

# What to expect from European identity? Explaining support for solidarity in times of crisis

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# What to expect from European identity? Explaining support for solidarity in times of crisis

Soetkin Verhaegen<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract** Having a European identity is expected to influence citizens' attitudes and behaviour towards the EU community. European identity is indeed positively related to support for EU integration, but are citizens with a stronger European identity also willing to pay a price for this identification, and to what extent? The contribution provides an answer to these questions by performing multilevel analyses on the EES 2014 data. The analyses show that citizens with a stronger European identity are more supportive of financial solidarity with member states in economic crisis. This explanation for support for solidarity is stronger than explanations provided by self-interest and economic ideological position. Citizens are thus willing to pay a price for their European identity. However, one can only expect so much from European identity as significant interaction effects show that the positive relationship between European identity and support for solidarity is mitigated by experiencing economic hardship.

**Keywords** European identity · solidarity · self-interest · economic ideological position · euro crisis

## Introduction

European identity takes an important place in the literature on the relationship between citizens and EU institutions (Kaina and Karolewski 2009). Citizens with a stronger European identity are expected to be more likely to participate in the EU, to have more positive attitudes about EU integration and to support solidarity in the EU community (Beetham and Lord 1998; Hix 2008; van Spanje and de Vreese

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2011; Zürn 2000). While studies provided an elaborate picture about how European identity is developed among citizens, little is known about what we can actually expect from citizens with a European identity (Fligstein 2008; Kaina and Karolewski 2009; Quintelier et al. 2014; Verhaegen and Hooghe 2015). This contribution partly fills this gap by showing how and to what extent European identity is related to support for solidarity in the EU.

In the wake of the euro crisis, solidarity became an increasingly salient topic in the EU as the crisis posed a challenging dilemma: Should member states in economic crisis get help from the other EU members? This discussion did not remain at the level of EU institutions and member state negotiations, but spread to public opinion. The euro crisis made clear to citizens that EU cooperation could also have redistributive consequences (Baden and Springer 2014; Cramme and Hobolt 2015). In member states that contributed to bailout packages and other measures, for instance, citizens often opposed these measures as—at least in the short run—they involve a cost (Auer 2014). In addition to the mobilization of public opinion, the observation that this discussion was salient all over the EU resulted in the conclusion that the euro crisis is the most clearly EU-wide politicizing event to date (Grande and Hutter 2016; Grande and Kriesi 2015; Hobolt and Wratil 2015). These dynamics resulted in an evident illustration of the shift from a permissive consensus to a constraining dissensus (Hooghe and Marks 2009). Public opinion constrained policy-makers' freedom to deal with the situation through manifestations and electoral choices (Auer 2014). Hence, it is important to understand why some citizens are more supportive of solidarity between EU member states than others.

Here, the lack of European identity is often coined as a reason for opposition to national contributions to EU policy aiming at helping member states in economic crisis. Critics of the debate that is framed in terms of costs and benefits argue that reluctance to show solidarity within the EU community could be overcome if citizens would have a stronger European identity (Kaina and Karolewski 2009; Risse 2014). From this perspective, opposition against solidarity reflects egocentrism and national identity that results in stereotypical ideas about an opposition between *us*, responsible and hardworking people against *them*, lazy over-spenders (Reese and Lauenstein 2014). A feeling of community within the EU, to the contrary, would make citizens more willing to show solidarity with fellow EU members that are in economic crisis.

Hence, the current contribution uses the background of the euro crisis to explore the relationship between European identity and solidarity in the EU, and provides an answer to Thomas Risse's question: 'Are citizens prepared to pay a price for their identification with Europe and the EU?' (Risse 2014, p. 1209). In other words, is European identity only superficial and overshadowed by other attitudes and attachments, or could it really have an impact on citizens' attitudes and behaviour towards the EU community?

More precisely, it is the aim of the current contribution to explore whether and how European identity is related to support for solidarity from one's own member state to other member states in economic and financial crisis. It is important to note here that while a number of policy measures have been developed throughout the euro crisis, such as bailout loans, the contribution seeks to explain support for and



opposition against the general idea of solidarity, rather than specific policies. Furthermore, in order to test the importance of such a relationship between European identity and support for solidarity between EU member states, this relationship is set off against more traditional explanations for financial solidarity in the context of the EU. First, citizens might oppose solidarity with other EU member states in crisis for reasons of self-interest. Second, ideological economic ideological positioning is expected to explain support for solidarity. By comparing the relative importance of these explanations, and by testing the potential moderating relationship between European identity and self-interest as an explanation for support for solidarity, this contribution shows whether and to what extent citizens with a stronger European identity are more likely to support solidarity of their own member state with member states in economic and financial crisis.

## Theoretical framework

### Identity and solidarity

The literature on social psychology explains the relationship between the concepts identity and solidarity as follows: ‘When individuals identify with a relevant group, they perceive themselves as part of a larger social unit. This redefinition of the self as a group member results in behaviour that serves the group’s interest and maintains the group’s welfare’ (Reese and Lauenstein 2014, p. 164). Hence, people who identify with the group are expected to be willing to invest in the well-being of the group as a whole, so to show solidarity (Drury et al. 2016). This investment can imply behaviour, or approval of behaviour towards the group and its members in need of support (de Beer 2009). This helps us understand why Zürn (2000) argues that ‘a collective sense of identity provides the basis for (re)-distributive processes within a political community’ (p. 199). In this account, he defines solidarity as ‘the willingness of individuals to give up things they value for the sake of the collectivity, and the acceptance of redistributive policies is the best indicator for this’ (Zürn 2000, p. 199).

Also in the EU literature, expectations of a link between European identity and solidarity towards the EU community are prominent. European identity is generally defined as that aspect of one’s social identity that refers to identification as part of the group of EU citizens (Herrmann and Brewer 2004; Risse 2010). An individual who is a member of the group of EU citizens can be cognitively aware of this and attach positive emotional value to this group membership. In that case, the individual has a European identity. This implies that for this individual being a member of the group of EU citizens is perceived as part of the self of this individual. More precisely, processes of self-stereotyping take place when one identifies as a member of a group. These processes stimulate the internalization of the norms, values, goals and beliefs of the social group one identifies with; the individual perceives the characteristics of this group as part of who (s)he is and perceives a common fate (Ashford and Mael 1989; Turner 1982). This connection between the self and the group of EU citizens makes this group membership a point of reference to interpret the surrounding world, social and physical, and to take a position in



social relationships (Cinnirella 1996; Tajfel 1981). Moreover, in the field of social identity theory, it is expected that these (perceived to be) shared norms, goals, values, beliefs and fate result in social cohesion and behaviour towards the group such as solidarity (Drury et al. 2016; Turner 1982).

Hence, having a European identity is expected to encourage EU citizens to act as a group member, based on the goals and needs of the group instead of based on purely individual goals and needs (Klandermans 2014; Turner 1982). Therefore, a European identity is expected to result in higher levels of support for common EU responses in times of stress, such as during the euro crisis (Ciornei and Recchi 2017; Kaina and Karolewski 2009). Perceiving a common fate is expected to encourage individuals' willingness to show solidarity with other members of the group in order to reach shared goals. Some even see this as a necessity and argue that the more a polity engages in redistributive policy—which would be the result of financially helping a part of the community as an act of solidarity, the more it needs a sense of community and loyalty among the members of this political group (Kymlicka 2001, p. 226; Risse 2014). Without such a feeling of community, it is argued, this redistribution would not be perceived as democratically legitimate (Scharpf 2015, p. 43). In sum, these literatures on (European) identity and solidarity propose that *citizens with a stronger European identity are more likely to support acts of solidarity with other EU member states (H1)*.

To investigate the importance of the role of European identity as an explanation for support for EU solidarity, this explanation is set off and compared to more traditional rational and ideological explanations for why some citizens would be more likely than others to support helping EU member states in crisis. Economic self-interest provides a rational explanation for opposition to solidarity. Attitudes about redistribution and state intervention in the economy positioning provide an ideological explanation for support for solidarity.

