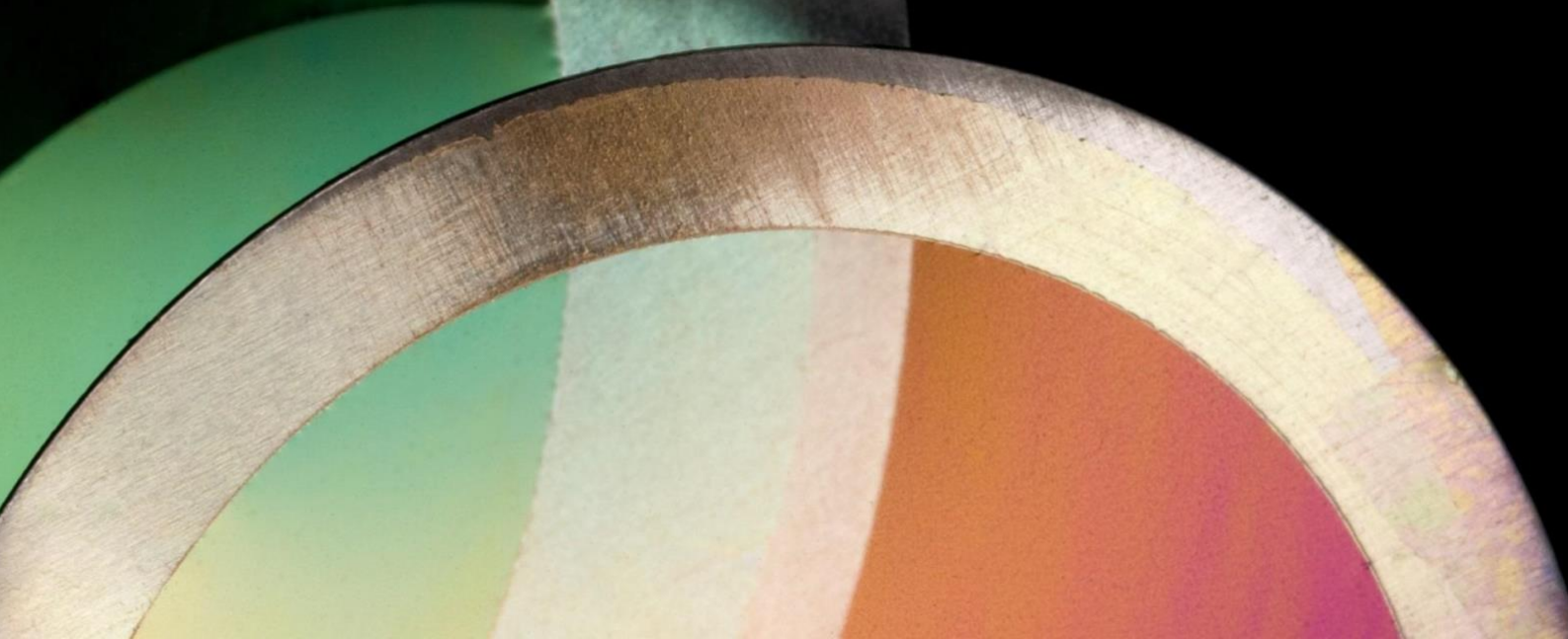




Solidarity in the European Union

*Theoretical framework,
empirical evidence, and policy
guidelines for education*

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Abstract

In recent years, the concept of solidarity has come to the forefront of European policy discussion and rhetoric. This report aims at providing a definitional framework for this value by drawing upon the domains of philosophy, political science and psychology, examining solidarity practices, including EU responses to major current crises in the EU. This report also provides options on how solidarity can be fostered through educational policies and practices. Among other aspects of the complexity surrounding solidarity, this report discusses the levels, longitudinal variation, and relevance as a political desideratum in democratic societies. This report also examines how solidarity relates to other sociological and psychological concepts, such as social identity, altruism, and social norms. Findings indicate the need to look at intergenerational solidarity and the salience of solidarity in discussions concerning the welfare state, the economy, migration, the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the consequences of the ongoing war in Ukraine, to cite some current concerns that are high on public and political agendas. In education, we find that instilling the value of European solidarity, among other common values, is key for the European integration project. We therefore recommend pursuing policies to foster solidarity at all levels and, with particular reference to Education in particular, to include solidarity education in school curricula in support of the promotion of European values.

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Executive summary

Policy context

Over the past decade, in response to the financial crisis, the migration crisis, and most recently the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and the war in Ukraine, solidarity has increasingly come to the forefront of European policy discussion and rhetoric. However, the meaning, importance, and value of solidarity, in its various forms, for the economic, social, and political resilience of the European Union remains disputed. Solidarity is also increasingly capturing the attention of economists and those at the forefront of the fight against climate change. In this publication, we address the idea and practices of solidarity, a fundamental European value, in its diversity and ambiguity, and draw policy conclusions for including it in education. This report is divided into two main parts:

Part A

In Part A, the report aims first to provide a definitional framework for solidarity. It draws upon sources in philosophy, political science, and psychology. Although the precise meaning of solidarity is not settled and even contested, we understand the following to function as a good working definition:

Solidarity is the willingness to accept forms of obligation or to bear costs and risks with the aim of providing help or support to others to whom one is not otherwise bound through personal (e.g. familial) relations.

