A Solidary European Union

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I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work, based on my personal research and that I have acknowledged and cited all sources used in its preparation. I also certify that this dissertation has not been submitted for assessment in any other institution and that I have not plagiarized the work of others.

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1. Introduction

In September 2020, the infamous camp of Moria on the Greek island of Lesvos burnt down, leaving 12,000 refugees without shelter, personal belongings and any sort of protection in the middle of a global pandemic (Kingsley, 2020). Sadly, what seemed like yet another climax of years of highly contentious migration politics in the European Union failed to lead to any meaningful change of strategy once again. Between 2014 and November 2020 alone, almost 21,000 migrants are recorded to have died attempting to cross the Mediterranean (Statista, 2020), with many further missing bodies never having been found. The dangerous attempts to cross continue, and the dire situation of those who wait for their turn, for example in Libya, is well-known. As of January 2021, the news reports of the devastating situation of many thousands of people seeking asylum in the EU continue, this time also from Bosnia-Herzegovina, where just next to another section of the EU's external frontier, thousands of refugees are struggling to cross the Croatian border. From there, they are brutally and illicitly sent back,[1] some staying in the woods "[a]fter spending days in makeshift tents and containers amid freezing weather and snowstorms" and with "many migrants and refugees staying at the Lipa camp near the border with Croatia (...) complaining of respiratory and skin infections" (Bathke, 2021).

The poor treatment of refugees is not only inhumane, it frequently amounts to violations of the European Convention on Human Rights, as many, including EU Commissioner for Human Rights Dunja Mijatović, argue (EU-Council, 2020). Clearly, not granting individuals the rights they are entitled to means breaching the law, and justice needs to be served. But it is also evident that the matter does not end with this insight. After all, the violation of rights is not coming to a halt, and the suffering continues. Justice seems far away, even though in theory every individual may be entitled to it. In order to solve this problem or

[1] So-called "pushbacks" are common practice. For information on this and other highly problematic practices of the EU's border agency, Frontex, see Douo et al. (2021).

at least improve the situation, one frequently hears that something more is needed, something to bring immediate relief, create attention, and eventually lead to justice. To many, solidarity is the answer – or, at least, part of it. Solidarity with the refugees in need, solidarity among the EU member states in distributing individuals and costs, solidarity from the societies that receive them. In fact, the popularity of the term "solidarity" is striking, not only in the example of refugees. Already in the aftermath of the eurozone crisis and most recently during the COVID-19 pandemic, the term is used by all kinds of different agents, and interestingly, it is to be found in the EU treaties as a core value of the union (cf. TEU, Title I, Article 2). A word that was frequently associated with political movements around class struggles, solidarity has become an acceptable term for everyone, even for conservative politicians, to use abundantly. Examples can be found almost on a daily basis. To former Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, it was an act of solidarity to transport Portuguese patients to Austrian hospitals in order to take pressure off the Portuguese healthcare system in the third wave of COVID infections (Kurz, 2021). Peter Altmaier, the German minister of Economic Affairs at that time, called financial support from the government for Germans working in the cultural sector a measure of solidarity, explained by the fact that the pandemic left many without work (Bundesregierung, 2020a), while the then-minister of health Jens Spahn said that "without solidarity, there is no Europe!", referring to uniform travel rules within the EU during the pandemic, as well as the distribution of vaccines (Bundesregierung, 2020b).

One may praise frequent calls for us to be concerned with what lies outside our immediate sphere of individual experience, especially given that social and material fragmentation has caused high levels of inequality and thus constitutes a threat and dangerous ill to many societies in the 21st century. At the same time, appeals to solidarity have also come to gain some notoriety. Firstly, it is often unclear what is meant by "solidarity", especially when used in a way that seems synonymous to related terms such as help or charity. Secondly, one may wonder whether the *appeal* to solidarity is so attractive precisely because an appeal is "just" an appeal – without legal mechanisms for enforcement or even strong moral pressure. Seen from a different angle, those who claim to act in solidarity can adapt a posture of generosity towards others that can make one doubt the noble intentions behind it. Lastly, solidarity – a

notion that enjoys many positive connotations – is also claimed by people whose aims cannot be considered worthy of any praise. In light of such (ab)uses, one is left to wonder about the criteria for the "right" kind of solidarity.

Let me return to the example of EU immigration in order to exemplify how this ambivalence is directly relevant: As refugees attempting to enter EU territory, individuals are in the overwhelming majority of cases unable to defend themselves legally. Many times, they are concerned with mere matters of survival: first, escaping the horrors of war and poverty. They then must avoid drowning in the sea or getting raped. They must receive enough to eat, try not to freeze and not get sick, especially in times of a global pandemic. Some may manage, at most, to protest against their condition in refugee camps and hope to attract the attention of the public. For justice to be attained and structural improvements to the whole issue of migration into the EU to be made, one could argue that they rely on solidarity from others. And there is no shortage of references to solidarity and actions that happen in the name of it. Consider these references: 1. The initiative "Solidarity Cities" unites the administrations of European cities who voluntarily want to help "manage the refugee situation", namely "by the principles of responsibility and solidarity", including receiving and hosting asylum seekers when capacities are available (SolidarityCities, 2021). 2. Activists and citizens in many EU countries organised a variety of campaigns (e.g. posters, banners, manifestations, petitions, open letters) during the COVID-19 pandemic using the hashtag "#leavenoonebehind" in order to express their disagreement with the treatment of refugees in places like the Moria refugee camp. 3. Portugal's Minister of Internal Administration at the time, Eduardo Cabrita, argued that "solidarity cannot be voluntary" when it comes to the distribution of refugees member states are expected to host (Reuters, 2021). 4. The NGO "Sea-Watch" organises rescue operations in the Mediterranean with the aim of creating a solidary Europe (Sea-Watch, 2021). 5. The European Commission proposed "return sponsorship" as a "new form of solidarity contribution that Member States can use to assist each other" (EC, 2020b), meaning that those countries unwilling to host refugees can help by paying for the deportation of others.

These examples of references to solidarity concerning refugees in the EU probably evoke different reactions, and it is hard to find commonalities in them. They are meant to

show how complex and confusing it is to speak of solidarity – not only more generally as a concept, but also as a maxim for action – particularly in the European Union. The aim of this dissertation is to look at both these aspects and to help find ways to understand solidarity and the role it can and should play in the EU. The omnipresence of solidarity per se, as a supposed remedy for a variety of problems, especially in the context of the EU, is one reasons why this topic is urgent. The many references made to solidarity underscore its importance in the EU, and one may wonder why and where this importance finds its foundation. After all, why not refer to moral duties, charity, justice or help rather than solidarity? Answering this question requires a better understanding of what solidarity means in the first place. There is a shortage of theoretical work on the topic, especially in comparison with the number of publications that discuss the related theme of justice, which extends throughout entire schools of thought – especially since the publication of John Rawls' work. Solidarity, most famously theorised in sociology by Émile Durkheim around the turn of the 20th century (2014 [1902]), cannot yet keep up with such an abundance of literature – particularly when it comes to normative ethics – although this is changing, as my discussion of previous literature in chapter 2 will show.

My motivation for writing this dissertation stems firstly from the aforementioned impression that calls for solidarity have become a ubiquitous companion to political matters of the recent years. This is particularly true when it comes to the European Union, a project that regularly seems to be on the edge of breaking apart, be it through Brexit and other nationalist surges or the unresolved tension between merely pursuing economic interests or building a common political and social union. I wonder why one of the wealthiest regions on the planet, with a terrible history of colonialism and global hegemony, resorts so frequently to this term and what its role may be in shaping the EU both internally and externally. In addition, there are two further aspects that guided my interest in the topic, one negative and one positive. The former is my conviction that using solidarity in the "wrong" way can lead to it becoming an empty signifier with, in the worst cases, grave political and social consequences. By "wrong" way I mean usages of solidarity that follow unethical ends or could be better captured with different terminology (and this surely applies to some of the references above, 1-5). The latter, positive reason is that I am convinced that solidarity already exists and bears potential for

greater societal cohesion, which would benefit everyone. Living in a more solidary manner in the way I will suggest throughout this dissertation can contribute to a less individualised society, as we have already seen in many contexts. Traditionally, joining together and acting in solidarity is a source of mutual recognition and continues to be one for many people. It may be encouraging to close this section by expressing my conviction that working towards a more cohesive society through connections and acts of solidarity does not have to be very difficult.

1.1 Research Questions

The disasters accompanying immigration into the EU do not merit much praise – nor do some of the cases referring to solidarity I outlined above. The reference to "return sponsorships", for instance, as a measure of EU solidarity, leaves an unpleasant aftertaste, being a measure that enables member states to buy themselves out of a situation that is decisive for the lives of human beings. But some other courses of action intuitively seem good or "the right thing to do": the initiatives of activists who rescue refugees, for example. But is what they do an act of solidarity? Or is saving people from drowning better described as assistance or help? Or is it both? The ambiguity of the term is not limited to the refugee example. In fact, solidarity overlaps frequently with other notions, and understanding it better is going to be part of my research. The puzzle I aim to work on can be phrased like this: First, sometimes solidarity may not be the (only) right term used or self-attributed by an agent for her actions, and second, solidarity is sometimes performed in a more desirable way than in other cases. This observation gives rise to the main question of the first part of my dissertation: **What is solidarity? And how can we interpret its normative connotation?** In other words, beyond defining solidarity, I argue that there is an evaluative element to it, and I include it in my definition. This will entail both excluding instances from amounting to solidarity as well as stipulating traits of *desirable* solidarity. The definition I propose characterizes solidarity as a relation between individuals outside the private sphere, as well as political action that corresponds to this

relation. The properties of both, which I will explain in detail, distinguish it from other related notions.

Apart from this conceptual question, the second part of this dissertation is concerned specifically with the EU as a space of and for solidarity. The many empirical examples of the (mis)use of the term solidarity in the EU already justify a more detailed examination. But apart from this, there is also reason to assess solidarity in the EU normatively speaking: on the one hand, the EU proclaims solidarity to be one of its core values in its treaties. On the other hand, the EU holds a particular position in the world as one of the largest economies and wealthiest regions, attributable at least in part to centuries of problematic expansionist politics and hegemonial aspirations both among its member countries and beyond. It is important to assess whether this position entails any particular responsibility for or predisposition to solidarity. The second part of my dissertation will therefore deal with the following research question: **On which basis and in which ways can solidarity – the way I understand it – be desirable for the European Union?** Put differently, I aim to understand what could help motivate and justify EU solidarity and what such solidarity could look like.

1.2 Research Gap

Previous contemporary literature on solidarity has so far not provided entirely satisfactory answers to the combination of questions I am interested in. As will become clear in the literature review in Chapter 2.4, much previous theoretical work either classifies solidarity into different types or deduces its meaning and role from specific contexts such as a political reality of oppression. Both approaches have their merits, and many of the resulting theses have been important sources of ideas for my dissertation, but they possess shortcomings, too. With regard to the classificatory works, establishing different types of solidarity can lead to confusion about what solidarity actually is, as they as they tend to mix definitions, insufficiently distinguish, and sometimes describe different phenomena altogether. In some of the other works I later discuss, I find that the evaluative element of what constitutes "good" or "right"

solidarity remains hidden, as with what distinguishes a praiseworthy kind of solidarity from one that is not. This can become problematic as soon as solidarity is described more generally and independently of one specific situation, such as opposition to the oppression of women or systemic racism.

One contribution my dissertation makes is therefore related to its normative properties: it acknowledges that there are desirable and non-desirable types of solidarity. For the conception of solidarity I will present and defend, this means that it shall include an evaluative element – and I will be transparent about the steps taken to arrive at it. While many elements of my definition are present in previous literature (and, of course, in many ways in which the term is used in ordinary language), I offer a more dynamic definition that takes into account in what ways they relate to each other.

When it comes to the EU as a locus for solidarity, I want to enter the research gap that has resulted mainly from the lack of theoretical work done on this topic. Extensive quantitative studies about solidarity in the EU have been conducted in recent years (cf. Gerhards et al., 2019; Lahusen & Grasso, 2018; Vasilopoulou & Talving, 2020), but there is not as much theoretical work on solidarity in the EU, especially when it comes to comprehensive analyses (short contributions to the debate have been made by, among others, Bauböck, 2017; Habermas, 2013; Karagiannis, 2007b; Mau, 2007; Sangiovanni, 2013). My theoretical contribution to the EU as a space of solidarity will not only be concerned with a normative basis for solidarity *among* EU members, but it will also provide new aspects for debate on solidarity within, among and beyond the EU. In this regard, my work on EU solidary relations and agency in particular offers a kind of analysis that has not been done before.

1.3 Summary of Chapters

The structure of my dissertation will be as follows. In **Part I**, consisting of three chapters (2-4), I will deal with solidarity as a concept. The idea is to arrive at the definition of solidarity I briefly introduced above and distinguish it from previous literature as well as related notions

whose meanings may sometimes overlap with solidarity. I will defend my understanding of solidarity as a type of relation and a resulting type of action. In expanding upon these two components (relation and action), I will distinguish my conception of solidarity from those of other authors thereby including aspects I deem necessary in order to evaluate instances of solidarity with regard to their normative desirability.

Chapter 2 will be mostly concerned with introducing central terminology, explaining the method of my work, and reviewing the previous literature. I will also dig deeper into the question of normativity that lies within solidarity, something I have already hinted at. More concretely, I will argue that relationships of solidarity induce a feeling of duty towards each other. At the same time, it seems to be the case that solidarity is highly desirable in general. In the remainder of that chapter, I will lay out the method I use to arrive at a definition of solidarity that accommodates these aspects and discuss how other, previous work relates to it. I will resort to the distinction between concept and conception for this purpose, and through a digression into the wide variety of historical usages of the term solidarity, I will show that a conception of solidarity will have to become rather specific in order to offer answers to the pressing normative questions. Chapter 3 is the chapter in which I will propose a definition of solidarity. I use the expression "to stand up for another" as a starting point for exploring what is meant by solidarity. Based on this phrase, the chapter will be guided by the diagnosis that solidarity is always relational (having to do with an "other") and expressed through practices (acts). The two guiding questions for my definition are consequently: 1. What makes me concerned about the other? – dealing with the relational question, and 2. What does it mean to stand up for the other? – dealing with the question of solidary action. I add a further, evaluative step to both questions, which I argue is necessary in order to clarify the normative dimension, i.e., to determine a desirable type of solidarity. In essence, I will argue that solidarity is both social and political: social in its relational sense and political in its "expressive" sense as an action. The understandings of both terms I will present determine traits of solidarity that I take to make solidarity different from other concepts. In these sections, I will also include my views on the kinds of properties that make solidarity desirable – in other words that make it pass a normative evaluation. Toward the end of the chapter, I will offer some further remarks

about the moral status of solidarity, arguing that as such, solidarity is not a moral obligation (albeit desirable). Once one has committed to a solidary community, action within one's means becomes a duty. At the end of the third chapter, I will discuss various reasons to act in solidarity: I argue that solidarity can be motivated by a shared goal, by instrumental reasons, and reasons of recognition. In Chapter 4, I will defend my definition of solidarity by differentiating it from related concepts, both in relational terms and as acts or practices. Specifically, I will be contrasting solidarity with love, friendship, loyalty, charity, altruism, nationalism, patriotism and justice, and show where solidarity can be situated among them, given that all of these exist in social contexts.

Part II of my dissertation is concerned with solidarity in the European Union. It consists of three chapters, too (chapters 5-7). In this part of my thesis, I will use the conceptual framework from the first part in order to tackle the question on what solidarity in the EU should look like. This means that once again I will focus on the aspects of relation and action, but this time in the context of the EU. By reconstructing different conceptions of "Europeanness" in Chapter 5, I will first map the terrain of Europe as an idea and a space, within which the EU is only a recent part. I will critically discuss the dimensions of universality that accompany canonical thought about Europe and its history; while these dimensions have led to remarkable progress, they have also come with high costs, especially for regions outside of Europe. While "Europeanness" in previous literature does not necessarily presuppose contingent or involuntary (e.g. ethnic or phenotypical) traits, its ambivalence in light of the history of global European hegemony is significant. In accordance with my conceptual work from Part I, I will argue that "Europeanness" as a basis for EU solidarity should be understood as open and inclusive to all (also those who are non-EU natives) – based on a shared historical awareness and a commitment to fundamental rights. This way, solidarity can serve as an alternative approach to the aim of pursuing a European "identity", which is contestable per se and has not been successful so far, as surges in nationalism in many EU member states demonstrate. Looking at the EU as one entire large solidary community, I will then argue that the solidary project to unite it should be small and limited – but can be complemented by other, more restricted solidary communities with more specific aims. In the last section of the

chapter, I will take a detailed look at the treaties of the EU and the way they use the term "solidarity" as a prescriptive and self-attributed core value. I will thus demonstrate that the aspiration for solidarity is officially present in the EU's legal framework and that the EU can offer the institutional framework for European solidarity to become more feasible, for example, by granting the shared status of citizenship. In Chapter 6, I will move to the question of solidary agency in the EU. First, I will briefly discuss the EU's integration process so far, in order to show the complexity of searching for ways in which EU citizens (and others living in the EU) can be considered to share a common basis for solidarity. I will then move to the question of levels of (solidary) agency in the EU and conclude that political institutions (whether national governments or EU institutions) are not suitable agents for solidarity, leaving only individuals and those associations that exist out of a limited shared goal and voluntary commitment as solidary agents. In my reasoning I will explain that political institutions make it impossible to refuse being part of them, thereby turning out to be incompatible with my definition of a desirable type of solidarity. Based on this conclusion, I sketch out some dynamics and problems regarding the scope and type of solidary communities I envision. In Chapter 7, I will then go on to discuss the type of political solidary action that can be conceived of in the European Union. I will explain that there are different possible levels of solidarity in the EU, depending on which public sphere solidarity is specific to: member states, the EU-wide level or a level independent of both. According to my view, these levels may perfectly co-exist, but my analysis will put a special emphasis on the EU-specific ones, entailing a discussion of what makes them EU-specific in the first place.

Part III of my dissertation will then be concerned with problems and limitations of my work and offer some concluding remarks on the thesis altogether. In Chapter 8, I will discuss two points of concern that my understanding of solidarity does not resolve. First, I will address the danger of the overly ambitious solidary matters that I mention at various points in the previous chapters. I will use this chapter to show both the potential and pitfalls of small- and large-scale solidarity. I will then return to the question of identity, an omnipresent and central theme that extends beyond debates about solidarity (cf. "identity politics"). In combination with the theme of recognition, I will discuss solidarity as a means to arrive at

more social cohesion without fragmentation. The conclusion (Chapter 9) will then offer some final remarks and lay out paths for further research.

Part I – Understanding Solidarity

2. Theorizing Solidarity

The idea of the subsequent three chapters is to introduce terminology, to provide an overview of previous work on solidarity and to then offer the reader a definition of solidarity. To understand my own point of departure, two prior observations may be helpful. Firstly, I will explain why I present solidarity as possessing an inherent normative character. I would like to stress that rather than presenting a description of solidarity, I consider the role solidarity ought to play in general – and, further on, in the context of the EU. Secondly, I reach my definition of solidarity not through a historical assessment, but rather by explaining the relevance and necessity of a notion that is distinct from other, related concepts such as charity or friendship. The historical development of the term is, however, relevant for understanding the need for a notion like solidarity – both in the late 19th century, when it appeared, and now. I briefly sketch out the history of the term and present previous work that has been done in theorizing solidarity. As will become clear throughout this chapter, an account of solidarity inspired by ordinary language will not be helpful due to the many different uses of the word in different contexts. A construction of a definition from scratch would, however, have to justify its existence as opposed to other conceptions of the term. After all, it is fairly uncontroversial to demand of a conceptual analysis to "fit, at least to some degree, with common-sense claims" (Carter, 2015, p. 279).

In an attempt to do justice to both these demands, my approach is to scaffold a concept of solidarity by abstracting from previous theories, then to fill it with my own understanding and finally, in a third step, to justify my conception by distinguishing it from other, related notions. I take solidarity to be the appropriate label for the specific social necessity I talk about. Other terms do not, as I will argue, comprehend the phenomenon I describe to the same

extent. These two observations are not only to be understood as parts of the conceptual framework, but also as part of my method.

This chapter will start with an elaboration on the first observation on normativity and introduce some methodological strategies for my work. Subsequently it offers a historical overview and a review of the relevant literature. The next chapter, then, presents my own account of solidarity, guided by two main research questions that structure my analysis. The fourth chapter returns to the second specification I made above on my method of derivation; it provides an argumentative distinction of the definition I present here from other, related ideas. Through this I hope to reinforce and defend the conception of solidarity that I offer.

This chapter and the following two are a closely linked conceptual package. In them, I lay the foundation of an idea of solidarity that will later be discussed in the realm of the European Union.

2.1 Normative and Descriptive Dimensions of Solidarity

Solidarity commonly bears a positive connotation – except among particularly passionate advocates of pure individualism (Smith & Sorrell, 2014, p. 239). It is typically associated with belonging and reliance on others. At the same time, no one likes being accused of not acting in solidarity where she or he should do so. Both solidarity's appraisal and the connotation of moral wrongdoing when one does not fulfil a required solidary[2] action point towards a normativity surrounding the concept of solidarity. This normative character seems to be of a twofold nature: 1. Existing relationships of solidarity give rise to duties, while 2. there is also a normative force evoking solidarity in the first place, because there is a certain positive value attached to fostering relations that go beyond the very intimate sphere. The consequence of

[2] Henceforth, I use the adjective "solidary." I am aware that in English, the phrase "to be/act in solidarity with" is more idiomatic than "solidary", which is not used in everyday language (unlike in other languages, e.g. solidarisch (German), solidário (Portuguese), solidario (Spanish)). In need of a simple adjective for the many occasions that would require one in this text, I chose "solidary" over "solidaristic" (which can sometimes be read in other theorists' work). The latter does, however, refer to specific schools of thought subsumed under "solidarism" and therefore seems less apt as a general adjective to correspond to the noun "solidarity".

this is to say that not any relation gives rise to solidary duties. Rather, there are relationships that exist out of a norm of solidarity, and these have prescriptive consequences, meaning that they entail a request to act (cf. Hare, 1952).[3] Let me explain this in the following.

Many theorists have previously argued that solidarity is a combination of an observable type of behaviour and a normative concept (e.g. Bayertz, 1999a; Derpmann, 2013; Habermas, 2013; Jaeggi, 2001; Pensky, 2006, 2008; Preuß, 1999; Reshaur, 1992; Scholz, 2007, 2008, 2015). Ulrich K. Preuß (1999) characterizes the descriptive dimension of solidarity as the "empirical reality of a community of interests, objectives and standards" (p. 281), while its normativity is voiced in mutual moral obligations of individuals that can be "deduced from this community" (ibid.). In this view, those who are members of communities that share certain aims or goals ought to fulfil duties of solidarity as a result of this membership.

If we think of some common examples in which the term solidarity is used, this observation seems plausible: Qua member of a union, I surely incur the moral obligation to go on strike in solidarity with others who invoke a strike. In my capacity as a woman in favour of gender equality, I may feel that I have solidary duties towards other women who are, for example, treated unequally by men. However, one might ask why certain other descriptively observable relations arguably do not give rise to duties of solidarity. For example, just because I happen to be the co-worker of someone who demands my solidarity, do I have the duty to help that person fix their bike? Or if I see a stranger in need of help, does this mean she can demand help out of solidary considerations?[4] One may also wonder whether such a view is compatible with cases of solidarity in which there is no evident relationship between two individuals. For example, when a group of journalists publishes a statement of solidarity with a colleague who is prosecuted in another country for her journalistic work and whom they

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[3] I use both the terms "relation" and "relationship" in this text. They denote types of connection or association between individuals with a different degree of specificity. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a relation is "a particular way in which one thing or idea is connected or associated with another or others", whereas a relationship denotes "a connection formed between two or more people or groups based on social interactions and mutual goals, interests, or feelings" (OED, 2019). I understand (solidary) relationships to be closer and more specific than relations between individuals in general, which may give rise to the existence of relationships of solidarity.

[4] Of course, solidary duties are not the only duties we may have towards each other. I may well have duties of justice, of humanity or of respect for my co-worker or someone in need, if only out of being a fellow national of my country, but these are not necessarily duties of solidarity (cf. Goodin, 1988).

have never met before – what relationship is this act based on? Lastly, one may ask: What should motivate someone to join a union in the first place? Or why should someone regard sharing the same gender with others a basis for solidarity.

As these examples show, the normative implications of solidarity do not necessarily arise out of an empirical or descriptive relationship.[5] Rather, there seems to be some impulse to form a (direct or indirect – as in the case of the journalists) relationship of solidarity, which is distinct. This relationship, in turn, gives rise to further duties of solidary action. Following from this, some pressing questions arise: Why should someone join or form a solidary group? What kind of relationship are solidary agents in? What kind of duties arise? I will return to these questions once I introduce my conception of solidarity in the next chapter.

Regarding solidarity as a normative concept does not mean that one cannot assess or measure a previously defined understanding of solidarity empirically. Other theorists have pointed towards the descriptive possibilities of solidarity. In his most recent work, Andrea Sangiovanni (2021) argues that it is conceivable for a conceptual definition of solidarity to be purely descriptive, opposed to analyses of the reasons and values of different conceptions of solidarity, which would then enter normative terrain. According to his view, solidarity can be described as a specific kind of action that needs to fulfil certain criteria but is not constrained by any moral framework. As a result, in Sangiovanni's view, members of a mafia can perfectly be in solidarity with each other even though the existence of their community may amount to a moral wrong.[6] Other theorists have depicted the descriptive side of solidarity as the empirical fact that we can observe the existence of a certain type of community (Preuß, 1999), or as the explanation behind why people take certain actions (Derpmann, 2013, p. 14), or as a type of social cohesion (Durkheim, 2014 [1902]).

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[5] This observation stands in contrast with Kurt Bayertz and Susanne Boshammer's (2008) view, who argue that the descriptive dimension of inner cohesion and feelings of mutual connectedness gives rise to the normative duties of shared action for the community. I doubt that there is generally an a priori descriptive relationship.

[6] This would mean that solidarity among members of a mafia group also follows normative considerations – for example, that members should be able to trust each other, offer support and show loyalty. This obviously does not mean that the normative considerations are the *morally right thing to do,* nor is it clear if they amount to instances of solidarity – which will depend on one's definition.

What I have meant to illustrate here is that a description of solidarity follows some normative concern, which will serve as an implicit assumption in an empirical study or observation in real life. As Max Pensky (2008) suggests, the descriptive and the normative dimensions of solidarity are at interplay with one another; there is not one without the other. They are in a "dialectical tension" (p. 1), which is not to be solved but to be taken as constitutive of the term (p. 4). Émile Durkheim's conception of the term, for instance, is sometimes presented as an example of a descriptive account of social cohesion in modern and historical society, using solidarity as a term to describe the type of social cohesion to be observed. Pensky notes that the descriptive character of Durkheim's theory requires underlying normative considerations on how social life should be organized and how to include individuals and recognize each other in that society (2008, p. 4). Durkheim (2014 [1902]) himself would agree, writing that "needs for order, harmony, and social solidarity are generally reckoned to be moral ones" (p. 51). Basically, in any mention of solidarity, there are normative considerations attached to it or underlying it.

In my dissertation, I am not primarily concerned with creating a descriptive notion of solidarity, but rather with answering urgent normative questions about how EU solidarity should and could play out in times of crisis, separation and increasing nationalism. To make this clearer, let me dive a little deeper into the topic of normativity. Normative questions are concerned with claims, rather than descriptions (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 8): "They command, oblige, recommend, or guide" (ibid.), seeking answers about what one *ought to do*. The "normative question", as Christine Korsgaard calls it, then, is the question about what justifies claims to morality (ibid., p. 9-10). More specifically, the study of moral concepts not only includes the question of why people should do certain things, but what we (from a first-person perspective) should really do (p. 13, 16). And knowing what we should really do requires justifications (p. 13). Since I am interested in precisely those questions in regard to (European) solidarity, my conception of the term should provide insights into two questions: Why ought we be in solidarity? And what should we do out of solidarity?[7] Any understanding of solidarity

[7] As will become clear in the later chapters, the "we" I refer to is the perspective of individuals, for example citizens of the European Union.

must be able to justify claims to normative demands resulting from it. In other words, if I am required to act in solidarity, there needs to be a good justification for why I should do so.

The questions I raise thus require a certain amount of precision. While one may aim to create a very broad or abstract definition of solidarity in order not to get too deep into normative details, this may happen at the cost of saying something meaningful and specific. And this may very well turn into a real problem: For example, what does it mean – concretely and beyond a vague notion of mutual support – when the EU claims that it considers solidarity a value?

To get a grip on the specificity of normative answers, I resort to Ian Carter's notion of value-neutrality, which he defines to hold for an ethical concept "if its use does not imply the superiority of any one of a set of contrasting substantive ethical points of view" (Carter, 2015, p. 285). In other words, value-neutrality is given if all uses of the term are on the same level when subjected to an ethical evaluation. Carter argues that value-neutrality is a matter of degree and can never be absolutely achieved. I find this to apply to solidarity, too. Once one gets into the normative nitty-gritty of solidarity in a particular definition, the value-neutrality will decrease, with the advantage of increased conceptional clarity. For example, if one takes "mutual support" to be one rather neutral definition of solidarity, it says less than a definition that specifies the terms and conditions for this mutual support. Methodologically, I think it is helpful to depart from a rather value-neutral definition and move towards a more specific one. I will use the terminological distinction between concept and conception for this purpose, which I will explain in the next section. My argument basically goes along the following line: While a concept is methodologically needed for reaching the conception, only the conception makes a sharp discussion possible.

2.2 The Problem of Concept and Conception

When reading previous works on solidarity, one may experience a feeling of increasing confusion. Just when one account of the concept seems plausible, a completely different one

may emerge and be equally as convincing. It helps to understand these diverse approaches as different conceptions of the same concept. What does this mean? In the Rawlsian spirit, a concept is what different conceptions have in common (Rawls, 1999 [1971]).[8] Korsgaard offers a helpful way of thinking about the role and importance of both: "The concept names the problem, the conception proposes a solution. The normative force of the conception is established this way" (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 114). Or, resorting to Carter's terminology once more, a conception is less value-neutral and goes deeper into questions of normative nature. What does this mean specifically? According to Stefan Gosepath (whose following point, originally about justice, I take and apply to solidarity), a concept must offer universal validity; this is a necessary precondition for any judgment about any given status quo, especially if it is located outside of one's specific context of values (Gosepath, 2004, p. 43). However, the concept must remain open through variables within, whose wide variety of configurations and interpretations constitute the various conceptions (ibid., p. 45f.). It is in this sense that both are necessary: rather than being a shortcoming, the openness of the concept is actually important for asking the right questions (ibid.).

When several conceptions of a concept exist, one may wonder why there would be a need for a further one. The justification of a new conception can, I think, happen through unveiling the shortcomings of previous ones as well as by offering something new. But there may also be disagreement about the concept that underlies the conception one uses. In the case of solidarity, one way to arrive at a concept is to adapt a historical approach. The historical approach collects and analyses previous conceptions of solidarity in diverse historical and political contexts and observes overlaps, abstracting from them a definition. My own conceptual basis, in contrast, relies on two basic *features* I find to be expressed in most

[8] John Rawls describes the difference in the context of the notion of justice as follows: "Existing societies are of course seldom well-ordered in this sense, for what is just and unjust is usually in dispute. Men disagree about which principles should define the basic terms of their association. Yet we may still say, despite this disagreement, that they each have a conception of justice. That is, they understand the need for, and they are prepared to affirm, a characteristic set of principles for assigning basic rights and duties and for determining what they take to be the proper distribution of the benefits and burdens of social cooperation. Thus it seems natural to think of the concept of justice as distinct from the various conceptions of justice and as being specified by the role which these different sets of principles, these different conceptions, have in common" (Rawls, 1999 [1971], p. 5).

theoretical work on solidarity, independent of the contexts discussed. I will present the concept I work with at the beginning of the next chapter.

Why not use the historical approach? Of course, my strategy is not free from historical context – and the history of solidarity matters for the way it has been used in theoretical work. However, the usages of the term have differed greatly over time, as I will show in the next section. In my own dissertation, I can use a concept that serves as an almost empty scaffold, as – to refer back to Carter's terminology – a rather value-neutral starting point. The advantage is to liberate myself from conceptions of the term that may have served contradicting normative purposes in the past. Instead of determining a common denominator in all previous schools of thought on solidarity, I will be able to declare some usages of the term not to fulfil my criteria of amounting to solidarity. With my method, there is no need to arrive at a descriptive concept from normatively (and sometimes ideologically) charged historical conceptions of many different sorts – ideology here meaning a way of obscuring one's political agenda and thus possessing a doctrinaire nature (cf. Homann, 2008). The idea of the next section is to illustrate the complexity of solidarity's history in order to support the choice of this method argumentatively.

2.3 Roots and Purpose of Solidarity

Even though there is a catalogue of literature on solidarity starting in the 19th century, it is not comparable with the extensive and comprehensive theoretical canon on other established concepts that are similarly constitutive for life in a society, such as autonomy, freedom, justice or equality. Like these concepts, solidarity is concerned with the permanent tension between individual and collective interests and how to best weigh legitimate claims to both against each other. The questions theorists need to ask when evaluating the organization of social life in their quest for stability, happiness, equality, freedom or justice are normative, too: What kinds

of obligations do we have towards each other? How should we distribute resources? How free can each of us be without interfering with others' freedoms?

Compared to other concepts, solidarity appears versatile and nebulous. When it comes to the political or social values behind solidary behaviour, the spectrum of causes and claims for solidarity defies all limits. There are claims to solidarity in left- and right-wing groups, in militant and non-militant, in religious and non-religious groups and so forth – no doubt, the term has served a wide variety of purposes. For this reason, Carlo Burelli aptly notes that "reconstructions of solidarity's long heritage emphasise the plurality of meanings rather than unifying them" (2016, p. 7). So how are we to make sense of this term? Any (new) conception of solidarity will undeniably serve a certain (political) purpose, too. The transparency concerning one's methodical strategy in arriving at a different conception is therefore of central importance. One way of going about this is by discerning commonalities in historical conceptions of solidarity. Andrea Sangiovanni (2021) and Hauke Brunkhorst (2002) resort to the historical meanings of solidarity – although to different extents and with the possibility of revising certain historical understandings. My own method differs. However, a look at the scope of the multifaceted heritage is quite revealing and may help explain why even nowadays the term is used in so many ways. It will also support my previous explanation as to why I adopt a different approach. There is one further purpose of offering a brief 'history of the idea': contemplating its etymological and conceptional past can help theorists reveal where the term is used in an ideological manner.

So here goes a very short history of solidarity. Most scholars who mention the history of solidarity – and I will include myself among them – solely and swiftly sketch the eponymous roots from Roman law. For completeness' sake, let me mention here that solidarity as a term has a legal origin, with the *obligatio in solidum* describing "collective responsibility among two or more debtors" (Fiegle, 2007, p. 49), in other words, financial liability in Roman law (Bayertz, 1999a; Brunkhorst, 2002, p. 10; Burelli, 2016, p. 8; Smith & Sorrell, 2014, p. 222).[9] In legal

[9] Interestingly, the term solidarité, as it appears in the Civil Code of the French (Code civil), still describes this term in the way it was understood by Roman law, while German law eventually translated the concept into "gesamtschuldnerische Haftung" (Fiegle, 2007).

terms, the *solidum* both connoted the stability of the relationship between the debtors and referenced the creditor's possession of a more solid basis from which he could extend trust the debtors (Brunkhorst, 2002, p. 10).

The idea of solid social relationships links well with the historical origins of the actual word "solidarity". Solidarity is sometimes considered a revised version of the notion of fraternity (Tiryakian & Morgan, 2014, p. 251). In the French revolution, *fraternité* was seen as the expression of a brotherhood of emancipated individuals in contrast to the Ancien Régime. However, Thomas Fiegle explains that the term *solidarité* originally held quite the opposite of an emancipated spirit. It was only in the counter-revolution by ultramontanist religious groups that a need for "solidarity" was voiced (2007, p. 49). In the mid-19th century, the Catholic Church and nostalgists of the Middle Ages evoked solidarity to rally against the traits of modern society and its "egoism", forming counter movements against the ideals of the French revolution. Sometimes the term was associated with "radical, antireformist, and violent groups" (Smith & Sorrell, 2014, p. 223). Their idea of solidarity was a unity of all human beings through original sin and, subsequently, a shared destiny (Fiegle, 2007, pp. 50-51).

Towards the end of the 19th century, solidarity was increasingly used as an answer to the "social problem", influenced by the work of Pierre Leroux, who first diverged from the religious meaning in his book "De l'Humanité" (1985 [1840]). Around the time Émile Durkheim's famous work on solidarity and the division of labour in society appeared in 1893, Léon Bourgeois wrote "Solidarité" (1911 [1896]), a highly influential work that made solidarity part of the social reform programme in France (Fiegle, 2007). He used the concept as a middle ground between individualism and collectivism (Tiryakian & Morgan, 2014, p. 252). Durkheim and other scholars at the time "understood the idea of solidarity as a means of restoring harmony and social integration in society" (Stjernø, 2004, p. 39). By then, Karl Marx had already referred to the "basic principle of the International: Solidarity", and promised to "constantly strive to strengthen among all workers this solidarity that is so fruitful for the future" (Marx, 1872).

Remember that the diversity of political purposes associated with the term solidarity is not surprising, historically speaking. Different empirical realities prompted diverse usages of

the term over time. As a consequence, different political "camps" evolved as well as descriptions of corresponding observations of solidarity.

Pensky (2008) summarizes some of the ways in which solidarity has been understood historically in four main categories. 1. First, there is the 18th-century civic ideal of fraternity, translated as solidarity into modern society (p. 1, 3). Originally it was understood as a sibling to liberty and equality, with the three requiring to be balanced against each other. This conception understood solidarity as a community entailing duties. 2. Solidarity in moral philosophy/normative ethics is defined as "membership in a moral community", with these communities "engendering and limiting" each one's "capacities for solitary moral reflection" (p. 2). In other words, being an autonomous moral agent requires mutual recognition of agents. Solidarity in this understanding is related to bonding or belonging in that community. Both 1. and 2. offer a reconciliation of freedom and equality through solidarity (p. 3). They provide a symmetrical view between and among communities in society. 3. The third, in turn, is most well-known in the socialist understanding of solidarity: describing an opposition between an oppressed solidary group and an oppressor. It is as asymmetrical as the fourth, 4., the Christian conception of "bonds of love and aid" (p. 3), which prescribes solidarity as a duty to the oppressed and poor elsewhere.

I will take the time to disentangle the potential tensions that arise from the wide array of uses of the term in the fourth chapter, where I distinguish my own definition from ideas like justice, loyalty, charity and friendship. Thus far, the short excursion into solidarity's history already showed one thing: It is not a term that easily allows a reconstruction through its historical use, because the array of different political stances associated with it makes a coherent transition into an encompassing definition difficult – in the same sense that a conservative Catholic in the 19th century had little to do with a socialist worker, the term continues to be used differently by various political camps.

Still, the existing definitions of solidarity are not entirely satisfactory to me, as the discussion in the next section will show. Most of these definitions are based on a certain political or historical usage of the term or a type of relation between individuals in a specific context, thereby fragmenting the meanings of the term into small components and raising

questions rather than clarifying doubts. My definition aims to avoid this pitfall by being less specific about the particular goals, actions and aims of a solidary group, and instead placing an emphasis on the function of solidarity in a wide variety of social contexts. This does not mean that my conception is neutral, and it does not aim to be; it gains its specific content, rather, from the subsequently placed normative components that serve to evaluate instances of solidarity. In other words, while my definition of solidarity is hopefully plausible to a wide array of people, it is sharp when *evaluating* different situations normatively.

What I strive to do in justifying my conception of solidarity is to come up with a convincing argument why it is useful both as an analytical tool but more importantly as a normative compass. Nevertheless, I am confident that my definition (as the others) does not need to encompass all uses of the term in common language, as long as these receive other plausible labels and analytical tools. As is likely the case with many other broad normative ideals, an all-encompassing definition of solidarity would be so vague it would hardly tell anything meaningful at all.

2.4 Literature on Solidarity

I have so far made some methodological remarks, introduced terminology and summarized the historical uses of the term solidarity. Before I can finally proceed and explain what I aim to contribute to the topic myself, the last step is to present and discuss the theoretical work on solidarity that has been done by other recent scholars so far.

On a general note, the many different historical dimensions of solidarity are reflected in canonical literature from political and social theory about the term. Kurt Bayertz (1999) offers one (of several) classifications for these, which Sally Scholz partly adapts for her own work. His well-known typology includes four prominent cases – equipped with names by Scholz (2007) that I put in brackets (it shows some overlap with the historical classification by Pensky that I mentioned before): 1. (*human solidarity*) Bayertz' widest understanding of the term refers to the "tie which binds all of us human beings to one big moral community" (Bayertz,

1999a, p. 5); 2. (*social solidarity*) The second type concerns the "cohesion of a narrower and more limited community, including the resulting (particular) obligations" (p. 9); 3. (*political solidarity*) The third type is "to be found wherever individuals form a group in order to stand up for their common interests" (p. 16); 4. (*civic solidarity*) The last type Bayertz mentions, also built on some notion of common interest, refers to solidarity understood as economic redistribution through the state, usually manifest in the welfare state.[10]

While a type of classification like Bayertz'/Scholz' gives a useful idea of different areas in which the term solidarity is used, I identify two problems with it. First, it may be incomplete in that it leaves out cases that mix several characteristics or are not clearly attributable to one category.[11] This problem becomes clear when looking at other typologies, such as the one proposed by Steffen Mau (2008), whose classification looks entirely different.[12] Second, it is questionable whether the classification can really provide an answer to what solidarity really is, rather than simply collect contexts, relations and purposes of community where the term is used.[13] If one takes all four types to be describing essentially the same phenomenon, it is fairly unclear what that phenomenon is really supposed to be and how it can be distinguished from other, related notions.[14]

Moving on from attempts to classify solidarity, a look at previous work on solidarity confirms that most scholars work on specific types/conceptions of solidarity rather than on a comprehensive definition: oppositional solidarity (cf. Scholz, 2008); solidarity as societal

[10] Scholz (2007) adapts this classification and focuses her work on type III., political solidarity as a "shared commitment to a political cause in the name of liberation or justice and in opposition to oppression or injustice" (p. 38). This type of solidarity with the purpose of ending oppression or finding liberation is associated with the socialist movement and struggles for labour rights. It is usually oppositional and exclusive towards those outside the solidary group.

