25.0	100.0
Violent protest action	37.5	25.0	25.0	12.5	0.0	100.0
Confrontational protests action	45.5	9.1	9.1	18.2	18.2	100.0
Demonstrative protest action	15.4	26.9	23.1	7.7	26.9	100.0
Conventional protest action	25.0	20.8	8.3	29.2	16.7	100.0
Repressive measures	31.8	31.8	18.2	9.1	9.1	100.0
Verbal statements	19.6	22.0	17.4	21.4	19.6	100.0
Total	21.1	20.6	18.8	19.8	19.6	100.0

Certain forms of action were associated with specific actors. In general, institutional actors tended to use more institutional and moderate actions, whereas civil society actors tended to use non-institutional and sometimes more radical actions. More specifically, political decisions were the main prerogative of state actors, and to some extent also of supranational actors (Table 21). More interestingly, violent protest actions were more often made by advocacy and policy-oriented groups, while demonstrative protest actions were more often made by other groups.

Table 20: Form of claims on solidarity with refugees by time period

Form of claim (%)	Aug-15	Sep-15	Oct-15	Nov-15	Dec-15	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	Total
Political decisions	4.1	29.7	16.9	7.6	9.3	5.8	8.7	9.9	8.1	100
Direct solidarity actions (support/assistance/help)	4.0	56.0	4.0	4.0	14.0	8.0	2.0	4.0	4.0	100
Humanitarian aid mobilisation	12.5	56.3	0.0	6.3	12.5	0.0	0.0	6.3	6.3	100
Violent protest action	12.5	12.5	18.8	6.3	0.0	12.5	31.3	6.3	0.0	100
Confrontational protests action	9.1	45.5	0.0	9.1	9.1	0.0	0.0	9.1	18.2	100
Demonstrative protest action	23.1	26.9	11.5	3.9	3.9	0.0	7.7	3.9	19.2	100
Conventional protest action	8.3	20.8	16.7	0.0	4.2	8.3	25.0	4.2	12.5	100
Repressive measures	13.6	22.7	4.6	9.1	0.0	4.6	13.6	27.3	4.6	100
Verbal statements	9.6	29.9	12.6	12.6	4.4	9.6	7.8	7.2	6.3	100
Total	8.7	31.3	12.6	9.9	6.0	7.9	8.5	7.9	7.2	100

Table 21: Form of claims on solidarity with refugees by actor

Form of action (%)	State actors	Political parties	Professional organisations and groups	Group-specific organisations and groups	Civil society and human rights organisations	Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	Other actors	Supranational actors (EU and UN)	Unknown/unspecified	Total
Political decisions	72.1	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	24.4	0.0	100
Direct solidarity action	22.0	0.0	14.0	26.0	12.0	8.0	12.0	4.0	2.0	100
Humanitarian aid mobilisation	31.3	0.0	0.0	43.8	0.0	12.5	0.0	6.3	6.3	100
Violent protest action	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	37.5	25.0	0.0	12.5	100
Confrontational protest action	9.1	9.1	0.0	54.6	0.0	9.1	18.2	0.0	0.0	100
Demonstrative protest action	3.9	19.2	7.7	15.4	0.0	7.7	42.3	0.0	3.9	100
Conventional protest action	41.7	25.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	4.2	4.2	12.5	4.2	100
Repressive measures	95.5	0.0	4.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100
Verbal statements	47.1	20.0	9.8	5.0	3.1	2.6	4.1	8.3	0.0	100
Total	48.9	13.8	6.9	7.4	2.5	3.5	5.4	10.8	0.8	100

Blamed/credited actors

In some cases, certain actors were explicitly referred to, either negatively (blamed actors) or positively (credited actors) in claims-making. Understandably, state actors were most often blamed when it came to claims on solidarity towards refugees, followed at a distance by supranational actors, then by group-specific actors and political parties (Table 22). At the same time, state actors were also most often credited, followed at a distance by group-specific organisations and groups, as well as by other actors (Table 23).

Table 22: Actors blamed by claims on solidarity towards refugees

Responsible actor (explicitly stated) blamed in the claim	N	%
State actors	116	53.0
Political parties	22	10.1
Professional organisations and groups	9	4.1
Group-specific organisations and groups	25	11.4
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	7	3.2
Other actors	1	0.5
Supranational actors (EU and UN)	38	17.4
Unknown/unspecified	1	0.5
Total	219	100.0

Table 23: Actors credited by claims on solidarity towards refugees

Responsible actor (explicitly stated) credited in the claim	N	%
State actors	17	44.7
Political parties	2	5.3
Professional organisations and groups	3	7.9
Group-specific organisations and groups	6	15.8
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	1	2.6
Other actors	6	15.8
Supranational actors (EU and UN)	2	5.3
EU member state(s) (any/some/all of the	1	2.6
Total	38	100.0

Objects of solidarity

The objects of claims took different forms, more generally or specifically referring to certain categories. Most of the objects in claims on solidarity towards refugees in Switzerland in the period under consideration referred to refugees or asylum seekers in general (Table 24). Refugees were quite often referred to in implicit terms. All other labels were marginally used.

Table 24: Objects of claims on solidarity towards refugees

Object of claim	N	%
Refugees (implicitly acknowledged)	137	17.2
Refugees/asylum seekers/etc. (about refugees as a full category)	630	79.2
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (families)	2	0.3
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (women)	1	0.1
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (men)	2	0.3
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (children)	16	2.0
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (young people)	4	0.5
Refugees/asylum seekers/etc. (migrant/ex-refugees, e.g. sans papiers, clandestin, wirtschaftsflüchtlinge)	4	0.5
Total	796	100

The nationality of the objects of claims was reported only in a small number of claims. When it was reported, Syrian refugees were by far the most often mentioned nationality, followed at a distance by Eritrean refugees (Table 25).

Table 25: Nationality of objects of claims on solidarity towards refugees

Nationality of object of claim	N	%
Pakistan	1	2.2
Nigeria	1	2.2
Eritrea	12	26.1
Afghanistan	1	2.2
Syrian Arab Republic	27	58.7
Other	4	8.7
Total	46	100

Justifying solidarity in the media

Framing represents an important aspect in claims-making. In this regard, we can distinguish between three broad underlying values in terms of the justification for the claims being made: Interest-based/utilitarian justifications, rights-based justifications, and identity-based justifications. Most of the claims on solidarity towards refugees in Switzerland during the period considered were justified in terms of interests (Table 26). Then came justifications in terms of rights. Only a relatively small share of claims were justified in terms of identity.

Table 26: Underlying values of claims on solidarity towards refugees

Underlying value of claim	N	%
Interest-based/utilitarian justifications	228	61.1
Rights-based justifications	102	27.4
Identity-based justifications	43	11.5
Total	373	100

Underlying values of claims also varied across newspapers and time periods. Concerning the first aspect, we note in particular an overrepresentation of rights-based justifications in Le Matin, as well as an underrepresentation of interest-based justifications in the same newspaper and, to some extent, of rights-based justifications in the Neue Zürcher Zeitung and in the Tages Anzeiger, as well as of identity-based justifications in La Region (Table 27). Concerning the second aspect, all three kinds of justification peaked in September 2015 (Table 28). Yet, in that month we observe a higher share of rights-based and identity-based justifications. After that, interest-based justification became more prominent in November 2015, while the other two kinds of justifications declined at the same time.

Table 27: Underlying values of claims on solidarity towards refugees by newspaper

Underlying value of claim (%)	Neue Zürcher Zeitung	Tages Anzeiger	Le Matin	Le Temps	La Region	Total
Interest-based/utilitarian justifications	28.1	29.8	6.6	11.4	24.1	100
Rights-based justifications	22.6	20.6	20.6	9.8	26.5	100
Identity-based justifications	27.9	25.6	14.0	11.6	20.9	100
Total	26.5	26.8	11.3	11.0	24.4	100

Table 28: Underlying values of claims on solidarity towards refugees by time period

Underlying value of claim (%)	Aug-15	Sep-15	Oct-15	Nov-15	Dec-15	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	Total
Interest-based/utilitarian justifications	4.8	23.3	13.2	18.0	6.1	7.0	7.9	7.9	11.8	100
Rights-based justifications	11.8	31.4	10.8	10.8	7.8	6.9	8.8	6.9	4.9	100
Identity-based justifications	9.3	32.6	9.3	9.3	4.7	4.7	7.0	11.6	11.6	100
Total	7.2	26.5	12.1	15.0	6.4	6.7	8.0	8.0	9.9	100

Different actors adopted different justifications for their claims on solidarity towards refugees. State actors, political parties and supranational actors tended to justify their claims based on interest (Table 29). Civil society actors, in contrast, tended to focus on the other justifications, with the partial exception of professional organisations and groups. More specifically, group-specific organisations and groups, civil society and human rights organisations and groups, but also other actors, most often based their claims on rights, while advocacy and policy-oriented groups were somewhat split between this kind of justification and identity-based justifications. Thus, here we find once more the divide between institutional and non-institutional actors observed earlier with regard to the position of actors towards objects and the forms of action.

Table 29: Underlying values of claims on solidarity towards refugees by actor

Actor of claim (%)	Interest-based/utilitarian justifications	Rights-based justifications	Identity-based justifications	Total
	79.2	12.1	8.7	100.0
State actors				
	57.1	33.3	9.5	100.0
Political parties				
Professional organisations and groups	45.7	42.9	11.4	100.0
Group-specific organisations and groups	26.3	52.6	21.1	100.0
Civil society and human rights organisations	30.0	70.0	0.0	100.0
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	5.6	44.4	50.0	100.0
	23.1	61.5	15.4	100.0
Other actors				
Supranational actors (EU and UN)	64.3	28.6	7.1	100.0
Total	61.1	27.4	11.5	100.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Claims on solidarity with refugees also had a different position depending on the kind of justification used. Interest-based justification tended to be most often anti-object, although a sizeable share of claims based on this kind of justification also took a pro-object or a neutral-ambivalent position (Table 30). In contrast, positive positions prevailed among rights-based and identity-based justifications. This applied especially to claims that were justified on the basis of rights.

