Measuring solidarity: towards a survey question on fiscal solidarity in the European Union

Adam Holesch

Accepted: 20 February 2021 / Published online: 9 March 2021
© Springer Nature Limited 2021

Abstract
Comparing solidarity attitudes between EU citizens is significant in the context of European integration, since solidarity—or rather the lack thereof—has been used in public debates and recent studies as an explanation for a variety of crises. In these academic studies, the measurement of solidarity and its conceptualization strongly differ and that prevents us from evaluating the long-term existence of solidarity in the EU or its effectiveness. This article intends to narrow this gap by starting a theoretical discussion on a possible standardized question on fiscal solidarity in the EU. To do so, it examines existing questions and borrows from the research on social trust and survey methodology. Then, it proposes a new fiscal solidarity question, of which its reliability and validity is assessed via the Survey Quality Predictor, a computer program to evaluate survey questions. This article argues that the new fiscal solidarity question should mention the term solidarity and include the solidarity practice defined as permanent financial help. Once established, a standard solidarity question will strengthen the comparability of solidarity in continued social science research.

Keywords Solidarity · Fiscal · Survey · Question · European Union

Introduction

The biggest challenges of the European Union (EU) today—including redistribution, inequality, and identity—touch upon the concept of solidarity (De Schutter 2017; Ross 2020). Historically, practices of solidarity in the EU integration process have taken place primarily in the form of the Regional Policy, developed to ease economic integration. After the Eurozone and migration crisis, the COVID-19 health crisis brought the issue of solidarity in the EU to the forefront once again. While
the first national reflexes in Spring 2020 led to the unilateral closing of borders and fights over medical supplies between Member States—summarized by Italian newspaper *La Repubblica* as ‘Ugly Europe’ (*La Repubblica* 2020)—the EU institutions tried to counterbalance this tension by emphasizing the existing solidarity between Member States in treating patients, sharing medical supplies across the EU and the repatriation of more than 600,000 Europeans stranded abroad (*European Commission* 2020a). The main efforts of the EU lay in securing an extraordinary budgetary package, which aimed to address the economic grievances of the southern States including Italy or Spain. The package was initially blocked by the ‘Frugal Four’—an informal group of fiscally conservative Member States: Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, and Austria (and occasionally Finland)—which were then accused of displaying a lack of solidarity (*Zerka* 2020). Eventually, the Member States agreed on that budgetary package, which was consequently called the ‘Solidarity Leap’ by Thierry Breton, the Commissioner for the Internal Market (*European Commission* 2020b, p. 1). For the first time in history, the Next Generation EU (NGEU)¹ fund could allow the Commission to take on supranational debts by borrowing funds on the capital markets.

Solidarity in the EU has been studied on many levels, focusing on its conceptual development (*Banting* and *Kymlicka* 2017; *Habermas* 2013; *Sangiovanni* 2013) or emphasizing the practice of solidarity (*Grimmel* 2017; *Rothstein* 2017). Many studies state a crisis of European solidarity (*Delanty* 2008; *Habermas* 2013), yet without explaining how the quantity of solidarity has been measured or which period it is being compared with. These questions are partly addressed by public opinion studies that analyze the attitudes of EU citizens towards solidarity (e.g., *Ciornei* and *Recchi* 2017; *Gerhards* et al. 2019; *Ferrera* and *Burelli* 2019; *Verhaegen* 2018; *Díez Medrano* et al. 2019). Nonetheless, conceptualization and measurement of solidarity differ greatly. Most of these works use an ad hoc operationalization of solidarity which cannot generally be applied beyond a particular study or specific population.

To date, a standardized solidarity survey question has not been developed by academic studies or social science surveys, and using different questions to measure solidarity has led to problems with comparability. There is still little evidence if, over time, there has been an increase or decrease of solidarity in the EU. As argued by *Kankaraš* and *Moors* (2009, p. 557), the validity of comparative attitudes towards solidarity among European citizens is largely taken for granted, and rarely tested. As a result, the comparative study of solidarity within the EU is still far from delivering relevant results. This article intends to narrow this gap by proposing a question to measure fiscal solidarity among EU Member States.

In this article, I focus on fiscal solidarity, which together with transnational solidarity sits at the center of public opinion research on the EU, which tends to focus on a solidarity practice built on rationalist rather than altruistic logic. I argue that

---

¹ In July 2020, EU leaders agreed on a package, which aims at rebuilding the EU after the COVID-19 pandemic by supporting above all investment in the green and digital transitions. It combines the multi-annual financial framework (MFF) and an extraordinary recovery effort, Next Generation EU (NGEU), and is worth €1 824.3 billion (*European Council*, 2020).
a new question should explicitly include the term ‘solidarity’, name the solidarity practice in form of financial help, and clearly define fiscal solidarity as a permanent instrument based on burden-sharing, not just as ad hoc help in times of crisis.

As a starting point, this article discusses how solidarity appears in the different issue areas of EU Treaties, pointing to a fundamental rift between rhetorical commitments to solidarity and its practice by the EU and its Member States. It is followed by a discussion of the concept of solidarity. Further to this, the scales of solidarity in the EU and the different levels on which solidarity have been studied are reviewed. After showing the shortcomings in the measurement of solidarity in public opinion research and survey questions, this article turns to the research on social trust. It explains the success of social trust as an attitude variable in social science and examines which aspects of it could be utilized for analysis of solidarity. This article then uses recent advances in survey methodology to improve the wording of the fiscal solidarity question. It also tests the newly developed question, answer categories, and scale, using the Survey Quality Predictor (SQP), a computer program that uses an automatic coding procedure to evaluate survey questions (Saris et al. 2011).

The contributions to the political science and sociological school of thought are threefold. First, it is a pioneering article which focuses on a theoretical discussion of a possible fiscal solidarity question. It is one of the first articles to discuss questions of the measurement of solidarity more broadly through its address of the shortcomings in the operationalization of the solidarity concept in the EU integration process. Finally, this article gives an overview of existing solidarity and trust questions in Eurobarometer, not seen before. While remaining at the micro-level, the findings of this article could help future studies to examine whether European citizens are willing to support fiscal solidarity towards other EU Member States and their citizens. The ultimate aim of this article is to open up the academic discussion on the measurement of solidarity in the EU via survey questions.