[11] And, as a side note, I find case IV. describes a different kind of category, which could arguably be considered a particular case of either II. or III. – or not solidarity at all. Whether an institutionalized, compulsory system of redistribution should really be considered a case of solidarity is a question I will get back to later in the fourth chapter.

[12] Mau's proposed types are: Solidarity of self-interest, solidarity of connectedness, solidarity between citizens, solidarity of movement and solidarity of compassion (own translation).

[13] A collection of different usages can of course be useful when, for example, debating whether the term solidarity is used in a desirable way – a matter that Lessenich et al. hint at (2020). But it does not solve the question of discerning and distinguishing the concept from other, related ones and ultimately taking the decisive step to make a normative claim about what kind of solidarity we should strive for.

[14] Andrea Sangiovanni voices a similar criticism towards a classification in the style of Bayertz, arguing that while it may be useful, it remains unclear what exactly it is that unites the diverse usages of the term and makes them instances of solidarity in particular (if there is something to unite them at all) (Sangiovanni, 2021).

cohesion (cf. Durkheim, 2014 [1902]); solidarity of the privileged with those suffering (cf. Kolers, 2016); solidarity on the basis of shared experience or common interest (cf. Dean, 1996; Shelby, 2005); solidarity among all humans (cf. Brunkhorst, 2002); and so on. Definitions of solidarity as a more neutral and encompassing concept are either to be found in introductory works and thus remain rather vague or do not specify how they are distinct from related notions and why some uses of the term are not covered by them.[15] However, one aspect all accounts of solidarity share is some notion of relationship, community or commonality between people. This shared aspect will structure my overview of the previous work I wish to present.

Literature on solidarity offers different perspectives on the type and composition of *community* in which solidarity can occur. Durkheim's (2014 [1902]) pathbreaking account of the two types of solidarity which I have already mentioned above is one of the canonical works on the topic. He argues the following: While "premodern" society was held together by a pre-existing homogeneity and a collective conscience almost as if all members of society shared it (mechanical solidarity), modern societies with a large degree of division of labour exhibit a mutual dependence of highly specialized individuals, just as each component of an organism depends on all the other ones (organic solidarity). In other words, members of modern societies would not be in solidarity if they were not dependent on each other.[16]

Durkheim's understanding of solidarity is fundamentally different from more recent work on the topic, in which scholars put more emphasis on the autonomy of individuals, their specific needs for alliances in society or the question of moral duties to solidarity. Overall, scholars agree that communities of solidarity should not be based on involuntary or contingent traits (even though they sometimes do, cf. Rorty (1989)). It seems to me that their focus on individuality and autonomy is less guided by a reaction to ideas like Durkheim's, but rather by

[15] For example, Rahel Jaeggi and Robin Celikates (2017) define solidarity as a symmetrical and reciprocal, non-instrumental relation of standing up for each other based on shared challenges, experiences or projects (p. 39). This definition can hardly encompass universal solidarity among all humans, for example, since neither symmetry, reciprocity nor shared experiences could apply to everyone. Lawrence Wilde (2013) refers to a "feeling of sympathy shared by subjects within and between groups, impelling supportive action" (p. 1), which sounds fairly neutral but runs into the problem of distinguishing solidarity from related notions such as friendship or love.

[16] For an extensive overview (in German) of the use of the term in classical sociology, see Kraxberger (2010).

the urge to distance themselves from nationalist, racist or exclusionary uses of the term. I am, at least, not aware of work that would defend such an account of solidarity (David Miller's idea of a nationalist but inclusive 'we' feeling (2017) maybe comes closest).

Let me briefly introduce the more recent literature. Simon Derpmann (2013) argues that solidarity is based neither on personal bonds nor on basic morals, but only on significant commonalities such as shared history, shared struggle, shared goal or utopia, making it a specific form of community-oriented obligation while at the same time being open to those who identify with the group (p. 29). It is constitutive for the **identity** of the social self. In this sense, Derpmann's view is in line with Tommie Shelby's ideas about foundations for **black solidarity**. Shelby (2005) claims that it is possible and more convincing to find the "common ground" for solidarity in shared history or experience rather than any "biological essence" (p. 4) or a supposed identity based on "ethnic" considerations. Shelby defends a position of "pragmatic nationalism", which is distinct from classical nationalism (which posits that a certain ethnic community should share a land, culture, language and/or religion). Pragmatic nationalism has the aim of achieving social justice, independently of whether there is an ethnic community. Being committed to working towards this goal means showing solidarity, as Shelby argues (p. 28). Should the goal be achieved one day, black solidarity would no longer be necessary and could even become counterproductive (p. 254). Shelby criticizes attempts to construct a collective identity among people of colour, since it would likely disregard other differences such as class. He understands blackness as purely political, as "adherence to certain political principles, including antiracism, equal educational and employment opportunity, and tolerance for group differences" (p. 247). Mara Marin's essay (2018) on racial solidarity is in apparent agreement with Shelby's work, since the author suggests to find the basis for solidarity in the structural, not the individual position of an individual in society.

Jodi Dean's book (1996) on **feminist solidarity** is similarly sceptical when it comes to understanding a solidary community as a homogenous group. She introduces the notion of reflective solidarity, according to which differences between members should be recognized as necessary, as opposed to evening them out through generalisations. She elaborates: "Solidarity can be modeled as an interaction involving at least three persons: I ask you to stand

by me over a third. But rather than presuming the exclusion and opposition of the third, the ideal of reflective solidarity thematizes the voice of the third to reconstruct solidarity as an inclusionary ideal for contemporary politics and societies" (p. 3). In this sense, opposition is not to be understood as exclusion. With her approach, Dean aims to counter a perceived danger of opposition and fragmentation associated with some strands of **identity politics**.

Asad Haider's (2018) timely book on American society has a comparable aim, criticizing a certain type of identity politics that arguably strengthens marginalisation as an element of identity-making, thereby hindering solidarity and splitting progressive society. Heinz Bude's book (2019) remains quite vague on what solidarity really is, but he notes the need for solidarity given increasing **individualism** in many societies. He calls for a solidary community, in which everyone can be unbound, different and bound together at the same time (p. 56). bell hooks' work on feminist solidarity (2015) sounds more fierce:

> Political solidarity between females expressed in sisterhood goes beyond positive recognition of the experiences of women and even shared sympathy for common suffering. Feminist sisterhood is rooted in shared commitment to struggle against patriarchal injustice, no matter the form that injustice takes. Political solidarity between women always undermines sexism and sets the stage for the overthrow of patriarchy. (p. 15)

This understanding of the solidary community is exclusive and **oppositional**, just as the one Sally Scholz (2007) presents, also on political solidarity. To her, solidarity exists in a "a group that comes together based on common interests in opposition to injustice or oppression" (p. 39). She descriptively distinguishes this type of solidarity from universal, human solidarity, as well as from social solidarity. Scholz' distinction between social and political solidarity concerns the group. Groups of social solidarity share certain characteristics like nationality, history, identity or other "social bonds" (ibid.), while political solidarity forms the solidary group by means of the shared interest. Just like Shelby, Scholz follows an approach aimed at arriving at a more just society. In her work, she argues that political solidarity needs models of decision-making in order to acknowledge and even out the epistemic and social privileges of different agents.

Andrea Sangiovanni's work also focuses on sharing a goal. In order to achieve it, it is necessary to be ready to face an adversity and to be willing to incur costs in a situation that requires "sharing fates". It is grounded in reasons, not emotions (Sangiovanni, 2015, p. 348). In an earlier essay, Sangiovanni (2013) suggests that solidary communities, in this case the EU, function by means of **redistribution**, satisfying "demands for a fair return in the mutual production of important collective goods" (p. 5).

According to Jürgen Habermas (2013), solidarity is based on a shared interest, too, namely in the integrity of a **political way of life** within the EU (p. 104). While morality and law concern the freedom of autonomous individuals, solidarity refers to a shared interest. Habermas stresses that nationalist conceptions of solidarity force the concept into a pre-political conception, which he considers to be wrong, because it is not as robust as ethical behaviour, since there is no such thing as a natural, original community (p. 105). As an alternative, he proposes to construct a common identity, which is to be based on shared political principles. This solidarity would function through reciprocity and trust and – unlike moral and legal duties – as a matter of degree rather than in a binary manner. In his earlier work, Habermas (1990) declared solidarity the reverse side of justice, arguing that justice is concerned with the liberties and rights of individuals, to which solidarity shall be the counterpart as a collective phenomenon in modern society.[17]

A fundamentally different basis for a solidary community is to be found in Avery Kolers' (2016) work. He understands solidarity as a call to the privileged to work towards more **equity for the oppressed**. In his definition of solidarity, the person expressing solidarity needs not have any antecedent link to the person/group calling for it. But still, the agent is morally obliged to defer her own ideas about how to bring about more equity to the will of the oppressed. Kolers argues that this is necessary because the individual conscience is limited and does not allow us to look beyond the role we ourselves play within the structures of society. His work is explicitly distinct from Shelby's and Scholz' trust in individual consciousness and the ability to use it for the purpose of solidarity.

[17] For critiques of some aspects of Habermas' remarks on solidarity, see Calhoun (2002) and Sangiovanni (2012). And for an analysis of its consequences on identity, migration, religion and justice, see Pensky (2008).

Another important question that emerges is that of the size of a solidary community. Taken to the extreme, one may wonder whether there is such a thing as **universal** solidarity. Scholars are generally sceptical when it comes to the idea of a solidarity that extends to all humankind, but there are some exceptions. Ulrich K. Preuß (1999) argues that humanity cannot be considered a community, and hence, duties of solidarity – which by definition apply to communities – cannot apply universally (p. 282). Richard Rorty agrees empirically, writing that "our sense of solidarity is the strongest when those with whom solidarity is expressed are thought of as 'one of us', where 'us' means something smaller and more local than the human race" (1989, p. 191). He thus urges all humans to apprehend the contingency of our own convictions and points of view. Instead, we should aim to find commonality in the universal experience of pain and suffering that all humans know, in the light of which other differences fade away (p. 192). The goal is a society in which the individual can self-create in her private life but act in solidarity in the public sphere (p. xv). Hauke Brunkhorst (2002) pleads for global solidarity as a solution to the social question in a globalised world. Rather than envisioning a community, he sees a democratic bond between free and equal humans in a world characterized by difference and pluralism. His proposal is a global legal community as it finds its foundational elements in the concept of human rights. Lawrence Wilde (2013) aims for solidarity as social justice on a global level once neoliberalism has been overcome.

There is also some work on transnational (while not global) solidarity[18]. Carol Gould (2007) can be considered an example in her conception of solidarity which finds a close relation between solidarity, empathy and mutual aid. The author introduces the idea of a network of solidarity, which does not require the same extent of reciprocity as community-based solidarity. Some of the work I mentioned that deals specifically with the example of transnational solidarity in the EU will receive further discussion in Chapters 5 through 7.

Lastly, there are different views on the nature of the *expression* of solidarity. Some theorists have previously observed that action plays a role in defining solidarity (cf. Derpmann,

[18] Beckert et al. (2004) offer a collection of contributions on transnational solidarity with a focus on the following themes: economic and religious solidarity; solidarity of international law; and solidarity in international organisations, foundations and NGOs.

2013; Kolers, 2016; Sangiovanni, 2015, 2021). At the same time, the idea that action is required as an expression of solidarity seems so straightforward that it does not appear as an explicit component in some other theories. For example, the requirement of commitment to a goal or political cause (cf. Scholz, 2008; Shelby, 2005) would logically have to presuppose some sort of action in order to bring about the required change.

Those that do elaborate on solidary action, however, diverge in their opinions. Solidary action is thus – even in normative terms – still heavily disputed.

Kolers (2016) conceives of solidarity as action, including the omission of an action (p. 54). The person acting in solidarity (subject) must accept obligations that fulfil the demands of those in need of solidarity. These obligations are formulated by the object and may be against the subject's conviction once the subject has freely endorsed and committed to the underlying solidary cause. Solidarity is about acting with others, even if there is disagreement over the necessary means and ends (Kolers, 2012, p. 366). Kolers makes explicit that in his view, the own conscience cannot always provide the best possible guide for action (p. 25-26).[19]

Sangiovanni (2015) diverges from this view in his understanding of solidarity as "joint action" in a teleological manner. He argues that solidary agents need not have the same intention to be in solidarity; there is no need for shared agency. However, it is necessary to share a goal (p. 343), face a common adversity (p. 345) and intend to achieve the goal while being ready to incur costs in its pursuit and without obstructing others' actions in working towards the goal. While the "attitude and resultant action" (p. 347) are of central importance, it is the goal that justifies action, not the commitment to act. This is an instrumental view of solidary action.

[19] Deferring one's own opinion to that of a supposedly homogenous group strikes me as an endeavour that is not only practically demanding but also potentially dangerous (which Kolers partly acknowledges). The complexity of this debate can be exemplified by the 2020 protests following George Floyd's (a black man) death in the United States. While solidary participation of white Americans in the protests was welcomed, their role was ambiguous among some protesters. As an activist said to The Guardian: "I need white people to ask black and brown people what they want them to do, then do that. Don't come with your own agendas – this isn't about you, it's about us" (Perkins, 2020). I think that while without a doubt white people have never experienced systemic racism, it is questionable to deny them any point of view on this issue and how to solve it. After all, those affected by racism do not constitute a homogenous group with identical aims and goals. Also, some non-affected may have useful thoughts on solving the problem. At the same time – and I think this is not mutually exclusive – giving a voice to those most affected makes sense and should be a priority.

To Derpmann (2013), acting in solidarity is non-instrumental and has to do with the readiness to stand up for someone (p. 41). Solidary action, he argues, happens between members of certain communities and is therefore partisan in character. William P. Umphres (2018) finds expressions of solidarity to be acts of deliberation in a Habermasian sense, which can provide a different bond than nationality, for example. In this way, action and relation reinforce each other.

2.5 Summary

The aim of this chapter has been to lay the basis for my conceptional work on solidarity. In order to do so, I took these steps:

First, I explained the link between the normative and the descriptive aspects of solidarity. Following this, I stated in what sense my thesis is concerned with answering normative questions about solidarity in the European Union. In order to introduce my methodological approach, I distinguished between concept and conception. Specifically, I argued that I would depart from a more normatively neutral and unspecific concept and elaborate on it by answering the questions that would make it more concrete in order to arrive at a stronger normatively laden conception. I distinguished this approach from an alternative method, which discerns commonalities in historical uses of the term to arrive at a comprehensive definition. The reason I did not adapt this approach is due to the variety of meanings solidarity has held in the past – which I presented in a separate section that briefly summarizes the history of the term. I then sketched out the relevant theoretical literature that has been written on solidarity, and in which I do not find a comprehensive account of solidarity that would offer answers to my question about solidarity as a societal relation in a satisfactory way. Starting with classifications of types of solidarity, I subsequently presented various accounts of specific types of communities of solidarity. I structured this presentation by the types of community to which previous theorists refer, by their extension and the different accounts on expressions of solidarity. Based on this preliminary work, I will now move on to

present my own conception of solidarity, structured by the aforementioned methodological steps.

3. Defining Solidarity

Even though definitions of solidarity are diverse and disputed, there is no doubt from either its French and German roots or from contemporary understandings that the notion has to do with a specific way in which individuals act for or towards others. The Grimm dictionary of the German language from the 19th century provides a short entry on the adjective solidary – "solidarisch", where it states: "what concerns him/her, concerns me, too. I stand up for him/her".[20] In the corresponding French *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle* by Pierre Larousse it reads that solidarity is a condition in which two or more persons have obligations towards each other, and each one towards all.[21] Both clearly show: Solidarity does not work without an "other".

This may read as very basic, but it introduces a fundamental feature that explains why solidarity is such an intriguing idea. We live in different types of relations with the people around us, some closer than others, and most people would agree that for a variety of reasons we should stand up for some of these people. We may feel the responsibility to stand up for a family member or friend or colleague. We may choose to do so out of love or friendship, or even loyalty or charity.[22] But what makes solidarity different? And further, what does "standing up" really mean? And what makes it distinct from merely helping or supporting someone? The dictionary entries appear to present a comprehensive, yet maximally open concept of solidarity that will of course require more detailed content to be equipped for a meaningful analysis.

In this chapter, I will present solidarity as essentially a combination of two things: a social relationship beyond the private sphere, and a political action that aims for change and possesses a "statement character" of some kind. I will in a third step present criteria for an evaluation of cases of solidarity in order to determine their ethical desirability.

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[20] "solidarisch, adj.: ich bin mit ihm solidarisch, was ihn betrifft, geht auch mich an; ich trete für ihn ein" (DWB, 1971). This is my own translation. I translated the (generic) masculine pronoun as him/her since I take it to include all members of society, at least in a contemporary reading.

[21] "Etat de deux ou plusieurs personnes obligées les unes pour les autres, et chacune pour toutes: la solidarité ne se présume pas, elle doit être stipulée expressement" (Larousse, 1875, p. 840).

[22] I will distinguish these ideas from solidarity explicitly in the next chapter.

3.1 Research Questions

As I anticipated in the previous chapter, my methodological approach differs from those scholars who present a historical deduction of the notion of solidarity, based on previous understandings of the idea. The difference is straightforward: My idea is to start with two basic features of the concept of solidarity I find to be expressed particularly in the Grimm dictionary entry and then enrich these features with my conception of what they *should* entail.

As I have argued in the previous chapter, a conception of solidarity resorts to normative questions that allow it to gain greater clarity and – inspired by Ian Carter's observation on the gradual shape of value-neutrality – allow and call for a more evaluative character. A less value-neutral conception is thus quite distinct from a more (albeit never completely) neutral concept. At the same time, a fairly neutral concept proves to be of great use in asking the right clarificatory questions.

The Grimm's dictionary entry thus serves as my scaffold, and it offers two variables in need of clarification. I therefore suggest two main questions whose answer will determine my conception of solidarity.

1. **What makes me concerned about the other? (Dealing with the relational question)**
2. **What does it mean to stand up for the other? (Dealing with the question of solidary action)**

These two questions are – in one way or another – present in all conceptions of solidarity. Both questions possess normative content, as they assume certain ideals of how one ought to live with others in a community or society and suggest that one should perform certain actions for others. What they do not entail are standpoints on the value or desirability of solidarity. To make them explicit, I find a further step to be necessary: an evaluation of cases that may qualify formally as solidarity in terms of their value and desirability. This is necessary if one wishes to answer Christine Korsgaard's normative question (cf. 2.1): Which solidarity justifies claims to morality? What should we really do in order to act in an ethically solidary way? In response, I will argue why certain types of solidarity are not normatively desirable as opposed to others –

which will be necessary for the later chapters on the European Union. In other words, according to my conception, potentially unethical behaviour may satisfy the formal requirements of the solidarity I determine.[23] In order for solidarity to be ethical, however, we need to evaluate these instances in a third step. We may call this third step the "ethical filter": a relationship or an act of solidarity is to be evaluated with regard to the ethical value of the goals it pursues, as a matter of normative value to do something good. The idea is ultimately not only to define solidarity, but to define a *desirable type* of solidarity.

3.2 Social and Political Understandings

Answering questions 1. and 2. requires a short digression into the terms *political* and *social*. One reason is that they appear in many accounts of solidarity, as I will show. Both terms help, moreover, in the definition of solidarity as a type of relation and as an action. For my account, I suggest thinking of solidarity as both political and social; more specifically, solidarity in my view is social in its relational sense (see Question 1.) and political in its "expressive" sense as an action (see Question 2.). I will explain and justify this view in the remainder of this section, presenting an account of both terms after assessing how they have been used in the existing literature on solidarity so far.

Let me start by presenting the various uses of the terms *social* and *political* in previous literature on solidarity. Émile Durkheim's seminal work on the concept, for instance, depicts solidarity as a social phenomenon. The structure of society in light of the degree of division of labour gives rise to a specific type of social cohesion: solidarity (cf. 2014 [1902]). This cohesion is caused by external circumstances (i.e., division of labour) rather than by individual action.

[23] This relates to the question of extension and intension of solidarity. The intension (also referred to as "defining conditions") and extension are characteristic of concepts. The former refers to the features that determine whether something can be considered to satisfy the concept, whereas the latter is the "subset of the domain consisting of precisely those objects that fall under the concept" (List & Valentini, 2016, p. 531). The extension depends on the filters that the intension imposes. In my conception, desirable ends and intentions are part of an ethical intension of solidarity, not only relating to another and standing up for each other. The extension of those relationships and acts that satisfy my criteria may include unethical ones – for this reason, we need to evaluate them in terms of their content in a third step.

Yet, solidarity is often understood as a constituent component of identity. As Simon Derpmann (2013) argues, solidarity is based on the identification of the social self with a community; solidarity is constituent of identity not only in the relation to the self, but also to others: one recognizes others as part of a community (p. 58). This view suggests an active component to social recognition of the self and others which is very distinct from Durkheim's. Thirdly, there is Andrea Sangiovanni's (2013) view, who calls demands for social solidarity "demands for a fair return in the mutual production of important collective goods" (p. 5). His understanding depicts social solidarity as a return to a collective effort, offering an instrumental view of the social that possesses a redistributive dimension. These are three very distinct utilizations of the term *social*.

When it comes to the use of the term *political,* matters are similarly complex. Avery Kolers characterizes solidarity as "political action" (2016, p. 5) and as "pursuit, together with others, of political goals" (p. 29). According to his view, solidarity has political aims based on the specific structural problem of inequity and takes place in the political sphere. However, the relational aspect he mentions implies a social nature of solidarity at the same time. To Carlo Burelli (2016), solidarity is "a political obligation to help the less fortunate" (p. 12). Jürgen Habermas (2013) goes further in suggesting to use solidarity in institutional terms (p. 100), implying that the actors for solidarity can only be governments, parties and unions. According to Max Pensky (2008), solidarity is "the political value against which the freedom of individuals must be balanced and without which the freedom becomes hollow" (p. 1). Ulrich K. Preuß (1999) affirms that the reference for solidarity is the "political community" based on citizenship (p. 285). In these examples, the term *political* not only bears a variety of meanings, but there is also a clear overlap with what is usually meant in the utilization of the term *social,* namely the relational bonds one shares with others. In other words, solidarity is potentially both a social and political concept. This possibility is distinct from Sally Scholz's (2007) depiction of the two, as her classification of types of solidarity makes a clear separation between political solidarity and social solidarity: in her work, they are two different *kinds* of solidarity. Political solidarity is a "shared commitment to a political cause in the name of liberation or justice and in opposition to oppression or injustice" (p. 38). This definition of

political solidarity is project-related in order to affect social change, oppositional against practices by another group and formed by commitment to unity (p. 40). Scholz' understanding of social solidarity, in turn, refers to the degree of mutual identification – for example, in a context where people "share a history, consciousness, identity, location or experience" (p. 39).

The theoretical accounts I just presented will echo, to different extents, my own suggestion of how to use these terms. I am aware of the multitude of theoretical debates and contestations around both the *political* and the *social*, but since a thorough debate of these terms would go beyond the scope of my dissertation, I will have to limit my understanding of each to a rather general definition, departing from a conception of the *political* which is inspired by Hannah Arendt's understanding.

Broadly speaking, the *political* describes a whole range of processes and actions that take place in a sphere of social life that demarcates specific matters that are public (as opposed to private) and thus, in principle, of concern for everyone (Blättler, 2008).[24] Theoretical discussions around the term debate the properties[25] and expansion of the political and, as a consequence, the borders of the private. For my purpose, an elaborate position on where to separate both spheres is not necessary, but it is important to realise that the distinction as such is contested. Notably, feminist theory since the 1960s has challenged the separation altogether (cf. Blättler, 2008), arguing that "the private is political". In contrast, Hannah Arendt's work sharply distinguishes the two, characterizing the political as the place where people can act together in freedom – beyond their immediate personal, private needs (cf. Arendt, 2002 [1967]). To Arendt, the private concerns a realm of social life that is not organized in a political way – i.e., family life – where survival and the most basic needs must be fulfilled. The private thus merits special protection for the public, political life to be meaningful. The *political* concerns those matters of shared interest to all that go beyond one's personal aspirations and one's own life span, and they are acted upon by individuals in their role as citizens (Arendt,

[24] "In principle" because some might argue that certain political matters do not concern them. But while their individual concern may be subject to discussion, the collective concern is inevitably part of the political.
[25] For instance with Chantal Mouffe conceiving of the political as a space of antagonisms characterized by hegemonies and endangered by (cosmopolitical) aspirations of consensus-building (cf. Mouffe, 2005).

1977). Arendt's conception of political action builds on the tradition of ancient Greek philosophy (cf. Arendt, 1959, 2002 [1967]).

In her well-known interpretation of Arendt's conception of the political, Seyla Benhabib (1999) problematizes the viability of this distinction, notably with regard to Arendt's intimate relationship with Martin Heidegger, which would fall into the category of the private although Heidegger's proximity to National Socialism is clearly a political issue. It is probably safe to say that Arendt's understanding is debatable, and, as Arendt herself might have acknowledged, the space to act politically in real life hardly resembles an ideal state, given that power imbalances, corruption and manipulation distort the freedom of the individual to act in the political. Still, I find Arendt's distinction of discerning those matters that belong to the political useful for my discussion of solidarity. In their most basic understanding, political matters need to be of shared, public concern to everyone and not belong solely to the sphere of intimacy, love and friendship.[26]

With this distinction in mind, I have referred to solidarity as a both social and political phenomenon. Nathalie Karagiannis' (2007a) definition of solidarity is helpful in understanding this intertwinement. She defines solidarity as a "recurrent specification of social bonds with a political view" which brings together "a (often a posteriori) description of a certain *social* reality at a certain time, and a (often a priori) *political* project" (p. 216). According to Karagiannis, the social and political are blurred, as are the "descriptive/static and normative/dynamic" dimensions of solidarity (ibid.). Her suggestion to view both the social and the political dimension of solidarity as inseparable constituents seems plausible to me: solidarity cannot happen on a merely individual level, but – more than that – it is characterized by activity or practice, in a political sense.

[26] One example to illustrate the line between the two is that of intimacy between two partners: while consensual intimacy pertains to the private sphere, non-consensual sex is (nowadays luckily considered) a politically relevant problem. Though it may happen in the same private bedroom, a criminal act therein can hurt the fundamental rights of an individual. This constitutes its political relevance. Depending on one's reading of Arendt, she would arrive at the same conclusion but for different reasons. While intimacy remains private, the sexual identity of private individuals is under attack, which turns it into a matter of public interest. As Benhabib interprets, "the personal becomes the political when one's identity as a Jew, as a woman, as a refugee, etc. – an identity one shares with others – is attacked by the larger society" (Benhabib, 1999).

In this view, there are certain connotations attached to each term: a more fixed, static meaning to *social* and a rather dynamic and active connotation to *political*. This overlaps with some of the ways other theorists have used the two terms [27] and fits an Arendtian understanding of the *political* as a space of action. In my interpretation of Karagiannis, the political dimension of solidarity takes place within the social, usually related to specific practical projects.[28]

While in general this depiction of the position and purpose of the political seems plausible to me, there is some controversy about whether the *social* is really such a fixed space. Craig Calhoun (2002) offers a valid point about this question, disapproving of a conception in which only the *political* is associated with progress and rationality, while the *social* is seen as a given that cannot be changed. To him, both dimensions are dynamic and inseparable. According to Calhoun, nations are "modern products of shared political, cultural and social participation" (p. 150). As a result, "constructing the relevant people should not be treated as a pre-political process, as simply a taken-as-given basis for politics" (p. 153). The terms individual and nation should not be seen as opposites, but as "complicit" (ibid.). He goes on to argue that we should not "reduce social solidarity to identity" (p. 155). Such a reduction would exclude the possibility of forming a new and different public sphere.[29] At the same time,

[27] Especially the social dimension is prone to diverse interpretations. Durkheim's seems value-neutral, simply referring to the reality of society as a large group of individuals. Derpmann's view, in turn, is centred around the individual and the active recognition of oneself among others. Sangiovanni seems to use the term *social* here as concerning the welfare of those living in society, thus attaching a specific value of cooperation or benefit to it. When it comes to the term *political*, it seems to evoke activity-related connotations, such as action and obligation, but is also referred to as a value or a specific type of community. Habermas suggests that the political is equivalent to the institutional organisation of society – as, for example, through governments.

[28] A small remark on the meaning of *political* in an institutional sense: I would interpret institutional political action as action occurring on behalf of the members of society, thus representing their interests. This, of course, requires a democratic system, limiting its application to certain cases.

[29] The discussion about identity would open an entirely new chapter here, and I will only briefly return to it at various points before reflecting more generally on it in chapter 8. Here, I limit this discussion to mentioning David Hollinger (2006), who argues that identity is a static, historically contingent construct and not fit to withstand the challenges of globalisation and diversification conceptually. Therefore, he proposes to regard solidarity as an active commitment, a question of "will". Solidarity requires individuals to actively make a choice in favour of it. Globalisation has led to a tension between the need to feel social belonging and the urge to form a broad alliance that would enable a richer social and cultural experience. Hollinger therefore describes solidarity as the "problem of willed affiliation" (p. 24). While I agree with the view that solidary affiliation is voluntary, I would still go with Calhoun's view that such affiliation would shape social identity actively, and I would reject the idea that it is static.

political commitment alone cannot be an "adequate source of belonging and mutual commitment" (p. 157).

Calhoun's argument alerts us to two potential problems in the social/political distinction and is helpful for my conception of solidarity. Firstly, it criticizes the possibility of shaping the *political* through reason, thereby classifying social characteristics as given and, to some extent, unchangeable. This bears the danger of leaving the social dimension to those regressive forces who want to use it to exclude others – for example, by referring to essentialist ethnic or cultural traits. Secondly, it ignores the creative potential within the public sphere to find new answers to the social questions identified above. It may also seem overly simplistic to assume that the social and cultural dimensions that shape solidarities can be realistically left aside in favour of a purely independent political commitment. Calhoun's warning helps my depiction of the *political* and *social;* normatively, both categories of the social and the political are spheres that can be shaped and are products of active participation. Solidarity is a social phenomenon (as opposed to an individual one), in that it is concerned with certain relations outside the intimate sphere. But forming solidary relationships does not presuppose passivity; on the contrary, it is a normative question of how to relate to those whom we do not relate to through love, family or friendship. It is political in the sense that it is concerned with an active role in the political sphere (outside the private).[30] In sum, I suggest conceiving of the term *social* as relational, specifically when taken in the context of solidarity referring to relationships that can be actively shaped – a thought I will develop further in the next section. The term *political,* I suggest, refers to matters of the public sphere and is associated with actions. Understanding the terms *social* and *political* in this way provides the basis to more closely examine my two main conceptual questions. The first conceptual question deals with the relation that underlies solidarity, and the second with the type of expression or action associated with solidarity.

[30] It is, of course, not impossible to think of a case in which individuals who share a private bond also unite in solidarity. However, this unity would constitute a political, not a private concern. This will become clearer in the next chapter, where I distinguish solidarity from related concepts that I think are more apt to describe relations in the private sphere.

3.3 What Makes Me Concerned About the Other? – The Relational Question

Solidarity, I argue, is not primarily concerned with emotional and personal relationships between individuals, such as love or friendship. Still, it requires a connection between individuals – usually more than two – making it a social phenomenon. Solidarity fills a conceptual gap by mediating between the interests and normative presuppositions of the individual and the collective. In other words, it is a relation outside the intimate sphere that is vital for the less restrictive bonds we all share with others; this relation, furthermore, does not quite find representation in more frequently studied notions like loyalty or charity. In this section, I will first sketch out the societal problem that gives rise to the need for solidarity. I will then characterize the specific type of solidary relationship and its constitution in terms of membership. This entails a discussion and evaluation of the (a)symmetrical relation solidary agents find themselves in, the inclusive or exclusive character of solidarity, as well as the scope of solidary relationships.

Solidarity deals with a fundamental question in political theory. I am referring to a discussion that has appeared in different shapes over the last 200 years of political philosophy. The profound changes Western[31] societies have undergone in the wake of modernization, i.e., industrialization and the transition from feudal to republican and (gradually) democratic political systems, have profoundly altered the ways they are held together. The transition has found representation in canonical literature, such as in Hegel's notion of civil society (1983),[32] as well as in Émile Durkheim's work, which, as I discussed previously, describes the societal transition in terms of different types of solidarity.

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[31] I wish to note the problematic alignment of the European/North American traditions of thought as some sort of superior centre of intellectual capacities. As Achille Mbembe notes, "the experience of the Other, or the *problem of the 'I' of others and of human beings we perceive as foreign to us*, has almost always posed virtually insurmountable difficulties to the Western philosophical and political tradition. Whether dealing with Africa or with other non-European worlds, this tradition long denied the existence of any 'self' but its own" (Mbembe, 2001, p. 2). Most certainly, many societal developments in the terms I mention do not apply globally.

[32] Even though Hegel himself does not refer elaborately to solidarity, it appears once in the notes of his lectures: "Indem die Korporation in Rücksicht der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft an die Stelle der Familie tritt, so fällt derselben auch die Sorge für die Individuen anheim, da/wo und insoweit die Kräfte der Familie nicht ausreichen. (...) Ebenso hat sie sich solidarisch zu verbinden für diejenigen, welche zufälligerweise in Armut geraten" (Hegel, 1983, p. 203). What Hegel argues is that those in society who are by chance affected by poverty should receive solidary support from corporations, whose role it is to care like a family when and where the actual family is unable to care for all.

Rahel Jaeggi and Robin Celikates, in resorting to Ferdinand Tönnies' problematically romanticized dichotomy of *Gemeinschaft* (community) versus *Gesellschaft* (society)[33] (Tönnies, 1991 [1887]), argue that a contemporary account of solidarity may help bridge the divide between the two by neither denying the challenges of modern society nor presenting a hypothetical return to a conservative idea of premodern society as a solution (Jaeggi & Celikates, 2017, p. 38). I find this to be a helpful conception of solidarity: it can be regarded as a path to overcome the perceived divide that modern society manifests between the individual and those people with whom one does not share bonds of friendship or love, but still connects to as members of society or in another way. Steven Lukes' observation of the notion of stability and strength prevalent in the word *solid* underlines this idea: "the opposite of 'solidarity' would be (if the word existed) 'fluidarity' – a lack of stable social relationships or bonds or connections, an absence of community or fellow-feeling" (Lukes, 1999, p. 273).

Solidarity is thus a "modern term through and through" (Brunkhorst, 2002, p. 9).[34] Of course, the complexity of modern society is not limited to what has been characterized by the term *Gesellschaft* as opposed to *Gemeinschaft*. Both closer and looser social relations exist within every society, and each individual finds themselves in many different kinds of them. It is not sufficient to take solidarity to be a social relation. It is necessary to explain what kind of relation solidarity is specifically, beyond the predication that it is located outside of the very individual and private sphere.

If those we are in solidarity with are neither friends nor lovers, concerns of terminology require an apt term for a unit of solidarity: A group? A community? An association? A society? In German, this question can be answered by looking at everyday language, given that the term

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[33] Ferdinand Tönnies (1991 [1887]) conceptualizes the dichotomy as follows: the two terms reveal the fundamental difference between the public, impersonal, more individualized sphere of collectivity existent in modern society (Gesellschaft) and the close bonds of homogeneous communities, such as family and bonds of kinship, attributed to premodern societies (Gemeinschaft). Tönnies himself offered a rather pessimist account of modern society, arguing that the ties of community are based on attachment, whereas the ties of society – characteristic of modernity – are based on anonymity and the division into individuals (cf. Bayertz, 1999; Jaeggi & Celikates, 2017).

[34] "Solidarität ist ein durch und durch moderner Begriff." (Own translation)

Solidargemeinschaft (solidary community) enjoys clear prevalence. Let me explain why it is also conceptually apt to speak of solidary communities.

Andrew Mason's work on communities can be of help here. According to Mason, a community is a twofold concept: "the ordinary concept of community picks out groups whose members share values and a way of life, identify with the group and its practices, and recognize each other as members. The moralized concept requires that the relationships between members of a community be non-exploitative or just, and that mutual concern exist between them" (Mason, 2000, pp. 40-41). Mason distinguishes communities from associations or societies, claiming that the latter consist of "people who interact with one another primarily on a contractual basis, in order to further their own self-regarding interests" (p. 20). He argues that communities are a sub-set of groups, which is a more neutral term for "a collection of individuals who either act together, or who cooperate with one another in pursuit of their own goals, or who at least possess common interests" (p. 21). Communities exist with different degrees of intensity; their definition is "inherently vague" (p. 25), and one does not need to be face to face with the other community members in order for a community to be a community. The normative and descriptive dimensions present in Mason's definition coincide with the two dimensions of solidarity I previously laid out, the moralized version serving as a way of normatively evaluating types of communities or setting standards for them. For my purpose, Mason's definition of *society* seems too instrumental, since – as I will explain – solidarity is not (primarily) about furthering self-interest. *Groups* are, in Mason's definition, too unspecific for my purpose, given that solidarity requires a more specific bond between its agents. I will therefore refer to solidary *communities* henceforth, while defining particular features that make them distinct.[35]

To get a clearer idea of the relationship members of solidary communities are in, one must consider how they constitute a specific type of community. Does membership to any community, entailing certain characteristics, provide grounds for solidarity? Or is the opposite

[35] In the German language, the equivalent *Solidargemeinschaft* (solidary community) possesses stronger prevalence than in English, particularly in the welfare state discourse. In later chapters, I will assess whether also (national or supranational) societies or collectives can be solidary communities.

the case: do individuals form communities because of common goals that merit solidarity? In other words, which comes first: solidarity or the community? As Avery Kolers (2016) observes, some theorists start with certain (potentially universal) characteristics, such as being human, sharing nationality, civic status, social class or ethnicity, to constitute the solidary unit, while others (including Kolers) argue that it is a shared need for solidarity that makes up the solidary community. In my own argument about this question, I will contend that: firstly, these are not mutually exclusive categories – there are also mixed forms of solidary communities; and secondly, what matters most is how we evaluate the formation of the community in normative terms.

From the literature I briefly summarized in the previous chapter, one can draw two conclusions. Descriptively, both cases of solidary communities appear in theorizing: those that form based on antecedent characteristics and those that unite around a shared goal or identification. Normatively, however, most theorists seem to reject an account of solidarity that is based on antecedent characteristics and instead stress the importance of shared goals, reasons or common ground. As a matter of terminology, I will henceforth refer to "antecedent characteristics" or "antecedent traits" to describe contingent and involuntary features such as skin colour or other phenotypical traits, place of birth or biological sex. I call these antecedent, because they precede conscious choices we can make about political matters such as how we want to live together or what we perceive to be just.

A discomfort with the idea of solidarity based on involuntary traits is plausible, since it would make belonging to a community somewhat arbitrary, rather than a commitment that individuals use their reason (and ideally good reasons) to make.[36] Solidarity based on antecedent characteristics is also not desirable in my conception of the term. Therefore, solidarity arising merely out of membership to a community does not suffice to qualify as such. Paul Gilroy describes such cases where an understanding of solidary community is based on

[36] A community based on antecedent characteristics can sometimes be more adequately captured under the umbrella of the concept "loyalty" (see next chapter), a relationship where the value of the connection to the other person and that person's wish can potentially trump reasonable actions.

"shared phenotypes, cultures, and bio-nationalities" as "cheap pseudo-solidarities" (2000, p. 41).

However, previous membership to a community may very well be a reason-giving factor. Antecedent traits many times lead to certain identifications, experiences or values that may make it more likely for one to engage in a solidary commitment. For example, women may be overly represented in a feminist solidary community. Their being female may be somewhat arbitrary (because antecedent), but their experience of oppression as a structural problem is not. Other solidary communities, however, may simply convene out of a shared interest. Imagine, for instance, a group of tenants in the same building who jointly protest against gentrification because their home was sold to a large investment company that threatens to raise the price of rent. This understanding of how solidary communities are constituted fits my previous conception of the *social* as a space that can be shaped and influenced.

But does this mean that men would not be able to join a solidary community of feminists? Or would those living in a different building be unable join in solidarity against gentrification? One could say so, since, to stay with the first example, men would not be able to experience the specific injustice women do and take action against (to really share each other's fate, as Sangiovanni (2015) would say). However, many scholars have pointed out that solidarity can come from outside the solidary community – for example, out of social empathy (Reshaur, 1992; Taylor, 2015). Further, it seems to me intuitively correct to include the possibility of what Ashley Taylor has called "expressional" solidarity (2015) and Onora O'Neill "solidarity with" (as opposed to "solidarity among") (1996, p. 201).[37]

Sangiovanni's standpoint, on the one hand, seems plausible: only whoever can reasonably claim to "share fate" is in a sufficiently symmetrical position with the other for a solidary act to qualify as such. What, after all, would otherwise distinguish it from asymmetrical

[37] Ashley Taylor describes the fundamental difference between both types of solidarity (within a group or from outside a group): According to her, solidarity within the group has to be bidirectional, in the sense that there has to be "mutual recognition of identifying with the group, mutual trust, mutual disposition to empathy and a joint interest" (Taylor, 2015, p. 139). When any of these preconditions is unidirectional or, in other words, does not involve reciprocity, the type of solidarity can be regarded as "expressional".

relations like those of help or charity? On the other hand, I wonder when "sharing fate" can ever truly be completely symmetrical. Individual circumstances will make the cost of acting in solidarity almost always dependent on one's own social position, wealth, status, risk factors etc. It is quite likely that the "fate" one shares does not impose the same burden on all.[38] Therefore, I suggest that instead of stipulating a need to share fate, membership to the solidary community should be characterized by the readiness to contribute: to express solidarity in light of a shared interest, goal or value and with a belief in equality of all, independent of one's ability to contribute. In this understanding, solidarity can be asymmetrical: Some may be able to contribute more, others less, thereby sharing more or less fate. It is clear to me that the readiness to make some sacrifice should be required. Otherwise, a mere declaration of solidarity would suffice, turning the term into an empty concept (or confirming the suspicion that it is frequently used in a merely superficial way). I argue that this readiness need not require sharing fate, but it does require a shared agreement that solidary intentions manifest through action.

