**Contesting European Solidarity during the 'Refugee Crisis': A Comparative Investigation of Media Claims Making in Denmark, Germany, Greece and Italy**

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**Abstract**

The migration crisis of 2015 and 2016 was a litmus test for EU solidarity, when increasing numbers of newly arriving refugees fueled its public contestation. Our overall assumption is that the 'refugee crisis' contributed to a solidarity gap between inclusive liberal-cosmopolitan and exclusive communitarian attitudes in the EU. We investigate this assumption by contrasting positions regarding solidarity with refugees among state and societal actors. We base our analysis on a fresh dataset of solidarity claims in the largest print newspapers in Denmark, Germany, Greece and Italy for the period of August 2015 – April 2016 coded in the TransSOL project. These four countries were affected differently by the 'crisis' and differently attractive for refugees and asylum-seekers as arrival, destination or transit countries. Results suggest a solidarity gap between state actors and societal actors and a higher degree of solidarity contestation in countries with state actors strongly promoting exclusive notions of solidarity. Results speak to the discussion about media representations of migration as well as the contestation of solidarity as a fundamental value.

**Key Words:** Claims-making, Contestation, Media, Migration, Refugee Crisis, Solidarity.

## Short author biographies

**Verena K. Brändle** was a post-doctoral research fellow associated with Siegen University and University of Copenhagen and is now based at the University of Vienna. Her research focuses on people's contestation of citizenship with a focus on online and offline spheres.

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**Introduction: The Migration Crisis as a Litmus Test for Solidarity in the EU**

The so-called 'refugee crisis' of 2015 and 2016 has fueled discussions on European solidarity, dividing public opinion about immigration and triggering political conflict on local, national and EU levels. The decision of German chancellor Merkel to open German borders for refugees in September 2015 virtually relocated a long-standing issue of solidarity contention – namely the guarding of the EU's external borders and the humanitarian problems that came with it – from the borders to the center of the EU (e.g., Conrad and Aðalsteinsdóttir, 2017). In doing so, the normative fundaments of the Union have been fundamentally tested, revealing deep-seated differences in how solidarity amongst member states and with refugees and asylum seekers[1] should be implemented.

Overall, then, it is not overstated to say that what became known as a 'crisis' functioned as a litmus test for solidarity in the EU. Within and between EU member states, there is contestation about how to apply, on the one hand, the principle of international or humanitarian solidarity towards individuals in need of assistance and, on the other hand, the principle of reciprocal solidarity among member states, especially exemplified in the 'Dublin rules' which regulate burden-sharing when it comes to forced migration (Thielemann 2018).

All over Europe, such solidarity contestations have become highly salient in the news media, which have a central role in public opinion-formation as they enable political debates and empower citizens to play their part in democratic government (e.g., Habermas 2012). Empirical studies on the issue of migration in the media have become abundant with a focus on the cultural framing or the reproduction of stereotypes in debates about migration (see Eberl et al. 2018 for an overview). Respective research on the 'refugee crisis' in the media has often focused on individual representations of refugees or the framing of migration more generally (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017; Dahlgren, 2016; Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017; Kluknavska et al. 2019; Mortensen & Trenz, 2016) and demonstrated the impact of media coverage, especially regarding a strengthening of anti-immigration voices (Damstra et al. 2019, Meltzer et al. 2017). There is furthermore sufficient evidence that differences in coverage persist across countries (Berry et al. 2015). As the aspect of mediated contestation of solidarity has so far received less attention, our perspective lays a focus on the drivers of conflict between various actors visible in this coverage and their positioning towards refugees as 'objects' of solidarity across different national news discourses. In other words, we consider how a variety of actors step forward with their claims to position themselves with regard to the issue of solidarity towards refugees. Against this

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[1] For reasons of readability and despite the different legal statuses of the terms 'refugee' and 'asylum seekers', we adopt the term 'refugee' in a more inclusive sense.

backdrop, we pose the following research question: *How is solidarity with refugees contested in print media?*

Our research is designed to compare solidarity claims in news coverage across four European countries in different geographical locations and with different political and economic conditions: Denmark, Germany, Greece and Italy. Greece and Italy are considered first arrival countries for people arriving on dangerous routes via the Mediterranean Sea. Denmark serves as an example for a transit country for refugees with the destination of Sweden while Germany represents one of the major destination countries in the 'refugee crisis' of 2015/2016. These four countries well illustrate the issue of solidarity during the 'refugee crisis' in the EU as they make conflicts about police and border control cooperation, resources for accommodation and first aid as well as political decision-making, e.g., regarding the Dublin rules and their interpretation, visible. In particular, we argue that solidarity contestation is visible along the lines of more liberal- cosmopolitan and nationalist-communitarian conceptions of solidarity. This argument is based on previous research showing how the issue of immigration is related to social cleavages between inclusive and exclusive conceptions of community and membership, which become more extreme during perceived moments of crisis (Strijbis et al 2018; de Wilde et al. 2019).

We measure solidarity contestation in the news media through the method of claims-making (Koopmans & Statham 1999; Statham & Trenz 2013; Vetters et al. 2009), which has been adapted for this purpose. Here, the paper builds on a fresh dataset of political claims covered in the media regarding solidarity toward refugees coded within the framework of the TransSOL project.[2] The dataset used for this study includes 2,859 claims coded from a systematic random sample of articles in the three largest newspapers in Denmark, Germany, Greece and Italy during the period 1 August 2015 - 30 April 2016. Overall, our analysis speaks to the broader debate about media coverage of the 'refugee crisis' in Europe and extends our understanding of the contestation of solidarity with people in need as a, in principle, accepted yet contested norm in practice.

**Theoretical Framework: Solidarity Contestations in the Public Sphere**

In the tradition of Western constitutional democracies, solidarity is both institutionally and constitutionally grounded and kept open to negotiation in daily politics. Mutual obligations to provide aid to fellow citizens are given constitutional shape, and are institutionalized, for instance, in the form of welfare state requirements (Stjernø 2009). Thus, solidarity is usually regarded as a concept that is based on expectations of mutual obligations and relationships

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[2] This research was funded within the European Union's H2020 Framework (TransSOL – Transnational Solidarity at Times of Crisis, GA No. 649435).

(Habermas 1994, 1996, 2013b; Salamon 2015; Michailidou &Trenz 2019), and is constitutive of or shaped by the specific understanding of membership in a community (Lahusen & Grasso 2018).

However, institutionalized solidarity is also contested not only in terms of appropriate practices within a community, but, especially in times of globalization and internationalization, in terms of the reference frame of the community itself: Democratic constitutions also recognize moral obligations towards 'non-members' which are, for example, institutionalized in the form of aid policies and humanitarian assistance, therefore engaged in negotiations of the conditions and normative principles of responsibilities toward members of other societies (e.g., Wheeler 2002). Furthermore, solidarity practices by societal actors such as civil society organizations, social movements, or citizens often engage in transnational forms of solidarity and include people beyond national citizens, yet remain organized locally (Lahusen et al. 2018). Solidarity is consequently contested and marked by political struggle since it is tied to questions about the constitution of the political community and what is considered appropriate behavior and practice.

Within a liberal-cosmopolitan tradition, for example, Habermas (2013) argues that solidarity does not necessarily need to be tied to a national community or the exclusive nation state. The reference frame for inclusion then is humanity, institutionalized through treaties and legal texts defining human rights (Brunkhorst 2005). In the communitarian tradition, in contrast, solidarity is often considered to be more exclusively shared among members of the same legal status or ethnic/cultural/national origin (Mason 2000). In this respect, the EU represents a case of a transnational political and social space that struggles with its understanding of solidarity: On the one hand, it has equally defined mutual obligations among its members and established a 'principle of solidarity' as part of its treaty arrangements, also in relation to burden-sharing in times of crisis (Art. 80, Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union). On the other hand, it is established as a requirement of humanitarian assistance, and as such mainly geared towards 'the outside' (for instance, in the EU external relations or aid policies) (Ross & Borgmann-Prebil 2010; Silveira et al. 2013). Yet, the EU's solidarity principle is partially open for interpretation between its member states in terms of what burden-sharing means (Thielemann 2018), therefore leaving much of its humanitarian responsibility for negotiation among EU governments and between those and its citizens. In other words, the EU is a political and social space for the negotiation of solidarity relationships, allowing for inclusive and exclusive understandings of membership and solidarity to clash, thus contributing to social cleavages and contestation. The 'refugee crisis' of 2015/16 can be approached as such as a critical case of solidarity contestation within the EU.