**EU legislation, EU crisis, and solidarity**

Solidarity has been mentioned in the preamble of all European Treaties since the founding of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951. Despite this, it should be noted that it is difficult to find empirical evidence that solidarity was one of the leading forces at any moment of the EU integration process. Further, scholars find ambiguity considering solidarity in the EU Treaties and its interpretation. While some academics argue that Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) cites solidarity as one of the EU’s values (Domurath 2013; Closa and Maatsch 2014), Ross (2020) emphasizes that solidarity appears in Article 2 but is not listed as a value.

The promotion of solidarity among the Member States is mentioned in Article 3.3 of the TEU: while focusing on the internal market it emphasizes that the EU ‘shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States’. The Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund, where the EU transfers huge amounts of money to its economically weakest States and regions, are an answer to
that. In the EU budget between 2014 and 2020, the part on ‘Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion’ presented 34 percent of the total amount (European Commission 2018).

There is some mention of solidarity in treaties such as the Common Foreign and Security Policy (e.g., Art 24.2. TEU) or the so-called ‘solidarity clause’ in Article 222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU). The latter in particular is often perceived as committing to solidarity, for example, it states, ‘The Union and its Member States shall act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if a Member State is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster’. However, in the legislative EU framework, we also find many more conflictive areas. Solidarity encompasses the policies of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (AFSJ). Yet, one of the most important instruments of the AFSJ, the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), came under enormous stress during the 2015 migration crisis. Instead of the fair sharing of responsibility, the CEAS lay the burden on the southern Member States, which were overwhelmed with the handling of the asylum procedures and control of the external borders. The most heavily affected states such as Greece and Italy fought for a temporary relocation scheme for asylum seekers and were backed by the President of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, who stated that ‘a true European refugee and asylum policy requires solidarity to be permanently anchored in our policy approach and our rules’ (European Commission 2015, p. 1). However, EU Member States from the Visegrád Group (Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, and Slovakia) openly rejected this solution. They justified the non-compliance with various decisions of the European Council with an argument that solidarity is a ‘flexible concept’ (Visegrád Group 2016, p. 1).

There are also other areas, where the Member States are in permanent conflict. Article 122.1 (TFEU) states that in the area of energy, decisions should be taken ‘in the spirit of solidarity between the Member States’ (also Article 194, TFEU). Here, for example, the Member States from Eastern and Central Europe (ECE) have called on the other Member States to show solidarity, in particular considering the EU’s position towards common projects with the Russian Federation (e.g., Nord Stream I and Nord Stream II). One of these numerous interventions took place in 2016 when eight governments of the ECE States signed a letter objecting to the Nord Stream II project. The Nord Stream pipeline ships gas directly over the North Sea and so avoiding the territory of the ECE states, which has resulted in the ECE States losing out on corresponding transport fees. In the objection letter to the proposed expansion of the pipeline, the main argument questioned the supply security, the compatibility of the project with EU law, and the principles of the Energy Union (Sytas 2016). Calls upon the principle of solidarity were also omnipresent in the Eurozone crisis, expressed by both central actors such as Germany and Greece (Grimmel 2020).

---

2 Here Article 67.2 states that the EU ‘shall frame a common policy on asylum, immigration, and external border control, based on solidarity between the Member States, which is fair towards third-country nationals’, and Article 80 stating that the implementation of the policies on border control, asylum and immigration ‘shall be governed by the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility, including its financial implications, between the Member States [...]’. 
In all three cases, we see an essential fracture between the commitments to solidarity in the Treaties and the practice of solidarity by the EU and its Member States. However, it should be recognized that the concept of solidarity in the Treaties may be difficult to grasp not only for Member States. Neither the preamble nor the articles of the Treaties provide any legal definition. There is no standard definition of solidarity throughout interdisciplinary approaches of social sciences. Solidarity research reflects highly multidimensional approaches from different fields of research which has led to a variety of conceptualization efforts.

The concept of solidarity

Durkheim (1984) was the first to suggest the notion of solidarity as the possible glue that binds societal groups together and prevents them from disintegrating. He distinguished between ‘mechanical solidarity’, the social cohesiveness of small, undifferentiated groups, and ‘organic solidarity’, the cohesion of societies differentiated by a relatively complex division of labor. Durkheim saw solidarity above all as an outcome of social interactions, pointing to an important element of solidarity—its boundedness. Further, Weber (1978) saw solidarity above all as a subjective feeling of ‘belonging together’ that leads to social action. This group attachment is the first definition of solidarity where solidarity is a feeling, tied to a community or group, whose members are expected to support each other. This feeling of closeness can be based on shared values, norms, or beliefs.

The second meaning of solidarity is solidarity as a practice, for example, the supportive behavior or applied support within (usually closed) national communities (Rorty 1989). There is a discussion if these solidarity practices must be voluntary and altruistic (affective solidarity) or can be based on self-interest (calculating solidarity) (Paskov and Dewilde 2012). 3 Grimmel (2020) claims the former, arguing that practices of solidarity must be based on selfless motives. When there is coercion from others to apply solidarity, or self-interest seeing these practices as a possible future investment, this cannot be described as solidarity, but something else. This type of solidarity practice could be best explained as exceptional ‘explosions of solidarity’ (Baumann 2013, p. 1), during unique events or times of crisis.

On the other hand, Hechter (1988) argues that if individuals have invested in a group, then they are more eager to show solidarity. Here, reciprocity helps to explain solidarity as a forward-looking expectation that can help to maintain solidarity practices. Habermas (2013, p. 9) argues that in the EU, at the very least to show solidarity is a political act, and should be not seen as synonymous with the term ‘selflessness’ or with the term ‘justice’, be it in its moral or legal sense. Paskov and Dewilde (2012) argue that the distinction between calculating and affective considerations is delicate. Therefore, the idea that people can be influenced by an affective feeling

3 In a similar vein, O’Neill (1996) has distinguished between two types of solidarity: on the one hand, bounded solidarity, solidarity among members of a group; on the other hand, humanitarian solidarity (solidarity with), such as a charity or gift, which has a one-way direction.
towards others but also by rational motivations at the same time cannot be excluded (also Weber 1978).