Table 30: Positioning of underlying values of claims on solidarity towards refugees

Underlying value of claim (%)	Anti-object	Neutral/ambivalent	Pro-object	Total
Interest-based/utilitarian justifications	42.5	32.9	24.6	100.0
Rights-based justifications	13.7	5.9	80.4	100.0
Identity-based justifications	37.2	7.0	55.8	100.0
Total	34.1	22.5	43.4	100.0

Case Study: Confronting media claims-making with citizens' responses

General overview in Switzerland

In addition to public claims-making on solidarity towards refugees in Switzerland, we also coded comments by readers as reported by the selected newspapers in order to get a grasp on more private (as

opposed to public) and individual (as opposed to collective) discourse in this field, as well as to study dynamics of bottom-up mobilisation. Only comments made in September 2015 were coded. The analyses was therefore limited to this subsample (N=293) and compared to the September sample of claims (N=249). Moreover, La Regione was replaced by Blick in the analysis of comments. In general, there was a strong relation between comments and claims-making, as most of the comments made in that month were related to claims made in the same period (Table 31). More specifically, more than half of the comments were responses to the general issues raised in the main article, a little less than a third were responses to claims raised in the main articles, and only a small part signified independent statements or opinions.

Table 31: Relation between comments and claims on solidarity towards refugees

Type of comment	N	%
Response to general issue in main article	164	54.7
Response to claim raised in main article	88	29.3
Independent statement, opinion	48	16.0
Total	300.0	100

Claims can be distinguished according to their addressee. Most comments had state actors and supranational actors, in addition to other actors, as addressees, all more or less to the same extent (Table 32). This was somewhat different to what we found for claims, where the same categories were also the most often mentioned but where state actors clearly outnumbered the other two types of addressee.

Table 32: Addressees of comments on solidarity towards refugees

Addressee of comment	N	%
State actors	14	33.3
Professional organisations and groups	2	4.8
Group-specific organisations and groups	1	2.4
Other actors	13	31.0
Supranational actors (EU and UN)	12	28.6
Total	49	100.0

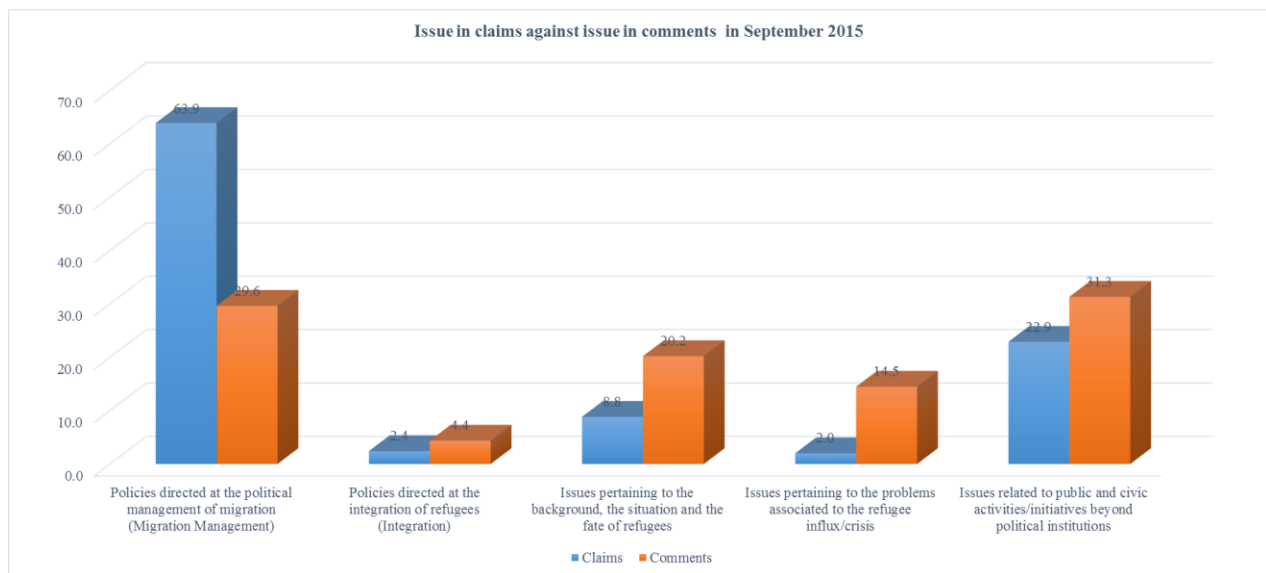
Concerning the positioning of comments on solidarity with refugees, we can see that it varied considerably across newspapers. The French-speaking Le Matin reported overwhelmingly more anti-object comments than all other newspapers (Table 33). The other French-speaking newspaper also had more anti-objects comments, albeit to a much lesser extent. The other three German-speaking newspapers were more balanced in this respect. Thus, there seems to be a regional cleavage here, opposing the two main linguistic regions.

Table 33: Positioning of comments on solidarity towards refugees by newspaper

Newspaper (%)	Anti-object	Neutral/ambivalent	Pro-object	Total
Le Matin	90.4	0.0	9.6	100.0
Le Temps	47.2	22.2	30.6	100.0
Neue Zürcher Zeitung	38.3	48.3	13.3	100.0
Tages Anzeiger	30.8	48.1	21.2	100.0
Blick	35.9	41.5	22.6	100.0
Total	48.2	33.2	18.6	100.0

If we compare the comments with claims-making for the same period, we see both similarities and differences. Reflecting in part what we saw earlier, the large majority of claims dealt with migration management issues followed at a distance by issues related to public and civic activities/initiatives beyond political institutions, and even further by the other issues. The distribution of comments reflected that of claims but it is more balanced. Here migration management issues and issues related to public and civic activities/initiatives beyond political institutions had about the same share, while minority integration issues, but above all issues pertaining to the background, the situation and the fate of refugees, as well as issues pertaining to the problems associated with the refugee influx/crisis, were more prominent in the comments than in claims-making.

Figure 2: Issues of claims and comments on solidarity towards refugees



Like we did earlier for claims-making, we examined which actors comments were referred to in either negative or positive terms, that is, blamed and credited actors. Concerning the first aspect, blaming actors was something that, overall, was more often done in the comments than in claims making (Figure 3). This can be seen in the last column in the Figure 2. State actors are the first target blamed by commenters, followed by group-specific organisations and groups and then by supranational actors. State actors and political parties, however, were more often blamed in claims-making than in comments, whereas other actors, especially civil society actors, were more often blamed in comments. Concerning the second aspect, once again, crediting actors was overall more often done in comments than in claims-making (Figure 4). This can be seen in the last column in the figure. State actors were by and large the most of-

ten credited actors, followed at a distance by other actors and then by group-specific organisations and groups. This holds true for both in the comments and in claims-making.

Figure 3: Actors blamed by claims and comments on solidarity towards refugees

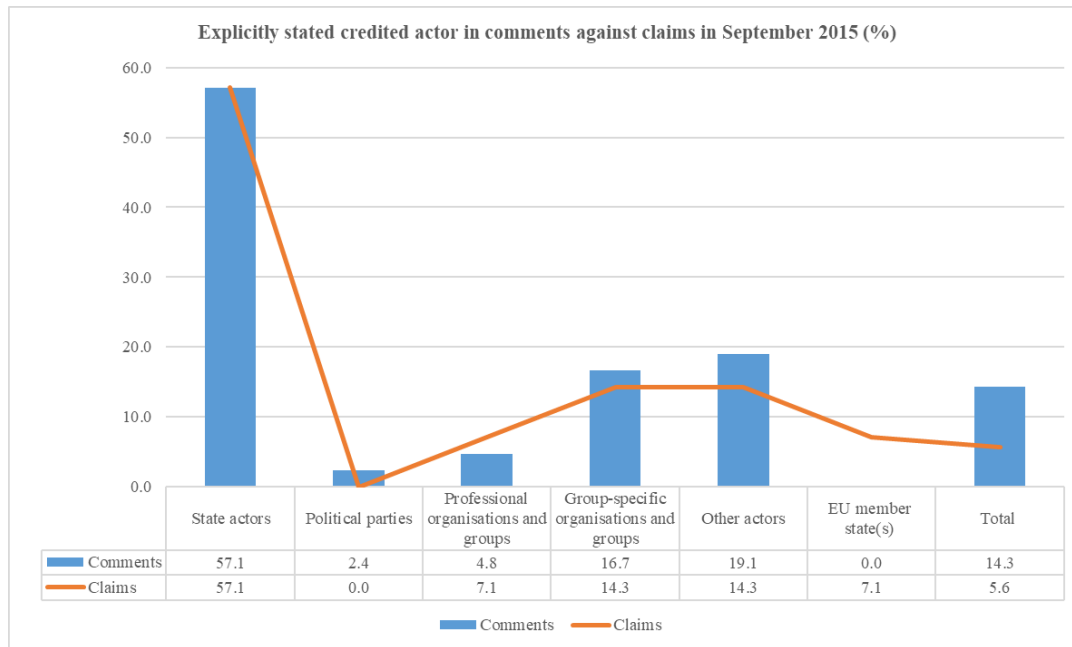
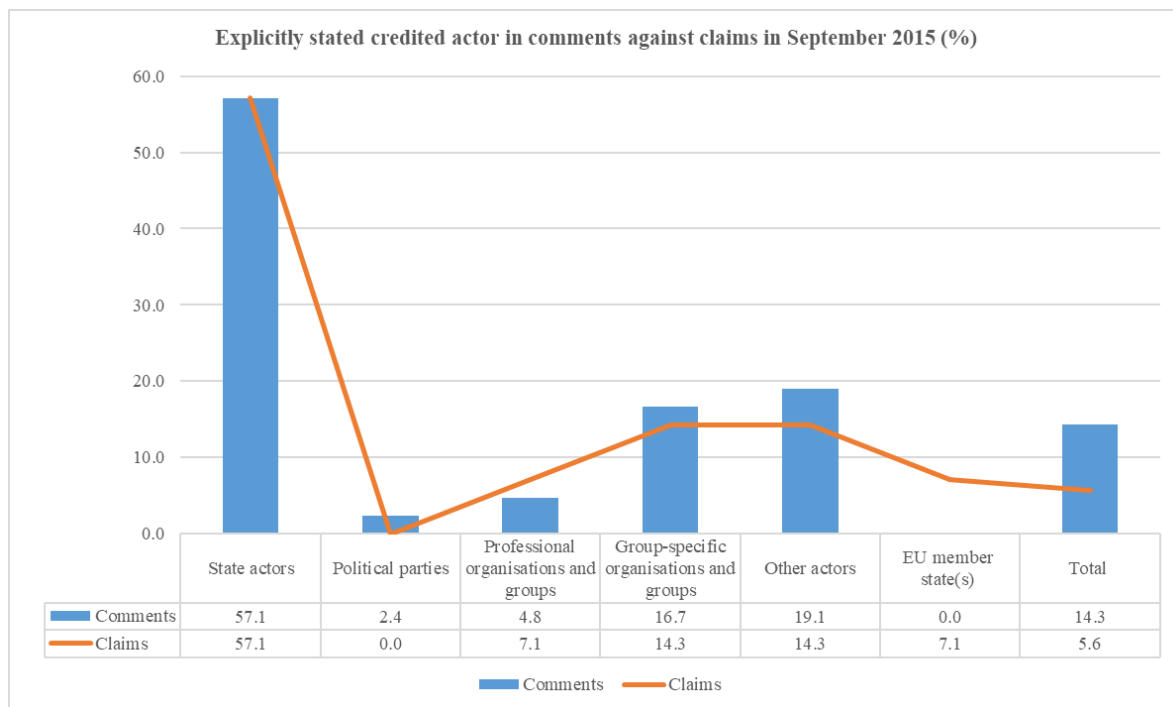
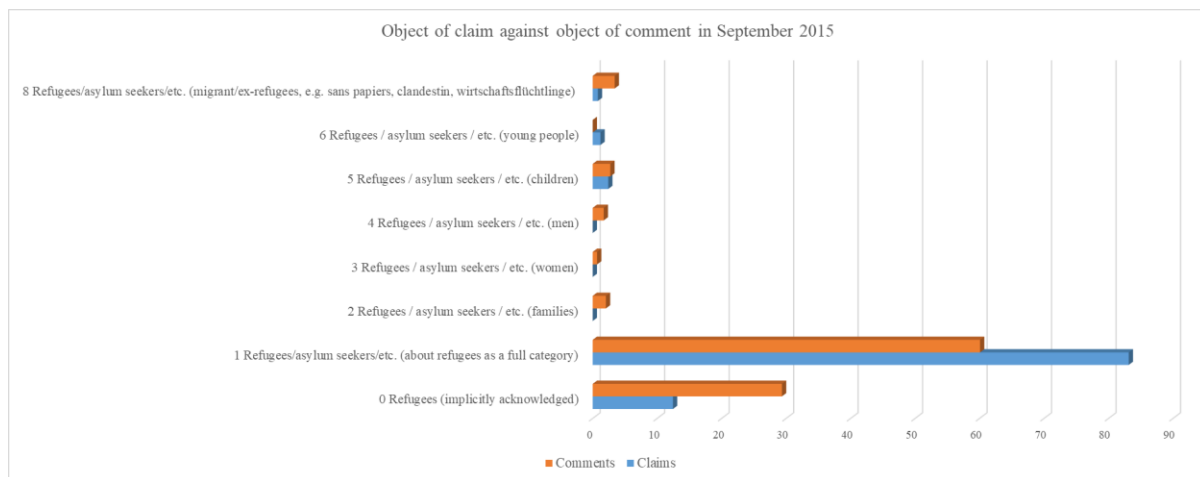