Our overall assumption is that the 'refugee crisis' has contributed to the already existing social cleavage between inclusive, liberal-cosmopolitan and exclusive, nationalist-

communitarian attitudes in the EU (see Strijbis et al 2018; de Wilde et al. 2019). In the first case, the reference point of the solidarity community is a 'cosmopolitan Europe' (Beck & Grande 2007). In the second case, it is the community of co-nationals. The underlying premise of these conceptions is that in both, exclusive and inclusive communities, claims for solidarity presuppose a shared communicative sphere where the needs of others can be made visible, responsibilities be attributed and ethical obligations be negotiated in light of the self-interest and moral duties of the political community.

In modern democracies, the public sphere provides the setting for solidarity contestation and the settling of related conflicts, as a matter of political choice of the citizens (Calhoun 2002). These cleavages have emerged in debates about European integration and especially during crisis (de Wilde et al. 2019). Contributing to the widening of these cleavages, the EU suffers from a notorious public sphere deficit (Fossum & Schlesinger 2007). It thus lacks a shared public communication to carry out such conflicts and to engage in the type of ethical-political debates inherent to such solidarity relationships. Questions of transnational or European solidarity are therefore mostly debated within national discursive arenas, especially the news media. This is especially so, when external, so-called crisis-related events provoke the politicization of issues related to redistribution, shared responsibilities and mutual obligations among members (Hutter et al. 2016; Michailidou & Trenz 2015). The question thus arises what shape solidarity contestation in the EU takes if filtered through the available public sphere and national news media.

We test our overall assumption about the deepening of liberal-cosmopolitan and exclusive communitarian lines of contestation during crisis through several hypotheses in order to explain how state and societal actors contest solidarity with refugees and asylum seekers in print news media across Europe from August 2015 to April 2016. Research has shown that state actors (such as governments and political parties) generally dominate mainstream media discourses (Thorbjørnsrud & Figenschou 2016). Immigration, in particular, presents a topic that is mainly framed through issues that require governmental decision-making, such as threats for security and economy (e.g., Caviedes 2015), which further contributes to the high visibility of political decision-makers. Coverage during the 'refugee crisis' is no exception here with a strong focus on political conflict, implications for domestic economy and emphasizing assumed challenges about integration, all implicating a 'crisis situation' that requires political decision-making (see Krzyżanowski et al. 2018). We therefore hypothesize: *H1: State actors will be most visible as claims-makers, while promoting exclusive, members-only solidarity.*

While the Twentieth century has been described as the century of class conflict, the new millennium has been marked by the salience of identity conflicts in the context of globalization. (see Koopmans & Zürn 2019). Especially conflicts about immigration and refugees can only

insufficiently be understood as structured along traditional ideological left-right divides and reveal new cultural cleavages among populations with cosmopolitan and communitarian mindsets (Dancygier 2010; Grande, Schwarzbözl & Fatke 2019). Such new conflict dynamics are displayed not only in the form of conflicts among political parties but bring also divisions among state and civil society actors to the fore. During a situation of a humanitarian crisis in particular, this could imply higher visibility of non-state actors engaged in solidarity contestation, like for example, the 'welcoming culture' in Germany in 2015: In perceived crisis situations, as also in the case of the 'refugee crisis' specifically, one can observe mobilization of existing and formation of new solidarity groups, e.g., composed of actors from civil society and unions, in industry, entertainment, social movements, among citizens and other parts of society (see edited volumes by Lahusen & Grasso 2018 and Della Porta 2018 for in-depth analyses of various forms of mobilizations). Generally, however, such societal actors receive less attention in news coverage than political decision-makers (Walter 2017). State actors as power holders are in general regarded as more 'newsworthy' than civil society actors (e.g., Krzyżanowski et al. 2018). Consequently, *H2: Societal actors will be less visible than state actors in the media, while promoting more inclusive solidarity beyond national membership*.

While we expect cleavages to be strongest between the categories of state actors (H1) and societal actors (H2) in general, we do not assume that these claimants act independently but in a shared public sphere. Rather, contestation is considered relational, that is, it emerges in response to claims or other actions between actors (Wiener 2017). Research has shown that discourses during the 'refugee crisis' were particularly salient when led by politicians and showed high degrees of institutionalization (Kluknavska et al. 2019). The government as a strong influence not only of the public debate but also of the actual policies regarding immigration are therefore expected to be important reference points of solidarity debates. More extreme governmental positions are expected to prompt stronger contestation of the issue of solidarity, amongst state and societal actors alike. Given that in our sample, there is no case with an extremely immigration-friendly attitude, we therefore expect that *H3: Solidarity will be more contested in national news discourses where government promotes exclusive, members-only solidarity*.

**Methodology**

The above discussed lack of a common European public sphere, also with regard to the coverage of the migration crisis in particular (Berry et al. 2015) suggests that country-specific dynamics in national news and solidarity debates will play a crucial role. We therefore discuss our findings against the background of similarities and differences between our four cases, sketched in the following. In addition, we will provide insights on the methodology of claims-making and how we used it for coding solidarity claims as well as details on the analysis strategy.

*Case Selection*

The four countries to be analyzed were selected based on different criteria relating to their geographical location as well as political and economic conditions, i.e., public opinion, prevalent ideological stances represented by the government, economic stability and living standards (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Similarities and Differences in Key Dimensions across Countries**

|  | **DE** | **DK** | **GR** | **IT** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Living Standards (GDP per capita in PPS)[3] | 123 | 126 | 68 | 95 |
| No. of asylum seekers Aug2015-April2016[4] | 504.885 | 19.180 | 15.030 | 75.420 |
| Left/Right Pos. of Government[5] | 5.64 | 7 | 5.39 | 5.09 |
| Restrictive Pos. of Gov. on Immigration[4] | 5.7 | 7.7 | 5.7 | 4.8 |
| Pos. attitude towards Extra-EU immigration[6] | 35% | 29% | 24% | 26% |

Denmark and Germany are considered attractive destinations for migrants mirrored in traditionally high numbers of immigration (see also No. of first-time asylum seekers in Table 1). This is directly related to their rather stable economies and a high level of living standards. Especially Denmark, however, is known for its restrictive citizenship and immigration regime, also when compared to other EU member states such as Italy (see Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2014). Greece and Italy, in contrast, are countries that have been hit hard by the financial crisis and also by the 'refugee crisis', both being first countries of entry to the EU. In the fall of 2015, while refugees and asylum seekers often entered the EU in Greece or Italy, their final destination countries were very often Germany or Sweden, with Denmark being a transit country located in between the two.