### Self-interest

A rational approach to solidarity comprises utilitarian considerations based on economic self-interest.<sup>1</sup> From this point of view, citizens who perceive helping other member states as threatening their own economic situation are expected to be less likely to support solidarity (Hobolt and Wratil 2015; Hooghe and Marks 2005). Individuals' economic situation is influenced by their own employment and income, but also by the economy they live in. Hence, both egocentric and sociotropic economic rationales play a role when evaluating EU cooperation (Hooghe and

<sup>1</sup> This touches upon one of the pressing issues in the study of solidarity: Can helping community members based on rationality be regarded as solidarity (Smith and Sorrell 2014)? For instance, Archer (2013) argues that solidarity should entail 'reciprocity, not exchange, coercion, or strategic concession of one to the other' (Archer 2013: 5). This view excludes solidarity based on self-interest. Other scholars do leave room for rational motives to showing solidarity. Hechter (1988), for instance, argues that the more individuals have invested in the group, the more they have to gain from showing solidarity to the group to safeguard their own interests. In his view, even investments in the group that are inspired by self-interest can be regarded as solidarity. However, in both cases it is recognized that self-interest can lead to behaviour that serves the group's interest and maintains the group's welfare, as studied in this contribution, so I leave it to the reader to take a stance in this debate.



Marks 2005; Verhaegen et al. 2014). Citizens in a weak economic situation are expected to be less supportive of solidarity with a member state that is in economic crisis because they are more likely to depend on welfare expenditures of their own country (Kuhn and Stoeckel 2014). As investing in rescuing another country's economy costs money to the state, showing solidarity potentially weakens the own national economy and might lead to a decrease in social expenditure, at the cost of citizens who depend on this. In the particular case of bailouts, this concern about the repercussions of contributing to a bailout is observed in the experiment of Bechtel et al. (2014). In line with this literature, it is expected that citizens who are in an economically worse situation, or who perceive their economic situation as such, are less likely to support solidarity of their member state to member states in an economic crisis.

Against the background of the euro crisis, perceptions of being in an economically worse situation and the fear to get into such a situation get specific attention in the study of Simpson and Loveless (2016). The authors show that citizens who perceive their situation as more precarious and feel economically insecure are less supportive of the current state of EU integration, but do support future EU integration. Translated to the current study on EU solidarity, this implies that citizens who have a negative perception about the economic evolution of their own household or their country will support policy-making that makes it possible to receive financial help, as such deeper EU integration could support them in the future. As the current contribution specifically studies support for *showing* solidarity by helping other countries, and not support for receiving such help (this is also reflected in the particular survey question asked), however, the rationale of economic self-interest suggests that respondents with a more negative perception about the economic evolution of their household and country will be less supportive of EU solidarity.

Utilitarian considerations of self-interest are not only expected to explain differences between individuals in support for EU solidarity, they could also explain differences in average support for solidarity between the member states (Kleider and Stoeckel 2016). First, a number of member states already face a particularly severe sovereign debt and banking crisis. For citizens of these 'debtor states', the above-mentioned self-interest mechanism could be transferred to the country level. When one's country already needs help, citizens might find it a bad idea if their own country would in turn help others as the money is needed for their own economy. Here as well, it is important to note that the current study specifically studies support for showing solidarity by helping other countries, and not support for receiving such help. Hence, average levels of support for solidarity are expected to be weaker in debtor states.<sup>2</sup>

Second, helping countries in economic crisis could also be in the own interest of Eurozone members. There is a widespread fear that when a Eurozone member goes

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that having received help from other EU member states could also induce a sense of reciprocity. This mechanism opposes the logic of economic self-interest, as this would strengthen citizens' sense of solidarity when they have particularly suffered from an economic crisis. Such a sense of reciprocity could be the result of feelings of indebtedness towards those who reached out in difficult times, but it could also be linked to the understanding of solidarity in the context of a shared feeling of belonging to a community whose members look out for one another.



bankrupt, this would be destructive for the rest of the Eurozone (Bechtel et al. 2014). German Chancellor Merkel also used this argument when she framed the Greek bailout as a necessity to save the EU. She stated that ‘If the euro fails, Europe fails’ (Bundesregierung 2011). From this perspective, helping a member state not to go bankrupt implies helping one’s own economic situation by (trying to) restoring peace on the financial markets for the entire Eurozone. The existence of this relationship between exposure to risks of default of debtor states and public support for solidarity with member states in economic crisis is confirmed in an analysis in eight West-European member states (Beramendi and Stegmueller 2016). Moreover, this mechanism is in line with Hechter’s (1988) rational perspective on solidarity. The author states that the more one has invested in a group, the more solidarity one is prepared to show as one’s own situation depends on the situation of the group. Hence, it is expected that citizens who live in a Eurozone country are more likely to support solidarity between EU member states.<sup>3</sup>

## Ideology

Another source for citizens’ support for solidarity are citizens’ general attitudes about redistribution and solidarity. As the euro crisis has shown that EU integration can have redistributive consequences, the potential for traditional economic left–right discussions structuring the debate on the EU increased (Cramme and Hobolt 2015). These debates could take place among politicians, but also among the wider public. Hence, a citizens’ economic ideological position can be expected to have an impact on their attitudes about solidarity on the EU-level. Specifically, it is expected that citizens who are more supportive of government intervention and redistribution in general (on the economic left) are more supportive of solidarity with member states in economic crisis than rightist citizens (Kleider and Stoeckel 2016). Supporters of the right, to the contrary, are more likely to oppose interventions in the economy such as financially supporting a member state in economic crisis because they support the undisturbed operation of the free market. This would be in line with the observation of Bansak et al. (2016) that leftist respondents in France, Italy, Spain and the UK are more likely to oppose a Grexit (i.e. Greece leaving the Eurozone) because they perceive the political intervention to prevent a Grexit as the necessary means to correct a market failure.

In sum, to evaluate the importance of the relationship (if any) between European identity and support for EU solidarity it will first be tested whether this relationship can be observed when alternative explanations (self-interest and economic ideology) are taken into account as well. Second, the strength of these relationships

<sup>3</sup> Apart from this self-interest mechanism, citizens living in the Eurozone are also expected to be more likely to support solidarity because they experience deeper integration than other EU member states. First, this results in a stronger habit of cooperation. Second, in this context citizens are more likely to be socialized into identifying as part of the EU community (Verhaegen et al. 2014). Third, Eurozone members bear more responsibility to contribute to financial help. While in the past also non-Eurozone member states contributed to bailouts, a European bailout fund has been created that only includes Eurozone members and the risk of losing money for non-Eurozone members got covered by the ECB. These expectations could influence what citizens think is appropriate for their member state to do.



will be compared. Third, as will be explained below, it will be tested whether European identity mitigates the relationship between self-interest and support for solidarity as a cloak of charity would do, or whether self-interest rather mitigates the relationship between European identity and support for solidarity when citizens suffer from a negative economic situation.

### **European identity as a ‘cloak of charity’**

While citizens are expected to be more supportive of solidarity when they have a stronger European identity, the impact of European identity on citizens’ support for solidarity would be even more substantial if having a stronger European identity would mitigate the negative relationship between self-interest and support for solidarity. Self-interest informs citizens to oppose solidarity when this might be at the expense of their own wealth. As explained above, this leads to the expectation that citizens who perceive their own economic situation or the economic situation of their member state as negative will be less supportive of solidarity with other member states in economic crisis. However, citizens with a European identity might (partially) set aside these concerns. For citizens who identify as part of an EU community, the recipients of EU solidarity are seen as part of the same group. Hence, in this case the sacrifices made when providing financial help are still seen as fleeing to ‘one of us’, rather than to ‘the other’ (Kymlicka 2001). Therefore, this feeling of community is expected to reduce the importance attached to one’s own situation to the benefit of fellow EU community members who experience economic hardship. In this sense, European identity could serve as the glue that keeps the EU together, even in times of stress (Kaina and Karolewski 2009). Citizens with a stronger European identity are expected to be willing to share the little they have with the rest of the group. Following this reasoning, *it is expected that citizens who are in a weak economic situation and have a strong European identity are more likely to support solidarity between EU member states than citizens in a weak economic situation with a weak European identity (H2).*

However, in their study on attitudes about EU integration, Garry and Tilley (2009) make the opposite argument. Rather than expecting that citizens’ exclusive national identity (which the authors define as opposed to a European identity) would moderate the relationship between self-interest and support for EU integration, they argue that the relationship between identity and support for EU integration is moderated by self-interest. These authors showed that respondents who have an exclusive national identity and live in a member state that benefits more from EU integration show less opposition to EU integration than respondents with an exclusive national identity in member states that benefit less from EU integration. The authors conclude that identity-based explanations for attitudes about EU integration and economic utilitarian explanations should be seen as complementary. Even though the current contribution does not deal with support for EU integration in general, but with support for solidarity between EU member states, a similar relationship can be expected. When citizens with a strong European identity experience a negative economic situation, this situation could weaken their urge to help fellow EU member states because they feel that they do not have the means to





help others. *Citizens with a strong European identity are thus expected to be less supportive of solidarity between EU member states when (they perceive that) their economic situation is weak, than citizens with a strong European identity who are in a positive economic situation (H3).*