**Research on solidarity in the European Union**

The research on solidarity in the EU is growing rapidly in different research areas. In the conceptual field, solidarity has been connected to values such as democracy (Niznik 2011), equality (Kolers 2016), identity (Risse 2010), and reciprocity and trust (Miller 2017). Bantling and Kymlicka (2017) connect EU solidarity above all to redistribution and financial help.

Other contributions emphasize the differentiating scales of solidarity. Sangiovanni (2013) presents a full account of EU solidarity principles for three of them: (1) national solidarity, which defines obligations among citizens and residents of Member States, (2) Member State solidarity, which defines obligations among Member States, and (3) transnational solidarity, which defines obligations among EU citizens. Gerhards et al. (2019) distinguish four forms of European solidarity: (1) fiscal solidarity (willingness to support indebted European countries financially), (2) territorial solidarity (willingness to reduce inequality between rich and poor countries), (3) welfare-state solidarity (willingness to support those in need), and (4) refugee solidarity.

The macro-structural approach to institutional solidarity in the EU remains underdeveloped (Börner 2013; Martinsen and Vollaard 2014). Further, there are only isolated contributions analyzing conflicts over solidarity between Member States (Knodt and Tews 2017). Wallaschek (2018) proposes a discursive approach to solidarity building on framing approaches, which were constructed by media discourse during the migration crisis in 2015. Closa and Maatsch (2014) and Kontochristou (2014) place a special emphasis on political elites, analyzing solidarity actions in national parliamentary debates. Bieler and Erne (2015) analyze cross-border solidarity campaigns such as European labor movements, while Della Porta (2018) examines civic protests as practices of solidarity.

In general, solidarity research is a topic conducted by public opinion research, focusing on the attitudes of EU citizens. While usually these works focus on fiscal or transnational solidarity, the conceptualization and measurement of solidarity differ highly, and we find varying results regarding the level of public support for solidarity actions. While Lahusen and Grasso (2018) find limited public support for EU-wide solidarity actions, other authors argue that more solidarity is found in the EU than perhaps first expected (Bremer et al. 2020; Ferrera and Burelli, 2019; Genschel and Hemerijck 2018; Gerhards et al. 2019). These analyses, while using different operationalizations, find substantial deviation across Member States, their policy issues, and instruments. The results are often contradictory (Bremer et al. 2020; Ferrera and Burelli 2019; Genschel and Hemerijck 2018; Lahusen and Grasso 2018). Specifically focusing on public opinion in the EU, the work of Genschel

---

4 Ferrera and Burelli (2019) show that while some practices such as increasing the EU budget to promote social policies are supported, others such as the introduction of Eurobonds have not been so popular. Further, the differences in levels of support of solidarity, namely public support for policies of redis-
A. Holesch and Hemerijck (2018, p. 4) found that many survey participants when questioned on support for an over-indebted Member State expressed confusion and ambiguity. This further underlines the enormous complexity of survey questions for public opinion research that this article addresses.

The measurement of solidarity

With nearly no analysis that exclusively examines the questions of solidarity measurements (except for Soler et al. 2018), the few studies which attempt to untangle such questions do not offer a reliable blueprint. When analyzing solidarity in the EU, some scholars examined it as part of the social cohesion or social capital camp, measuring it by borrowing sets of indicators such as social trust, voluntary work, or public engagement (e.g., Berman and Phillips 2004). Others have constructed measurement models from items found in large-scale comparative surveys in particular the 1999/2000 wave of the European Values Study (EVS), which offered a set of questions in which participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they are ‘concerned about the living conditions of other people’. In this research, solidarity is understood as being directed towards the members of a certain group (e.g., Halman 2001; Paskov and Dewilde 2012). Abela (2004), when analyzing the relationship between citizens’ current religious values and the practice of solidarity, used these questions to build his model of socio-economic solidarities. Checking for possible inaccuracies of this approach, Kankaraš and Moors (2009) found through multiple-group latent-class factor analysis that it allows for a valid comparison of solidarity attitudes between countries.

Recently, other scholars have started exploring survey questions, which have been used in the framework of different EU projects. Gerhards et al. (2019), when developing the aforementioned four forms of European solidarity, relied on the Transnational European Solidarity Survey (TESS)—a unique general population survey carried out in 13 EU countries in 2016—which used 21 items to measure general attitudes towards solidarity. Most relevantly within this article is the conceptualization and measurement of fiscal solidarity. The concept is defined as citizens’ willingness to financially support crisis-affected European countries. They measure it in the national, EU, and global context with the question on the EU being:

Footnote 4 (continued)

tribution and burden-sharing between countries, are large, where net-payers to the EU budget are less inclined towards transfers (Lahuusen and Grasso, 2018). Bremer et al. (2020) measure support for the European integration of core state powers and show that horizontal transfers, in which one state sends money or credit guarantees without using EU resources, such as in the Greek rescue package, receive higher levels of support than vertical capacity-building, which creates European core state powers such as an European Monetary Fund. They also find that the EU’s Southeast is more supportive of transfers in comparison to the EU’s Northwest. Genschel and Hemerijck (2018) explain that solidarity support is highest in relation to disaster aid, but decreases step-by-step on issues of military defense, refugee burden-sharing, and unemployment.
In times of crisis, [COUNTRY] should give financial help to other EU countries facing severe economic difficulties.

Other scholars have relied on data from EU institutions. Reinl (2020), when studying multiple facets of European solidarity and its link to Eurosceptic sentiments, integrated some data from the Eurobarometer between 2009 and 2015 focusing on survey questions on the support of Eurobonds, binding asylum quotas within the EU, and support for financial assistance provided for EU countries facing high asylum flows. Also, Ciornei and Recchi (2017, p. 6) when measuring international solidarity use a Eurobarometer question on support of Eurobonds, which ‘captures individual opinion on the pooling of sovereign issuance among the Member States and the sharing of associated revenue flows and debt servicing costs’.

