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Contested solidarity in the Euro crisis and Europe's migration crisis: a discourse network analysis

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ABSTRACT

The article analyses the solidarity discourse in the Euro crisis and Europe's migration crisis and examines how meanings of solidarity are framed and which political parties participate in these debates. The discourse coalition and coalition magnet approaches are combined to study the two discourse dynamics of demanding solidarity (migration crisis) or being criticised for not showing solidarity (Euro crisis) in the German media discourse. By applying the discourse network methodology, the interdependence of framing and actor visibility is analysed. It is demonstrated that solidarity is linked to austerity by a conservative party discourse coalition in the Euro crisis. The migration crisis discourse is shaped by one large discourse coalition, arguing for political solidarity. In 2015, political solidarity is challenged by security and demarcation claims in the migration crisis. The study contributes to the ideational research framework and demonstrates the different trajectories of solidarity in Europe in hard times.


KEYWORDS Coalition magnets; discourse coalition; discourse network analysis; Euro crisis; Europe's migration crisis; solidarity

Introduction

The Euro crisis and Europe's migration crisis have had a substantial impact on European politics. The Euro crisis demonstrated that the European integration process was mainly driven by market integration and the prospects of a common currency union, ignoring different national economic growth models (Johnston and Regan 2016; Scharpf 2002). The crisis was predominantly addressed by austerity measures and strict debt conditionality (Blyth 2015; Matthijs 2016).

The migration crisis has shown that the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) is not a burden-sharing system, because the Southern European countries are mainly responsible for external border control and assessing

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asylum procedures. It revealed the tension between external border enforcement by the Dublin Regulations and the internal open borders Schengen agreement in the European Union (EU) migration policy (Bauböck 2018; Thielemann 2014).

A common feature of both crises is the public appeal to solidarity. Claiming solidarity or criticising the lack of solidarity in times of crisis is a crucial site of conflict in respect of who should act in solidarity with whom and on what grounds (Hutter et al. 2016). Moreover, the concept of solidarity has recently sparked theoretical debate (Banting and Kymlicka 2017; Habermas 2013; Sangiovanni 2013). Solidarity touches upon central issues with regard to collective actions under stress, modes of cooperation and conflict in politics, and the normative principles to which actors refer. This raises the question of what the public appeal to solidarity means and how political actors frame the idea of solidarity in times of crisis.

Accordingly, the article asks how the solidarity discourse in the Euro crisis and Europe's migration crisis is framed and which political parties are most active in the public solidarity discourse in times of crisis. I examine which meanings of solidarity are debated and most salient in the Euro crisis and Europe's migration crisis and to what extent these meanings are present in both crises. Germany's double involvement in these two severe crises, as well as the country's leadership position in the EU, makes the German public discourse an interesting case to study.

An ideational research framework is applied to account for the dimensions of agency and ideas. Hajer's (1995) discourse coalition approach is adopted, investigating agents' cooperation and conflicts in discursive struggles on solidarity, in addition to the coalition magnet approach proposed by Béland and Cox (2016) accounting for when and how an idea becomes influential. Hence, the present study is concerned with *how* politicians and parties propose to resolve the crises rather than why the crises evolved and which integration theory best explains the crises' trajectories.

The study analyses the framing of solidarity in the German mass media arena from 2010 to 2015 as the 'communicative discourse' (Schmidt 2008) of political parties which strongly shape the public debate on European issues and are the key decision-makers (Koopmans and Statham 2010). The discourse network methodology is adopted to study the interdependence of actor and concept formation in the public discourse (Leifeld 2016).

I argue that solidarity and austerity claims are linked and thus create a unique framing strategy, which serves to justify the Euro crisis management in the German discourse. In the migration crisis, I show that political solidarity is the predominant meaning in the discourse, but it is contested by a security-oriented framing of migration. This has hindered the establishment of a solidary framework and contributed to the failure of solidarity in Europe's migration crisis.

The article contributes to the existing literature in two ways: *Conceptually*, it elaborates the ideational research framework by combining the discourse coalition and coalition magnet approach and shows how they are interrelated. *Empirically*, it expands our understanding of solidarity by separating the idea into its various meanings, demonstrating which parties frame solidarity in the respective crises and how solidarity is linked to other concepts in public discourses.

The paper proceeds as follows. The first section introduces the discourse coalition approach and the coalition magnet approach. These are then linked to the literature on actors and issue framing in the public sphere. The research design section lays out the data selection and the discourse network methodology. Finally, the findings are presented and further implications are discussed.

Ideational research: discourse coalitions and coalition magnets

Discursive institutionalism has been established as a fourth institutionalism in the field of comparative political economy (Schmidt 2008; Schmidt 2012). Discursive institutionalism is 'concerned with the substantive content of ideas and the interactive processes of discourse and policy argumentation in institutional context' (Schmidt 2012: 85). Recent ideational research has shown *how* ideas actually come to matter (Dellepiane-Avellaneda 2015; Galpin 2017; Papadimitriou et al. 2019). However, scholars still criticise the unclear agency dimension and argue that ideas can evolve and disperse across other policy areas (Boswell and Hampshire 2017; Carstensen 2011; Carstensen and Schmidt 2016).