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[3] Obtained from https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/figures/living_en#quality-of-life, numbers for 2018. Last accessed on 26 September 2019.
[4] Obtained from Eurostat (Numbers of First-Time Asylum Seekers)
[5] Chapel Hill Expert Survey Data 2014; item: lrgen, ranging from 0 (extreme left) to 10 (extreme right); item immigrate_policy, ranging from 0=fully opposed to 10=fully in favor of restrictive immigration policies. Since DK is not part of the CHES survey 2017, we relied on the previous round to have comparable data for all countries.
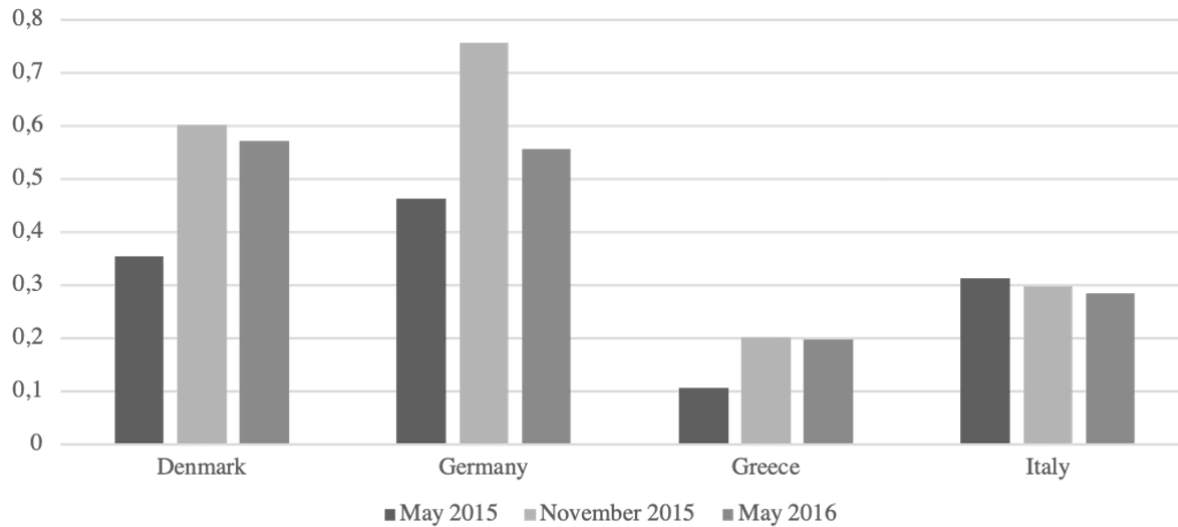[6] Eurobarometer data averaged across three waves 05/2015 – 05/2016.

**Figure 1: Share of Answers Indicating that Immigration is One of the Two Most Salient Issues Facing Our Country Today (Source: Standard Eurobarometer Spring Waves 2015 and 2016 & Autumn Wave 2015)**

All four countries have been members of the EU for at least 35 years, with especially Germany being one of the drivers of European integration. However, regarding burden-sharing between members, especially with regard to the issue of migration to the EU, Greece and Italy have long raised demands of more solidarity and complaints of being left alone (Küçük 2016). Regarding public opinion about the salience of immigration, the share of people regarding immigration as a pressing issue for their country, interestingly, was much higher in Denmark and Germany during the period of analysis than in Greece and Italy which were much more heavily affected by the inflow of refugees (see Figure 1). Thus, in terms of migration saliency, our country sample is divided in the two groups of first-entry countries on the one hand and (in the Danish case potentially perceived) destination countries on the other.

*Coding Solidarity Claims in the News Media*

Data analyzed here was collected in the large-scale EU project TransSOL (see transsol.eu for further information)[7]. The time frame for the claims analysis was August 2015-April 2016, covering the most intense time of the 'refugee crisis' in terms of public salience and contestation. Using the claims-making approach in its original sense, we only included claims with claimants explicitly mentioned in the text. Thus, if the journalist authoring the news article raised a claim him or herself, thus acting as a claimant but not being explicitly mentioned in the text, we did not consider that claim for coding. In that sense, we look at a claim as an intervention, verbal or nonverbal, made in the public space by any actor (including individuals who engage in acts of solidarity), which bears on the interests, needs or rights of refugees and asylum seekers. Claims

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[7] Note that the TransSOL sample includes 8 countries, 4 of which were included for this study.

are given expression in a way that these interests, needs or rights of others are strengthened/affirmed/supported or rejected/weakened/disapproved.

Inspired by the claims-grammar introduced by Koopmans and Statham (1999), we coded claims in the three largest newspapers of the four countries with regard to their distribution, political leaning and journalistic routine (see Table 2). These newspapers were selected to represent the broader discourse in the mainstream news media (see, e.g., Gattermann 2013; Koopmans and Statham 2010 for similar approaches).

**Table 2: Newspaper Sample and Numbers of Units of Analysis (Claims)**

| Country | Newspaper Sampled | Journalistic Routine | Number of Claims Coded | Average Number of Claims/Article |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Germany* | | | | |
| | Süddeutsche Zeitung | Broadsheet | 247 | 2,4 |
| | Frankfurter Allg. Zeitung | Broadsheet | 244 | 3,3 |
| | Bild | Tabloid | 249 | 2,4 |
| | DE Total | | 740 | 2,7 |
| *Greece* | | | | |
| | Proto Thema | Broadsheet | 238 | 1,8 |
| | Ta Nea | Broadsheet | 236 | 1,6 |
| | Kathimerini | Tabloid | 237 | 2,1 |
| | GR Total | | 711 | 1,8 |
| *Italy* | | | | |
| | La Repubblica | Broadsheet | 235 | 3,3 |
| | Corriere della Sera | Broadsheet | 235 | 2,4 |
| | Il Giornale | Tabloid | 231 | 3,3 |
| | IT Total | | 701 | 3,0 |
| *Denmark* | | | | |
| | Politiken | Broadsheet | 235 | 2,2 |
| | Jyllands Posten | Broadsheet | 236 | 2,2 |
| | BT | Tabloid | 236 | 1,7 |
| | DK Total | | 707 | 2,0 |
| *Grand Total* | | | 2859 | 2,4 |

For data retrieval, we made use of databases such as LexisNexis and Factiva. Searching for the terms 'asylum' and 'refugee' in the respective languages returned an enormous body of relevant articles which is why we resorted to a systematic random sampling of articles from which claims were identified and coded. The number of claims was limited to around 700 overall, thus to around 234 claims per newspaper. Newspapers covered claims to different degrees; the average number of claims coded per article, thus, differed across papers (see Table 2).

Given our aim of covering the nine months of August 2015-April 2016, we used a systematic random sample of articles to identify and code claims. For that purpose, we first

established an average number of claims per article by extracting 100 articles from the sample. We then divided the total number of hits in the database by 100, giving us a rank x. We then coded only every xth article in the chronological order returned by the databases; the procedure was repeated on the basis of the average of claims coded in the first round to reach the envisaged number of claims. Only news articles were coded while interviews or editorials were excluded from the analysis. Furthermore, only such articles were included which were published in the national, as opposed to a regional edition or section of the newspaper.

Regarding the coding scheme, we built on earlier projects[8] with similar research interests. For this study, we included the claimant (i.e., the actor raising the claim), the nationality and scope of the claimant, the issue in the context of which the claim was made, the position of the claimant towards the object (refugees) and the justification given (see Supplementary Material S1 for an elaborate account of coder training and reliability checks, see Figure 2 for our basic claims coding scheme).

| Claimant | Issue | Position | Object | Justification/Frame |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| •E.g., Prime Minister, chancellor, asylum seeker, activist | •E.g., migration management, integration, background/fate of refugees | •Negative/Ambivalent or Neutral/Positive | •Refugees | •E.g., interest-based/rational frame |

**Figure 2: Basic 'Grammar' Used for Claims-Coding**

'Solidarity' claims regarding refugees are operationalized as positive or negative stances towards refugees as a by definition vulnerable group and measured in a position (tone) variable ranging from -1 to 1. For a claim to be considered for analysis, therefore, the object had to be present (see Table 3 for examples of claims coded for our analysis; examples retrieved from the UK sample which was not included for this study).

