ERC Synergy Grant 2018
Research proposal [Part B2]

Part B2: *The Project proposal*

a. State of the art and objectives

Objectives and general argument. The last decade has been a *decennium horribile* for the EU. Since 2008, the European Union has faced a series of **unprecedented shocks**: the Great Recession, the sovereign debt crisis and its dramatic social consequences, security threats linked to terrorism and conflicts in the MENA region, the refugee crisis and, eventually, Brexit. Supranational decision making was severely tested. From today's vantage point, we observe that **policy performance has not lived up to its promises and potential,** damaging public trust in the efficacy and transparency of the EU. Pessimistic views now abound in academic and policy debates (Gillingham, 2016; Streeck, 2015; Zielonka, 2014; Drozdiak, 2017). And yet, despite existential threats, **we observe resilience.** The EU and the euro have not fallen apart. At the apex of the crisis, EU leaders managed to agree on strategies for recovery (Schimmelfennig, 2014; White, 2015) and, with the exception of the UK, they are now debating how to strengthen integration in the long run (Juncker, 2017). After record lows, citizens' support for integration is picking up again (Stokes, Wike and Manevitch, 2017).

SOLID aims at understanding how and why "doom" and "elation" can go together. The EU is still fragile and its durability remains an open question. Durability ultimately hinges on the capacities of the Union's political sphere to address collective problems and orchestrate consensus about solutions, in the context of a shared and robust normative order (Lepsius, 2009; Olsen, 2007; Ferrera, 2017). This is a demanding condition. New capacities were created during the long crisis. But it is not clear how robust they are and whether developing them further will encounter insurmountable obstacles, including resentment by citizens. We argue that the aforementioned sequence of sectoral/policy crises produced a **"deep" political crisis** which unsettled fundamental assumptions and practices regarding the exercise of authority and its legitimation. The urgency and depth of the economic crisis initially fostered a largely technocratic "emergency response mode", which increasingly disconnected EU decision-making from national democratic processes. Over time, tensions and disagreements unleashed three foundational conflicts: **conflicts over sovereignty** (who decides), **solidarity** (who gets what when and why) and **identity** (who we are). The "crisis politics" that was deployed to deal with such tensions has constrained policy responses in their scope and effectiveness, further deepening the foundational rift. Against all odds, however, **the destructive spiral stopped short of driving the Union into self-destruction:** a circumstance that still calls for an explanation. Only a thorough retrospective analysis of the political crisis can cast light on the nature of this unexpected resilience.

We shall thus pursue five broad objectives and related research questions:

Table 1: Broad objectives and research questions

1. *To investigate the novel foundational conflicts about sovereignty, solidarity and identity: what made them emerge and escalate during the crisis?*
2. *To unpack the crises on both the supply side and the demand side: which political dynamics were activated by each shock and lead to crisis policy making and crisis politics?*
3. *To analyse key processes linking supply and demand in selected crisis situations: what coalitional dynamics operated during the euro area crisis, the social crisis, the refugee crisis, the membership crisis (Brexit and intra-EU separatism)?*
4. *To capture key episodes and decisions which underpinned resilience: how can we account for them?*
5. *To outline a theory-driven assessment of the outcome of the political crisis: which scenarios and perspectives can be envisaged for a durable EU?*

Ours is an attempt to bring together three still disjointed perspectives on the EU crisis: those of political sociology, policy-analysis and political economy. Our theoretical framework builds on our previous work on the structuration of political conflicts in the Great Recession (Kriesi's POLCON project), on the institutional and political strains between the economic and social dimensions of integration (Ferrera's REScEU project), and on Schelkle's (2017) extensive work on risk sharing in the euro area. We propose to connect them within a **coalition-centred approach** to the study of the supply of policy-making by political authorities, the formation of public opinion and societal demands and, most notably, the interrelation between the two in "hard times" (Gourevitch, 2013). SOLID is innovative in at least four ways: 1) the **breadth** of its integrative framework – we study a sequence of great crises in different arenas (national, transnational and supranational); 2) its **depth** – we study each individual crisis in great detail on both the supply and the demand side with a multiplicity of methods; 3) its systematic attempt to **link the policy crisis to crisis politics**; 4) its **multidisciplinary approach**, combining comparative politics, policy analysis and political economy.

State of the art. Before the crisis, a sort of "permissive consensus" at the EU level (Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970) traditionally allowed for broad exchanges and agreements, essentially based on compensation strategies (side and/or deferred payments). At the national level, however, the member states were increasingly struggling with a "new politics" of permanent austerity and its difficult reform agenda: a politics less centred on traditional class/partisan juxtapositions than on (contingent) conflicts between a variety of "categories" (social, but also territorial groups) sharing welfare/tax/regulatory interests (Pierson, 2001; Bonoli, 2001; Kitschelt, 2001; Armingeon and Bonoli, 2006; Häusermann, 2010; Bonoli and Natali, 2012; Busemeyer and Neimanns, 2017).

The euro-crisis and the ensuing recession have made this new politics much more complicated (Vis *et al.*, 2011; Kriesi *et al.*, 2012; Streeck and Schäfer, 2013). Fiscal austerity has placed national policy-makers between a rock and a hard place (Closa, 2014; on Germany see Zohlnhöfer, 2011). Domestic interest constellations were suddenly and brutally altered (Beramendi *et al.*, 2015a), executives were further burdened by novel policy challenges related to peaking unemployment, heightened poverty risks and the underdevelopment of national peripheries. National political authorities thus self-selected themselves as the primary "responders" (Meny, 2014; Curtin, 2014), turning the European Council into a quasi-permanent situation room (Dyson, 2013; Joerges and Kreuder-Sonnen, 2017; Woodruff, 2016). However, new severe distributive tensions emerged between member states as well, contributing to a syndrome of "constraining dissensus" (Hooghe and Marks, 2009). The widening gap between intergovernmental and technocratic decision making and the domestic democratic process has given crisis politics a marked populist flavour (peoples vs. elites) (Kriesi and Pappas, 2015; Offe, 2015; Schmidt, 2016, 2017), ultimately producing a political drama of "shame, humiliation and resentment" (Dyson, 2014). New conflicts emerged about cross-national transfers, free movement (Ferrera, 2012, 2014), the burdens of immigration from Africa and the Middle East, the resources to be deployed to face security challenges and so on (Guiraudon, 2017). The development of adequate EU-level "burden-sharing capacities" was accordingly prevented, not only in the euro crisis but also with the refugee one.

In recent years, political science and political economy have provided a wealth of encompassing analyses (Stamati, 2017 for a review). The literature has widely acknowledged a rapid and marked "intergovernmental turn" (e.g. Bickerton *et al.* 2015a, 2015b, 2015c; Fabbrini, 2013, 2014, 2017; Meny 2014; Schimmelfennig 2015a, 2015b; Bressanelli and Chelotti, 2016), debating its novelty and discussing its normative and legal implications. The notion of "executive federalism" (Oeter, 2010; Thompson, 2013) has been popularized by intellectuals such as Habermas (2012), who consider it a post-democratic and gubernatorial variant of post-Maastricht governance, under the framework of the Lisbon Treaty (Chalmers *et al.* 2016; Barbier *et al.* 2015; Dinan, 2013). Another significant novelty was the empowerment of epistemic actors – the "technocrats" – and of their efficiency-oriented expertise and goals (Carmel, 2017; Gornitzka and Horst, 2015; Earle *et al.* 2017; Schmidt, 2016). Intergovernmentalism was thus paired with a strengthening of non-deliberative/non-majoritarian authorities such as the ECB and the Commission (Bickerton *et al.* 2015a; Metz 2015; Meny 2014; Dyson 2013).

Against this backdrop, our own still ongoing researches (see Box 1) are casting additional light on the new problem and conflict constellations that have emerged in the EU during the last decade, as well as on their destabilizing implications. We will develop further synergies among them by combining comparative politics, policy analysis and political economy.

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Box 1: Ongoing research projects and synergies

Political conflicts in Europe in the shadow of the Great Recession (POLCON: https://www.eui.eu/Projects/POLCON)

The project focuses on the structuration of political conflict in Europe, based on an analysis of political contestation in the electoral arena, the protest arena and in issue-specific events and contentious episodes. The key question is whether the Great Recession and its consequences are changing the long-term trends in the development of political conflict in Europe. The first phase of the project is based on novel data sets on national elections and protest events in 30 European countries covering the period of 2000-2015. The second phase of the project is still ongoing and is zooming in on key political events – such as bailouts and austerity packages – and on contentious episodes in order to study the mechanisms which have mediated the economic impact of the crisis in the political arena.

Reconciling Economic and Social Europe: the role of ideas, values and consensus (REScEU: www.resceu.eu; www.euvisions.eu)

The project focuses on the institutional and political strains between the economic and the social dimensions of integration. A neo-Weberian theoretical framework has been elaborated in order to investigate four lines of conflict: 1) market-making vs. market correcting at the EU level; 2) opening vs. closure as regards free movement and access to benefits; 3) mutual solidarity vs. national responsibility in fiscal policy; 4) supranationalism vs. *souverainisme*. Detailed case studies have been carried out. Public and elite attitudes vis-à-vis various policy and reform options have been tapped in two original surveys conducted in seven EU countries and extensive social media analysis. An online observatory ("EuVisions") has been launched for data presentation and dissemination and for policy debate. The results of the first half of the project have been presented in a book by the PI and many articles on peer reviewed journals.