Standardly Eurobarometer surveys are produced every few months with data from all EU Member States with variables that have a solid empirical time basis. However compared with surveys such as the EVS, survey research on solidarity in the Eurobarometer is widely underdeveloped. This is surprising as EU institutions while having never established a standardized solidarity question have historically questioned the idea, for example in the European Communities Study (1973) and the Eurobarometer 6 (1976):

If one of the countries of the Common Market found itself in major economic difficulties, do you feel that other countries, including (your own), should help it or not?

In the Eurobarometer 15 (1981), a similar question was asked in the context of the European Community (EC):

If one of the countries of the European Community other than our own found itself in major economic difficulties, do you feel that other countries, including (your own), should help it or not?

Both questions do not explicitly use the term ‘solidarity’ and focus on the logic of help between EC countries. Here not only is a general disposition to help others measured, but also potential target groups—‘other countries’—are listed. Neither of these questions were repeated in later Eurobarometer surveys. More recently, the Eurobarometer 74.1 (2010), the Eurobarometer 76.1 (2011), and the European Election Study (2014) used the following question:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: In times of crisis, it is desirable for (OUR COUNTRY) to give financial help to another EU member state facing severe economic and financial difficulties?

This question has different characteristics. First, it asks about the desirability of fiscal solidarity, focusing on financial help to other Member States. Second, it measures help not within a framework of a more permanent system of burden-sharing, but during a serious crisis. Besides that, the question does not ask about any support for a bailout which could be seen as a possibly lucrative investment (Verhaegen 2018).
The key advantage of this question is that it has been used by some of the recent works on EU solidarity and redistribution (Kleider and Stoeckel 2019; Lengfeld et al. 2015; Verhaegen 2018), also in the context of survey experiments (Kuhn et al. 2018). This question could make such studies, at least in parts, comparable. At the same time, this question reveals an important conceptual shortcoming. While in some studies authors connect this question to a solidarity practice (Verhaegen 2018, also the similar question by Gerhards et al. 2019), it is also used in others’ studies which refrain from using the term solidarity and instead opt to measure public support for fiscal transfers or European fiscal integration (Daniele and Geys 2015; Kleider and Stoeckel 2019). This highlights the potential failure of questions to date. If the term solidarity itself is not used in the question, do responders relate to the concept of solidarity? Is here solidarity being measured or something else? In the following section, I will examine how this question could be improved after contrasting it with social trust and survey methodology research.

The social trust questions

The purpose of this section is to show why social trust is a widely popular variable in public opinion research and which part of its successful application can be used when formulating the new solidarity question. Despite some contradictions on the exact meaning of social trust (Newton 2001), its popularity—compared to other variables such as reciprocity, social cohesion, or social capital—widely relies on the fact that most studies use the same social trust survey question, widely developed by Rosenberg (1956):

> Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?

This question is successful for several reasons. Since Almond and Vrba (1963) included it in The Civic Culture Study, it has been widely applied in general surveys such as the European Social Survey (ESS), the World Values Survey (WVS), and the EVS. Further, as Uslaner (2002) has shown, the question works reasonably well to measure generalized trust. Notably, this question of attitude explicitly includes the term ‘trust’, which can then be easily identified by the respondents. Finally, its former dichotomous response scale which included the answers ‘You can trust most people’ and ‘You can never be too careful when dealing with others’ has been improved in the ESS survey which uses an 11-point answer scale, which is likely to lead to higher reliability and validity.  

Despite its successful implementation, Delhey et al. (2011) point to some ambiguity around the term ‘most people’. It predominantly connotes out-groups and the

---

5 Survey research claims that response scales with more answer points have higher reliability and validity. Although there are mixed results regarding the exact number of scale points, a number between seven and 11 is considered reliable (DeCastellarnau, 2018). In this scale, a 0 reference point means ‘you cannot be too careful’ and a point 10 meaning ‘most people can be trusted’.
radius of ‘most people’ varies considerably across countries. In the EU context, ambiguity is avoided since the respondents can point to different nationalities when questioned on ‘Trust in people from other countries’. In the Eurobarometer 6 (1976) or Eurobarometer 25 (1986), the following question was asked:

Now, I would like to ask about how much you would trust people from different countries. For each country please say whether, in your opinion, they are in general very trustworthy, fairly trustworthy, not particularly trustworthy, or not at all trustworthy.

In later surveys such as Eurobarometer 33 (1990), the question was included and then reworded to:

Now, I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in people from various countries. For each, please tell me whether you have a lot of trust in them, some trust, not very much trust and no trust at all.

Although the trust question in the EU context is different from the standard social trust question, both use the term ‘to trust’, to ‘have trust in’, or ‘to be trustworthy’. That was one of the reasons why the EU Trust question became popular and was considered a ‘Trends’ question between the years 1976 and 1996, being used in ten different Eurobarometer surveys (Signorelli 2012; GESIS 2020).

Insights from survey methodology research

When thinking about improving survey questions, scholars of survey methodology have studied primarily the effects that the wording of survey questions has on the response (e.g., Presser and Schuman 1996; Sudman and Bradburn 1982) or guidelines about which kind of scales to use (e.g., Converse and Presser 1986; Dillman 2000). Recently scholars have focused more on the problem of translating concepts one wants to measure into a question (Hox 1997; Revilla et al. 2016; Saris and Gallhofer 2014; Smyth 2016).