### **Relationship with previous empirical findings**

So far, a modest, but fast-growing, amount of empirical studies has been published that explain public opinion related to collective responses to the euro crisis. Available studies addressed the expected effectiveness of various types of economic governance (Ciornei and Recchi 2017; Kuhn and Stoeckel 2014; Stoeckel and Kuhn, 2017), beliefs about the effectiveness of Eurobonds (Daniele and Geys 2015) and support for monetary integration (Hobolt 2015; Hobolt and Wratil 2015). The current contribution uses insights from these studies, but one should be cautious about the difference between perceptions of effectiveness of EU economic integration in general, specific EU policies, support for monetary integration and support for solidarity within the EU. First, economic and monetary integration does not necessarily imply solidarity (which includes giving up something valued). For instance, economic and monetary integration could be seen as stimulating trade, which benefits all member states rather than involving a cost for some to the benefit of other EU members. Before the euro crisis, solidarity in the form of bailouts was even prohibited by the Maastricht and Lisbon Treaties, while economic and monetary integration have been core activities in the EU (Hennessy 2013). Hence, explanations for support or opposition towards EU-level solidarity should be different as well. The fact that Daniele and Geys (2015) even use solidarity as an explanation for respondents' expectations about the effectiveness of Eurobonds illustrates this conceptual distinction.

Second, expectations about the effectiveness of particular types of economic and monetary governance can indeed tap into support for these governance proposals (Daniele and Geys 2015; Kuhn and Stoeckel 2014). From a rational view, it can be expected that respondents who think that a policy measure will be effective to tackle the euro crisis or the debt crisis of a country, will support these measures. However, such questions fail to fully tap into evaluations of, and support for, these policy measures based on ideology and identification with the community that is suffering from an economic crisis. Hence, it is self-evident from the nature of these survey questions that rational economic explanations take the lead in these studies. The survey question used by Hobolt and Wratil (2015) did capture support for monetary integration, rather than perceptions of effectiveness. They conclude that while national identity has a persisting negative relationship with support for monetary integration, the explanatory value of utilitarian considerations increases. As mentioned above, however, there still is an important difference between supporting monetary integration and supporting financial solidarity with other member states.

One notable exception that comes closer to support for solidarity is the experiment of Bechtel et al. (2014). This experiment shows that economic utilitarian considerations provide a limited explanation for support for bailouts, and that respondents that support more extreme (both left and right) parties are more



supportive of bailouts. Hence, apart from taking rational explanations in mind, Bechtel et al. (2014) also take ideology into account. However, this study is limited to the German case, specifically studies support for bailouts (which can be seen as solidarity, but also as an investment as it usually includes loans with interests) and the study did not include European identity as an explanation. Moreover, this study shares a limitation that Ciornei and Recchi (2017) also highlight about their own study on the relationship between experience with cross-border interaction and support for EU solidarity (Ciornei and Recchi study support for Eurobonds and the EU helping the poor). These studies use attitudes about specific policy proposals that are clearly connected to the EU as a coordinating body as measures for solidarity. The resulting measures of citizens' attitudes about EU solidarity can therefore be expected to be influenced by their attitudes about EU institutions. To overcome this limitation, the current contribution uses a measure of citizens' support for EU solidarity that does not include this connection (Kleider and Stoeckel 2016; Kuhn et al. forthcoming also use this approach).

While taking these differences in mind, these previous studies on EU economic and financial integration are still highly valuable to build on in the current contribution. These studies have used the literature on international economic relations and trade, and the literature on support for the EU. These perspectives propose utilitarian, ideological and (mostly national) identity-based explanations (e.g. Hobolt and Wratil 2015; Hooghe and Marks 2005). As mentioned above, the current study also includes these rationales, but further adds the role of European identification to the analysis. It does so in an empirically and theoretically more elaborate way than previous studies (Ciornei and Recchi 2017; Stoeckel and Kuhn 2017).

In sum, the current contribution contributes to the literature by specifically studying support for solidarity between EU member states in the context of the euro crisis, it demonstrates both the importance and limitations of European identity and it does so taking all 28 EU member states into account. In the next sections, it will be tested whether and how European identity is related to support for solidarity from one's own member state to other member states in economic and financial crisis.

## Data and methods

The data of the European Election Study (EES) 2014 Voter Study allow for testing the hypotheses among a representative sample of respondents residing in the 28 EU member states (Popa et al. 2015; Schmitt et al. 2015). In the month following the 2014 European Parliament elections, citizens of voting age were surveyed about their preferences and attitudes concerning European Parliament elections, the EU and politics more generally. Participants were 18 years and over in all member states, except for Austria where citizens can vote from 16 years old.<sup>4</sup> A multistage random sample was drawn, and the data were collected using computer-assisted personal interviews.

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<sup>4</sup> As all respondents that were 16 or 17 years old lived in the same country, the analyses were rerun without these respondents. This did not substantively alter the results of the analyses.



As the respondents are clustered in member states, and as we expect differences between the member states due to different experiences during the euro crisis on the one hand, and between citizens within and across member states on the other, a two-level multilevel regression model is built with random intercepts (Hox 2010). In

**Table 1** Explaining support for solidarity between EU member states

	Null-model (B)	Full model (B)	Standardized full model ( $\beta$ )
<i>Individual level</i>			
European identity		0.117 (0.010)***	0.102 (0.009)***
National identity		-0.079 (0.010)***	-0.054 (0.007)***
Decreased income		-0.049 (0.013)***	-0.049 (0.013)***
Negative perception economic evolution		-0.073 (0.009)***	-0.064 (0.007)***
Support redistribution within own country		0.005 (0.002)*	0.013 (0.006)*
Support increased tax for public services		0.027 (0.002)***	0.074 (0.007)***
Attitudes and perceptions EU institutions		0.150 (0.013)***	0.112 (0.010)***
Attitudes and perceptions national institutions		0.129 (0.012)***	0.103 (0.010)***
EU is responsible for economy		0.004 (0.003)	0.011 (0.007)
Country is responsible for economy		0.004 (0.003)	0.010 (0.007)
<i>Education level (ref. education till age 16–19)</i>			
No education		0.123 (0.071)	0.123 (0.071)
Education till age 15		-0.083 (0.019)***	-0.083 (0.020)***
Education till over age 20		0.098 (0.015)***	0.098 (0.015)***
Still student		0.041 (0.032)	0.041 (0.032)
Age		0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Female		-0.041 (0.012)**	-0.041 (0.012)**
<i>Support for EU membership (ref. neither good nor bad)</i>			
Good		0.167 (0.016)***	0.167 (0.016)***
Bad		-0.187 (0.021)***	-0.187 (0.021)***
<i>Country level</i>			
Eurozone		-0.071 (0.075)	-0.071 (0.075)
Debtor states		-0.025 (0.086)	-0.025 (0.086)
Intercept	2.496 (0.052)***	1.726 (0.085)***	2.451 (0.062)***
Variance <sub>Country level</sub>	0.076 (0.020)***	0.029 (0.008)***	0.029 (0.008)***
Variance <sub>Residual</sub>	0.799 (0.008)***	0.656 (0.007)***	0.656 (0.007)***

Reported values are:  $B$  or  $\beta$  with the standard error between parentheses; in the standardized model, all non-binary variables have been standardized (mean = 0, SD = 1); The Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) test shows that the model does not suffer from multicollinearity (the highest VIF-score is 2.45), even though a number of measures such as support for EU membership and European identity are strongly associated (O'Brien 2007); \*  $p < 0.050$ , \*\*  $p < 0.010$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ ;  $N = 18,991$

Data source EES 2014 Voter Study



order to be able to compare the variance structures between models, the data are prepared by list-wise deletion of all cases that have missing values on at least one of the variables included in the full model (the full model is presented in Table 1). This led to a sample of 18,991 respondents. Standardized coefficients and marginal effects are calculated in order to compare the strength of the observed relationships between the different explanatory variables and support for EU solidarity.