The Political Economy of Monetary Solidarity (http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/68670/)

Waltraud Schelkle, has been working on risk sharing in the euro area and, historically, in the US dollar area (Schelkle, 2017). Her research provides evidence for an extensive risk sharing during the crisis, even though the EU has not been acknowledged (let alone praised) for achieving collective action. The findings can be summarized in a political-economic paradox of diversity: the more diverse a monetary union (or more generally: a polity) is, the greater the economic potential for mutually beneficial risk-sharing but also the more difficult to realize this potential politically. Risk sharing is therefore bound to remain incomplete and contested even when it promises a net insurance gain.

Synergies

The two ERC projects have been addressing similar problems, with a complementary focus on the demand (POLCON) and supply (REScEU) sides. Synergies have already been created in terms of shared knowledge, research interests and methods. Kriesi and Ferrera have both been engaged in reviving Stein Rokkan's framework, making it suitable for the analysis of the integration process. SOLID will build on this framework, but it will innovate by linking it with Schelkle's politico-economic perspective. A close interaction between comparative politics, public policy and political economy in a single project is quite uncommon. Additional cross-disciplinary synergies will be generated through the recruitment of experts in political communication (social media analysis), advanced natural language processing methods and applied ontology.

Theoretical framework: the EU's political foundations, conflicts and crisis.

SOLID wants to go **beyond the state of the art** by elaborating an empirically-grounded **original theory of the EU political crisis** and of the foundational nature of its conflicts. To clarify let us briefly introduce the basic concepts of our approach.

Political foundations. We adopt a Weberian and Rokkanian perspective on politics, which rests on a pluralistic view of conflict and on a positive appreciation of its role under specific conditions. If appropriately channelled, conflict loses its disruptive potential and, may serve to draw citizens, groups, or states closer together, leading to the formation of purposeful coalitions (Weber, 2012; Rokkan, 1999; Collins, 1986, 2009; Vobruba, 2014). Accordingly, the key function of politics is the structuring and composition of conflicts and the promotion of "constructive change". This is typically accomplished by fulfilling three tasks: 1) policy making, 2) consensus building and 3) polity maintenance. Often forgotten or neglected by political scientists, polity maintenance refers to the foundational task of safeguarding the basic

authority structure (who decides), the normative underpinning of socio-economic transactions and solidarity (who gets what and why) and the identity/community framework (who we are) of a given territorial collectivity. In critical moments, polity maintenance requires keeping the democratic political community together "whatever it takes". We therefore consider it crucial for a theory of political crisis. Our approach thus marks a **twofold innovation** with respect to mainstream views. First, we characterise the **political system as a "transversal" sphere** of human activity: a "meta-sphere" which integrates all the others (in particular the market and the social protection ones), so as to accommodate – within a given spatial context – their mutual externalities and potential conflicts. Second, we highlight the **polity maintenance dimension of the EU as such**, i.e. a complex and multi-level structure of political authority.

Foundational conflicts. One crisis after the other, European integration has been realised by the joint pursue of the three imperatives of policy making, consensus building and polity maintenance. The post 2008 sequence of shocks exerted an unprecedented impact, especially on the third front. As never before, the EU had to prove its resilience in the face of escalating "foundational conflicts" that posed existential threats to its authority structure, normative order and identity/community.

Who decides (authority structure and sovereignty). In the wake of the just described intergovernmental turn, the "political normal" of the EU was rapidly replaced by a new situation of **crisis policy making**. The thin links between EU policies and national democratic processes were further weakened. The old actor constellation changed, following a web of bilateral and multilateral consultations, negotiations, alliances and compromises (the "intermediate sphere", according to Van Middelaar, 2013), more than the power relations embedded in the EU's institutional architecture. This **crisis situation** led to the emergence of novel foundational conflicts about rules and rule-making. Which authorities should control and manage fiscal surveillance, assistance programs or external and internal borders? How much conditionality – even beyond Treaty provisions? How does one actually exit from the EU, at what conditions and who is the arbiter?

Who gets what, when, how and why (normative order and solidarity). Since 2008, deep distributive conflicts have developed in the heart of the EU-polity. The severity of the shocks has made resource-related conflicts more urgent and visible, touching on the basic code of social solidarity: "who owes what to whom and why" (the very essence of politics, according to Lasswell, 1936). Conflict patterns have been rapidly de-structured along an overall process of normative de-anchoring, which produced a further blurring of the left-right dimension and the emergence of new political conflicts (Hooghe and Marks, 2018; Kriesi *et al.* 2006, 2008, 2012). Cultural and even religious divisions suddenly resurrected. Old prejudices have been mobilized, cutting across the old boundaries, divisions and alliances (Hien, 2017). The "new politics" of welfare, which had prevailed up until the mid-2000s, turned into an unstable "**crisis politics**", which increasingly challenges the traditional normative order of the EU.

Who are we (community and identity). The emergence of intra-EU distributive conflicts has led to a progressive re-nationalization of we-feelings (Schauer and Schmitt, 2009; Westle and Segatti, 2016). Some social groups have experienced the sequence of events as sources of economic impoverishment, social marginalization and political exclusion. The widespread fears and anxieties linked to immigration have brought to the fore identity issues, pitting "natives" vs. "foreigners", "us" versus "them". Similar perceptions have by and large affected national publics in debtor states like Greece, while those in creditor countries felt exploited (as in Germany). As a consequence of all this, pre-existing social bonds have been increasingly strained within and across countries. "Crisis politics" called into question **foundational beliefs about boundaries, identities and legitimate authority.**

Crisis dynamics and political crisis. How could the economic crisis (i.e. a sectoral/policy crisis) turn into an existential challenge for the EU's political foundations and polity maintenance capabilities? The literature suggests several ways in which the economic crisis catalysed political conflict. Some scholars insist that the sovereign debt shock was unprecedentedly severe and, in combination with subsequent shocks, exerted an almost intractable problem pressure (Radice, 2015; Dinan *et al.*, 2017). Throughout the 2000s, others suggest, a latent malaise had been already mounting in both domestic and supranational arenas, bringing about slow-burning yet deep conflicts (Grimmel, 2017). This causal account, we contend, is correct, but insufficient. The mechanisms relating the extant malaise and the new sudden shocks to the explosion of foundational conflicts still need to be disentangled. Such mechanisms should be found in some **distinctive political patterns which are activated in times of crisis.** In our investigation, we will make use of various

original notions (crisis politics, crisis dynamics, problem structures, response modes) as building blocks for constructing the overarching notion of **deep political crisis.**

Neo-institutional approaches (especially of the historical institutionalist sort) have extensively used the notion of "crisis" in the context of theories about punctuated equilibria (Thelen and Conran, 2016) and critical junctures (Pierson, 2004; Capoccia, 2016). This literature has highlighted the opportunities crises may open for innovative coalition-building, "out-of-winset" reforms, and broad ideational shifts (Capoccia, 2016; Hall, 2016; Beramendi *et al.* 2015a; Mahoney and Thelen, 2010). We want to **push forward** the frontiers of the **neo-institutional approach** by combining it with the insights of **crisis research** - a recently developed field at the intersection of **political science, (disaster) sociology, international relations, organization theory, public administration and management** (DuBrin, 2013; Dayton, 2004; Boin *et al.* 2016; see also the results of the H2020 projects ENLIGHTEN and TACTIC). According to this strand of research, crises give rise to ill-structured and "wicked" problems, for which there seems to be no epistemic or normative foundation (Mitroff, 2004). Their lack of structure may lead to "fuzzy gambling" or "E3 mistakes" (solving the wrong problem), hampering policy effectiveness (Dror, 1993; Mitroff, 2004). Actors that already command authority resources which can be rapidly deployed get further empowered (Boin and Rhinard, 2008). As highlighted by the "**gender in the crisis" approach,** crisis dynamics also tend to de-politicize a number of social and gender equality issues, silencing or side-lining them in crisis management (Hozic and True, 2016).

By combining historical neo-institutionalism and crisis research, we aim at building a thick notion of **crisis dynamics**, in particular by linking types of "**problem structures**" with types of "**response modes**" – which as such tend to activate specific patterns of policy making and political conflict (see below for details). In our perspective, crisis dynamics are the mechanism that, building on the existing political malaise, has turned the exogenous shocks into existential challenges for the EU, i.e. a deep political crisis.

Political resilience. As mentioned above, the potentially destructive spiral of foundational contention has so far stopped short of institutional collapse. **How can we understand this resilience?** Neo-institutionalist approaches tell us that punctuation breaks extant equilibriums and triggers off a general reshuffling of actors and resources. They can prompt a long term "explosive process" (Baumgartner *et al.*, 2009) before a new equilibrium is reached (if at all). Critical junctures provide actors with unexpected opportunities to shape future institutional developments by making decisions which are "causally decisive" for the selection of one path over other possible paths (Mahoney *et al.*, 2016). It is building on this perspective that we will try to explain why the EU and the Euro area have not broken up during the "deep political crisis". Even under severe pressure, **institutions have the potential to provide stability thanks to their multi-functionality,** hence they can underpin the transition from an untenable status quo to a viable, even if uncertain destination. Of course, managing such a transition is a **contingent, open-ended process**, attainable only by the actors who dare to walk on the available institutional tightrope.