In addition, Saris et al. (2011) have created the open access Survey Quality Predictor (SQP) software which contains a large database of survey questions and their quality predictions. Measurement quality ($q^2$) in SQP is defined as the product of reliability ($r^2$) and validity ($v^2$), following the True Score Model (Saris and Andrews 1991), as illustrated in Fig. 1 (see Annex 1). It shows the strength of the relationship between the variable of interest and the observed answers. If this relationship is perfect, the quality is 1 while everything less than 1 is due to measurement errors. The predictions of SQP2.1 (2015) provides are based on a meta-analysis of 3483 Multi-trait-Multimethod (MTMM) quality estimates explained by more than 50 formal and

---

6 Scientists from the Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences (GESIS) have defined ‘Trends’ questions as those that have been asked at least five times in the Eurobarometer survey (Signorelli, 2012).
linguistics characteristics, such as social desirability, the balance of the request, or numbers of abstract nouns (as indication of linguistic complexity).⁷

SQP allows the addition of new survey questions, new codes for formal and linguistic characteristics, and obtains quality predictions as well as suggestions for potential improvements, which can be directly applied. For the formulation of the solidarity survey question, I coded the question’s characteristics to obtain its measurement quality and compared this to other existing survey questions, which helps evaluating its strength. Besides that, after coding the question, the SQP shows on the result screen not only the formal and linguistic shortcomings of the newly developed survey question but also suggests potential improvements, which I have directly used.

**A new question on fiscal solidarity in the European Union**

In the next section, a new question on fiscal solidarity in the EU is suggested. To do so, I took as a starting point the aforementioned question, which has been widely used in recent research to measure fiscal solidarity:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: In times of crisis, it is desirable for (OUR COUNTRY) to give financial help to another EU member state facing severe economic and financial difficulties?

---

⁷ For more details on the coding scheme I refer to Saris and Gallhofer (2007b, 2014).
The first part of this question is reformulated in three steps by contrasting it with the findings from the conceptual discussion, the section on the measurement of solidarity and social trust, as well as the insights from the survey methodology camp.

First, I have introduced changes based on the conceptual discussion. As mentioned in the section on social trust, the success of the social trust research lies not only in the wide acceptance of a standardized question—also described by scholars as the ‘trust question’—but also that the term ‘to trust’ appears in both the question and the answer scale. Therefore, I argue that an equivalent term describing the solidarity practice in form of ‘to show solidarity’ should be a part of the new question.

Besides that, I have kept the term ‘in form of financial help’ in the question. This concurs with the prevailing notion from the literature review of public opinion research, where EU solidarity means above all redistribution and financial help (see also the conceptual discussion by Banting and Kymlicka 2017). Bringing all these points together, I introduce the term ‘to show solidarity in the form of financial help’ in both the question and the response scale.

Second, I have removed the term ‘in times of crisis’ because of academic findings and political developments. Ciornei and Recchi (2017) argue that solidarity should not be measured in times of crises only, but instead defined as burden-sharing. Further, Wallaschek (2019, p. 261) argues that support for solidarity might be different in situations of serious crisis than during normal times. This decision is strengthened by the recent political discussion around the NGEU recovery effort, where a possible introduction of a common debt can make fiscal solidarity in the EU permanent. With that, the solidarity measured is based on self-interest of a group of people (EU), and not on the altruistic version of solidarity in times of crisis.

Third, when contrasting this question with the findings from the survey methodology, I can also address other shortcomings. As argued by Saris et al. (2010), the Agree/Disagree (A/D) rating scales are hugely popular in the social sciences; however, answers to this rating scale tend to be of low quality. Therefore, the introduction text ‘To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement’ should be removed. The new question instead should start with the term ‘generally speaking’—taken from the standardized social trust question template—which keeps the question broad and generic, allowing for its generalization. Besides that, the term ‘it is desirable’ is problematic because ‘social desirability’ is considered a major source of response bias in survey research (DeMaio 1984). The question can be improved by asking the respondent directly: ‘Do you think that…?’ Further, the phrase ‘economic and financial difficulties’ makes the question double-barreled and should be avoided in case respondents agree or disagree with only half of the question (Saris and Gallhofer 2007a, p. 65). Here, I suggest using only one term, and have selected ‘economic difficulties’ which has been already asked in former Eurobarometer questions. With all these changes considered, the following question proposed is:

Generally speaking, do you think that (OUR COUNTRY) should show solidarity in the form of financial help to another EU Member State facing severe economic difficulties?
Considering the response scale, here I also have built on the social trust research by suggesting the use of the 11-point answer scale of the trust question from the ESS. Thus, a survey participant would respond to the new fiscal solidarity question, by using the following response scale:

Please indicate on a scale from 0 to 10 if (OUR COUNTRY) should show solidarity in the form of financial help, where ‘0’ means ‘(OUR COUNTRY) should not show solidarity in the form of financial help’ and ‘10’ means ‘(OUR COUNTRY) should show solidarity in the form of financial help.

To test the quality of the proposed solidarity question and its answer scale, I have used the SQP, which revealed a quality prediction of 0.708, which in this case was calculated by the factor reliability of 0.766 multiplied by the factor validity 0.925. This quality prediction means that close to 70 percent of the variance in the observed variable comes from the variable that it should measure. It also means that close to 30 percent of the variance is an error. With that, the quality of the question is superior to the quality of the ESS social trust question, which has the quality of 0.687 (see Annex 2).

Discussion

The approach presented here contributes to the recently growing interest in the empirical dimension of solidarity and proposes a new solidarity question for measuring fiscal solidarity existent in the EU. While the focus of this article is on the theoretical discussion, I hope that future research will help to evaluate if this question indeed captures fiscal solidarity. That could be done by a pre-test in the form of cognitive interviewing, where people could freely associate their thoughts when they hear this question. The next step could be fielding in the form of a large-N survey, where it could be tested whether the question succeeds in discriminating between what is then assumed to be measuring solidarity.

If once approved, would the Eurobarometer be an adequate place to position this question and make it permanent? Despite the few exceptions examined in this article, the Eurobarometer surveys widely abstain from questions on redistribution within the EU (see also Haverland et al. 2018). Nonetheless, recent academic research argues that there is growing support for solidarity in the EU and maybe the EU’s cautious approach should be revised.

There is a great potential for a theoretical discussion on other questions, for example, a question on transnational solidarity or an additional question about support for the widening of future solidarity practices. Further, a question on refugee solidarity could be considered. These could be complemented by ad hoc surveys in cases of an EU crisis when necessary.

Future research could also focus on the development of an experimental approach, scarcely used in EU research (Kuhn et al. 2018). It could examine if it

---

8 An exact codification of this question in the Survey Quality Predictor can be found in Annex 2.
would be viable to measure solidarity by developing new lab experiments following the approach of trust and trust-games or to combine the experimental method with both a sample from the general population and the survey method itself (Ermisch et al. 2006).