## Measurements

### Support for solidarity

Support for solidarity between EU member states is measured with the 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’. Response options ranged from totally agree (1) over agree (2) and disagree (3) to totally disagree (4) and are reversely coded for the analysis. This question refers to solidarity as financially helping a part of the community. The mean score in the sample on this question is 2.510 (SD: 0.935). The share of respondents that agree or totally agree with the statement ranges between 32.8 per cent in Slovakia and 84.9 per cent in Sweden. This question clearly asks about the desirability of financial solidarity from one’s own member state to another member state, as it asks respondents about their agreement to *help* other member states. This is a better question to study solidarity than when respondents would be asked about support for a bailout, for instance, because bailouts can also be seen as a (potentially) profitable investment. Moreover, we can assume that the politicization of the debate about how to react to EU member states in economic crisis made this survey question less abstract and hypothetical than it would have been before the crisis.

While this 4-point Likert scale would call for an ordered logit regression, linear multilevel regression models are included as the main analyses for several reasons. First, linear models allow for the comparison between effect sizes (which is one of the main aims of this study), while this is problematic in ordered logit models (Long 1997; Mood 2010). Second, Norman (2010) has convincingly shown that linear regression and Pearson correlations are robust for the violation of the assumption of linearity when using Likert scales. Third, when comparing the linear models in Table 1 and Table 2 to the ordered logit models included in “Appendix 2”, it is shown that the direction and significance of the explanatory variables and the interaction terms do not change.

### European identity

To test the relationship between European identity and support for solidarity, European identity is measured by two survey items that capture self-placement as a member of the EU community and attachments to this community. As these items strongly correlate ( $r = 0.674$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), a sum scale is made of these items that



**Table 2** Interaction effects between European identity and self-interest

European identity in interaction with	
<i>Individual-level interactions</i>	
Decreased income	-0.049 (0.015)**
Negative perception economic evolution	-0.024 (0.008)**
<i>Cross-level interactions</i>	
Eurozone	0.054 (0.016)**
Debtor states	-0.122 (0.019)***

Reported values are *B* with the standard error between parentheses; \*  $p < 0.050$ , \*\*  $p < 0.010$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ ;  $N = 18,991$

*Data source* EES 2014 Voter Study

ranges from 1 to 4. A higher score on this scale signifies having a stronger European identity. The average European identity score in the EES 2014 Voter Study is 2.915/4 and ranges across member states between 2.29/4 in Greece and 3.49/4 in Luxembourg. The full question wording and descriptive information of all used variables is included in “Appendix 1”.

### Alternative explanations: self-interest and ideology

First, as a measure for egocentric economic self-interest, respondents were asked whether they had experienced a decrease in the income of their family during the two years preceding the survey. A dummy variable indicates whether a respondent experienced a decrease in income (score 1), or not (score 0). Second, respondents were asked about their general perceptions about the evolution of the economy. On the one hand, it is asked whether they think that the current economic situation is better or worse than one year ago. On the other hand, they were asked about their expectations about the evolution in the next 12 months. Both questions ranged on a scale from 1 to 5 between ‘a lot better’ to ‘a lot worse’. A sum scale that ranges from 1 to 5 was made from these two highly correlating ( $r = 0.621, p < 0.001$ ) survey items. A higher score indicates a more negative evaluation. Third, a country-level dummy variable is included that distinguishes between the ‘debtor states’ or ‘GIIPS + Cyprus’<sup>5</sup> in the Eurozone and other member states to distinguish countries that are typically seen as most severely hit by the euro crisis. While this distinction fits the purposes of this study, a replication of the analyses with alternative measures to distinguish between countries that have been more and less hit by the euro crisis are presented in “Appendix 6”. Fourth, a country-level dummy variable is included to distinguish between Eurozone members (code 1) and non-Eurozone members (code 0).

Ideological attitudes about redistribution and solidarity are measured by respondents’ support or opposition towards the redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor within their own country, and towards raising taxes to increase public services (both on a scale from 1 to 11). These questions overcome the

<sup>5</sup> Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Cyprus.



difficulties to interpret what citizens mean when they position themselves on the left–right spectrum (especially in a cross-national perspective), as these questions are more specific (Garry and Tilley 2015; Knutsen 1997). As left–right self-placement is more regularly used in research on public opinion related to economic policy in the EU, though, analyses that use left–right self-placement are still included in “Appendix 7”. This allows readers to compare the results in this contribution to previous work.

### Control variables

The economic situation in EU member states that have been most severely hit by an economic crisis has been pictured in various ways in news media, and users of these media largely share these frames (Baden and Springer 2014). Therefore, studies on the framing of the economic crisis in the EU suggest which responsibility frames citizens could hold. Debts and economic performance have been presented as structural problems causing the crisis, states and the EU have been presented as political causes. Solutions are expected from these political actors as well. It is important to take beliefs and attitudes about the responsible actors for the crisis into account as it is expected that citizens are less likely to support solidarity with a country in economic difficulties when they perceive that member states are responsible for their own situation. When the EU is seen as responsible, EU-wide solidarity might be seen as more appropriate as a sense of shared responsibility for the causes of the crisis could result into a sense of a shared responsibility to deal with the consequences as well. Of course, respondents might also disagree with both statements, as alternative views of the economic crisis are prevalent in public discourse as well (Joris et al. 2014). For instance, the euro crisis is often pictured in media as a war of the EU and its member states against financial markets, or as a disease for which neither the EU, nor the member state in trouble is to blame. Also, many citizens perceive banks as the actor most responsible for the crisis (Hobolt 2015). In the data of the EES 2014 Voter Study, however, respondents mostly view member states as responsible for the economic situation. Hence, two responsibility frames are taken into account: To what extent do citizens perceive the economic situation in a member state as the responsibility of the member state, or of the EU?<sup>6</sup> Responses range between 0 (no responsibility) and 11 (full responsibility).

Not only the economic and financial situation of the whole Eurozone is at risk when one member suffers from severe economic and financial problems, it has also been widely suggested in the public debate that the future of the whole EU could be at stake (Hennessy 2013). Therefore, a control is included for support for EU integration as this could be another reason to be willing to help member states in financial and economic difficulties. Citizens who are more supportive of EU integration might be more likely to accept costly decisions such as showing

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<sup>6</sup> The effect of perceiving banks as responsible for the economic situation has been included in an additional model that can be retrieved from the author. The analysis shows no significant relationship with support for EU solidarity in the full model (Table 1). As including this variable led to a considerable decrease in the sample due to missing values on this item, it is excluded from the final analyses.



solidarity with other member states in order for the euro not to fall and as a (assumed) result the EU not to dissolve. Additionally, support for EU integration is also positively correlated to European identity (Weßels 2007). Respondents were asked whether they find their country's EU membership a good thing, a bad thing or neither good nor bad.

The question measuring support for solidarity concerns solidarity from one's member state to another EU member state. In other words, it questions support for interstate solidarity, arranged on the supranational EU-level. A control is included for attitudes and perceptions<sup>7</sup> about the institutions that organize this transaction, as one could find that member states suffering from economic hardship should be helped out, but still oppose financial transfers due to a lack of confidence in the involved institutions (Hetherington 2005). Citizens with higher levels of trust in and external efficacy<sup>8</sup> related to the EU, to the contrary, are more likely to support the EU, even if they have negative perceptions about the state of the economy (Mcevoy 2016; Muñoz et al. 2011; Rohrschneider 2002). For both the EU and the national institutions, a measure is composed by three highly correlating survey items measuring trust in the respective institutions and two measures for external efficacy, namely having the feeling that citizens' interests and concerns are taken into account and having the perception that one's voice counts. Scores on these sum scales range from 1 to 4 where a higher score implies more positive attitudes and perceptions about the institutions.

Furthermore, a control for national identity is included as national identity is expected to be related to both European identity and support for solidarity (Duchesne and Frogner 2008). This is measured in a similar way as European identity. However, only one survey item measuring attachment to one's member state is available. Apart from the specific reasons to include measures for identification, perceptions and attitudes about both the EU and their national-level equivalents in the same model, this approach translates the context of multilevel governance into public opinion research. Governance in the EU is the result of an interplay between different levels, and so are citizens' attitudes about them (Arnold et al. 2012). Finally, controls are included for education level, age and gender.