It is especially important that both types of relationship (solidarity "with" and "among", in O'Neill's terms) qualify as solidarity, because in my view, it is ethically desirable for solidarity to be inclusive. If it is reserved exclusively to those able to "share fate", fulfilling this ethical requirement would be impossible, because sharing fate is not something a person coming from the outside can simply decide to do. Inclusivity (as opposed to exclusive, oppositional understandings of solidarity) is a decisive feature of my normative view of solidarity, specifically in the context of the EU.[39] I do not mean to say that there are no cases of solidarity "among", meaning that a certain solidary community presupposes that some others do not qualify for it. However, being in solidarity "with" a community and consciously

[38] The consequences of acting in solidarity will therefore be different for each and every one of them. In a community of feminists, for instance, there may be those harshly affected by oppression and others who – due to their diverse forms of capital – do not suffer as much or find ways out. So "sharing the fate" may simply be a relative term that has to be weighed against the structural conditions each member of the solidary group finds herself in. There is one single exception to this: in solidary struggles that are about life or death. Since in death we are all equal, this extreme threat in a situation in which solidarity is asked for truly represents a case of sharing fates. For all other cases sharing one's fate goes beyond what solidarity requires to qualify as such – and what it can ask of its actors.

[39] Steven Lukes (1999) proposes an inclusive understanding of solidarity in which the concept of citizenship serves as unifying element in an otherwise very diverse society. However, the question remains whether this understanding can be made inclusive towards non-citizens as well.

committing to actions that will strengthen it may very well turn a "with" into an "among";[40] even though a man in solidarity with feminists does not become a woman, he becomes one of them (the feminists) in the sense that he fights for the same goal and is willing to incur some sacrifice for it. The inclusive character, the possibility to act in "sympathetic expression" (Scholz, 2015, p. 725) with the solidary group, should be a constitutive feature of solidarity.[41]

In the context of the European Union, or in any case of large communities of solidarity, only an inclusive understanding of solidarity can offer a suitable normative basis. Importantly, the question of exclusive vs. inclusive solidarity is not a matter of what solidarity is and is not, but a matter of normative evaluation. In my understanding, only inclusive solidarity qualifies, because an exclusive European solidarity would pose dangers such as European nationalism and "fortress Europe". I will elaborate in the chapters on the EU on what this point means for my purpose. An inclusive understanding of solidarity may have far-reaching consequences: It means that the borders of a solidary community are porous, and in theory, those outside of it are able to join. In other words, those who are not (yet) part of a solidary community do, in principle, have the possibility of joining.

Carlo Burelli (2016), in his conception of solidarity, suggests that empirically, most cases of solidarity were exclusionary. Steinar Stjernø (2004) writes that "almost all examples of solidarity imply inclusion and exclusion" (p. 17), but that the concept as such may "imply inclusion and exclusion, or only inclusion" (p. 18). I am not aware of any comprehensive empirical collection of solidarities (if this were possible), but I would say that the exclusionary character of solidarity may be true for some but not all cases of solidarity. It also does not seem to me to be a requirement. Even if we think of workers' solidarity against an exploitative class, it may well be the oppression that triggers solidarity, not necessarily the opposition towards individuals in charge.[42] Still it is useful to consider cases in which exclusiveness seems

[40] Jodi Dean makes a further case for inclusivity by also taking opposing voices into consideration: "Solidarity can be modeled as an interaction involving at least three persons: I ask you to stand by me over and against a third. But rather than presuming the exclusion and opposition of the third, the ideal of reflective solidarity thematizes the voice of the third to reconstruct solidarity as an inclusionary ideal for contemporary politics and societies" (Dean, 1996, p. 3).

[41] Recall my rejection of antecedent traits as a basis for solidarity; they would also be clearly exclusive.

[42] One question would be to discuss whether a factory owner would also be able to act in solidarity with his workers, for example, by providing decent working conditions or allowing or joining organised action against

inevitable. Let's say, for example, some people say human rights should be abolished. Should those people not be – by definition – excluded from a solidary community that unites in order to preserve or expand human rights? While opposition to human rights sceptics is more than necessary, I do not see a reason to completely exclude them from the solidary community, in case they credibly change their minds. However, one may think of an even more extreme case, in which a (former) rapist wants to join a solidary community of rape survivors; to preserve the dignity and health of those survivors, excluding the rapist seems a reasonable demand. These cases are, however, quite drastic, and upon further deliberation, we might even reach the conclusion that there are ways in which the former rapist can act in solidarity with movements struggling against sexual violence.

In sum, I find neither an empirical nor normative objection to a general inclusivity requirement. The question of inclusivity seems to be, more pressingly, whether there are limits to communities of solidarity in terms of size. Universal solidarity extending to all humankind is empirically non-existent, and theorists have been similarly sceptical about it (cf. chapter 2). Scholars like Kurt Bayertz (1999a) have argued that the internal motivation to act in solidarity is not unlimited towards all human beings (p. 5). Axel Honneth notes that there is something abstract and utopian about the idea of universal solidarity (cf. Honneth, 1994, p. 219). Why? And how would this limitation be able to subsist next to an inclusivity requirement?

One obvious consideration is that the larger the community, the weaker any actual bonds are between its members. Large group size usually implies less personal connection and potentially more distance to other group members. However, one may also think of a hypothetical small solidary group that is spread all over the planet and does not necessarily have personal contact, such as groups formed by a religious or cultural diaspora or by adherence to specific political goals, in which solidarity works well because the decisive normative basis for solidarity is strong (albeit limited to specific issues).

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structural exploitation. An interesting case is the French philosopher Simone Weil, who in order to document and share the life of exploited workers, worked in a factory in the 1930s. She clearly shared her fate with them by going through harsh physical work (without being required to do so by material need), so her efforts could arguably be considered successful acts of solidarity (sharing the burden of work, helping the struggle by exposing the conditions). Had she been the owner of a factory, though, the argument could be made that only by ceasing to be the owner could she be in a credible condition to perform acts of solidarity.

What seems more likely to weaken cohesion in a solidary community is a large number of individuals paired with an overly ambitious project of solidary "consensus". In other words, if we consider a very large group of individuals and require them to act in solidarity on a variety of issues or in significant ways, it is likely that their willingness to do so will be fairly low. For example, in most countries the readiness to make some collective effort for redistribution and act in (institutionalized) solidarity with the poor exists, but it is subject to constant deliberation and negotiation. Imagine that apart from redistributing money, an idea of solidarity would be to allow everyone in your country who needed a place to sleep in your home, share your clothes and personal objects. The opposition to this would be significant. Another argument I find plausible, however, is not empirical: if solidarity is about political concerns that are relevant to the public sphere (as I will elaborate on in the next subchapter on solidary action), these concerns are, in most cases, somehow caused by fellow human beings. There seems to be a contradiction, then, with all humans being part of a community tackling such concerns, as it would render impossible any opposition towards those who caused the problem. In other words, universal (global) solidarity would only be possible when faced with some political issue that is not man-made, such as a threat to life on earth coming from space. The current COVID-19 pandemic is such a case, although the blame cannot be put on single individuals but rather on practices that have been going on for a long time, such as the gradual destruction of the natural habitat of wild animals. But even if there were people to blame directly, opposition against them would not be a current priority of solidarity, since most urgent acts of solidarity need to be in support of those that are most affected by the pandemic. In the exceptional case of COVID, which I discuss at various points in later chapters, global solidarity, limited to the very specific concerns arising out of the public health emergency, would be at least a hypothetical possibility. But, as the example of global vaccine distribution indicates, feelings of global solidarity are not very strong, even in such an exceptional situation.

Does this mean that large-scale solidarity is impossible unless prompted by force? Apart from doubts on whether forced solidarity is still solidarity, I do not think so. It is a matter of making sure the solidary goal is not too demanding to each member, especially in a large group with a very diverse makeup. But there is also a question of desirability. I argue that

it is not desirable to have a very comprehensive set of demands for solidarity in a large group. The idea here is that too many demands within a solidary community bear a danger other than the criticism that their realization is unrealistic; they would, I argue, force large pluralist communities into a supposed consensus that will likely be dictated by the "loud voices" in the solidary community without any institutions to counter this tendency. This would not only overlook and potentially silence those with alternative ideas but also possibly lead to an implosion of the whole solidary community if some voices in the spectrum go unheard.

A search for broad consensus should not, I argue, be the aim of large solidary communities.[43] This also applies to small ones, but since they are likely to be more homogeneous, broader consensus is more likely. In my view, the goal of broad consensus is not conducive to cohesion in a pluralist social setting; it mixes up issues that deserve specific consideration and blurs legitimate different interests into a supposed common denominator. Thus, I believe a very limited but more specific understanding of solidarity can be a basis for large-scale solidarity. As for solidarity among humankind, I posit that it might be possible with a very limited but specific understanding of solidarity – though clearly not at this moment. Maybe COVID-19, climate change or other global problems will create potentials for solidarity; however, it's possible that a shared threat may have the opposite effect: opposition and fragmentation (given that they do not affect everyone in the same way).

Solidarity, in my account, can be agent-neutral. By this I mean that a person I am in solidarity with does not need to be known to me individually, and, in some cases, her individual traits are not important for the solidary relationship to exist. I phrase this as a possibility, because there may be cases where it is not agent-neutral – for instance, when one particular person requires solidarity. But agent-neutrality is important to distinguish solidarity from concepts like loyalty or love (see next chapter), enabling it to cover a wider scope of potential fellow agents.

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[43] The notion of consensus evokes Rawls' idea of "overlapping consensus" (1999 [1971]). While Rawls' idea may make sense as a guiding principle to institutionalise principles of justice, solidarity is generally not governed by institutions or clearly defined democratic structures. Thus, dealing with a very diverse set of demands may crush the potential of solidary action by overburdening it. Rawls' awareness of this danger manifests itself in the formulation of his principles, which are meant not to be too demanding for an entire society.

Thus far, I have argued that neither the composition (asymmetrical or symmetric) nor the teleology (solidarity or group) of a solidary community is of much importance. What matters is the normative evaluation of this solidarity. Namely, there may be cases of solidarity in communities based on antecedent traits, but according to my view, we must reject their solidarity out of normative considerations. Contingent factors are a non-suitable basis for solidarity since they exclude those who do not share the decisive characteristic and do not grant "outsiders" an equal standing. There is also no evident reason why individuals sharing a contingent characteristic should have similar interests, aims or ideas about how to act, even if we grant that they may share similar experiences of oppression, need or injustice. Shelby mentions this objection when noting that black solidarity in his terms "must be sustained without the demand for a thick collective identity or ideological cohesiveness" (2005, p. 256). This is because such a demand would simulate a type of homogeneity within a black solidary community that simply does not exist, which in turn may exacerbate pre-existing power dynamics among black people along the lines of social class, patriarchy, religion or sexuality (cf. p. 122 ff.). There is no reason why a solidarity based on antecedent traits should produce any consensus about how to fight injustice or even what kind of injustice constitutes the problem.

I have also argued that solidarity should be inclusive. While solidarity is possible on a large scale, increasing the size of solidary community should coincide with an ever-decreasing scope of its pretence in order to avoid dangers arising from consensus-building in large and diverse groups. But how should people then act in solidarity? And which acts of solidarity qualify as "good"?

3.4 What Does It Mean to Stand Up for the Other? – Solidary Action

The second question arising from the Grimm definition concerns the idea that action is necessary for something to qualify as solidarity. The metaphor "standing up" for someone represents some kind of active engagement. For solidarity to require action is also an intuitive

claim and, as I explained previously, appears explicitly and implicitly in previous literature.[44] While solidary action can range from vocal expression to activism to financial support, it should manifest itself in some tangible way. When it comes to possible types of action, they can entail a wide variety of acts that need no specification regarding spontaneity, length, mode, type or intensity, except that they should happen within certain ethical boundaries, such as not harming the physical integrity of another. In this section I elaborate further in which ways "standing up", i.e. showing solidarity, requires individual action. This active participation is the "contribution" to the solidary community that I referred to in the last section. Specifically, I characterize this action as political. Its political character, I argue, typically asks for what I will henceforth refer to as a "statement character" for acts of solidarity.

1. Firstly, this means that the action has to be inspired by a public concern. In section 3.2, I advocate for the conception of the *political,* as inspired by Hannah Arendt, which demarcates issues that are of shared relevance to all members of a society. This makes these issues public concerns as opposed to those that are relevant only within the private sphere, i.e. of concern only to some individuals sharing intimate relations. For reasons of clarity, I will henceforth refer to the concerns, issues or problems that give origin to a solidary act as *matters of solidarity*. Now, an act of solidarity may certainly concern a problem or matter that takes place within the private life of an individual. For instance, it makes sense that solidarity is needed with victims of injustice inflicted by those they share private relations with. This can also be the case for individuals who suffer disadvantages because of characteristics or choices pertaining to their private life (examples include domestic violence or discrimination because of one's sexual orientation). In such cases, the injustice or disadvantage is what makes the matter a concern for the public. Thus, an action is political if its matter is of concern also to those with whom one does not share private relations.[45]

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[44] An exception to this is to be found in the work of Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka (2017a), who argue that rather than a clearly defined action, solidarity is an attitude of cooperation and support. I still find it more plausible to conceive of the cooperative aspect in terms of relationships and the expressive aspect in terms of actions.

[45] Even if someone were to claim that they really do not care about the oppression of others, inequality or injustice, I would say that this very claim would justify its public relevance. Whether the opinion to "not care" can be considered valid is a separate concern that would require a discussion of the notion of the "common good", which I cannot offer in this context. Since certain values, like justice, freedom and equality, are usually

2. Secondly, if an issue is of public concern, acts of solidarity concerning it should entail a symbolic character – some kind of statement. The idea is that an act of solidarity tries to *make a point* regarding the public concern established in 1. By acting in solidarity, a person not only reacts remedially in a situation of need but also wants to expose the underlying problem that made solidarity necessary in the first place, which is something larger than the very act they are performing right now. Ideally, the solidary action therefore enjoys some visibility.

There are two reasons for the requirement of this "statement character", as well as an important limitation to it. Firstly, in line with my understanding of the *political*, what is of principle concern to others needs to be in some way perceptible to the public. If we presuppose that a concern that is political is of relevance to the public, the same must go for actions that are political: They must be public, and thus visible. This does not mean that all instances of solidarity possess a large reach and that everyone knows about them. Nonetheless, understood this way, solidarity does justice to its activist, dynamic nature and coincides with the use of the term *political* in the solidarity literature I briefly introduced before. The second reason for acts of solidarity to be visible is that they create reliability for members of the solidary community and even for those outside of it. By this I mean that acting in solidarity entails an (at least vague) idea that: should I be in a similarly precarious situation as another, someone would stand up for me, too. This idea of reciprocity may sometimes be impossible to fulfil because relationships of solidarity are likely to be unequal – perhaps it is this inequality that makes solidarity necessary in the first place. Relationships of solidarity are many times going to be asymmetrical, as I explained in the previous section: Only if I have something to give can I act in solidarity, and it is possible that the other will not be able to return the favour.[46] For this reason, I like to maintain the idea of reciprocity as something fairly unspecific: not as a type of exchange, but as a conviction that others will follow the plausible reasons to act in solidarity,

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part of the constitutional basis of democratic states, one could counterargue that everyone is obliged to "care" about cases where they are violated.

[46] One may ask what makes this different from charity, a concept which, as I argue in the next chapter, is based on the prerequisite that the relation between the giver and the receiver is unequal. In short, the difference is that in solidarity both possess agency. For a more elaborate distinction, see the next chapter.

should I need them to stand up for me in the future.[47] This also holds for the beneficiaries of solidary action: should they not cultivate some responsibility of acting reciprocally when possible for them, they would not be in solidarity but, on the contrary, "free riders" (Bude, 2019).

Now, regarding the requirement of "statement character" and the connected notions of visibility and reciprocity, there is an important limitation. 1. Firstly, it only works in an environment where the risk and burden of acting in solidarity is within reason. Think of an extreme example, namely hiding prosecuted Jews during World War II; while this is certainly an act of solidarity in its aim to fight an unimaginable injustice, doing so visibly would have undermined its very purpose and action – not to mention the danger for both the prosecuted and the person hiding them. For cases like this I suggest seeing the "statement character" of solidary action as a future ideal, because the act's significance will not expire: its importance reaches beyond the political circumstances of that time.[48] Thus, the visibility and symbolism can remain as a goal for a brighter future, such as, in this example, after the war. For this reason, the testimonies or evidence of resistance fighters are of such fundamental importance for future references to repressive regimes; their traces make up for the symbolism that was previously impossible to show. For example, in the series adaptation of Margaret Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale,* the severely oppressed women in the authoritarian regime of the fictional state of Gilead manage to write letters about their immeasurable suffering. These are individual cries for help, but once collected and smuggled outside of Gilead (through a collaborative effort of solidarity), they constitute a testimony of political relevance and clearly serve as a statement of resistance that in the course of events has actual implications for the

[47] The previously mentioned model Sangiovanni (2013) proposes in order to provide a theory of social redistribution on the level of the EU is called reciprocity-based internationalism (p. 5). The basic idea is to formulate demands for social solidarity as "demands for a fair return in the mutual production of important collective goods" (p. 5). Sangiovanni's idea for a future EU is for it to protect against the risks and problems of globalization. The idea that one should be motivated by reciprocity in the form of some sort of dividend is attractive, but prone to the risk of collapsing when one agent cannot contribute for some reason – then solidarity would not last long. For this reason, I suggest that reciprocity should be interpreted in a less immediate manner, as "standing up" for another not only regarding a joint product but with openness and awareness that one may need the other to stand up for them regarding a variety of reasons in the future.

[48] This example does not necessarily describe an act of solidarity, but could also be understood as an individual moral action: Although the future outcome of the war, for example, is unknown (and thus the possibility exists that the act would never achieve "statement character"), the person hiding Jews would still do so, in this case, out of a moral commitment to human dignity or out of moral considerations.

diplomatic relations of Gilead with the outside world. Both the collection of the letters and each letter written as such is an act of solidarity. Inside the repressive country of Gilead, their visibility is impossible; once outside, however, these statements take on an importance that will not expire, even if some day the repressive system ends.

2. Secondly, there may be cases where people cannot act at all: either through temporal or permanent constraints. Just as in the aforementioned example of the Jews, wherein reciprocity is not really the motivating force for the person hiding them, I suggest regarding the reciprocity expectation here as an abstract hope that someone else would do the same, should I be under a comparable threat. If, however, no one were to do the same for me, the moral motivation to help would persist regardless.

3. Acting in solidarity, thirdly, is commonly oriented towards change (or to prevent conditions from worsening) based on the underlying normative concerns it encompasses. It frequently entails a risk or makes the agent vulnerable, as it may go against strong resistance. This criterion resorts to an understanding of the political as a space of contradiction and dissent, in which opposing positions compete against each other (cf. Mouffe, 2005). Solidary action is political also in this sense: After observing an undesirable state of affairs, the members of a solidary community join in order to act towards change. Of course, whether a state of affairs and the vision of change can reasonably be considered to be ethical is a further question, which requires a normative evaluation.

In sum, these are the traits that make a solidary action political: the public concern of its matters, its aim to make a statement and its orientation towards change. The three criteria I just introduced are almost certainly subject to diverging opinions in some way or another. This goes especially for 2. (after all, what can be considered an actual statement as opposed to one that is not?). Regarding 2., I have already attempted to show that it is a complicated and fragile idea with some important limitations. 3., in turn, the idea that political solidarity is directed towards some change, seems relatively uncontroversial. For the first criterion it seems viable to offer some further words of clarification.

One corollary of 1. is that acts that evolve around purely private concerns cannot be acts of solidarity. However, the realm of issues considered to be of purely private concern is

not demarcated by a clear line (and it has been thoroughly debated, as I previously mentioned). But my intuition is that it is not necessary to draw such a line here in order to make a point about the difference between political and non-political concerns and acts for my understanding of solidarity. Let me offer some examples to illustrate my distinction. If an elderly lady asks her granddaughter to help her carry groceries upstairs, the young woman may perform an act of help, but not an act of help *in solidarity with* her grandmother. Helping one's grandmother is not political in the sense I defined (unless one assumes that all or a large number of grandmothers suffer some sort of structural wrong having to carry groceries alone, making it a political issue). If my partner is running late for work and asks me to help her by ironing her blouse, I may do so, but this is not an act of solidarity either.

There are sufficient terms to describe acts pertaining to private concerns, such as love, friendship and loyalty. In the next chapter, I will show more specifically what makes these different from acts of solidarity. The political nature of acts of solidarity does not yet make any evaluative statement about the ethical desirability of solidary actions, which is an issue I will tackle in the next subchapter.

Beyond the characterization of solidary actions as *political*, I now proceed to ask a normative question that is crucial given my discussion thus far on solidary relations and actions: Is there a duty to act in solidarity if one encounters an issue of political relevance? The question is whether and when there is any normative requirement for individuals to seek to effectuate change through solidarity where they deem it necessary and to be ready to make their contribution to the cause they endorse as a community. In other words: While there may be countless reasons to join and act in solidarity (some of which are desirable, and others less so), is there a duty to join and act in solidarity in the first place? And if so, how strong is it?

I observe a split in this question, depending on whether one is part of a solidary community or not. If one is already part of a solidarity community (situation A), meaning that a shared concern has been determined, the question is whether one ought to act to effectuate change. If not (situation B), the question is rather whether one generally ought to seek to improve the public life/the political sphere through solidarity. My answer to both is yes, but to different degrees.

Situation A: Solidary acts are not merely supererogatory within communities one has decided to join based on the criteria laid out in the previous section.[49] Say, I consider myself committed to be a part of a solidary community that aims to end a societal malpractice (which does, in fact, constitute a moral wrong). As a member of the community, I have a moral duty to perform acts of solidarity where possible. This has to do with the relation I share with the rest of the solidary community after entering it. It is also the prerequisite for the shared notion of reciprocity. For example, as member of a union I morally may not be a strike-breaker, because otherwise I would be free-riding on the actions of others – which would be a moral wrong.

Now, if solidary acts for members of communities of solidarity are not supererogatory as a result of the shared relation and the expectation of reciprocity, they are consequently binding duties. The idea of reciprocity – while understandings and expectations of what exactly it entails may differ – is what holds the solidary community together and motivates members to act. If one does not follow these duties, I would argue, one cannot truly be considered a member of the solidary community, unless there are valid reasons for not acting, such as inability, direct threats or extreme consequences.

Situation B: Now, whether one has to act in solidarity in the first place is a different question. I consider this kind of action to be supererogatory because as desirable as it is, membership in solidary communities cannot be considered a perfect moral duty. The question of whether one has the duty to act in solidarity or may also live an unsolidary life without committing a moral wrong becomes more concrete with an example: A wealthy, well-known woman lives in a society with extreme gender inequality. She abides by the law, pays her taxes and fulfils moral duties such as respecting others and their lives, rights and freedoms. However, she does not make use of her societal and social standing to join a solidary community that aims to end the oppression of women (or any other group). Is she obliged to do so? My answer is no: she *should* as a matter of normative desirability, but she is not morally obliged to. Consider the (more extreme) example of philosopher Simone Weil that I mentioned previously, who

[49] This is in line with Ulrich K. Preuß' (1999) previously introduced argument that there is a moral obligation that arises out of membership in a solidary community.

worked in a factory under harsh conditions in solidarity with those who had no choice but to be exploited there. She was surely not morally obliged to make the sacrifice, but her aim to end oppression was nonetheless commendable. Think of George Orwell, who fought in the Spanish Civil War against fascism – the same goes for him.

In sum, while certain societal duties are mandatory for moral reasons and/or as determined by law, acting in solidarity in general is desirable but not a moral obligation. However, once one is part of a solidary community and thus in a special relationhip with the other members, the duty to act in solidarity (where possible) with them is a moral one and is no longer supererogatory.

Although it may seem a logical consequence of the discussion thus far, let me stress that solidary actions must be non-coercive in both cases A and B. Coercion would influence the rationale of an individual to act in a way that would no longer be able to fit into a framework of solidarity. Rather, it would represent a simple act of unjustified or justified (as, for example, in the case of law[50]) force. In particular, there would be two problems with coerced acts of solidarity: Firstly, it would be necessary to distinguish solidarity from any other act which results from the threat of coercion Secondly, the relationship between members of the community, which I defined in the previous section, would no longer be of relevance since coercion does not allow for acts to be performed out of one's own motivation and following one's own normative reasoning and commitment to join a community. Coerced acts do not require a relation between agents.[51]

As elaborated extensively in this chapter, discussing solidarity requires an understanding of the type of relationships and actions worthy of bearing the term. What is missing, however, is a digression into the problem that not all instances of solidarity are desirable, either because they pursue unethical ends and/or because they happen for bad

[50] I will discuss in the next chapter how solidarity and law (specifically as an institution of justice) are linked.

[51] Sangiovanni (2015) adds an exception to the principle of non-coercion. According to him, the only form in which coercion can be permitted is when the committed group decides to impose it on themselves after having agreed to commit to the cause. For example, the threat of being punished for deserting in a war to which everyone committed would be an acceptable form of coercion to him.

reasons. It will be my aim of the next section to take a stance on which reasons for and which instances of solidarity can be considered good ones.

3.5 Reasons for Solidarity

The way I have presented it thus far, solidarity is characterized by specific types of relations and actions. Now, the matters that actually give sense and content to solidarity are, of course, the main reasons for individuals to join and act in the first place. They need not be defined very specifically since they may cover a wide array of topics. However, they should be (as any political act) subject to normative evaluation and condemned when they, for example, seek unethical or immoral ends or use such means. There is no such thing as a consensus about what is moral/ethical and what is not. Personally, I would consider the "red line" crossed when an act aims at increasing injustice or inequality, goes against the dignity and the human and civil rights of others or seeks to exclude certain agents or groups from society. But even within these principles, there is a lot of leeway for different and even contradictory positions. Claims of solidarity for the "wrong" reasons, in unethical contexts and in pursuing reprehensible ends, exist, but this is a separate concern from the question of whether they constitute solidarity as a relationship and practice. If cases are compatible with my conception of solidarity, as far as the types of community and action are concerned, but do not pass my normative evaluation, I will still have to admit that they constitute cases of solidarity.

Imagine a community fulfilling all the requirements I laid out in this chapter but aiming to deprive some minority group of their rights or to destroy all trees on the planet in order to plant crops; they may be claiming to act and unite in the name of solidarity, but are they? As Kolers (2016) argues, a teleological account of reasons for solidary action "is characterized and justified by appeal to the ends that the agents seek" (p. 29), and it is only justified if "required for morally compelling and important ends" (ibid.).[52] While this sounds attractive, which

[52] Kolers (2016) frames the reason for acting in solidarity in structural terms, arguing that the need for solidary action stems from the duty to help those structurally worse off in terms of status. His account, however, only

authority would decide which ends are morally compelling and important? It seems that the undisputed cases would be none or close to none.

The requirements for solidary communities and actions I have laid out are already very demanding. Many unethical cases of solidarity are likely to already be excluded by them. But even with these requirements fulfilled, there may still be cases of solidarity that seek morally reprehensible ends. Another question that thus arises is the ethical desirability of a matter of solidarity. Provided one has some interest in an (ethical) matter, what is it that gives reason to join and act in solidarity, and which reasons are normatively desirable? Joining communities and acting in solidarity spring from different reasons than other types of relations such as love and friendship (which I will get back to in the next chapter); in a love relationship or friendship, the reasons for acting in a certain way for or towards another are influenced by the "other" being a specific individual. This influences one's judgment when it comes to actions. For instance, a lover may be prepared to act against their instrumental (i.e., concerning their own benefit) or even moral conviction in order to support their partner.[53] What makes solidarity different is, first and foremost, the commonality within solidary communities regarding goals/ideals or shared opponents that provides reasons to act. We can consider the relevant reasons to be end-related reasons (e.g., the conviction that bringing about justice or the end of oppression is the right thing to do). Such reasons gain normative value through their being directed toward the good of the community without harming those outside of it.[54] In other words, a joint cause/goal provides reasons for joining and acting in solidarity.

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allows for cases of "solidarity with" and not "solidarity among". It also makes any expectation of reciprocity impossible because of its inherent asymmetry.

[53] While an action out of love or loyalty that qualifies as "standing up" or supporting another may result in the same outcome as an act of solidarity, it is only solidarity if it happens for different reasons: those provided by the matter which inspires the relationship and those that motivate the political action. To provide an example: a woman asks her partner to stand up for her because she suffers discrimination due to her gender. The partner may do so out of love or inclination (because he or she cares for the other and wants to end discrimination for her individually – agent-relative reasoning) or out of solidarity (because there are structural problems of gender discrimination fighting which merits support – be it in the case of the partner or any other person suffering from the same discrimination).

[54] I would say that this type of reasoning regarding solidary action applies to the accounts of Sangiovanni (2015), Kolers (2016), Scholz (2006), Shelby (2005) and Habermas (2013), among others. Kolers, whose end-related reason is bringing about equity (2016, p. 118), argues that his account is not just instrumentally, but intrinsically valuable (making it a moral duty). I see no contradiction here, but also no specific duty for solidarity (as opposed to other acts); if equity could be brought about another way, it would be just as justifiable.

Certainly, reasons like personal gain or even selfishness could also give rise to acts of solidarity. For example, ending a certain type of oppression may well be an instrumental reason for an individual to join a solidary community. The solidary community and the shared action would then serve as an instrument to reach a goal that is also individual. In fact, solidarity is fundamentally instrumental in achieving actual improvements, and I do not see a problem in this.[55] One might ask: If there were no moral wrongs in society, would solidarity even be necessary? This question may be futile to ask given all the real-life reasons that do require solidary action and community. But it does lead to an important follow-up question: Is there value in solidarity as such, independent of its end-related and instrumental reasons and effects?

After all, instrumental and end-related reasons are not explanatory of solidarity specifically. One could also act towards a shared goal by other means – for example, by refraining from certain practices, by voting for political parties that claim to represent these demands or any other individual action, by educating oneself on the issue at stake, by force and so on. What makes solidarity different is a third set of reasons that is independent of end-related and instrumental reasons (because both could hypothetically be satisfied some day).[56] Joining communities and acting in solidarity possesses value as such, a value that gives further reason. It is based essentially on the idea of mutual recognition.

To understand this idea better, recall that solidarity entails a component of social relation and a feeling of belonging with others, which I introduced in the beginning section on solidary relations. I discussed the idea that solidarity might serve as a bridge between individual private relations and distant members of society. In order to illustrate this social value, I resort to the Hegelian notion of recognition, elaborated famously by Axel Honneth as a form of

[55] Of course, once again, not any means would justify the achievement of the goal: the instrumental reason justifying a solidary act would be subject to normative evaluation. Habermas (2013) argues that Germany, based on the existing interdependencies and contingent advantages and disadvantages or member states, has a long-term self-interest to a cooperative joint political effort to strengthen the economy of the eurozone, even if this has short- and medium-term disadvantages. One may disagree about the question of whether a purely self-interested goal is normatively sustainable as a main reason for solidary action.

[56] Sangiovanni (2015) offers a different distinction between types of reasons: those that make people join in solidarity in the first place and, in a next step, those who make people "share their fates" (p. 348). Regarding the first, he argues that it is not usually the shared experience that constitutes the reason to join in solidarity but rather an expectation that people with similar experiences are more trustworthy than others, which can help achieve the real reason, e.g., to avenge. If the real reason is to fight a more general injustice, this does not require anyone to share one's individual experience. The reasons "stem from the prospect and then the reality of acting together on behalf of the shared goal" (p. 349). This second type entails, he says, the obligation of reciprocity.

social esteem, the "reciprocal respect for both the unique and equal status of all others" (Honneth, 2001, p. 45). I do not have space here to elaborate more fully on the various theories of recognition but limit myself to stating that solidarity possesses a value necessary for the full realization of the social self. Recognition has a prescriptive element that remains independent of specific situations. As Honneth phrases it: "To the extent to which this form of recognition has to presuppose the crucial experience of shared duties and responsibilities, it includes, in addition to the cognitive element related to ethical concerns, the affective dimension associated with solidarity" (ibid., p. 50).

What does this mean? The experience of recognition through solidarity within a social context is, in Honneth's terms, best understood as the realisation of "social freedom", which he distinguishes from "negative" and "reflexive" freedom (Honneth, 2014).[57] Recall that Derpmann (2013) also mentions identification and fellow-feeling as constituent of the social self. According to him, solidarity as such a component of social life not only refers to the relation to the self but also to others, which means it has an intersubjective dimension to it (shared identification). One recognizes others as part of a community (p. 58). If recognition is thus necessary for "actualizing social freedom and realizing one's personality" (Schuppert, 2014, p. 38), as various accounts of the concept agree upon, solidarity can serve as a medium through which recognition is enhanced beyond the private sphere. Indeed, recognition, just like the various types of relations I have described, ranges from very basic forms, such as between a few individuals, to the whole of society. While in love, family and friendship, recognition may be realized partly because one is united with the other through a strong affectionate bond, solidarity may, I argue, enhance recognition on a broader social level with those with whom intimacy is not shared. And this aspect can be considered a further independent value and reason for solidarity. Consider this very straight-forward example of, say, steel workers organized in a union. Why would they join and act in solidarity with each other? Firstly, because together they fight injustice; secondly, because this fight may benefit

[57] Both Honneth's negative and reflexive freedom are centred on the individual subject, whereas social freedom is explicitly about its relationship with others – and it is necessary for both personal, intimate relationships and the economy and the democratic public sphere (Honneth, 2014).

them personally; and thirdly, because they recognize and respect each other through this joint effort, giving them a sense of belonging and worth.

3.6 Two Difficult Cases

In order to defend and clarify my conception of solidarity, I confront it with two common types of communities that are sometimes claimed to constitute examples of solidarity. Let me briefly discuss first the case of a group of organized criminals and then the example of a right-wing nationalist movement. I will assess in which ways they do or do not constitute examples of solidarity according to my definition.

1. Let us call the group of organized criminals "Cartel".[58] They consider themselves to be united through a strong bond: not constituted by ethnicity or blood but by their common project of instilling terror and fear in order to go about their illicit and very profitable trade business. The sense of belonging inside the group is strong, and so is the tacit agreement that no one will commit an act of treason against another; loyal members can expect reciprocity. The members of the cartel claim to constitute a solidary community that is protected by acts of solidarity – even going as far as giving one's life.

Still, I claim the Cartel members are *not* in solidarity. Their solidary community is not based on antecedent characteristics nor on bonds of friendship and love; in this respect, it does not contradict my conception. They may even credibly purport to be inclusive, but they will not be able to claim that they are agent-neutral. Regarding the actions they perform in the name of solidarity, I argue that they are not political in my understanding of the term.[59] That is, when they claim act in order to protect the group and each other (from law enforcement and/or competitors), they are not following a goal of political relevance to the whole of society.

[58] A famous literary example of such a community is to be found in Friedrich Schiller's play "The Robbers" (Die Räuber).

[59] I am thankful to have been reminded by Eleonora Milazzo and Andrea Sangiovanni that of course the actions of criminal associations possess extreme political relevance (for example, the illicit trade and bribery they rely on). I do, however, believe this fact to be distinct from what I am trying to say about the political nature of their allegedly *solidary* actions.

Their actions benefit first and foremost themselves because a strong community of trust is indispensable to their real purpose: creating illegal trade routes and making money. Also, their actions do not usually possess statement character but mostly occur out of sight. At most, they may perpetrate acts of statement character to instil terror and fear among the population. All things considered, the type of community they claim to constitute can rather be considered one of loyalty (see next chapter) and/or one simply built upon the threat of coercion if a member becomes disloyal or commits treason. Lastly and importantly, the goals of the cartel are, of course, morally reprehensible and in no sense directed towards some sort of common good. Individuals most certainly possess instrumental reasons to join because they could earn money, power and even recognition since belonging to the cartel can instil a sense of pride and respect.

2. The second example is about an association called PUACPG (Patriots United Against the Cultural Pollution of Germany). They are a group of mostly German-born citizens who consider themselves to be "traditionally German", claiming to have united in order to protect their country's cultural practices, like drinking beer and eating pork sausages, from an imminent threat: increasing cultural diversity, which allegedly endangers their precious cultural habits and threatens the heritage of their country. They claim to act in solidarity with each other by organizing manifestations, drinking beer and eating sausages symbolically, uploading videos of these activities on social media and intimidating alleged "cultural foreigners" verbally and physically so they might leave the country or assimilate.

While PUACPG cannot be considered a desirable example of a solidary community insofar as it is probably strongly influenced by antecedent traits such as cultural belonging and an alleged ethnicity or "race", it is not necessarily exclusive, since members may say that PUACPG is open for anyone sympathizing with its goals. Their actions, they claim, are political because they want to protect cultural practices of relevance to the whole of society, and they do fulfil the statement character and visibility in their solidary actions. The content of PUACPG's agenda can be considered of relevance indeed for the public sphere, unless one could prove that the perceived threat is non-existent. In any case, it is certainly arbitrary and discriminatory against some members of society, constituting a moral wrong. The group's goal

to restore cultural homogeneity goes against morally acceptable ends in my view. This is, however, merely the result of my own normative evaluation, and others may disagree.

The reasons for individuals to join PUACPG are complex. Unlike in the case of the Cartel, instrumental reasons seem to play a smaller role (except maybe a sense of empowerment) than those of expecting recognition and a feeling of belonging once part of the PUACPG community. I am sure many members genuinely believe that they are doing what is right for German society. PUACPG, I would argue, can be considered a case of solidarity as per my definition. Whether it can pass the normative evaluation test of its ends, however, is a different question, which I doubt it could convincingly do. All things considered, it was my intention to persuade the reader that the Cartel cannot be considered an example of solidary community and action, while the more complex PUACPG case can.

3.7 Definition of Solidarity

In this chapter, I sketched the terrain necessary for answering the two central questions for a definition of solidarity, the need for which arises out of the societal problem of mediating between the interests of the individual and the collective. The first question dealt with the relation that agents of solidarity find themselves in, while the second one analysed expressions of solidarity through action. I arrive at the following definition of solidarity:

> Solidarity is a specific type of social **relation** and all consequential political **action(s)**. A relation of solidarity ("community") is non-coercive, is located outside the most intimate private sphere and can be actively shaped. Solidary action is political, meaning that its matters must be of public concern, and it must aim to make a statement and show orientation towards change.

In order to qualify as desirable types of solidarity, the relations and actions must fulfil the following criteria:

- The constitution of the community is not to be based on antecedent characteristics, even though these may sometimes be a contributing factor.
- The community should be inclusive, meaning that the matter of solidarity can also be of concern to those not affected directly by the issue that requires solidary action.
- The members of the community are not usually in a symmetrical position, which is why the burden of solidary contributions is different to all, but they should treat each other as equals.
- Solidarity is agent-neutral – except for specific cases in which solidarity is required for one particular individual.
- Acting in solidarity in general is desirable, but not a moral obligation. However, once one is part of a solidary community, and thus in a special relationhip with the other members, the duty to act in solidarity (where and when possible) with them is a moral one.

In this chapter, I also presented reasons for solidarity, which can assist further in providing an ethical evaluation of cases of solidarity. I introduced three types of reasons for joining and acting in solidarity: those motivated by a shared goal, instrumental reasons, and those of recognition. In the next chapter, I will defend this definition by comparing it to concepts that are related, show some overlap or are sometimes used synonymously.

4. Distinction from Other Related Concepts

The definition of solidarity that I presented in the previous chapter may give rise to questions and scepticism regarding the distinctiveness of my conception of solidarity from other, related concepts – especially because I base my methodology on this conceptual distinction. Therefore, I offer a defence and justification of my conception by explicitly comparing it to some ideas commonly associated with solidarity. As may be obvious, I do not have the space to offer a detailed conceptual package of each of the terms I am discussing.[60] However, I aim to specify what distinguishes solidarity from these other terms. I will proceed by adapting the same macro structure I used to conceptualize solidarity: analysing both relations and actions. This way I hope to ensure the comparability and the relevance of the related concepts I chose for my distinction from solidarity. The limited space attributed to each of the concepts here will most certainly be susceptible to criticism, different understandings and claims about lack of completeness. The only thing I can strive for is to make a convincing case for what I am defending – thereby placing the burden of any (counter) proof on the one who challenges the view I present here.

The concepts I introduce start with those from the (more) private sphere and then turn to the (more) public, political sphere. The first ones, love and friendship, are concerned with the most intimate relationships. I then move on to the idea of loyalty, which still retains the idea of agent-relativity or group-relativity. These are followed by charity and altruism, which require a purview beyond what is within our private sphere of relationships, until I arrive at nationalism and patriotism, ideas which suppose different types of political or ethnical unity clearly outside the private sphere. Justice as a universal concept is aptly placed thereafter, followed only by redistribution, which I understand as a political measure. In a final section, I will summarize these distinctions and explain where among them I locate solidarity.

[60] In fact, Ulf Tranow (2013) suggests to regard related notions like loyalty and help to be sub-forms of solidarity. The idea of this chapter is to show that it is more plausible to distinguish them altogether.