While the present study adopts the ideational research perspective, it also considers the relevant criticisms by explicitly focusing on the agency and ideas dimensions. I argue that both dimensions are conceptually and empirically interrelated, enhancing our understanding of how ideas matter and the role of agency in public discourses. To this end, the discursive institutionalism framework is extended via the discourse coalition approach of Hajer (1995) and the coalition magnet approach of Béland and Cox (2016).

Discourse coalitions and actors in times of crisis

Actors can establish discourse coalitions to push for their preferred options through strategic interactions (Hajer 1995). A discourse coalition is 'a group of actors who share a social construct' (Hajer 1993: 45). Hajer analyses the social construct of acid rain in Great Britain, showing how different discourse coalitions make sense of it through various problem definitions and solutions. These framing strategies highlight that it is not shared interests that constitute the basis of the discourse coalition, but rather the shared use of ideas. The

discourse coalition approach has been used in policy studies, emphasising the role of agency in the research on public deliberations and discourses, as well as the cooperative aspect of forming argumentative clusters by actors in the pursuit of political goals and in seeking to influence policy decisions (Leifeld 2013; Rinscheid et al. 2019; Schmidt 2014).

To substantiate the discourse coalition approach, previous research on the actor presence in public debates on European issues is considered. *First*, national political parties dominate the public debate, legitimising their position and influencing public opinion (Koopmans and Statham 2010). Mainstream parties are the most present actors while radical left or right parties are less influential in public debates (Hutter et al. 2016; Senninger and Wagner 2015). Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that the party opposition uses solidarity claims in parliamentary debates during the Euro crisis to criticise the government and its lack of solidarity with other crisis countries (Closa and Maatsch 2014). Hence, I expect the formation of two discourse coalitions: a governing party discourse coalition, and a party opposition coalition. The first might be more present in the discourse.

Second, government representatives account for the largest quantity of statements in the public discourse (Kriesi and Grande 2015). The Euro crisis and the migration crisis were mainly approached at the intergovernmental level of European Council meetings (Schmidt 2014; Zaun 2018). Therefore, the public dominance of single national executives is expected. In particular, I expect that Chancellor Merkel as well as the federal ministers for the policy areas (Finance, Foreign Affairs, Interior) are most visible in the governing party discourse coalition.

Third, scholars have pointed out that supranational institutions have increased their political power during the Euro crisis (Bauer and Becker 2014). Despite the international and supranational character of the European Commission (EC) or the International Monetary Fund (IMF), individual representatives are most often affiliated with political parties. Since it has been argued that supranational bodies, such as the EC, are structured by partisan ideologies (Hartlapp et al. 2014; Hix 2008), individual international actors are included in the study. The presidents of the EC (Barroso, Juncker) as well as the respective Commissioners for Home Affairs (Malmström, Avramopoulos) and Monetary Affairs (Rehn, Moscovici) are expected to form a distinct EU discourse coalition with individual ties to the partisan discourse coalitions in both crises.

Coalition magnets and frames in times of crisis

The discourse coalition approach focuses on actors in discourses and how they are bound together by a social construct. However, Hajer does not elaborate on the term 'social construct'. How and under what circumstances social

constructs are the ideational glue for discourse coalitions is not theorised by Hajer. To fill this conceptual gap, the coalition magnet approach by Béland and Cox (2016) is adopted. It conceptualises an influential idea as a 'coalition magnet' and thereby sheds light on the ideational basis of discourse coalitions.

Béland and Cox identify three criteria that need to be met if an idea is to become a coalition magnet. *First*, an idea is broadly interpretable by different actors, meaning that it is rather 'ambiguous or polysemic' (Béland and Cox 2016: 431). *Second*, key actors pick up the idea and promote it. *Finally*, an idea has to bring various actors together. An additional criterion might be a crisis situation. The Euro crisis and the migration crisis created institutional uncertainty in the EU in respect of how to deal with crisis countries or a large number of incoming asylum seekers. In such times, ideas matter most and account for ideational-institutional change.

Recent studies on coalition magnets demonstrate how they bear a certain ambiguity to which multiple actors can connect their policy beliefs and expectations (Khayatzadeh-Mahani et al. 2019). Moreover, coalition magnets appeal to the public as positive ideas that can hardly be discredited. For instance, Kiess et al. (2017) show how the idea of the 'social market economy' functioned as a 'coalition magnet' in the German discourse on labour market reforms during the global financial crisis in 2007/2008. Thus, a coalition magnet mobilises political power and helps actors to reach their goals.