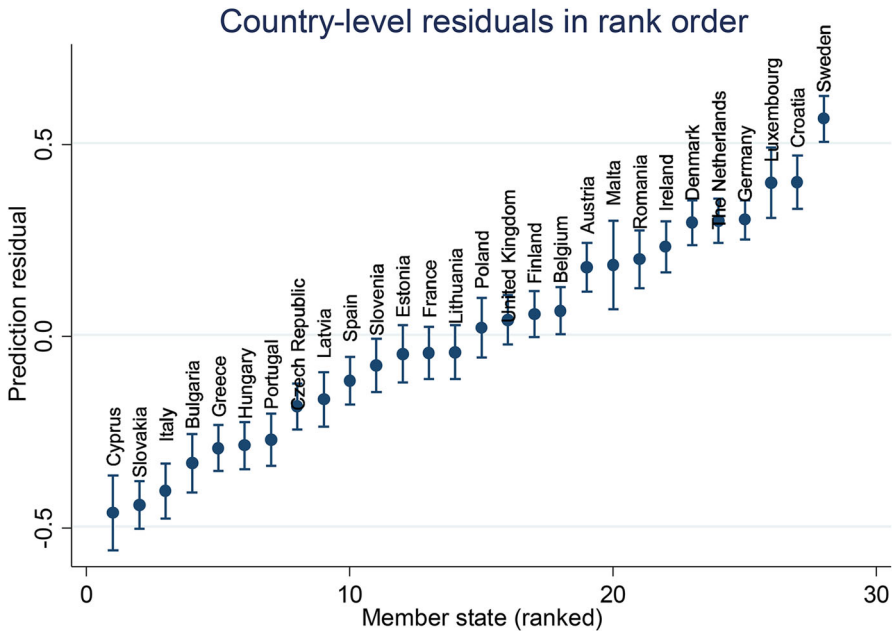
## Analyses

The Null-model (Table 1) presents the variance in support for solidarity between individuals and between member states (respectively 0.799 and 0.076). The intra-class correlation is 8.7 per cent. This modest figure is quite surprising as given the

<sup>7</sup> In this contribution, citizens' perceptions about political institutions are defined as their interpretation of these institutions. This interpretation might differ from a more objective account of the functioning of political institutions (although it is highly doubtful whether true objectivity can be established in this area) (Gabel and Whitten 1997). The used measures for external efficacy can be categorized as perceptions. Attitudes are the evaluation of political institutions, which can also be described as a tendency (favourable/unfavourable) towards an object (Gawronski 2007). Hence, it is a subjective assessment about political institutions, which builds upon how one perceives these institutions. The measures for trust in political institutions reflect respondents' attitudes about these institutions.

<sup>8</sup> External efficacy is an estimation (by a citizen) of the responsiveness of political institutions or actors (Balch 1974; Loveless 2013).





**Fig. 1** Variance in support for solidarity between member states. *Data source* EES 2014 Voter Study. *Notes* Country residuals and 95 per cent confidence intervals for support for solidarity in the Null-model. *N* = 18,991

different experiences with the economic and financial crisis in various member states, one would expect more variation between countries. Hence, this suggests that individual-level attitudes and characteristics will probably explain most of the variance in support for solidarity. More technically, the likelihood-ratio test shows that even though the modest size of the intra-class correlation, taking the clustering in member states into account significantly improves the model, compared to a single-level model. Hence, a two-level multilevel regression model is built with random intercepts to account for the clustering of the data. Figure 1 visualizes the intercept random effects between member states. As for most member states, this is different from zero, and as these differ from each other, a random intercepts model is called for.

The analyses in Table 1 (see “Appendix 3” for a step-wise set-up of the model) show that the proposed European identity-based explanation for support for solidarity between EU member states is confirmed by the data. This relationship is robust for controls for alternative traditional explanations and is significantly stronger than the relationships between self-interest and economic ideological position on the one hand, and support for EU solidarity on the other.

A closer look first shows that respondents with a stronger European identity show more support for financial help from their own member state to member states in economic and financial crisis. The first hypothesis that citizens with a stronger European identity are more likely to support solidarity with other EU member states is





thus confirmed. Citizens with a European identity are ‘willing to pay a price’ for their European identity as they have feelings of solidarity towards fellow EU member states.

Importantly, the analyses show that this relationship exists independent of the strength of respondents’ national identity. While previous studies concerning support for economic and financial integration in the wake of the euro crisis have assumed that having a European identity has the opposite effect of having an exclusive national identity on attitudes about EU cooperation, using independent measures for national and European identity further uncovers this relationship. On the one hand, the observation that respondents with a stronger national identity show less support for EU solidarity is in line with the findings of Kuhn and Stoeckel (2014) who observed a negative relationship between having an exclusive national identity and supporting European economic governance, with the findings of Hobolt and Wratil (2015) who studied monetary integration and with the experiment of Kuhn et al. (forthcoming) where participants with an exclusive national identity are observed to be less willing to share money gained in the experiment with citizens from other EU member states than with co-nationals. Participants that also identified as European did not make this distinction (the confirmation of the findings in this contribution by experimental data on similar concepts strengthens the confidence of our conclusions as the current research uses survey data where questions about social desirability and endogeneity might arise). On the other hand, the standardized model (Table 1) shows that the positive relationship between European identity and support for solidarity is nearly 50 per cent stronger than the negative relationship between national identity and support for EU solidarity. Using separate measures for European and national identity is thus not only more in line with theories and observations about the coexistence of national and European identification, it also provides a clearer view on the relationship between identity and support for solidarity (Bruter 2008; Duchesne and Frogner 2008).<sup>9</sup>

Second, the relationship between European identity and support for EU solidarity is robust for the control for more traditional explanations for support for solidarity. Measured at the individual level, respondents’ support is partly based on economic self-interest. Both having a decreased income and having negative perceptions about the evolution of the economy are negatively related to support for solidarity in the EU. If one perceives one’s own situation as more precarious, one tends to be less supportive of investing in other member states. This mechanism can be explained by potential fear for the loss of welfare spending in one’s own member state (Hooghe and Marks 2005; Kuhn and Stoeckel 2014). Furthermore, the standardized coefficients show that even though Hobolt and Wratil (2015) conclude that self-interest became more important than national identity during the euro crisis, in the case of solidarity the effect of self-interest is not significantly different from the effect of national identity. Moreover, European identity is a significantly more important predictor, as indicated by both a Wald-test and the predicted marginal

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<sup>9</sup> To support this claim, an additional analysis has been carried out with categories of combinations of national and European identity. This shows that even when citizens have a strong national identity, they are still more in favour of intra-European solidarity when they also have a European identity. Combining national and European identity thus does not imply that European identity is only superficial and does not affect citizens’ attitudes and behaviour.



effects that are presented in “Appendix 4” and further discussed below. This again highlights the importance of including European identity in the equation.

Measured at the country level, however, no support is found for the self-interest hypothesis. Even though Fig. 1 suggests that citizens in debtor states are less supportive of solidarity, the multivariate analyses show that the lower levels of support for solidarity in these countries can be explained by individual-level attitudes and characteristics.<sup>10</sup> Additional analyses (see “Appendix 5”) show that the bivariate significant relationship between living in a debtor state and support for EU solidarity perishes when either European identity, or self-interest measured at the individual level is included in the analysis. The inclusion of economic ideological position does not decrease the significance of living in a debtor state. The observation that respondents in debtor states have a significantly weaker European identity, more often have decreased incomes and have more negative perceptions about the economy explain why, on average, support for solidarity is weaker in debtor states. Living in a Eurozone country is neither bivariate related to support for solidarity, nor in the full model.

Also one’s economic ideological position is, as expected, significantly related to support for EU solidarity. Respondents who are more supportive of redistribution within their own country and who prefer higher taxes in order to increase public services tend to be more supportive of inter-member state solidarity. This relationship supports the expectation of Cramme and Hobolt (2015) that the redistributive consequences of EU integration that are demonstrated by the euro crisis increased the potential for more traditional economic left–right discussions. When citizens think about financial and economic solidarity between EU member states, their ideological preferences such as preferring states to intervene in the economy or leaving free play to market forces play a role (Bansak et al. 2016). This finding is especially interesting as Bechtel et al. (2014) found that Germans supporting extreme parties (both left and right) are more supportive of bailouts. While in the EES 2014 it is also observed that, across EU member states (and also in the German sample specifically), more extreme leftist respondents are more supportive of EU solidarity, the opposite is true for extreme rightists (see “Appendix 7”). Kleider and Stoeckel (2016) confirm this conclusion about the role of economic ideological position. They add that especially respondents who support redistribution in their own country and are in an economically stronger situation, are significantly more likely to support EU solidarity. Respondents in favour of domestic redistribution in an economically weaker situation are not.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Alternative indicators for the extent to which a country has been affected by the euro crisis are change in GDP and unemployment rate compared to before the crisis. Analyses with these measures are presented in Appendix F. Additionally, the absolute level of economic performance of a member state, and compared to the others, could influence citizens’ attitudes about EU solidarity. Hence, absolute unemployment levels (in 2014) and GDP per capita in purchasing power standards (PPS) have been included in the supplementary analyses as well. The results of these analyses (including the interactions calculated as in Table 2) are nearly identical to the main analyses where a dummy for ‘debtor states’ is included.