4.1 Love and Friendship

It may seem rather intuitive to say that love and friendship are not the same as solidarity. To clarify the differences, I will distinguish the three by briefly explaining the kind of relation – and potentially resulting actions – I take to be characteristic of these ideas. While, of course, love and friendship are not the same (albeit overlapping traditionally in their conceptions originating in Greek philosophy),[61] I tackle both terms in one joint section because I think their fundamental differences from solidarity allow for a joint contemplation.[62]

Nowadays, it may seem a little controversial to say that both relations of love and friendship in a broad understanding are relations of intimacy and – as such – voluntary and private.[63] I may add that they are also agent-relative, marking two fundamental differences to relations of solidarity, which are agent-neutral (with few exceptions, cf. 3.3) and social outside of the private sphere (in the sense I defined previously). Put differently, it is a personal choice whom we love or consider friends; we share a close relation with them, and it matters who the people we love or are friends with are as individuals.[64]

This (admittedly broad) understanding of love or friendship differs from the conception of political friendship Aristotle famously introduced and which has been incorporated into their notions of solidarity both by Kurt Bayertz (1999a) and Hauke Brunkhorst (2002). According to Aristotle's work in his Nicomachean Ethics, friendship can be defined as wishing well for another person for the sake of that particular person, given that the other wishes the same (reciprocity). The relation between friends relies on similarities, and both must be aware of it, meaning that friendship is agent-relative (cf. Aristotle, 2018,

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[61] *Eros*, *agape* and *philia* are the ancient Greek terms that describe different types of love (of persons, not activities or objects), including friendship (Helm, 2017).

[62] I do not go into the details of the different types of and reasons for love or friendship; for the sake of my distinction from solidarity I can leave this discussion aside.

[63] I realize that there may be relations of love and friendship that are voluntary to a lesser degree and/or hierarchical (cf. Vogt, 2008, p. 343) but leave this discussion aside.

[64] Both relations of friendship and love may be changing over recent years. Examples include the use of the term *friendship* in "social media", such as on Facebook, and the observation of a threat by the commodification of love (cf. Illouz, 2018). However, the broad understanding of friendship and love I present here is the one I take to (still) be predominant in a wide array of cultures.

1155b30-35, 1156a1-5).[65] So far, there is no contradiction to the previously presented account of friendship. However, Aristotle then proceeds to a brief expansion of the idea of friendship to communities, acknowledging that communities may entail relations of friendship, some closer, some looser (ibid., 1159b30-35). This type of friendship in communities, he argues, can be found up until the state level, constituting a community of utility, which makes friendship a strongly political concept. As Judith Shklar notes, this type of friendship has "no feeling, nothing affective" to it (Shklar, 1993, p. 207). However, as Brunkhorst observes, modern friendships are quite separate from the idea of an ethical community of citizens (cf. Brunkhorst, 2002, p. 24): In his reading of Aristotle, one will see the ideal of the ethically "good" in the friend (p. 28), thereby connecting the members of a larger community through the ideal of the good. However, it seems rather problematic to conceptualize friendship as agent-relative and then apply it to the whole of society, where not all agents know each other and where they are in no voluntary relation. In Bayertz' words: "Most of the human beings within such societies are strangers to each other" (Bayertz, 1999a, pp. 10-11).[66] And it is not just the case that individuals do not know each other; different interests and ideals persistent in societies make shared identification difficult – which is why I see friendship as separate from the relation that brings about societal cohesion. Both love and friendship are relations between individuals and about individuals.[67]

Simon Derpmann aptly suggests to regard them as direct relations in that they are about the identification with a person (2013, pp. 50-51) rather than with a matter. Love and friendship do not rely on matters, as solidarity does, but rather on emotional attachments that

[65] Aristotle distinguishes between three different types of friendship: friendships of utility, friendships of pleasure and friendships of the good (cf. Aristotle, 2018, 1156a10-20, 1156b5-15). The final of the three represents an ideal type of friendship because it is the most durable and also entails utility and pleasure for both sides while being based on a similar conception of the good between both friends.

[66] Even though I wish to characterize relations of friendship as not political, I acknowledge that at the same time, private relations and the way they are conducted, the topics that concern them and the conversations they entail are of extreme political significance. This is an aspect Hannah Arendt touches upon when arguing that the political meaning of friendship manifests itself in conversation, when the world becomes humane by being talked about (and is inhumane when not talked about) (Arendt, 1960, pp. 47-48).

[67] This does not mean that politics do not matter for friendships, and in fact, different political views may very well impair friendships. As Shklar writes: "Politics and friendship do not mix, yet without politics mature people do not have full friendships, and affection may not quite fill the gap" (Shklar, 1993, p. 212). But even if friendships and political views are frequently linked, friendships possess an affective element which makes them intimate relationships.

give rise to their relations. What about those relations that purely concern a matter, not a person? I argue that if relations are completely separate from any individual traits, they concern the moral sphere – and may constitute the basis for universal duties. The need persists, however, to describe relations that are not between intimate individuals but at the same time not as universal as moral duties. And it is between these two poles that the conception of solidarity is located – through the twofold reasoning I introduced in the previous chapter. Solidarity understood as motivated by a specific matter of concern as well as the argument of recognition requires the insight that there is something "more" than the fact of being human that holds communities of solidarity together. Alternatively, if acts of solidarity amounted to perfect moral duties, universal solidarity would be possible and required (a view against which I argued in the previous chapter).[68]

The identification with a person (rather than a matter) prevalent in relations of love and friendship has to do with emotional attachment.[69] This type of attachment has consequences for the kind of action one may feel the responsibility and readiness to perform *out of* love and friendship. This leads me to the second distinction of love and friendship from solidarity: the actions associated with them.

According to Aristotle, friendship usually entails a disposition to act as a matter of virtue but does not require action – as when, for example, there is a separation between friends. Not acting does not necessarily mean the end of a friendship, even though Aristotle acknowledges that a long-term lack of presence (and thus action) can lead to a deterioration of friendship (Aristotle, 2018, 1157b10-15). The same goes for love: Though it may be sustained by mere mutual affection for some time, it usually requires actions of some sort to persist. Recall my definition of solidarity as "standing up" for someone. Unlike in love or

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[68] Hannah Arendt's beautiful quote on solidarity differs from my view in the sense that she locates solidarity on the other extreme if one imagines a scale ranging from *sentiments* to *ideas:* "solidarity, because it partakes of reason, and hence of generality, is able to comprehend a multitude conceptually, not only the multitude of a class or a nation or a people, but eventually all mankind. But this solidarity, though it may be aroused by suffering, is not guided by it (...); compared with the sentiment of pity, it may appear cold and abstract, for it remains committed to 'ideas' – to greatness, or honour, or dignity – rather than to any 'love' of men" (Arendt, 1982 [1963], p. 84). My own view would locate solidarity somewhere in the middle of the scale: neither love nor pure abstraction.

[69] It is probably also dependent on bio-chemical processes and genetical compatibility, depending on which type of scientist one asks.

friendship, action is an integral part of my conception of solidarity. One can say "I love you" or "I am your friend" and be perceived by the other as authentic without committing to some sort of act – at least for some time. Eventually, failing to act can certainly put a strain on relationships of love or friendship, as Aristotle argues, but the relationship can outlast a lack of action for a while. In relationships of solidarity, action is more central. This difference has to do with the relational distinction I made above: while love and friendship arguably centre around the person, solidarity as an agent-neutral relation *entails* a political act for reasons that go beyond individual affection. It also has to do with the type of political action I specified in the last chapter – unlike in acts of love or friendship. The political content guides the kind of action that is permissible out of solidarity. Relations of love and friendship sometimes request actions "just" for the individuals' sake – which is why theorists discuss whether friendship allows for immoral acts inspired by the affection one feels (Vogt, 2008, pp. 343-344). This is different in solidarity, which is agent-neutral and where the action must happen in accordance and conviction with the solidary matter – and within the boundaries of what is permissible by the reasons why one has decided to join the solidary community in the first place.[70]

A question to ask as a logical consequence is: May friends and lovers be in solidarity with each other? They most certainly can once there is a matter that gives rise to a relation apart from their intimate one, which is not, in this case, agent-relative. Put differently, they need not only each other but a third "something": a political matter to define their solidary relationship.

[70] This is another reason why I have doubts about Avery Kolers' account of deference of one's own will to the solidary community, which I introduced in Chapter 2. Deference seems to me a practice at most permissible in a private, affectionate context. In other words, I may sometimes out of love or friendship defer my own conviction to what the other asks of me. This should happen within ethical boundaries, of course, and one may argue whether it would be the right thing of the lover or friend to accept me deferring my own conviction to theirs.

4.2 Loyalty

I continue with a short analysis of the notion of loyalty. In order to get an idea of what is commonly meant by loyalty and why it is interesting to compare it to solidarity, let me cite Simon Keller's helpful definition:

> Loyalty is the attitude and associated pattern of conduct that is constituted by an individual's taking something's side, and doing so with a certain sort of motive: namely, a motive that is partly emotional in nature, involves a response to the thing itself, and makes essential reference to a special relationship that the individual takes to exist between herself and the thing to which she is loyal. To be loyal to something is to have loyalty towards it. To act out of loyalty to something is to be driven to action by the motive just described. (Keller, 2007, p. 21)

This conception, like my own of solidarity, is centred around a certain type of relation and action. There are further parallels between the two ideas: According to Josiah Royce's influential work on the term, loyalty is characterized by a choice to act upon a certain cause (cf. Royce, 1995 [1908], p. 9). He also recognizes its ambivalent character and that it may be used for causes that cannot be considered good, which would in turn constitute a breach of a wider loyalty among humankind. His work depicts loyalty, overall, as a virtue that is constitutive of the moral sphere (ibid.). Loyalty's ambiguity and need for normative clarification resemble my account of solidarity. However, I argue there are some fundamental differences, especially concerning the motivation and resulting type of relation.

As with solidarity, a relation of loyalty can range from closer to looser and depend on the size of the context (cf. Keller, 2007). However, it does not need to be situated outside the private sphere. Loyalty may just as plausibly exist in a very intimate setting, such as between close friends, making agent-relativity possible (although not necessary).[71] So what motivates people to join in relations and actions of loyalty?

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[71] Derpmann (2013) makes the following comparison: he argues that solidarity is particular in the sense that it is about the identification with a trait that connects one with the community. To him, both solidarity and loyalty are about the identification with a matter and therefore suggest an indirect relation, whereas friendship and love are direct relations in that they are about the identification with a person. The difference between loyalty and

It seems that unlike solidarity, loyalty requires an emotional attachment to the specific community or person, which can be characterized as "perseverance in an association to which a person has become intrinsically committed as a matter of his or her identity" (Kleinig, 2017).[72] Consider, for example, contexts of patriotism, religion, friendship or love, in which loyalty is frequently evoked. I feel this strong personal connection not to be present in solidarity, even though, as I explained in the previous chapter, some accounts of solidarity rely on attributes that could be considered to pertain to one's identity. Recall the previously mentioned example of a criminal group, e.g., a mafia: Arguably, what could be called solidarity among members of the mafia is better described as loyalty in the sense that there is a strong emotional connection within the community. In addition, there seems to be a hierarchy in at least some relationships of loyalty, as with, for example, a leader – although this may not always be the case.

Thus, the central difference, one could say, is that solidarity attributes less centrality to the community than to the matter. Rather, a *relation* of loyalty seems to be equivalent or very closely related to the *matter* of loyalty, ascribing to it a very profound status of entrenchment[73] – hence the previous reference to one's identity. It is then only coherent to note that the matter that gives reasons to relations and actions of loyalty may arise out of all sorts of concerns, but they need not be limited to those of relevance for the public sphere, a further difference to solidarity. Further, and arguably bearing with it more problems, loyalty may be based on belonging to a group connected by antecedent or involuntary traits. Many times, this dangerous type of loyalty has been called for in totalitarian regimes, where it requires deference of one's own convictions to some supposed value of the community.[74]

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solidarity to him is as follows: loyalty is characterised by the fact that the reference to the community precedes referring to the matter (pp. 50-51). I find his observation plausible, though I would argue that loyalty can also be about a direct relation, since it may exist also in friendship and love.

[72] The ubiquitous term "identity" already came up in the previous chapter, and I understand it broadly as that what defines a person or group in a variety of contexts and determines feelings of belonging – implying some anteriority of (antecedent) characteristics, especially when it comes to national, gender or ethnic identity.

[73] This has also been observed by William Mander, who in a section on Royce's work writes that loyalty "receives a thoroughly concrete goal: the society or community of which one is a loyal or willing member" (2016, p. 151).

[74] Cf. once again the account of solidarity by Kolers (2016), which postulates deference to the group – even though to Kolers the group is not constituted by antecedent traits but determined by injustices, the idea of deference strikes me as problematic. After all, is it not deference that also serves the Nazi as justification for his atrocities, claiming to be in fulfilment of his duties as a "law-abiding citizen" (cf. Arendt, 1994)?

The act of loyalty, according to Keller, starts by taking sides (see above). This can be said to apply to solidarity, too. What differs are the reasons and the specific actions. Whereas loyal acts must happen in pursuit of the good of the community (however defined), solidary acts are required to contribute to the solidary matter. This way, the problematic notion of deferring to a group can be avoided when it comes to solidary acts. Furthermore, it permits a more critical perspective on the composition of the community by allowing for different criteria than those of the identitarian or other antecedent perspectives, such as an inclusive, political understanding, as I introduced previously. A second component is that acts of loyalty are often invoked and indeed expected by others. The military officer expects loyalty of his/her soldiers, the leader of a party of its MPs, etc. While acts of solidarity are also a real requirement as I argue extensively in the previous chapter, there is no authority to invoke them as seems frequently present in communities of loyalty. For solidarity, it is the *matter* that gives a reason to act in solidarity (and to form a community).

My depiction up to this point most likely conveyed a rather negative picture of the term "loyalty", which does not do it entirely justice. It is also true that loyalty out of the right (as in ethical) motivation and in a justifiable context is indeed a virtue. In a reading of loyalty that centres on one's continued firmness regarding certain principles it is crucial and even necessary for – as I would say – especially private relations. But in contexts of solidarity, and hence regarding non-private relations and matters, loyalty can be a virtue, as well, if one takes it to mean persistence and reliability. I would even go as far as admitting that within certain boundaries, a solidary community possesses value in virtue of being a solidary community (for example as a space that allows for mutual recognition), which implies an overlap between solidarity and loyalty. However, the central concern in a setting of solidarity should always be the reason-giving matter. And if defended through acts of loyalty, these should only occur when, through strict assessment, they are still in line with the solidary matter. The solidary community may never surpass the matter in importance. Andrea Sangiovanni would, I believe, agree with the possibility of this combination. He grants that solidarity might over time form a sort of identity, although one based on shared action. Loyalty, then, he sees "as an appropriate response (if it is appropriate) to the aspiration to justice of the institutions and the

solidarity of those who sustain them, rather than a ground for either the justice or the solidarity" (Sangiovanni, 2015, p. 356).

4.3 Charity

This section deals with a different idea that should be clearly distinguished from solidarity: charity.[75] Historically, the term charity overlaps with the previously analysed feeling of love in its reference to a notion of divine love. At the same time, it is distinct from the conception of love I referred to in the previous part since charity is not concerned with love between individuals.[76] Furthermore, in Thomas Aquinas' moral philosophy, charity is distinguished from friendship in that it does not require reciprocity (Aquinas, 1947, IIaIIae 23.1) and "extends even to one's enemies" (ibid.). He considers charity to be a moral virtue (ibid., IIaIIae 23.3).

Despite its Christian origins and the fact that it continues to evoke religious connotations – as, for instance, through charitable organizations, frequently run by religious communities – the idea of charity can also be conceptualized fairly simply as giving to the worse off. Whether this occurs based on the "bonds of love and aid" (Pensky, 2008, p. 3) or out of more secular motivations is not of central importance. Charitable acts are generally agent-neutral in that they do not require a previous relation between giver and receiver, even though such a relation may exist and influence whom the charitable act is directed at. Nowadays, the practice of charity is not only limited to religious contexts; rather, a certain type of temporary helping or assistance essentially seems to be captured in most references to "charity". It is a practice that, by definition, presupposes an asymmetrical relation (the giver

[75] Brunkhorst (2002) considers the Christian notion of charity as a contributing concept in the development of solidarity. His comparison basically states that all humans, as children of God, are joined in one community, which is inclusive and counts for all humans equally (p. 44), including foreigners and non-Christians (p. 53). Since I do not make a historical deduction to arrive at my definition of solidarity (see previous chapter), I focus on the differences between the two terms in their current use, which I believe to be fundamental.

[76] For example, the King James Version of the famous 1 Corinthians 13 on love translated *agape* as charity (1 Cor. 13 King James Version), while more recent translations and other languages translate it as love (cf. German: "Hohelied der Liebe", Luther Bibel).

being in a privileged position). It is voluntary and non-coercive, and the amount, extent or frequency of charitable giving is entirely up to the giver. Related to charity is the concept of benevolence, in the sense that it may inspire charitable actions and describe similar relations by focusing all agency on the perspective of the giver. Charity and benevolence differ from solidarity also in terms of motivation since they are usually motivated by pity or compassion but not a shared political goal.

Charity and the feelings associated with it are characterized by inherently unequal relations between a giver and a receiver. This relational imbalance has been frequently criticized (such as by Slavoj Žižek (2011)). Offering a direct comparison with solidarity, Pierre Leroux criticizes the idea of charity as well; specifically, he disliked the idea of emotionality that underlies charity as well as the lack of concern with equality (Leroux, 1985 [1840]). According to Steinar Stjernø, Leroux preferred solidarity as the result of a "genuine interest in community with others" (Stjernø, 2004, p. 24). This marks one of the central differences between the two: solidarity – while even more clearly agent-neutral than charity – must exhibit some sense of community based on the reasons why individuals decide to join in solidarity and related to the political nature of the actions that follow. While solidarity, as I conceptualize it, does not require perfect symmetry, a relation of charity is not even prepared for its possibility. In other words: Solidarity – no matter how asymmetrical the relation – always considers those involved as possessing agency. Therefore, it seems like an overstatement to even refer to corresponding relations of charity as communities – at most, one could conceive of communities of givers or of relations of dependence between givers and receivers. Examples of communities of givers are charitable institutions, a typical feature of which is their explicit indication that they represent the assistance of the rich/privileged to the poor/needy, the latter of whom do not take part in the relationship as equals. Some charitable institutions may even be accused of not wanting to transform structural inequalities, but merely alleviate immediate suffering through single acts of charity. As a result, charity also contradicts the idea of inclusive community as I have postulated it for solidarity.

Acting in a charitable manner is ideally based on personal emotions rather than shared convictions, constituting a further difference to solidarity.[77] While compassion or benevolence (which I think are very similar to charity) may be of influence, charity can, on its own, be enough of a motivation and reason for action. Unlike in solidarity, neither of these reasons is based on reciprocal recognition, as Jürgen Habermas notes (1990, p. 70).

Can charity then be political action? The actions of charity may be inspired by matters of public concern (if they are, indeed, of private concern, one would have to distinguish them from love and friendship). I would argue that charity ideally becomes unnecessary if a community manages to fulfil its political aspirations of justice and equality. Sometimes charity may be a way to make a political statement when the means for more radical political action are lacking. Arguably it can also be a step on the way of creating more symmetrical conditions in the long run.

Gerald Beyer (2015) argues that while compassion is about assisting passive recipients, solidarity is about empowerment. The asymmetry thus influences the type of action performed by charity; the normative evaluation is purely up to the giver, who decides which action will be performed and for how long. The action is, therefore, non-coercive. In the context of solidarity, however, the type of action is determined by the matter of solidarity and deliberation by the agents in the community. Additionally, solidarity, unlike charity, is concerned with the idea of equality, which is why it must reject the asymmetries to be found in charity.

4.4 Altruism

Altruism, which in its most basic understanding can be defined as an antonym to egoism, was introduced as a term by Auguste Comte (cf. Steiner, 2015), who saw in it a moral imperative for a stable and ethical social life. Altruism entails the subordination of one's own benefit to

[77] If we assume that feelings cannot be experienced vicariously except in a metaphorical sense (so Hannah Arendt argues as cited by Reshaur (1992, p. 723)), there is a further dimension to the disequilibrium between givers and receivers of charitable acts. The givers act on a picture they believe to be corresponding to the feelings of the receivers, who are not attributed the agency to voice their own (structural) demands.

another's, though it is disputed whether altruistic behaviour may not also sometimes benefit oneself. This discussion, however, is not central to its distinction from solidarity. In fact, one main difference concerns the fact that altruism does not require any specific relation between the agents. One can act in altruism towards both friends and strangers. It does not presuppose any bonds – be they of identity, emotions or shared goals. What makes it different from charity, then, is that altruism does not require an inherently asymmetric relation between giver and receiver (see section on charity); indeed, it does not require a relation at all.

Just like solidarity, altruism, while potentially motivated by many different factors, is expressed through action: it does not suffice to feel altruism for a person to quality as an altruist. However, as Richard Kraut observes, it does not need to involve self-sacrifice: "We should be careful to distinguish purely altruistic behaviour from self-sacrificing behaviour: the former involves no gain for oneself, whereas the latter involves some loss" (2018). For solidarity, in turn, the readiness to potentially incur some sacrifice is required but at the prospect of a future benefit, which is achieving a political project. The political nature of solidary acts is different from altruism. Altruism requires no public concern, no "statement character" and no vision or goal going beyond the immediate act.

4.5 Nationalism and Patriotism

To compare solidarity with nationalism and patriotism is somewhat complicated. I focus my comparison initially on what gives rise to a certain type of relation, as nation and homeland are both containers for human relations. Although both nationalism and patriotism describe different phenomena, I decided to assess them in one section because their main distinction from solidarity is equivalent. This central difference, I argue, is that they take the nation or "fatherland" (as connoted through the term patria) as a basis for the community they deem to be worthy of acting upon. This, unless interpreted in a very specific manner, goes against the conception of solidarity that I present, which rejects a basis of antecedent characteristics for a solidary community. I will explain this in more depth by briefly introducing both notions.

Let me set out by examining nationalism. I take the nation to be broadly understood here as the community of a specific people. It is closely linked to the idea of political self-determination in the shape of a territory and/or state institutions but, in the first place, refers to a type of community and relation among its members. Miller defines nationality, i.e., the belonging to a nation, in three components: the existence of a national identity; the nation understood as an ethical community with specific duties going beyond those of humanity; and the right to self-determination (which links to the idea of the state) (Miller, 1995). Nationalism, then, while coming in many different forms, requires a conviction that one's nationality is ethically and politically significant (Miller, 2008, p. 530) in that it gives rise to certain obligations towards fellow nationals and institutions that ensure self-determination (ibid.).[78]

The definition of patriotism, according to David Miller, reads as follows: "To be a patriot is first of all to love one's country, and then to be committed to advancing its interests in various ways, by defending it against attack or working to help it prosper" (2008, p. 531). He goes on to distinguish it from nationalism:

> Nationalism goes beyond patriotism in two respects. First, culture plays a much larger part in defining national identity: A nation certainly has a territorial homeland, and its political system may be one of its distinguishing features, but over and above that it has, or is believed to have, distinctive cultural traits – a language, a religion, a national style of art or literature, forms of music or dance, perhaps a national cuisine, and so forth. (…) Second, nations are understood as collective agents with their own distinctive aims and purposes, which are therefore entitled to self-determination, often in the form of political self-rule. (…) Patriotism has no such specific political entailments.[79] (ibid., p. 532)

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[78] According to David Miller's defence of a liberal nationalism, a strong national identity is a prerequisite for successful institutions of social justice (1995, p. 96); importantly, however, it requires neither a feeling of superiority of one people over another nor an ethnic identity. The supremacy dimension of one state over others is, however, a historically prominent feature, which makes Miller's understanding a disputable one.

[79] It is worth mentioning the other use of the term patriotism incorporated in the concept of "constitutional patriotism" by Jürgen Habermas (1992). His argument is that national identity is a construct achieved by institutional persuasion and thus historically contingent and prone to manipulation by national elites (p. 635). Therefore, Habermas proposes the idea of constitutional patriotism for the European Union, which can be said to combine a liberal view in that it rejects national identity to be part of democratic citizenship with the communitarian idea of a socialization of all citizens in a shared political culture (pp. 643, 651). With the help of a

Patriotism, in Miller's view, is mainly to feel affection towards a land and needs no explicit institutional connection, while nationalism is more comprehensive, including not principally the land, but the culture and political system in its reach. However, the distinction between the two is complex, and the terms are frequently used in an almost synonymous manner – or different uses of the terms in distinct cultures may bear almost opposite connotations. Both carry – depending on factors like the national context – the deeply problematic idea of the superiority of one nation or land over others. While it is unclear whether it is inherent in either of the terms, nationalism is sometimes considered to be more radical and aggressive than patriotism in this respect. In sum, nationalism and patriotism both refer to some connection between the individual and their origin, whether in a geographical sense or based on some notion of national identity or culture. Igor Primoratz' (2019) simple distinction proves to be helpful:

> Both patriotism and nationalism involve love of, identification with, and special concern for a certain entity. In the case of patriotism, that entity is one's *patria*, one's country; in the case of nationalism, that entity is one's *natio*, one's nation (in the ethnic/cultural sense of the term). Thus patriotism and nationalism are understood as the same type of set of beliefs and attitudes, and distinguished in terms of their objects. (Primoratz)

This understanding of nationalism and patriotism serves as a basis for a comparison with solidarity. A main distinction concerns the *kind of concept* each refers to. While solidarity encompasses both a relation and an action, as I previously explained in detail, nationalism and patriotism do not require an action (even though action can be inspired by them). It is perfectly conceivable for someone simply to feel patriotic or nationalist. However, just in relational terms, a comparison is possible; in this context, the question emerges on whether patriotism or nationalism as types of relations can inspire or be compatible with solidarity. In Tommie

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deliberative process led by cultural elites and the media, he envisions a political culture characterised by mutual communication and learning (p. 651). This view can be considered to be in direct opposition to Miller's (or, in fact, any nationalist) view; indeed, Habermas clearly rejects solidarity out of nationalism on the basis that there can be no natural or original (as in pre-political) community, making nationalist acts less robust than ethically-inspired acts of solidarity (2013, p. 105). An intermediate position is offered by Will Kymlicka, who argues that cultural belonging is a necessity for individual autonomy (Kymlicka, 1995a).

Shelby's work (2005), an enlightening analysis of different types of (in his case black) nationalism explains in which ways there may be a normatively desirable connection. While what he refers to as *strong black nationalism* would require a self-governed state of a black people, the pragmatic idea of *weak black nationalism* relies on the goal to end suppression and "create greater freedom and social equality for blacks" (p. 27). The second one, constituting a political goal and not being based on the idea of (antecedent) ethnic distinctiveness but rather on a shared experience of oppression among blacks is perfectly compatible with the account of solidarity I defend. However, it requires an understanding of nation that relies fundamentally on a shared political project, which is precisely what Shelby has in mind:

> This pragmatic nationalist strategy does not, however, require blacks to retain or regain their 'original' identity, because the basis of black unity is not their glorious national past or their so-called native characteristics but their mutual recognition of their common vulnerability to white domination and their collective resolve to overcome it. (p. 43)

In line with my considerations about antecedent traits, a view of nationalism that does not originate from a clearly ethically evaluated political project is incompatible with the kind of solidarity I defend.[80] The same goes for patriotism. If we interpret patriotism to be detached from any concerns with the political organisation of a community, I do not see a way in which the type of solidarity I defend could stem from it.

The bottom line in the relational distinction is that both nationalism and patriotism are frequently considered to be based on antecedent characteristics, entailing an element of belonging that is based on characteristics that are (in spite of being socially constructed (Anderson, 2006)), involuntary and/or entail an emotional element, which is not compatible with the type of solidarity I envision. At the same time, there are ways to conceive of national communities that do not rely on static characteristics. Craig Calhoun (2002) defends this view, taking Europe as an example. He describes Europe as possessing a dominant view against any

[80] Why frame the black struggle for equality in the language of nationalism, one could ask? While I think it is not the only way of conceptualizing black solidarity, I can imagine that it also originates from a nationalist framework that makes the oppression possible in the first place (i.e., white supremacy). Therefore, a conceptualization in these terms (like Shelby's (2005)) is plausible.

type of nationalism and argues in favour of political integration while at the same time preserving cultural diversity. Calhoun criticizes the idea of "postnational" societies and regards nationalism not merely as a "passive inheritance" (p. 150); rather, he sees nations as "modern products of shared political, cultural and social participation" (ibid.). This observation may seem outdated in light of the essentialist, nationalist surge in many European countries, but the idea of a nation (or union of nations) based on shared participation is nonetheless plausible and does not exclude the potential for solidarity to arise out of it. This does not change the problem, however, that in today's differentiated and plural societies most forms of nationalism – at least in its homogenizing form – should be considered antiquated.

4.6 Justice

Two frequently associated terms are solidarity and justice. Stefan Gosepath (2004) notes that in light of the many conventions of justice in different communities with their individual sets of laws and values, a common idea of justice has to remain very general. According to the definition from the Greek philosophy he cites, an action can be considered just if each person gets what they are entitled to or what is deemed to be appropriate.[81] This definition then leaves space for different conceptions of what is considered to be appropriate (Gosepath, 2004, p. 44). John Rawls' definition, Gosepath adds, which nowadays constitutes the basis for an entire tradition of theories about justice, is more specific, including two criteria: the exclusion of arbitrary differences between individuals (neutrality); and the reasonable compensation between competing claims (redistribution) (ibid., p. 44-45). Either way, justice is a strongly normative notion.

Inspired by Jürgen Habermas' well-known comparison of solidarity and justice, I will compare the underlying relations and actions in both. In short, Habermas' comparison reads

[81] "Gerecht ist eine Handlung, wenn sie jedem das gibt, was ihm zukommt. Alle Gerechtigkeit scheint auf das jemandem *Zukommende* oder das *Angemessene* bezogen zu sein" (Gosepath, 2004, p. 44).

like this: "Justice concerns the equal freedoms of unique and self-determining individuals, while solidarity concerns the welfare of consociates who are intimately linked in an intersubjectively shared form of life—and thus also to the maintenance of the integrity of this form of life itself" (Habermas, 1990, p. 244). This juxtaposition makes Habermas consider solidarity as the "reverse side of justice" (ibid.). Habermas' account suggests that justice is not relational in the same way that solidarity is. In fact, justice seems to be relational in that one is entitled to it as a matter of equality, comparison and mutual recognition of agency. But generally, there is no joint effort for a temporary project of justice; rather, it is universal and can ideally be demanded individually from neutral institutions. There may be efforts of solidarity to achieve justice in cases where it is absent or lacking, and in these cases, both the relation and the action possess the characteristics and importance they do in any other case of solidarity. Put differently, justice may very well be a *matter* of solidarity, for example, when unjust practices are targeted by means of solidary action. However, once achieved, justice is concerned with the individual, namely what she is entitled to. This contrasts the conception of solidarity that I have previously presented in that there is no specific value in the community of justice. Axel Honneth makes an enlightening observation about this difference, referring to it in terms of universalism and particularism: While justice and its underlying idea of equal treatment is universal, solidarity cannot be. It is particular with regard to the special relation one shares with the other members of the solidary community (cf. Honneth, 1994, pp. 218-219). To illustrate the difference, it may help to conceive of a scale ranging from justice to solidarity to loyalty and, finally, to love, wherein justice is the most universal, agent-neutral and non-affective idea, solidarity is somewhat less of all the above, and loyalty and love attach most value to either individuals or a particular community and entail an explicit emotional dimension.

A closer look at acts of justice allows me to digress into a short section on law. If the universal character of justice is to be reliable to members of a society, there is commonly assumed to be a need for mechanisms of enforcement. According to Habermas (1992), given the decreased influence of religion and other traditional value systems, modern pluralist societies require democratic processes of deliberation that produce legitimate institutions and

laws which allow for legal coercion. John Rawls famously described justice as the "the first virtue of social institutions" (1999 [1971], p. 3). While justice is not limited to legal structures and can be acted upon by everyone (say, for example when splitting a cake between one's children equally), law can be considered as the central means for societies to achieve justice (the link between two is linguistically very strong in German where the term law, "Recht", is part of the word justice, "Gerechtigkeit"). Understood this way, justice is also a clearly procedural notion. As a matter of fact, it seems uncontroversial to say that it should also prevail in private, making it relevant to all areas of social life. This aspiration to universality makes acts of justice non-voluntary, which is a central difference to acts of solidarity. I may add that one can also describe cases of conscious *lack* of acting in solidarity without them amounting to moral wrongs, but this is not true for justice. In this sense, solidarity is less absolute than justice, a refusal of which – according to most understandings of the term – means that one is acting immorally.

The possibility to institutionalise justice through law makes it an attractive end for solidarity to achieve. It also provides an additional clear distinction between solidarity and justice: Since I understand solidarity to be non-coercive and voluntary, it cannot be institutionalised in the sense that political institutions like governments can enforce it or even be agents of solidarity. This would only work in hypothetical situations in which all members of a society voluntarily agree to solidary action and never change their mind about it (so as to not desire eventually leaving the solidary community). It is a contestable claim that political institutions cannot be agents of solidarity, which I will get back to throughout my dissertation. Let me just mention here that some political and legal institutions claim to be acting in solidarity – for example, in the case of the solidarity surcharge in Germany (*Solidaritätszuschlag*), an extra tax introduced to cover the costs of the German unification after 1989. While it may have been introduced out of solidary considerations, it is best described as an institution of justice or equality. The next section on redistribution returns to this argument and may provide further clarification.

4.7 Redistribution

As the previous comparison between solidarity and justice shows, both notions are fairly far apart. However, a solid bridge between the two exists through the idea of redistribution. This bridge rests on pillars built both from the side of justice and from the side of solidarity. To the former – as I explained above – redistribution is an integral part, at least in much predominant discourse. Namely, for justice to exist, there needs to be compensation where there is injustice (for example, if an unequal distribution of wealth is considered unjust). To the latter, the connection is also essential: solidarity is sometimes understood as an equivalent to redistribution or redistribution as a goal of successful solidarity (cf. Sangiovanni, 2013). Recall that Sangiovanni phrases demands for social solidarity as "demands for a fair return in the mutual production of important collective goods" (p. 5).

In my view, the main difference between redistribution and solidarity lies in the need for solidarity to be non-coercive. Redistribution understood as an institutionalised system such as in the welfare state would, according to my view, not account for solidarity[82]; it is better classified as an institution of justice. However, a welfare state system may very well be based on solidary actions that led to its introduction in the first place – for instance, because the lack of a welfare state amounted to injustice and a solidary community took action with the goal of instituting a compulsory welfare state. I understand redistribution in this specific institutionalized sense here, be it of wealth, welfare or other goods. There may be cases of voluntary redistribution, which would then have to be assessed separately to find out whether and in what way they differ from acts of charity and whether they can constitute acts of solidarity, too. In those circumstances and with the other criteria regarding the solidary community and the political nature of the action satisfied, redistribution may in fact amount to an act of solidarity. Redistribution, however, is distinct from the notions of solidarity and

[82] John Roemer (2017), from a socialist standpoint, also regards redistribution and solidarity as two necessary but separate elements: the former is guided by the goal of equality of opportunity with the latter "appending" to this a cooperative ethos (p. 310).

justice in the sense that it should be considered a political measure, not a relation among individuals (whichever shape this relation may take).

4.8 Summary

This chapter aims to clarify and defend my previously presented definition of solidarity and show that several related concepts do not capture the particular role of solidarity, even while they may share some characteristics in terms of relation or action. The particular position of solidarity among them can be explained once again both in terms of the relationship and the acts we can expect to follow. Recall that solidarity, according to my definition, entails the following main characteristics:

1. Solidarity is a specific type of social relation manifest in communities of solidarity. These communities are located outside the most intimate private relations and are not determined by antecedent traits. The need for solidarity arises from the question of how to mediate between the interests of the individual and the collective. Communities of solidarity are inclusive, presuppose political equality among their members (in their capacity to come together and act together, no matter how asymmetrically weighed our contributions to the solidary action may be) and are centred around a shared project, a *matter of solidarity*.
2. Solidarity is a type of political action performed by the members of the solidary community. It is political in that it deals with matters of the public sphere, is associated with actions that possess "statement character" and must show orientation towards change. Solidary action is non-coercive and not a moral obligation; it is only obligatory once one is part of a solidary community.

Given these central characteristics of solidarity, one can locate it among the concepts I introduced in this chapter as follows. As a relation, solidarity is distinct from friendship and love, which are agent-relative and (at least in this basic understanding) part of the private sphere. This can (but need not) apply to loyalty, which is agent-relative but not limited to

private relationships. Charity is distinct through its inherent asymmetry and inequality in terms of political participation, as well as the exclusiveness towards those in need of help (who cannot be agents of charity by definition). Solidarity is also agent-neutral, just as relations of altruism, nationalism, patriotism and justice. This means that the relations are not based on an individual connection between their members, although it does not imply for them to be inclusive (certainly nationalism and patriotism are not).

As action, solidarity distinguishes itself from love and friendship in the sense that for them, the action is of secondary importance and not necessarily political. Loyalty is similar to solidarity in that it requires acts (or the omission of acts). The same goes for charity and altruism. All three, however, do not require acts like the ones I have characterised as *political*. For nationalism and patriotism, in turn, acts are not of constitutive importance. Justice, lastly, does require action, for example, through moral duties or law (which, unlike solidarity, allows for coercion). I suggest to conceive of redistribution as a different type of notion, since it does not entail any explicit form of relation. As a political measure, it only exists through acts, but these can happen both in solidary and non-solidary contexts.

Specifying the properties of solidarity among related notions has, I hope, clarified why and in what sense I take solidarity to be a necessary idea that cannot simply be described with another word. It has also provided tools with which to analyse cases that claim to amount to solidarity but do not, perhaps, fulfil the criteria and are better described with one of the other concepts. This chapter concludes my conceptional analysis of solidarity and allows me to move to the second main part of my work: the European Union and the role solidarity plays – and, most importantly, *should* play – in it.

Part II – Solidarity in the EU

5. European Solidarity – Historical Context and Self-attributions

In the previous chapters, I present a conception of solidarity that is centred on the agency between individuals who join together in what I have called solidary communities and perform acts of solidarity. Part II of my dissertation is concerned with a specific context of and for solidarity: the European Union. In a way, this second part is an application of the previous conceptional work since I rely on my own definition of solidarity as a grid whose purpose is to help navigate the terrain of the actual example. At the same time, it is not an empirical section in the sense that it tests whether or not my conception of solidarity currently applies to the context of the EU. I do not have the data or method to test this question, and it is not the aim of my thesis. In any case, it is debatable which kind of empirical material could be of use for an analysis of whether or not solidarity in the EU exists and whether it is feasible to objectify a matter that seems subjective in large parts. While declarations of politicians would hardly provide "proof" of solidarity, surveys among European citizens that measure the attitudes towards a certain understanding of solidarity (as done by Gerhards et al., 2019) or the perception of individuals on whether or not solidarity is present seem a more promising option – even while they may raise issues of conceptional definition.

I wish to make an argumentative case for solidarity as a desirable maxim for social association and political action in the EU and – in a second step – describe what such solidarity could look like. The aspiration for solidarity that the EU attributes to itself in treaties, speeches and other public discourse is enough reason for assessing solidarity in the EU context particularly, but there is a further rationale for doing so. Certainly, the tension between the aspiration to be solidary versus the reality of solidarity in the EU plays a role, too. The ongoing state of political crisis that is hovering all around the EU, combined with the frequent mention

of solidarity as a guiding principle for European integration in different contexts, raises doubts that theoretical aim and reality currently align well. In fact, when I started writing this chapter, appalling videos with migrants left in inhumane conditions on the Greek island of Lesbos and at the Turkish-Greek border showed once again how a reference to European solidarity can be cynical through and through. There is nothing solidary, it seems, about creating a fortress that keeps the suffering out at any price – even violence and human rights violations against the most vulnerable. Clearly, the importance attributed to solidarity in the EU treaties requires a critical re-assessment of its appropriateness. It is for this (rather pessimistic) reason that I also take the aim of these "applied" chapters to follow normative considerations: What kind of solidarity *should* the EU display?

My method is not based on empirical data: I construe the European Union as a political and social project in light of the normative principle of solidarity, whose components I defined in the previous chapters. In my interpretation of the European Union, I discuss previous theorists' work in order to create a philosophical basis to explain in what sense the EU could be understood as a solidary community, which in turn supports my normative argument for solidary action. This analysis requires no new theory of what the European Union is or what kind of community, agents or acts it is capable of; indeed, there is a large amount of literature on these themes, and it suffices to extract from them what is helpful for the questions I ask. Let me make explicit that my own theoretical contribution is thus limited to the body of theoretical work on the particular topic of solidarity with regard to the EU, not on theories about the EU in general. In other words, my discussion of solidarity in the EU includes a discussion of some seminal works as well as the conclusions I've drawn from these sources.

This second part of my dissertation will be divided into three chapters (5-7). The first two chapters will be guided by questions that concern the EU and an assessment of the ways in which its history and self-understanding can lead to an understanding of the EU as a *community of solidarity*. This initial chapter includes an overview of historical work from different disciplines to offer a general account of the geographical space, culture, history and philosophical thought and tradition of Europe as a continent. The idea is that in order to talk about the EU, we need to know where the EU originated from. This analysis is followed by a

reconstruction of the EU's self-attribution as such a solidary community: What expression does solidarity find in the self-understanding of the EU?

In the next chapter (6), the potential agents of solidarity in the context of the EU receive a closer look, starting with an assessment of the European integration process, its historical and political developments and its challenges and aims. The guiding question is: Who are the (potential) agents of solidarity in the EU and how can we think of them in terms of communities? Linked to this question is the discussion of the scope of a solidary community in and of the EU. It deals with the position of the EU in the world and refers, additionally, to the importance of what does *not* constitute the EU as to determine a conception of how far EU solidarity can or should reach. I also briefly compare the EU to other transnational initiatives and organisations to show what makes the EU a particular case of a potential solidary community. The final section of the next chapter offers a characterization of the type(s) of community that we can imagine when talking about solidarity in the EU. It will be in the subsequent, seventh chapter, then, that I move to the related question of *acts of solidarity* in the EU and formulate principles for a desirable account of solidarity in the EU.