Let us briefly mention some **examples of backstops** during the crisis decades. Solidarity, reluctantly pursued in financial and socio-economic matters, was expanded to a historically unprecedented scale in the field of **inter-state lending and cooperation** (Schelkle, 2017: ch.6). **Unconventional monetary policies,** threw a lifeline to Southern European banking systems (and, indirectly, to their national governments) which were shut out of interbank and bond markets. In mid-2012, the existential threat of a euro area meltdown generated a punctuation that led to the **banking union**. The ECB thus became the world's largest financial supervisor in terms of bank assets. Similar – if less conspicuous – examples of constructive change can be discerned in other policy sectors and crises. Small, but significant innovations were introduced at the EU level by **"socializing" the Semester** (Zeitlin, 2017), creating **new programs and funds** (e.g. the Youth Guarantee and the Fund for Aid to Deprived Persons), launching the social investment package or, more recently, establishing a **"European Pillar of Social Rights"** (Vandenbroucke, 2016). The latter has also revived gender objectives that had virtually disappeared from the EU agenda during the crisis. As shown by the REScEU project, these measures – if appropriately cultivated – have potential for transformational change (still with a big "if", however, as regards the post crisis fate of the **EU's gender equality project:** Kantola and Lombardo, 2017). Conversely, the failed agreement on a **quota system** let the refugee crisis be addressed with a temporary and unstable **patchwork of EU and national measures** (Bauböck, 2017). Still, due to the nature of the issue, it is still striking that there was containment in the first place. The goal of

identifying and explaining key moments in which resilience prevailed at the edge of collapse will be at the very core of our project.

Supply side, demand side and the "provision of coalitions". During a political crisis, the links between the rulers (what and how they decide) and the ruled (their preferences and expectations) tend to weaken or break, jeopardising routine processes of political legitimation. To put it differently, political crises have a supply and a demand side. The former revolves primarily around public policies and authoritative decisions by the political elite. The latter primarily refers to the requests and loyalties of voters, interest groups and other relevant constituencies at the mass level. Thus our project will investigate the way in which the political crisis has impacted on the supply side (**crisis policy-making**), on the demand side (**crisis politics**) and on the modes of their interaction. Focusing on the **supply side** means investigating political leaders/policy makers, their interactions and the way in which they "puzzle", "power" and "value" (Ferrera, 2017). It means studying the national, transnational and supranational arenas in which they operate and interact. Focusing on the **demand side**, instead, means investigating societal and electoral constellations, the way in which they have politically reacted to the sequence of critical challenges of the last decade, the changing patterns of claims and claims making. To investigate the **interaction of demand and supply**, finally, means acknowledging their reciprocal influence. On the one hand, the supply-side cannot move beyond the constraints imposed by the demand side: as argued by the post-functionalists (Hooghe and Marks, 2009), national electorates and their representatives (parties, interest groups and social movements) impose constraints on policy-makers (e.g. German public opinion with respect to the Greek debt). On the other hand, as argued by public opinion research (Zaller 1992; Druckman *et al.*, 2010) and discursive institutionalists (Schmidt, 2009), political demands are partly informed by the cues/ideas/discourses/frames provided by the political elites/policy-makers. The question of who is cueing whom is still crucial (Steenbergen *et al.,* 2007).

We will situate our concept of "deep political crisis" within a **coalition-centered approach** (Beramendi *et al.*, 2015b; Van Dyke and McCammon, 2010). As famously put by Gourevitch (1984, 1986, 2013), the "provision of coalitions" is a key node of the political process linking demand and supply, particularly in "hard times" (see also Hirschman, 1963). Neo-institutional theories have shown how, in situations of high uncertainty, misalignments arise between structural conditions and political organization, opening up margins of choice and entrepreneurship in "coalition engineering" (Capoccia, 2016; Capoccia and Ziblatt, 2010). Our coalitional analysis will take into account seven types of stylized coalitions of actors: 1) **Social coalitions** formed by shared economic interests and attitudes; 2) **Electoral coalitions** formed by individual parties that aim to articulate the demands of social coalitions in the partisan arena; 3) National governments formed by **party coalitions**; 4) Policy-specific **country coalitions** formed by national governments at the EU-level; 5) Policy-specific **epistemic coalitions** formed by political experts at different levels; 6) **Policy-specific/sectoral coalitions** formed by interest groups; 7) **Protest coalitions** formed by "challengers"

Figure 1: General framework for studying the unfolding of political crises
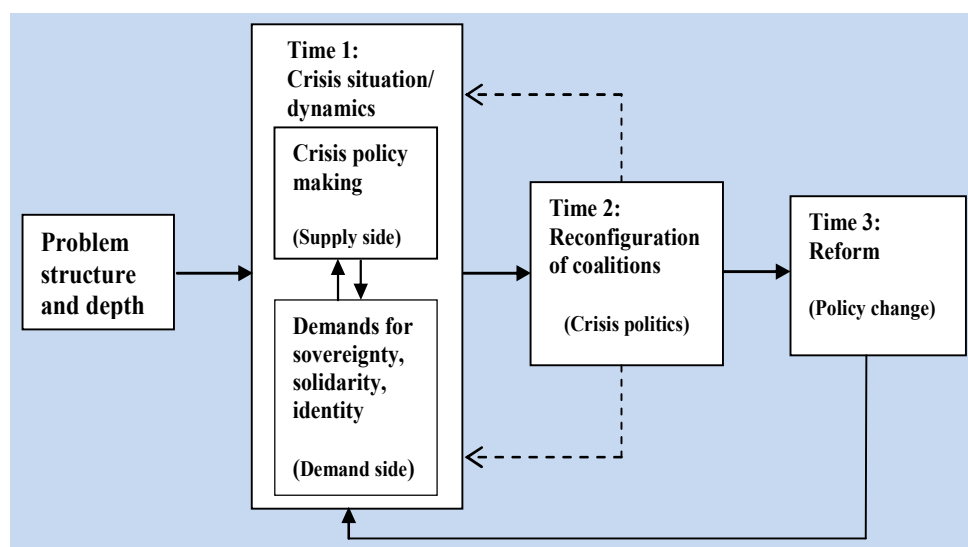

Figure 1 summarizes our general framework for studying the unfolding of political crises.

SOLID's theoretical propositions. Against the backdrop of the general objectives and research questions (*Table 1*) as well as the framework summarized in *Figure 1*, SOLID is based on a series of theoretical propositions and questions. They all

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try to specify the links between problem structures, crisis dynamics and crisis politics in generating and sustaining a "deep political crisis".

The problem structure drives the unfolding of the political crisis. This first set of propositions aims at identifying the causal mechanisms linking problem pressure to the crisis situation (*Table 2*). Our key hypothesis is that certain problem structures typically activate certain response modes and political patterns. Drawing on Pierson (2004: ch. 3), crisis research and disaster sociology specifically (see Rodriguez *et al.*, 2007), we posit that a given "problem structure" can be analytically reduced to the "temporal modes" by which its originating challenge arrives (sudden and unexpected or cumulative and expected) and to its "timing of effect" (immediate or delayed). Their combinations are likely to determine how difficult it is for policies to respond adequately and how contentious the politics of adopting them is.

Table 2: Types of problem structures[1]

Temporal mode \ Timing of effect	Immediate	Delayed
Sudden and unexpected	**Tornado**	**Meteorite**
Cumulative and expected	**Avalanche**	**Erosion**

The **tornado** problem structure is potentially the most disruptive: policies have to be adopted in haste and the "emergency response mode" tends to silence opposition. Experts and technocracies, able to come up quickly with short-term solutions are considerably empowered. The outcome is likely to be favourable to more powerful players and to the ones less affected by the shock. The policy response may therefore contain bold innovations, but also experience harsh contestation in the long run. It is likely that such a "state of exception" favours the formation of new coalitions at the supranational and transnational level. We sense the **euro area crisis** – in both its financial and sovereign debt ramifications – to be such a "tornado", which hit unprepared institutions and almost trumped the common currency. Can this problem structure explain why this economic crisis prompted a "deep political crisis", despite massive policy interventions?

The **avalanche** structure characterizes generally expected and cumulative developments but which suddenly escalate and "snow-ball" in unpredictable locations. The immediate effect calls for urgent action but political responses can build on some pre-existing institutional capacity and established coalitions. The policy response is typically one of "rapid deployment under constrained creativity". In such a case, we do not expect major shifts in the political underpinning of the status quo. We hypothesize that the arrival of millions of **refugees** on Europe's shores might have resulted in such an avalanche. Can this explain why the policy is, at the time of writing, stuck in rapid deployment mode while existing cleavages over immigration and cultural diversity become deeper, constraining more creative solutions?