<sup>11</sup> Kleider and Stoeckel (2016) also use the EES 2014 data, but they use a different set of explanatory and control variables. Therefore, the observed interaction effects have also been tested in the current study using the operationalizations for economic situation and economic ideological position of Kleider and



Third, the relationship between European identity and EU solidarity is stronger than the relationships between support for EU solidarity and the self-interest and ideological explanations. This is demonstrated by the standardized results in Table 1 and confirmed by Wald-tests with  $p < 0.001$ . To further illustrate the relative importance of the observed relationships, the value of support for EU solidarity is calculated at different levels of European identity, while keeping the other variables in the model at their means. The predicted support for EU solidarity for a respondent with the lowest score on European identity is 2.285 (SE: 0.038), and increases to 2.635 (SE: 0.035) when the respondent has the highest score on European identity. The same calculation is performed for different values for the measures for self-interest and for ideological position (all discussed predicted marginal effects are included in "Appendix 4"). The difference between the lowest score and the highest score on these measures is smaller than for European identity, which illustrates the relative importance of the relationship between European identity and support for EU solidarity, compared to the self-interest and ideological explanations. These observations support the claim of Huddy and Khatib (2007) that European identity, given its similarities to identification with national social groups, should be a better predictor of behaviours and attitudes related to the EU community than other measures.

Finally, the control variables show that both respondents who have positive attitudes and perceptions about their national institutions and respondents who have positive attitudes and perceptions about the EU institutions are more supportive of solidarity between EU member states. Compared to the other coefficients in the standardized model, these are strong relationships. It is thus important for citizens to trust the institutions that will bargain and carry out solidarity, and to have the feeling that they listen to citizens. Furthermore, more highly educated respondents are more likely to support EU solidarity and female respondents are slightly less likely to support EU solidarity.

Next to a direct relationship between European identity and support for solidarity, it is also tested whether strength of European identity interacts with utilitarian explanations for support for EU solidarity. Table 2 presents the coefficients of the interaction effects between European identity and the different operationalizations of self-interest, as calculated in the full model (for reasons of brevity only the interaction terms are presented as the control variables do not show irregular results). Significant interactions are observed between European identity and both the individual-level and country-level measures for self-interest. However, the interaction effects oppose the expectations of hypothesis 2. European identity does not mitigate the negative relationship between self-interest and support for solidarity. Rather, self-interest seems to mitigate the positive relationship between European identity and support for solidarity, which confirms hypothesis 3. For

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Footnote 11 continued

Stoekel. Similar results as in their working paper are observed, even though the authors include different covariates in their study. As this did not alter the conclusions of this contribution and as this is not the focus of the paper, this test is not included in the main analyses presented in this article, but can be retrieved from the authors upon request.



respondents who live in a 'debtor state', who personally experienced a decrease of income or who have negative perceptions about the economy, the positive relationship between European identity and support for EU solidarity is weaker. In other words, when respondents with a strong European identity live in a country in crisis, they are less likely to support the redistribution of the little they have to other member states that are in severe economic crisis as well, than respondents with a strong European identity in a wealthier state. The former respondents might reason that it is up to the other member states that are in a better economic condition to help countries in crisis. In sum, these results show that there are limitations to the relationship between European identity and support for solidarity as it is constrained by economic self-interest.

Slightly different, but in the same vein, is the observation that for respondents who live in the Eurozone and have a stronger European identity, the effect of European identity on support for solidarity is strengthened. This can point at a strengthening effect of the combination of having a European identity and self-interest (saving countries in economic crisis to save the Eurozone), or at a strengthening effect of both feeling more European and living in a member state that has a stronger tradition of (financial) EU cooperation.<sup>12</sup>

## Conclusion

The euro crisis does not only challenge the institutional capacities of the EU to reach agreement among the member states in issues such as the Greek debt crisis. It also raises the question whether EU citizens prefer a 'hard' position in this case which implies demanding the Greek government to further apply austerity measures and fully repay their debt to the ECB and other creditors, or whether citizens prefer a solidarity approach which implies decisions such as debt restructuring or other ways to help the Greek economy to recover, but that are costly to the rest of the EU. This preference can be explained by a combination of determinants. General attitudes about economic interventions, such as attitudes about redistribution and state intervention in the economy, provide a logical explanation. Also self-interest plays a role. Citizens are more likely to oppose financial transfers to other member states when they perceive the economic situation of their own member state or their own household as more precarious, as financially helping other member states reduces the available resources in their own country.

Next to these rather traditional explanations for support for EU solidarity, it is shown that citizens' strength of European identity is an important determinant for citizens' preferences about policy-making concerning the euro crisis. While some argue that European identity, if present, is only a superficial type of identification

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<sup>12</sup> Even though there are no clear reasons to expect that strength of European identity would interact with the effect of ideological attitudes, for reasons of comprehensiveness this has been tested as well. However, no significant interaction effect is observed between European identity and economic ideological position.



that is overshadowed by attachments to the member state, this contribution shows that citizens with a European identity are more supportive of intra-European solidarity, independent of their national identification. Kymlicka (2001), for instance, explains this by the proposition that citizens with a European identity do not see other EU member states and their citizens as ‘the other’, but as one of their own. The idea of helping fellow group members makes them more willing to redistribute wealth to other member states. As this relationship is significantly stronger than the negative relationship between national identity and support for solidarity, this indicates that European identity should not be regarded as superficial and inferior to national identity.

Furthermore, this contribution provides three main contributions to the literature on EU public opinion. First, it specifically studies solidarity in the light of the economic crisis. Previously published studies related to this topic have mostly investigated evaluations of and support for monetary integration, economic governance, fiscal integration and bailouts (Bechtel et al. 2014; Daniele and Geys 2015; Hobolt and Wratil 2015; Kuhn and Stoeckel 2014).<sup>13</sup> While such cooperation and policies can imply forms of solidarity, it is not necessarily seen as such. In Hobolt and Wratil’s study about support for monetary integration, for instance, a specific rationale behind support could be that a common currency is perceived as a gain for all by abolishing exchange costs; a bailout loan could be seen as an investment that will be repaid with interest. The current contribution, to the contrary, specifically investigates support for providing financial help to other EU member states, which explicitly involves a financial cost. Hence, the solidarity aspect is disentangled from support for related forms of EU cooperation.

Second, in this study of EU solidarity three relevant perspectives are set off against each other. While self-interest is a popular approach to study support for economic and financial integration in the EU, it is a more recent development that ideological attitudes and especially European identity (in contrast to national identity) are entering the equation. The analyses show support for all three explanations for support for solidarity, but most importantly it is shown that the positive relationship between strength of European identity and support for EU solidarity is robust for the control for self-interest and ideological explanations. Moreover, the relationship between European identity and support for EU solidarity is stronger than the relationship between solidarity and the other two approaches. While “the euro crisis serves as a hard test” (Risse 2014, p. 1209) for European identity, it is thus shown that citizens are prepared to pay a price.

Third, I show that these explanations for support for solidarity interact in the light of the euro crisis. Some member states and citizens suffer more from the crisis than others. I show that this has an impact on citizens’ attitudes about solidarity in the EU. Suffering from an economic crisis by living in a debtor state, having a negative perception of the economy (which is enhanced by an economic

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<sup>13</sup> Daniele and Geys (2015) and Kuhn et al. (forthcoming) are notable exceptions, but still the theoretical and empirical focuses of these studies differ from the current contribution.



crisis) and experiencing a decrease in income negatively affect citizens' feelings of solidarity within the EU community. On the one hand, citizens whose economic situation is (perceived as) worse are less supportive of helping other member states; when citizens have a positive perception about the economy, they are more likely to be supportive of helping other member states in economic and financial crisis. The latter group might see financial possibilities to help others, but they might also think about the potential repercussions of a bankrupt member state for their own country, given the interconnectedness of European economies. On the other hand, it is shown that the self-interest and identity perspectives interact. While the idea of European identity as a cloak of charity suggested that having a stronger European identity would weaken the effect of self-interest, the opposite is observed. The positive relationship between European identity and support for solidarity is weaker for citizens in a negative economic situation, than for citizens in a positive economic situation. Hence, even when citizens feel part of a wider EU community, they might find that it is not up to them to help other member states in economic hardship, but up to EU member states with a healthier economy. This finding shows that the euro crisis poses a paradox. While having a stronger European identity strengthens support for solidarity in times of crisis, which could restrict the effects of a crisis, this relationship is limited by experiences of an economic crisis. In other words, while citizens with a stronger European identity are more likely to support EU solidarity, one should be aware of its limitations. Rather than being a cloak of charity, economic crises seem to weaken its effect.