The coalition magnet approach is linked to previous studies on framing in times of crisis. From a post-functionalist perspective, it has been argued that current political conflicts are driven by either economic or cultural issues, expecting that cultural conflicts become more important than economic conflicts. This might lead to a nationalistic backlash (Hooghe and Marks 2009). However, the Euro crisis debate were mostly framed in economic terms. The focus on sovereign debt, a banking crisis or the loss of trust in the capitalist market are the main frames in the public debate (Grande et al. 2016; Kaiser and Kleinen-von Königslöw 2017).

With regard to the framing in the migration crisis, scholars have demonstrated the role of security frames, which underpin the policy orientation towards a securitisation of migration policies in Europe. In turn, humanitarian claims in the discourse on Europe's migration crisis have been less identified (Greussing and Boomgaarden 2017; Musarò and Parmiggiani 2017).

While the cited studies have focused on the general framing of the crises and partially included solidarity as one frame among others, the present study focuses on solidarity for two reasons. *First*, in the discourse on the crises, scholars agree that solidarity is lacking, but attribute different meanings to the term. Hall (2012: 367–368) states that social solidarity is eroding in the Euro crisis, while Biermann et al. (2019: 258) speak of 'temporary solidarity' and Genschel and Jachtenfuchs (2018: 192) of 'multilateral solidarity' as missing

types of voluntary burden-sharing in the migration crisis. Börzel and Risse (2018) attribute cultural, political, and economic issues to solidarity by stating that solidarity is about who is part of the European community and how resources are redistributed in the wake of the crisis. The present study differentiates solidarity by suggesting several meanings that are discursively constructed by actors in the public. By considering coalition magnet patterns for the analysis of meanings of solidarity, the interconnectedness of these meanings can be studied. *Second*, analysing the use of solidarity identifies which of these meanings is most dominant, how they are linked, and which political parties refer to similar meanings during the crises.

The discursive construction of solidarity

By discursive construction of solidarity, I mean the framing of solidarity by actors (Wallaschek 2019). Solidarity does not just exist; it has to be appealed to and argued for by actors so as to resonate in discourses and mobilise the public. Assuming that solidarity is contested (Gallie 1956), insofar as actors argue about the proper meaning of the term without coming to an agreement, the study analyses meanings of solidarity and identifies which is dominant in the mass media. I highlight five meanings of solidarity for the present study: cultural, social, political, economic, and monetary solidarity.

Cultural solidarity refers to promoting shared norms, rights or a common identity to undertake solidary actions. Closa and Maatsch (2014: 833) understand solidarity as supporting universal justice and human rights in their frame analysis of parliamentary debates on the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF). Others have highlighted a shared European identity and belonging to the EU community as constitutive of cultural solidarity (Galpin 2017). In the migration discourse, I expect that cultural solidarity is salient, because it touches upon humanitarian values that are inscribed in the EU treaties.

Social solidarity focuses on the distributional politics behind solidarity actions. In particular, welfare policies are considered as solidary, because they redistribute resources and create mutual social relations via institutional mechanisms (Baldwin 1990). I expect that social solidarity is prevailing in the Euro crisis discourse due to high unemployment rates and cuts in social spending in the crisis countries.

Political solidarity is about creating new political-institutional settings that foster cooperation and support among political actors. It is a source of legitimacy for political actions – especially in times of crisis (Kneuer and Masala 2015). Since the EU lacks supranational authority in migration policies, I expect that political solidarity is most prominent in the migration crisis.

Economic solidarity is about supportive actions for economies. These are related to public investment plans and coordinated strategies to support

growth and employment. It is often related to Keynesian understandings of macroeconomics (Sommer 2013). I expect that economic solidarity is hardly visible in the Euro crisis discourse due to the prevailing austerity paradigm.

Monetary solidarity refers to financial liability created among members of a community. It is a risk-sharing mechanism dealing with uncertainty and diversity among member states in monetary and financial issues. The newly established ESM is seen as a mechanism that provides monetary solidarity in times of crisis (Schelkle 2017). I expect that monetary solidarity is crucial in the Euro crisis discourse.

To sum up, social solidarity and monetary solidarity are expected to be most relevant in the Euro crisis and act as coalition magnets. Economic solidarity might be demanded too, but it might be less central than the other two meanings of solidarity. In the migration crisis discourse, cultural and political solidarity might be predominately used and are expected to be coalition magnets.

Beyond the use of solidarity, I also investigate other concepts in the discourse by highlighting how meanings of solidarity are connected to them which offers a comprehensive analysis of both discourses. Specifically, I expect the presence of austerity in the Euro crisis discourse, as Galpin (2017) has emphasised in her qualitative analysis of the German Euro crisis debate. Furthermore, I expect security and demarcation claims in the migration crisis due to the prevalence of border control issues and the contestation of the Dublin Regulations and the Schengen agreement.