From the definitional framework, the report:

- examines paradigmatic, unorthodox, and boundary cases of solidarity practices, including EU responses to the 2015 European migration crisis, the COVID-19 global pandemic and the war in Ukraine ;
- provides an overview of how solidarity is and can be further fostered in and through educational policies and strategy.

Key findings of the definitional framework:

- Solidarity has different levels. A solidaristic actor can be an individual, an association or organisation, or a political authority. Likewise, the recipients of solidarity practices can be individuals, groups, associations, organisations, or political authorities. These different possible levels of solidarity add to the complexity of an idea like “European Solidarity”.
- Solidarity relations and practices can also have a less prosocial side. In some cases, strong solidaristic relations within an in-group can lessen the feeling of obligation or even create hostility towards those not in the in-group. At the European level, this can affect relations towards migrants, citizens of other EU Member States, relations between Member States, and relations between the EU, its Member States and non-Member States. We can see from this that solidarity *can* have a close relation to social identity; and feelings of solidaristic bonds and obligations can be related to feelings of belonging to identity groups.
- Solidarity is a political desideratum in a democratic society as it facilitates core aspects of democratic life, namely collective decision-making, action and risk taking. Solidarity is thus an infrastructural element or core pillar of democratic society.
- The question of whether solidarity relations require some level of reciprocity, and if so, what level of reciprocity, is one of the key controversies in the political and philosophical discussion of the concept. The emphasis on reciprocity is one element that distinguishes solidarity from related concepts such as charity and benevolence.
- Psychological research into solidarity reveals that from a psychological standpoint, solidaristic behaviour does not necessarily require altruistic, other-regarding attitudes or motivations, since desire for conformity may well suffice to achieve it.
- Shared social-identity plays a key role in motivating solidaristic attitudes.

- Social norms and reputational concern can be strong motivating forces for solidaristic practices; they can also lead to greater openness and cooperation between in-groups and towards outsiders in a particular society.

Key findings of the examples/discussion:

- Intergenerational solidarity is an often-overlooked arena of solidarity; it can be mediated and potentially improved by political communication in key areas such as health, employment, and environmental sustainability.
- As a value and set of practices, solidarity is salient across a broad and sometimes unexpected range of areas, including discussions about the welfare state, the not-for-profit and cooperative sectors of the economy, migration, civil disobedience, and the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the current war in Ukraine.

Key findings for education:

- *Although instilling the value of European social cohesion and solidarity through education has been a central aspect and goal of the European project since its inception, the (intentional and explicit) promotion of (European) values through education is relatively recent within a European policy context.*
- *Although solidarity is a polyvalent and even, at times, contested concept, solidarity in education can proceed by focusing on aspects or dimensions of the value that are broadly agreed upon. These include: common values and goals, risk sharing, equality, and trust (St. John 2021: 191). These can be understood as prerequisites for the cultivation of affinity towards solidarity practices.*

Key policy recommendations:

- *Policies to foster solidarity can be pursued on all of the levels identified in the definitional framework (individual, associational/organisational, institutional) as well in relation to both in-group and out-group solidarity.*
- *Relevant policy suggestions for fostering solidarity include developing school curricula with the specific aim of supporting European values; expanding exchange programmes beyond the current scope of Erasmus+ to include individuals not enrolled in tertiary education; EU support for cooperatives; the not-for-profit sector; and workers organisations for independents and platform workers.*

The table below categorises the policy suggestions made in this report:

Table 1. Policy suggestions

Levels of solidarity	In-group	Out-group
Individual	Curricula Educational exchanges EU schools and universities	
Group (e.g. organisation/association level)	EU trade unions EU cooperative legislation	Red Cross Man and the Biosphere (UNESCO) ¹
Institutional	Eurobonds NextGenerationEU EU redistributive programs	COVAX scheme ² UN Peacekeeping missions ³ Refugees & migration policies

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Part B

The second part of this report attempts a longitudinal empirical analysis using the results of nine rounds of the European Social Survey 2002-2018. The European Social Survey (ESS) was selected as a data source because the core modules were unchanged during this period. This allowed for a longitudinal analysis. The appropriate indicators to measure general and non-situation-specific attitudes towards solidarity are not obvious, as the concept itself is polyvalent and contested in its meaning. To address this issue, and in lieu of specific survey data addressing general attitudes towards solidarity, we selected what we thought to be the best possible indicators from the core modules of the ESS. Indicators were chosen due to an affinity or close proximity, based on the definitional framework, to what we understood to be significant aspects or dimensions of solidarity or solidaristic behaviour. This points to a major challenge in trying to measure solidarity, similar to the challenge of measuring concepts such as human development. Thus, what is attempted here is not to measure solidarity directly, but to take some initial steps towards measurement of indicators of solidarity. As it is likely impossible to measure general European attitudes towards solidarity outside of specific contexts or issues (e.g., migration, specific forms of welfare), the basket of indicators approach may serve as a methodologically sound manner to grasp this desired but elusive construct. Further research is, however, necessary to arrive at a robust research design. At the end of this report, we sketch a path forward for further research on this pressing issue.