5.1 From Europe to the European Union – In Search of "Europeanness"

The EU is a European project. As simple as this assertion may sound, it is not straightforward and clear. The many uncertainties about what Europe is, where it begins and ends and so on are reflected in an extensive history of the idea of "Europe", overshadowed by the immeasurable tragedies that it hosted and bears responsibility for. Europe, this very densely populated and fragmented piece of land with a large diversity of languages, cultures and histories, tells a globally unique story of development, progress, domination and hegemony followed by a remarkable fall in the first half of the 20th century. The two World Wars were succeeded by several decades of ever-increasing prosperity, but now the continent seems to have retrogressed to the site of recurring crises.

Europe sometimes appears to be more of a mythical space than a clearly defined reality.[83] And in fact, the word does mean more than just a (roughly delineated) geographical space: It is also a philosophical idea, a concept, an "infinite task" (cf. Gasché, 2009). Europe as an idea is studied and represented in philosophy, history and political sciences just as extensively as in literature and art. This diversity of the works of those who have written or spoken about Europe should become apparent in this chapter, in which I offer a brief look at Europe in terms of its space, its people, its intellectual history and its rupture in and from the Second World War. The idea is that the search for the basis of a community of solidarity in the European Union can be more fruitful when combined with a more informed view of Europe as the continent out of which it was established. This is necessary because an examination of solidary communities in and of the EU is also an investigation of the particularities of the EU. Without this step, the arguments about solidarity could apply to simply any context. It will therefore be my aim to explain how the specific European circumstances have led to the relationships people in the EU share.

Geographically, Europe is a space without clear borders, unlike the other continents. The dividing line to Asia at its East is (nowadays) considered to run right through Russia, along the Ural Mountains.[84] Of this space, the European Union occupies a large part, but by no means all of it.

It may seem fitting that the etymological origin of Europe (7th century BC), "designating a shapeless land over there – that is, the land of the evening" (Gasché, 2009, p. 10), was neither a self-attribution nor a clear description. In fact, the word presumably meant darkness or evening, referring to the place where the sun sets when contemplating it from Greece, which at the time considered itself not as part of Europe, but rather located between Europe and Asia. According to literary scholar Rodolphe Gasché, whose book *Europe, or the Infinite Task* discusses some of the canonical work about Europe as a concept rather than merely a space or history, the term "Europe" was first used as a designation from the outside

[83] A saddening example of this can be found in the interview of a refugee living in a Greek refugee camp and talking about the ideas he had about Europe as a place of freedom and human rights before his arrival (ProSieben, 2020).
[84] Europe, when seen as a small portion of Eurasia, can even be considered only a sub-continent.

until it became a self-reference; "Europe looks at itself, and grasps itself reflectively only through the opaqueness of a name that comes to it from the other" (Gasché, 2009, p. 10).[85] This origin fits the uncertainties and quarrels that have shaped and continue to shape European self-interpretations while including the external perspective of Europe, which is of as much importance nowadays as it is historically.[86] What is certain is that the name does not presuppose any definite or original essence of what this Europe is and where it starts and ends; there is a degree of openness to defining it (as has been done throughout history time and again).[87] In any case, the etymological origin can serve as a metaphor behind the doubts associated to the question of whether Europe – or the European Union – can somehow constitute a solidary community. Where does Europe end and start? Is there such a thing as "Europeanness"? And if so, do those living within the EU possess more of it than their neighbours? What is, then, Europe's place in the world – in terms of history, power, geography and culture? Briefly recalling the central discussion in Chapter 3 about antecedent traits in solidary communities, the relevance of this set of questions for the European context should become clear.

In fact, "Europeanness" as a concept looks back at a long tradition of thought. French essayist and poet Paul Valéry, whose famous prose work on European culture, Europe's decline and its historical roots resisted the nationalist surges of the first half of the 20th century, offers a contribution to debates that have received renewed attention in recent years and in light of more recent crises. His 1928 text "The European" is an attempt to characterise the people of Europe, adopting the non-essentialist view on European characteristics that they are – as he notes himself – "quite distinct from race, nationality, and even language" (Valéry, 1962, p. 322). One could say that the indeterminate nature of European geography finds resonance

[85] The mythological character *Europa* is another possible originator of the name. She is likewise a person of the "outside", as she has been abducted by Zeus from Asia to Crete (Gasché, 2009, p. 11).
[86] The origins of the names of other continents are distinct (and also disputed). Some theories in short: "America" might be a derivation of the name of navigator Amerigo Vespucci; the etymology of "Australia" may refer to a "Southern land" in Latin; "Antarctica" means the "opposite of North" in Greek; "Oceania" is probably linked to the meaning of water; and while the terms "Asia" and "Africa" allow for various interpretations, both were initially used by the Greeks and Romans to refer to different geographical areas than those demarcated today.
[87] The debate of European geographical space gains new relevance in the integration process of the European Union, since territorial questions play a fundamental role in all matters concerning its formation, development, future shape and relation to its outside.

in Valéry's observations. If they turned out to be correct, making these attributes more explicit and visible could take the wind out of the sails of those who like to insist on supposed antecedent and/or ethnic traits, which, referring back to Chapter 3, I have argued do not constitute a normatively desirable basis for solidary communities.

In fact, Valéry refers to Europe as a geographical space of extraordinary productivity and of the realization of the dreams of humanity – the "European mind" as "author of [...] wonders" (Valéry, 1962, p. 312). Europe, which began as a "Mediterranean market, has thus become a vast factory" (p. 314) drew in influences from the rest of the world and extracted those that it could adapt and transform productively. According to Valéry, Europe is "a kind of system composed of human variety and a particularly favorable locality, and, lastly, fashioned by a singularly vivid and eventful history" (p. 315).

It is striking that to Valéry, the product of Europe, the European, is both monstrous – greedy and daring compared to the rest of humanity – and somewhat impressive, namely when considering the mass and scope of their influence and productivity. Valéry offers a theory on three main influences that – according to him – define Europeans. The reason I present them here is to assess whether there are convincing alternatives to define "Europeanness" in terms of antecedent traits such as ethnical origin. The first factor regards the status of being a citizen (*civis romanus*), based on the Roman influence as an "eternal model of organized and stable power" (p. 316). It is this status that, according to Valéry, has become a commonality among Europeans – and interestingly, citizenship is also a distinctive trait of the European Union in comparison with other transnational initiatives. Secondly, Valéry finds Europeans to be shaped by Christianity as a universal religious association that spread, just like the influence of Rome, as early as the missionary journeys of Saint Paul. While the Roman conquest was focused on politics, Christianity "reached the depths of consciousness" (p. 318), imposing "self-examination" (p. 319) and a "sense of an eternal justice" (ibid.). Lastly, ancient Greece, the originator of the virtues, inspires Valéry to search for the origin of the central importance of science in Europe: the "subtle yet powerful influence to which we owe the best of our intelligence, the acuteness and solidity of our knowledge, as also the clarity, purity, and *elegance* of our arts and literature" (ibid.). According to Valéry, the influence of ancient Greece is what

distinguishes Europeans the most, having given origin to science, making Europe "above all the creator of science" (p. 320).

The themes Valéry collects in his characterization of the European are – as he himself points out – ambivalent, and they are encompassed in the seminal works of philosophers over centuries. Rephrasing Valéry, Europeans are characterized by traits that concern a supposedly distinct way of thinking and as a result, by social and political organization as well as scientific progress. Although Valéry's characterization does not resort to ethnic or nationalist traits, his idea of a certain European mind is clearly problematic. But taking it as a point of departure, it can help to analyse further how Europe reached a moment of unparalleled ascension to a hegemonic position in terms of technology, science and intellectual life as well as in perpetrating wars and atrocities; the aspects of Europeanness that Valéry delineates might just as well have been used to justify the European expansionist demeanour in world politics, as they may have brought about actual progress in European societies.

All three of these traits, in one way or another, rely on the idea of universality – be it of rights, religion or science. This is no coincidence: The connection between universality and Europe is a prevalent theme in philosophical thought, with Europe as such even being considered a "universal project" of philosophy (Glendinning, 2017, p. 64). Elaborating on universality is therefore relevant in order to understand why it is a highly problematic idea and continues to shape ways in which Europe enjoys certain attributes and sets claims in and on the world.

5.2 Universality: An Ambiguous Aspiration

Aspirations of universality are a dangerous and valuable inheritance of the Enlightenment. European (though not only European) history provides examples of both of these aspects of universality. Think, for example, of universal colonial rule as opposed to the Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789), which, just like the US Declaration of Independence (1776), was inspired by an understanding of universality associated with equality before the law.

Universality enjoys a long scholarly history when it comes to Europe. As a point of departure, we can recur to the idea of universal and rational science, which stems from Ancient Greece and to which Valéry attributes fundamental importance. Phenomenologist Edmund Husserl famously connected the idea of aspiring for universal sciences with his own interpretation of the looming crisis of Europe during and after the First World War. In his influential (albeit unfinished) 1936 work on the crisis of the European sciences, Husserl presents the problem of Europe's 20th century crises as originating in the transition from an ancient to a modern understanding of science. According to his view, philosophy and the exact sciences drifted apart, and with the exact sciences becoming dominant, a misrepresentation of the world in supposedly exact categories prevailed (Husserl, 2012). In short, the original Greek universality of the sciences was based on the requirement that they stay "in relation to humanity's basic concerns" (Gasché, 2009, p. 44) and "*one* intersubjectively shared world" (p. 47) that should be "intelligible to all" (p. 45).[88] During the return to Greek thought in the Renaissance, Husserl argues that the very attitude entailed in the original Greek heritage got lost; due to the undeniable success of the exact sciences, their presupposition that it is possible to find measurable and exact truth in all comparable contexts was extended even to modern philosophy. For this reason, philosophy then became tied to Europe as a particular space and simply assumed that its particularities would apply to other contexts instead of remaining open in a truly universal way to the rest of the world. It is in this context that Husserl criticizes the colonialist conquest of entire continents as an expression of this lack of a universal perspective for the world.

Having arrived at the most advanced stage of European imperialism in the 20th century, Husserl saw only two possibilities for the European future, his ideas being inseparably linked to the First World War and the rise of Nazi Germany, where he personally was only exempted from further prosecution because of his death in 1938:

> The crisis of European existence can end in only one of two ways: in the ruin of a Europe alienated from its rational sense of life, fallen into a barbarian hatred of spirit;

[88] The Greek universal scientific understanding found its largest success in the exact sciences: first and foremost in geometry, which successfully shaped scientific development throughout the whole world.

> or in the rebirth of Europe from the spirit of philosophy, through a heroism of reason that will definitively overcome naturalism. (Husserl, 1965, p. 192)

Ideally, Husserl suggested that Europe should be seen as a "practical objective – a life project – an immanently practical project, one that embraces all aspects of life" (Gasché, 2009, p. 23). In accordance with Husserl's convictions about the Greek tradition, this kind of universality does not imply European superiority, while being universal in its aspirations. On the contrary, Husserl's idea was to criticize individual (and European) particularities through "a certain self-alienation, self-estrangement, self-othering" (ibid., p. 43), following the type of reasoning he attributed to ancient Greek philosophy. This strategy would imply the capacity to adapt an outside perspective on oneself, meaning that one would be able to reflect on one's own role and position, for example, as a European in the world. In Husserl's view, the Greek ideal, which was limited due to the naturally finite horizon of their knowledge, can be realized, complemented and improved in modern science through phenomenology, in that it recognizes the existence of infinite tasks and essential forms that shape the particular life-world as a new form of universality. In other words, to Husserl, it is exactly the lack of universal truth that constitutes a universality – but one of universal openness and the capacity to reflect.

Based on Husserl's view of Europe's crisis in the 1930s, one can thus essentially discern two types of universality. The first, which he criticizes, understands universality as the equal applicability of science without concern for context and with a reliance on supposed objective truths (as they arguably exist in the exact sciences). The second is a call for universality in the sense that there should be complete openness to the infinite variety of needs in the world along with a questioning of one's own particularities. It is certainly the former, extended to the political and social realm, that has accompanied the rise of Eurocentrism, hegemonic and expansionist attitudes that have prevailed for centuries and continue to offer reason for criticism, which I will discuss more in depth later on. The latter, however, may be seen as quite the opposite: as a critical attitude to Europe's own particularities – the differences *within* Europe as well as those in relation to the rest of the world. But even for the latter, we must remain conscious about the origins of universal aspirations; coming from the inside of Europe,

any expansion beyond it shall be met with suspicion about the dangers of Eurocentrism, a phenomenon that merits a closer look.

Certainly, Husserl's ideas on a universal project emanating from European ideas are to be seen in a longstanding tradition. A universal aspiration that takes its ideas from the supposed "centre" (Europe) and expands beyond it is an old theme. In other words, what Gasché characterizes as the infinite task of the "reshaping of the relations among individuals, groups, and nations, in light of what it means to be human rather than in terms of membership in an ethnia" (Gasché, 2009, p. 23) eventually may turn out to be a global one for "humanity to be able to understand and reshape itself" (ibid.). The centre of this universe, without a doubt, is Europe, which is problematic as such.

The idea of a potential European universality that does not necessarily entail a notion of European superiority can famously be found in Immanuel Kant's essays "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose" (Kant, 1784) and "Towards Perpetual Peace" (Kant, 2008 [1785]).[89] The idea of the former is that a universal history is shaped by human nature, eventually ending up in the development of a cosmopolitan, political and societal system. Even though Kant's views on colonialism and civilization are controversial (cf. Flikschuh & Ypi, 2014; Tully, 2002), this particular account of universality does not necessarily lead to an idea of European hegemony in this globalised world (although Kant did write about racial and cultural European superiority in other works (Said, 1993; Tully, 2002)). On the other hand, its universal purpose does rely on assumptions about human nature that are obviously based on a European perspective and simply expanded to the international sphere. This makes Kant's universalist pretence problematic, even though it was certainly a visionary text when considering the development of international law that has since followed. In "Towards Perpetual Peace", Kant proposes a set of political measures in order to ensure global peace, eventually resulting in a global federation of free states (Kant, 2008 [1785]). In this text, again, the idea of leaving behind the age of empires in favour of a federation is remarkable, but there

[89] In the former, using a set of nine propositions, Kant offers a teleological construction of universal history, drawing on an account of human nature characterized by the antagonism of seeking company and isolation at the same time, the former as part of the realisation of their human predispositions and the latter as a symptom of their inherent egocentrism and tendency to rank themselves within their species.

is still cause for criticism that this federation should be built in a European way, exhibiting a clearly Eurocentric point of view and relying on the old imperialist structures of global commerce (Tully, 2002, p. 335). Still, the Kantian idea remained influential for centuries to come, "promoting a form of postcolonial state building and international organization" (ibid.).

Now, the overview of some European, cosmopolitan and universal thoughts that I have presented up to this point lacks the dimension of what has ultimately led to the total crisis of the 20th century: Europe was never a unified actor in its hegemonic aspirations in the world[90], and, indeed, it hosted some of the worst atrocities in modern history. Centuries of wars between European neighbours, empires that rose and fell and the terrible climax of the first half of the 20th century followed by a lethal dividing line right through Europe's centre until 1989 are by no means testimonies of any positive kind of universality within the European continent, in whichever way one demarcates its borders. And nowadays, it is at the very least questionable whether a true sort of desirable universality has been achieved even within the European Union – but I will get back to these current questions a little further on.

The many ideas for and definitions of Europe were, long as their tradition may have been, not able to prevent the Holocaust. It is an incommensurable tragedy; Husserl's alternative way forward – the fall into barbarism – turned out to be the reality of the years between 1933 and 1945. It also shows that thinkers of the time were already aware of this possibility. With this in mind, another look at Valéry's text – written between the two World Wars – inevitably calls for additions to his characterization of Europe and Europeans. Nevertheless, his work offers two important insights. Briefly recapitulating, he firstly discerns the ambivalence of those characteristics and circumstances he finds in the "European": the people he characterizes came to dominate and destroy parts of the world and each other while also bringing about progress, influence and an undeniably magnificent corpus of cultural heritage. Secondly, the characteristics are not directly related to antecedent traits such as ethnicity, which is a fundamental criterion when it comes to considerations about who can be

[90] Edward Said found that in 1914, European countries "held a grand total of roughly 85 per cent of the earth as colonies, protectorates, dependencies, dominions and commonwealths" (1993, p. 8), marking the terrible climax – though by no means the end – of European imperialism.

a European and who cannot. If we take Valéry's three components – politics, self-consciousness and the urge to produce knowledge – to be what makes up Europeans, it is apparently a matter of nurture rather than nature, meaning that their distinctive traits are acquired through exposure. This is a view that allows the inclusion of any individual to whom these traits apply – whether originally from Europe or not – to qualify as a "European". When conceiving of a basis for a solidary community in the EU, this inclusive thinking bears some potential. However, we should remain critical about Valéry's three characteristics[91]; with the atrocities committed in Europe and abroad and the experience of another century that has passed, they seem far too idealized. It is therefore indispensable to recognise the Second World War and its shattering impact as a uniquely violent period that shook humanity to its core as well as to acknowledge the post-war era and the end of the Cold War as a catalyst for a new wave of global interactions. The last 100 years has fundamentally altered the way Europe and Europeans are looked at both from within and without.

"Stunde Null", hour zero, the end of the Second World War, marked the absolute caesura of a world that had existed before Nazi Germany, enabling the unprecedented abyss of humanity to reveal itself in the personification of the Germans. Historian Tony Judt imbeds this moment historically in his seminal book on post-war Europe and critically assesses the narrative of Europe's miraculous recovery in the decades to follow (2010), which is so many times portrayed as the rise of a peaceful continent from its ashes, having apparently "learned the bitter lessons of recent history" (p. 5). Judt shows how this narrative leaves out Eastern Europe, where the Red Army's regime essentially formed a repressive border, splitting Europe in two for the duration of the Cold War. He tells the post-war period of Europe as a "history of reduction" and the "withering away of the 'master narratives' of European history" (p. 7), where European states lost their hegemonic status in the world for good after not having been able to free themselves from Fascism alone. The reality of an atrocious European history both inside and out, culminating in the universal disaster of two World Wars, certainly bears responsibility for the fact that a discourse of crisis dominates philosophical work on Europe

[91] In Chapter 6 I will elaborate on the problematic dimensions of certain assumptions of European thinking in the way Europe's "outside" is treated.

of the post-war era as well.[92] When the Berlin Wall finally fell in 1989, putting an end to the division of Europe (and the world) into two poles, the promise of liberty revealed itself to be mostly of economic nature and brought with it an ongoing period of fragmentation and unrest characterized by ethnic conflicts (cf. Kymlicka, 1995b).

Nowadays, the cumulative effects of globality shape Europe. The 20th century was already characterized by the globalisation of wars and of the economy, and ever increasingly, migration and global crises like climate change or the COVID-19 pandemic show that while the world has grown closer, it has done so in a fragile manner. This form of universality, of course, did not arise out of nowhere. Colonialism, the aspiration of universal Christianity and the World Wars were already of global scale. But what makes European globality in the 21st century different is that it is strongly and constantly influenced from external perceptions, interactions, and relations. It seems simply not enough to search for European essence in regional sources any longer. The very "Europeans" nowadays are products of global interconnectedness, which needs to be seen in close connection with Europe's own historical responsibilities.[93] The way in which this globality component will shape the "European" in the future is a question that currently lacks an answer. Some react to increased influences from outside Europe by searching for a European essence of the sort that Valéry rejected and attempt to isolate themselves in the world, clinging on to their privileges. Many reject a European essence, too, and move ever more into the national or even regional boundaries of

[92] Roberto Esposito's book on European philosophy (2018) shows how a "crisis dispositif" (p. 22) runs through the schools of philosophy of post-war France, Germany and Italy. Esposito characterizes this crisis in the following way: The "forgetfulness of the constitutive identity of Europe" can only be overcome by re-appropriating "the lost origin, reviving it through a new beginning" (ibid.). Esposito finds the ill of European thought to lie in the lack of a perspective from the outside. This idea breaks the self-referential frame of European philosophy that is rightfully criticized so frequently. However, unlike what one might have expected, this newly gained insight does not incite Esposito to include an outside perspective through actual thinkers from outside Europe, such as those who offer theoretical work on post-colonialism or other philosophical traditions that may offer different insights. Rather, he analyses only European theorists who – one may wonder – may have continued a tradition of philosophy that caused the crisis in the first place (in his words, "the crisis of philosophy was causing the crisis of Europe rather than the other way around" (p. 21)) and how they transcend their own horizon either literally, such as those who had to emigrate to the United States to flee Nazism, and/or theoretically by stretching their own horizons of theory-making through techniques like deconstruction or transcendence of thought. The fact that Esposito fails to truly abandon the frame of European philosophy for his critique of a Europe that needs an outside perspective mirrors a problem that still does not seize to exist: a lack of universality in terms of equal say in philosophical traditions as well as on the political stage (cf. Wachinger, 2019).

[93] Here I would like to draw attention primarily to postcolonial debates both from outside and inside Europe, as well as global shifts in dominance by other countries and continents that have become much more significant than Europe in terms of population size and economic and intellectual production.

territory and culture. Needless to say, it would be the most prudent option to show willingness to question and reinvent the European role in the world. Without sounding too pessimistic, I can safely say that voices for this option are currently in the minority – particularly in times of increased nationalist challenges to the European project. It will remain to be seen whether the globality of Europeanness can ever have a unifying force or will instead lead to even further fragmentation than is already to be seen.

My diagnosis of the historical universal aspirations in and of Europe elucidates several problems. If we refer to universality in Husserl's sense, however, we can also understand it as a normative ideal of openness that allows for diversity and particularities. Seen in such a way, universality is compatible with the kind of solidary communities that are desirable according to my conception, and I will get back to it in the next chapter.

The complexity behind what is nowadays the European Union (and its surroundings) is so striking that the best this chapter, up to this point, may be able to offer is simply an idea of the many factors that determine what Europe is from a philosophical standpoint and what shapes the relationships of Europeans. One aspect that should have been conveyed in my discussion of some of the canonical works on Europe is that its ideas have for a long time struggled to find commonality and union for a divided geographical space while moving in self-referential frameworks that have in turn been used to justify the hegemonic role of the countries that make up the continent. Now, when I move to the question of what should be considered the basis for a solidary community in and of the EU, it is a necessary task to discern in what sense this background can provide an argumentative foundation. Recall the central criterion I established in Chapter 3 for the basis of a relationship of agents in order to qualify as a solidary community of – as I argued – the desirable type: It should reject communities based on antecedent traits in order for it to fulfil the requirement of being inclusive.

It should be clear from my argument until now that it is highly difficult to argue for any antecedent essence of "Europeanness" in a convincing way, even though some xenophobic voices may attempt to do otherwise. They do so, for example, by warning of the supposed destabilising effect of migration into the region or alleged cultural differences that migrants import. However, the selectiveness of their argumentation frequently exposes the

lack of an actual basis – for instance, when the supposed threat from the outside might as well actually be from the same apparent "European" background. As another example, a Muslim from the Middle East moving to a central European country may one day be considered a threat to European culture and tradition, but the next day, an Eastern European person in the same country may be exposed to similarly prejudiced argumentative patterns – falling victim to "othering" even while she was still part of the in-group the day before.[94]

The fact that there is no such a thing as a basis for Europeanness relying on antecedent traits is – as I argued – present in the origin of the whole *idea* of Europe as a relationship that goes beyond geographical space. Just being born in the same region does not lead to Europeanness. Valéry's characteristics of the "European" introduce this line of thought as he leaves aside any considerations about "race", nationality or language. The ambivalent character Valéry sees in the "European" is based on traits that are determined by a "mind", defined by a shared history, not a biological essence. These traits are, however, also problematic in their universalist aspiration, as I argued. In fact, any essentialist traits of what is supposedly "European" or, in stronger terms, constitutes a European identity, are to be regarded with suspicion.[95] Husserl's work helps one arrive at the conclusion that universality can only serve as a basis for a European community when interpreted in a manner that presupposes openness, a critical attitude towards European particularities and the variety within.

If one adapts this attitude, it should be inevitable to take the shared responsibility of historical wrongdoing both within and beyond Europe as a further basis for "Europeanness" just as much as a commitment to fundamental rights – as is already the case, at least formally. From a present-day perspective, to account for Eurocentrism and the exclusion of those Europeans that (for one reason or another) do not share the same century-old "mind", this

[94] Of course, othering also happens even within the most (apparently) homogeneous groups.

[95] The theme of a European identity is widely debated, and I will not render an extensive summary here. Different streams of theory show the problems of the term, as Erik Jones summarizes: Those who argue that identity is context-determined stipulate that one may feel "European" in a room with another European plus non-Europeans, but once in a room with only a European of a different nationality, the national identity becomes increasingly important. Those who argue that national integration builds identity through the closeness of relationships and shared values struggle to apply the same logic to Europe, as if it were a project of national integration of the same sort. In any case, multiple identities are normal and do not necessarily compete with each other (Jones, 2012). Jones goes on to propose strengthening solidarity instead of identity by putting an increased focus on citizenship as a source of belonging (ibid.), which is comparable to the Habermasian thoughts I outlined in chapters 2 and 4.

type of basis should be extended to apply to them, as well. This way, those from outside of Europe can receive access to the notion of "Europeanness" – of course within reasonable limits. What I do not mean to say is that any individual from, let's say, Japan can just by declaring her intention share the basis of "Europeanness" and be part of a European solidary community. This would sound absurd in any case. But if she lives in Europe, sharing the factual concerns and problems of life in Europe which are also determined by its history, and identifies with this type of universality, I argue that she can indeed. Understood in this way, "Europeanness" is a commitment to a normative ideal that is based on recognising the wrongdoings of the past and the potential of the future. It is not a descriptive trait anyone "just possesses".

Obviously, the basis of a solidary community relying on such a vague Europeanness is not the strongest one and arguably does not offer the sense of belonging and pride a more specific political and social project can. This basis alone is one that is, by definition only, subject to a small and limited consensus. In any case, as I argued in Chapter 3, the larger the solidary community, the smaller and more limited its shared goal and interest should be. This may sound a bit disappointing to enthusiastic proponents of EU solidarity in and of the EU, but it is actually more desirable (a thesis I discuss in further detail in Chapter 8). It certainly makes solidarity a more modest concept than it appears to be sometimes in common language. This limitation by no means forbids solidary communities with a more ambitious reach *within* Europe, whose basis will then potentially rely on this open understanding of "Europeanness" *plus* a shared aim or experience going beyond this limited notion, for example, being a European *and* a woman subjected to unequal treatment.

Before closing this section, I want to stress that Europe and the European Union are not the same thing. It will be the next step to determine in what way the institutional reality of the EU adds a component to this Europeanness, binding EU citizens closer together by political, legal and economic means. The (shorter) shared history of the EU, which I will explain in more detail in the next chapter, may possibly add an additional bond among EU citizens that relies primarily on the fact of being a political reality that can serve as a further basis for an EU community of solidarity. At the same time, current developments towards

disintegration of the EU do not exactly point in the direction that the EU functions particularly well as a source of identity and belonging. This, in turn, may make a more modest basis even more desirable.

Despite all this pessimism, the political developments of the post-war era, followed by an on-going process of European integration, are likely to be the most successful attempts to find European unity thus far. The EU, in a most benevolent reading, is an attempt to transcend borders, to construct a political project which can do better than the previous Europe – both within and beyond. Its imperfection, however, can be seen every day when confronted with the EU's crises and its tendency towards fragmentation. These will constitute a main topic of the next chapter, but first, we will take a look at how the EU actually refers to solidarity in its own official language, namely its treaties as a main legal body. The idea behind doing so is that these documents are the political materialisation of a certain societal self-understanding of (parts of) Europe. The way that solidarity is or is not portrayed as a component of "Europeanness" in these documents will serve as a basis for discussing solidary agency in the EU in the next chapter. In other words, the verbalisation of solidary aspirations in these treaties can prove to be both a self-attribution and goal and thus help assess, in more detail, who can be solidary in the EU and in what ways.

5.3 Solidarity as a Self-attribute of the EU

Solidarity is a self-attributed and self-prescribed principle of the European Union. By this, I mean that EU representatives regularly refer to solidarity as a reality in the EU, while EU documents, speeches and treaties, at the same time, present solidarity as an aspiration. However, the use of the term in treaties of the EU has developed and intensified over time. An attempt to reconstruct the use of the term chronologically in the treaties proves to be complex, since the different languages in versions of early pre-EU treaties do not use the term

consistently. Let me exemplify this with the oldest:[96] In the Treaty of Paris (1951), which established the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) between Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, solidarity appears in the preamble as a prerequisite for rebuilding Europe, but only in the French (solidarité) and Italian (solidarietà) versions (ECSC, 1951). In the German and Dutch versions, the terms "Verbundenheit" and "saamhorigheid" are used instead; these can be translated as connectedness and belonging together respectively. In an English translation of the ECSC treaty – to be found in the fusion of treaties called "Single European Act" from 1987 – "solidarity" is the chosen translation. It reads: "RECOGNIZING that Europe can be built only through practical achievements which will first of all create real solidarity" (SEA, 1987, p. 25, emphasis in original text). Now, these differences in deploying the term may come from a variety of reasons; there may simply be differences in their meanings in the member states' languages, which, as I mentioned in Chapter 2, give rise to issues like the lack of an appropriate adjective to correspond to "solidarisch" and "solidaire" in English. From the context provided by the English version, one may indeed interpret the ECSC preamble to simply refer to a mutuality of economic relations, but this is a subjective understanding of the term. Clearly, it is not only in philosophical work that nowadays solidarity signifies more than just connectedness, as more recent ways of deploying the term in the EU context strongly suggest. For example, briefly before Germany took the presidency of the EU council for the second half of 2020, German chancellor Angela Merkel said in an interview with *The Guardian* that it was "only right for Germany to think not just about itself but to be prepared to engage in an extraordinary act of solidarity" in light of the shared challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic for the EU (Merkel, 2020), implying a bond and a need to act accordingly.

An interpretation of the different usages of the term may, however, go beyond mere imprecisions in the translation or slightly different usages of the term. After all, the ECSC was

[96] It is remarkable that the well-known 1950 Declaration of (then) French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman already mentions solidarity: "Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity" (Schuman & Monnet, 1950). While this declaration was of significant importance for the foundation of the ECSC, the term "solidarity" only acquired prominence many years later in treaties.

a purely economic trade association, and the less normatively charged words used in the German and Dutch versions of the treaty could be read as precursors of a political attitude that prioritized economic gain over mutual normative obligations and resorts to mutual prejudice – an accusation that has repeatedly caught up with Germany and the Netherlands quite recently in the discussion about so-called corona bonds during the COVID-19 pandemic.[97] Assessing the plausibility of this difference in political interests goes beyond what can be done in this dissertation but would be an interesting question to pursue nonetheless.

How is solidarity treated in subsequent pre-EU and EU treaties? A thorough look at the documents shows a clear intensification and concretization of the word, but not straight away. In the Treaties of Rome from 1957, which entail the treaty establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) (EEC, 1957; EURATOM, 1957),[98] the differences in the use of the word between the languages remain: there is a short mention in the preamble which declares the purpose of intending "to confirm the solidarity which binds Europe" (SEA, 1987, p. 217).[99] The term solidarity receives a clearer political meaning neither in the 1965 treaty that merges these three original communities with a joint commission and a council nor in the Single European Act of 1987.

In line with the shift from a union of economic cooperation towards a comprehensive political project – a movement I will explain in more detail in the next chapter – the term "solidarity" increasingly became relevant from 1992 onwards, when the Treaty on the

[97] In 2020, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and Finland positioned themselves against the requests for so-called "corona bonds" that were being voiced. The exchange of allegations that followed shows the sensitivity of the topic: "Adding insult to injury, the finance minister, Wopke Hoekstra, called on Brussels to investigate why some eurozone member states had failed to get their houses in order ahead of the pandemic – comments that the Portuguese prime minister, António Costa, later described as 'repugnant' and 'senseless'. The spat has reopened painful old wounds. In the early stages of the eurozone crisis, the Dutch were among the most vocal opponents of the initial Greek 'bailout' and demanded draconian austerity measures in return for the emergency loans. The former Dutch finance minister Jeroen Dijsselbloem gained widespread notoriety for his penny-pinching in the Greek debt negotiations, at one point appearing to suggest that his southern European neighbours had wasted their money on 'booze and women'" (Adler & Roos, 2020).

[98] The treaty establishing the EEC was later updated to be the TFEU (Treaty for the Functioning of the European Union).

[99] Only in a short annexed declaration on the city of Berlin and its particular position in the world in light of the division of Germany, the word solidarity is used: "ANXIOUS to confirm their solidarity with the people of Berlin" (SEA, 1987, p. 602). The German version, however, once again uses the word "Verbundenheit".

European Union was signed in Maastricht (TEU, 1992).[100] In the TEU, even the German version uses "Solidarität". First, in the preamble, which in English reads "DESIRING to deepen the solidarity between their peoples while respecting their history, their culture and their traditions" (ibid.), the meaning of the term seems to be more directed towards the Europeans as members of cultural communities rather than merely as economically interdependent agents. But in the TEU, solidarity finds its way even beyond the symbolic words of introduction, and in fact appears again in the very first article, A, of the common provisions, where it reads in the English version that the task of the EU is to "organize, in a manner demonstrating consistency and solidarity, relations between the Member States and between their peoples". Even more significantly, the TEU, in its amendments to the Treaty establishing the EEC, the section on Principles of the (no longer only economic) community contains, as a task of the community, the effort of working toward "economic and social cohesion and solidarity among Member States" (Title II, Article G., B2). A further article in the treaty refers to solidarity together with loyalty as principles of foreign policy (Title V, Article J.1, 4). The references to solidarity are not only more frequent and consistently used throughout the languages, but also point in a normative direction as a principle to deepen, to organize and to work towards.[101] It is only, however, in the Treaty of Lisbon, signed in 2007, that solidarity becomes a central principle in a series of different areas as well as consolidated through a new legal instrument that is introduced: the solidarity clause (ToL, 2007). The Treaty of Lisbon, I note to clarify and help navigate this jungle of treaties, is a further amended version of the TEU and the TFEU (a revised version of the Treaty of Rome establishing the EEC).

The use of the term solidarity in the consolidated versions of these treaties (TEU-TFEU_Consolidated, 2008) is thus to be understood as the current status of self-attribution

[100] A brief search for the term "solidarity" in the press archive of the European Commission, the main executive body of the EU, confirms this intensification for uses beyond treaty texts. The search offers more than 6100 results (EC, 2020c, access on February 26). They include press releases, speeches, news, official statements and announcements. The results give the impression that solidarity plays a significant rhetorical role in a wide variety of topics such as natural disasters, migration, finance, terrorism, border control and so on. This is merely a third of the results that appear for "justice" but only roughly 1700 less than for "freedom" and 2700 more than for "equality". The earliest result for "solidarity" stems from January 1985 (archive starts in 1974), while almost half of the results are roughly from the last decade.

[101] The subsequent Treaty of Amsterdam, which was signed in 1997 and which amended the Treaty on European Union, follows this spirit; further amendments in the Treaty of Nice of 2001 entail no mention of the word.

and self-prescription of the main legal documents of the European Union and can be seen as the result of a long development in which the term increasingly gained importance. It seems logical that the increased weight that was attributed to instituting political principles to guide a union that was no longer merely economic happened in the years that marked extensive enlargement of the EU, namely between the late 1980s and 2007. A closer look at the way solidarity is used from this time on is instructive; in the consolidated versions of the TEU and the TFEU, solidarity appears 11 times and 12 times respectively. With regard to the TEU, it is notable that solidarity is not only mentioned in the preamble, but immediately in Article 2 of the Common Provisions as a core value of the EU – alongside pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice and equality between women and men (TEU, Title I, Article 2).[102] In the TFEU, the preamble interestingly stresses self-attributed solidarity "which binds Europe and the overseas countries".

Apart from this, let me discuss in some more detail the solidarity clause (TFEU, Part V, Title VII, Article 222, as well as Declaration 37).[103] The solidarity clause is an article specifically designed for disaster cases. It reads:

> The Union and its Member States shall act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if a Member State is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster. The Union shall mobilise all the instruments at its disposal (...).

The resulting action is to be coordinated by the Member States through the Council. The choice of extreme situations applicable to the solidarity clause can be explained by the fact that it was introduced as a reaction to the 2004 Madrid bombings; and still, it seems striking that the name refers to a principle that is – seen in the context of its other usages in both the TEU and the TFEU – by no means limited to catastrophic cases. One may wonder why it is not called the "Disaster Clause" or the "Catastrophe Clause". In Declaration 37, which amends

[102] The remaining referrals to solidarity concern generations (TEU, Title I, Article 3.3), member states (TEU, Title I, Article 3.3), solidarity and mutual respect between the peoples of the Earth (TEU, Title I, Article 5), together with equality as a guide for external action of the EU (TEU, Title V, Chapter 1, Article 21.1). Further mentions in Title V, Chapter 2, Section 1, Articles 24.2, 24.3, 31.1 and 32.

[103] Other notable referrals to solidarity in the TFEU include: solidarity between member states regarding asylum and immigration (TFEU, Part III, Title V, Chapter 1, Article 67.2 and Chapter 2, Article 80); solidarity in economic policy to be decided by the Council (TFEU, Part III, Title VIII, Chapter 1, Article 122.1); and solidarity between member states with regard to energy policy (TFEU, Part III, Title XXI, Article 194.1).

the clause, the text adds that "none of the provisions of Article 222 is intended to affect the right of another Member State to choose the most appropriate means to comply with its own solidarity obligation towards that Member State", which one could read as a cautious reminder that member states are not quite bound by these provisions. Rather, it seems like a step back from joint action as a political union and an assertion of Member State sovereignty.

The aforementioned examples of self-attribution and self-prescription of solidarity in the treaties of the EU are per se reasons to further study and interpret the concept empirically and theoretically. The same could be said for other principles such as freedom, equality and justice and the ways they are mentioned in constitutional texts.[104] The mere fact that the consolidated treaties entail solidarity as a principle is not, however, a distinctive feature of the EU compared to national constitutional texts, as a search in the database of the project "Constitute" reveals. The tool, an initiative of the Comparative Constitutions Project at the University of Texas which allows comparing and searching the constitutions of (currently) 202 countries, finds results for "solidarity" in 89 of them, distributed entirely across the globe (Constitute, 2020). There is obviously a fundamental difference between referring to solidarity on a nation state level and a supranational political union. As I previously mentioned, the nation state is frequently considered to be the adequate, if not exhaustive locus within which solidarity can take place. It is probably no coincidence that the Charter of the UN – a looser but larger bond between countries – does not entail a reference to the term solidarity, but indeed to justice and freedom (UN-Charter, 1945).

Consequently, it seems adequate to say that while solidarity as a principle is not unusual to be found in constitutional texts of countries, elevating it to such a status in the corresponding treaties of a supranational political project is a novelty. The fact that this happens within Europe, a continent with the undisputed and ambivalent influence and power in the world discussed at the beginning of this chapter, makes it worthwhile to take a closer look at the possible reasons for choosing solidarity as a principle – and in which ways it is a problematic choice, too.

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[104] As a side note, while justice and freedom receive a lot more mentions in the consolidated treaties TEU and TFEU than solidarity, equality receives less (just 9 in total).

We can speculate about the reasons for the choice of solidarity through a look at the EU in its historical, geographical and political context, which is what the next chapter will do. This contextualisation happens through the lens of the questions that guide the analysis of the EU as a solidary community. After all, it is the aspect of community that makes solidarity an intriguing idea – quite fundamentally distinct from freedom, justice or equality, which could have been a subject of study in the EU context, too. As philosopher and artist Bini Adamczak puts it:

> Unlike other key emancipatory terms like freedom or equality, solidarity is fairly difficult to grasp: In part, this is because solidarity is more clearly a relational occurrence that cannot be tied to an external measure (such as "I am free to do what I want" or "I earn an equal amount of money as you"). Solidarity happens between us. This is what makes it so attractive: It creates connections. (Adamczak, 2018, own translation)

The EU's emphasis on human connection that underlies its focus on solidarity speaks for itself as an aspiration, and the need for connection seems to have been clear from its beginnings, although it intensified over the decades of increasing integration.

Therefore, the following chapter will discuss the potential for a solidary community in the EU, namely its agents, its basis and its scope. One common narrative could sound like this: a continent characterized by fragmentation, war and imperialism for many centuries – and, at the same time, a source of progress and innovation – Europe finally "got its act together" after the culmination of disaster in the two World Wars, founding a first economic, then political union. However, there is an obvious discrepancy between rhetoric and political reality. Where is solidarity in these times when a member state decides to leave the union? How do we explain the rise of nationalism in many member states and an apparent lack of solidarity towards one another? Due to the tension between national and European interests, politicians frequently resort to the language of solidarity whenever an appeal to values is necessary, but no legal force is possible – as, for example, in the distribution of refugees among member states. The bridge between the nation state and the union of states, it seems, is fragile. Building it, I think, requires

a more sincere (and maybe modest) approach to solidarity. I will move to this more normative aspect of EU solidarity considering the flipside of the EU's political reality in the next chapter.

5.4 Summary

A brief summary of this chapter may help order the large number of ideas and thoughts it entailed. The first section started with a reconstruction of different conceptions of "Europeanness" as one way to discuss a potential basis for solidary community in the EU. My argument in search of such a basis was that – since antecedent traits are not suitable – "Europeanness" should be open and inclusive to all in recognition of diversity and based on a shared historical awareness and commitment to ethical principles such as fundamental rights. I further hinted that this basis alone for such a large solidary community can and should only entail a small solidary project (cf. Chapter 3); in other words, it should be based on a small solidary matter – an aspect I will return to later.

The subsequent section offered a look at the treaties that form the legal basis of the EU (and its predecessor organisations) with regard to their use of the word "solidarity". I found that the frequency and importance attributed to solidarity intensified, specifically from the foundation of the EU in the 1990s and onwards when the union formally became "more than" just a matter of institutionalized economic cooperation. As a political project, the EU includes solidarity as a self-attributed and self-prescribed principle and core value.

The next chapter will complete the analysis of the EU as a solidary community by discerning potential agents of solidarity in and of the EU. This shall happen in light of the merits, purposes and imperfections of the European Union (and what lies beyond). This context will also allow to draw normative conclusions about the type and scope of solidary community(-ies) the EU and its surroundings have to offer.