Data and methods

For both crises, the German mass media arena from 2010 to 2015 has been selected. Analysing the German discourse considers Germany's position in the two crises and the different expectations of receiving or giving solidarity. Claus Offe (2016: 139–151) argues that Germany was criticised for its lack of solidarity with the crisis countries, insisting on ordoliberal austerity policies in the Euro crisis. In the migration crisis, however, Germany criticised other member states, in particular, the Visegrád countries (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia), for their lack of solidarity in establishing new European cooperative mechanisms. These different perceptions – in terms of who should act in solidarity with whom and how actors justify these decisions – makes comparing the German media discourse in both crises an intriguing case.

The two German daily quality newspapers *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) and *Die Welt* (Welt) have been selected. SZ and Welt have a high circulation and readership and represent the political cleavage of 'centre-left' and 'centre-right' (Eilders 2002). Printed quality newspapers are still the main gatekeepers in the public debate in European countries and previous research has

demonstrated that tabloids cover less politically relevant information (Koopmans and Statham 2010).

The newspaper articles were coded with the political claims analysis. Claims are defined as

public speech acts (including protest events) that articulate political demands, calls for actions, proposals, or criticisms, which, actually or potentially, affect the interests or integrity of the claimants or other collective actors. (Koopmans and Statham 2010: 55)

Four core codes constitute a claim: the speaker, the act, the issue, and the position. If one of these four codes cannot be identified, the claim is not coded. The coding of the selected newspaper articles followed a deductive-inductive coding process and was adapted from the codebook by de Wilde et al. (2014) (more information in the online appendix).

Based on a keyword search in the database Factiva 1,155 articles on solidarity in the migration crisis and 1,108 articles on solidarity in the Euro crisis have been selected. Regarding the selection of the articles, I applied a nominalistic approach. This means that I only coded claims if the word stem 'solidar' was mentioned in the newspaper article (more information in the online appendix). In sum, 673 claims were coded for the migration crisis and 367 claims were coded for the Euro crisis. Figure 1 gives an overview of the frequency of claims, differentiating between the centre-left newspaper *SZ* and the centre-right newspaper *Welt* as well as both crises.

The frequency of claims in the two newspapers follow similar paths in both crises. In the migration crisis, *SZ* and *Welt* show two rather uniform graphs from 2010 to 2014. However, in 2015, the *SZ* covers solidarity claims almost twice as much as the *Welt*. In the Euro crisis, the *SZ* features more claims on

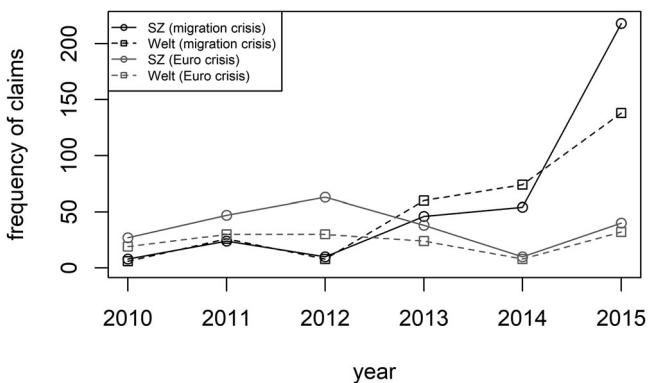


Figure 1. Number of claims in Europe's migration crisis and in the Euro crisis.

Note: The dashed graphs show the number of claims in centre-right newspaper *Welt* and the solid graphs display the number of claims in the centre-left newspaper *SZ*. The grey lines show the number of claims in the Euro crisis while the black lines are for Europe's migration crisis.

solidarity with a peak in 2012. From 2012 to 2014, the coverage in both newspapers decreases, but then rises again in 2015.

In order to explain these discourse dynamics, the ideas and actor constellations are studied from a discourse network perspective (Leifeld 2016; Leifeld and Haunss 2012). Discourse networks are affiliation networks, because they consist of two types of nodes (actors and concepts) which are connected via edges. These only exist between different types of nodes in affiliation networks. The communicative action of an actor using a concept is defined as a relation between an actor (first type of node) and a concept (second type of node).

To analyse the centrality of actors and concepts, the *eigenvector centrality* is computed (Bonacich 1987). It takes into account the number of edges of each node and the edges to other central nodes. The higher the value (from 0 to 1), the more likely it is that the node acts as a coalition magnet or key actor in a discourse coalition. To strengthen the perspective on influential ideas and actors, the edge weight has to be at least two in the Euro crisis discourse network and at least three in Europe's migration crisis. This means that an actor has to refer to a concept at least two (respectively three) times to be included in the discourse network. These thresholds are based on the expectation that referring to a concept once can be seen as a rather random connection, but claiming an idea more often stresses its importance for the actor and the whole discourse.