Figure 4: Actors credited by claims and comments on solidarity towards refugees



Just as claims, comments on solidarity towards refugees can be broken down according to their object. Similar to what we observed for claims-making, comments referring to refugees or asylum seekers as a full category clearly prevailed, with more than half of all the comments, followed at a distance by comments dealing with refugees as implicitly acknowledged (Figure 5). As compared to claims-making, however, the latter were more frequent, while the former were less so. All other issues were raised less often.

Figure 5: Object of claims and comments on solidarity towards refugees



Finally, just like claims, comments on solidarity towards refugees often conveyed some form of justification. In the case of Switzerland in the period being considered, various justifications were used, with none standing out in particular (Table 34). The most often mentioned were legal/cultural status and welfare chauvinism, followed by Law and order/security, humanitarian crisis, and then human right. All other justifications were less often reported. We should also note that nearly half of the comments had no justification at all. The justification of comments, however, varied depending on their position towards the object (Table 35). Justifications based on human rights, religious or spiritual reasons, and the humanitarian crisis were overwhelmingly in favour of the object, whereas justifications based on social or economic capacities, welfare chauvinism, law and order or security, migrant or refugee behaviour, religious or cultural incompatibilities and legal or cultural status tended to be hostile towards the object.

Table 34: Justification of comments on solidarity towards refugees

Justification of comment	N	%
Human rights	16	5.5
Religious/spiritual reasons	1	0.3
Historical reasons	12	4.1
Political capacities	13	4.4
Social/economic capacities	12	4.1
Instrumentality	2	0.7
Welfare chauvinism	24	8.2
Law and order/security	19	6.5
Migrant/refugee behaviour	12	4.1
Religious/cultural in-/compatibility	11	3.8
Legal/cultural status	26	8.9
Humanitarian crisis	19	6.5
No frame	126	43.0
Total	293	100.0

Table 35: Justification of comments on solidarity towards refugees by position towards the object

Justification of comment(%)	Anti-object	Neutral/ambivalent	Pro-object	Total
Human rights	6.3	25.0	68.8	100.0
Religious/spiritual reasons	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
Historical reasons	25.0	41.7	33.3	100.0
Political capacities	46.2	15.4	38.5	100.0
Social/economic capacities	75.0	25.0	0.0	100.0
Instrumentality	0.0	50.0	50.0	100.0
Welfare chauvinism	87.5	8.3	4.2	100.0
Law and order/security	89.5	10.5	0.0	100.0
Migrant/refugee behaviour	83.3	0.0	16.7	100.0
Religious/cultural in-/compatibility	72.7	9.1	18.2	100.0
Legal/cultural status	80.8	0.0	19.2	100.0
Humanitarian crisis	15.8	0.0	84.2	100.0
No frame	34.9	22.2	42.9	100.0
Total	48.8	16.4	34.8	100.0

Conclusion

This report has examined which identities, norms and practices are associated with transnational solidarity towards refugees in Switzerland. We have characterised public claims-making as reported in the media and more specifically in newspapers. A variety of actors made claims on this topic during the period considered, from August 2015 to April 2016, from state actors and political parties to various civil society actors. All these actors raised a number of issues, focused on certain objects either negatively or positively, addressed, blamed or credited different actors, and used different justifications for their claims. The picture that we get from it shows that both state actors and civil society actors were active in this field. Most of the time, they focused on issues relating to migration management, mostly concerning refugees or asylum-seekers in general and often Syrian and, to a lesser extent, Eritrean migrants. How-

ever, especially civil society actors often raised more integration-related issues. Moreover, claims-making most often addressed, blamed or credited state actors, but sometimes also supranational actors. Finally, it often showed interest-based, rights-based, or identity-based justifications for the claims made.

One more general aspect coming out of this description of claims-making on solidarity towards refugees in Switzerland is that there was a sort of divide between institutional and non-institutional or civil society actors. On a number of aspects, these two types of actors behaved differently. For example, in terms of positioning, state actors and political parties tended, on average, to be more anti-object, while civil society actors were much more pro-object. Similarly, in terms of justifications, state actors, political parties and supranational actors tended to justify their claims based on interest, whereas civil society actors, in contrast, tended to focus on the other justifications.

One of the features of Switzerland is the presence of three partly distinct public spheres, one for each linguistic region, hence providing somewhat different discursive opportunities for actors in claims-making on solidarity towards refugees, beyond those characterising the country as a whole. This was reflected in the country's media landscape, with no real nation-wide newspaper but rather regional newspapers focusing on each linguistic region. Of course, all the newspapers reported nationally relevant news, but each had a specific regional focus. As a result, claims-making on solidarity towards refugees as reported in the media varied across newspapers and linguistic regions.

Finally, we also looked at the more private and individual comments by newspaper readers aimed at capturing the dynamics of bottom-up mobilisation. Here, along a strong relationship between comments and claims-making, we found both similarities and differences between these two types of interventions, particularly in terms of addressees, objects, blamed actors, and credited actors. This brief description of comments on solidarity towards refugees in Switzerland shows that newspaper readers expressed themselves privately and individually in the media on this topic. Most often commenters addressed state actors as well as supranational actors, focusing on different issues, from migration management to more integration-related issues, often blaming or crediting state actors on certain issues while blaming or crediting civil society actors on other issues. The comments were most of the time against or on behalf of refugees or asylum-seekers in general, rather than specific groups, and justified in a large spectrum of values. While in general there was only a weak relation between comments and claims-making, some similarities across the two types of interventions were found. For example, the objects of comments, including their nationality, were similar to the objects of claims-making. Similarly, state actors, supranational actors as well as other actors were the main addressees of both comments and claims-making, although state actors were more prominent in the latter. Moreover, state actors and in part also supranational actors were often blamed or credited in both cases.

Claims making and the construction of the refugee crisis in Britain

Tom Montgomery, Francesca Calò, and Simone Baglioni

Introduction – the UK context and media discourses

Any proper analysis of the claims made in any country during a perceived crisis should not be isolated from its political context, and this report, situated in the political tumult which has characterised the UK political landscape since the decision to leave the European Union in 2016, must also be understood against the backdrop of longstanding contentions in the UK relating to issues of migration and asylum that have often been framed by policymakers through the prism of border control rather than solidarity. Therefore the analysis contained within this report offers an original contribution to an established literature on a topic that looks set to continue to animate public debate in the UK even after the country has negotiated its exit from the European Union.

Our analysis focuses on three newspapers which reflect diverse editorial perspectives and readerships, namely: The Guardian, The Telegraph and The Express, mirroring a spectrum of progressive and conservative viewpoints. Moreover, this media sample provides a novel contribution towards an existing body of literature that analyses how UK newspapers report the issues surrounding refuge and asylum, exemplified by Greenslade (2005) who highlights on the one hand the long-standing differentiation in approaches by ‘quality’ newspapers, represented in our sample by The Guardian and The Telegraph, and on the other hand ‘tabloid’ newspapers, represented in our sample by The Express. Indeed, Greenslade highlights The Express as a crucial case for understanding how issues of migration and asylum are mediated in the UK given that in the early 2000s it ‘became fixated on the ‘crisis’ of asylum-seekers, often devoting its front page to alarmist stories’ (2005: 21). Therefore, our data and the analysis which accompanies it seeks to illuminate how these same media outlets reported political claims during a period when issues of migration and asylum were, and in many cases continue to be, headline news across Europe.

To best understand the political claims examined in this study, it is useful to employ the distinction made by Hall et al. (1978) between ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ definers in the media, with the primary definers being comprised of key actors who make claims relating to the refugee crisis, compared to ‘secondary definers’, namely the media which act to interpret, and indeed often amplify or exaggerate any potential crisis. Our analysis in this report focuses on the ‘primary definers’ in the UK media and although we can say that these primary definers or key actors are the generators of the claims being made, our analysis does not neglect the fact that the asymmetric access to media platforms such as newspapers in the UK is reflective of the broader inequalities and asymmetries of power apparent across society (Gans, 1979) and as such, the news production processes that ‘reproduce the definitions of the powerful, without being, in a simple sense, in their pay’ (Hall et al., 1978: 57).