6. The European Union – Solidary Community(-ies)?

In the previous chapter, I wrote about Europe as a geographical, political and historical space in order to contextualize what the European Union builds upon. I further described the significance the EU attributes to solidarity through its official legal documents. It is the purpose of this chapter to establish a normative account of solidary agency more concretely in the EU. This requires firstly sketching out the historical EU integration process, taking into consideration the developments that might have led to the intensification of referrals to solidarity in the treaty texts analysed in the previous chapter. Through a look at the current state of integration in the EU and the difficulties the Union currently faces, I present a normative account of solidary agency in the EU, arguing that solidarity in the EU essentially lies in the hands of civil society. The section that follows concerns the scope of solidary agency in the EU, offering a view on the relations to the EU's outside and a comparison with other supranational organisations. It grapples with the EU's historical responsibilities arising out of its history, as laid out in the previous chapter, and results in an evaluation of solidary agency in the EU beyond the actual territorial space of the European Union.

6.1 Solidary Agency Around Integration and Crisis in the EU

It is undisputed that the European Union, in its first shape founded in 1951 as the European Coal and Steel Community, is a supranational bond that was originally built to primarily serve economic interests. The idea was that by "tying" countries together economically, root causes of conflicts would lose their importance, serving not only interests of trade but also the political interest of keeping Europe at peace. Its subsequent continuous enlargement and the so-called integration process have corrected some of the shortcomings that were concomitant features of the purely economic focus. In this context, a variety of political and social competencies

were expanded to the supranational level, while the economic cooperation grew closer, eventually resulting in one single market in 1993, characterised by freedom of "goods, services, people and capital" (EU, 2018, p. 4). All EU integration is established and legitimized through the contracts that have been signed by all member states. Up to this day, however, there are not only claims of a lack of democratic structures within the EU, but also criticism that some member states exert hegemonic powers within the union,[105] compromising the sovereignty of others – not to mention the factor of the union sealing off its wealth and privileges from the outside world like a fortress. More recent crises and challenges, such as increased migration since 2015 and the COVID-19 pandemic since 2020, have led critical observers of politics in the EU to lament that the union, unable to respond to shared challenges adequately and resorting to the national realm in cases of doubt, gives the impression of being a successful and committed community only during times of fair weather – not when facing a storm, in whichever form it may appear on the horizon.

This lack of unity is in line with the common impression that EU solidarity does not function very well in practice. As a locus of self-prescribed solidarity, the EU does, however, serve as a clearly demarcated space when it comes to a set of potential solidary agents. In order to understand the various levels of agency potentially involved in EU solidarity, one must better understand the EU. I will not analyse in detail the process and elements of European integration, nor discuss its shortcomings one by one. There is abundant literature on these topics, and they are only of indirect relevance to my own project. However, a general account of what the European Union is will help determine potential agents of solidarity. In other words: a closer look at what the EU is – institutionally, socially and politically – will help discern the potential agents in it, more specifically agents of solidarity.

In one of the few seminal works on the concept, political scientist Murray Forsyth described unions of states (like the self-proclaimed EU) as the "intermediary stage between normal interstate relations and normal intrastate relations" (Forsyth, 1981, p. 10). By neither giving up sovereignty completely nor remaining isolated states, member states of unions are in

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[105] One problem remains: the difference in size of the member states, whose institutional and political implications have intensified rather than weakened over recent years (cf. Bunse & Nicolaïdis, 2012).

a volatile position subject to continuous reassessment and negotiation of conditions. According to Forsyth, the European Union was a particular case of a union of states from its very beginnings (albeit only assuming the name "union" in 1993, long after Forsyth's book was written[106]), since it was mostly aimed at increasing overall prosperity for its members in the economic sense. It initially did not strive for a united system of defence, nor did it have universalist aspirations for global peace, such as the League of Nations or the UN (ibid.). Andrea Sangiovanni, quoting Alan Milward, specifies that "the basic point and purpose of the EU (…) was to 'uphold and stabilize the postwar consensus on which the European welfare state was rebuilt'" (Sangiovanni, 2013, p. 11). Even though there were warnings early on, Sangiovanni reminds us that giving up economic autonomy to a certain degree to the supranational level was at first not perceived to be a problem, since the opinion prevailed that it would be possible to separate the common market from national welfare policies. Expressed in terms of political institutions, this means according to Sangiovanni that the initially prevailing thought was that member states were to provide the central institutions (their governments), only to be complemented by joint initiatives concerning specific economic areas of cooperation.

However, the success of "negative integration", i.e., market making by removing barriers, eventually affected areas of (national) welfare state concern: There was not enough "positive integration", i.e., correcting for the effects of an unleashed market, on the supranational level (Sangiovanni, 2013, p. 12). The resulting instability can be seen in the freedom of capital movement putting pressure on taxation schemes, integration benefiting rich economic hubs and leaving behind poor regions and the euro not being able to accommodate for the different members' economic situations. The risks and benefits are unevenly distributed among the EU (p. 16). In other words, the volatility of the shape and condition of the union that Forsyth mentions works to the advantage of some members while taking a toll on others.

[106] In fact, the term "community", which had been used for all EU predecessors in one way or another, was only replaced entirely by "union" after the Lisbon treaty came into force (Devuyst, 2012). It is debatable whether the term "community" has stronger connotations of a relational bond than "union" (cf. Chapter 3). The ever increased political and social integration brought about with the establishment of the EU point towards "union", in its literal sense of "becoming one", as a stronger term. "Community", in its meaning of finding and acting upon what is "common", can be interpreted as a more limited bond, leaving greater space for difference.

In Habermas' opinion (2013), the EU received the approval of its citizens as long as economic benefits were present: The initial EU success story was not so much the result of democratic will – its legitimacy stemmed from its positive results (p. 82). This is important to consider given that anti-EU movements have been on the rise for years now.

The establishment of the Eurozone was a turning point – or perhaps the climax in a series of mistakes (cf. Habermas, 2013; Streeck, 2012). Streeck writes that the Eurozone:

> [a] monetary union, initially conceived as a technocratic exercise – therefore excluding the fundamental questions of national sovereignty and democracy that political union would entail – is now rapidly transforming the EU into a federal entity, in which the sovereignty and thereby democracy of the nation-states, above all in the Mediterranean, exists only on paper. (Streeck, 2012, p. 67)

The euro has ultimately exacerbated the economic differences between the member states rather than eliminating them (Habermas, 2013, p. 87). It seems fair to say that the EU, in retaining its structure of national member states but adding to these a powerful level of supranational institutions, is in a constant struggle to determine how intensive the interstate relations become at the cost of intrastate sovereignty. This means that an additional, ever more important level of institutional agency exists at the EU-level. While this is not in contradiction to Forsyth's definition, the EU as a historical first is so different from other unions of states that it may well be considered a union *sui generis*.

The inequalities among EU member states and the problems of a project initially following mostly economic interests are salient. At the same time, many minds have been involved in the integration process that saw beyond utilitarian economic goals and strove for a societal and political EU, too. Their experiences and efforts have created a different level of EU-wide agency: its citizenry. Nowadays, there is already more than one generation of young people, some of whom have benefited from EU projects like Erasmus, who cannot imagine a life without the EU any longer. Further, it is hard to deny that even in its capacity as an economic project, the EU has also been a successful union of peace in a continent that had notoriously been at war. While it is not the first time that a supranational project was attempted in Europe, it is the first one made with the purpose of peace behind it. Just think of the empires

that, throughout the last 2400 years, ruled large parts of the continent: The Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the Frankish Empire, the Holy Roman Empire, the Ottoman Empire, the French Empire, the Russian Empire, the Austrian Empire, the German Empire, Nazi Germany, the USSR – not to mention all the colonial empires reaching from Europe all over the world. It seems that agglomerating the carpet of small nations in Europe into a bigger project is the fate Europeans have shared for centuries. The difference between all of these and the European Union is nevertheless obvious. There is no autocratic rule in the EU, no hegemon and no coercion, no forced cultural assimilation.[107] As envisaged in the preamble of the Treaty of Maastricht (which entered into force in 1993), it is, at least ideally, an "ever-closer union among the peoples" of Europe, in which every member bears the right of citizenship and which is characterized, as a whole, by the rule of law.[108]

Obviously, the evident progress of the EU when compared to historical transnational projects does not mean that its insufficiency in many regards should be ignored, and, once again, much theoretical and practical work has been devoted to the question of how to proceed with the integration process of the union, how to improve the lack of democratic accountability and how to reform its shortcomings. There seem to be three tendencies: those that strive for more social integration of the kind that will eventually make it possible to refer to one European *demos;* those to whom the unifying tendencies reach too far and who would prefer a Europe of close cooperation but with respect for the differences within; and thirdly, those who would prefer a resort to the national realm – the latter may follow different, even contrasting sets of reasons. Habermas (2013) summarizes the motivations behind the different paths ahead: firstly, those who prefer a stronger nation state for republican or right wing

[107] It is worthwhile specifying that there is no such rule explicitly. But, for example, the financial policies during the financial crisis were widely perceived to be coercive on the part of the economically strong member states towards the weaker ones, leading to a perception of hegemonic rule by the large economies, particularly Germany.
[108] The ratification of some of the treaties was accompanied by problems – and this was also the case with the Treaty of Maastricht. The Danish voted against it, the French barely accepted it and the British had difficulties passing it in Parliament. Because of the Danish vote, some amendments to the treaty were made. The final, approved version was considered to widely reflect the interests of the Germain bargainers, particularly with regard to the low inflation guaranteed by an autonomous ECB. The subsequent reformatory treaties of Amsterdam and Lisbon were to correct for the shortcomings of Maastricht (cf. Laursen, 2012). However, they can be considered a problematic compromise as well, since the ratification of a constitutional treaty failed, having been rejected in referendums in France and the Netherlands. As a result, the amending treaties avoided referendums in all member states except for Ireland (Devuyst, 2012).

populist reasons; secondly, those who want less EU integration because they favour less state regulation; thirdly, those who would rather have more EU integration for neoliberal economic reasons; and fourthly, those who believe that more EU integration may make it possible to tame the financial markets, among which are technocrats and euro-democrats (p. 83-84). Only the last group, Habermas argues, actually aims to close the gap of the democratic deficit. Importantly, each of these paths ahead has different visions on the kind of agency the EU holds institutionally and on the level of its citizens. This has implications on the type, frequency and scope of solidary communities and actions we can conceive of.

Let me just mention some of the defenders of the different paths ahead. One initiative has been to proclaim a European Republic, in which any sort of nationalism would be overcome and existing EU institutions would be replaced with a supranational democratic government (Guérot & Menasse, 2016). Less absolute is Habermas' conviction, which favours a political union as opposed to a mere currency union (2013, p. 93). He suggests a split into themes pertaining to core and periphery. The core would signify a common fiscal/budget/economic politics, which would cross the boundaries of what is considered national sovereignty. However, according to Habermas, this would not result in a European federation or federation of states. It would suffice to have these competencies delegated in a democratic and centralized manner. Within this supranational democracy, member states would retain control of the monopoly of violence and their administrations (it is debatable whether this type of sovereignty can be retained once member states lose their fiscal sovereignty).

In whichever shape, the urge to unify bears dangers and leaves open numerous questions, such as how far common politics would infringe upon the autonomy of each member state to decide, for example, about its taxation scheme and budgetary policy. It is for this reason that the well-known suggestion to conceive of Europe as a *demoicracy* involves an urgent call to "resist the pull of 'oneness' – be it one people, one state, one voice on the world stage, or indeed one story – to concentrate instead on drawing strength from the accommodation of differences" (Nicolaïdis, 2012, p. 274). Rather, the idea is for the EU to be

"a Union of peoples who govern together, but not as one" (Nicolaïdis, 2013, p. 351), with its different peoples organised in a truly democratic way.

An attempt that broadly follows the spirit of creating a pan-European *demos* and aims to reform existing EU institutions by making them more democratic and accountable can be seen in the project DiEM 25, a political movement and party initiated prominently by former Greek finance minister Yanis Varoufakis. It has not been not very successful; even in Germany, sometimes considered one of the remaining states still committed to the European project, DiEM 25 has not enjoyed much visibility, resonance and success in (European) elections. The story of DiEM 25 thus seems to confirm what sceptics like Wolfgang Streeck think: that even large and supposedly committed member states like Germany are not truly willing to give up sovereignty. National sovereignty is one of the few powers of small states, since it allows them to have some leeway and control vis-à-vis large and powerful states. Thus, bigger nations have historically wanted to infringe and limit sovereignty (not their own, certainly). In Streeck's opinion, it is for this reason that small EU member states are generally more reluctant to the idea of greater EU integration – fearing the result of less sovereignty (2018). The experience of the eurozone crisis seems to prove them right; the austerity measures imposed by the Troika have been interpreted to have been made possible due to a loss of sovereignty as well as a concerted effort by large and powerful member states. Streeck, a fierce critic of the euro, argues that only a retreat to the nation state by abandoning the common currency will make it possible to regain democratic control and account for the differences among the EU member state economies (Streeck, 2012). It is important to stress that a point of view like Streeck's stems from an entirely different motivation than those movements that seek to retreat from integration in the EU based on the surge of nationalist mindsets favouring a return to the nation state, most prominently to be observed in Brexit. But anti-EU tendencies are not only present in the UK; there is an increasing worry by staunch observers like EU law professor Laurent Pech (2021) about the rule of law and commitment to so-called values of the EU, such as human rights and democracy, in Eastern-EU member states' governments, such as Hungary and Poland – which may cause a West/East rift that is perhaps comparable to the North/South split between member states in terms of economic power.

The diverse ideas for a future of the EU exemplify how different the perceptions can be about how desirable the union is as a whole, how closely knit the community of citizens and states should be and what individuals and countries prioritize. Apart from these different ideas, the diversity of languages and member state cultures certainly provides a challenging ground for the aim of achieving "unity in diversity", which is both "fact" and "aspiration" in the EU (Bauböck, 2017, pp. 82-83). Given both the challenges and the ideas to tackle them, it seems fair to say that whichever path lies ahead, the challenges will be many.

Any answer to what the European Union is must include a notion of the complexity of the aims, problems and interests that I attempted to convey thus far. It must account for the fact that the EU is not a synonym of Europe but still a project of and in Europe, which is to be seen within the particular historical context of the European continent. This holds just as much as the fact that it is a political project through and through – in its economic dimension but also in its social one, structurally distinct from any other comparable initiative because it attributes individuals the right of citizenship. This complexity also includes the observation that it is a union of separate states with separate *demoi*, with individuals who possess national identities but also with those who identify as European; it is thus a community of economic interests, but also one with some degree of cultural similarity (Calhoun, 2002, p. 154). It is a union characterized by inequality on various levels, by dominance of some members, by lack of commitment to human rights and other agreed-upon values by others. These problems are all reflected in the main challenge that is constantly balanced and negotiated: How to find a suitable equilibrium between retaining national governmental sovereignty where desirable and giving it up to a supranational body? While it is fair to say that the EU is a story of peace, it is also one of institutional deficits and mistakes, especially in the face of crisis – be it in a financial crisis, a crisis of war and global inequality and the resulting migration or the crisis of a global pandemic. It is also for this reason that the question of giving up sovereignty is frequently met with suspicion or worry. Finally, if relying on others is not possible when faced with difficulties, it may be tempting to let a rather pessimist thought prevail about the EU: "Is it not the case that 'Europe' is precisely what is about to disappear in what is currently being created, as an economic and political bloc, in the name of Europe?" (Gasché, 2009, p. 5). Of course, the

interpretation that the EU is one single hypocrisy in the shadow of grand European ideals does not lead anywhere and also goes against what I have argued about Europe itself – that its splendour should be met with a critical mind. More concretely, "more Europe" and "less EU" would not necessarily have produced a more laudable outcome. Also, it is important not to underestimate the reality of EU-wide cooperation within civil society, which is of central importance when it comes to solidarity in the EU.

From the EU's history of integration and disintegration that I have summarized thus far, it should be clear that the EU is a project that involves a set of agents and institutions, among which are most importantly:

1. individuals, in their role as nationals and EU citizens, as well as anyone else living in the space of the EU (in their role as agents of solidarity, I will henceforth refer to them as "EU solidary agents", irrespective of their legal status)
2. national governments of the member states as elected representatives of the citizens' democratic will
3. EU institutions and elected EU officials as legitimate representatives on a supranational level

Any account of solidarity in the EU will have to decide on which of these levels solidarity is supposed to take place.

The main question is whether political institutions can be agents of solidarity at all. By institutions, I mean the political apparatus of governments and other institutions of governance. The question applies to both governments and EU institutions. My main doubt here is that unlike between individuals, it is unclear whether institutions can possess relationships of the (mildly affective) type providing mutual recognition which is associated with solidary communities. Given the characterisation of solidary communities that I provide in Chapter 3, this seems to be rather unlikely. In other words, institutions can neither feel belonging nor share thoughts about a common goal. At most, we can regard institutions as proxies of the relationships between those they represent. This would mean that, for example, an interest group with a clearly defined objective (e.g., an NGO advocating for gender equality)

may represent the relationship of individuals sharing the same goal, and its members are free to join and leave as their conviction changes.

In addition, one main problem with admitting political institutions as solidary agents is the requirement of non-coercion, which seems difficult to realise in a setting of, say, an elected government that achieved 55% of the available votes. Even if we grant that in any democratic system, it will be impossible to fulfil the will of every single individual. Such a government, especially in the EU with its diverse positions that I outlined above, seems a particularly unfortunate place to uniformise solidarity through institutionalised matters and enforce solidary acts that should not be coercive according to my view.[109] It is likely that a large number of EU citizens would reject measures proposed out of the rationale of solidarity if they are to exist as distinct measures from law simply decided on the institutional level without democratic procedures. In other words, it would be difficult to justify why institutions should be entrusted with voluntary and non-coercive actions. On the contrary, they are (and should be) responsible for matters pertaining to the legal sphere, such as issues of justice. These issues of justice may, of course, be born from initiatives of solidarity which have gone through a democratic process that turned them into law. Thus, an initiative brought forward by agents of solidarity through acts of solidarity can eventually become a matter of law (and thus a responsibility for political institutions) if a (democratic) society eventually considers it to be a justified concern about an existing injustice or oppression.[110]

In addition, if political institutions were to be regarded as solidary agents, they would impossibly be inclusive towards their "outside" because their bodies are, by definition, limited – both in the case of national governments and EU institutions. Therefore, only those individuals legally pertaining to the sphere of influence of an institution would be represented in a potential solidary community, thereby excluding outsiders who may wish to be part of it.

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[109] Elements of coercion also exist in solidary communities, as dynamics of power and domination are present in any social relation. However, the idea here is that solidary communities, unlike governmental institutions, allow us to leave them. Compared to political institutions, solidary communities are less based on compromise and more on shared conviction.

[110] This argument shows the limits of solidarity very well. It does not have mechanisms of accountability or legitimacy, and therefore it is problematic to elevate it to an institutional level next to democratically elected governmental institutions. Rather, it should be understood as a means to complement institutions where they are insufficient.

This raises another problem: If we were to consider the members of EU institutions to be agents of solidarity in the EU united in a solidary community, this alone would not specify which issues merit solidary action. As a result, the already existing institutions would be considered a solidary community whose aim is unclear and determined without specified procedures as they exist in legal questions. This is problematic because without democratic processes of determining what exactly EU institutions should act upon, it is unclear what would be the advantage of solidarity in the EU over, let's say, justice or redistribution in the EU. It would also be unclear whether there would be any possibility to withdraw from acts of EU solidarity if some institutions, such as, for example, the government of a member state, disagree with the proposed acts of solidarity. The history of integration in the EU that I presented above should show that the interests about action diverge dramatically between and among member states. In fact, the solidarity clause, a law that actually determines specific issues of solidarity (namely catastrophic incidents like terrorism or natural disasters, i.e., that which happens through no fault of one's own), can be considered to do exactly this: avoid having to commit to a legal procedure with clear steps for how to support other members in need.

The problems attached to permitting political institutions like governments to be agents of solidarity apply both to EU institutions and to national ones, although to different extents. National governments of member states, if considered to form a solidary community, could arguably fulfil their role of representing national interests but also work towards solidarity on the level of the EU as a matter of shared interest and history, which would locate them more in the realm of an "interest group". In this second role, they would gain a parallel function that arises out of the shared interest of preserving and improving the EU. This seems more plausible than considering institutions that operate on the EU level to constitute a solidary community whose self-prescribed purpose of fostering EU solidarity would arguably be fulfilled by the mere declaration that they constitute a solidary community. At the same time, national governments understood as solidary interest groups within the EU hardly fulfil an integrative purpose across borders due to the clash with their foremost function as representatives of their national peoples, and this could be the cause of even further

fragmentation on the societal level. Because institutions cannot fulfil the requirements of mutual recognition and non-coercion, I conclude that considering either type of institution would constitute a problematic and ethically questionable understanding of solidary agency. This means that even where political institutions act as proxies for solidary communities – when, for example, they can rely on a high degree of homogeneity in their community – they are by no means ideal agents of solidarity.

This conclusion leaves only individuals living in the EU (henceforth: EU solidary agents) as persuasive and normatively desirable agents of solidarity. They are the only ones who – by conviction and free will, only motivated by the various reasons to join in solidarity (instrumental, end-related and recognition-related) – can associate and act in solidarity. These individuals include, if we follow the basis of the solidary relationship that I explained in the previous section, both citizens of the EU and those who live in it and share the basis of an open understanding of "Europeanness". As I elaborated before, Europeanness in the understanding that I propose would per se give these individuals only a limited shared aim with a small overlap of ideas and goals. As a solidary matter, it would lack much specific content. It is for this reason that communities of solidarity in the EU frequently operate in the pursuit of more specific matters. Put differently, many solidary communities in the EU are based not only on shared "Europeanness" but also on further reasons that may only apply to a subset of the group, such as those sharing a specific political concern. These subsets of the entirety of EU solidary agents may, of course, form solidary communities that are not merely based on individuals but also organisations that represent them – for example, activist groups or NGOs – as long as they adhere to the principles of inclusiveness and non-coercion. Let me clarify this by providing an example. A solidary initiative against domestic violence arguably appeals more to some individuals than others, specifically, for example, those directly or indirectly affected by it. In the EU, this means that a subset of all individuals living in it enjoys a closer bond through the shared interest in ending this terrible abuse. They can call for solidarity both among themselves and beyond because it is a matter that is of relevance to the whole society (I will discuss in the next chapter whether it is also of relevance specifically to

the EU). Their initiative may organise through NGOs or activist groups – these can all be solidary agents as long as everyone is free to join out of their own conviction.

Two questions arise in connection with this example:

1. Why do specific issues and shared interests create a stronger bond and what does this mean for the EU as an entire community?

Recall my argument that for several reasons (cf. Chapter 3), large groups should have limits to their solidary aim and goal: the larger the group, the smaller the aim should be. This is due to the danger of domination by powerful subgroups that can develop more easily in large communities as well as the experience of recognition that is usually stronger in a small community where one potentially knows all or many other members. In the context of this example, the solidary community against domestic violence in the EU is a subgroup of the EU as a whole. While it is still potentially very large, it does not encompass all individuals in the EU. On the contrary, it adds a shared aim and interest to *some* individuals that would otherwise only be united by weaker bonds, such as the (arguable) bond of shared Europeanness. For the EU as a whole, this means that if it is a solidary community *as such*, just by virtue of being a group of all individuals living in the EU, the bond between these individuals should be considered more limited than the one between the solidary agents against domestic violence. What this bond can look like and what actions may result out of it will be the theme of the next chapter. It should be clear from this subchapter that a limited bond and shared aim of solidarity makes sense given the very different ideas that prevail in the EU about how it should develop as a political project.

2. What happens when strong bonds exist but do not fulfil the normative requirements of my definition of solidarity, such as nationalism/national citizenship?

One may object to my example of the solidary community formed against domestic violence by questioning whether the bond among these agents is stronger than the bond between nationals of an EU member state. In other words, why should a Polish activist feel more attached to a Portuguese one due to a shared interest in ending domestic violence than to a different Polish citizen as a matter of shared nationality? There is no doubt that to some people, the bond of shared citizenship can feel very strong and increase their readiness to act

in solidarity. However, depending on how it is understood (whether as a matter of antecedent traits or in an inclusive manner), it will be difficult for this type of attachment and resulting readiness to act in solidarity to fulfil the *normative* requirement of the type of solidarity I envision. It will very likely be an exclusive type of solidarity. If there is a nation-specific bond (due to, for example, historical experience) that explains why nationals of one country in particular should feel solidarity regarding domestic violence, their solidary communities may be explained by their commonalities and fulfil the requirements for solidarity (this is a matter I will return to in the next chapter).

Having established the basis and potential agents of solidary action within the EU, many further points of debate remain open. Firstly, there are questions around how to deal with agents that are Europeans but not members of the EU, for example in neighbouring countries. Secondly, an obvious question arises after my description of solidary agency in the EU: Why should it stop at the borders of the EU? What justifies this special bond if it exists? And as a result: Can EU solidarity stretch beyond its borders? And should it? The next section will address these questions, which refer to the type and scope of solidary relationships in the EU. It will also deal with the question of what distinguishes the EU from other supra- or transnational bonds, such as international organisations or historically grown relationships between neighbouring countries – and why my work on solidarity deliberately does not focus on them.

6.2 What is the Scope/Type of the Solidary Relationship?

"Europe is not a continent in a geographical sense. It is a continent in an axiological sense", Donald Tusk wrote, reflecting on his presidency of the EU Council (Tusk, 2019). This and the previous chapter have equipped us with some arguments to question Tusk's quote from various perspectives. For example, one may wonder which values – if any – unite Europe. Further, since commitment to these values does not make anyone a "European", the fact that someone happened to be born within Europe's geographical limits seems to play a significant

role in the constitution of the continent. Additionally, Tusk refers to "Europe", but seems to mean the EU – a formulation that remains exclusionary towards non-EU Europeans. Lastly, one may wonder what defines other continents. Are they merely geographical spaces and not unified by values?

A lack of grappling with such questions is sometimes seen as a certain attitude that has been criticized from outside of the EU: an implicit superiority over others (recall the previously mentioned criticism made about Kant's cosmopolitan thought) paired with a historical forgetfulness and what Edward Said (1993) calls "cultural imperialism" in addition to the economic type. To take the EU seriously as a potential project capable of performing or hosting acts of solidarity, it is therefore crucial to consider such allegations from its outside – and the complexity of the mutual relations. Discussing these relations will help to determine the type and scope of solidary relationships in the EU. Doing so entails describing the dynamics of power, movement and attitudes between the "inside" and the "outside" of the EU.

One important point concerns power relations. As I argued above, the decline of Europe's hegemonic power in the world is not just a recent development. This shift is usually described in terms of economic power (e.g., by the rise of China and other economic superpowers) but also in terms of population, which only continues to grow in Europe because of migration (Eurostat, 2020) and not high birth rates – indeed, there is much faster population growth in many other parts of the world. As a reaction to competitors of global power, it is not rare to read assessments of Europe's capacity as a "global player" and an apparent need to assert this capacity in order to still have a say on the stage of global politics. Keeping this power is many times treated as an end in itself, and a functioning European Union, as a coalition of states and thus resources, is seemingly the answer to how to stay (or become?) such a global player (cf. EU-Council, 2019).

Paul Valéry (1962) described the external threats to European dominance in the world already almost 100 years ago. His depiction resembles that of a boomerang effect:

> What I make out, or think I make out, very clearly is a contrast between Europe – since the fifteenth century – and the rest of the world, from which she differs by her will to

> precise and objective knowledge and by the power that has been the result. But since this kind of power is essentially *transmissible*, Europe now has to reckon (1) with America, which is an emanation of Europe and represents a kind of exaggeration of her characteristics;[111] and (2) with the older continents which she has gone out and disturbed, aroused, educated, armed, and angered. (Valéry, p. 324)

In this passage, Valéry presents an undeniably ambivalent image of what Europe has done in the world and the related consequences. It may be correct that the global system of trade, of capitalist development which originated in Europe, is now challenging its very originator. Additionally, Valéry's view of the course of history discloses Europe's problematic position that occupies an imaginary core of a world map, a sphere of influence spreading to the other continents, which leads to my second point.

A core-periphery view of Europe and the world is indeed even the dominant visual perspective, as a look at most world maps suffices to illustrate.[112] But a further-reaching problem is the idea of a European superiority that has accompanied this view frequently for centuries – as, for example, in rhetoric about other, supposedly primitive societies (cf. Pitts, 2011) or discourses that constructed narratives about the "orient", exhibiting colonialist thinking (cf. Said, 1978). Scholars like Argentine-Mexican Enrique Dussel (2011) criticize such attitudes from a post-colonial perspective. Dussel particularly argues against a "Eurocentric paradigm" (p. 97), which is the view that Europe possessed some sort of "internal superiority accumulated during the Middle Ages" (p. 98), resulting in its advanced development thereafter. In reality, it was, according to Dussel, the conquests and "discoveries" during colonial times that contributed to the central role of Europe, modernity being "a fruit of this happening, not its cause" (ibid.). In other words, it depends on what *kind* of system Europe allegedly constitutes the centre of: one based on superiority (which Dussel refutes), or one based on

[111] This is a controversial view on America. Postcolonial scholar Frantz Fanon's quote on the United States shows a clear criticism of any attempt to imitate European development: "Two centuries ago, a former European colony decided to catch up with Europe. It succeeded so well that the United States of America became a monster, in which the taints, the sickness and the inhumanity of Europe have grown to appalling dimensions" (Fanon, 1963, p. 313, cf. also Tully, 2002).

[112] Interestingly, the idea of core-periphery is also discussed in debates about the European Union economy (with central Europe being the core – heavy, high value-added industry – and southern Europe being the periphery – tourism, services). But in this context, I am referring to the phenomenon seen on a global level.

conquest, gaining a comparative advantage and attributing many advancements of modernity to Europe itself, having displaced and hegemonized them (cf. p. 99). Apart from the need for a critical perspective on a certain discourse of European superiority in relation to its outside, the image of European superiority also grossly glosses over the internal struggles and disparities that I hinted at in the previous section. As Dipesh Chakrabarty phrases it, the problematic tendency to generalize goes both ways:

> just as the phenomenon of Orientalism does not disappear simply because some of us have now attained a critical awareness of it, similarly a certain version of "Europe", reified and celebrated in the phenomenal world of everyday relationships of power as the scene of the birth of the modern, continues to dominate the discourse of history. (2008, p. 28)

In any case, a central point I wish to make is that a self-reflective view on European history in relation to its "periphery" should entail a notion of responsibility rather than superiority. This is important when talking about solidarity: Does the expansive European history result in a duty of solidarity? Or rather of justice, charity or humanity? And does the relation of responsibility lead to an increased ethical duty for solidarity?

In answering, I want to get back to the term used by Tusk, "axiological". If Europe – or, more precisely, the EU – is truly united by values, what are those values? And what distinguishes them from its outside? From what I have written in the previous chapter about European thought, one may think that the prevailing axioms in the EU should be characterized by universality, for example, of reason, science, rights, equality, justice and so on – or a modernised version of such "Europeanness". Given the problematic and complex dynamics of Europeans both among each other and to their outside, such a characterization may come across as more of an idealization than an actual reality. In a way, the question of values specific to Europe or the European Union is the question of what could potentially serve as a basis for a community and thus for solidarity. It is also the red thread when it comes to the difficult relationship of Europe, the EU and its outside.

Here are some of the associated problems. Firstly, since the EU and Europe are not congruent, there is a part of the "outside" of the EU that is part of Europe. As the borders of

Europe are not definite, one may also wonder: What are so-called European values? And would they, in theory, end at the EU's border? If so, it may be hard to convincingly explain in what way a closer bond of shared values exists, for example, between a Spanish citizen and a Greek one than a Greek citizen and an Albanian one (Albania not (yet) being a member of the EU – but potentially becoming one, since the territory of the EU has never been permanently fixed). From what I have argued above, the reality of shared EU institutions and the resulting shared status of citizenship could provide the decisive additional bond.

Secondly, however, it is certainly difficult to explain the closeness of an EU solidary agent to a member of the government of, say, Hungary, who can be considered to disregard many fundamental principles of the EU. One could certainly argue that the Hungarian president, Viktor Orbán, represents a breach to these values and that should his country leave the union or should he be replaced by a more value-compatible successor, the values of the EU would hold again. Further, Orbán's government clearly does not represent all Hungarian citizens, who are, as discussed above, the most plausible agents of EU solidarity. But this would not solve the question of why some other closely neighbouring states are supposedly not part of the axiological continent. Its borders may actually seem fairly arbitrary or only justified in hindsight where countries do not qualify in economic terms for joining the union. In fact, the value dimension among the population can hardly be considered a factor in the debates about those countries currently aspiring to become members of the EU.

Thirdly, even when disregarding a case like Hungary, there is no uniformity of values within the EU. For example, when it comes to specific topics such as humanitarian values, the spectrum of opinions is wide even within one state. In fact, it is unlikely that one would be able to discern any uniformity of values among all EU agents at all – and apparently even less so in more recent years.

The fourth problem also concerns those further away than EU members: How to quantify and operationalise the historical responsibility member states of the EU inflicted on themselves? And is it not the case that the supposed values of the EU are still frequently disregarded when it comes to nations outside of the union?

Each of these questions can fill entire books. The idea is to illustrate the various types of relationships that are involved in the EU and its surroundings: their natures and their complications. This applies to the relationship between citizens of and individuals living in EU member states, of their governments and the institutions of the EU. But it also applies between all of these and those individuals and states that are Europeans but not members, as well as those further away. Considering this complexity, an account of solidarity according to the definition I have presented will need to include a variety of relationship types. Their closeness will differ regarding the size of their communities and the reasons motivating them to engage in solidarity. In other words, there may be small communities of solidarity widely dispersed across the EU with specific goals as well as very large ones with less defined aims. For example, a solidary community of EU customer service workers from call centres united against the injustice of exploitative working conditions may join forces for instrumental and end-related reasons (personal improvement as well as the fight against injustice) and unite specifically in solidarity for reasons of recognition as I explained in Chapter 3. At the same time, a large number of EU-located individuals may decide to join solidary forces to protest against a lack of adequate EU measures to limit the adverse effects of climate change. Here, too, instrumental reasons of increasing economic prosperity through joint action do not exclude the possibility of end-related reasons such as a healthier planet or the avoidance of conflict arising out of climate injustice that may threaten peace in the region.

Now, what is the role of the EU in both these small and large solidary communities? Couldn't they just exist anywhere else as well? And why and how should one convincingly limit them to the borders of the EU? After all, this section has dedicated some effort to exposing complicated and problematic questions attached to the EU, including the question of the EU's basis for solidarity and its separation from and problematic relationship with its history and its outside. One may wonder why, out of all options, a political union whose institutions' legitimacy and accountability is regularly challenged should provide a frame for the potential of solidarity among the agents living within, especially given the argumentative result of my discussion that institutions *cannot* frame solidarity adequately (because solidarity should be free from coercion, as I argued in Chapter 3).

To tackle these questions, it's possible to look at alternative types of relationships that could exist independently of the EU and then discern the difference the EU adds to them. For example, some may suggest studying voluntary and non- or less-institutionalised relationships such as the "friendship" between two neighbouring nations or organisations like the United Nations or NATO which do not possess power over the sovereignty and institutional setting of their member states.[113] There is no particular reason *not* to study solidarity in these contexts, but the specific appeal of the EU can also be explained through a comparison with the institutional meaning and structure of such alternatives along with their reach and purpose.

One aspect this comparison can show is that the issue about institutions and their role for solidarity goes beyond the matter of coercion. This may become clear through a look at other institutions and their potential for solidarity. Think about a state, a labour union, a civil society organisation. Even though solidarity within them may not be enforced through coercion, the institutions as such or aspects of them may possess coercive elements and/or be decisive for the community of solidarity to come into being or solidify. For example, an organisation fighting for gender equality may charge a membership fee while the readiness to engage in solidary action in line with the organisation's goals can hardly be made obligatory. It will rather be based on the shared conviction that gender struggles are important and channelled through the common, voluntary membership of the institution. Returning to the EU, the institutional point can thus be explained in the following way: Even though the institutions are not equivalent to agents of solidarity (though sometimes they insinuate otherwise), the *existence* of the institutions and the resulting set of rules and laws may be a decisive element to provide a frame within which EU citizens are convinced that solidarity is desirable. In other words, while neither the member states' governments nor the EU institutions can act in solidarity or be in a solidary community with each other, their existence provides the formal frame within which relationships of solidarity can form.

[113] NATO as an alliance for military defence and safety is just one example of such an association, with more limited aims and purpose than the UN but of fundamental political and symbolic importance after the Second World War. The rationale for choosing it as an example does not reach beyond this – other organisations could have been analysed instead.

However, the existence of EU institutions as such probably does not suffice, as the lack of a comprehensive EU-wide feeling of belonging shows. But there is more: as previously mentioned, the EU institutionally attributes its individual members a status of citizenship, which entails rights and duties, such as the right to live, move and work freely within the union and participate in its political life. [114] This distinguishes it fundamentally from intergovernmental organisations (like UN and NATO) and from "friendships" between neighbouring nations. Whether they identify with it or not, the EU is thus institutionally relevant for each citizen (and those without this status) individually. And, as Rainer Bauböck (2017) suggests:

> citizenship regimes are potential sources of solidarity because they signal who has a claim to be treated as an equal member of the polity and whose interests should be taken into account when deliberating about the common good of the polity. (p. 85)

This makes a difference because even though there may not be an EU-wide *demos*, there is an institutional commonality (which may – or may not – enable a *demos* to exist someday). This commonality exists next to the EU's shared history and burden, any shared interests and values.

With regard to the purpose of the EU as opposed to other organisations, the previous sections showed that peace, solidarity and social integration were most likely subordinate or at least parallel goals to the original economic association. Still, as I explained, the EU institutionally cannot be looked at without keeping in mind the European historical context and responsibilities. While this is true for both the UN and NATO, the main difference is that the UN was established to serve the universal purpose of working towards global peace and NATO possesses a more restricted (while controversial) aim that – while being used for political and economic purposes – does not aspire to govern. Both do not influence the lives of citizens to such an extent as those of the integration of European nations.

[114] This status is exclusionary. It only applies to nationals, although a sort of replacement with more limited rights applies to non-nationals: civic citizenship (Bell, 2010). Irregular migrants do not enjoy any status of the sort, which is highly problematic, given their contributions to society and economy, as Mark Bell (2010) explains.

The global goals of the UN are, as a matter of scope, potentially too broad as themes of solidary action. I explained this in Chapter 3, where I argued that universal aspirations are – even in the face of shared global threats – probably too extensive for any solidary community to be possible. This does not hold for, say, the French-German friendship. Like the entire EU, the French-German friendship carries a historical burden, namely, in this case, generations of being archenemies; however, it does not feature an institutional framework like the EU. This does not mean that there may not be specific instances of French-German solidarity, just like there may be instances of "Southern EU" solidarity in light of perceived "Northern EU" economic domination. In sum, despite the discrepancy between the self-attribution of solidarity by EU institutions and the perceived reality, the EU as a political project is distinct from other intergovernmental institutions and, through its direct relevance to its citizens, provides a frame for assessing and implementing questions of solidarity. With this in mind, let me return to the questions about the EU just previously posed:

1. What is the role of the EU in both these small and large solidary communities? Couldn't they exist anywhere else as well?

First, the institutional reality of the EU provides a frame and a specific status for individuals as citizens or bearers of certain rights. While I argue that this alone does not provide a justification for solidarity, let us return to the three types of reasons that I have frequently referred to: instrumental, end-related and recognition-based. The first two types are straightforward albeit certainly context-dependent; we can think of instrumental reasons like personal gain, freedom of movement and residence, economic prosperity and greater potential for finding like-minded individuals in the EU. End-related reasons may be as vast as ensuring peace and acting out of historical responsibility and as specific as fighting against racial profiling by the police in EU member states. The third type is the crucial one that makes the difference between the EU and just any other context. By self-attributing solidarity to itself and by granting the legal status of EU citizenship to individuals, the EU created a locus of recognition that may or may not resonate with all its inhabitants (or those who possess

citizenship, at least).[115] With the written declaration of an intention to be in solidarity, the EU offers something the people in it can refer to and use as an anchor for legitimising their own communities and actions; this distinguishes them from those outside of the EU (even though they may share the same historical preoccupation and certain values). This limited locus is certainly not without problems because it creates an exclusive trait only available to some.

2. Why and how should one convincingly limit solidarity at the borders of the EU?

This second question is twofold in that it concerns both those solidary agents that may be considered to share "Europeanness" in a geographical sense but are not EU members and those further away towards whom there is arguably a historical responsibility for compensation. Regarding the former, there seems to be a conflict between the geographical limits of the EU and the need for inclusiveness for solidarity. Ideally, they should also be able to share the particular basis of solidarity, but lacking the legal privileges that the EU attributes, they currently do not have access to the shared locus of recognition. Currently, there is an imbalance towards those outside the geographical limits of the EU. The EU could therefore aim to include its neighbouring countries and provide access to these privileges. Even though there are continuously negotiations with those countries that may qualify as future member states of the EU, the intention behind assessing their suitability does not put emphasis on the question of whether their citizenry would potentially find cohesion and recognition within the union (but usually on economic and political questions such as the situation of corruption, rule of law and democracy in a country).

With regard to others that are further away, the answer to the question is different, particularly in the case of former colonies: Since there is a historical responsibility to compensate for injustice done during times of colonial rule as well as for the resulting inequality between the EU countries and such former colonies, I am convinced that the question is not primarily a matter of solidarity, but of justice.[116] The reasons are as follows:

[115] As Bauböck (2017) argues, the mere "fact of coercive subjection to a government may support a perception of shared interest in government responsiveness and accountability but is not a sufficiently strong source for horizontal solidarity among citizens" (pp. 90-91). He therefore proposes additional factors of citizenship on various levels that can create more encompassing relations of solidarity.