Results

The findings are presented in two steps, by first presenting the discourse networks for the specific discourse coalitions and then looking at the coalition magnets in the Euro crisis discourse and the migration crisis discourse.

The Euro crisis started in Greece in December 2009 at which point the Greek government admitted to having reported false numbers of debt and economic growth. The following political and financial events that culminated in the most severe crisis of the EU peaked with the Greek referendum in July 2015 concerning the third bailout programme ('Memorandum of Understanding').¹ The subsequent defeat in the European Council and an even stricter agreement on the bailout terms marked the end of an intense debate on the Euro crisis. In the same year, the migration topic came to public attention and dominated the media coverage from summer 2015 onwards. Nonetheless, after the 'Arab Spring' of 2011 and an increase in the number of migrant shipwrecks in the Mediterranean in 2013 and 2014, solidarity was already being debated in the public.

Discourse coalitions: the omnipresence of conservative politicians

The most central actors are (German) conservative party politicians in the Euro crisis. German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the two German parties CDU and

CSU, as well as the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso (2004–2014), are most visible and form a discourse coalition (Figure 2). Regarding the migration crisis, the key actors in the debate are the German parties *Die Grünen*, SPD, and CSU, as well as Merkel. They form one large discourse coalition (Figure 3).

In the Euro crisis discourse, the central role of conservative parties and politicians during the Euro crisis underlines their influence in shaping the solidarity discourse. They are supported by claims from the German liberal party (FDP) politicians Guido Westerwelle (Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2009–2013) and Rainer Brüderle (Minister of Economics, 2009–2011). Hence, the German government coalition of CDU/CSU and FDP between 2009 and 2013, that is, amid the main phase of the Euro crisis, engaged in the public discourse by linking the solidarity discourse with claims on financial solidity.

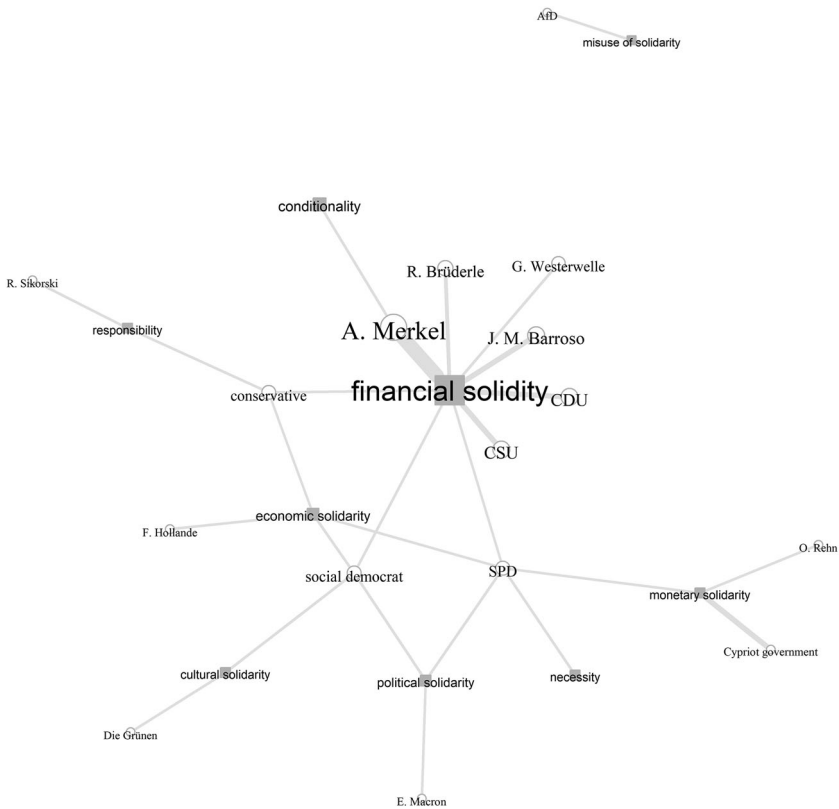


Figure 2. Solidarity discourse networks in the Euro crisis (2010–2015).

Note: Actors are shown as circles and concepts displayed as squares. The size of the nodes and the size of the labels are based on the eigenvector centrality. The thickness of the edges indicates how strongly actors and concepts are linked. The discourse network only shows edges with an edge weight of at least two.