We have a **meteorite** problem structure when challenges originate in events thought to be unlikely and whose most acute negative effects are delayed. Disruption may be considerable, but the longer time horizon allows for pragmatism so that we expect new coalitions to conform to existing institutional rules. The **membership crisis** – Brexit and, within the EU, Catalonian separatism – seems to fit that pattern. Can we thus explain that we see more of a deepening of cleavages between existing coalitions than a transformational change, despite the "deep political crisis"?

Finally, the **erosion** problem structure insists on a chronic challenge, adding do it increasingly serious long term effects (like in soil erosion from wind or rain). As the latter can often be addressed with existing instruments, we generally expect a strong status quo bias. A sharp deterioration, however, may lead to new and strong political reactions (as in the sudden formation of a sinkhole in soil). We see the **social crisis** in European member states, especially youth unemployment, social exclusion and the widening of the gender gap, as fitting this pattern. A long-standing set of problem was treated with the arsenal of income support disregarding the incremental depletion of human capital over the long term as well as the formation of "sinkhole" on gender issues, undermining the achievements and overall durability of the EU's gender

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[1] In a *tornado* a voluminous and immediately destructive rotating column forms very rapidly and almost unpredictably in certain meteorological conditions. An *avalanche* is a rapid downward slide of a cumulative abundance of snow. The likelihood of its occurrence can be predicted, and its effects immediately destructive. *Erosion* is the gradual wearing away of topsoil due to physical forces (e.g. water or wind). It may slowly cause unnoticeable but potentially damaging sinkholes in the ground. Finally, the *meteorite* – especially a big one. Its trajectory can be spotted well in advance, as well as its impact probability. If it does take place, the impact obviously has harmful effects, but its worst damages are likely to unfold slowly over an extended time span (e.g. species extinction or climate change).

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equality project. Can this problem structure explain the different reactions in different member states, leading to protest movements able to challenge the establishment in some member states, while the rise (and feminization) of unemployment and poverty was met with policy paralysis and political blockage in others?

Crisis policy-making creates crisis politics. The emergency mode assumed by EU policy-making in the early phase of the economic crisis and, more generally, the intergovernmental turn that destabilized the institutional status quo and opened up the Pandora's Box of competence allocation regarding core state powers. New capacity-building needed to be created at the EU level, involving a visible reallocation of "core state powers" such as taxing and spending, security and border controls, sovereignty about citizenship and residence rights (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs, 2016: 49). This created the conditions for an expansion of conflict (soon to become foundational) on the authority structure, with important consequences for coalition building on the demand side. Conflict has also expanded in terms of arenas and actors. The "primary" economic crisis has generated a "secondary" crisis, based on perceptions of the new forms of domination/marginalization linked to the self-selection of crisis leaders and their policy choices: conflicts affect basic normative principles and identity issues. As indicated in *Figure 1*, the coalitional dynamics of crisis politics retroacted on the crisis situation, generating a potentially destructive spiral.

Policy change relies on coalition building by domestic compensation strategies. Our coalition-centred approach allows us to put forward further theoretical propositions on the conditions under which policy change (and, more generally, polity maintenance) can obtain against all the headwinds. Building electoral coalitions is a highly contingent process, likely to succeed only under very specific scenarios. In one such scenario, ruling ideas disseminated by the epistemic community resonate with a domestic electoral majority and/or a majority of national governments. Policy-makers do not need to take existing coalitions for granted. They can also shape them with the appropriate mix of compensation, side-payments and package deals. The idea of compensation has a long intellectual pedigree in the domain of political economy where the success of small states exposed to the whims of global markets can be largely attributed to successful domestic compensation strategies via the welfare state (Katzenstein, 2015; Rodrik 1998). In the context of our project, the idea of compensation as a coalition building strategy can be transferred to the transnational level.

Partisan alignment facilitates resilience and change. Most EU-level decisions need to build on electoral majorities in multiple member states. To get around the (in-)famous Joint Decision Traps (Scharpf, 1988), a degree of preference alignment between member states is necessary. Such preference alignment can be a result of partisan affinities among the representatives of different member states. Furthermore, the reform agenda can be facilitated by domestic grand coalitions (e.g. Austria, Germany and Netherlands, among others) that restrict contestation to a relatively narrow set of partisan challengers as fervently in disagreement with each other as opposed to policy-change. In sum, policy change is facilitated either by transnational partisan-alignments between the key domestic policymakers and/or by grand coalitions that scale partisan contestation down to a manageable level.

Policy reforms and their alignment with prevailing coalitions create the preconditions for polity maintenance. Ineffectiveness, i.e. the lack of capacity to adopt and implement policy reforms weakens the authority of policy-makers and, as a result, their legitimacy. Effective policy reforms, in turn, strengthen the legitimacy of the policy-makers and of the polity as a whole. This is not only a key insight of Easton's (1975) theory of political support, but also of Linz's (1978, 1988) analysis of the breakdown of democratic systems.

Expected impact. If successful, SOLID will be able to provide a **general theory of political crisis**, valuable as such, but especially useful for offering a **more adequate account of the politicization** of the European integration process. The new theory will be tested through a detailed analysis of crises episodes, capturing their deep interconnections. The project will break new scientific paths by **integrating different disciplinary approaches and new research fields in EU studies**, bringing under a coherent framework the analysis of supranational , transnational and national politics, with the view of bypassing the analytic lock-ins resulting from disciplinary "perspectivism".

b. Methodology

We have very ambitious research questions and an articulated theoretical framework. This is the **"high risk"** side of our project, as a lot of efforts will be needed to keep together the building blocks of the framework

and exploit all of their potential. In order to contain as much as possible this risk, and turn it into a **"high gain",** we will adopt an ambitious methodological strategy and will engage in **extensive data collection.** Our research design is based on cases of crises that arguably represent different problem structures for policy change. Extensive data collection and analysis will trace the dynamics of crisis politics and policy-making, captured in the permanent or temporary formation of new coalitions for or against policy change (see *Figure 1*). We build – with significant innovations – on the methods we have developed to systematically collect event data in POLCON as well as our experience with online surveys at REScEU. Our research program will cover the fifteen-year period from 2010-2024. To the crises that are already known at the time of writing, we shall add those which will come up until the possible start of the project in 2019.

The four cases of crisis show systematic variations of the problem structure we outlined with reference to *Table 2*. In terms of depth, we consider the euro area and the lingering social crisis in some member states as equivalent in their severity but they represent opposite ends of the problem structure. *Table 3* summarizes our case study rationale.

Table 3: Case selection

Timing of effect / Temporal mode	Immediate	Delayed
Sudden and unexpected	Tornado: **Euro area crisis** technocratic emergency politics	Meteorite: **Membership crisis** pragmatic problem solving
Cumulative and expected	Avalanche: **Refugee crisis** rapid deployment under constrained creativity	Erosion: **Social crisis** bifurcated: business as usual or upheaval against establishment

We hypothesize that the tornado pattern characterizing the **euro area crisis** favours technocratic emergency politics in which asymmetries of power among member states come to the fore and create resentment in the long-term. The transition from the emergency mode of policymaking to routine will be an interesting phenomenon to watch, notably how lasting coalitions forged under duress prove to be. The **social crisis** that manifested itself to various degrees in declining living standards and human capital depletion allows us to study the effects of country differences in an erosion problem structure. We are interested in a 'threshold' of escalation above which the business as usual mode of policy responses becomes a target for vehement protest that challenges the establishment for its complacency. Is it lasting change or exhaustion that leads back to routine?

The avalanche structure is pertinent to characterize the challenge that the **refugee crisis** posed for the EU. It came up with a policy that could be relatively quickly devised once it could no longer remain a horrendous problem for the frontier states of the Mediterranean Sea. But the collective action problem of burden-sharing could so far not be overcome and a transitory rapid deployment mode is in operation for the time being. One may wonder which political forces drive the search for more lasting solutions, given that the problem itself does not go away. By contrast, the **membership crisis** of the EU that manifests itself in Brexit and separatist movements in Spain, possibly elsewhere, has the characteristics of a meteorite problem: each of these events came to the great surprise of outside observers in the EU, and the effects are hard to gauge although they are likely to lead to a political climate change. Pragmatic attempts at limiting the damage for the EU are likely to prevail. Again, it will be interesting to see whether they lead to discernible movements in coalition formation as inertia is a distinct possibility.

Data collection and analysis. We will study the **policy making processes** in each one of these crises. For this purpose, we plan a series of original data-collection procedures, given that the combination of data we need for the systematic study of these crises is not readily available. With respect to the supply-side, we propose to do **case-studies of the key decisions** in each crisis at the national, transnational and supranational level, and to identify the corresponding party configurations. The case-studies will focus on the reconstruction of the key decision-making processes, map out the conflicts and identify the epistemic, sectoral and country coalitions.

The special focus on **party configurations** is a result of their double function: they link the citizen public to the policy-making process, and they organize and give coherence to political decision-making. The analysis of party configurations will allow us to identify the government and partisan coalitions at the national level. For the demand-side we plan to map the general and the policy-specific demand-side constraints. For this

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purpose, we propose to study **general and policy-specific surveys as well as the social media** to identify the social and electoral coalitions, and to do a protest event study to identify challenger coalitions. *Table 4* provides an overview of the key features of the data collection procedures involved.