**Table 3: Examples of Refugee Solidarity Claims and Coding**

| Newspaper Article (text part coded as claim in italics) | Coding of variables |
|---|---|
| **"Europe has lost control of the refugee crisis, admits Merkel",** **The Daily Telegraph, 12 Jan 2016** ANGELA MERKEL said last night that the Continent had lost control of the refugee crisis, as she confronts public anger over the New Year's Eve sex attacks in Cologne. "All of a sudden we are facing the challenge that refugees are coming to Europe and we are vulnerable, as | • *Claimant:* Ralf Jager • *Issue:* Policies directed at the integration of refugees • *Evaluation:* Negative • *Object:* Immigrants • *Justification/Frame:* Rule of law/security/protection of |

| | |
|---|---|
| we see, because we do not yet have the order, the control that we would like to have," the chancellor told a meeting of business leaders. ... The findings of a report by the state government of North Rhine-Westphalia released yesterday are likely to add to the pressure. <br><br> *"Both witness accounts and police reports indicate that people of an almost exclusively immigrant background were the perpetrators of these crimes," Ralf Jager, the state interior minister, told the state parliament as he presented the report. "After they were intoxicated with drugs and alcohol came violence. It culminated in the acting out of fantasies of sexual power. That must be severely punished."* | citizens (interest-based/utilitarian justification) |
| **"British writers and actors urge David Cameron to rescue refugee children",** <br> **The Guardian, 18 Feb 2016** <br><br> *The actor Jude Law has assembled some of Britain's most prominent writers and actors to call on David Cameron to rescue the growing numbers of unaccompanied children living in desperate conditions in Calais and Dunkirk, after visiting the migrant camps and being horrified by what he saw. ... He was "horrified at the sheer number of people living in the most extreme conditions between Dunkirk and Calais, and the level of squalor". Law was so disturbed by the suffering he encountered that he assembled 145 well known figures to join him in an appeal to the government, asking for immediate action to help hundreds of migrant children, traveling without their parents and living in tarpaulin shacks in France.* | • *Claimant:* Jude Law and other celebrities <br> • *Issue:* Inhumane conditions/emergency (e.g. descriptive accounts of conditions of camps, also along refugee routes) <br> • *Evaluation:* Positive <br> • *Object:* Child Refugees <br> • *Justification/Frame:* Human rights (rights-based justification) |

*Analyzing Solidarity Claims*

The focus of our analysis is on solidarity contestation as manifested in media claims-making. We therefore focus on the positioning towards refugee solidarity in such ethical political debates as a dependent variable and analyze variation in type of actors, issues, newspaper types and countries. For our analysis, we make use of descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations to understand how our variables are distributed. We also rely on a Kruskal-Wallis rank test to understand if samples differ regarding their medians in the position variable. The Kruskal-Wallis rank test, sometimes also referred to as the non-parametric alternative to a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), can accommodate non-normally distributed data and is therefore the adequate choice for our analysis (Kruskal & Wallis 1952). For assessing the degree of contestation of solidarity with refugees, we calculate the standard deviation in our position variable (see also Winzen 2013 for a similar approach) and make use of a Brown-Forsythe test to check the homogeneity of variance in our samples. This test uses deviations from the median instead of the mean and has been found to deliver more robust results than other similar tests for non-normally distributed data like the position variable (Derrick et al. 2018).

The variables included in our analysis are shown in Table 4: Apart from our dependent variable position, we include a dummy variable where 1 indicates the presence of a state actor as claimant. State actors here mean all governmental actors and institutions at various political

levels (regional, local, national, supra/international) in addition to political party actors. The variable, thus, ranges from EU commissioners or the institution of parliament or party leaders to officials at a mayor's office in a Bavarian village or a judge in the capital. This is the central independent variable for the expectations formulated earlier. Given the strong prominence of this category in our analysis, we decided to subsume all other actors under the headline of 'societal actors', including social movements, companies, celebrities and ordinary citizens, and thus create a binary variable (0 = societal actors) to assess the cleavages between politics and society during the refugee crisis.

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Variables included in the Analysis**

| Country | DK | | | DE | | | GR | | | IT | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | Obs | Mean | SD | Obs | Mean | SD | Obs | Mean | SD | Obs | Mean | SD | Min | Max |
| Posit | 707 | 0 | .90 | 740 | .09 | .82 | 711 | .01 | .92 | 701 | .10 | .83 | -1 | 1 |
| State Actors (1) / Societal Actors (0) | 707 | .68 | .47 | 740 | .71 | .45 | 711 | .76 | .43 | 701 | .73 | .44 | 0 | 1 |
| Claimant Scope = National | 707 | .64 | .48 | 740 | .64 | .48 | 711 | .60 | .49 | 701 | .51 | .50 | 0 | 1 |
| Nationality of Claimant = Domestic | 707 | .52 | .50 | 740 | .68 | .47 | 711 | .45 | .50 | 701 | .39 | .49 | 0 | 1 |
| Issue Migration Management | 707 | .68 | .47 | 740 | .57 | .50 | 711 | .70 | .46 | 701 | .69 | .46 | 0 | 1 |
| Issue Integration | 707 | .20 | .40 | 740 | .34 | .47 | 711 | .19 | .39 | 701 | .13 | .34 | 0 | 1 |
| Issue Fate/Back-ground and Other | 707 | .20 | .40 | 740 | .33 | .47 | 711 | .29 | .45 | 701 | .28 | .45 | 0 | 1 |

## Findings and Discussion:

The average tone in claims as the central indicator of the claimants' stance towards refugee solidarity tends towards the neutral. Regarding differences across countries, claims in Danish news are completely neutral (0) on average and therefore the most negative, Greek claims show an average tone of 0.01 while Italian (0.10) and German (0.09) claims seem to converge on a slightly more positive tone (see Table 4).

Looking at the development of tone over time and contrasting it with the visibility of claims in news articles (see Figure 3), we see a greater salience of solidarity contestation in September 2015 and a quite continuously high level of visibility in 2016. While the tone follows a downwards trend in 2015, it reaches a high when claims are least visible in December 2015 to then drop sharply with highly increased salience in January 2016.
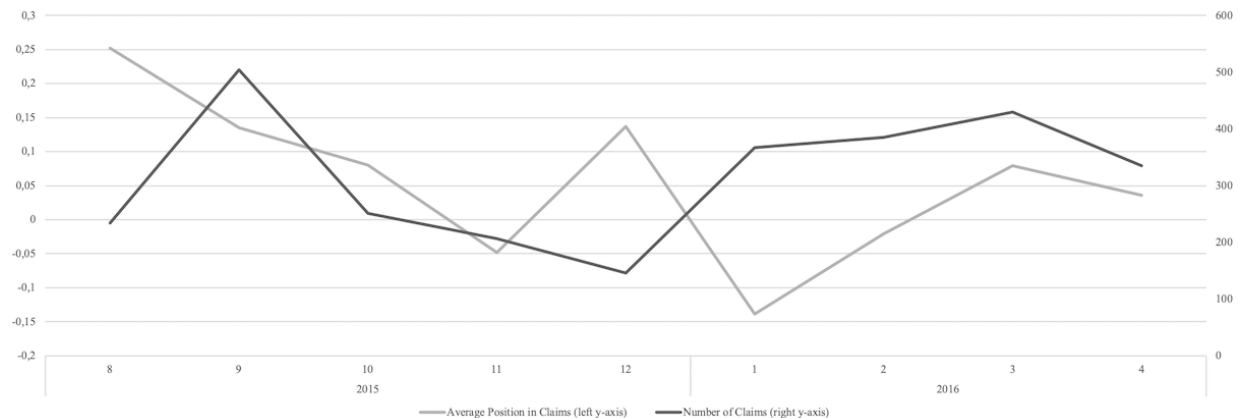
**Figure 3: Visibility and Position of Claims over Times**

These average trends are mirrored in country samples: Looking at the development of positions over time (see Supplementary Material S2), we find that especially in the fall of 2015 solidarity positions are volatile. Here, we observe stark changes in each country, with somewhat converging trends in Denmark and Italy; Italian news claims stand out as the most positive in October and December. Hitting a low in solidarity toward refugees across the four cases in January, we find that pro-solidarity claims recover and vary less across countries in early 2016.

The dynamics in positions toward refugees in 2015 might to some extent reflect the political conflict within and between member states as well as the EU Commission regarding the negotiation of distribution quotas of refugees and asylum seekers across the EU. Yet, the negative attitude in January 2016 across all cases can most likely be attributed to the events on December 31 in Cologne and other cities in Germany: mass incidents of sexual and other assaults on women were recorded by German police, identifying mostly young men with migration background as perpetrators (Burghardt et al., 2016). Thus, the discourse during the 'refugee crisis' seems quite sensitive to (not necessarily directly related) external events which steer the contestation of solidarity with refugees.