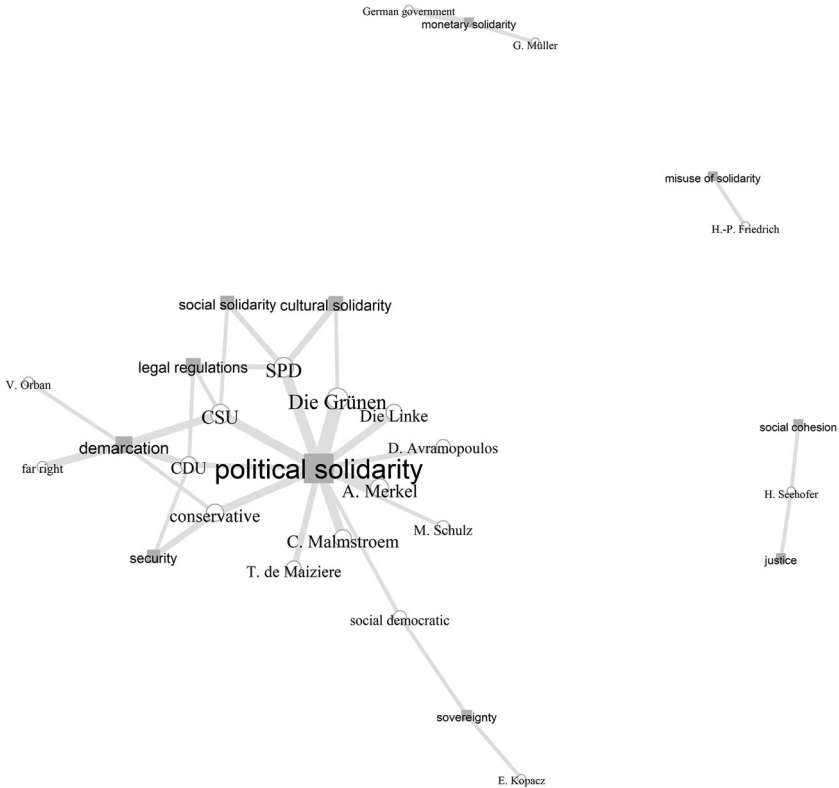


Figure 3. Solidarity discourse networks in Europe’s migration crisis (2010–2015).

Note: Actors are shown as circles and concepts displayed as squares. The size of the nodes and the size of the labels are based on the eigenvector centrality. The thickness of the edges indicates how strongly actors and concepts are linked. The discourse network only shows edges with an edge weight of at least three.

The following statement by Merkel from the beginning of the Euro crisis illustrates the dominant framing in the German discourse. She links ‘financial solidarity’ to solidarity as a necessary component of any solidarity action.

Merkel also briefly talked about the Greek debts crisis. The long lasting infringement of the stability pact has brought Greece into this situation and not the [financial, S.W.] speculation. Therefore, short-term solidarity was not the solution. There is no alternative to a rigorous austerity programme. (*Welt*, March 18th 2010)

Merkel’s position is indirectly quoted in the centre-right newspaper saying that austerity measures are unavoidable in Greece. She blames Greece for its precarious situation and argues that there is no other way than austerity. With the highest number of claims, Merkel stands out as the most central actor in the discourse network.

The other parties and politicians do not form a coherent discourse coalition in the Euro crisis. Social democratic parties, in particular, the German SPD, refer to

both austerity and meanings of solidarity. Other actors and concepts were rather marginal in the discourse. The German *Die Grünen* focused on cultural solidarity claims, while the appearance of the radical right party AfD at the beginning of its establishment is based on its Eurosceptic focus. Non-German actors, such as the French President François Hollande (2012–2017), the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski (2007–2014) or the European Commissioner Olli Rehn (2009–2014), are less central in the discourse, which emphasises the strong domestic focus of the German solidarity debate on the Euro crisis. Accordingly, other discourse coalitions are not identified.

Regarding the migration crisis, the party opposition receives public attention and influences the solidarity debate. *Die Grünen* and the SPD argue for a European solution and new political instruments to deal solidarily with the migration movements (political solidarity). Nonetheless, Chancellor Merkel and the CSU are also strongly represented in the discourse. Besides referring to political solidarity in the migration crisis discourse, conservative politicians and parties also justified security measures against refugees, questioned cooperative actions among EU member states or suggested a re-nationalisation of border control before 2015. The establishment of the Dublin Regulations – stating that the country in which an asylum seeker first enters has to deal with its asylum procedure – created the context in which other EU member states did not feel obliged to support the Southern member states in dealing with migrants. These claims even stress that the existing legal regulations should not be altered.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) harshly rejected those ideas which were also presented by her Austrian counterpart Werner Feymann in Brussels. Relocating asylum seekers among the EU member states is demanded again and again, said the Chancellor. She thinks, however, that the discussion on refugee policy should be based on the existing legal regulations. (SZ, October 26th 2013)

European actors are represented in the migration discourse. The European Commissioners for Home Affairs, Cecilia Malmström (2010–2014) and Dimitris Avramopoulos (since 2014) demand a European solution that fosters cooperation between EU member states and reforms to the existing CEAS. Hence, the German migration discourse on solidarity has one discourse coalition encompassing German domestic party actors as well as EU actors while the Euro crisis discourse is predominantly shaped by national executives who are affiliated to conservative parties.