This latter point regarding who exactly has the necessary access and resources to articulate their views and advance their agenda in the media reflects a core theme of this report and is embedded within the broader literature which seeks to understand how discourses in the UK around the movement of people are shaped and which actors primarily shape them. In this vein, our analysis is both informed by and seeks to contribute towards the debate engaged between Statham and Geddes (2006) and Freeman (2002). Through claims making and network analysis (Cinalli, 2004) of migrant civil society actors in the UK, Statham and Geddes (2006) found that the direction of immigration and asylum policy in the UK has been dominated by political elites, a conclusion which they contrast against the central thesis put forward by Freeman (2002) that a gap exists between public opinion and immigration policies, and that the explanation for this gap is the success of pro-migrant organisations at lobbying and shaping policymaking towards a liberal approach to immigration. Statham and Geddes (2006) found instead that although civil society actors were mainly pro-migrant, the UK is actually characterised by restrictive rather than liberal immigration policies which are best explained by the disposition of political elites, many of whom embrace a strategy informed by a perspective ‘that there are untapped resources of public grievances against asylum seekers, verging in many cases on racism or outright xenophobia, and that their policy proposals must compete for this political territory’ (Statham, 2003:167). In the following analysis, our findings both reinforce and expand on existing research by revealing the dominance of state actors in claims making in the UK and the negative disposition of these actors towards refugees. Furthermore, what our findings reveal is that rather than claims making being reflective of pragmatic or policy actions, claims making in the UK in the context of the refugee crisis was articulated predominantly through verbal statements and as such, the refugee crisis was constructed by claims in such a way that the crisis was externalised as an event happening ‘outside’ the UK.

Transnational solidarity in the public sphere: Structure of claims-making in the UK

Visibility and inclusiveness

Actors: Who are the proponents and opponents of solidarity towards refugees?

Earlier studies based on claims-making have revealed that making a claim in the public sphere and, moreover, one that attracts media coverage requires resources on the part of the claimant and sometimes an alignment with a newspaper’s editorial line (Koopmans and Statham, 1999; Baglioni, della Porta and Graziano. 2008; Giugni 2010). As such, claims making does not occur in a vacuum; it takes place at the intersection of actors’ diverse, and sometimes divergent, interests, an intersection at which claimants’ resources play a role in their capacity to have their voice heard in the media and therefore to penetrate public debate. Furthermore, the media themselves have an editorial line, and a political or opinion agenda to promote and therefore claims and claimants are scrupulously filtered. Thus, the media tends to prioritise claims made by those perceived to be resourceful, and powerful actors. However, the media also reports claims by a range of social, economic and political actors due, also, to the capacity of such ‘other’ actors to deploy claims-making with innovative or disruptive actions that capture media attention.

When dealing with a critically central policy issue like immigration and asylum, the media coverage of claims making will also reflect the current functional constellation of actors that shape the policy field through either their political or institutional authority, or their humanitarian service and advocacy capacity. Immigration and asylum, in fact, require policy action granting non-nationals access to a country, thus providing such non-citizens with a range of legal protection and social welfare services. In the context of global political turbulence and security concerns, granting access to unknown non-nationals may also trigger public security and safety issues. Therefore, we should expect, on the one hand, state or governmental actors not only to be included in claims making, but to perform a key role given their political responsibility and authority (the ‘political elite’ discussed by Statham and Geddes), along with, on the other hand, a range of societal actors mainly engaged in providing services and care for immigrants and refugees.

However, that the outlined situation is what we might expect in circumstances when immigration and asylum would be considered a sensitive but non-politicised issue. Instead, for several decades, immigration and asylum have become a strongly politicised and polarising issue in the UK, with a peak political polarisation occurring almost in parallel with the Syrian refugee crisis analysed here, when the country was entering a polarising referendum on whether to vote to leave or remain in the European Union where the topic of immigration and asylum featured prominently. Thus, given the strongly polarised dimension of immigration and asylum, we should also expect to find such a polarisation reflected in the media debates.

Considering this context, we began our analysis by focusing on the type of actors that had made claims across the three UK newspapers. As we can see from Table 1 (the figures in the last column), state actors, that is governmental or public administration representatives, played a pivotal role in shaping the public debate of the 2015 refugee crisis, with almost one in every two claims (45.4%). This is not an unexpected result given, on the one hand, the resources that state actors possess to have their claims reported by the media, and on the other hand given the salient functions that state actors play in a field like immigration and asylum, where their decision-making power is crucial in determining which direction the UK should take. Governmental actors, for example, are those who take decisions on whether to accept further refugees and to be part of resettlement programmes, whether and how to contribute to integration/humanitarian response policies at multiple levels of action, and so on. Along with state actors, the second most salient actors are political parties (16.4% of all claims): This reflects that immigration and refugee issues are highly contentious and politicised in the UK, and political parties, in particular right-wing and anti-immigrant ones, consider them topics on which to gain popular support, and are consequently very vocal in these areas.

However, the immigration and refugees field is one in which other actors, like civil society organisations, charities, and non-profit groups, play a role in providing a first response of humanitarian action as well as raising awareness and funds. This is reflected by our claims making results showing that one in every ten claims were made by what we call “group-specific organisations and groups” which, in our analysis, turned out to be mainly formal and informal refugee-crisis oriented organisations (both pro- and anti-refugees) among other actors including self-organised groups of refugee/migrants and other groups such

as the unemployed and disabled people. These findings should be read in conjunction with the percentages of other civil society and advocacy groups which together amounted to more than 5% of the claims. The presence of both types of civil society and interest groups in claims making confirms that the immigration and refugee field is populated not only by state and political actors, but also by a vibrant range of societal actors deploying their capacity for service provision or advocacy. The one other finding that was particularly noteworthy was the virtual absence of the labour movement in the making of claims relating to the refugee crisis. One may argue that this is to be expected given that the issue is often framed around security and humanitarian issues or indeed, points to a decline in membership and consequently, a weakening of the influence of the trade union movement in the UK (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2016). Nevertheless, it is an important gap to identify given the capacity of the trade union movement to offer a progressive voice across a range of issues.

Another group of actors whose vocal capacities have found a platform in the media are supranational actors (11.7% of all actors' claims), again not a surprising result given the international nature of the so-called refugee crisis, in which supranational organisations such as the UN or the IOM, along with the EU, played a role.

Overall, although the most resourceful actors (state actors) played a pivotal role in the claims making, we observe a certain degree of inclusiveness of the public debate around the so-called refugee crisis, with voices offered also by a range of societal organisations, some of which are rather weak in terms of material resources. However, it is interesting now to consider whether such a relatively inclusive debate was apparent across all the three newspapers we used.

A cross-newspaper comparative analysis of actors of claims is also provided in Table 1. Overall, among the three newspapers, it was The Guardian that gave voice to a broader range of actors, and although state actors were preeminent in this newspaper (37.7% of claims), The Guardian reported more than twice as many claims made by societal actors (either group-specific organisations or civil society-advocacy organisations) than the other two newspapers. Thus, from this first overview of claims making actors, it appears that the public debate regarding the so-called refugee crisis was more pluralistic and inclusive in our more left leaning 'quality' newspaper, The Guardian, than in the others. On the contrary, The Express provided a much stronger voice to political parties (almost a third of actors were political parties, more than double that of The Guardian, and three times that of The Telegraph). While digging deeper into an analysis of these actors, we observed that the Express offered a platform to key figures in UKIP, including the one-time leader of that party and key figure in the EU leave campaign, Nigel Farage. This outcome confirms the tabloid's strong contribution to the politicisations of the refugee and immigration issue by prioritising political leaders that 'shout' louder, thus strongly contributing to the polarisation of the debate.

There was another interesting result which emerges from the analysis of the cross-newspapers distribution of the supranational actors category: Both The Guardian and The Telegraph were more inclusive of and sensitive to the claims made by supranational actors and organisations (the EU and UNHCR) that were indeed centrally placed in refugee issues, but were sometimes at odds with the viewpoint of the UK Government.

Table 1: Actors by newspaper (percentages; frequencies between brackets)

	The Guardian	The Telegraph	The Express	Total
State actors	37.7 (101)	55.6 (144)	43.3 (113)	45.4 (358)
Political parties	11.9 (32)	9.7 (25)	27.6 (72)	16.4 (129)
Professional organisations and groups	4.9 (13)	3.5 (9)	5.7 (15)	4.7 (37)
Labour organisations and groups	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.8 (2)	0.3 (2)
Group-specific organisations and groups	16.4 (44)	8.5 (22)	6.1 (16)	10.4 (82)
Civil society and human rights organisations	4.1 (11)	1.2 (3)	2.7 (7)	2.7 (21)
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	3.4 (9)	3.5 (9)	1.9 (5)	2.9 (23)
Supranational actors	15.3 (41)	13.5 (35)	6.1 (16)	11.7 (92)
Specific countries	0.7 (2)	0.0 (0)	0.8 (2)	0.5 (4)
Other actors	5.6 (15)	4.6 (12)	5.0 (13)	5.1 (40)
Total	100 (268)	100 (259)	100 (361)	100 (788)

N=788

When we look at Table 2, we observe the distribution of claims by representatives of different political parties across the three newspapers, and one of the most striking findings concerns the number of claims where the actor's claim is not explicitly linked to any political party; a total of 85.9% of claims with a similar distribution across The Telegraph (91.5%) and The Guardian (89.6%) and to a lesser extent in The Express (76.6%). This resonates with our data concerning the distribution of claims that were made by state actors, where the claims made were expressed through the prism of the governmental role of the actor, rather than their party affiliation. Moreover, the data presented in Table 2 somewhat reinforces the analysis of the UK newspaper landscape outlined at the outset of this report, namely the interrelationship between actors and the editorial line of newspapers. We can observe that claims which were clearly aligned with the Conservative Party map on both right-leaning newspapers such as the tabloid, The Express (4.2%) and the quality newspaper, The Telegraph at 2.3%, with scarce visibility in the left-leaning quality newspaper, The Guardian (0.7%). The situation is then somewhat reversed in the case of the Labour Party, with most claims explicitly made by party representatives more prominent in The Guardian (4.9%) than in The Telegraph (3.1%) or The Express (also 3.1%). There is a residual degree of visibility for both the Liberal Democrats and the Scottish National Party, with both parties having just one claim (0.4%) made explicitly in the name of their party in the same left-leaning quality newspaper, The Guardian. Perhaps unsurprisingly a more internationalist outlook was presented also by The Guardian with claims made by political party representatives featuring almost twice as often (4.1%) than in The Telegraph (2.3%), and with greater frequency than in The Express (0.8%). One of the more interesting findings from Table 2 concerns the observable findings relating to UKIP, whose representatives had no

footprint in The Guardian at all and only a residual one in The Telegraph (0.8%); however, we can observe them enjoying a dominant role in The Express (15.3%), a close relationship that was not replicated in any of our other political parties and newspapers. The connection between both this party and this newspaper identified in this dataset resonates with conclusions reached in a recent study by Deacon and Wring (2016) examining the relationship between UKIP and the UK media, suggesting that much of the established media in the UK had pursued a containment strategy of the discourse emanating from UKIP, including on the subject of immigration, with the sole exception of The Express, where political convergence on several issues exists, and whose owner has financially supported the party. Given the silo that UKIP therefore operates in, in terms of our findings, we need to be careful not to overstate its impact on the broader public discourse, and that to some extent our data suggests that in the context of our time-frame, in terms of the newspapers we have examined, they were often found to be preaching to the converted.