Turning to the expectations formulated earlier, we looked at the type of claimants who are visible in the news. In all four cases, we find that state actors form the main share of claimants with over 70% of claims in all countries while all other actors, here subsumed under the headline of societal actors, make up around 30% (see Table 4). Thus, state actors are by far the most dominant group of claimants, which already partly supports H1, while societal actors – partly supporting H2, are much less visible.

Regarding the actual positions of claimants, then, we find a gap with societal actors being more supportive of refugees on average while state actors' positions are overall more negative. Also here, our expectations that state actors would promote more exclusive solidarity (H1) while societal actors would be more inclusive regarding refugees (H2) finds support when looking at

all countries together. Claims of societal actors and state actors are also found to be significantly different across all countries: Results of a Kruskal-Wallis rank test indicated statistically significant differences ($\chi^2 = 114.4$ with 1 d.f., $p < 0.01$) between societal actors' claims and state actors' claims regarding their positions towards refugees. Conducting the same test for each country individually revealed that, with the exception of Greece ($\chi^2 = 2.4$ with 1 d.f., $p = 0.1212$), societal actors and state actors differed significantly in their support for refugees within countries as well. Thus, we find supportive evidence for H1 and H2.
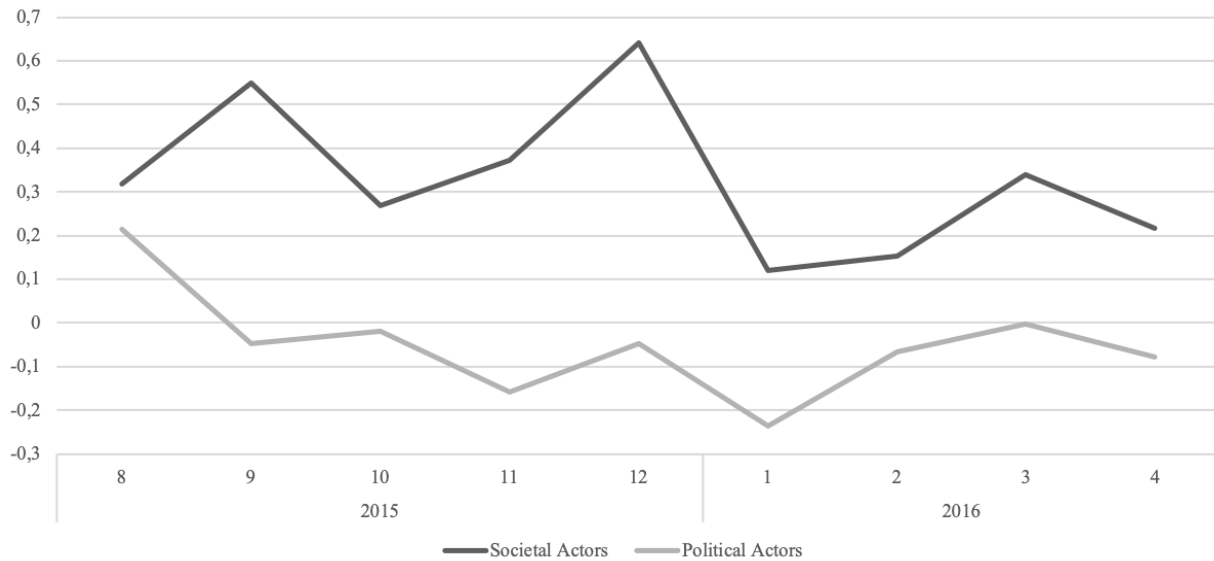


**Figure 4: Average Position of State Actors and Societal Actors over Time**

The Greek case, however, appears to be somewhat of an exception for which hypotheses H1 and H2 find only partial support. Recalling what we discussed in the methods section, migration was not a very salient public topic during our period of analysis, the government had a comparably immigration-friendly attitude while the public's attitude towards extra-EU immigration was quite negative. In line with this, Greek state actors' claims seem to roughly follow a similar yet more positive curve as found in other countries as well, but societal actors' positions are much more volatile, jumping to the positive between October and December 2015, while otherwise showing a more negative trend than state actors.
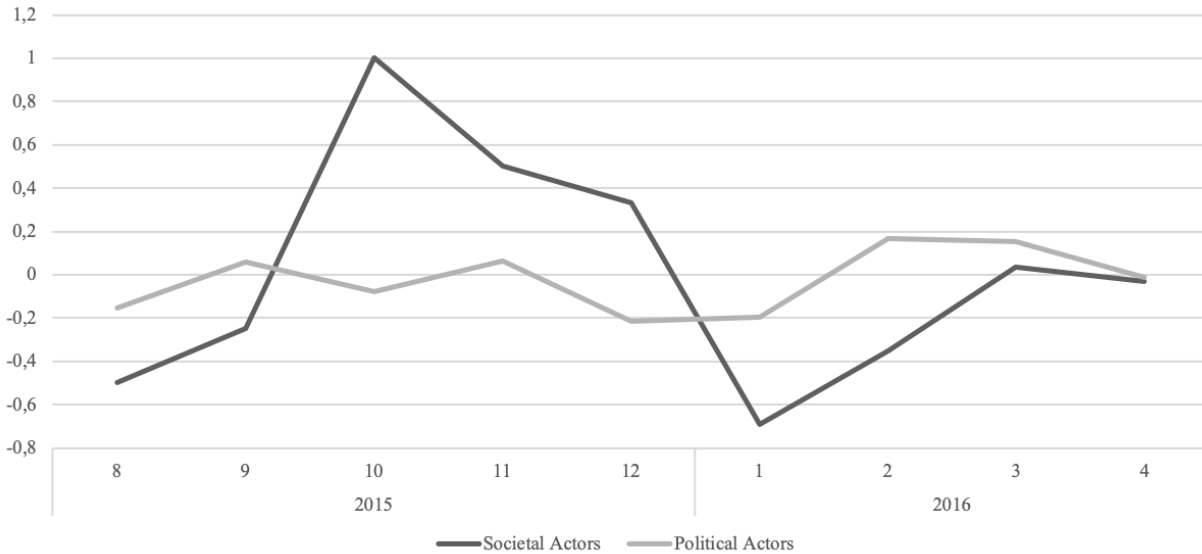
**Figure 5: Average Position of State Actors and Societal Actors in Greece**

In order to further understand and contextualize these results, we looked into the nationality of claimants and their scope, thus if they were national or supranational/international actors (see Table 5). For the Greek case in particular, we see that the negativity in claims by societal actors is mainly due the fact that a lot of negative claims by societal actors from other EU member states and the supranational/international level were covered in the news. Such claims often dealt with the violent rejection of refugees at the borders, escalating situations involving the police or claims by refugees themselves who were no longer willing to wait. The majority of societal actors, however, are domestic ones exhibiting a more balanced position towards refugees on average.

The focus on negative claims by non-domestic claimants in the Greek sample could be a result of a media logic of newsworthiness, where 'foreign' news might be more interesting to cover when they exhibit a certain degree of conflict or negativity (e.g., O'Neill & Harcup 2009) – especially with an audience being less open for refugees. Still, all of societal actors' claims covered in Greek news media show a high level of contestation (standard deviation in the position variable), indicating a high diversity of claimants' positions regarding solidarity with refugees.

For the other three cases, all societal actors promote slightly to very positive positions. For Germany, this is most probably a mirror of the 'welcoming culture' of September 2015 (Vollmer & Karakayali 2018), where societal actors were most visible with very supportive claims (see Supplementary Material S2 for details). In the other two countries, societal actors may be perceived as somewhat of a counterbalance of state actors, especially in the Danish case:

Danish immigration policies are characterized by restrictiveness and nationalism, also mirrored in an overall negative position of Danish state actors towards refugees during that time.

Interestingly, supra- and international state actors' claims seem overall more positive and less divided over solidarity with refugees. Especially in the case of the EU, this could be a sign that European norms or values, such as solidarity were defended against exclusive nationalist tendencies that developed during that time, also expressed in the fact that the distribution of refugees over Europe could not be implemented (e.g., Bauböck 2017). In line with research on the coverage of EU issues in the media (e.g., Marquart et al. 2018), results also suggest that domestic state actors dominate the samples.