Coalition magnets: the dominance of austerity and contested political solidarity

The discourse on solidarity in the Euro crisis is strongly influenced by claims on *financial solidity*. Financial solidity is the uncontested coalition magnet in the

public discourse. Claims on solidarity and financial solidity are linked in the German public discourse. In contrast, the solidarity discourse in Europe's migration crisis is shaped by the coalition magnet *political solidarity*. This meaning of solidarity is challenged by other concepts such as demarcation or legal regulations (see Table A3 in the online appendix).

Both discourses have a different ideational structure. Some understandings of solidarity are only deployed in one of the crisis discourses (including social solidarity in the migration crisis and economic solidarity in the Euro crisis, among others). Besides meanings of solidarity, other concepts such as sovereignty, responsibility or, most prominently, financial solidity do not feature in both discourses. Therefore, discourses are structured along coalition magnets that attract actors and offer a specific way of framing the crisis.

The EU established the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) in 2010, the intergovernmental treaty ESM and the Fiscal Compact in 2012 and stressed that solidarity is given, but only under certain circumstances, including austerity measures. The following debates on bailout programmes for Greece, financial turmoil in Spain and Cyprus, as well as the establishment of the ESM underpin the ideational focus on austerity.

The German SPD as well as other social democratic parties are rather undecided when it comes to how to solve the Euro crisis. They argue that EU member states should cooperate and form an 'ever closer union' (political solidarity) or should establish a European public investment plan or a transfer union (economic solidarity) to solve the Euro crisis. Yet, none of these solidarity claims became salient in the discourse. Social democrats also demanded austerity measures to reduce the level of national debts (financial solidity). This argumentative support contributed to the strength of financial solidity as a coalition magnet in the Euro crisis.

The debate on solidarity and solidity continued in 2014–2015. It was then linked to the electoral victory of the left party alliance Syriza in Greece in January 2015, as well as to the following negotiations about a third bailout programme between the Greek government, the Troika,² and the Eurozone members. The pressure on the Greek government after the referendum in July 2015 to accept new (and even stricter) conditions and supervision by the Troika supports the central role of austerity in the Euro crisis.

Examining the migration crisis, the debate about reforming the European asylum and migration policies started before 2015. Several ship incidents in the Mediterranean (e.g., at the coast of Lampedusa in October 2013), as well as an increasing number of asylum seekers coming to Italy and Greece from Syria in 2012–2014, induced a lasting debate about reform. In particular, a European solution and new political instruments were put forward to deal solidarily with the migration movements. The concern that the Southern European countries are left with the incoming asylum seekers and are over-

burdened is shared by many European, as well as social democratic, green, and left actors:

'Calling for an active admission of Syrian civil war refugees and the "protection in the region" approach do not contradict each other, but are interdependent', said [Vice Chairman of the Greens in the Bundestag Josef, S.W.] Winkler with regard to the government's position. His party demands that Germany takes in refugees unbureaucratically. 'We also see this as an act of solidarity with the European border countries which have provided a lot of assistance in the refugee admission. (*Welt*, September 4th 2012)

In 2015, radical right parties such as the AfD and right-conservative politicians like the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán (since 2010) demanded national border control, claimed to re-establish national sovereignty, and refused a fair sharing of burdens among the EU member states. The prevalence of the call to solidarity in 2015 and evidence of how party actors seek to reinterpret the term are provided in the following statement by the Polish Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz (2014–2015) in 2015:

Warsaw wants to prevent a revision of asylum law based on the population of the EU member states. Until now Poland receives only few refugees in relation to its population size – in 2014 only 114 Syrians have applied for asylum. It is not surprising that the head of government Ewa Kopacz primarily insists on better border security in the Mediterranean at the EU summit in Brussels. 'Our solidarity primarily rests upon strongly supporting Frontex. We will send our border police officer'. (*Welt*, April 25th 2015)

Nonetheless, the European Commission (2015) proposed several 'institutional packages' in 2015. Among these was the relocation of 160,000 refugees who had already been registered in Greece, Hungary, and Italy across the other EU member states, following a certain quota for each country in September 2015. The European Council approved it by a majority vote two weeks later. This led to conflicts among the member states, because the Visegrád countries voted against it and brought it to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) to repeal the decision. However, the ECJ ruled against it in September 2017. Nonetheless, other countries such as Belgium or Austria have also delayed and slowed down the relocation of refugees from Greece and Italy (European Commission 2017). Although the particular meaning of political solidarity was established in the European solidarity mechanism and approved by the member states, the resistance of several EU member states has brought down the idea of political solidarity.

Conclusion

This article has analysed the German media discourse on solidarity in the Euro crisis and Europe's migration crisis, examining meanings of solidarity as well as connected concepts and the specific party constellation in both crises

discourses. Since Germany was criticised for its lack of showing solidarity in the Euro crisis, but demanded solidarity from other EU member states in the migration crisis (Offe 2016), it was expected that solidarity is differently framed in the two crises discourses.