Table 2: Party by newspaper (percentages; frequencies in brackets)

Party	Newspaper			
	The Guardian	The Telegraph	The Express	Total
Conservative and Unionist Party	0.7% (2)	2.3% (6)	4.2% (11)	2.4% (19)
Labour Party	4.9% (13)	3.1% (8)	3.1% (8)	3.7% (29)
Liberal Democrats	0.4% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.1% (1)
UK Independence Party	0.0% (0)	0.8% (2)	15.3% (40)	5.3% (42)
Scottish National Party	0.4% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.1% (1)
Non-UK political party	4.1% (11)	2.3% (6)	0.8% (2)	2.4% (19)
No political party	89.6% (240)	91.5% (237)	76.6% (200)	85.9% (677)
Total	100 (268)	100 (259)	100 (261)	100 (788)

N=788

Table 3 offers a cross-temporal overview of actors of claims for the period we studied. We can observe that the frequency of state actors' claims making remained consistent across the timeline with the exception of December 2015 (9.7%) and tailed off somewhat in April 2016 (38.8%). Actors such as political parties maintained a similarly consistent trend which fell to single figures in December 2015 (6.5%). Interestingly, however, we see that the claims made by non-state and non-political party actors spiked somewhat during the same month of December 2015, which was true for group-specific organisations and groups (19.4%), Advocacy and policy-oriented groups (12.9%) and other actors (22.6%), the latter of which encompassed local citizens, individual activists, celebrities and those framed as the elite by the newspapers. We can attribute such a spike in groups and civil society organisations claims to the period, Christmas, and specific events that occurred when several actors (such as the Pope and the Church of England) launched fund-raising campaigns. Actually, one of our newspapers (The Guardian) launched a

fundraising campaign that same month. Such appeals for donations in turn generated further claims by civil society actors and pro-refugee activists. This finding suggests that non-state actors which typically have fewer resources gain higher than usual visibility when they can take advantage of contingent circumstances, such as the context of Christmas where to the likelihood of people making donations increases exponentially, and when the media are more likely to echo such altruistic appeals. In terms of supranational actors, we can observe a similar spike in December 2015 (19.4%), when the European Union intervened by publicly criticising some of the member states for their reluctance to host refugees and other states for their mismanagement of the influx of refugees.

Table 3: Actors over time: August 2015-April 2016 (percentages; frequencies between brackets)

	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Total
State actors	46.3 (37)	48.8 (100)	40.7 (35)	58.3 (21)	9.7 (3)	52.2 (60)	51.3 (40)	40.0 (36)	38.8 (26)	45.4 (358)
Political parties	15.0 (12)	17.6 (36)	19.8 (17)	11.1 (4)	6.5 (2)	19.1 (22)	11.5 (9)	17.8 (16)	16.4 (11)	16.4 (129)
Professional organisations and groups	10.0 (8)	2.9 (6)	7.0 (6)	8.3 (3)	6.5 (2)	6.1 (7)	1.3 (1)	3.3 (3)	1.5 (1)	4.7 (37)
Labour organisations and groups	0.0 (0)	0.5 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	1.1 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.3 (2)
Group-specific organisations and groups	8.8 (7)	10.7 (22)	12.8 (11)	2.8 (1)	19.4 (6)	9.6 (11)	9.0 (7)	13.3 (12)	7.5 (5)	10.4 (82)
Civil society and human rights organisations	3.8 (3)	2.4 (5)	4.7 (4)	2.8 (1)	3.2 (1)	2.6 (3)	1.3 (1)	2.2 (2)	1.5 (1)	2.7 (21)
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	3.8 (3)	3.9 (8)	2.3 (2)	0.0 (0)	12.9 (4)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	1.1 (1)	7.5 (5)	2.9 (23)
Supranational actors	7.5 (6)	7.8 (16)	9.3 (8)	8.3 (3)	19.4 (6)	6.1 (7)	16.7 (13)	20.0 (18)	22.4 (15)	11.7 (92)
Specific countries	1.3 (1)	0.5 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	1.1 (1)	1.5 (1)	0.5 (4)
Other actors	3.8 (3)	4.9 (10)	3.5 (3)	8.3 (3)	22.6 (7)	4.3 (5)	9.0 (7)	0.0 (0)	3.0 (2)	5.1 (40)
Monthly total %	100 (80)	100 (205)	100 (86)	100 (36)	100 (31)	100 (115)	100 (78)	100 (90)	100 (67)	100 (788)

N=788

We can now consider the scopes of activity (transnational, national and sub-national) of each category of actor involved in claims making across the three UK newspapers. Migration and asylum are by definition, international issues, however national media debates tend to focus on national actors for the resources and editorial line reasons we discussed earlier, but also because of the political, social and economic

implications that refugees and immigrants have for a given country or community. Therefore, we would expect a large number of actors to be national or making claims with a national focus.

Table 4 confirms, in part, such an assumption: The majority of state actors can be identified as principally focused on the national level (88.3%), as well as political parties where 60.5% focused on acting at this level. A more even distribution of the scope of the actors can be identified among the category of group-specific organisations and groups, where a quarter had a supranational scope, although a third of actors in this category evaded classification in terms of their scope. However, some of the other findings from Table 4 are worth highlighting: Civil society and human rights organisations primarily focused on the transnational scope of action (81%) and as expected, all supranational actors focused on the transnational level. Thus, Table 4 suggests that the refugee crisis generated both a nationally focused reaction and one that took a broader, more international approach, generating a debate in which voices from within and from outside the UK could be heard, although with different degrees of intensity.

Table 4: Actors by scope (percentages)

	Transnational	National	Sub-national	Unclassifiable	Total
State actors	2.0	88.3	9.2	0.6	100.0
Political parties	16.3	60.5	3.9	19.4	100.0
Professional or- ganisations and groups	10.8	73.0	2.7	13.5	100.0
Labour organisa- tions and groups	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Group-specific organisations and groups	24.4	24.4	15.9	35.4	100.0
Civil society and human rights or- ganisations	81.0	19.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	13.0	82.6	4.3	0.0	100.0
Supranational actors	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Specific countries	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Other actors	0.0	22.5	15.0	62.5	100.0

N=788

Addressees

When analysing the findings from our data that relate to addressees, i.e. those whom actors directly address when making claims (Table 5), we observe that in most cases, there were no addressees at all (79.4% in total). In those cases where there were addressees, we can once again observe that it was the usual suspects of state actors, due to their capacity of action in this field (or their reluctance to act) who were most frequently the target of claims being made (12.6%) and that these actors were most frequently targeted in The Express (14.9%), closely followed by The Telegraph (12.4%), then by The Guardian (10.4%). Interestingly, the next category of actors that were most frequently addressed across the

three newspapers were supranational actors (3.2%), but it was The Telegraph where these actors were most frequently addressed (4.2%) with The Guardian and The Express both at around 2%. These results seem to suggest that the discourse between actors was most likely to be conducted as a high-level game and this reinforces our contention that the primary discourse of the refugee crisis from the perspective of the UK media was a top-down rather than a bottom-up process.

Table 5: Addressee by newspaper (percentages; frequencies between brackets)

	The Guardian	The Telegraph	The Express	Total
State actors	10.4 (28)	12.4 (32)	14.9 (39)	12.6 (99)
Political parties	0.4 (1)	0.4 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.3 (2)
Professional organisations and groups	0.4 (1)	0.8 (2)	0.8 (2)	0.6 (5)
Labour organisations and groups	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
Group-specific organisations and groups	1.9 (5)	0.0 (0)	0.8 (2)	0.9 (7)
Civil society and human rights organisations	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	0.4 (1)	0.4 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.3 (2)
Supranational actors	2.6 (7)	4.2 (11)	2.7 (7)	3.2 (25)
Specific countries	1.9 (5)	3.1 (8)	1.1 (3)	2.0 (16)
Other actors	1.1 (3)	0.4 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.3 (2)
No addressee	81.0 (217)	78.4 (203)	78.9 (206)	79.4 (626)
Total	100 (268)	100 (259)	100 (261)	100 (788)

N=788

Positioning

That immigration and the so-called refugee crisis have had a highly polarising effect on British society (and not only here, given that the same high degree of social and political polarisation has manifested itself across several European countries) is clearly apparent in Table 6 which shows the position towards refugees of actors involved in making claims. Table 6 reveals that two types of actor occupied the two opposing sides of the political and social arena: One in every two claims made by state actors were against refugees, while a third of them had a neutral stance, and only one in five perceived refugees in a positive light. On the contrary, almost all claims made by civil society and human rights organisations, and more than two out of three of those made by group specific organisations, were in support of refugees. Other actors such as professional organisations and a range of different other societal bodies occupied more neutral positions, as they occupied the space between a business oriented positive perception of migration and refugee issues, and more critical positions inspired by political entrepreneurs. Fi-

nally, the position of supranational actors reflects the heterogeneity of political dispositions towards migration and asylum, with some of these supranational organisations in favour of refugees, namely those that work to protect them such as the UNHCR and the IOM, and the more diversified position within the EU, with the Commission and some member states in favour of the rights of refugees and the Council and other member states adopting a more cautious position.