Table 4: Overview over data collection procedures

	TYPE OF STUDY	GENERAL TASK	SOURCES
Supply-side	**Case studies of key decisions in each crisis**	• *Reconstruction of decision-making processes* • *Mapping of conflicts* • *Identification of epistemic, sectoral and country coalitions*	• *Inventories of legislation/reports* • *Content analysis of Euractiv.com and of national newspapers* • *Expert interviews* • *Public speeches of key policy-makers*
	General configuration of parties	• *Mapping of party conflicts* • *Identification of government and partisan coalitions*	• *Coding of election campaigns* • *CMP – party manifesto data* • *Electoral results* • *Government formation*
Demand-side	**General demand side constraints**	• *Identification of general demand-side constraints: social, electoral and challenger coalitions*	• *ESS, Eurobarometer* • *Other existing surveys* • *Protest event coding* • *Social media analysis*
	Crisis-specific demand-side constraints	• *Attitudinal constraints/ opportunities: issue-specific social, electoral and challenger coalitions*	• *Existing policy-specific surveys* • *Original surveys (CAWI, CATI, CAPI)* • *Conjoint survey experiments* • *Social media analysis*

Supply side: Case studies of key decisions in each crisis. We propose to study decision-making at the supranational, transnational and the national level. Keeping feasibility constraints in mind with respect to the national level, we stop short of including all member states in our study. Instead, we shall focus on 16 member states, 12 of which have already been closely studied by POLCON project:

- *Northern Europe:* UK, Ireland, Sweden and Finland
- *Western continental Europe:* France, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands
- *Southern Europe:* Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain
- *Central- and Eastern Europe:* Poland, Hungary, Romania and Latvia

The four regions represent distinct contexts with regard to EU policy making in various policy domains: countries with debtor/creditor positions in international capital flows, countries inside/outside the Eurozone, countries being on the sending/receiving ends of inter-EU migrant flows, being net contributors/recipients Thus we argue that this regional perspective is crucial for case selection.

As indicated in *Table 4*, the case studies have three general tasks:
- the reconstruction of the decision-making process at the three levels (national, transnational and supranational), which includes the identification of the key policy proposals and of the key decisions
- the mapping of the conflicts (the relevant issues per proposal) and
- the identification of the relevant coalitions (the positions of the actors on the relevant issues and the salience of these issues for them) – country, epistemic, sectoral coalitions.

For these tasks we can build on the experience of the EMU-Choices project (Degner and Leuffen, 2016), a Horizon 2020 project that is currently studying the EU decision-making on EMU reform proposals during the Euro crisis (from 2010 to 2014), which has, in turn, built on the experience of the previous DEU project (see Thomson, Stokman *et al.*, 2006; Thomson, Arregui *et al.*, 2012). Following the lead of these projects, we shall identify and select the key policy proposals using the EurLex database (for proposals on secondary legislation), the European Council's conclusions (for primary law changes and strategic policy papers). For the identification of the key conflicts and actor configurations at the European and the transnational level we rely on Euractiv.com, a website that has closely covered EU affairs since 1999 and whose archive can be accessed out of charge. The results we obtain based on the **analysis of these documents**, we shall then attempt to validate with **expert interviews**. We assume that the relevant experts for EU decision-making can primarily be found among desk officers (especially of the countries holding the rotating Presidency of the Council in the period covered as they were responsible for brokering compromises among member states) and higher-ranking officials in the national ministries concerned by the crisis, in the member states'

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permanent representations in Brussels, and in the Commission (including the permanent secretariat of the Euro Group), the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, the ECB and the responsible EP rapporteurs.

We shall pay particular attention to the developments and coalitions in the transnational arena. This arena is highly important, but it is informal and opaque, factual information (the "known unknowns": Janning and Zunnenberg, 2017) is hard to find and collect. **The construction of a data base on this arena will be a major contribution of SOLID for the advancement of empirical knowledge about the EU.** In addition to direct interviews with key experts, we will in fact collect data (and possibly construct a coded dataset) on the main and observable venues of transnational contacts and on the dynamics taking place within them:

- bilateral or multilateral governmental official summits outside the EU framework;
- pre-summit party meetings of EU leaders;
- formal and informal member state groupings (Visegrad, Euromed, Nordic cooperation etc.);
- bilateral or multilateral dialogue infrastructures (e.g. the German-Italian *Sprach Forum* or the various instruments of the Franco-German relationship etc.);
- the production of official "joint" papers and non-papers and other unofficial collaborative texts issued by a set of member state governments sharing interests and ideas on pertinent topics and issues.

We also cover the dynamics of policy crisis and crisis politics at the national level. Important policy decisions in the crises covered have been taken at the national level. For the reconstruction of decisions in the selected member states, we envisage a parallel procedure to that described at the supranational level: we shall identify key proposals using national legislative inventories. For the identification of the key conflicts and actor configurations we shall then rely on the **content analysis of a national quality newspaper in each country.** We shall also attempt to validate the results we obtain from these content analyses with relevant experts who will include the desk officers and higher ranking officials in the relevant ministries already mentioned, as well as policy experts from the national parliaments.

The content analysis of the national newspapers will also allow us to reconstruct the public face of the policy-specific debates. This is important for linking policy-making on the supply-side to demand-side constraints. The public's perceptions of the policy-making processes and their outcomes are shaped by the information it receives from the media about these processes. Together with the analysis of **public speeches by key policy-makers,** the analysis of the newspapers will allow us to study the framing of the policy-specific crisis for the public by the key actors. A systematic comparison of the newspaper accounts in the different countries will reveal to what extent the public in the different member-states was confronted with the same type of crisis or whether it was given an entirely idiosyncratic account of the crisis.

The content analysis of national newspapers in 14 different languages poses an important methodological challenge which we would like to address with innovative natural language processing (**NLP**) tools. We intend to build on the experience of the POLCON project and develop procedures which will allow us to efficiently identify and code relevant articles.

Based on the national newspapers, we shall also attempt to reconstruct the interaction dynamics of the crisis politics during particularly important episodes of the crisis at the EU and at the national levels. For this analysis we can build on the experience of both the POLCON and the REScEU project. Both projects have developed **manual procedures for coding the interaction dynamics of contentious episodes** (see Hutter and Kriesi, 2017a; Tortola, 2017). For the proposed project, these procedures are promising, but they need to be further developed. Thus, the POLCON procedure is only taking into account the interactions between three stylized coalitions – the government, the challengers, and 'third parties'. With only three types of actors, it is not sufficiently complex for the purposes of the proposed project. Moreover, it does not take into account the coalition formation, i.e. the constitution of the actors. The REScEU procedure started in turn with very ambitious objectives and a highly articulated codebook, which has however shown various limitations during the probing phase. It is the ambition of the proposed project to develop the coding procedure for contentious episodes exploiting the synergic experience of the two previous projects.

Supply side: General configuration of parties. As already indicated, parties have a double function: they represent the citizens and they govern, they are responsive to the citizens and responsible to a large number of national and inter-national stakeholders. Their unique contribution to the development of modern democracy was that they combined these two crucial roles (representation and government) into one. For the time being, this holds at the national, but not at the EU-level. As a result, national parties are the key actors

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for forging electoral, governmental and country coalitions in the multi-level governance structure of the EU. To study the party configurations in the different countries, we focus on a **secondary analysis of national election results and party manifesto data** provided by the Comparative Manifesto Project (MRG/CMP; https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/), as well as on the study of the **party competition in national election campaigns** with the help of *core sentence analysis* (**CSA**) (Hutter and Kriesi, 2017b). For the period from 2000 to 2015, the proposed project can rely on the data on national election campaigns that has been collected by the POLCON project in 14 out of the 16 countries we intend to cover in the proposed project. For the years 2016-2024, this data-set will have to be updated by the new project. Moreover, two countries (Finland and Sweden) will have to be added for the period from 2000 to 2015.

Demand side: general and policy-specific surveys. The demand side acts as a constraint on policy-makers: under "constraining dissensus" (Hooghe and Marks, 2009), the policy-makers need to take into account public opinion, anticipating the citizens' reactions at the next elections. As Jean-Claude Juncker famously observed: "We all know what to do, but we don't know how to get re-elected once we have done it". We attempt to get at these demand-side constraints with **general and policy-specific surveys.** In terms of general surveys, we build on the European Social Surveys (ESS) and Eurobarometer surveys, as well as other existing surveys. In terms of policy-specific surveys, we shall build on the surveys in public archives (such as GESIS or FORS) and on surveys of private research institutes (such as IFOP in France, Pew Research Center or Bertelsmann Foundation). In particular, we shall identify and reanalyse surveys that have been provided by previous European projects. These surveys allow us to study the development of attitudinal constraints (e.g. trust in national governments/parliaments/EU parliament; satisfaction with democracy, with the economy; attitudes towards European integration, national vs. European identity; EU and austerity, the best actor to deal with the crisis, responsibility for austerity; the EU is going in the right/wrong direction to exit from the crisis). In addition, we can rely on **regular national surveys** which provide us with approval ratings for governments and vote intentions for parties. In POLCON, we have already built a fairly extensive database on some of these variables and we plan to immediately update this at the start of the proposed project. REScEU has in its turn not only conducted two original surveys (mass and elite), but is also already constructing a comprehensive database containing similar questions in previous surveys in order to allow for longitudinal analyses.