**Table 5: Positions promoted in Claims by Actors, Scopes and Nationalities**

| | Nationality - Scope | DE ø Pos. (SD) | N | GR ø Pos. (SD) | n | IT ø Pos. (SD) | n | DK ø Pos. (SD) | n | Total N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Societal Actors | Domestic - National | 0.28 (0.91) | 144 | 0.12 (0.97) | 50 | 0.66 (0.70) | 63 | 0.47 (0.80) | 120 | 377 |
| | Other EU - National | 0.43 (0.98) | 7 | -0.37 (0.96) | 20 | 0.04 (0.92) | 26 | 0.00 (0.92) | 49 | 102 |
| | Non-EU National | 0.20 (1.10) | 6 | -0.13 (0.83) | 8 | 0.33 (0.87) | 13 | 0.75 (0.46) | 9 | 36 |
| | Supra/International | 0.71 (0.69) | 25 | -0.21 (0.94) | 73 | 0.94 (0.30) | 67 | 0.79 (0.60) | 33 | 198 |
| | Total | 0.34 (0.90) | 182 | -0.11 (0.96) | 151 | 0.66 (0.70) | 169 | 0.42 (0.83) | 211 | 713 |
| State Actors | Domestic - National | 0.10 (0.75) | 346 | 0.27 (0.86) | 244 | 0.06 (0.80) | 196 | -0.21 (0.85) | 225 | 1011 |
| | Other EU - National | -0.33 (0.80) | 104 | -0.26 (0.90) | 163 | -0.37 (0.74) | 208 | -0.31 (0.85) | 152 | 627 |
| | Non-EU National | -0.19 (0.75) | 32 | -0.33 (0.89) | 40 | -0.27 (0.78) | 30 | -0.35 (0.83) | 28 | 130 |
| | Supra/International | 0.05 (0.64) | 59 | 0.05 (0.90) | 122 | 0.40 (0.57) | 70 | 0.16 (0.84) | 84 | 335 |
| | Total | 0.00 (0.77) | 541 | 0.04 (0.91) | 569 | -0.09 (0.79) | 504 | -0.18 (0.86) | 489 | 2103 |
| Grand Tot. | | 0.09 (0.82) | 723 | 0.00 (0.92) | 720 | 0.10 (0.83) | 673 | 0.00 (0.90) | 700 | 2816 |

Note: n = 2816 claims due to missing values in scope and nationality variables; in addition, the claimant variable allowed two entries, we recoded the claimant variable as well as all variables connected to it to dummy variables for each category (i.e. state actors = 1 means a state actor was claimant 1 and/or claimant 2; this also means that one claim could have a political and a societal claimant at the same time). Therefore this table shows the number of times the value was entered which is not necessarily corresponding with the absolute number of claims; the variable nationality-scope was computed from one scope (national vs. supra/international) and one nationality (domestic vs. other EU vs. non-EU) variable (see descriptive statistics in Table 4); for scope = 'supra/international', we did not consider nationality.

Regarding the degree of contestation (H3), solidarity with refugees seems to have been contested to different degrees in the four countries, as the values of standard deviations suggest

(see Table 4 for values including all claims): Overall, contestation seems highest in countries with more negative means of positions. To gain a better understanding of these across-country differences (H3), we conducted a Brown-Forsythe test for homogeneity of variance to understand how similar or different national news discourses were in terms of the degree of solidarity contestation. Results of a test including all four countries suggest that indeed, discourses differ significantly in the contestation of refugee solidarity ($W = 24.918$ with 1 d.f., $p < 0.001$). In addition to the pooled model including all countries, we also conducted the same test for each country pair individually which shows that Italy and Germany are the only exception ($W = 0.952$ with 1 d.f., $p = 0.329$). Here, the pair-wise test shows no significant differences indicating thus that the degree of contestation over solidarity in these two samples is quite similar.

Conducting the same test for all countries including claims of state actors only showed significant results as well, suggesting that the degree of contestation amongst state actors differed across countries as well. One exception is, again, the pair-wise comparison of Germany and Italy where the test did not show significant results, suggesting that contestation amongst state actors in the two countries was quite similar. The same results are achieved when only including claims of all societal actors (non-significant results only for pair-wise comparison of Italy and Germany). Thus, country differences in the degree of contestation of refugee solidarity persist even when looking at either state or societal actors only with the one exception of Germany and Italy.

Our expectation (H3) that solidarity would be more contested in countries with more exclusive governments, then, seems to find support: The Danish case with a very restrictive government, restrictive immigration policies and the most exclusive state actors regarding refugee solidarity in the sample was counterbalanced by very inclusive societal actors; in contrast, Italy's center-left government implemented a quite open approach to migration; also Germany's migration policies were dominated by Angela Merkel and her liberal policy of 'open borders', causing tensions between EU member states as well as within the country and even her own conservative party. While, as discussed earlier, societal and state actors respectively differ in their positions regarding refugee solidarity in Germany and Italy (H1 and H2), state actors still promote a comparably positive and inclusive position on average with societal actors being the most inclusive in the sample. In line with our expectations, we, here, also see less contestation over solidarity with refugees expressed in a lower standard deviation overall and similar patterns for both countries. The national discourse in Greece, then, seems to follow its own logic overall, not matching our expectations: The two actor groups compared here do not differ significantly in their positions while we find an overall very high degree of solidarity contestation in the debate.

Further contextualizing these results, the most important issue claimants raised regarding solidarity with refugees was the management of migration, e.g., the accommodation of refugees, the distribution of refugees across Europe and within the country, or legal issues regarding asylum and refugee protection. Almost all countries' solidarity debates evolved around this issue with a share of at least 60% of claims. Somewhat deviating from this observation, in Germany the share was at only around 50%, with the two other categories (integration of refugees and background/fate of refugees) making up around 25% each. Integration was the least discussed issue in Italy (around 10%) where around 15% of claims were about the background or fate of refugees or other issues (see Table 4). In terms of tone (see Supplementary Material S3 for details), the issue of migration management was discussed in a rather balanced way but showed a high degree of contestation with standard deviations of above .75 for all countries; again, especially Greece stands out with a standard deviation of .91 (see Supplementary Material S3 for details).

The integration of migrants was debated with a dominantly negative tone in Italy and Greece whereas claims raising the issue of the fate of refugees and their background stories (e.g. war), overwhelmingly promote a pro-solidarity stance. Thus, the causes of flight, mirrored in their background stories, seem to be acknowledged and are considered as legitimate reasons to come and seek asylum in a safer place. This does, however, not mean that refugees are also considered as persons with an unconditional right to stay, as their integration into the host society is only discussed at low frequency and includes much more controversial perspectives (as mirrored in high standard deviations, >.84 in all countries; see Supplementary Material S3 for details).

**Conclusion**

This paper set out to investigate solidarity contestation during the 'refugee crisis' by analyzing solidarity claims published in the news media across four EU countries: Denmark, Germany, Greece and Italy. It thereby addressed a so far rather underexplored issue (but see Kluknavska et al. 2019) of different actors gaining visibility in the media to take stances in burden-sharing and humanitarian responsibilities in the EU with people from other societies. Our overall approach was grounded in the assumption that existing social and political cleavages between liberal-cosmopolitan and communitarian conceptions of solidarity and membership across European societies were exacerbated in times of globalization, European integration and associated perceived crisis (see e.g., Strijbis et al 2018; de Wilde et al. 2019). Specifically, given the strong solidarity mobilization during the 'refugee crisis' from societal actors (see edited volumes by Lahusen & Grasso 2018 and Della Porta 2018) and a steady trend toward immigration-critical political decision-making across Europe, we investigated contestation

between political decision-makers and societal actors. Our aim was to better understand whether and how solidarity contestation regarding refugees unfolded along these division lines in the news media of the different national contexts, given that solidarity during the 'refugee crisis' was a subject matter debated beyond traditional left-right party lines, including claimants from various political and social groups.