Table 6: Position towards refugees by actors (percentages)

	Anti-object	Neutral / Ambivalent	Pro-object	Total
State actors	50.3	30.4	19.3	100.0
Political parties	64.3	14.7	20.9	100.0
Professional organisations and groups	32.4	40.5	27.0	100.0
Labour organisations and groups	50.0	0.0	50.0	100.0
Group-specific organisations and groups	13.4	7.3	79.3	100.0
Civil society and human rights organisations	0.0	4.8	95.2	100.0
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	39.1	13.0	47.8	100.0
Supranational actors	23.9	27.2	48.9	100.0
Specific countries	75.0	25.0	0.0	100.0
Other actors	57.5	2.5	40.0	100.0

N=788

An interesting insight into how the different positions towards refugees are distributed is offered by our findings in Table 7, where we can observe that those claims that were favourable towards refugees peaked in October 2015 (50%) and then in December 2015 (54.8%) and never again regained that momentum, whereas it was after this period that the claims that were decidedly anti-refugee came to the fore as we can observe in January 2016 (61.7%) and February 2016 (61.5%).

Moreover, when we look at Table 8, we can also gain some insight into the uneven distribution of those claims across the three UK newspapers which reflect the editorial narrative of each newspaper; The Express published the most anti-refugee claims (six out of ten) compared to four out of ten by The Telegraph and three out of ten by The Guardian. This hierarchy is turned upside down when we observe the proportion of pro-refugee claims across the three titles, with most of the claims being found in The Guardian (45.5%), followed by The Telegraph (34.4%) and The Express (20.3%).

Table 7: Position towards refugees over time: August 2015–April 2016 (percentages; frequencies between brackets)

	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Total
Anti-object	38.8 (31)	38.0 (78)	24.4 (21)	22.2 (8)	25.8 (8)	61.7 (71)	61.5 (48)	46.7 (42)	55.2 (37)	43.7 (344)
Neutral / Ambivalent	28.8 (23)	24.4 (50)	25.6 (22)	44.4 (16)	19.4 (6)	13.0 (15)	16.7 (13)	27.8 (25)	14.9 (10)	22.8 (180)
Pro-object	32.5 (26)	37.6 (77)	50.0% (43)	33.3 (12)	54.8 (17)	25.2 (29)	21.8 (17)	25.6 (23)	29.9 (20)	33.5 (264)
Total	100 (80)	100 (205)	100 (86)	100 (36)	100 (31)	100 (115)	100 (78)	100 (90)	100 (67)	100 (788)

N=788

Table 8: Position towards refugees by newspaper (percentages; frequencies between brackets)

	The Guardian	The Telegraph	The Express	Total
Anti-object	29.9 (80)	42.9 (111)	58.6 (153)	43.7 (344)
Neutral / Ambivalent	24.6 (66)	22.8 (59)	21.1 (55)	22.8 (180)
Pro-object	45.5 (122)	34.4 (89)	20.3 (53)	33.5 (264)
Total	100 (268)	100 (259)	100 (261)	100 (788)

N=788

To develop a further nuanced analysis of the position of actors towards refugees, we analysed their positions by nationality and to do so, created three specific categories of nationality that would assist in our study: Actors from the UK, actors from the EU27 and non-EU actors. What we can observe in Table 9 is that in terms of actors from the UK, there was a clear tendency towards adopting an anti-refugee position (52.4%) as opposed to a pro-refugee position (27.5%). Nevertheless, rather than being an outlier, this is in fact reflected by the results from those actors from the other 27 EU countries, where 52.8% made claims which adopted an anti-refugee stance as compared to 22.6% that made claims which adopted a pro-refugee position. Moreover, what our findings reveal is that the category which demonstrated the most favourable disposition towards refugees was the actors who were not from the European Union, 50.8% of whom made claims that were pro-refugee in comparison to 22% of claims that were anti-refugee, although the latter findings regarding non-EU actors need to be tempered with the caveat that such actors contributed far fewer claims in total in comparison with the UK and EU27 categories. What these findings relate to us is a sense that a negative disposition towards refugees was not exclusive to UK actors, and indeed space existed in the UK media platforms for those from elsewhere in the EU and beyond to make claims that were anti-refugee in nature. This reflects a somewhat broader context for the rise in reactionary and populist anti-refugee and anti-migrant movements and parties across Europe (Bale, 2003; Bale et al., 2010). Moreover, what our findings may also tentatively suggest is that there is a need to be conscious of an anti-refugee discourse that, although often reframed and reconstructed in national terms, is perhaps better understood as a European phenomenon that mutates according to the specificities of each national context, manifesting itself in the UK as a conflation of is-

sues of asylum and migration with Euroscepticism (Ford and Goodwin, 2014; Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017).

Table 9: Position towards refugees by actor nationality (percentages)

	Anti-object	Neutral/ ambivalent	Pro-object	Total
UK	52.4	20.1	27.5	100.0%
EU27	52.8	24.6	22.6	100.0%
Non-EU	22.0	27.1	50.8	100.0%
Unclassifiable	19.5	22.6	57.9	100.0%
N=788				

Issues

The so-called refugee crisis was a dominant issue in public and political discourse in the UK between 2015 and 2016, but how did actors conceive of such an issue? Claims making analysis helps us to understand how a given topic is discussed or portrayed in the media through the prism of specific actions and actors. Such an issue-definition process is portrayed in Table 10 presenting the distribution of claims across a range of possible understandings and definitions of the refugee crisis. Table 10 reveals that by far the most frequent way to define the refugee issue was as a matter of political management (more than one in every two claims), meaning that actors made claims primarily over the political-managerial aspects of the crisis (who should take responsibility and decisions about it? Issues of refugee responsibility sharing across the EU, etc.). The next most frequent type of issue raised by actors concerned the background, situation and fate of refugees (15.9%) which often revolved around issues such as the journey of refugees and the conditions in the camps. Finally, almost one out of ten claims had an issue focusing more on general problems connected with refugees, and a residual portion of claims (4.2%) centred on public and civic initiatives, or focused on integration policies (3.2%).

These findings highlight two intertwining aspects of the UK public debate on the so-called refugee crisis. Firstly, the debate portrayed the refugee issue primarily as a matter of public management capacities rather than as a matter of respecting consolidated international human rights norms which should oblige states to provide shelter and refuge to human beings fleeing from persecution and war. Secondly, such a ‘managerialisation’ of the issue was due to the dominance of state actors and political parties in the number of claims made in the UK press. This is somewhat confirmed by our findings in Table 11 where we find that state actors indeed predominantly made claims relating to the political management of the refugee crisis (77.9%), a figure mirrored, albeit with the caveat of much fewer claims being made overall, by political parties (74.4%). Moreover, when considering the dominant issues raised by supranational actors, we see a similar pattern with the primary type of issue again being that of political management (78.3%). It is only when we look more closely at non-state organisations do we begin to discern some divergence in the types of issues being highlighted, such as group specific organisations and groups which, while engaged in issues of political management (32.9%), were mainly focused on issues relating to the background, situation and fate of the refugees (46.3%). But the latter lacks those resources and political saliency that state actors possess, and therefore their presence is much less visible.

Table 10: Frequency of issue

Issue	Percentages
Political management	68.1
The background, the situation and the fate of refugees	15.9
Problems associated with the refugee influx/crisis	8.6
Public and civic activities/initiatives beyond political governance	4.2
Integration policies	3.2
Total	100

N=788

Table 11: Issue by actors (percentages)

	Political management	Integration policies	The background, the situation and the fate of refugees	Problems associated with the refugee influx/crisis	Public and civic activities/initiatives beyond Political Governance	Total
State actors	77.9	2.5	10.3	7.8	1.4	100.0
Political parties	74.4	3.9	7.0	11.6	3.1	100.0
Professional organisations and groups	45.9	10.8	10.8	21.6	10.8	100.0
Labour organisations and groups	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	100.0
Group-specific organisations and groups	32.9	6.1	46.3	7.3	7.3	100.0
Civil society and human rights organisations	47.6	0.0	38.1	0.0	14.3	100.0
Advocacy and policy-oriented groups	52.2	4.3	17.4	13.0	13.0	100.0
Supranational actors	78.3	0.0	18.5	1.1	2.2	100.0
Specific countries	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Other actors	47.5	2.5	20.0	17.5	12.5	100.0

N=788

Solidarity contestations in the public sphere

Forms of actions

Which form did the claims made by actors in the UK take? Analysing the forms of action, as shown in Table 12, more than 70% of the total forms of action were verbal statements, which is unsurprising since typically, actors gain access to the public space via discursive tools. Disaggregating verbal statements,

the claims were mainly online statements, declarations in the media or interviews, and proposals by government or parliament. However, actors also entered public debate of the so-called refugee crisis through political decisions (15.5%), mainly by governmental and parliamentary actors, while a smaller number of actors made claims through forms of direct solidarity (1.8%) or humanitarian aid mobilisation (1.7%). Finally, although a polarising issue, our analysis reveals that the refugee crisis did not play a catalytic role for proper contentious and protest actions: Demonstrative and conventional actions represented only 3.3% of the total claims. Violent and confrontational protest actions represented only 1.4% and 1.3% of total claims, respectively, with repressive measures representing just 1.3% of total actions.

What these findings perhaps emphasise is that the refugee crisis in the UK is better understood not as an event that was taking place in the UK, but as one that was perceived to be occurring elsewhere in Europe and thus the key forms of action that could be taken were more discursive than pragmatic. This does not suggest that pragmatic measures were neither taken by the government nor by civil society, but instead reinforces the point that the key battleground, as revealed by our data, was through the verbal statements made by actors rather than other actions. Consequently, claims making in the UK media positioned the country as a spectator rather than a participant in the refugee crisis (in comparison for example to Greece or Germany), thus potentially assisting those with an agenda to differentiate the UK from the European Union.

Table 12: Forms of Action

Forms of Action Aggregated	Percentages
Verbal Statements	70.2
Political Decisions	15.5
Demonstrative Protest Actions	3.3
Conventional Protest actions	3.3
Direct Solidarity (Support/Assistance/Help) Actions	1.8
Humanitarian Aid Mobilisation	1.7
Violent Protest Actions	1.4
Confrontational Protest Actions	1.3
Repressive Measures	1.3
Total	100.0

N=788

Table 13 shows the distribution of the forms of actions over the given time period. Verbal statements ran at the same level across the period, while other types of actions reflected a more specific “momentum”. Therefore, as one might expect, direct solidary actions were mainly undertaken during September 2015 at the peak of the crisis and in December 2015 when various humanitarian and religious actors called for support for refugees. Similarly, actions mobilising humanitarian aid were, as expected, mainly conducted during August and October 2015. Political decisions were fairly spread across the period although they peaked post crisis, with the assumption that once the emergency period has passed, political actors are called on to decide on the provision of integration and services for refugees.