For the policy-specific surveys, we also need to build on existing surveys, since the four crises we start out with have all been repeatedly studied over the last years. In this respect, too, we shall build on surveys in public archives and in private survey institutes. In addition, **we shall conduct our own surveys,** building on the REScEU experience with online surveys. We plan to run **several cross-national survey waves** and a number of conjoint survey experiments in a subset of countries. The goal of the surveys is to monitor public opinion trends in all the 16 countries covered by SOLID, with questions that tap both general attitudes towards crises and crises responses. Another module will be devoted to measure protest and voting behaviour. Others yet will focus on political preferences on several issues, cultural orientations and social dispositions. The surveys will be conducted in all the sample countries along the time span of the project. This research design will allow us to measure attitudes on specific, unpredictable future crises. The main surveys might be accompanied by specific initiatives through the more flexible online methodology shortly before and shortly after any predictable "shock" (for instance national election or referendums) in the countries of interest and as shortly after as possible after an unpredictable one (such as a terrorist attack).

For the study of specific demand side constraints, we need to know the preferences and priorities of citizens with respect to different elements of the policies related to the specific crises as well as how these priorities map onto partisan choices. **Conjoint survey experiments** constitute the second pillar of our own surveys. This methodology – already used in experimental psychology and in marketing, but only recently employed in political science and public opinion studies – would allow us to make in-depth investigations of policy trade-offs and ways out of the resulting conflicts of interest (framing, compensation, package-dealing to name a few). We build on innovative recent studies which have included a similar design in their surveys, so as to capture the importance of policy trade-offs (Bechtel and Scheve, 2013; Hainmueller *et al.*, 2014; Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2015; Bansak *et al.*, 2016; Gallego and Marx, 2016; Häusermann *et al.*, 2016). In such surveys, respondents are asked to choose between two policy packages and to indicate how likely they are to support each of the proposals. Through randomization and a large number of pairwise comparisons, conjoint analysis allows one to identify – and quantify – the causal effect that individual policy elements have on support for a whole policy package. These experiments will be conducted in a subset of countries

included in the general survey (we think of France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the UK).

Demand side: social media analysis. In addition to the collection of original survey data, we also plan to collect **"big data"** from the so-called blogosphere and undertake an **analysis of social media**. The REScEU Project has developed substantial expertise on the topic thanks to the monitoring and research carried out by its observatory: **EuVisions**. Currently, EuVisions has addressed three main dimensions of the EU "Twitter-sphere" – the salience across borders of some key political event/development (horizontal Europeanisation), the level of politicisation among the national masses and the political elites or particular issues, and the presence and transnational scope of a number of event-specific discussions (e.g. the #soteu hashtag). In addition, large datasets have been collected on social media activities related to national elections (at the mass and at the elite level), on Brexit, Catalonia and some aspects of the refugee crisis. SOLID will extend the analysis to Facebook as well. EuVisions' real-time or historical data on "social media statements" and other similar "voice manifestations" of key policymakers (and the political elite more broadly) will complement the content analysis of newspapers. Furthermore, social media analysis will also be a precious instrument to observe in real time demand side developments, for instance after certain policy-decisions have become salient in the public debate. This kind of research will interact with conjoint survey experiments in various ways, providing inputs, seeking confirmation or just support conventional survey data analysis.

As far as data protection is concerned, both for surveys and for social media analysis, we will fully comply with national and EU legislation. The ethic self-assessment for the proposal is attached as technical annex.

Demand side: protest event analysis. To study the mobilization of challengers, we plan to rely on protest event analysis **(PEA)**. The POLCON project has pioneered a comprehensive collection of protest events in 30 EU countries for the period 2001-2015. SOLID would have to update this data-set for the years 2016-2024. For this purpose, we could also build on the effort of the POLCON project to automatize data collection for PEA. This data collection is essentially composed of two steps – identification of documents (e.g. newswires) containing information on protest events, and coding of the events. The POLCON project succeeded in automatizing the first step, but not the second. In SOLID, we would pursue the **automatization of event extraction**, a procedure which also holds out a lot of promise for the content analysis of newspapers, which we plan to use for the case studies on the supply side.

Methods and techniques for data analysis. The classic way to analyse our case studies is, of course, process tracing, i.e. to provide a systematic narrative for each case study. In SOLID, we intend to provide such narratives. Methodologically, we aim at elaborating an "**enhanced" form of process tracing** programmatically framed to capture mechanism-based "causal production" (Groff and Ruth, 2017). An "applied ontologist" will be recruited to develop this innovative methodology. Substantially, we plan to go **beyond standard case narratives** in two directions. On the one hand, we intend to provide systematic analyses of the different types of coalitions involved by using network analysis. The nodes in the **network analysis** we have in mind will be the different actors in the decision-making processes, the ties between the actors will be constituted by cooperative and conflictive actions. Such networks can be constructed for an entire crisis, as well as for specific episodes during a given crisis. Importantly, the characteristics of a given coalition in a given network (e.g. its centrality, closeness or betweenness: see Hanneman and Riddle, 2005), can then be used as independent determinants of the dynamics of the episode/the entire crisis. On the other hand, we will analyze the dynamics of an episode/the entire crisis by relying on **sequence analysis (and event history analysis)**. Sequence analysis has been used in the social sciences since the 1980s, but it has developed extensively during the past two decades (Halpin, 2013; Blanchard *et al*., 2014). Finally, for the study of demand-side constraints related to public opinion and preferences (gathered through existing and original surveys) we will also employ **state-of-the art multi-level modelling survey data techniques.**

Organizational structure, dissemination. SOLID is divided into two main phases which are preceded by preparatory phase and followed by a concluding phase (see *Table 5*): in **Phase I** we plan to study the four crises that we have already selected. In **Phase II,** we propose to extend our study to a set of crises, which will develop in the course of the project. Potential candidates for such an extension include the separatist crisis in Catalonia, the security crisis (terrorism) and the "values crisis" or "rule of law crisis" involving Hungary and Poland and their breach of fundamental democratic rules. For the time being, it is not yet clear how far they will develop into full-fledged crises at the European level. Moreover, we do not know yet

which crises will hit Europe in addition to these potential crises during the course of the SOLID project. The idea would be to apply the tools developed for our study of the four crises to the study of ongoing crises.

Table 5: Project phases, products and dissemination

	THEORY BUILDING	DATA COLLECTION	DATA ANALYSIS	PUBLICATIONS	DISSEMINATION
Preparatory phase (year 1)	*Elaboration of theory and detailed hypotheses*	*Detailed research design*	*Identification, elaboration and probing of new techniques*	*Theory paper(s) on the EU's political crisis*	*Website preparation*
Phase I: data collection (year 2)		*Data collection on the four crises*	*Exploratory data analysis*	*Working papers on the four crises*	*Revised "Euvisions" Data bases New nlp tools*
Phase I: data analysis (year 3)			*Data analysis*	*Journal articles; First joint book publication*	*Mid-term conference Public event Euvisions*
Phase II: data collection (year 4)		*Data collection on additional, ongoing crises*		*Journal articles (Phase I), wor-king papers (Phase II)*	*Euvisions Data bases*
Phase II: data analysis (year 5)			*Data analysis*	*Journal articles*	*Euvisions*
Concluding phase (year 6)				*Journal articles Second joint book publication*	*Final Conference Public event*

SOLID's expected outcome on the empirical front is a new data infrastructure for the study of decision-making processes in times of crises, which builds on already existing data bases (e.g. EMU Choices, the POLCON PEA and CSA datasets, the REScEU surveys and social media datasets), extends them and integrates them into a much richer data base that will be made accessible on the project's website. In addition, SOLID hopes to innovate in terms of NLP tools allowing the social scientists to collect data on policy-making processes more efficiently than is currently the case. SOLID's main outputs will be contributions to the literature in the form of journal articles and at least two joint book publications.

In terms of dissemination, SOLID will benefit from the experience of REScEU, which has set up its own website EuVisions, which will be adapted to better suit the new project. We shall also hold a mid-term and a final conference and organize parallel public events on these occasions. All three PIs and the postdocs will contribute to the public debate by public talks, blogs, and newspaper articles.

For each phase, we distinguish between **shared tasks**, which are shared by the three teams, and **special tasks**, which are attributed to one of the three teams on behalf of the whole project. The key tasks of the supply side – case studies – and of the demand side – general and policy-specific surveys – are shared tasks. As shown in *Table 6*, each one of the three teams will be responsible for one of the four crises: Milano will be responsible for the social crisis, Florence for the refugee crisis and the LSE for the EA crisis, while the fourth crisis – Brexit – will be studied by the three teams together. The special tasks attributed to individual teams are social media analysis (Milan), analysis of election campaigns, election outcomes, governments formation and protest events (Florence), and analysis of events and developments in the transnational sphere government formation (LSE).

The three PI will be equally involved in the overall scientific direction on the project, assisted by the organizational infrastructures of their respective institutions. Although each PI will take responsibility for a different cluster of shared tasks, we envisage a **constant collaboration**, through Skype conversations (the PI have already successfully experienced this mode of interaction) as well as regular meetings in person.