The discourse coalition and coalition magnet approaches were combined, addressing recent criticisms on the unclear agency and idea dimensions in ideational research and demonstrates how both are intertwined. Béland and Cox (2016) note that the polysemic nature of concepts matters for creating a coalition magnet. However, as I show, this polysemic condition might also prevent ideas from becoming influential. As shown in the Euro crisis discourse, actors strategically link solidarity and financial solidity so as to legitimise their decisions. The suggested combination of both approaches can be deployed in future studies.

The two main findings of the discourse network analysis are as follows. *First*, conservative parties and politicians are the most present party actors in both crisis discourses. While they dominate the Euro crisis discourse, the migration crisis discourse shows a more encompassing discourse coalition that includes conservative actors, but also members of the German *Die Grünen*, SPD, and even the German *Die Linke*. The expectations that discourse coalitions are formed by the government versus party opposition conflict and a left versus right cleavage is corroborated for the Euro crisis, but not for the migration crisis discourse. The finding by Closa and Maatsch (2014) that the party opposition mainly focuses on claiming solidarity in plenary debates on the Euro crisis is not corroborated for the media arena. Members of the European Commission (e.g., Barroso, Malmström or Avramopoulos) are represented in the debates and are linked to politicians with similar party affiliations, but do not form an EU discourse coalition as expected.

Second, the framing of solidarity differs in the two crises, which corroborates the expectation in respect of the perceived solidary obligations in Germany. It also demonstrates that meanings of solidarity are linked to other concepts by actors in the discourse. In the case of the Euro crisis, austerity claims were prevalent, while meanings of solidarity were too contested among the actors. Economic and monetary solidarity were present in the discourse, because they have been linked to the *reform* process of the EMU and the understanding that the Eurozone, in order to survive, has to establish new institutional mechanisms (ESM, Fiscal Compact). This ideational interlocking confirms Galpin's (2017) account and supports the expectation that German actors frame the lack of giving solidarity mainly with regard to an austerity regime. Financial and monetary issues were hotly debated and have been linked to domestic debates on reducing national sovereign debt (on the so-called *Schuldenbremse* and *Schwarze Null*). Despite the high rates of unemployment and major cuts in the social sector of the crisis countries, social solidarity has not received much attention in the Euro crisis.

The analysis of coalition magnets in Europe's migration crisis has demonstrated an increasingly polarised discourse between a solidarity-oriented understanding in which political solidarity is closely linked to other meanings of solidarity, such as cultural solidarity, and a contra-solidarity perspective stressing security issues. The limitations of the CEAS in responding to the high influx of asylum seekers and a fair burden-sharing have opened a discursive opportunity to debate either new cooperative institutional settings or contesting the Schengen agreement. Even though the implementation of these institutional reforms mostly failed in the end (Biermann et al. 2019; Zaun 2018), such public discussions on reforming the CEAS were hardly imaginable before 2015. However, the CEAS's reform process has been blocked by several EU member states. While Germany hesitated to support such institutional reforms before 2015, it has changed its position in response to the large number of incoming asylum seekers and supported a European framework in the wake of the migration crisis. The presence of cultural solidarity in the migration crisis might be due to the fact that norms and values are strongly inscribed in the migration policies. The solidarity debate underpins the high degree of potential conflict around the migration issue in the EU.

These results bear some limitations and open the agenda for future inquiries. First, applying a nominalistic approach to solidarity presupposes that actors intentionally use the concept. This limits the amount of available data and it does not cover claims that use the idea of solidarity without mentioning the term. While this approach was useful in exploring the meanings of solidarity in two different crises, future studies should extend the terminological scope of the study and utilise a broad conceptualisation of solidarity so as to capture further aspects of and debates on solidarity. The focus on quality newspapers leads to a selection bias towards statements by government actors. However, the study was interested in how political parties frame solidarity and mobilise the public, and as such studying quality newspapers proved to be most apt. Nonetheless, meanings of solidarity should be analysed in other argumentative arenas such as parliaments, online discourses or policy debates.

The public appeal to solidarity strongly resonated in Germany during both European crises and as shown is far from uncontested in the public. In this regard, the present study has demonstrated how actors deal with crisis situations and how they frame solidarity as a potential solution when experiencing crises.

Notes

1. In the German debate, bailout programmes are framed as *Rettungspakete* or *Rettungsschirme* (rescue packages or rescue umbrellas). This underlines the link between austerity and solidarity: Together with other EU member states,

Germany is opening its umbrella and sends a package to rescue crisis countries from their sovereign debt via credit. Thus, certain conditions such as austerity policies can be requested.

2. The Troika was established in 2010 to monitor the compliance with the conditions of the bailout programme (noted in country-specific 'Memorandums of Understanding'). It consists of the EC, the European Central Bank, and the IMF. In 2015, the Troika was renamed 'the Institutions', requested by the newly elected Greek government.

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