Table 13: Forms of action over time: August 2015-April 2016 (percentages; frequencies in brackets)

Forms of Action	Months									
	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Tot.
Political Decisions	10.0 (8)	17.6 (36)	10.5 (9)	22.2 (8)	0.0 (0)	14.8 (17)	19.2 (15)	16.7 (15)	20.9 (14)	15.5 (122)
Direct Solidarity	1.3 (1)	3.9 (8)	1.2 (1)	2.8 (1)	3.2 (1)	0.9 (1)	1.3 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	1.8 (14)
Humanitarian Aid Mobilisation	6.3 (5)	0.5 (1)	4.7 (4)	2.8 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	1.1 (1)	1.5 (1)	1.6 (13)
Violent Protest Actions	6.3 (5)	2.4 (5)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	1.1 (1)	1.5 (1)	1.5 (12)
Confrontational Protest Actions	0.0 (0)	1.5 (3)	1.2 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	1.3 (1)	3.3 (3)	3.0 (2)	1.3 (10)
Demonstrative Protest Actions	2.5 (2)	1.5 (3)	7.0 (6)	2.8 (2)	9.7 (3)	3.5 (4)	2.6 (2)	3.3 (3)	3.0 (2)	3.3 (26)
Conventional Protest Actions	1.3 (1)	3.4 (7)	2.3 (2)	5.6 (2)	12.9 (4)	6.1 (7)	2.6 (2)	0.0 (0)	1.5 (1)	3.3 (26)
Repressive Measures	1.3 (1)	1.5 (3)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	5.1 (4)	1.1 (1)	1.5 (1)	1.3 (10)
Verbal Statements	71.3 (57)	67.8 (139)	73.3 (63)	63.9 (23)	74.2 (23)	74.8 (86)	67.9 (53)	73.3 (66)	67.2 (45)	70.4 (555)
Total	100 (80)	100 (205)	100 (86)	100 (36)	100 (31)	100 (115)	100 (78)	100 (90)	100 (67)	100 (788)

N=788

There were no relevant differences among the three newspapers in the forms of actions reported, the only (indeed small and perhaps statistically insignificant) difference is that The Guardian reported more direct solidarity events and more demonstrative and protest events than the other two papers, and as such, offered a voice to a broader set of claims (Table 14).

Table 14: Forms of action by newspaper (percentages; frequencies between brackets)

Forms of Action	Newspapers			
	The Guardian	The Telegraph	The Express	Total
Political Decisions	13.8 (37)	19.7 (51)	13.0 (34)	15.5 (122)
Direct Solidarity	3.7 (10)	0.8 (2)	0.8 (2)	1.8 (14)
Humanitarian Aid Mobilisation	2.2 (6)	1.2 (3)	1.5 (4)	1.6 (13)
Violent Protest Actions	0.7 (2)	3.1 (8)	0.8 (2)	1.5 (12)
Confrontational Protest Actions	1.5 (4)	1.2 (3)	1.1 (3)	1.3 (10)
Demonstrative Protest Actions	5.2 (14)	3.1 (8)	1.5 (4)	3.3 (26)
Conventional Protest Actions	3.0 (8)	3.1 (8)	3.8 (10)	3.3 (26)
Repressive Measures	0.7 (2)	1.9 (5)	1.1 (3)	1.3 (10)
Verbal Statements	69.0 (185)	66.0 (171)	76.2 (199)	70.4 (555)
Total	100 (268)	100 (259)	100 (261)	100 (788)

N=788

Table 15: Forms of action by actors (percentages; frequencies between brackets)

Forms of Action	Actors										Total
	State Actors	Political Parties	Profes- sional organisa- tions and groups	Labour organi- sations and groups	Group specific organisa- tions and groups	Civil society and human rights or- ganisations	Advocacy and poli- cy- ori- ented groups	Other actors	Supra- national actors	Specif- ic coun- tries	
Political Decisions	27.4 (98)	1.6 (2)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	21.7 (20)	50.0 (2)	15.5 (122)
Direct Solidarity	1.7 (6)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	2.4 (2)	9.5 (2)	0.0 (0)	10.0 (4)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	1.8 (14)
Humanitarian Aid Mo- bilisation	1.7 (6)	0.0 (0)	5.4 (0)	0.0 (0)	2.4 (2)	9.5 (2)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	1.1 (0)	0.0 (0)	1.6 (13)
Violent Protest Actions	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	2.7 (1)	0.0 (0)	4.9 (4)	0.0 (0)	21.7 (5)	5.0 (2)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	1.5 (12)
Confrontational Protest Actions	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	2.7 (1)	0.0 (0)	9.8 (8)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	1.1 (1)	0.0 (0)	1.3 (10)
Demonstrative Protest Actions	0.0 (0)	4.7 (6)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	10.0 (12.2)	0.0 (0)	8.7 (2)	20.0 (8)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	3.3 (26)
Conventional Protest Actions	1.7 (6)	3.9 (5)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	2.4 (2)	14.3 (3)	8.7 (2)	5.0 (2)	6.5 (6)	0.0 (0)	3.3 (26)
Repressive Measures	2.8 (10)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	1.3 (10)
Verbal Statements	64.8 (232)	89.9 (116)	89.2 (33)	100 (2)	65.9 (54)	66.7 (14)	60.9 (14)	60.0 (24)	69.6 (64)	50 (2)	70.4 (555)
Total	100 (358)	100 (129)	100 (37)	100 (2)	100 (82)	100 (21)	100 (23)	100 (40)	100 (92)	100 (2)	100 (788)

N=788

Analysing the forms of action promoted by actors, Table 15 reveals that forms of action followed the actor's function or role, therefore expectedly, political decision was used mainly by state actors and supranational actors. Also, direct solidarity actions and humanitarian aid actions were mainly provided by civil society organisations. Violent protest actions were mainly used as a form of action by advocacy and policy-oriented groups.

Objects

Considering the object of solidarity/contestation, refugees were identified as a full category – only one entity or group - in 60.7% of the claims, while they were implicitly acknowledged in almost 30% of the data (Table 16). Only 3.9% of claims focused on children and 3.8% on irregular migrants. The lack of a specific identification is confirmed also when the nationality of refugees is analysed (Table 17). In fact, in 92% of cases, no nationality was identified. Only in 7% of the cases was nationality identified as Syrian. From this data, it is possible to discern a type of “dehumanisation” of refugees in the way that newspapers reported their identity as a full group and not identifying their specificity in terms of their background or the context from which they had previously been embedded. This is a crucial component for understanding how the debate over the refugee crisis was malleable and easily shaped, particularly for those actors with a more negative disposition towards refugees, something which can best be understood through the prism offered by the analysis of Cohen (1972) in the construction of ‘folk devils’ in the production of moral panics in society where perceived ‘threats’ were exaggerated and distorted. What we can infer from our findings is that through the reduction of a multitude of refugees to a catch-all categorisation, actors both reflect and enable the discursive reconstruction in the UK media of people seeking refuge to people who pose a threat to the borders of the country, a strong trope of migration discourse in contemporary Britain (Walters, 2004; Squire, 2008).

Table 16: Objects of claims

Objects of Claim	Percentages
Refugees/asylum seekers/etc. (about refugees as a full category)	60.7
Refugees (implicitly acknowledged)	29.7
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (children)	3.9
Refugees/asylum seekers/etc. (migrant/ex-refugees, e.g. sans papiers, clandestin)	3.8
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (men)	0.5
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (young people)	0.5
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (families)	0.4
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (women)	0.3
Other refugees/asylum seekers/etc.	0.3
Total	100.0

N=788

Table 17: Nationality of refugees

Nationality of refugees	Percentages
No Nationality identified	91.6
Syrian Arab Republic	7.0
Eritrea	0.4
Somalia	0.3
Afghanistan	0.3
Sri Lanka	0.1
Iraq	0.1
Morocco	0.1
Other	0.1
Total	100.0
N=788	

Table 18 reveals how each actor type refers to the refugees when making claims: There are no relevant differences among actors; they all primarily refer to refugees as a broad category explicitly and implicitly acknowledged.

Table 18: Object of claims by actor (percentages; frequencies in brackets)

Object of Claim	Actors											
	State Actors	Political Parties	Professional organisations and groups	Labour organisations and groups	Group specific organisations and groups	Civil and rights organisations	society and human organisations	Advocacy and policy oriented groups	Other actors	Supranational actors	Specific countries	Total
Refugees (implicitly acknowledged)	27.4 (98)	35.7 (46)	29.7% (11)	50.0 (1)	31.7 (26)	19 (4)		30.4 (7)	15.0 (6)	35.9 (33)	50 (2)	29.7 (234)
Refugees/asylum seekers/etc. (about refugees as a full category)	64.0 (229)	54.3 (70)	59.5% (22)	50.0 (1)	58.5 (48)	52.4 (11)		56.5 (13)	77.5 (31)	56.5 (52)	25 (1)	60.7 (478)
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (families)	0.3 (1)	0.0 (0)	2.7 (1)	0.0 (0)	1.2 (1)	0.0 (0)		0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.4 (3)
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (women)	0.3 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)		0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	1.1 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.3 (2)
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (men)	0.0 (0)	0.8 (1)	5.4 (2)	0.0 (0)	1.2 (1)	0.0 (0)		0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.5 (4)
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (children)	3.9 (14)	5.4 (7)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	3.7 (3)	23.8 (5)		0.0 (0)	5.0 (2)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	3.9 (31)
Refugees / asylum seekers / etc. (young people)	0.8 (3)	0.8 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)		0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.5 (4)
Refugees/asylum seekers/etc. (e.g. sans papiers, clandestin,)	3.4 (12)	3.1 (4)	2.7 (1)	0.0 (0)	3.7 (3)	4.8 (1)		4.3 (1)	2.5 (1)	6.5 (1)	25.0 (1)	3.8 (30)
Other refugees/asylum seekers/etc.	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)		8.7 (2)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.3 (2)
Total	100 (358)	100 (129)	100 (37)	100 (2)	100 (82)	100 (21)		100 (23)	100 (40)	100 (92)	100 (4)	100 (788)

N=788

Justifying solidarity

How is solidarity for refugees justified across the claims? Table 19 shows that solidarity was primarily articulated on the basis of interest based/utilitarian justifications which included political tactics and the distribution of refugees (almost one in every two claims with a justification), while in only a minority (one fifth) of claims did rights-based justifications, such as human rights and issues of moral responsibility, have a bearing, and a tiny minority (3.8%) were instead based on an identity-based rationale. Moreover, in 27.2% of the cases, it was not possible to identify a clear justification at all. Therefore, our findings suggest that the main dichotomy in the justifications underpinning the claims made in the UK were between material interests on the one hand and on the other hand, human rights.