[116] For a review of strands of theory dealing with the question of global (postcolonial) justice, see Kohn (2013).

Firstly, the responsibility of descendants of former colonial rulers towards others makes it impossible to form a community of equals when it comes to demands of compensation, which is one of the prerequisites laid out in Chapter 3 (although symmetry of power does not need to be given). Furthermore, the historical burden of colonialism is not sufficiently addressed by actions of solidarity which are not enforceable. There needs to be a movement of compensating historical injustice. Solidarity is simply not enough in this case. It is for this reason that I consider the case of historical responsibility towards former colonies to pertain to the sphere of justice, not solidarity, therefore requiring a more formalized procedure. At the same time, I think that on the way to a just compensation there may be instances of solidarity with individuals or movements that fight for post-colonial justice. However, these should be considered a step on the way, not the goal or value itself, unlike the case of EU solidarity, which is to be understood as a permanent way of living together in the EU.

Other cases of required solidarity that do not touch upon the theme of colonialism (for example, between the EU and non-colonised countries or countries that are in a more equal position) will have to depend on the types of bonds, shared interests or goals of members of the potential solidary communities. If these are close, I think they may perfectly provide the basis for an experience of mutual recognition and successful solidarity, especially given the means nowadays to connect with people very far away and act together.

6.3 Summary: What Kind of EU Community?

In the last two chapters, I offered a variety of perspectives on the European Union that showed it is a worthwhile place for assessing questions of solidarity and that characterized the complexity of the European context in historical and spatial terms. With the criteria for communities of solidarity from Chapter 3 in mind, I aimed to discuss the EU in its capacity as a type of community with agents able to perform acts of solidarity, which this summary of the chapter should give a better overview of. But let me first summarize the contextual work I provided in these chapters.

My first step was to discuss some of the attributes associated with Europe, such as its cultural and scientific history. While these attributes do not necessarily presuppose antecedent traits that supposedly make up Europeans, such as ethnic or racial characteristics, I argued that they are still problematic and ambivalent, especially in light of the history of global European hegemony. Hegemonial aspirations are quite likely linked to the idea of universality that runs like a thread through many self-representations of Europe, be it of science, thought or religion. Depending on the type of universality one envisions, it most likely helped justify the colonialist conquest of large parts of the world. But even if such universality did not imply European superiority, as it did and continues to do frequently, its Eurocentric origin and its glossing over internal European differences are still to be met with suspicion.

This is especially true for the more recent European history, namely the responsibility for two world wars and the decline of global imperialism. This period was not only the climax of internal European struggle and animosity combined with a display of the most grotesque flip side of supposed European virtues but also the experience that Europe was unable to free itself from fascism without external help. Post-war Europe, then, as I argued, was characterized by a sharp East-West rift, with integration in the EU taking place in the globalised capitalist West. In this process, solidarity became an increasingly central term in treaties of the EU, which self-attributed and self-prescribed solidarity as a fundamental principle in the documents that constitute the EU's legal basis. After 1989, the EU expanded increasingly eastward, and its economic integration culminated in the eurozone, a project that continues to be subject to fierce criticism. A lack of democratic structures in the Union is often found faulty, and social integration has arguably not been able to correct for the shortcomings of the economic one. A further problem is the increasing isolation of EU borders from outside migration, poverty and war, as well as the question of how to characterize the relationship to those Europeans who are not part of the Union. The many diverging ideas for the EU's future show how divided its members are about the right way of handling the EU's problems and crises.

With all this in mind, I structured the last two chapters by four main factors that determine whether and how solidary communities can be conceived of in the EU and how they can and should be a way of bringing EU solidary agents closer despite the many different

views and opinions that prevail. The four factors are characterised by analyses of literature and treaty texts but complemented by a normative view on what they *should* mean for EU solidary communities:

1. What is the basis for the solidary relationship and action?

It is no news that Europeans struggle to find a shared basis for peaceful coexistence, and centuries of fragmentation and war confirm this. While it is also true that the EU is probably the most democratic and successful peace project for the region so far, those that advocate for something like a "European identity" comparable to a national one are arguably stretching the commonalities too far (for contributions to this question, cf. Bauböck, 2017; Jones, 2012). This is also seen in the more recent surges of nationalism in member states. In an attempt to characterize EU solidarity as an alternative set of social relations among EU agents, I discussed different conceptions of "Europeanness", concluding that such an idea of commonality should refrain from relying on antecedent traits. Instead, it should recognise diversity within the EU and consist of an open and inclusive attitude – including towards those that are not natives of EU territory – combined with the awareness of a historical responsibility the EU holds. This basis is more modest than the hopes of those defending a "European identity", but this is no constraint for my theory of solidarity. On the contrary, I argue that for a large community of solidarity, the solidary "project" should be very limited. Only in smaller groups within, the shared goal can be more comprehensive, when more specific commonalities are added to the general shared basis for solidarity.

2. How does the EU self-attribute solidarity?

This is a more descriptive question. The use of the term "solidarity" in EU treaties intensifies from the 1990s on both in frequency and centrality; this coincides with the development of the concept that integration can go beyond merely economic cooperation as well as with the central era of EU expansion. This shows that the EU attributed an increasingly fundamental role to solidarity as a human connection beyond institutionalised cooperation, but it should be met with a critical eye given the actual reality of those instances where solidarity is evoked in current EU politics.

3. Who is the solidary agent?

In my discussion of potential agents of solidarity in the EU, I came to the conclusion that political institutions (whether national governments or EU institutions) should not be considered suitable agents for solidarity, leaving only individuals and those associations that exist out of a limited shared goal and voluntary commitment as desirable solidary agents. In the EU, these agents should include both citizens and others living in the EU. The corollary of this view may at first sight seem like a rejection of political institutions, which it is not; on the contrary, institutions for governance are, I argue, fundamental for questions reaching *beyond* solidarity and requiring enforcement, such as matters of justice, freedom and equality. The problem of permitting governmental institutions to serve as agents of solidarity is, however, that they make it impossible to refuse being part of the solidary community, thereby turning out to be coercive.

4. What is the scope and type of the solidary relationship and community?

Lastly, I discussed the type and scope of potential solidary relationships in the EU. I argued that the historical responsibility towards Europe's "outside" and the need to ensure peace within Europe provide reasons for joining solidary forces. However, this is not enough to specifically limit the matter to the EU. In addition, the institutional setting of the EU provides a specific status of citizenship to its individuals, which is unique to the EU as a limited geographical and political space. It offers, I argue, a space for recognition by self-prescribing solidarity to itself in its legal framework. Thus, the EU adds a shared basis to communities of solidarity that exist within, on which I shall say more in the next chapter. Recalling the three types of reason for solidarity introduced in Chapter 3, instrumental and end-related reasons for solidary communities to join forces may exist in about any context where shared interests meet. They are also certainly present in the EU, for example, through mutual benefit of solidarity or the acknowledgment of a shared historical responsibility. The third type, reasons of recognition, can be facilitated through the specific space the EU offers. I further argue that this is not without problems, especially towards close EU neighbours, whose joining the EU should remain open to. Those nations or individuals "outside" that have claims for compensation due to historical wrongdoings by EU members should, however, not be

regarded as potential members of solidary communities with the aim of fulfilling this specific historical responsibility due to the underlying inequality between them and EU individuals; rather, their claims should be treated as matters of justice. In other words, solidarity does not suffice in this case.

With these considerations in mind about the EU as a solidary community and the communities within, I move on to the next chapter, which is focused on acts of EU solidarity.

7. Acts of Solidarity in the European Union

Having discussed the European context as well as the agency and scope of solidary communities in the EU in the previous two chapters, it is the aim of this chapter to take a closer look at the EU with regard to its capacity and potential for solidary action. Recall the criteria I presented in Chapter 3 for an act to qualify as solidary, which constituted the second component of my definition of solidarity. First of all, it should be political; its matter should be of public concern, and it should aim to make a statement and be oriented towards change. Secondly, it should be non-coercive and voluntary to join the solidary community. However, once committed to the community, there is a duty to act in solidarity when necessary and possible.

In this chapter, I will start with a section on political matters of the European Union, in which I refer back once again to those matters that are generally considered political as well as those specific to the EU, discussing what action corresponding to them might look like. I then offer a normative account of what kinds of solidary acts we can ask of EU solidary agents. Lastly, I discuss some examples of actions that, according to my understanding of the term, do not count as acts of solidarity in the EU.

7.1 Public Spheres and the *Political* in the EU: A Typology

Political matters, as I defined them in Chapter 3, are those situations, patterns, structures or behaviours of concern to the public. This means, as I've argued, that certain acts that occur in the sphere of intimate personal relationships, such as domestic violence, are political matters just as struggles for higher wages are. In other words, a matter occurring in private places may certainly be of political concern. Those matters that do not constitute a general problem beyond the private sphere or evoke a structural concern are not political matters in my

definition and therefore should be excluded from the spectrum of matters and actions of solidarity.[117]

Returning to the European Union as a locus of political matters, I argue that my understanding of the political does not depend as such on a clearly limited public sphere. To put it differently, just to be relevant to the public as opposed to the private does not require a specification or demarcation of the respective public sphere. By different public spheres I mean two things. Firstly, they are units governed by the same political institutions and laws. In addition, they may possess further commonalities such as a shared history, language or culture – as do member states or the European Union as a whole. Secondly, these public spheres are places of action. As inspired by Hannah Arendt, the public is the realm where individuals can *act*, and since I conceive of solidarity as not only a relation but specifically an *expression through actions*, these actions happen in the public sphere, be it a regional, national, supranational or global one. Those who can act are the members of society, and they should all have access to the public sphere.

While my understanding of the political does not apply to different public spheres in distinct ways, there are naturally differences with regard to matters of solidarity that concern some public spheres more than others. For example, we can imagine a case in which individuals living in a certain country for a long time without possessing the respective nationality do not have the right to vote. In this example, the lack of voting rights might be perceived as unfair treatment under national law. If they voice a call for solidarity, it will likely be directed at the society of the country in which they live. Firstly, there may be others in the same situation; and secondly, there may be individuals who possess the status of citizenship or other means to improve the situation by complaining to their representatives, changing their voting behaviour or adapting other strategies of acting in solidarity, for example through public manifestations. They may also feel particularly responsible for acting in solidarity, because the injustice concerns others living within their society. This does not mean that other people from outside

[117] Those relationships that are not necessarily political according to this understanding but still evoke an impulse to act, are often better described by other concepts such as help, loyalty, friendship, etc., as I explained in Chapters 3 and 4.

the respective country are free from any possibility of expressing solidarity or may feel the urge to do so. Still, the situation concerns the people of certain public spheres more than others. This has mostly to do with the institutions, laws and customs that govern this space and that are responsible for the specific matter that calls for solidarity. In a different case, for example, where solidary action is called upon to end oppressive behaviour against women, it is (I suppose) an issue that finds resonance in more places independently of (institutional or territorial) boundaries. This second example may even be considered largely detached from these institutional boundaries in the sense that laws already forbid the oppressive behaviour against women in many places – though it occurs nonetheless. For this reason, it is important to add that allegedly unjust laws or specifically national practices are not the only factors that can define solidary matters with regard to a certain place; this can happen for historical reasons or out of social and cultural practices. Moreover, a solidary matter might apply to all public spheres equally. In short, some circumstances direct solidary action at more clearly delineated public spheres than others.

A look at the European Union can mirror the three purviews for solidary actions that we may discern from the examples above: (a) those that are not specific to the EU's public sphere; (b) those that are specific to the EU because of its institutional set-up; and (c) those that are specific to the EU (or a more roughly defined space that does not make membership to the union a specific prerequisite) for other reasons than institutional ones. These categories serve a clarificatory purpose about the kind of possible situations EU solidary agents might see themselves confronted with – frequently overlapping with often unclear borders. In any case, let me explain them by going into more detail.

(a): Firstly, there are non-EU-specific concerns of solidarity that may nonetheless motivate solidary action among some, many or all Europeans. Questions of far-reaching or even global relevance fall under this category. For example, racist thinking and behaviour unfortunately constitute a global phenomenon. They occur on a regular basis even though institutionally there are laws in place in many countries that forbid them. Acts of solidarity with those affected can range from speaking out against oppressive practices (cf. the Black Lives Matter Movement) to campaigning for better protection against these malpractices.

Although racism represents a global problem, this type of reprehensible action can and should trigger solidary responses in the European Union, as well as any other affected place. The Black Lives Matter Movement is an interesting example since – even while beginning in the United States – it spread to many countries beyond.

(b): The second category is about cases that concern the EU specifically as a matter of institutional set-up. In this category, we can think of an example that particularly concerns those living in the EU due to characteristics that apply to the EU as a political project. The case of asylum policy may help illustrate this point. Since the months sometimes referred to as the "long summer of migration" in 2015, there have been endless calls for and many acts of solidarity with regard to the arrival of millions of asylum seekers to the EU. In this situation, solidarity was and is called for, both with refugees seeking asylum (because, for example, war or poverty in their countries of origin are political matters of concern to all) and with those EU solidary agents receiving refugees at the border states of the EU who are often left alone to provide basic services to new arrivals. Acts of solidarity that can occur in this context can range from publicly denouncing wrongdoings and raising awareness, creating spaces for refugees to organise themselves and supplying them with material means to live autonomously where institutional structures do not suffice. Other options include activism in civil society groups in, for example, the places that are most overwhelmed with the arrival of refugees and require particular support.

Part of the asylum problem has been the infamous Dublin regulation which – as a matter of EU law – determines where an asylum application in the EU must be processed, namely in the first EU country the individual entered. This regulation is clearly unjust towards those member states that border the Mediterranean Sea and other highly frequented migratory routes because first entry into other EU member states is much less likely. If one applies my conception of solidarity here, solidarity could be a means to achieve a more just – and legally enforceable – asylum law. But currently, the recent initiative of the European Commission to reform and eventually replace "Dublin" is cynical when it comes to the term solidarity. With regard to the organisation of deportations, for example, it reads: "Return sponsorship is a new form of solidarity contribution that Member States can use to assist each other" (EC, 2020b).

The idea of this "solidarity contribution" is that those member states unwilling to take in refugees could compensate for their lack of commitment to the right to asylum by paying for and facilitating the deportation of other rejected migrants. This initiative deserves no praise. Firstly, it is common sense that solidarity cannot serve to facilitate the deportation of human beings as some sort of letter of indulgence to compensate for humanitarian failure. Secondly, solidarity is wrongly used in this context as a term to euphemistically characterize the potential role of member states in assisting a practice that is not solidary at all. If my conception of solidarity holds, member states are the wrong addressees (since governments cannot act in solidarity), and there are legitimate doubts that this use of the term solidarity would withstand any normative evaluation. It is also hard to see how the whole project is in line with the self-attributed value of solidarity in the treaties of the EU, such as in the TEU (cf. Chapter 5). Clearly, there needs to be a fundamental change regarding asylum policy through EU institutions – and this has become crystal clear since the onset of large numbers of refugees entering the Union.

But what role can solidarity play in a case like this? The calls and claims to solidarity to be made on the level of EU solidary agents can serve as a vehicle for bringing about a more just asylum system in the long run. For example, those individuals and organisations carrying the large burden of rescuing refugees in life-threatening situations and accommodating for their needs once they have entered the EU may receive solidary support from those that have been less affected as long as the bigger picture, to create a more just asylum system, remains in sight. This includes raising awareness and publicly defending activism that happens elsewhere. The kind of solidarity needed here has to do with unjust asylum laws within the boundaries of the EU. It therefore applies specifically to those living in the public sphere as defined by the EU, which can act in solidarity in order to pave the way for a fairer asylum system.[118]

[118] Calls for solidarity are also voiced towards displaced people and refugees in the first place, for example as matters of global inequality, historical responsibility and/or humanitarian emergency – plus, they are frequently deprived of their right to asylum as stated by the Geneva convention. These calls are, I argue, combinations of type (a), (b) and type (c) cases because these calls not only are defined by the applicability of certain rules that delineate the corresponding public sphere (such as the deficient application of the 1951 UN refugee convention),

(c): The last category concerns instances that are directed at EU solidary agents for other reasons than those determined by an institutional setting. This category is clearly problematic, given that it delves into those contested categories like "Europeanness" (cf. Chapter 5), shared identity, common history, responsibility and the like. In the previous chapter, I showed how these supposed traits are difficult to sustain due to their underlying assumption of European (or EU) homogeneity as well as a frequently present core-periphery view towards the EU's "outside". Let me provide two examples for this category. For the first one, think of a call for solidarity with a German journalist jailed in Turkey, their imprisonment widely perceived as an attack on the freedom of the press through arbitrary detention. Now, institutionally, there is no specific reason for expressions of solidarity to be directed specifically at EU solidary agents, since freedom of the press is no factual reality in all EU member states either (cf. World Press Freedom Index, RSF, 2020). Also, the call might be issued toward any other individual anywhere in the world who is convinced of the importance to protect the freedom of press. Still, there may be a specific urge for EU solidary agents to act – but why?

The second example concerns a group of activists. Let us assume that they run a human rights NGO documenting injustice committed by their government against political opponents. Should their call for solidarity in the shape of donations, awareness-raising and political pressure for sanctions against the government find particular resonance in the EU? Or would it not make a difference to simply be global? And does it make a difference whether they operate in an EU member state, a close neighbour or a state far away?

Both examples, I think, *should* find particular resonance among EU solidary agents, even though there may not be reasons determined by institutional frameworks for them. This does not exclude the possibility, of course, that they will resonate with others outside the EU as well, but there are specific reasons that we can characterize as reasons of responsibility, if my understanding of solidarity and the European Union holds. The responsibility I refer to has two components. One is a historical responsibility, referring back to the discussion from Chapter 6 about Europe's past, its colonial history and its internal struggles and wars which

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but at the same time apply globally *and* to the EU as a specific place for non-institutional reasons. This will hopefully become clearer throughout the section on type (c) cases.

endow EU solidary agents with a particular responsibility for doing good. It applies both to internal and external calls for solidarity (see second example). It is arguably stronger internally, however, precisely because EU solidary agents should not jeopardize efforts made in the past in order to pacify the region and establish stable democracies and the EU.

The second type can be called the responsibility of privilege, namely the ability to act largely without fearing repression as well as possessing the material means to act in solidarity. This privilege – while not limited to the EU – is only enjoyed in a limited number of nations. Among them are many countries that make up the EU and are, at the same time, committers of many wrongdoings in the past. Therefore, the EU is in a particular situation of responsibility to use its privilege as, for example, in the form of its agents acting in solidarity.[119] Since one may wonder why the EU-specific "traits" and historical responsibilities should lead to type (c) cases of solidary action and not a different response such as charity or help, it is useful to remember the importance attributed to solidarity in the treaty texts (cf. Chapter 5). In them, solidarity is an explicit EU value of central importance, and it certainly entails a normative dimension: EU agents should act in solidarity. Let us remember that solidarity is also a less problematic response to the type of responsibilities I mention here than charity, since it attributes agency to all involved and does not put anyone at the mercy of another's will to give or act (like charity does). In other words, the texts of these treaties – the legal basis of the EU – formulate solidarity as a core value (cf. Chapter 5), meaning that it is a maxim for action in general (which in turn also implies that this should hold for type (a) cases).

Recall that I mentioned before that the distinction between (a), (b), and (c) is not mutually exclusive; some of the examples I introduced above may apply to several categories. This is not a problem per se for my normative argument as long as the case for EU-specific solidarity can still be made. Let me illustrate this by providing another complicated example that touches upon all three categories and shows how blurred the lines between them are.

[119] In this context, I should also refer once again to the historical guilt and frequently called-for duty for compensation in formerly colonized countries. These, I argue, are matters of justice and should pertain to the state, thus not directly constituting calls for solidarity. However, in order to bring about increased awareness and apply pressure for justice to be achieved, solidarity may well be a suitable means.

Think about the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Once the pandemic reached the European continent, some EU member states were much harder hit by soaring numbers of infections and deaths than others. The lack of mutual support within the EU was frequently lamented as a lack of solidarity, but it might also be considered a type (a) case of lack of solidarity, meaning that it is independent from being located in the EU spatially and institutionally. Considering that the lack of (sufficient) solidary action continued throughout the course of the pandemic once it reached a global level, the issue became more saliently detached from the EU, but the early phase of spring 2020 exhibits traits of (b) and (c), too.

To elaborate, the pandemic was of concern to the entire planet from its very beginnings, and its initial spread was untouched by institutional boundaries. For this reason, it is difficult to morally justify why people in a country less hard hit like Germany should prioritize acting in solidarity with Italians rather than with Chinese. On the contrary, one could have argued that the severity of the situation should have been given priority over geographical proximity or joint membership in a political union. Even national boundaries seem of little use for determining who deserves solidarity once we consider that a single city or region may have experienced devastating effects of the virus as opposed to the rest of the country.

However, regarding national boundaries one can argue that the institutional setting of a nation-wide health system provides a suitable environment for coordinating the distribution of resources to the most affected places in a practical manner. Solidary action of type (b) could have been concerned with advocating for exactly this type of institutionalised distribution on an EU-wide level.

Since in my dissertation I assume a view on solidarity that is not primarily concerned with institutional politics of justice or distribution, what matters most is the public sphere of civil society agents and individuals and the way problems related to COVID-19 appealed to their calls for solidary action. It is in this context that it is worth recalling that the instinctive reaction to the first wave of infections largely connoted the assumption that compatriots would deserve priority in the effort to alleviate suffering and ensure a maximum number of survivors. This line of thought has received little questioning throughout the worst months of the first half of 2020, but morally it seems difficult to sustain. Given that COVID-19 represents a global

pandemic and is thus a threat to all, how can it be justified that the lives of fellow nationals are worth more than those of other countries? To reserve ventilators for potential cases in one country while people die due to the lack of equipment in another? The apparent answer is that a national health system represents the shared effort of the citizens of a state and thus justifies prioritizing those who contribute to it through their taxes (which does not hold for the EU). With regard to non-institutional action of solidarity, however, it is not necessarily EU-specific, if my understanding is correct. Think about expressing solidarity for the elderly who claim that they have been unjustly isolated during lockdown phases, participating in protests calling for state support of those who lost their jobs or campaigning for better wages for those fulfilling essential jobs during the pandemic. These are all solidary actions that apply to a broad range of different national and cultural contexts.

The typology of (a), (b) and (c) I sketched here has the purpose of distinguishing and ordering different matters and actions of solidarity to be performed by EU solidary agents. They are all of equal significance as a matter of normative desirability, and the distinction is most likely not something most solidary agents are conscious of or think about. These categories should, however, illustrate that there are matters that call for solidarity as an EU-specific concern and others that are independent of the EU.

Importantly, my central argument in these chapters rests on the assumption that in the EU there is a special normative force behind calls for solidarity. It exists both as a matter of self-ascription and self-attribution as well as of historical responsibility. Its potential lies in the hope for mutual recognition that can be found in solidary communities in the EU. EU-specific matters of solidarity that call for action as a matter of faulty or insufficient institutional design (b) provide an easy argument in favour of solidary action. The trickier cases are those that fall under (c) – if only partially. If a convincing case can be made for (c), it would provide a stronger force for my normative argument that EU agents should indeed be solidary agents. It would be a more comprehensive argument than just (b) because it would likely include solidary matters far beyond or completely untouched by any EU institutional connection. In other words, if there are cases that are not of direct institutional/political concern to EU solidary

agents but they still possess normative force, EU solidarity can stretch to matters that concern its "outside". I will devote the next section to this possibility.

7.2 An EU-Specific Duty to Act in Solidarity?

In this section, I offer some further detail about those acts of solidarity that concern the EU specifically. Namely, I will develop the argument that the EU's potential solidary agents have a specific duty to act in solidarity by virtue of being EU solidary agents. This is not to say that other acts of solidarity in the EU are inferior; they are simply easier to argue in favour of. If, for example, there is a specific wrongdoing caused by the existing political institutions within a certain space, it is more straight-forward to assume that at least some people living within will feel some responsibility to do something about it – at least those affected by the wrongdoing are likely to join forces. It remains an entirely different question whether non-affected individuals sympathetic with the aim of ending malpractices will express solidarity as well, a question that can sometimes – but by no means always – be empirically answered in the affirmative.

As previously suggested, there are two types of responsibility behind the EU-specific duty to act in solidarity: the historical responsibility and that arising out of privilege. Of course, both are unequally distributed – and even lead to inequalities and power imbalances – within the EU, as the previous chapter showed. As a matter of fact, it seems hard to sustain an argument that all EU solidary agents are bound by the same responsibilities precisely because of the lack of homogeneity within the EU. At the same time, insisting on the different responsibilities with regard to each member state may cause further fragmentation rather than help nurture the unifying and transformative force of solidarity. For example, if we take as a criterion which country has done more damage throughout its history than another one, we will find ourselves in debates about the severity of the holocaust, colonialism, inner-European wars and empires and so forth, which would likely not fulfil the purpose of finding

commonality.[120] The same goes for privileges; it would be close to impossible to determine the shared ability for solidary action of EU solidary agents when there are clear differences not only between different nations but also within each member state.

It is for this reason that I understand the responsibility for solidarity in the EU not as a matter of guilt or compensation. Such matters are certainly fundamental for achieving justice and thus of utmost importance, which is why we heavily rely on fair and democratic institutions to assess and enforce them. But I suggest that the responsibility to act in solidarity, both historically and in terms of privilege, should rather be understood as a mutual understanding, inspired by Jan Patočka's notion of a "solidarity of the shaken" (Patočka, 2010, p. 157). To Patočka, a student of Edmund Husserl, the individual experience of the Second World War and the direct confrontation with its horrors can foster shared understanding among all those who have been "shaken". A lack of this shared understanding and of the resulting solidarity can nourish new, future wars. Solidarity of the shaken means respecting the differences of the other and their fundamental rights for the sake of peace, which is a matter of life and death. For Patočka, the unifying idea is that war must never happen again.

If we take the responsibility of EU solidary agents to be one that resembles the solidarity of the shaken, the notion of a shared understanding needs to be given normative content to guide their actions. The fact that peace is indispensable, as Patočka argues, can be part of this content, and it can and should be complemented with other factors. This way, Patočka's notion can become particular for EU solidarity and the type of mutual understanding not simply applicable to any other context.[121] The normative content is not necessarily fixed and may change over time. Based on my argumentation of the last chapters, I could, for example, add to the requirement of peace that the kind of understanding required to guide acts of EU solidarity should not be exclusively based on the horrors of the Second World War but

[120] Of course, this does not mean that claims for compensation or struggles for justice about these responsibilities are less important or unnecessary. I just think they belong in the sphere of justice and do not help to foster solidarity. Demands of justice certainly vary for different member states, and some may be more "indebted" than others. To provide a recent example, the German economic dominance in the EU as a matter of benefiting disproportionally from the shared currency and certain economic practices is a matter of injustice towards other member states, not of solidarity (unlike what Habermas (2013) argues).
[121] This does not exclude the possibility that other societies have also developed a different type of "solidarity of the shaken".

should look beyond, for instance, by acknowledging the lasting effects that colonial rule and economic domination and exploitation continue to have all around the world. This way, global non-domination could become a further maxim for solidary action in the EU. One can proceed to find further content through a critical look at the current state of affairs in and outside of the EU's borders. For example, the dire conditions in the EU's refugee camps in Greece and elsewhere are not only a violation of fundamental rights; the fact that the camps are installed by actual EU institutions should incite EU solidary agents to express their solidarity with those suffering in these camps and fight for their closure. In this example, the actual institutional failure and the joint recognition of EU solidary agents that there is a violation of rights and values could serve as a basis of solidarity. This way, the necessity of preserving human rights could complement the need for peace.

If we consider solidary action in the EU to be guided by a shared understanding of certain necessities, we can establish a parallel to the idea of mutual recognition within solidary communities that I introduced in Chapter 3. Put differently, if solidarity in the EU can result in acts that express such a shared understanding, it may be a source and expression of mutual recognition. Such recognition gives a reason to act in solidarity beyond specific shared interests and individual benefit (cf. Chapter 3).

Patočka's idea of solidarity, which in its original shape was supposed to form a basic societal understanding with which to reach across different political camps, brings along the limitation I analysed in my conceptional Chapter 3 regarding the size and scope of solidary communities. Namely, I defended a view in favour of a limited consensus of goals and acts of solidarity when it comes to large and diverse communities of solidarity. I argued that due to dangers like inner-group domination of fractions within one solidary community, large solidary communities should have a clearly limited aspiration for what precisely they aim to achieve through solidarity. The actual impact that can result from an EU-specific type of solidary action that is limited to, first and foremost, preserving peace and basic human rights may seem restricted. However, the EU would already be a better place if basic human rights were respected everywhere. In any case, even a limited aspiration of EU-specific solidarity constitutes an important basis for more comprehensive inner-EU solidarity.

If there is a basic EU-specific type of solidarity that all EU solidary agents should share, it may be rather limited, but no less important. It may suffice to keep the EU out of war or inhibit gross violations of human rights, but it will be insufficient for the more specific political struggles that any society needs to fight permanently. For these kinds of struggles, we can conceive of many solidary communities within the EU solidary community to complement the basic, EU-specific understanding of solidarity. For instance, an EU solidary movement against ethnic discrimination would build upon the EU-specific solidarity and expand it to serve the purpose of its particular political goals. Of course, not all EU solidary agents will be motivated to be part of each of the inner-EU solidary communities, and sometimes these communities will compete with each other. However, they should share, with the basis of the "solidarity of the shaken", the EU-specific recognition and mutual understanding that, for example, peace is to be preserved and human rights are to be protected and defended. To put it differently, the EU-specific duty to act in solidarity that arises out of the mutual understanding and recognition that peace and human rights are strictly necessary leaves space for more specific communities of solidarity within the EU public sphere – across and beyond it.

One could legitimately argue against the picture I presented thus far that even though there are violations and deficiencies with regard to basic EU-specific solidarity, the need for peace and respect for human rights is, in large part, recognised and in place. Why then is the perceived general mood one of profound dissatisfaction with the EU and solidarity in the EU? Fragmentation, rather than unity and shared aspiration, seems to dominate the public image of the EU. It is a complex question that certainly touches upon many different reasons for individuals: a lack of perceived reciprocity, a general feeling of uncertainty in the world, growing economic inequality that correlates with societal rifts and so forth. Going back once again to the question of political institutions and their role in encouraging and/or discouraging solidarity in many ways can offer insights about this question.

7.3 Another Look at Political Institutions

At this point, I return once again to the question of political institutions and their role in solidarity. As I previously argued, political institutions cannot be considered satisfactory agents of solidarity for a variety of reasons: they cannot experience mutual recognition, they are not unified agents (even though they may represent a democratic majority), and they are not free from coercion, all of which go against the idea of solidarity. They are not open for anyone to join and leave as they please and are thus clearly exclusive towards their "outside". This does not mean, as I wish to reaffirm, that political institutions are "bad" or to be considered inferior to solidary communities. There is no competition between both. I consider solidarity a vehicle to carry important needs, injustices or structural deficits to the institutional level; in order to fulfil this purpose, however, it must remain separate from these same institutions. One could characterise solidarity as a combination of relationships and actions that brings important issues from the "bottom up" for them to eventually become matters of institutionalised justice, right or freedom. Solidarity, if understood in this way, is the crucial social relation that forms society in a way that enables political action and, if used in normatively desirable ways, leads to progress. It is, indeed, an infinite task.

So why return to the question of political institutions in the EU once more? One reason is that they use the term "solidarity" frequently, sometimes in ways that attribute it to their own actions. In other words, while some uses of "solidarity" in the treaties of the EU are compatible with the view that it is a value to be fostered among civil society in the EU, there are many cases in which the concept implies that institutions in the EU have already acted in solidarity. Secondly, the common observation that there is a constant lack of solidarity in the EU despite the general commitment to peace and human rights offers a point of criticism to the view I have defended thus far, requiring me to take a further look at its assumptions. And lastly, previous scholarly work has implied institutional solidarity to be a possibility, if not an ideal type of solidarity. Ulrich Preuß (1999) states, for instance, that "solidarity is the kind of institutionalized mutuality which merges personal feelings of sympathy with the impersonal modern institutions of statehood and law" (pp. 286-7). Steffen Mau (2007) argues that modern

solidarity takes place on an institutional level, since institutions govern not only territory and administration but also "collective and individual welfare" (p. 131). Carlo Burelli's idea is to implement solidarity as a "top-down decision which will eventually generate feelings of solidarity" (2016, p. 21).

My dissertation thus far has provided a variety of arguments against the possibility of political institutions being agents of solidarity. And still, it makes sense to look at cases in which political institutions claim to be just that. Let me therefore analyse another recent example from the European Union and explain the ways in which it does not actually deserve solidarity as a label. There is a multitude of potential cases to choose from given that the term "solidarity" is used with such frequency, many times by EU politicians or representatives. Earlier in this chapter, I referred to the case of migration and asylum policy and the plea for "solidarity" in the deportation of refugees. There are ethical reasons for rejecting such use of the term, combined with the fact that the EU's political institutions are acting neither in unison for normatively desirable ends nor in solidarity as I conceive of the term (i.e., political expression and social relation). The example of asylum policy is a clear case where political institutions have duties of justice and human rights towards refugees (and do not fulfil them sufficiently), not of solidarity within the union.

The following example I chose for this section is different since it is not to be rejected directly out of normative concerns. It concerns a press release on new funds proposed by the European Commission destined for the EU Solidarity Fund, a support mechanism for member states affected by natural disasters. The Commission's suggestion to stock the fund with €823 million for natural disasters in Croatia and Poland as well as the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic prompted the following comment by the Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, Elisa Ferreira:

> Thanks to the EU Solidarity Fund, Member States and citizens can receive the support they really need, either in the wake of a natural disaster or during a health emergency. Today we have yet another important proof of what EU solidarity actually means, as the beating heart of the European project. (EC, 2020a)

Now, the fund can be considered a sort of joint action of EU institutions for when some union members are in need. Natural disasters are of concern to everyone (with some being more affected than others), and establishing a fund can be considered a statement that the union members stand up for each other in light of something unpredictable that could happen to each of them. Understood in this way, however, the Solidarity Fund has nothing EU-specific to it. Rather, natural disasters or health emergencies are of equal relevance to all humans and thus represent the rare cases that could actually motivate global solidarity (cf. Chapter 3 on the scope and size of solidary communities). While the Solidarity Fund is not exempt from some of the problems that political institutions bring with them when it comes to solidary action, one could reject the example for a different reason: the argument that all human beings ought to help each other as a matter of solidarity in disaster cases, relying on the very limited human solidarity that binds all. If we accept this argument, however, the EU Solidarity Fund could only pass a normative evaluation of the type I suggest as an example of solidarity if there were anything EU-specific to it. The fact that this is not the case cements its exclusionary character; there is no EU-specific element to natural disasters. Therefore, an imaginary Solidarity Fund for natural disasters would only count as solidarity if it were a truly global fund. In its current shape, the EU Solidarity Fund excludes the EU's outside with no justification and cannot be said to fulfil the requirements of the type of solidarity I envision.

From a political angle, I find it curious that the EU Solidarity Fund, one of the few official instruments relating to a supposedly central EU value, is limited to external disasters whose occurrence is out of the EU's control. Given that the EU Solidarity Fund only comes into action when natural disasters occur, a disillusioned observer could consider it a minimum consensus about the least contestable topic imaginable – making it an instrument that the EU can hardly gloat about as an example of solidarity.[122] It is better described as a commitment to helping each other as members of a shared political project, not an instrument of solidarity. Arguably, however, any binding EU instrument with the label of "solidarity" that would entail

[122] I made a comparable comment about the TFEU's "Solidarity Clause" in Chapter 5.

actual EU-specific political aims would immediately be a matter of controversy as shown by the points I made in explaining why political institutions are not suitable agents of solidarity.

In sum, this example reaffirms my conviction that solidary action cannot realistically be pursued by political institutions. But if this is true, what then is the role of political institutions when it comes to questions of solidarity? And why does it matter nonetheless that they value and foster solidarity?

For solidarity to exist and be expressed through action, certain preconditions need to be met. Solidary agents need to be able to act freely; they need to possess the means to do so and not be obstructed in their actions unless there are legitimate reasons to do so. These may be that solidary ends or actions are unconstitutional, with illegal or violent means, or that they entail infringements on the freedom of others (all this assuming that one is located in a democratic country). A corollary of this view is that political institutions can provide a setting that allows for solidarity, and they can even foster it actively. But they can also discourage it and contribute to a lack of solidarity in a society, particularly when it comes to the problem of pitting certain solidary communities against others. Many examples I previously mentioned show that this can happen when allegedly nationalist interests go against the interests of the European Union as a whole. The constant competition of national against shared interests that is so prevalent in the EU can therefore be an obstacle to encouraging solidarity among EU solidary agents.

On a more constructive note, political institutions can also foster a "climate" of solidarity and select their support for solidary communities and acts according to certain normative standards. This way, they can guide the normative evaluation that, as I explained in Chapter 3, makes some instances of solidarity desirable as opposed to others. Ways of fostering (civil society) solidarity (through political institutions) include commitments in constitutional and legal texts but also go beyond. Support for acts of solidarity could receive specific protection and/or funding. The only current initiative of the EU that contains mentions of "solidarity" and that I think could qualify as a builder of the type of solidarity I envision is the European Solidarity Corps, a volunteering programme for youth aimed "to foster solidarity in European society, engaging young people and organisations in accessible and high-quality

solidarity activities" (EC, 2020d). Funding is available for so-called solidarity projects. While this is a step in a promising direction, more could be done to encourage a more diverse set of potential solidary agents that may have very interesting ideas for joint acts of solidarity. The educational role of political institutions could also entail learning about the meaning and purpose of solidarity. These initiatives could go across and beyond the borders of the EU.

Another task of political institutions is to protect solidarity by preserving and creating conditions in which solidarity is possible. It is for this reason that values, rights and duties are important instruments for the institutional *legal* system: if they are respected and their breaches sanctioned, a society or societies as *solidary* systems can flourish. The same goes for the opposite dynamic: a solidary society strengthens the institutions of justice from the bottom up.

7.4 A Normative Account of Solidary Actions in the EU

It should follow from my argument until now that in the EU acts of solidarity, performed by EU solidary agents united in various types of solidary communities, do not require a very precise definition nor limitation. As long as they fulfil the requirements of solidarity as opposed to other related concepts and pass a normative evaluation, they count, whether they manifest themselves in the shape of public activism, written statements, financial support or other ways – for example, online or in formats that are yet to be invented. These requirements include possessing a statement character and the aim to provoke change. Their fulfilment is, of course, not always easy to assess. After all, a statement is easily proclaimed – even with regard to a cause that is without a doubt political and may pass a normative evaluation of the kind I suggested – but can still not be solidary. Further, a solidary action can occur and be considered without statement character by some observers but not by others. In other words, solidarity is easier proclaimed than assessed, and at the same time, a "statement" may not so clearly be identifiable as one. Similar concerns can be voiced regarding the aim to induce change. However, I think some degree of subjectivity about these two aspects is acceptable.

Still, questions remain around this understanding of solidarity in the EU. Most strikingly, the normative evaluation is likely to be a tricky and contested aspect. Some parts of it seem clear: EU solidarity can, but need not, be exclusively based on EU-specific themes, as I argued in this chapter. It should, of course, not inflict harm on others through violence nor infringe on their human rights. Additionally, while EU institutions and governments of member states cannot be agents of solidarity, they can foster it.

But can solidarity in the EU be *against* the EU as a political project? It can, if it can convincingly show the EU to work against its own self-proclaimed values and/or to be inherently unjust. But it has to propose a better alternative that change could bring about. In this way, sceptics of the EU as a project in its current shape who unite in solidarity to transform it are perfectly compatible with my understanding. It is also possible (and to be encouraged) that EU solidary agents unite in solidarity in support of the nationals of a (member) state whose government acts unjustly or immorally – even though this government is a member of the union and thus a constitutive part of the political project. Solidary communities do, in all cases, have to make a convincing case; a merely destructive type of community and action cannot qualify as desirable solidarity. Institutionally, if the EU takes its commitment to the value of solidarity seriously, this commitment will have to confront even harsh (if justified) criticisms coming from solidary communities within. Only through this possibility can solidarity be considered a truly functional democratic instrument of building improved social relations in the EU and reforming the union where necessary. Which types of actions cannot be considered valid forms of EU solidarity? Those that are built on un-solidary communities, and those whose actions are unethical.

Recall that solidary action, according to my definition from Chapter 3, is voluntary until one is committed to a community of solidarity, which in turn leads to the moral duty to act in solidarity. Importantly, this commitment does not result in the coercion of members into solidary action, just as their commitment is only valid for as long as they wish it to be. The agents' commitment is a voluntary one, and being a member of the solidary group makes them morally obliged to act where possible. This implies that it must be possible to reject acting in solidarity on an EU level even though there may be EU-specific matters that concern all. Just

as an individual is not entirely voluntarily a member of a nation state, an EU agent is not free to enter or leave the EU at any point. Further, each agent is (legitimately) coerced to abide by the laws of both the member state they live in and the EU. Being a member of the EU, however, does not make one a solidary agent, and committing to a solidary community and action should indeed remain up to each individual. At most, one can make an appeal to their ethical duties: EU agents that categorically deny any solidary action certainly do not fulfil their duty as good members of society and may feel sanctioned in other, if not legal ways as, for example, by lack of ever experiencing the mutual recognition solidarity brings about. In general, however, the idea should be to incentivize solidarity rather than sanction its lack.