The PIs also plan to jointly undertake elite interviews with key informants (including former Prime Ministers or Presidents). POLCON and REScEU have already experienced **"joint team meetings"** including all the collaborators in order to share hypotheses, research designs and findings. SOLID will do the same, envisaging a joint team meeting three times per year, one in each of the involved institutions.

Table 6: Organizational structure of the research

	UNIMI	EUI	LSE
Shared tasks			
Supply side: case studies	Social crisis Brexit	Refugee crisis Brexit	Euro-area crisis Brexit
Demand side	Surveys Text coding Big data collection	Surveys Text coding Big data collection	Surveys Text coding Big data collection
Special tasks			
Supply side	Discourse analysis of public speeches, Causal tracing	Coding of election campaigns Party manifesto data and Core sentence analysis Government formation	Official and other policy documents, grey materials, dataset on the transnational sphere (events and documents)
Demand side	Social media (Twitter, Facebook)	Electoral results Protest event analysis	

The collective joint meetings will be preceded by a **full day tri-lateral meeting** of the PIs. Several postdocs and some Ph.D. students will be recruited by each of the PIs (see budget). The recruitments of the postdocs will be made through public competition publicized by the three universities and relevant websites, including EURAXESS. Equality of opportunity (for nationality, gender, ethnicity and so on) will be ensured for all recruitments throughout the project.

An **additional participant** will be added to the three Universities: the **Centro di Ricerca e Documentazione Luigi Einaudi**, based in Turin (www.centroeinaudi.it). The Centro Einaudi already successfully participated as partner institution to the REScEU project, under the overall supervision and responsibility of its PI, Maurizio Ferrera. In the course of REScEU the Centro Einaudi has hosted and managed **EuVisions**, has contributed to social media analysis and to the organization of surveys. This organization has proved to be a flexible and reactive partner. It has specific and established competences in carrying out applied research and valorizing its results *vis-à-vis* a wide constituency of potential users and stakeholders; editorial and publishing experience; the ability to effectively relate with the press and other media. SOLID plans to assign to Centro Einaudi the tasks related to **dissemination, social media analysis and the organization of the surveys.** All three PIs will supervise the activities of the Centro Einaudi, delegating to Maurizio Ferrera the responsibility of practically and continuously liaising with it. In terms of dissemination, SOLID will benefit from the experience of REScEU, which has set up its own website EuVisions, which will be adapted to better suit the new project. We shall also hold a mid-term and a final conference and organize parallel public events on these occasions. All three PIs and the postdocs will contribute to the public debate by public talks, blogs, and newspaper articles.

The expected long-term impact of the project

As already mentioned above, SOLID aims at breaking **new scientific paths** by integrating different disciplinary approaches and new research fields. This will allow us to bring under a broad and coherent framework political supply and demand and their links via coalitions in the three key arenas of EU policy and politics, i.e. the supranational the transnational and the national arenas. We expect that our framework will have an **academic impact also beyond EU studies,** by providing new concepts and theoretical propositions for the distinct and wider fields of political sociology, comparative politics, policy analysis and political economy. In other words, **SOLID will go against the mainstream** of disciplinary specialism and perspectivism. New grounds will also be explored in terms of **methods** through the cross fertilization of existing techniques of political research with those of other disciplines. In particular, we will cast bridges towards **linguistics** and its frontiers in terms of natural language processing; and towards **applied social ontology**. In this latter case, the goal is that of aligning the epistemology and methodology of political research with frontier conceptions of causality in the philosophy of science, and in particular causa realism and causal production. In **substantive terms**, our general theory of political crisis, valuable as such, will provide a more adequate account of that politicization of the European integration process which occupies the center stage in academic and political debates about the EU and its future. The **huge mass of empirical data** will greatly enrich the knowledge base currently available in archives and data bases on European political developments. As our integrative approach includes policy analysis, we expect to be able to offer **useful insights for European politicians** who will confront future crises. In line with the Weberian perspective on the relationship between science and politics, we hope in particular to provide policy makers with new knowledge and awareness about the conditions under which they have to choose and which affect the effectiveness of their choices.

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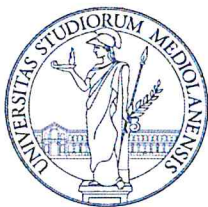
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO

Object: Commitment of the host institution for ERC Synergy call 2018

The *Università degli Studi di Milano*, which is the *corresponding applicant legal entity*, confirms its intention to sign a supplementary agreement with Professor Maurizio Ferrera in which the obligations listed below will be addressed should the proposal entitled "SOLID. Policy Crisis and Crisis Politics. Sovereignty, Solidarity and Identity in the EU post 2008" be retained.

The corresponding applicant legal entity confirms also its association with and support to the Synergy project, which involves the following Principal Investigators:

Corresponding PI: Maurizio Ferrera
PI 2: Hanspeter Kriesi
PI 3: Waltraud Schelkle

The fact that the corresponding applicant legal entity confirms it association with and support to the group's Synergy project does not imply an obligation to contractually engage all of the Principal Investigators.

Performance obligations of the *applicant legal entity* that will become the beneficiary of the H2020 ERC Grant Agreement (hereafter referred to as the Agreement), should the proposal be retained and the preparation of the Agreement be successfully concluded:

The following obligations apply <u>only</u> to the Principal Investigators, hereinafter referred as the PI(s), who will be engaged by the corresponding applicant legal entity.

The corresponding applicant legal entity commits itself to hosting and engaging the *PI(s)* for the duration of the grant to:
a) ensure that the work will be performed under the scientific guidance of the *PI(s)* who are expected to devote *at least 30% of their total working time* to the ERC-funded project (action) and spend at least 50% of their total working time in an EU Member State or associated country.

b) carry out the work to be performed, as it will be identified in Annex 1 of the Agreement, taking into consideration the specific role of the *PI(s.)*

c) enter — before signature of the Agreement — into a '*supplementary agreement*' with the *PI(s)*, that specifies the obligation of the corresponding *applicant legal entity* to meet its obligations under the Agreement;

d) provide *the PI(s)* with a copy of the signed Agreement;

e) guarantee the *PI(s)* scientific independence, in particular for the:
    i) use of the budget to achieve the scientific objectives;
    ii) authority to publish as senior author and invite as co-authors those who have contributed substantially to the work;

iii) preparation of scientific reports for the project (action);

iv) selection and supervision of the other *team members* (hosted *and engaged* by the corresponding *applicant legal entity* or other legal entities), in line with the profiles needed to conduct the research and in accordance with the corresponding *applicant legal entity's* usual management practices;

v) possibility to apply independently for funding;

vi) access to appropriate space and facilities for conducting the research;

f) provide — during the implementation of the project (action) — research support to the *PI(s)* and the team members (regarding infrastructure, equipment, access rights, products and other services necessary for conducting the research);

g) support the *PI(s)* and provide administrative assistance, in particular for the:

i) general management of the work and their team;

ii) scientific reporting, especially ensuring that the team members send their scientific results to the PI(s);

iii) financial reporting, especially providing timely and clear financial information;

iv) application of the corresponding applicant legal entity's usual management practices;

v) general logistics of the project (action);

vi) access to the electronic exchange system (see Article 52 of the Agreement);

h) inform the *PI(s)* immediately in writing of any events or circumstances likely to affect the Agreement (see Article 17 of the Agreement);

i) ensure that the *PI(s)* enjoys adequate:

i) conditions for annual, sickness and parental leave;

ii) occupational health and safety standards;

iii) insurance under the general social security scheme, such as pension rights;

j) allow the transfer of the Agreement to a new beneficiary ('portability'; see Article 56a of the Agreement).

k) take all measures to implement the principles set out in the Commission Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers[1] - in particular regarding working conditions, transparent recruitment processes based on merit and career development – and ensure that the *PI(s)*, researchers and third parties involved in the project (action) are aware of them.

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[1] Commission Recommendation 2005/251/EC of 11 March 2005 on the European Charter for Researchers and on a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (OJ L 75, 22.3.2005, p. 67).

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO

For the host institution (Università degli Studi di Milano)

Date 0 8 NOV 2017

Name and Function
Gianluca Vago; Rector

E-mail of Legal Representative
sportello.ricerca@unimi.it;

Signature of Legal Representative

IL RE...
Gianluca Vago

Stamp of the corresponding host institution (Università degli Studi di Milano)

ERC Synergy Grant 2018
Ethic self-assessment

POLICY CRISIS AND CRISIS POLITICS.

SOVEREIGNTY, SOLIDARITY AND IDENTITY IN THE EU POST 2008

SOLID

Name of the corresponding PI (cPI):   Maurizio Ferrera

Name of the corresponding Host Institution (cHI): University of Milan

List of the other participating PIs: Hanspeter Kriesi, European University Institute, Florence

                                                Waltraud Schelkle, London School of Economics, London

Proposal duration in months: 72 months

1.   **Does your research involve personal data collection and/or processing? Yes**

Surveys

The research involves human data collection insofar as it aims at analyzing public opinions in sixteen EU member states. Data will be collected through one or more waves of a cross-country opinion survey aims at investigating citizens' attitudes towards the causes, the evolution and the consequences of political crises and specific critical junctures that invested the European Union and the member states in the period under analysis. It must be noted that these surveys will involve adult volunteers (18 years old or older) and, given the research topic, no information will be required or asked for about the health conditions of the volunteers.