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## Appendix 1



### Question wording and descriptive information used variables

Variable	Question wording	Mean (SD)	Min.	Max.
European identity	For each of the following statements, please tell me to what extent it corresponds or not to your attitude or opinion:			
	You feel you are a citizen of the EU	2.914 (0.935)	1	4
	You feel attached to Europe	2.917 (0.918)	1	4
Negative perception economic evolution	What do you think about the economy? Compared to 12 months ago, do you think that the general economic situation in (our country) is...	3.134 (1.005)	1 (a lot better)	5 (a lot worse)
	And over the next 12 months, how do you think the general economic situation in (our country) will be? Will it...	2.939 (0.924)	1 (a lot better)	5 (a lot worse)
	Now I would like you to tell me your views on various issues. For each issue, we will present you with two opposite statements and we will ask your opinion about these two statements. We would like to ask you to position yourself on a scale from 0 to 10, where '0' means that you 'fully agree with the statement at the top' and '10' means that you 'fully agree with the statement at the bottom'. Then if your views are somewhere in between, you can choose any number that describes your position best.			
Support redistribution within own country	(I) You are fully opposed to the redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor in (our country) -	7.130 (2.886)	1	11
	(II) You are fully in favour of the redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor in (our country)			

Variable	Question wording	Mean (SD)	Min.	Max.
Support increased tax for public services	(1) You are fully in favour of cutting public services to cut taxes -	5.063 (2.753)	1	11
	(11) You are fully in favour of raising taxes to increase public services			
National identity	For each of the following statements, please tell me to what extent it corresponds or not to your attitude or opinion:			
	You feel attached to (our country)	3.625 (0.663)	1	4
Attitudes and perceptions EU institutions	For each of the following statements, please tell me to what extent it corresponds or not to your attitude or opinion:			
	You trust the institutions of the EU	2.528 (0.860)	1	4
	The European Parliament takes into consideration the concerns of European citizens	2.456 (0.848)	1	4
	Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:			
Attitudes and perceptions national institutions	My voice counts in the European Union	2.466 (1.006)	1	4
	For each of the following statements, please tell me to what extent it corresponds or not to your attitude or opinion:			
	You trust the (national parliament)	2.423 (0.915)	1	4
	The (national parliament) takes the concerns of (country) citizens into consideration	2.363 (0.877)	1	4
	Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:			
	My voice counts in (our country)	2.716 (0.998)	1	4





Variable	Question wording	Mean (SD)	Min.	Max.
Country is responsible for economy	Now I would like to ask you some questions about how much responsibility the different institutions have in the current economic situation in (our country)			
	The (our country) government	8.751 (2.504)	1	11
EU is responsible for economy	The European Union	7.565 (2.519)	1	11
Age	How old are you?	51.456 (17.292)	16	99
Variable	Question wording	Proportion		
Decreased income	Please tell me whether or not each of the following situations has happened to you or someone in your household during the last two years?	51.12% Yes		
	Your household experienced a decrease in income	48.88% No		
Education	How old were you when you stopped full-time education?	14.93% 15–		
		40.94% 16–19		
		38.58% 20+		
		4.78% Still studying		
Female		0.76% No full-time education		
		48.94% Male		
		51.06% Female		
Support for EU membership	Generally speaking, do you think that (our country) membership of the EU is...?	59.36% A good thing		
		13.66% A bad thing		
		26.97% Neither a good thing nor a bad thing		

*Data source* EES 2014 Voter Study



## Appendix 2

Explaining support for solidarity between EU member states with ordered logit random intercept models

	Full model
<i>Individual level</i>	
European identity	0.289 (0.024)***
National identity	-0.194 (0.024)***
Decreased income	-0.097 (0.030)***
Negative perception economic evolution	-0.179 (0.020)***
Support redistribution in own country	0.012 (0.005)***
Support increased tax for public services	0.064 (0.006)***
Attitudes and perceptions EU institutions	0.366 (0.032)***
Attitudes and perceptions national institutions	0.312 (0.029)***
EU is responsible for economy	0.009 (0.006)
Country is responsible for economy	0.009 (0.006)
<i>Education level (ref. education till age 16–19)</i>	
No education	0.235 (0.165)
Education till age 15	-0.190 (0.047)***
Education till over age 20	0.226 (0.034)***
Still student	0.094 (0.073)
Age	0.001 (0.001)
Female	-0.101 (0.028)***
<i>Support for EU membership (ref. neither good nor bad)</i>	
Good	0.369 (0.037)***
Bad	-0.424 (0.049)***
<i>Country level</i>	
Eurozone	-0.172 (0.174)
Debtor states	-0.052 (0.201)
Cut-off 1	-0.076 (0.201)
Cut-off 2	1.651 (0.201)***
Cut-off 3	4.210 (0.204)***
Variance <sub>Country level</sub>	0.160 (0.043)***

Reported values are log odds (B) with the standard error between parentheses; ordered logit random intercept models are presented using `gllamm` for Stata (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2005); \*  $p < 0.050$ , \*\*  $p < 0.010$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ ;  $N = 18,991$

Data source EES 2014 Voter Study



Interaction effects between European identity and self-interest with ordered logit random intercept models

European identity in interaction with	Interaction coefficient
<i>Individual-level interactions</i>	
Decreased income	-0.101 (0.035)**
Negative perception economic evolution	-0.057 (0.019)**
<i>Cross-level interactions</i>	
Eurozone	0.127 (0.038)***
Debtor states	-0.269 (0.045)***

Reported values are log odds (B) with the standard error between parentheses; all control variables were included in the model, but not presented in the table for reasons of brevity, ordered logit random intercept models are presented using `gllamm` for Stata (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2005); \*  $p < 0.050$ , \*\*  $p < 0.010$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ ;  $N = 18,991$

Data source EES 2014 Voter Study

### Appendix 3

Step-wise set-up main analyses

	European identity only	+ self-interest	+ ideology	+ control variables
<i>Individual level</i>				
European identity	0.334 (0.008)***	0.295 (0.008)***	0.289 (0.008)***	0.117 (0.010)***
National identity				-0.079 (0.010)***
Decreased income		-0.084 (0.013)***	-0.078 (0.013)***	-0.049 (0.013)***
Negative perception economic evolution		-0.150 (0.008)***	-0.147 (0.008)***	-0.073 (0.009)***
Support redistribution within own country			-0.000 (0.002)	0.005 (0.002)*
Support increased tax for public services			0.035 (0.002)***	0.027 (0.002)***
Perceptions EU institutions				0.150 (0.013)***
Perceptions national institutions				0.129 (0.012)***
EU is responsible for economy				0.004 (0.003)
Country is responsible for economy				0.004 (0.003)
<i>Education level (ref. education till age 16–19)</i>				
No education				0.123 (0.071)
Education till age 15				-0.083 (0.020)***
Education till over age 20				0.098 (0.015)***



	European identity only	+ self-interest	+ ideology	+ control variables
Still student				0.041 (0.032)
Age				0.000 (0.000)
Female				-0.041 (0.012)**
<i>Support for EU membership (ref. neither good nor bad)</i>				
Good				0.167 (0.016)***
Bad				-0.187 (0.021)***
<i>Country level</i>				
Eurozone				-0.071 (0.075)
Debtor states				-0.025 (0.086)
Intercept	1.522 (0.048)***	2.135 (0.055)***	1.969 (0.058)***	1.726 (0.085)***
Variance <sub>Country level</sub>	0.050 (0.014)***	0.043 (0.012)***	0.040 (0.011)***	0.029 (0.008)***
Variance <sub>Residual</sub>	0.727 (0.007)***	0.711 (0.007)***	0.698 (0.007)***	0.656 (0.007)***