Annex 1

See Fig. 1.

Here $F$ is the construct or the variable of interest (here Solidarity), $M$ is the reaction of the respondent to the method (here 11—point scale), $T$ is the True Score, and $Y$ is the observed response or variable. The validity coefficient ($v$) describes the effect of the construct on the True Score, $\mu$ is the method effect on the True Score, the reliability coefficient ($r$) is the effect of the True Score on the observed variable ($Y$), and $e'$ is the random error. For further specification of the model I refer to Saris and Andrews (1991).

Annex 2

Question on Fiscal Solidarity in the EU

This question can be found at the SQP website under the link: http://sqp.upf.edu/loadui/#questionPrediction/93595

The exact Quality Prediction reads as follows:

- Reliability = $1 - \text{random error}$.
  - $r^2 = 0.766$.
- Validity = $1 - \text{method effect}$.
  - $v^2 = 0.925$.
- Quality = reliability ($r^2$) x validity ($v^2$).
  - $q^2 = 0.708$.

ESS Social Trust Question

The ESS Social Trust question can be found under the link: http://sqp.upf.edu/loadui/#questionPrediction/1084/29

- Reliability = $1 - \text{random error}$.
  - $r^2 = 0.718$.
- Validity = $1 - \text{method effect}$.
  - $v^2 = 0.957$.
- Quality = reliability ($r^2$) x validity ($v^2$).
  - $q^2 = 0.687$. 
Acknowledgements  I would like to thank the editors of this special issue on European Solidarity, Irina Ciornei and Malcolm Ross, for inviting me to the workshop at the University of Bern. Besides that, I would like to thank Wiebke Weber, André Pirralha, and Josep Maria Comellas from the Research and Expertise Centre for Survey Methodology (RECSM), but also Jordi Mas, Lewin Schmitt, and Michalina Preisner for valuable scientific advice. I would also like to thank Will Kymlicka for the incentive to start this research.

Declarations

Conflict of interest  I declare that no conflict of interest exists.

References

Abela, A. 2004. Solidarity and Religion in the European Union: A Comparative Sociological Perspective. In The Value(s) of a Constitution for Europe, ed. P. Xuereb, 71–101. Malta: University of Malta European Documentation and Research Centre.

Almond, G.A., and S. Verba. 1963. The Civic Culture. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Banting, K., and W. Kymlicka. 2017. Introduction. In The Strains of Commitment: The Political Sources of Solidarity in Diverse Societies, ed. K. Banting and W. Kymlicka, 1–58. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Baumann, Z. 2013. A Word in Search of Flash, Eurozine, 8 May 2013. https://www.eurozine.com/solidarity-a-word-in-search-of-flesh/. Accessed 19 August 2020.

Berman, Y. and D. Phillips. 2004. Indicators for Social Cohesion. Paper submitted to the European Network on Indicators of Social Quality of the European Foundation on Social Quality, Amsterdam. June 2004. https://www.socialquality.org/wp-content/uploads/import/2014/10/Indicators-June-2004.pdf

Bieler, A., and R. Erne. 2015. Transnational Solidarity? The European Working Class in the Eurozone Crisis. In Transforming Classes: Socialist Register, ed. L. Panitch and G. Albo, 154–178. London: Merlin Press.

Börner, S. 2013. Belonging, Solidarity and Expansion in Social Policy. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bremer, B., P. Genschel, and M. Jachtenfuchs. 2020. Juncker’s Curse? Identity, Interest and Public Support for the Integration of Core State Powers. JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies 58 (1): 56–75.

Ciornei, I., and E. Recchi. 2017. At the Source of European Solidarity: Assessing the Effects of Cross-Border Practices and Political Attitudes. JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies 55 (3): 468–485.

Closa, C., and A. Maatsch. 2014. In a Spirit of Solidarity? Justifying the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) in National Parliamentary Debates. JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies 52 (4): 826–842.

Converse, J.M., and S. Presser. 1986. Survey Questions: Handcrafting the Standardized Questionnaire. Beverly Hills: SAGE.

Daniele, G., and B. Geys. 2015. Public Support for European Fiscal Integration in Times of Crisis. JEPP: Journal of European Public Policy 22 (5): 650–670.

DeCastellarnau, A. 2018. A Classification of Response Scale Characteristics that Affect Data Quality: A Literature Review. Quality & Quantity 52 (4): 1523–1559.

Delanty, G. 2008. Fear of Others: Social Exclusion and the European Crisis of Solidarity. Social Policy & Administration 42 (6): 676–690.

Delhey, J., K. Newton, and C. Welzel. 2011. How General is Trust in ‘Most People’? Solving the Radius of Trust Problem. American Sociological Review 76 (5): 786–807.

Della Porta, D. 2018. Solidarity Mobilizations in the ‘Refugee Crisis.’ London: Macmillan Publishers Limited.

De Maio, T. 1984. Social Desirability and Survey Measurement: A Review. In Surveying Subjective Phe-nomena, ed. C.F. Turner and E. Martin, 257–282. New York: Sage.
Measuring solidarity: towards a survey question on fiscal...

De Schutter, H. 2017. The Solidarity Argument for the European Union. In A European Social Union After the Crisis, ed. F. Vandenbroucke, C. Bernard, and G. de Baere, 68–91. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Díez Medrano, J., I. Ciornei, and F. Apaydin. 2019. Explaining Supranational Solidarity. In Everyday Europe. Social Transnationalism in an Unsettled Continent, ed. E. Recchi, et al., 137–168. Bristol: Policy Press.

Dillman, D.A. 2000. Mail and Internet Surveys. The Tailored Design Method. New York: Wiley.

Domurath, I. 2013. The Three Dimensions of Solidarity in the EU Legal Order: Limits of the Judicial and Legal Approach. Journal of European Integration 35 (4): 459–475.

Durkheim, E. 1984. The Division of Labor in Society. New York: Macmillan Publishers Ltd.