National samples will be randomly selected and will be representative of the adult population in 16 EU member states (Ireland, UK, Sweden, Finland, Germany, France, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Hungary, Latvia, Romania, Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal). The activity will be subcontracted by the Additional Participant (Centro Einaudi) to private specialized companies conducting public opinion research.

The private companies to which the fieldwork will be subcontracted shall comply with the main following requirements: (1) membership to ESOMAR, the world Association for Social, Opinion and Market Research and/or to the corresponding national Association (e.g. Assirm in Italy, MRS in the UK, ADM in Germany), (2) adherence with the ethical codes and professional standards of the above mentioned Associations, (3) and preferably possession of a valid quality system certification in agreement with ISO standards (ISO 9001, ISO 20252).

The contract agreements will make sure that detailed information on data collection will be included in the contract and that procedures will fully comply with national and EU legislation and, in particular with European Directives 95/46/EC and 2002/58/EC (collectively the "Data Protection Directives") and all laws

implementing the Data Protection Directives in each country within EU bound to be involved in the fieldwork (and any amendments and successors to the same).

The collected data shall be supplied to and received by the project participants in anonymous and aggregate form.

As regards privacy/confidentiality, it will be ensured that respondents' personal identity is protected along the whole process, from data collection to storage, protection, retention and destruction. In particular, respondents' personal data shall be readily separated from questionnaires as soon as quality controls are performed. **The data collected will be then treated and processed anonymously, aggregately and in accordance with the statistical methodologies that will be used for the scientific purpose of the project. In every research outputs using public opinion data the total anonymity of single respondents will be protected.**

The templates for Informed Consent Forms and Information Sheets in the languages used for all personal, phone and online interviews will be made available once the undertaking companies are chosen and the content of the questions defined. Full compliance with existing European and national privacy regulations will be assured.

In compliance with the above mentioned Data Protection Directives in force in each EU country involved in the project when collecting personal information from respondents', the Informed Consent Forms and Information Sheets shall ensure that **respondents are aware of the purpose of the collection and that respondents' personal identity is withheld from third parties, being treated anonymously and aggregately only for statistical purposes**.

Moreover, as regards the use of data, the Informed Consent Forms and Information Sheets shall specify that respondents' personal information for the project shall be collected for specified research purposes and not used in any manner incompatible with these purposes. Collected data will be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose of the research for which they are collected and/or further processed, and preserved no longer than it is required for the purpose for which the information was collected or further processed.

Finally, the Informed Consent Forms and Information Sheets shall specify that the respondents are entitled to exercise their rights not to participate in the research project, to withdraw from the research interview at any time, to require that their personal data are not made available to others, and to delete or rectify incorrect personal data which are held on them.

A report presenting the main results obtained from the survey will be prepared and made freely and publicly available on the official website of the project. At the end of the project, datasets with survey data collected during the fieldwork and all the documentation associated to them (questionnaires, codebooks) will be stored in one of the internationally validated repositories for academic data (such as Gesis or ICPSR) to allow other scholars to reproduce our analyses and/or conduct further research.

Social Media Analysis

SOLID also aims at analyzing EU leaders' views and public opinion's political attitudes towards the EU. This will be done by the means of Social Media Analysis (SMA) techniques. SMA consists in an automated and computer-assisted extraction and analysis of knowledge from unstructured texts circulating freely and openly on the net (with an emphasis on social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook and Reddit, as well as forums, You Tube, blogs etc.). Only fully public web-sites and blogs will be accessed; all the existing data used for secondary analysis will come exclusively from social media public profiles which are "public domain". As SMA involves the collection of existing data, it has to abide by the stated terms of use enforced by each social networking platform/blog. Consequently no privacy or copyright issues are involved. The

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data will be received in anonymous form in electronic files. As the project's exclusive interest is on political attitudes on EU issues, we expect that none of the accessed public texts will have been produced by children.

Data processing by the means of SMA involves - among others - Natural Language Processing techniques, a set of semi-supervised methods that implies the classification of an initial corpus of texts by human coders. This allows to manually screen the texts to be sure that they refer exclusively to the topics of interest for the analysis. Also, whenever demographic information of the users is provided by the social networking sites, we will always make use of this information to drop from the analysis all identified underage users.

In compliance with the current national and EU regulations, all data will be treated anonymously and in aggregate form, with the exception of data related to public figures and organisations whose information is intended to be widely disseminated.

Results of data processing and interpretation will be presented anonymously and in aggregate form only, with no identification of individuals, with the exception of data related to public figures and organisations whose information is intended to be widely disseminated.

The PI confirms that:

1) for the SMA only fully public profiles will be accessed (i.e., public profiles on Twitter, Facebook, Reddit, Blogs, etc.);

2) only texts referring specifically to EU-related topics will be collected for the analysis, while pictures, videos, and any other files posted by the users on their public profiles will be dismissed.

2.   Does your research involve further processing of previously collected personal data? Yes

Surveys

The research involves secondary analyses of previously collected personal data via public opinion surveys. The research employs the most important cross-country public opinion surveys conducted in Europe and collecting data on individuals' political preferences, general attitudes towards politics, diffuse support for national and EU institutions and specific support for policy issues at the EU and national level. The project will look into, among the others, different waves of the Eurobarometer, the European Social Survey, the European Election Studies, the International Social Survey Programme, the European Values Study, the World Values Survey, the EUEngage project, the REScEU project.

All the above mentioned survey data have been collected by institutions or academic research projects – via private specialized companies conducting public opinion research – for scientific purposes and in accordance to all laws implementing the Data Protection Directives in each country within EU bound to be involved in the fieldwork (and any amendments and successors to the same).

Data are stored in academic repositories and provided in anonymous and aggregate form. As regards privacy/confidentiality, research projects and institutions who had commissioned the data collection ensured that respondents' personal identity had been protected along the whole process, from data collection to storage, protection and retention.

The data collected will be then treated and processed anonymously, aggregately and in accordance with the statistical methodologies that will be used for the scientific purposes of the project. More precisely, secondary analyses of these kind of data aim at investigating public reactions to the most relevant crises that invested Europe and member states and opinions regarding the actual or potential policies and initiatives that governments implemented or could implement to face the consequences of the crises.

Social Media Analysis

The research will also involve secondary analyses of previously collected personal data coming from social networking platforms and blogs. The research employs the most relevant data corpuses collected, among others, by the REScEU project and the Centre for Analysis of Social Media (CASM/DEMOS). Such data have been collected by institutions or academic research projects for scientific purposes.

Data are stored in academic repositories and provided in anonymous and aggregate form. As regards privacy/confidentiality, research projects and institutions involved in the data collection process ensured that only fully public profiles have been accessed, and that collected data have been treated anonymously and in aggregated form, with the exception of data related to public figures and organisations whose information is intended to be widely disseminated.

 The data collected will be then treated and processed anonymously, aggregately and in accordance with the statistical methodologies that will be used for the scientific purposes of the project. More precisely, secondary analyses of these kind of data aim at investigating public reactions to the most relevant political crises that invested Europe and member states and opinions regarding the actual or potential policies and initiatives that governments implemented or could implement to face the consequences of the crises.
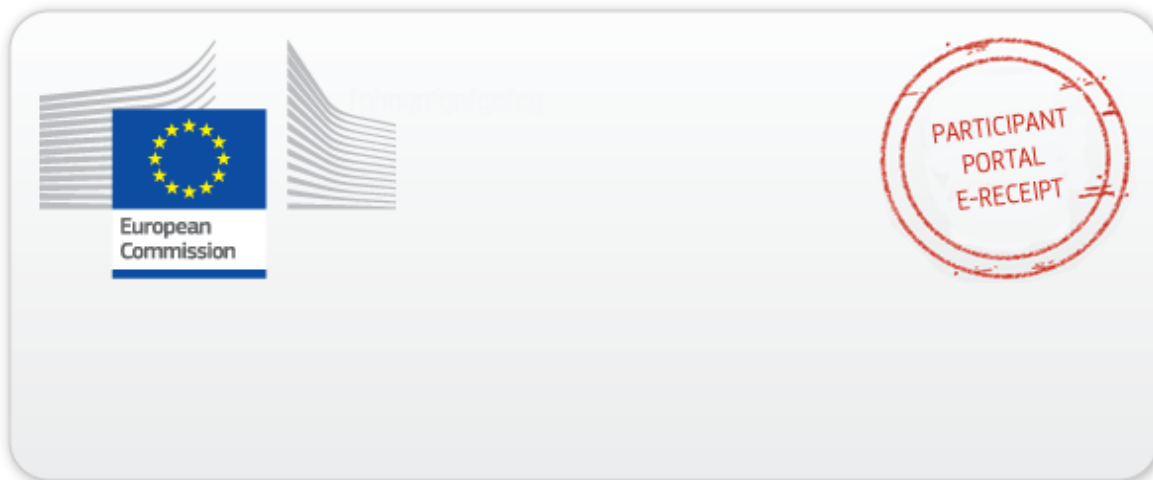
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