Reported values are unstandardized regression coefficients with the standard error between parentheses; \*  $p < 0.050$ , \*\*  $p < 0.010$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ ;  $N = 18,991$

Data source EES 2014 Voter Study

## Appendix 4

Predicted values of EU solidarity at different levels of the main explanatory variables

	At minimum value	At maximum value
European identity	2.285 (0.038)	2.635 (0.035)
National identity	2.717 (0.042)	2.480 (0.033)
Decreased income	2.534 (0.033)	2.485 (0.033)
Negative perception economic evolution	2.657 (0.037)	2.366 (0.037)
Support redistribution within own country	2.481 (0.035)	2.527 (0.034)
Support increased tax for public services	2.400 (0.034)	2.668 (0.036)

Reported values are predicted marginal effects with the standard error between parentheses;  $N = 18,991$

Data source EES 2014 Voter Study



## Appendix 5

Relationship between living in a debtor state or in the Eurozone and support for solidarity between EU member states

	Bivariate debtor state		Bivariate Eurozone	
Debtor state	-0.287 (0.116)*	-0.161 (0.100)	-0.198 (0.105)	-0.275 (0.108)*
Eurozone				-0.116 (0.110)
European identity		0.334 (0.008)***		
Decreased income			-0.103 (0.014)***	
Negative perception economic evolution			-0.222 (0.008)***	
Support redistribution within own country				-0.012 (0.002)***
Support increased tax for public services				0.045 (0.003)***
Variance <sub>Country-level</sub>	0.062 (0.017)	0.045 (0.012)	0.051 (0.014)	0.061 (0.017)
Variance <sub>Residual</sub>	0.799 (0.008)	0.727 (0.007)	0.764 (0.008)	0.798 (0.008)

Reported values are *B* with the standard error between parentheses; \*  $p < 0.050$ , \*\*  $p < 0.010$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ ;  $N = 18,991$

*Data source* EES 2014 Voter Study



Differences between debtor states and non-debtor states in strength of European identity and individual-level measures of self-interest

	Debtor state	Non-debtor state	Significance
Mean European identity	2.636 (0.014)	2.986 (0.007)	$T = 51.812$ ( $p < 0.001$ )
Mean negative perception economic evolution	3.275 (0.015)	2.976 (0.007)	$T = -43.757$ ( $p < 0.001$ )
Proportion decreased income	75.12%	45.02%	$p < 0.001$ ( $\chi^2$ -test)

Reported values are means with the standard error between parentheses;  $N = 18,991$

Data source EES 2014 Voter Study

## Appendix 6

Alternative measures for the economic situation of EU member states and the degree to which they are affected by the euro crisis

	GDP change	GDP per capita in PPS (2014)	Unemployment change	Unemployment 2014
<i>Individual level</i>				
European identity	0.116 (0.010)***	0.116 (0.010)***	0.117 (0.010)***	0.117 (0.010)***
National identity	-0.079 (0.010)***	-0.079 (0.010)***	-0.079 (0.010)***	-0.079 (0.010)***
Decreased income	-0.050 (0.013)***	-0.048 (0.013)***	-0.049 (0.013)***	-0.049 (0.013)***
Negative perception economic evolution	-0.073 (0.009)***	-0.073 (0.009)***	-0.073 (0.009)***	-0.073 (0.009)***
Support redistribution within own country	0.005 (0.002)*	0.005 (0.002)*	0.005 (0.002)*	0.005 (0.002)*
Support increased tax for public services	0.027 (0.002)***	0.027 (0.002)***	0.027 (0.002)***	0.027 (0.002)***
Perceptions EU institutions	0.150 (0.013)***	0.151 (0.013)***	0.150 (0.013)***	0.150 (0.013)***
Perceptions national institutions	0.130 (0.012)***	0.128 (0.012)***	0.129 (0.012)***	0.130 (0.012)***
EU is responsible for economy	0.004 (0.003)	0.004 (0.003)	0.004 (0.003)	0.004 (0.003)
Country is responsible for economy	0.004 (0.003)	0.004 (0.003)	0.004 (0.003)	0.004 (0.003)
<i>Education level (ref. education till age 16-19)</i>				
No education	0.122 (0.071)	0.122 (0.071)	0.123 (0.071)	0.123 (0.071)
Education till age 15	-0.083 (0.020)***	-0.083 (0.020)***	-0.083 (0.020)***	-0.083 (0.020)***
Education till over age 20	0.098 (0.015)***	0.098 (0.015)***	0.098 (0.015)***	0.098 (0.015)***
Still student	0.041 (0.032)	0.041 (0.031)	0.041 (0.032)	0.041 (0.032)
Age	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Female	-0.041 (0.012)**	-0.041 (0.012)**	-0.041 (0.012)**	-0.041 (0.012)**



	GDP change	GDP per capita in PPS (2014)	Unemployment change	Unemployment 2014
<i>Support for EU membership (ref. neither good nor bad)</i>				
Good	0.167 (0.016)***	0.167 (0.016)***	0.167 (0.016)***	0.167 (0.016)***
Bad	-0.187 (0.021)***	-0.188 (0.021)***	-0.187 (0.021)***	-0.187 (0.021)***
<i>Country level</i>				
Eurozone	-0.092 (0.074)	-0.116 (0.068)	-0.080 (0.072)	-0.078 (0.072)
GDP change (2014–2008)	-0.114 (0.253)			
GDP per capita in PPS (2014)		0.002 (0.000)*		
Unemployment change (% of active population 2014–2008)			0.059 (0.764)	
Unemployment 2014 (% of active population)				-0.000 (0.006)
Intercept	1.748 (0.094)***	1.590 (0.103)***	1.723 (0.088)***	1.729 (0.102)***
Variance <sub>Country level</sub>	0.029 (0.008)***	0.025 (0.007)***	0.029 (0.008)***	0.029 (0.008)***
Variance <sub>Residual</sub>	0.656 (0.007)***	0.656 (0.007)***	0.656 (0.007)***	0.656 (0.007)***

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#### European identity in interaction with

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GDP change (2014–2008)	0.363 (0.060)***
GDP per capita in PPS (2014)	0.002 (0.000)***
Unemployment change (% of active population 2014–2008)	-1.138 (0.157)***
Unemployment 2014 (% of active population)	-0.010 (0.001)***

Reported values are unstandardized regression coefficients with the standard error between parentheses; \*  $p < 0.050$ , \*\*  $p < 0.010$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ ;  $N = 18,991$ . All other variables that are displayed in the full regression model were also included in these models

*Data source* EES 2014 Voter Study, Eurostat (2017a, b)

## Appendix 7

### Main analyses including left–right self-placement as a measure for economic ideological position

	Full model
<i>Individual level</i>	
European identity	0.100 (0.009)***
National identity	-0.055 (0.024)***
Decreased income	-0.055 (0.013)***
Negative perception economic evolution	-0.062 (0.007)***
<i>Left–right self-placement (ref. centre)</i>	



	Full model
Extreme left	0.086 (0.021)***
Left	0.112 (0.018)***
Right	-0.042 (0.017)*
Extreme right	-0.053 (0.021)*
Attitudes and perceptions EU institutions	0.117 (0.010)***
Attitudes and perceptions national institutions	0.105 (0.009)***
EU is responsible for economy	0.012 (0.007)
Country is responsible for economy	0.005 (0.007)
<i>Education level (ref. education till age 16–19)</i>	
No education	0.129 (0.169)
Education till age 15	-0.082 (0.019)***
Education till over age 20	0.101 (0.014)***
Still student	0.042 (0.031)
Age	0.000 (0.000)
Female	-0.041 (0.012)**
<i>Support for EU membership (ref. neither good nor bad)</i>	
Good	0.174 (0.016)***
Bad	-0.202 (0.021)***
<i>Country level</i>	
Eurozone	-0.076 (0.077)
Debtor states	-0.024 (0.088)
Intercept	2.441 (0.063)***
Variance <sub>Country level</sub>	0.030 (0.008)***
Variance <sub>Residual</sub>	0.662 (0.007)***

Reported values are  $\beta$  with the standard error between parentheses; all non-binary variables have been standardized (mean = 0, SD = 1); \*  $p < 0.050$ , \*\*  $p < 0.010$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ ;  $N = 18,991$ ; note: While left–right self-placement is measured with a 10-point scale in the EES 2014, it is recoded into 5 categories (extreme left, left, centre, right, extreme right) in analogy with Bechtel *et al*'s (2014) categorization

*Data source* EES 2014 Voter Study

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