Our expectations largely find support: State actors are indeed on average more exclusive in terms of refugee solidarity than societal actors; contestation also seems dynamic in the sense that both actor groups react to each other: Our findings suggest that solidarity contestation might be considered to be strongest where state actors take more extreme or concrete positions, in negative or positive terms. While generalization from these results is difficult due to the rather small sample analyzed, they nevertheless point to the news media's tendency to stick with traditional news value logics (e.g., O'Neill & Harcup 2009): Indeed, also in times of crisis and emergency, where principles of humanitarian aid and solidarity are at stake, voices of state actors take center stage, while humanitarian actors, as included in our category of societal actors, find less attention. Results, thus, point to the key role played by state actors, and especially governments as the agenda-setters and principal interpreters of immigration issues made visible to the wider public via the news. Overall, our findings also point to the role of news media making exclusive, communitarian notions of solidarity more visible (though not in every case as the Greek sample suggests). This also resonates with previous research which found that both the news media and political actors played a crucial role in constructing a 'crisis moment' at the cost of people in need (see Triandafyllidou, 2018).

There are some limitations to our study which mainly concern the sample of data: We included only four countries in our study while using claims-making as a very specific, interpretive method for measuring contestation in public discourse. Such a method requires to acknowledge that the interpretations that are at the bottom of the analysis are very contingent upon the context in which claims are raised. The time-consuming nature of manual claims-coding, furthermore, limits the analysis in terms of the amount of data that can be collected, given that the assistance of computers is still difficult to implement for that type of analysis. Such an analysis would need to include more, and more different, cases in order to serve as a starting point for generalization.

Notwithstanding these limitations, however, we add to the discussion about the EU as a solidarity community, taking the 'refugee crisis' as a litmus test. Given both the observed similarities and differences between the four countries, national contexts and events matter and shape national news discourses, as confirmed by previous research (Berry, Garcia-Blanco, Moore 2015), as does the dominance of exclusive political decision-makers in news discourses. Our analysis is therefore sobering regarding the state of solidarity towards refugees and asylum

seekers, especially when considering the low visibility of more inclusive societal actors. Our findings illustrate a debate, strongly influenced by key events, in which state actors were the dominant actors, engaged in political contestation about the increased immigration by people in need – predominantly as 'a problem that needs solution'. Not the interests of those in need of support – both people as well as countries to secure humane living conditions – but the voices of actors involved in political conflict are visible. Such solidarity contestation reflects not only the political stalemate and national 'going alone' during the 'refugee crisis'; it may also be read as a reflection of a symbiotic relationship between politicians and the news media in constructing this 'crisis', potentially reinforcing cosmopolitan-communitarian conflict lines.

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**Supplementary File for 'Contesting European Solidarity'**

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*Supplementary Material S1: How did we measure reliability?*

The analysis was conducted in the large-scale EU-project TransSOL (see transsol.eu for further information). 8 countries' news coverage was analyzed by 8 individual country teams which consisted of 2-3 coders each which were all native speakers (except for samples not included in this analysis). The work package consisted of the analysis of two different data sources and was therefore led and supervised by two leaders, overall in a core team of four researchers who were responsible for developing and pretesting the codebooks. The codebook for the claims analysis, which we used for the paper at hand, builds on previous codebooks (in particular the LIVEWHAT project), thus on an already tested scheme.

Claims analysis is an interpretive method and overall a more qualitatively-oriented way of analyzing text. We tried to ensure comparability of our data by providing coders with quite broad categories and a high number of very specific sub-categories of variables for orientation; sub-categories were then aggregated to these broader categories for the analysis of this paper, which improved reliability of the coding. An example for categories would be the claimant variable in which we had 'political actors at the national level' as a broad category, and sub-categories such as: government/executive/state actor, parliament/legislative, courts/judiciary, police and other security/military forces, state executive agencies, welfare/social security agencies, migration/asylum agencies; or 'supra/international political actors' as a broad category and sub-categories such as: EU Commission, EU Parliament, Council of the EU, European Court of Justice, UN/UNHCR, the EU in general.

We started the coding process with a one-week training of coders for which we all met at one partners' venue to be able to discuss face-to-face. An advantage was that a large part of the group had already been part of another cooperation in an EU-project with a very similar constellation of partners. Here, a claims analysis had been conducted as well which is why a large part of our coders were already experienced with identifying and coding claims.

We conducted a first small reliability test only for screening purposes at this stage: This test was basically used to identify such teams/coders which needed further training which is why we do not report the results here.

The reliability test reported here was conducted after further training of the teams; reliability results were then discussed at another face-to-face meeting of only team leaders to identify possible systematic errors that were then re-checked afterwards by teams individually.

All teams had regular meetings for discussion of the coding. In that way, regular training was ensured, also involving work package leaders via Skype. Due to the low number of claims coded in total (n=700-750 claims), re-checking and correction of coding was possible without a major loss of resources.

Due to the logistic effort that comes with conducting an analysis of claims in a multi-team setup, we decided to test reliability across teams in English as well as decentralized within teams in the original language. This was on the one hand due to the fact that when using such a more interpretive method of coding, the language context and the broader discourse on the issue under analysis matters a lot for interpretation; and on the other hand, because the actual coding of claims was conducted in the original

language while training and instructions, i.e. also the codebook, was in English. There was always at least one person in every team with a close-to native level of English and extensive experience with international cooperation. For the claims-coding, however, coders were hired from outside the project context – mostly Master or PhD students. Not all coders, while being able to follow training discussions, were that advanced in English which is another reason why we decided to split the test in two phases:

*Phase 1* was a test of reliability across teams (inter-teams reliability test); here, we used English language material from an abridged version of the Greek Katherimini online newspaper (http://www.ekathimerini.com/), assuming that the English used here would be less complex and easier to code than using, for example, a sample of The Guardian. In that sense, we tried to create equal conditions for all coders, also such with a lower level of English language skills.

Coding for this test was conducted as a team effort: Thus, the coding that was submitted to work package leaders for the calculation of reliability scores was the result of decisions made in the team (i.e., n=8 reliability coding samples for 8 teams in total). This was to ensure that the rationale of coding was the same across teams. Results for this test are reported in Supplementary Table 1a for the 4 country samples used in our analysis.

Technically, teams were here provided with 10 articles from Katherimini from which they first identified claims for testing reliability of claims identification. The articles were retrieved using the same key words as for the overall analysis (refuge* OR asyl*). The set of claims identified by teams was then checked by work package leaders and a set of valid claims identified (n=20). This set of valid claims was then re-submitted to teams for the reliability coding of variables.

***Supplementary Table 1a: Reliability Scores Across Teams (Inter-teams Reliability Test)***

| Variable | Rel. Measure | Rel. Score |
|---|---|---|
| *Claims Identification* | % Agreement[1] | 82% |
| *Posit* | K-alpha (% Agr.)[2] | 0,75 (92%) |
| *State Actors/Societal Actor* | K-alpha (% Agr.) | 1 (100%) |
| *Claimant Scope = National* | K-alpha (% Agr.) | 0.95 (99%) |
| *Nationality of Claimant = Domestic* | K-alpha (% Agr.) | 0.95 (99%) |
| *Issue Migration Management* | K-alpha (% Agr.) | 1 (100%) |
| *Issue Integration* | K-alpha (% Agr.) | 1 (100%) |
| *Issue Background/Fate and Other Issues* | K-alpha (% Agr.) | 1 (100%) |

*Note: 2 coders in the following teams: DE, GR, IT; 3 coders for DK; Krippendorff's alpha, while being the most established measure of reliability, is not well-suited to be performed on rare phenomena, especially in dummy variables due to the already low variance of values (1 or 0). We therefore also provide percentage agreement measures here as a comparison.*

*Phase 2* which was conducted after the across-teams reliability check, consisted of an intra-team reliability test which was conducted in the respective country language on a sample of the newspapers used for coding (see Table 1). Teams here proceeded in the same way as for Phase 1 reliability testing: Team leaders first let coders identify claims from a sample of 10 articles and then code a set of valid claims (n=20).