7.5 Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the type of solidary acts that we can conceive of, given the assessment of EU solidary communities that I presented in the previous chapters. Given that solidary action, according to my definition, must be political, I discussed what this means for the European Union. Specifically, I argued that there are different types of political matters that may be relevant for the various public spheres EU solidary agents can find themselves in: those belonging to their member states, those being specific for the EU level and those being independent of either. It is perfectly conceivable for solidarity in the EU to exist with regard to all three types of matters. However, the ones specific to the EU are the ones that require a more detailed analysis. As I argued in the previous chapter, the EU provides an institutional basis for a shared public sphere to exist, especially through its particularities as compared to other transnational initiatives, namely the attribute of citizenship to its members. In a second step from this institutional scaffold towards a reason to unite and act in solidarity, I resorted to Patočka's concept of the "solidarity of the shaken" and transferred it to a notion of mutual recognition that can guide solidarity in the EU, especially in light of its history and the privileges its solidary agents possess by living in this space. I went on to argue that this EU-specific reason for solidarity may not be very far-reaching, and it should be complemented by

further, smaller solidary communities that are concerned with more specific aims. In a next step, I argued that while the political institutions of the EU cannot be agents of solidarity, they can actively foster it (and, as a matter of fact, they are committed to doing so through the treaties of the EU). Lastly, I touched upon some of the questions that arise when one is to normatively evaluate solidary actions in the EU; while these must be able to justify which wrongdoing they address and must not be violent nor infringe upon other individuals' human rights, they need not be specified much further. The requirements of provoking change and being of statement character will likely remain matters of subjective opinion.

This chapter concludes the second part of my dissertation. In the third, final part, I offer a final chapter and a conclusion to this dissertation. The former is a critical discussion of some of the dangers entailed by solidarity in the way I have conceived it some of which have been touched upon already. The latter's aim is to recapitulate the central theses of this dissertation, return to the questions that motivated me to write it in the first place and offer some further directions for future research.

Part III – Critique and Concluding Remarks

8. Difficulties Associated with Solidarity

In the last part of my dissertation, I aim to discuss the implications of my conception of solidarity in primarily two ways. Firstly, in the chapter at hand, I assess several problems and limitations associated with solidarity and attempt to defend my conception against some lines of criticism. In the following concluding remarks, I return to the bigger picture of this dissertation.

The concerns about solidarity that I will discuss cover not only corollaries of the way in which I presented it as a concept but also potential societal implications that may turn out to not be so desirable after all. These are not necessarily limited to the EU, and in fact, the EU as a space of "application" is not of foremost importance in this chapter. More precisely, I talk about three main concerns. The first is the problem of a large consensus in solidary communities in general, which I have already hinted at throughout this dissertation. Next, I return to the question of a suitable basis for solidary communities. Although my dissertation up to this point is somewhat critical of relying on a shared identity for the purpose of solidary association and action, I find it productive to engage with the widely debated and rather contested topic of identity politics. I discern how (a certain understanding of) identity politics clashes but also intertwines with solidarity, thus expanding the question of recognition. I also address a contradiction that I find arises when comparing solidarity and identity politics. Lastly, I offer a short digression into the misuse of the term "solidarity" and sketch out some consequences of accepting solidarity as a central element for social cohesion. This chapter, while certainly suffering from a US-American and European perspective, is not only concerned with the EU and can be considered to deal with conceptual and political challenges more generally.

Borrowing from the language of carpentry, it is the aim of this last part of my dissertation to break some of the edges that become apparent from previous chapters, as well as to open new paths for future projects that study solidarity. For these, I will offer an outlook in my conclusion to this dissertation.

8.1 The Risk of a Large Solidary "Consensus"

In both parts I and II of my thesis, I refer to the problem of a large solidary consensus, which I understand as an overly ambitious project or matter of solidarity, particularly in large communities. The first concern I address is that a large group of individuals, combined with an ambitious requirement to act in solidarity on a number of issues, will likely possess a limited readiness to act as a matter of empirical motivation (e.g., beyond a nation state or occupational group). Secondly, I argue that a very demanding set of issues for a solidary community is also problematic as a matter of desirability, especially in large communities. The problem is twofold. There is the risk of diverging ideas about how to express solidarity becoming neutralised because the community may display an apparent homogeneity towards its outside. Additionally, there is the risk that loud fractions will dominate less powerful ones within the community (a theme I will elaborate on in the next section). Especially due to the frequently informal modes of organisation, some solidary agents may as a result feel "stuck" with representatives who benefit from or exploit the dynamics of a solidary project.

In the previous chapters, the normative consequence I drew out of these thoughts was that the larger a solidary community, the smaller the solidary project should be. In my analysis of the European Union, I explained this further; I argued that a narrow but open understanding of "Europeanness" (as I define it) should provide an admittedly not so ambitious solidary basis for the EU. This basis can then be complemented by more ambitious solidary projects in the EU that are based on a further shared basis and solidary matter.

A corollary of this view is that I (implicitly) advocate for small-scale solidarity: more demanding goals and a stronger shared basis are not only more likely to be successful, but also

less prone to the problems mentioned above, which are frequently found in large groups. These requirements are easier to fulfil in a smaller (and potentially more homogenous) community. Many solidary communities in parallel, my initial argument goes, are perfectly compatible with each other in coexistence and are desirable since they enhance social cohesion in general and their members find recognition within. Let me provide an example to illustrate what I think the advantages are. Think about gender equality. Many solidary communities with their own specific aims – for example, equal pay, same-sex marriage, gender quotas for companies or working towards an end to cat-calling – can perfectly co-exist. Each one of them may be based on a concrete project (even on a very small scale), but even though they may not agree in all details, they are somehow united on a larger scale as, in the example case, through the broader goal of gender equality. On an even larger scale, one could argue, those that fight in favour of gender equality are in a very loose community of solidarity with those who fight for equality without specifying which type. In this example, the way I think about the coexistence of small, medium-sized and large-sized communities of solidarity is that smaller ones function in a more dynamic manner and can usually rely on stronger relational bonds. The larger ones, although they are prone to the dangers above, can then serve as more general vehicles for social cohesion through the visibility and critical mass they enjoy.

Depicting large-scale solidarity as prone to the dangers I outline above implies that small-scale solidarity is suitable for more radical, faster action and could thus be interpreted as preferable to the former. This is problematic for several reasons; in particular, pursuing predominantly small-scale solidary projects may create destructive opposition among ever smaller and more scattered solidary communities. In fact, even if a solidary community remains open to those who wish to join from its outside, there may be a risk of arriving at many fragmented communities of solidarity if the scale becomes too small. For example, if fundamentally different ideas about a similar problem prevail within a solidary community which fights for better working conditions in a factory, there may be a temptation to split into smaller communities. If some think a strike is the way to achieve this, and others think that as many workers as possible should resign to harm the company, fragmentation may occur. Splitting does not usually further the goal and may actually decrease the effects of all efforts (I

will get back to the problem of fragmentation in the next section). Conversely, as I have argued thus far, the goal of solidarity is the discovery of commonality and thereby the luting of fragments in the first place. Further, if small-scale solidary communities turn out to be in competition with each other, some less vocal or powerful communities may fall prey to the dominance of others and not manage to build a strong enough basis for political change. This, in turn, may decrease their feeling of recognition and motivation to act. Lastly, small-scale solidarity may not be able to make use of the transformative power that is commonly associated with large mass movements.

With these doubts in mind, how can solidarity, as I understand it, still be a desirable and useful principle for political change and social cohesion? Let me start by acknowledging that assessing the success and desirability of any case of solidarity will most likely remain a question of balancing the benefits of small versus large solidary communities. It is hard to deny that both types are necessary and possess different advantages and problems. The main criterion to determine whether either case is a success, I contend, will remain, to some degree, subjective even when checked by the evaluative step I've put forward throughout my previous chapters to assess cases of solidarity. Glossing over the fact that some instances of solidarity are clearly more desirable than others and that there will be disagreement about them will not help counter the concerns I have voiced so far even though it may be tempting to do so in order to avoid having to declare some kinds of solidarity wrong or bad. How then, can we evaluate solidarity?

Recall that my conception requires solidarity to be non-coercive, communities to be inclusive and joining and leaving a community to be voluntary. While this already rules out many morally reprehensible cases of self-proclaimed solidarity, the step of evaluating the remaining cases for their ethical value remains complex and cannot be done according to a simple formula. However, given the objections to some types of solidary communities that I raise above, some thoughts on both how these relate to the criteria I suggest for solidarity and to the evaluative step may be helpful.

Firstly, we may question a type of solidarity that allows for such strong internal power imbalances that some members' points of view are oppressed or they see themselves forced to

split. This would probably count as a coercive type, even though it is, of course, difficult to determine where coercion begins and where phenomena like peer pressure, group think or persuasion end. A similar argument could be made about competition; while, of course, solidarity exists in opposition to something or somebody else in many cases, competition with similar initiatives is not really a desirable trait of solidarity. After all, can one still claim to be a solidary agent with a clean conscience, if one expressly denies solidarity to other solidary communities that fight for related, albeit not the same ends?

Beyond these worries about solidary "conduct", my main argument about dynamics of solidary communities and actions has to do with the agents' expectation to gain recognition. Solidarity, the way I understand it, is usually not explicitly institutionalised, and its membership is fluid. Also, its aims are many times quite general, and acts of solidarity are not determined by an official code of conduct. Unlike a political party, for example, a solidary community is not forced to decide on a specific political programme nor to allow or permit only certain types of action. There is usually no spokesperson or representative in a solidary community. Recall that solidarity is a relation, not an institution, and its communities are generally not to be understood as such. This depiction of solidarity is, I argue, confirmed by observations of empirical examples; because of its properties, solidarity is not as prone to the power dynamics that exist in institutions like parties, political organisations or interest groups. This may have to do with the fact that there is not much to gain by dominating a solidary community, such as social status, money or political power. But there may be something different to gain: only by acting in solidarity in a respectful manner towards other members of the community can agents experience the recognition and cordial feeling that make solidarity desirable for individuals to engage in. If some agent introduced opportunistic or authoritarian behaviour in a solidary community, they would change the dynamics of the group to an extent that recognition would no longer be experienced by any group member. Since this is what really distinguishes solidarity from mere instrumental relations with others, individual attitude for solidary action is a central argument to bring forward to counter the warnings about the dangers solidarity can entail. This solidary attitude is a matter of normative evaluation, meaning that those agents who breach it do not engage in a desirable type of solidarity. But it is also a

matter that gives reason to engage in solidarity in the first place. Returning to the initial question of a large consensus, I therefore conclude that even from an individual perspective, more ambitious solidary projects in smaller communities make sense (and less ambitious ones for large communities); individually, there is more recognition to be gained if one is involved more deeply and personally, which is more likely to be the case in small-scale solidarities. The advantage of a large-scale project, then, remains that with more people, more visibility to the matter can be achieved and the potential for political change might be higher.

Regarding this last point, let me add some thoughts on the power of large-scale solidarity. What we consider to be a powerful type of solidarity depends largely on our understanding of power. Is it the effect solidarity has in terms of political change or the individual recognition its agents experience? Both are legitimate criteria, and they need not be mutually exclusive. Amy Allen, in an Arendtian spirit, suggests looking at solidary power as joint action that is never individual but collective by definition. She writes:

> The power that arises out of such reciprocal commitments to act in concert, I call solidarity. Insofar as the account of solidarity that can be culled from Arendt's work rests on such revisable commitments and on the concerted action that grows out of them, it represents a great advance over accounts that equate solidarity with repressive identity categories. (Allen, 1999, p. 113)

According to my interpretation, Allen finds power to lie in joint action as such, and to her, this is what constitutes solidarity. She separates the question of power from categories like identity which are apparently more binding and therefore potentially repressive.

But is action really enough? My own conception differs from this understanding insofar as I find that beyond the collective power of action the individual experience of recognition matters. Recognition is part of the social relation solidary agents share as well as the potential improvement for everyone's situation if solidarity is successful. I nevertheless find Allen's understanding of solidarity insightful: without the need for any reference to the size or scope of the solidary community, acting together in solidarity means power. Small-scale and large-scale solidarity are likely to be powerful in different ways. Some solidary communities may enhance the agents' experience of recognition that empowers them through acting

together with others, while other communities may have more far-reaching and powerful political consequences. In her understanding, Allen seems to detach the individual perspective and experience from solidarity, at least when defined by one's identity. I think that this question is more complex as the controversial and timely debate about identity politics and the way in which solidarity relates to it shows. Discussing it is the theme of the next section.

8.2 Identity Politics, Recognition and Solidarity

In this section, I examine identity politics and solidarity. It is a topic that could receive much more attention than I am able to devote in this chapter given that both terms are fundamentally associated with struggles against oppression. They are also frequently used in the same context or social movement, although critics would argue that they present different goals for social cohesion and work with normatively distinct propositions for collective action. Both have also received renewed attention in public discourse throughout the recent years and are understood in a variety of ways. Solidarity, as I illustrated in various examples in previous chapters, finds frequent and very positively connoted mention among both progressive and moderate (and even right-wing) voices as an ideal for the way people should live together in society, even while it sometimes seemingly serves as a wildcard for lack of institutional accountability or is misappropriated as a term.

Identity politics, on the contrary, was already fiercely discussed in feminist theory of the 1990s. Nowadays, the term evokes stark reactions in political discourse, especially from the political Right. At the same time, it is by no means agreed upon what exactly it means. One rather general definition of identity politics depicts it as:

> a wide range of political activity and theorizing founded in the shared experiences of injustice of members of certain social groups. Rather than organizing solely around belief systems, programmatic manifestos, or party affiliation, identity political formations typically aim to secure the political freedom of a specific constituency marginalized within its larger context. (Heyes, 2020)

These social groups are frequently determined by questions of gender, "race", ableness or class. Identity politics is concerned with the representation and recognition of the rights of the disadvantaged, and its emergence has enabled valuable debates and an awareness for structures of discrimination and oppression that reaches far into the moderate political spectrum. At the same time, identity politics receives criticism – and not only from conservative voices, which are to be expected. Moderate and left-wing voices, to different extents, agree that the visibility and recognition of structural and multi-layered discrimination against and oppression of some groups of society should be a priority. However, the controversy traditionally centres about the basis for collective action, namely its expression in terms of identity. Identity politics have been criticised since the 1990s for possessing divisive currents and for splitting society into fragments of ever-more specific groups of the marginalized, hindering constructive dialogue or distracting from issues of economic inequality (cf. Allen, 1999; Dean, 1996; Haider, 2018; Rorty, 1998).

In conjunction with "political correctness", another politically laden term, identity politics has recently evoked concerns outside academia about the increasing prevalence of a so-called "cancel culture" that allegedly threatens the freedom of speech and opinion, especially in the United States but also in some European countries. One public expression of this concern was the *Letter on Justice and Open Debate* written in July 2020, signed by numerous academics and public figures such as Noam Chomsky and Gloria Steinem, which – while acknowledging that many debates have been necessary – states the worry that it has become "all too common to hear calls for swift and severe retribution in response to perceived transgressions of speech and thought" (Various, 2020). The letter initiated a long-lasting debate. One disputed issue was the timing of the letter's publication, which was unfortunate given that many voices previously cancelled for decades were finally being heard in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement. Others argue that the phenomena the letter describes can hardly be considered to amount to a "culture" that oppresses freedom of speech and that the alarmist rhetoric is inappropriate. In the remainder of this section, I will offer some thoughts on the debate about these claims and relate them to my conception of solidarity.

Once again, I will mainly be concerned with the relational aspects in both and argue a productive conception of either can profit from engaging with the criticisms about the other.

Recall my rejection of antecedent characteristics as a basis for solidary communities. If this holds, the most substantial criticism of identity politics is worth discussing: Does it hinder political struggles by splitting people into groups that can no longer form alliances and collective movements? Asad Haider's insightful book (2018) explains how this problem with identity politics was already identified by scholars like Judith Butler and Wendy Brown in the 1990s (long before identity politics became a concern of mainstream public debate) and comes to the following conclusion: groups defined along the lines of identity are actually forced to formulate their political demands in terms of inclusion into a structural capitalist norm, rather than criticizing and overturning the structure as such. He writes: "The framework of identity reduces politics to who you are as an individual and to gaining recognition as an individual, rather than your membership in a collectivity and the collective struggle against an oppressive social structure. As a result, identity politics paradoxically ends up reinforcing the very norms it set out to criticize" (Haider, 2018, p. 24).

This problem, Haider argues, is actually contrary to what the members of the socialist activist group "Combahee River Collective" (CRC) had in mind when they coined the term "Identity Politics" in the 1970s in what they envisioned as a revolutionary practice. Namely, the CRC expressed doubts that "a socialist revolution that is not also a feminist and anti-racist revolution will guarantee our liberation" (as quoted by Haider, 2018, p. 7). Looking back, CRC founding member Barbara Smith confirms this:

> What we were saying is that we have a right as people who are not just female, who are not solely Black, who are not just lesbians, who are not just working class (...) We didn't mean that if you're not the same as us, you're nothing. (as quoted by Haider, 2018, p. 8)

If the intentions of the CRC and other early advocates for identity politics were such, what has happened to this idea and its original purpose to alert us to different dynamics of oppression that exist *within* an ongoing (class) struggle? It seems to have become a notion that increasingly accompanies discourse that defends individualism and hinders an overarching shared aim for

structural change. Indeed, it is the very structure of the state and the economy that the struggles of identity aim to integrate into and find representation in (Haider, 2018).

At this point, several aspects I touch upon overlap with my discussion of solidarity, and I find that they can help clarify the problematic aspects of solidarity I have encountered as well as offer insights into the debate on identity politics.

I will start by discussing the role of the shared relational basis of a solidary community in comparison with one based on identity. Antecedent traits are, I argued, exclusive towards others who wish to join a determined solidary community. I also referred to the work of Tommie Shelby (2005), with whom I agree that constructing a collective identity based on antecedent traits risks overlooking fundamental differences within the community, such as class, gender or other categories of identity some members may or may not share. Lastly, there is no reason why identity understood as a categorisation along the lines I indicated should produce only one shared consensual idea about how to end oppression or unjust practices. On the contrary, it raises concerns about potential power imbalances within such a group. Those with the most power or loudest voice, the worry goes, may dominate the community and steer action in a direction that suits them and their own interests best.

It would be wrong to equate identity with antecedent traits. Identities are largely subject to change, and they are mostly dependent on political structures and experiences, such as the shared experience of oppression (or recognition or privilege). In fact, there can be little doubt that one's identity is deeply complex and unique, as the notion of intersectionality (cf. Crenshaw, 1989) shows, according to which our experiences are multidimensional (for example as women, as lower class, as disabled or as white). The problem is not about possessing identities and sharing these with other but how the commonalities that arise out of shared identities are used to position oneself in a society with others. Organising politically along the lines of identity may bear the danger of differentiating too much and too little at the same time since each one of us possesses a multitude of identities and our individual combination is what makes us different from the others (although our experiences may intersect). For example, as a lower-class man of colour, I might not necessarily find the most recognition in a community of other people of colour if they are mostly very wealthy. However,

in an association of lower-class white people that is defined as such, I will not be able to belong even though my political struggles may overlap with theirs. The worry about identity as a basis for solidary communities therefore remains if it is exclusionary: it does not allow for perspectives from the outside because of a supposedly thick bond that joins members together (whether these are equivalent to antecedent characteristics or not) while at the same time glossing over potential internal differences. Furthermore, the similarities within identity groups are usually factors one can hardly influence directly, such as one's gender, skin colour, ethnic group and so on. This lack of taking intersectional experiences into consideration would mean that members construct the idea of a thick bond where there is not necessarily one.

The pitfalls for certain understandings of identity politics I mentioned so far curiously resemble the previous section of this chapter, in which I discussed the risks of an overly large apparent consensus for action in solidary communities. This time, the argument develops in the opposite direction. Previously, I voiced the concern that an overly large solidary consensus about what to act upon and how risks disregarding different positions of power and influence within the community, reinforcing structures of power and being prone to the marginalisation of some. As a consequence, I even advocated for small-scale solidarity, at least in cases in which large-scale solidarity would be incapable of avoiding those risks. But is this not just a different way of advocating for the very fragmentation which I criticise now? In this section, after all, I then go on to argue that some identity-based communities can foster fragmentation. How can we make sense of a picture in which fragmentation or differentiation is simultaneously undesirable and necessary?

My (short) solution to this dilemma is to look back at the meaning of identity politics as articulated by the CRC. For political change to truly be for everyone, it seems, the members of the Combahee River Collective required identities to be *seen* and taken seriously. It is in this understanding that Iris Marion Young's criticism of a perceived homogenous public that forces the assimilation of diverging groups can be of help. According to Young, it is necessary to recognise group differences and the types of oppression they experience (Young, 2011). There is no need, however, for an exclusionary understanding of identity to *become* the solidary matter

and/or the prerequisite for being a solidary agent.[123] Instead, it may very well serve as a means to recognising those oppressive and unjust practices that are indeed political and concern *all*, whether they share the affected identity or not. This way, the *unjust practices* can become matters of solidarity without being stripped of their particular relevance to one or several marginalised groups. As a consequence, the solidary community can remain open and act in the interest of those individuals who hold those identities without being restricted to them. Returning to the theme of identity politics, I think it may help to look at it this way; there is little to object to it as a way of finding mutual recognition in shared experiences. Problems associated with a lack of recognition of one's identity are real and severe, and although, for example, a trans woman of colour and a white trans woman may experience very different forms of oppression and an unequal distribution of privileges, their identity as trans women connects them and makes it important that they find (exclusive) spaces in which they can discuss them, find empowerment and vocalise political demands. The political issues they (or others) deduce from these shared experiences, however, are ideally acted upon in an open way that allows for others to join in.

The distinction between solidary matters and the experiences that may give rise to them shows some parallels to the debate about recognition and redistribution between Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth (Fraser & Honneth, 2003). In particular, this observation concerns solidary matters as different kinds of struggles for recognition. Whereas Fraser suggests regarding both recognition and redistribution as fundamental, "mutually irreducible dimensions of justice" (p. 3), Honneth defends redistribution as a "subvariety of the struggle for recognition" (ibid.), recognition serving as an "overarching moral category" for claiming rights, "cultural appreciation" and "love" (ibid.). According to Fraser's understanding, redistribution is to be seen as primarily concerning the dimension of economic *class*, while socio-cultural *status* requires the dynamics of recognition (p. 50). Both dimensions are interconnected in different ways, depending on the society, and constitute a "perspectival dualism" (p. 60). On the

[123] Kwame Anthony Appiah (2002) argues that "most social identities, especially of historically subordinated groups, have norms of solidarity: 'Because I am an L,' an L will say, 'I should do this thing for that other L.'" (p. 283). This understanding of solidarity makes the social identity the basis of membership to a community of solidarity rather than the agreement that the historical subordination Appiah refers to amounts to wrongdoing. In my understanding, this would not be an entirely desirable type of solidarity as it would not allow for non-members of the identity group to also express their urge to join and act in solidarity.

contrary, Honneth rejects a gap between "'symbolic' and 'material' aspects of social reality, since, on the assumptions of a theory of recognition, the relation between the two can be seen as the historically mutable result of cultural processes of institutionalization" (p. 113). A corollary of Honneth's view is that injustices around material distribution should also be seen as the results of a lack of recognition.

An approach that can encompass the very different injustices and experiences of oppression individuals have reason to fight against both in theory and practice seems to me a good path to choose. Returning to the question of matters of solidarity, there is no need to conceptually separate or rank different injustices or malpractices; they can all be matters of solidarity and neither need to define the composition of a solidary community in an exclusionary way. If we understand recognition as a need individuals and communities have regarding many societal dimensions, it is hard to see why one should distinguish between questions of identity, status or class. Once they can be conveyed to be of political significance, they can turn into matters of solidarity. Solidarity can then be the means to struggle for a given type of recognition that oppressive or unjust structures impede; further, it can provide recognition through the very experience of jointly acting in solidarity. This second aspect applies to an entire solidary community even if not all its agents are potential recipients of the recognition that is being fought for. Put differently, solidarity is a way of fighting for the political change necessary to grant recognition to those that deserve it while at the same time allowing for an additional type of recognition by virtue of offering the joint experience of solidarity. The second type of recognition is just as crucial, as it is the one that makes agents find allies in society even beyond their own sphere of experience. It seems a hindrance to me to defend an exclusionary type of solidarity that grants some of the first type of recognition but at the cost of possibly losing the latter by strictly separating solidary agents by identitarian criteria of membership. After all, recognition requires someone else to recognise us, and if we cut potential ties to that *other*, it is unlikely that they will grant us the recognition for which we yearn. All experiences of suffering, oppression or injustice merit presenting themselves as matters of solidarity. What is decisive in assessing them is whether they and their aims fulfil the norms desirable solidarity we attribute to them.

As the discussion about identity politics shows, the concerns I present deal with problems that are not limited to the debate about solidarity. In fact, they receive a much more polemical discussion in quarrels about identity politics. These debates are connected to solidarity because they raise many questions about solidarity's potential, such as how to avoid the oppressive dynamics that made the term "identity politics" necessary in the first place. Since solidarity existed before identity politics both as a concept and as an activist maxim, something about it must be insufficient or inadequately theorised because a truly solidary society should take into account the differences in experience (and not only in rights) that people hold. So far, it has apparently been a difficult task to realize projects of solidarity that actively recognise different identities while not allowing them to rely on an exclusionary basis for membership to the community (in cases where they tend to).

Thus far, my examination of the concerns about solidarity was entirely focused on identities *within* one given society. Within this scope, I agree with Judith Butler's quote from a recent interview:

> We are equally dependent, that is, equally social and ecological, and that means we cease to understand ourselves only as demarcated individuals. If trans-exclusionary radical feminists understood themselves as sharing a world with trans people, in a common struggle for equality, freedom from violence, and for social recognition, there would be no more trans-exclusionary radical feminists. But feminism would surely survive as a coalitional practice and vision of solidarity. (Butler, 2020)

What my examination lacks so far is a reference to the supranational sphere. Based on my analysis of the European Union and the role of solidarity in it, let me offer my perspective on identity beyond a single (national) society, which I think shows a further weakness if one conceives of identity as a criterion for membership to a solidary community. The question arises: How is it determined which types of identities deserve to provide matters of solidarity?

When applied to a national context, the category of identity is, as I discussed in Chapter 4 and as many progressive voices would agree, problematic. It is frequently accompanied by the idea that one national identity is superior to others and thereby also provides the cornerstone of exclusionary discourse towards outsiders. In the EU, it seems that one of the

core issues that prompts fragmentation is the lack of consistent exclusion of member state-specific identitarian discourses from EU-wide discourse. In fact, the impression I shared in Part II of my dissertation that economically the EU works in the spirit of "every man (i.e., national community) for himself" can serve as an example; it has repeatedly revealed ugly nation-specific prejudices in times of crisis (about "lazy" Mediterraneans or "Nazi" Germans, for example). Considering that the EU is currently a space in which national communities mostly struggle for recognition against one another, it would be hard to find ways in which the union could end up as a joint political and social project. It is precisely by escaping an identitarian rhetoric that agents in the EU were and will be able to find commonalities across national identities and to form solidary alliances. For this reason, my entire conception of solidarity rejects antecedent traits (and, to a certain extent, national or ethnic belonging) as a foundation for EU solidarity and instead suggests focussing on the common experience, interests and duties EU solidary agents share. Importantly, this does not mean that questions of (national) identity are irrelevant; they should simply not be the basis of membership to a community of solidarity (just as other concerns of identity could be relevant, too, as I explained before). If any EU solidary agent has reasons to claim that they or their community is being oppressed within the union on the basis of national identity, this problem merits recognition; the underlying norms for equality and justice provide a matter for everyone in the EU to engage in solidary action – but those who possess other national identities should be welcomed and encouraged to participate in this action.

The discussion about identity on a national level exemplifies a deeper problem within the type of identity politics I portrayed so far: the need for transparent criteria to determine which identities deserve recognition and may form potentially exclusionary communities and which do not. There seems to be an implicit agreement that questions of identity pertaining to marginalized communities along the lines of gender, class and "race" merit support, but there is less clarity about national identity, certain political ideologies or religious affiliations. The importance of the recognition of all oppression and the fight against unjust marginalisation

should remain uncontested,[124] and there is no reason that this should not happen in exclusive, protected spaces that allow for a safe dialogue. The lines of fracture, however, that are produced if exclusion rather than commonality becomes the matter of the struggle for political change affirm my conviction that the latter is the more desirable basis for solidarity.

8.3 Solidarity – A Misused Concept?

In this final section I want to briefly offer some recurring thoughts from the process of writing this dissertation that could provide further food for thought on solidarity. I am particularly concerned with the increased use of the term in public discourse and the implications of attributing so much weight to societal cohesion and solidarity.

First, I wish to comment on potential shortcomings of the conceptual tool I chose to work with. One may object to my conception that it does not include certain uses of the term (most likely regarding the possibility of institutionalising solidarity). While I am confident about the reasons I provided for this exclusion, such objections may possess validity based on the different understandings people have of the term. No conception is beyond reasonable doubt, and although I argued for the necessity of a term for a social phenomenon that I find to be described best by "solidarity", future developments of its usage may take different routes. Another criticism could find my work to focus excessively on the dynamics of solidarity as opposed to its matters, i.e., the goals, concerns and structures that provide solidarity with content. My answer to this is that solidarity as such cannot resolve all questions of ethics. It can only be one aspect of societal cohesion, embedded in a complex system of values, norms, and laws. I therefore defined solidary matters in a rather open way and argued that solidarity is desirable as long its matters are in accordance with the other determinants of what is normatively valuable in relations beyond the intimate sphere.

[124] Honneth voices this concern in his debate with Fraser, fearing that an approach like Fraser's lacks a justification about which social movements merit recognition more than others. He also argues that Fraser's focus on existing claims for recognition leaves little space for considering injustices that are yet to become visible (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, pp. 115-117).

Next, I wish to discuss whether we can consider the need for solidarity as a result of (institutional) insufficiency. The argument could go like this: Only in unjust or oppressive structures it is necessary to establish movements within civil society that join and act in solidarity. If this were true, the corresponding question would be: Is it not the responsibility of political institutions to bring about justice and end oppression, rendering solidarity superfluous? In this view, solidarity would be merely a tool of transition towards justice or other ethical ends. Now, of course, the answer is that governmental institutions, at least democratic ones, are not absolute authorities nor are they detached from the societies they represent. Put differently, it is the society that needs to constantly determine and re-determine what is just, who rightly demands which type of recognition and so on – it is impossible to know what exactly these will look like in the future. Solidarity could therefore be understood as a funnel for political demands that eventually need to arrive at the institutional level, where, if they resonate with a majority and protect minorities, can be turned into binding rule. It is for this reason that political institutions are right in declaring solidary societies desirable.

At the same time, it would be wrong to allow anyone to declare solidarity the right approach or solution to virtually every problem. If the notion becomes burdened with this weight, it becomes empty by meaning everything and nothing and an excuse for political institutions not to act even when they have an existing duty to do so. By calling the distribution of refugees in the EU a matter of solidarity rather than of justice, the institutions and politicians of the EU do exactly this. It is an evident breach of human rights to lock refugees into camps, and it is against the fundamental values of the EU that some member states should bear the responsibility for almost all refugees entering the union and that people in need are stripped of their right to ask for asylum. In this example, institutions are failing at their tasks, and it is this failure that evokes solidarity with refugees among non-institutional agents.

The second thought I want to briefly introduce is closely linked to its frequent usage and concerns the question of whether solidarity can be a radical instrument for political change. My question goes like this: If solidarity is such a common phenomenon and readily available instrument for cohesion of society, can it possess power for fundamental and radical change? Put more bluntly: If it is an act of solidarity to sign a letter of solidarity with a cashier who was

fired for taking too long of a coffee break, what distinguishes this behaviour from activists' attempts to improve the way we live together, end the exploitation of people and the planet and turn an unjust distribution of wealth into a just one? My thought on this is: solidarity does not need to aim at changing the entire "system" every time (in whichever way this system is defined). Solidary matters can be less or more radical, and I would speculate that more instances of solidarity allow for more large-scale change in a society. Regarding the EU, I take the most pressing questions for radical movements of solidarity to be those that truly require many EU solidary agents to look beyond their own direct surroundings: solidarity in favour of a fairer economic set-up and distribution in the EU as well as solidarity with those people who do not enjoy the privileged life EU citizens have.

Lastly, I want to mention my concern that solidarity, while surely a concept that relies on relationships, may have become so appealing to moderate or even conservative voices for being essentially individualistic. Is there an over-emphasis on the liberty to join and leave a solidary community as one pleases and on the lack of a moral duty to engage in solidarity in the first place? Put differently, solidarity might risk lacking any binding force and merely remain an appeal in a world that is highly dependent on the premise that individual gain is what matters most. I have no answer to this, merely the hope that solidarity is a *reaction* to such a world, not another aspect of it. In other words, finding ourselves in a political-economic system that incentivizes individualism but becomes increasingly unequal ideally produces the urge to find commonalities and recognition with others through solidarity.

8.4 Summary

In this chapter, I discussed some of the implications and possible critiques against the conception of solidarity I defend in this dissertation. I started with a sketch of different dynamics that could unfold in solidary communities depending on the extent of their solidary matter and the size of their community. Finding both pitfalls and merits in small-scale and large-scale solidary communities, I returned to recognition as the binding element that should

ideally circumvent the dangers I refer to (e.g., domination within the community and fragmentation). In the second part, I turn to the discussion about identity and work on revealing parallels and differences between solidarity and (a certain understanding of) identity politics as struggles for justice and oppression. I end this section with an affirmation that identity, while central in establishing unjust practices, is not an apt solidary matter, normatively speaking, as it can exclude and hinder alliances. In the final section, I briefly refer to solidarity's societal role in a way that may inspire further thoughts on the topic.

9. Conclusion

It has been my intention to portray solidarity as a type of relation and action that can occur in many contexts and concern an almost unlimited number of matters – as long as it fulfils the requirements that I explained and defended throughout the previous chapters. Understood in the sense that I proposed, solidarity is very common. In fact, it has to be if it is to live up to its appraisal as one of the central contributors to make societies cohere. We can find solidarity around us, just as we can find love, friendship, loyalty and charity as well as the lack thereof.

My conception of solidarity is, as I point out throughout the chapters, characterised by an evaluative element. This element entails the question: What kind of solidarity can be considered to be "good" or desirable? I think that such an element is present in most understandings of the term – but the ideas about what is "good", what is "acceptable" and what is "bad" certainly differ. Further, the lack of theoretical work on undesirable forms of solidarity indicates that the normative criteria are not always made explicit. Rather, previous studies suggest that its occurrence is most prevalent in praiseworthy cases, such as ending the oppression of (minority) groups in society.

Throughout this dissertation, I argued that in fact, many instances of self-proclaimed solidarity are better captured by different terms. In distinguishing these, I mostly suggested criteria that can are somewhat detached from the solidary matter, i.e., the content, issue, problem or case that a solidary community is concerned with. Namely, I demanded that solidarity must be inclusive and non-coercive, that its relations must not be based on criteria like antecedent traits and that its actions must fulfil a certain political aspiration. This means that they should be of public concern and aim to make a change and possess what I labelled "statement character". Indeed, these criteria exclude many cases of (self-)proclaimed solidarity and allow us to argue that some acts that claim to be solidary are not. My conception nevertheless leaves space for cases of solidarity that are not desirable from an ethical standpoint when it comes to their matter or concern, and this is plausible, in my view. I would

even say that it is necessary that a conception of solidarity entails some leeway about which are desirable matters of solidarity. The reason why there need not be extremely strict normative criteria when it comes to solidary matters is the very purpose of solidarity: it is a means for bringing about societal cohesion. Therefore, if it is to be appealing for as many individuals as possible, the plurality of a society needs to be able to find expression in matters of solidarity up to a certain extent. The limits of what can be considered acceptable matters of solidarity can be determined by other norms, laws or rules that define living together, and at various points I made indications about these as well as my view on normatively desirable matters of solidarity.

Having returned to the question of the normative, evaluative element of solidarity allows me to make some broader remarks about its role and significance. I presented solidarity as a way to mediate between ourselves as individuals that hold private, intimate relationships and those people with whom we share something else that is not private but still of vital importance for our existence as social beings in the world: our convictions, beliefs, wishes and everything we want to stand up for. The "others", our fellow solidary agents, may be further away from us or not even known to us; nonetheless, joining together and acting in solidarity can give us a feeling of mutual recognition and purpose. Solidarity means bringing topics to the fore that are otherwise neglected. It means rising up against state institutions where and when they act wrongfully. It means fighting against oppression. Certainly, solidarity is not the only way to shape the societies we live in, and it is also not the most powerful one; on top of domination, oppression, money and dependence, dynamics of joint association and action prevalent in relationships of loyalty, charity or communities of nationalists, supremacists or misogynists equally shape our societies. And, as history repeatedly shows, the dynamics that prevail in democratic societies are closely linked to politics, election results and individuals in power.

The success of politicians like Donald Trump, Jair Bolsonaro, Viktor Orbán and Boris Johnson and the rapid ascension and increasing influence of political parties like *Lega*, *Alternative für Deutschland* or *Chega!* mirror tendencies in societies that do not fulfil my criteria of normative desirability. They give rise to the worry that solidarity is too weak to make a

difference or not attractive for enough people to engage in it and that other, worse dynamics of social coexistence have the upper hand. At the same time, there are, of course, many exceptions to this, and seeing solidarity in practice can raise hope for the possibility that it is actually going to experience a golden age – maybe even as a reaction to unfulfilled hopes the wave of reactionism and populism fomented. At the same time, it is questionable whether our powerful economic system, whose pressure of competition and promise of individual success work precisely to undermine solidarity, will permit solidary structures to truly make profound changes.

While – as I criticized at several points – solidarity is sometimes deployed like an empty signifier, I am still convinced that in a more consistent understanding, it can contribute to radical change, even of the political economy. A solidary society results in more solidary politics, and more solidary politics have the necessary power for change, even though current inequality and the absurd power of large corporations may suggest otherwise. Maybe the experience of a global pandemic and the extreme changes it brought about within only weeks on a global level can be considered an expression of the fact that nothing is set in stone. At the same time, the increased use and misuse of the term solidarity make it ever more important to know what we are actually talking about. Contributing to the clarification of the meaning of solidarity was one of the principal purposes of my dissertation.

The second part of my dissertation, in which I wrote about solidarity in the context of the European Union, can be understood as the formulation of a framework to speak of solidarity in normative terms in the EU. In an attempt to discuss the EU as a place for solidarity, I began to tackle those aspects of my conception of solidarity that may allow us to make an argumentative case for a solidarity that is specific to the EU. My suggestions about how to conceive of "Europeanness" in particular, as well as the reasons and rationale for engaging in solidary behaviour may ideally start a debate about a question that is by no means answered completely with this dissertation. Conceiving of solidarity in the EU as a way of acting together that is detached from antecedent traits and does not need to find expression in problematic terms such as a shared identity is my suggestion for beginning this debate. To abandon the wish for a shared identity does not mean that we should negate the space and

history of the EU and Europe; on the contrary, I argued that a consciousness of both should guide EU solidarity and make it an accessible instrument for change and for finding mutual recognition not just for those who share the privilege of being Europeans by birth. It would be interesting to study in more depth which kinds of actions and which different dynamics of solidarity are possible in such a solidary EU, both in empirical and theoretical terms.

Returning to the very first sentences of this dissertation, in which I wrote about the situation of refugees entering the EU, a "verdict" on EU solidarity in its current shape and in light of my own theoretical contribution – is mixed, to say the least. Certainly, there are successful instances of solidarity among solidary agents from civil society, whether they speak out on the streets about the poor treatment and violations of European law or collect funding for rescue operations and publicly denounce the lack of EU rescue boats. There are also many acts of help and charity when it comes to receiving refugees, several of which – albeit problematic in some ways, as I previously discussed – turn out to be vital for the survival of many. The referral to solidarity on an EU institutional level, however, strikes me as repeatedly deficient; in some cases, it is for the simple reason that the referral or appeal has nothing to do with solidarity. I find this to be the case when a just system of distribution and burden sharing among member states would be needed instead of appeals to solidarity, or when cynical ideas like the aforementioned "return sponsorships" are glossed over with the euphemism of solidarity. But these referrals can also be wrong for the fact that immediate relief and action by governments would be needed rather than an appeal to something voluntary and possibly vague like solidarity.

My arguably most controversial thesis in this dissertation, that political institutions cannot be agents of solidarity, receives a further reinforcement through the observation that EU institutions and member state governments use the term in a wrong way. Yes, solidarity can improve political institutions and guide their processes towards greater justice, freedom and equality and towards less oppression. But once the *matters* at stake turn into binding rules, they are no longer instances of solidarity. The welfare state, frequently referred to as an institution of solidarity, is in fact an institution of redistribution – or, arguably, justice. Very roughly speaking, it is an institution originally guided by a solidary initiative with the conviction

that everyone should be entitled to a certain amount of money in order to survive and live a life of dignity. However, once this entitlement became a right to be claimed by everyone, it was no longer solidarity. Consequently, the EU's institutions can only channel solidary demands and improve and shape the union by turning them into binding rules. Therefore, they depend on the citizens and can at most support them in their acts and communities of solidarity. Their apparent reluctance to doing so at the moment is not really surprising. History has shown that asking the citizens of the EU for their opinion would not necessarily lead to further integration in the EU as the rejection of an EU constitution in referenda illustrates. However, imposing it nonetheless (but in the shape of yet another treaty) has hardly improved the trust and commitment to the EU. Consequently, I would dare to say that attempting to impose a certain (mis-)understanding of solidarity in a similar way could not only have adverse effects but also do permanent harm to the term as such.

To end on a more constructive note, let me close by stressing that many different dynamics and collaborative efforts can find expression in the term "solidarity", even with the restrictions my conception proposes. This diversity is encouraging and bears potential for very creative forms of solidarity. For instance, in a struggle to end sexual violence against women, solidarity can serve to empower and build a strong defence against a structural pattern of recurring aggression. I find the slogan "Touch one, touch all!" to exemplify this opposition by means of solidarity in a powerful and very simple way. It is regularly used in the context of workers' struggles but could also be seen on posters of feminist protesters in Latin America in recent years. As a second example, we can imagine a European Union initiative that aims at making the lives of refugees lost or at risk in the Mediterranean more visible by displaying a recognisable symbol visibly all over the EU in public places. In this case, the solidary action may be a very quiet act of drawing the symbol or putting up a sticker or poster in order to show that one rejects policies that kill and remember those who have died. I think it is compatible to speak of solidarity just as much in the first as in the second case.

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