Table 19: Values

Values	Percentages
Interest-Based/Utilitarian Justifications	47.1%
Rights-based justification	22.0%
Identity-based justifications	3.8%
No Justifications	27.2%

N=788

Focusing on the frequencies of these values across the three newspapers (Table 20), The Guardian in comparison with the other two newspapers, expectedly, focused more on reporting claims based on rights based justifications (28.0%, twice as many as the Express). The Express instead focused more than the other two newspapers on utilitarian-based justification (56.7% of its reported claims), while the Telegraph occupied an intermediary position with close to half of its claims having an interest-based rationale and one fifth, a rights-based one. This suggests that quality newspapers tend to promote a vision of actions concerning refugees to be inspired by a broader range of values, including human rights based justifications. The tabloid newspapers, on the other hand, clearly prioritise utilitarian-based viewpoints.

Table 20: Values by newspaper (percentages; frequencies in brackets)

Value	Newspaper			
	The Guardian	The Telegraph	The Express	Total
Interest-Based/Utilitarian Justifications	37.3 (100)	47.5 (123)	56.7 (148)	47.1 (371)
Rights-based justification	28.0 (75)	22.8 (59)	14.9 (39)	22.0 (173)
Identity-based justifications	4.1 (11)	3.9 (10)	3.4 (9)	3.8 (30)
No Justifications	30.6 (82)	25.9 (67)	24.9 (65)	27.2 (214)
Total	100 (268)	100 (259)	100 (261)	100 (788)

N=788

When we observe how the position of actors towards refugees in the UK is manifested across each of the categories of justifications, we can again appreciate the extent to which the polarisation revealed thus far is reflected by the connection of specific categories of justifications with pro- and anti- mi-

grant/refugee dispositions. Table 21 reveals that seven in every ten claims (71.5%) that were anti-migrant/refugee were underpinned by an interest-based justification. In contrast, when the claims had a positive orientation towards the object, more than five in every ten of these claims (54.9%) were built upon a rights-based perspective. Returning to the column indicating a negative disposition towards refugees, we can observe that identity-based justifications were as we would expect, predominantly found to be in this anti-object column (7%), however, the scarcity of claims underpinned by this perspective is very much illustrated by the frequencies outlined in Table 21. Overall, what the data reveal is a landscape where the polarisation of the debate within the context of the refugee crisis is one characterised by particularly entrenched forms of justification for the positions which were adopted, with those supportive of refugees embedding their actions and arguments within a framework of human rights, and those with a more restrictive disposition towards refugees emphasising material interests and to a much lesser extent, the issue of identity.

Table 21: Values by position towards Objects (percentages; frequencies in brackets)

Value	Position towards Objects			
	Anti-object	Neutral / Ambivalent	Pro-object	Total
Interest-Based/Utilitarian Justifications	71.5% (246)	57.8% (104)	8.0% (21)	47.1% (371)
Rights-based justification	7.0% (24)	2.2% (4)	54.9% (145)	22.0% (173)
Identity-based justifications	7.0% (24)	1.1% (2)	1.5% (4)	3.8% (30)
No Justifications	14.5% (50)	38.9% (70)	35.6% (94)	27.2% (214)
Total	100% (344)	100% (180)	100% (264)	100% (788)
N=788				

Case Study: Confronting media claims-making with citizens' responses

When examining the comments of the UK public on Facebook towards articles and claims within articles posted on the pages of each of the three UK newspapers, we found that 48.7% of Facebook comments responded to the general issue of the related article, 27.7% expressed an independent opinion and 23.7% referred to a claim raised in related articles. It seems clear that on Facebook, at least for UK commenters, the general theme of the article (e.g. the “refugee crisis”) is a potent catalyst for reaction rather than for substantive content pertaining to the article itself. Analysing the position taken by commenters towards refugees, Table 22 reveals very similar percentages concerning the disposition of commenters toward refugees to the one presented in the newspaper claims analysis revealed earlier in this report, although Facebook comments presented slightly higher negative results. 45.3% of claims (in the media claims, 43.7%) were anti-object, while 32.7% (in the media claims, 33.5%) were pro-object. However, in our analysis of the Facebook comments, it was easier to identify the position of the commenter towards the object and to understand if they were pro or against. In fact, only in 8.7% of cases (in the media claims, 22.8%) was the position ambivalent or neutral. What these findings appear to indicate is

that there is consistency across media platforms in the UK in the polarisation between those who are anti-refugee and those who are pro-refugee. Moreover, what these findings from social media claims making also suggest is that, despite their dominance in newspaper claims making, we should insert a note of caution in any broader conclusions about the capacity for policy makers, such as state actors and political parties, to shape public discourse over issues of migration and asylum more broadly and the refugee crisis more specifically. As Negrine (1994) warns, there is a danger of exaggerating the influence of the media on public opinion and neglecting what may be latent concerns among the wider population.

Table 22: Position towards refugees

Position toward Object	Percentages
Anti-Object	45.3
Neutral/Ambivalent	8.7
Pro-Object	32.7
Not about the object	13.3
Total	100.0

N=300

Finally, as for the substantive content of the claims made on Facebook, it was often challenging to identify the justification behind the comments, and Table 23 reinforces this point by revealing that three out of ten claims did not have a clear justification frame.

Table 23: Justification/value frame

Justification	Percentages
Human rights	9.3
Religious/spiritual reasons	7
Historical reasons	6.7
Political capacities	8.3
Social/economic capacities	4.3
Instrumentality	0.7
Welfare chauvinism	8
Law and order/security	4.7
Migrant/refugee behaviour	1
Religious/cultural in-/compatibility	0.7
Legal/cultural status	5.3
Humanitarian crisis	0.3
Not about the object	13.3
No frame	30.3
Total	100.0

N=300

Human rights justifications, including a humanitarian frame, were used (positively and negatively) as justification for 9.4% of the comments, while more utilitarian or interest-based positions were used in 18% of the data. Among utilitarian justifications, political capacities (8.3%), law and order (4.7%) and social/economic capacities (4.3%) were the main frames behind comments. Identity-based justifications were used in 27% of the comments. Among this type of justification, welfare chauvinism (8%), religious/spiritual differences (7%) and historical reasons (6.7%) were the main rationale promoted. In com-

parison with media claims analysis, a higher percentage of identity-based justifications were used. This is in line with the cross-analysis between value and actors explored in the media, where citizens were one of the main actors to explain their solidarity (or not) mainly with identity justifications. What our findings reveal is a landscape that is again somewhat divided in the UK.

Conclusion

What this report set out to achieve was an analysis of the claims made in the UK media by various actors on the issue of the so-called refugee crisis, the arrival of Syrian refugees onto Southern European's shores and their movement across Europe in the period comprised between August 2015 and April 2016. From the outset, we have sought to connect our findings and analysis with existing research and to contribute towards the extant debates on how policies and discourse on issues of refuge and asylum are constructed. What our findings reveal is that in terms of the claims made across three UK newspapers, there was clearly a dominance of state actors in the making of claims relating to the challenges presented by the refugee crisis, findings which offer support to earlier studies that have unveiled the role that resources play for actors to access the media-based public sphere. The presence of actors' voices in a public debate depends on the resources made available to them; therefore those actors with further economic, political and relational resources have more opportunities to have their voices heard. However, the strong presence of state actors among our claimants supports also the conclusions drawn by Statham and Geddes (2003) in their rejection of the arguments made by Freeman (2002), specifically that it was the policymaking elites who shaped this issue field rather than any pro-refugee or pro-migrant 'organised public'. Moreover, we have revealed that the dominance of state actors was reflected across different newspapers and reinforced through the way in which other actors in their own claims predominantly addressed these state actors more than others.

Our findings furthermore reveal that these dominant state actors also reflected a negative disposition towards refugees and indeed this vulnerable group were often categorised very broadly, stripping them of the specific contextual characteristics which could have enabled them to be better perceived and understood in a more humanitarian way that simultaneously appreciates the complexity of the situation rather than reducing it to issues of border control and political management.

Our findings from the social media lend further evidence towards the conclusion that the UK continues to offer a hostile environment for refugees which can be best understood not as an event triggered by the refugee crisis, but a long-term process where anti-migrant and anti-refugee discourse has dominated policymaking and media discourse. Furthermore, we stated at the beginning of this report that our findings could not be extricated from the UK political context; in fact, one additional value of our findings is that they appear to provide a clear reflection of a contemporary context shaped by the implications of Brexit and the aftermath of the leave campaign which placed migration front and centre. The connection between the issues of migration and asylum and the exit of the UK from the EU are not as novel as the data presented in this report; indeed, over a decade ago, Greenslade warned that in Britain:

‘...there is a clear parallel between the coverage of asylum-seekers and of the EU in terms of xenophobia and chauvinism. The tone and content of the tabloids’ stories about Europe shows that they see equivalence between the threat to British values caused by incomers and the threat caused by greater integration in Europe’ (2005: 13-14).

More than a decade later, the connection between these issues was highlighted by none other than the Director of the Vote Leave campaign months after the Brexit vote had been taken, who explained that the control of borders had been a powerful force in a leave campaign that rejected the complexity of such issues and instead ‘focused attention more effectively than the other side on a simple and psychologically compelling story’ (Cummings, 2017).

What our data point towards is therefore a potential double disadvantage for those seeking to articulate a more nuanced and solidaristic understanding of the refugee crisis throughout August 2015 and April 2016. On the one hand, opponents who were adopting a strategy that simplified and reduced the issues of the crisis to border control and political management and reconstructed those seeking asylum as modern day ‘folk devils’ in sections of the UK public imagination, laying the foundations for a moral panic around a perceived (but non-existent) mass influx of refugees as reflected particularly by the findings in our newspaper claims data, where claims made by state actors and political parties reinforced the notion that in the UK the refugee crisis was articulated from the perspective of a spectator rather than that of a participant. We can conclude that this externalisation will only become further entrenched once the UK has left the European Union. Moreover, the discourse that has come to characterise the public debate on migration and asylum in the UK in recent decades can be expected to continue given the dominance of state actors in such issues, unless another major reconfiguration in the UK political landscape shifts the balance of policy away from border control and towards solidarity.

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