However, this phase of coding was designed to ensure the reliability of coding across coders, which is why team discussions only took place after the identification and coding were concluded – thus, each coder coded the reliability sample independently from his/her colleagues in the team. For some countries, this entailed another re-check and correction of the data which then was conducted by team leaders, thus by expert coders. Results for the Phase 2 test are reported in Supplementary Table 1b for each country individually.

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[1] Following the line of reasoning in literature evaluating similar data (e.g.Van der Brug/D'Amato/Berkhout/Ruedin 2015), we measured the agreement on claims identification with percentage agreement: (All coding decisions-decisions deviating from majority)/all coding decisions. Example: 3 coders code 3 claims for reliability; for 1 claim, only two coders agree (= 1 deviating decision); all coding decisions = 3 (coders) * 3 (claims) = 9; 1 deviating coding decision; percentage agreement = (9-1)/9 = 0.89. For further information on the approach, see the documentation of reliability checking of the EUROPUB project (WP2) at https://europub.wzb.eu/codebooks.en.htm
We decided for percentage agreement against the background, that any claims reliability sample is highly likely to be biased towards only relevant claims since irrelevant claims are not coded and accordingly, would only appear in the sample if included by at least one coder. Hence, agreement on non-relevance would be heavily underestimated while chance agreement may be assumed to be very low. Strict measures accounting also for chance agreement, therefore, do not seem adequate.
[2] For percentage agreement: deviations from the majority decision. Since the variable is metric, we decided to weight mistakes in the coding differently: If one coder coded a claim as 0 for neutral/ambivalent and the other coded the same claim as 1 for positive, we regarded that as less of a mistake than having one coder code the same claim as 1 for positive and the other one coding the same claim as -1 for negative.
Accordingly, for percentage agreement, we counted deviations of 1 (e.g., neutral and positive coded) as minor deviations of 0.5; deviations of 2 (i.e., positive and negative coded) as a true mistake/deviation. Reference for calculating percentage agreement was the number of claims coded multiplied by the number of teams. Accordingly, we counted deviations of 1 (e.g., neutral and positive coded) as minor deviations of 0.5; deviations of 2 (i.e., positive and negative coded) as a true mistake/deviation. Reference for calculating percentage agreement was the number of claims coded multiplied by the number of teams.

*Supplementary Table 1b: Reliability Scores for Individual Teams (Intra-teams Reliability Test)*

| | Rel. Measure | DE | DK | GR | IT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Claims Identification* | % Agr. | 81% | 89% | 96% | 97% |
| *Posit* | K-alpha | 0,78 | 0,49 | 0,32 | 0,83 |
| | (% Agr.) | (96%) | (87%) | (85%) | (99%) |
| *State Actors/Societal Actors* | K-alpha | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | (% Agr.) | (100%) | (100%) | (100%) | (100%) |
| *Claimant Scope = National* | K-alpha | 0,79 | 0,80 | 0,87 | 1 |
| | (% Agr.) | (93%) | (95%) | (98%) | (100%) |
| *Nationality of Claimant = Domestic* | K-alpha | 0,69 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | (% Agr.) | (95%) | (100%) | (100%) | (100%) |
| *Issue Migration Management* | K-alpha | 0,48 | 0,52 | 0,86 | 0,70 |
| | (% Agr.) | (88%) | (90%) | (98%) | (92%) |
| *Issue Integration* | K-alpha | 0,48 | 0,36 | 0,62 | 0,65 |
| | (% Agr.) | (88%) | (95%) | (95%) | (98%) |
| *Issue Background/Fate and Other Issues* | K-alpha | 0,22 | 0,75 | 0,58 | 1 |
| | (% Agr.) | (85%) | (95%) | (93%) | (100%) |

*Note: 2 coders in the following teams: DE, IT, UK, FR; 3 coders for DK and GR.*

Coder in the Greek and Italian team benefitted from having been part of a similar project before (as mentioned earlier). Moreover, also one coder of the German team had coded claims before, however with a slightly different definition of a claim. This specific coder was trained again and the coding re-checked by the team leader. The main difficulty for the claims identification was to distinguish claims from a mere description but also to distinguish one claim from another in the same text.

Krippendorff's alpha, while being the most established measure of reliability in the content analysis literature (Hayes and Krippendorff 2007), is not well-suited to be performed on rare phenomena, especially in dummy variables, due to the already low variance of values (1 or 0). As noted in De Swert (2012: 7-8), Krippendorff's alpha returns very low values with even very few mistakes in such cases. We therefore also provide percentage agreement measures here as a comparison which returned satisfying values across all variables.

Especially for the coding of the posit variable, we trained coders again to improve the quality of data and re-checked already coded claims. The problem here, as it often occurs for the coding of tone, was to assess tone towards refugees as the object of the claim: In some cases, the tone would appear to be negative since the claimant criticized the government's decision regarding refugees, which in turn, however, would mean an expression of support – thus a positive evaluation – for refugees. In addition, it was in some cases difficult to decide if a claim was evaluative or neutral – in many cases, mistakes were made where one coder coded neutral whereas the other coder coded negative or positive. We therefore also calculated the percentage agreement measure (see FN) accommodating different degrees of mistakes explicitly based on the argument that a disagreement between neutral and evaluative is not as grave as not agreeing if a claim is positive or negative.

The issue variable, especially in the German sample, was checked again by the team leader to improve the quality of the data. Due to the fact that a large part of the coding was conducted by one coder who left the team early, a re-checking of data by an expert was the only possibility to correct data in hindsight.

*Supplementary Material S2: Position of Claims over Time by Country*
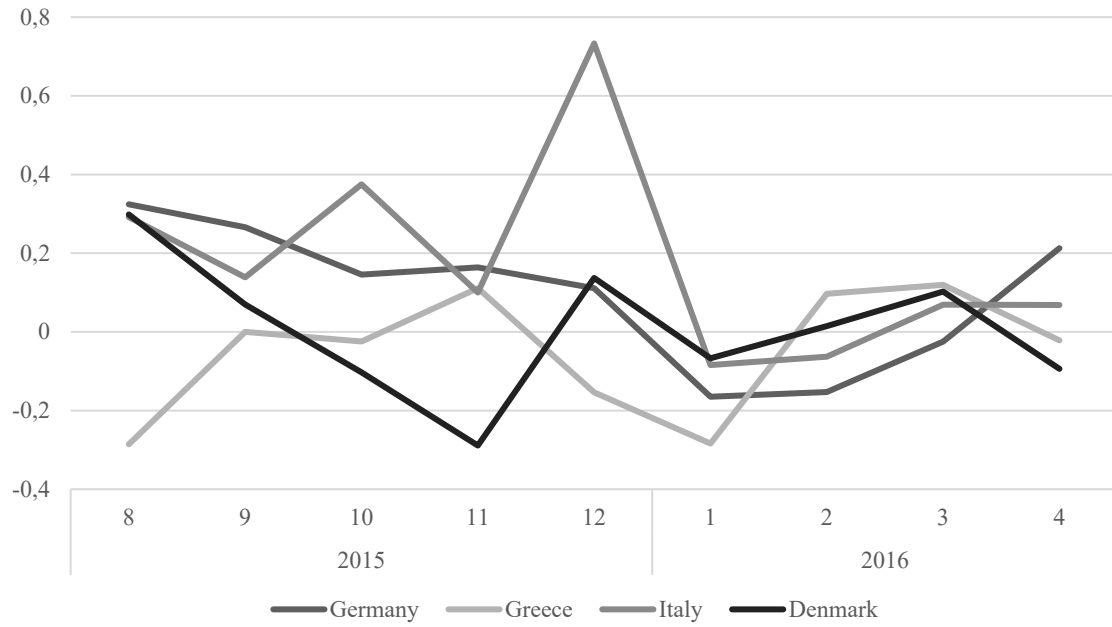


*Supplementary Material S3: Issues and Average Positions of Claims*