Ermisch, J. F. and D. Gambetta. 2006. People’s Trust: The Design Of A Survey-Based Experiment. [online working paper, 2006-34] http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/pubs/workpap/. Accessed 20 July 2020

European Commission. 1973. European Communities Study, No. 0628. https://www.gesis.org/eurobarometer-data-service/survey-series/standard-special-eb/study-overview/eurobarometer-ecs-1973-za-0628-sep-oct-1973/. Accessed 10 October 2019.

European Commission. 1976. Standard Eurobarometer 6 (EB6). https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb6/eb6_en.pdf. Accessed 10 October 2019.

European Commission. 1981. Standard Eurobarometer 15 (EB15). https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb15/eb15_en.pdf. Accessed 13 October 2019.

European Commission. 1986. Standard Eurobarometer 25 (EB25). https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb25/eb25_en.pdf. Accessed 11 October 2019.

European Commission. 1990. Standard Eurobarometer 33 (EB33). https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb33/eb33_en.pdf. Accessed 12 October 2019.

European Commission. 2010. Special Eurobarometer 74.1. (EB74), Europeans and the crisis. https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/topics/eb74parl_en.pdf. Accessed 17 October 2019.

European Commission. 2011. Special Eurobarometer 76.1. (EB76), Crisis. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/2011/décembre/rapport_en.pdf. Accessed 17 October 2019.

European Commission. 2015. State of the Union 2015: Time for Honesty, Unity and Solidarity. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_15_5614. Accessed 28 October 2019.

European Commission. 2018. EU Budget 2014–2020. https://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/biblio/documents/2019/Programmes_performance_overview.pdf. Accessed 1 November 2019.

European Commission. 2020a. Coronavirus: European Solidarity in action. https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response/coronavirus-european-solidarity-action_en. Accessed 1 September 2020.

European Commission. 2020b. Europe: The solidarity leap. 9. September 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/breton/announcements/europe-solidarity-leap_en. Accessed 15 September 2020.

European Council. 2020. Special European Council, 17–21 July 2020. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2020/07/17-21/. Accessed 25 August 2020.

European Election Study. 2014. http://europeanelectionstudies.net/european-election-studies/ees-2014-study. Accessed 22 October 2019.

European Social Survey. 2016. Round 8. https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/data/download.html?r=8. Accessed 22 October 2019.

European Union. 2008a. Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union, 13 December 2007, 2008/C 115/01. https://www.refworld.org/docid/4b179f222.html. Accessed 3 November 2019.

European Union. 2008b. Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, 13 December 2007, 2008/C 115/01. https://www.refworld.org/docid/4b17a07e2.html. Accessed 3 November 2019.

European Value Survey. 1999. [Survey] 1999. https://europeanevaluuestudy.eu/methodology-data-documentation/previous-surveys-1981-2008/survey-1999/. Accessed 3 November 2019.

Ferrera, M., and C. Burelli. 2019. Cross-National Solidarity and Political Sustainability in the EU after the Crisis. JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies 57 (1): 94–110.

Gensche1, P. and A. Hemerijck. 2018. Solidarity in Europe. European University Institute, Policy Brief No.1, pp. 1–8.
GESIS. 2020. Eurobarometer Data Service, Trust in People from Other Countries. https://www.gesis.org/eurobarometer-data-service/search-data-access/eb-trends-trend-files/list-of-trends/trust-in-people%2810%29. Accessed 12 October 2019.

Gerhards, J., H. Lengfeld, Z. Ignácz, F.K. Kley, and M. Priem. 2019. European Solidarity in Times of Crisis: Insights from a Thirteen-Country Survey. London: Routledge.

Grimmel, A. 2020. ‘Le Grand absent Européen’. Solidarity in the Politics of European Integration. Acta Politica 5: 1–19.

Grimmel, A. 2017. Solidarity in the European Union: Fundamental Value or “Empty Signifier.” In Solidarity in the European Union, ed. A. Grimmel and S.M. Giang, 161–175. New York City: Springer International Publishing.

Habermas, J. 2013. Democracy, Solidarity and the European Crisis. In Roadmap to a Social Europe: Social Europe Report, ed. A.M. Grozelier, B. Hacker, W. Kowalsky, J. Machnig, H. Meyer, and B. Unger, 4–13. London: Social Europe Ltd.

Halman, L. 2001. The European Values Study: A Third Wave. Source Book of the 1999/2000 European Values Study Surveys. Tilburg: EVS, WORC.

Haverland, M., M. De Ruiter, and S. Van de Walle. 2018. Agenda-Setting by the European Commission Seeking Public Opinion? JEPP: Journal of European Public Policy 25 (3): 327–345.

Hechter, M. 1988. Principles of Group Solidarity. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hox, J.J. 1997. From Theoretical Concept to Survey Question. In Survey Measurement and Process Quality, ed. L.E. Lyberg, P. Bieme, M. Collins, E.D. de Leeuw, C. Dippo, N. Schwartz, et al., 47–69. New York: Wiley.

Kankaraš, M., and G. Moors. 2009. Measurement Equivalence in Solidarity Attitudes in Europe: Insights from a Multiple-Group Latent-Class Factor Approach. International Sociology 24 (4): 557–579.

Kleider, H., and F. Stoeckel. 2019. The Politics of International Redistribution: Explaining Public Support for Fiscal Transfers in the EU. European Journal of Political Research 58 (1): 4–29.

Knoht, M., and A. Tews. 2017. European Solidarity and its Limits: Insights from Current Political Challenges. In Solidarity in the European Union, ed. A. Grimmel and S.M. Giang, 47–64. New York City: Springer International Publishing.

Kolers, A. 2016. A Moral Theory of Solidarity. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kontochristou, M. 2014. Expressions of Solidarity in the European Union: The Case of Greece. Journal of Regional & Socio-Economic Issues 4 (3): 79–93.

Kuhn, T., H. Solaz, and E.J. van Elsas. 2018. Practising What You Preach: How Cosmopolitanism Promotes Willingness to Redistribute across the European Union. JEPP: Journal of European Public Policy 25 (12): 1759–1778.

Lahusen, C., and M. Grasso. 2018. Solidarity in Europe: A Comparative Assessment and Discussion. In Solidarity in Europe. Citizens’ Responses in Times of Crisis, ed. C. Lahusen and M. Grasso, 253–281. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

La Repubblica. 2020. La brutta Europa. March 27th, p. 1.

Lengfeld, H., S. Schmidt, and J. Häuberer. 2015. Is There a European Solidarity? Attitudes Towards Fiscal Assistance for Debt-Ridden European Union Member States. SSRN Electronic Journal 31 (67): 1–31.

Martinsen, D.S., and H. Vollaard. 2014. Implementing Social Europe in Times of Crises: Re-established Boundaries of Welfare? West European Politics 37 (4): 677–692.

Miller, D. 2017. Solidarity and its Sources. In The Strains of Commitment. The Political Sources of Solidarity in Diverse Societies, ed. K. Banting and W. Kymlicka, 61–89. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Newton, K. 2001. Trust, Social Capital, Civil Society, Democracy. International Political Science Review 22 (2): 201–214.

Niznik, J. 2011. The Concept of Solidarity in the European Integration Discourse. In Reinventing Social Solidarity Across Europe, ed. M. Ellison, 17–27. Bristol: Policy Press.

O’Neill, O. 1996. Towards Justice and Virtue. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Paskov, M., and C. Dewilde. 2012. Income Inequality and Solidarity in Europe. Research in Social Stratification and Mobility 30 (4): 415–432.

Presser, S., and H. Schuman. 1996. Questions and Answers in Attitude Surveys: Experiments on Question Form, Wording, and Context. London: SAGE.

Reinl, A.K. 2020. Euroscepticism in Times of European Crises: The Role of Solidarity. In Anti-Europeanism. Critical Perspectives Towards The European Union, ed. M. Baldassari, E. Castelli, M. Truffelli, and G. Vezzani, 95–113. Cham: Springer.
Revilla, M., D. Zavala-Rojas, and W.E. Saris. 2016. Creating a Good Question: How to Use Cumulative Experience. In The SAGE Handbook of Survey Methodology, ed. C. Wolf, S. Joye, T.W. Smith, and Y. Fu, 236–254. London: SAGE.

Risse, T. 2010. A Community of Europeans? Transnational Identities and Public Spheres. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Rorty, R. 1989. Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rosenberg, M. 1956. Misanthropy and Political Ideology. American Sociological Review 21 (6): 690–695.

Ross, M. 2020. Transnational Solidarity – A Transformative Narrative for the EU and Its Citizens? Acta Politica 106: 1–22.

Rothstein, B. 2017. Solidarity, Diversity and the Quality of Government. In The Strains of Commitment. The Political Sources of Solidarity in Diverse Societies, ed. K. Banting and W. Kymlicka, 300–326. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sangiovanni, A. 2013. Solidarity in the European Union. Oxford Journal of Legal Studies 33 (2): 213–241.

Saris, W.E., and F.M. Andrews. 1991. Evaluation of Measurement Instruments Using a Structural Modeling Approach. In Measurement Errors in Surveys, ed. P.P. Biemer, R.M. Groves, N.A. Lyberg, L.E. Mathiowetz, and S. Sudman, 575–597. Hoboken: Wiley.

Saris, W.E., and I. Gallhofer. 2014. Design, Evaluation, and Analysis of Questionnaires for Survey Research. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Signorelli, S. 2012. The EU and Public Opinions: A Love-Hate Relationship? Jacques Delors Institute: Studies & Reports, November 2012, online version, https://www.europe-solidarity.eu/documents/ES_eupublicopinioni-nov12.pdf. Accessed 15 September 2020.

Smyth, J.D. 2016. Designing Questions and Questionnaires. In The SAGE Handbook of Survey Methodology, ed. C. Wolf, S. Joye, T.W. Smith, and Y. Fu, 218–235. London: SAGE.

Soler, M. et al. 2018. SOLIDUS Research Report on Indicators’ Kit for Social Citizenship. http://solidush2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Deliverable-8.2-Research-Report-1.pdf Accessed 15 September 2020.

Sudman, S., and N.M. Bradburn. 1982. Asking Questions: A Practical Guide to Questionnaire Design. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Survey Quality Predictor. 2.1. 2015. http://sqp.upf.edu/ Accessed 29 August 2020.

Syts, A. 2016. EU Leaders sign letter objecting to Nord Stream-2 gas link. Reuters [online] https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-eu-energy-nordstream-idUKKCN0W1IYV. Accessed 20 August 2020.

Uslaner, E. 2002. The Moral Foundation of Trust. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wallaschek, S. 2018. The Discursive Construction of Solidarity: Analysing Public Claims in Europe’s Migration Crisis. Political Studies 68 (1): 74–92.

Wallaschek, S. 2019. Solidarity in Europe in Times of Crisis. Journal of European Integration 41 (2): 257–263.

Weber, M. 1978. Economy and Society I and II. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Verhaegen, S. 2018. What to expect from European Identity? Explaining Support for Solidarity in Times of Crisis. Comparative European Politics 16 (5): 871–904.

Visegrád Group. 2016. Joint Statement of Heads of Governments of the V4 Countries. Bratislava, 16 September 2016. https://www.euractiv.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/09/Bratislava-V4-Joint-Statement-final.docx.pdf Accessed 25 August 2020.
Zerka, P. 2020. The frugal blues: An underappreciated threat to the European project, European Council on Foreign Relations. https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_the_frugal_blues_an_underappreciated_threat_to_the_european_proj Accessed 15 September 2020.

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Adam Holesch is a post-doctoral fellow at the Institut Barcelona d’Estudis Internacionals (IBEI) and an Adjunct Professor at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra. He is also the Project Manager of the H2020 – Project GLOBE – “Global Governance and the European Union: Future Trends and Scenarios”. His research follows an interdisciplinary approach mixing insights from Political Theory, Comparative Politics and Political Economy, studying about all questions of nationalism, regionalism, solidarity and the European Union. He has published in Politics, Territory and Governance, East European Politics and edited volumes with Routledge and Nomos. He has also written two books on German–Polish relations.