Key findings of the empirical analysis

The analyses we performed, revealed that there is large variability in solidarity indicators across EU countries, with generally lower solidarity scores among Eastern European countries as compared to Western European countries. Thus, a closer look at the country differences is needed to fully understand how to stimulate solidarity behaviours in the EU. With these analyses, we intend to provide an outline of such longitudinal aspects. Nevertheless, we must point out that our work was not able to benefit fully from the empirical basis (the European Social Survey, ESS, Human Values block), as the latest round (EES10) is yet to be released. Therefore, incorporating the results of this round would be of significant interest to understand further the evolution of solidarity in the EU following these turbulent years of pandemic and war.

¹ <https://en.unesco.org/mab>

² <https://www.who.int/initiatives/act-accelerator/covax>

³ <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en>

Introduction

The Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) mentions “solidarity” in several instances. It refers to the value in the context of combatting social exclusion and discrimination, promoting social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations, and protection of the rights of the child. The TEU also states that the EU shall promote economic, social, and territorial cohesion and solidarity among Member States. It refers to the contribution of the Union to peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth, solidarity and mutual respect among peoples [...]⁴. In Article 2 of the Treaty, it is stated verbatim that “The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.” We could say that the principle of solidarity is the basis of the EU. Solidarity is not only legitimate, but also essential, for the Union to pursue peace and security, freedom and welfare of its societies.

Furthermore, the Solidarity clause was introduced by Article 222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), to provide the option for the EU and EU Member States to act jointly to prevent the threat of terrorism in the territory of an EU Member State, and to provide assistance to another EU country which is the victim of a natural or man-made disaster. The clause was implemented as anticipated following the terrorist attacks in Madrid in March 2004. In 2014, the EU adopted a decision laying down the rules and procedures for the operation of the clause to ensure that all of the parties concerned at the national and EU levels work together to respond quickly, effectively, and consistently in the event of terrorist attacks or natural or man-made disasters. The European Union Solidarity Fund, first created in 2002, is an instrument financing operations in the field of civil protection.⁵ Under revised rules adopted in 2014, working procedures have been simplified and eligibility criteria clarified and extended to cover drought.⁶

If solidarity is at the basis of the European Union, the term is nonetheless subject to a variety of interpretations, perspectives, and political views. Frequently invoked, its meaning is not fully clear. The relevance of solidarity, as a value, but also as a political glue of the Union, is in times of crisis more apparent than ever. Often invoked by politicians and citizens and considered a fundamental value, we nonetheless lack a clear conception of its meaning and perspectives, as well as the role education might play in conveying the value to students and EU citizens at large. The aim of this report is to add clarity to the concept, elaborate some of the concrete practices that fall under its umbrella, and provide some indications on how education can promote solidarity. This report faces a serious limitation in its empirical analyses because the metrics of solidarity require the use of proxies and, in addition, vary longitudinally across the years in European societies. An obvious example is that since the start of the study in early 2022 the solidarity value showed in the European Social Survey, used in the empirical analyses of this report, might have changed across the European Union, perhaps drastically in some countries, as a consequence of the ongoing war in Ukraine, the cost-of-living crisis and/or other factors.

⁴ Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union - TITLE I: COMMON PROVISIONS - Article 3 (ex Article 2 TEU). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX%3A12008M003>

⁵ <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/stories/s/An-overview-of-the-EU-Solidarity-Fund-2002-2022/qpif-qzyn/>

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/solidarity-clause.html>

1. Part A. Theoretical framework and policy guidelines

1.1. Definitional framework

1.1.1. Working definition

The notion of solidarity has a long history in European social and political thought. Its origins go back to the concept of obligation in *Solidum* in Roman law, which points to mutual interdependencies, created through a binding legal act. Later, we owe the most relevant developments of the idea to Christian church teachings and socialism, where it becomes increasingly emancipated from the legal context, coming to embrace the entire spectrum of human interactions (Bayertz 1999).

Solidarity can be very generally defined as the willingness to accept forms of obligation or to bear costs and risks with the aim of providing help or support to others to whom one is not otherwise bound to through personal relations, for example, family members.

The following definitional framework provides some flesh to the concept, in view of its subsequent operationalisation.

1.1.2. In-group and out-group solidarity

Solidarity has been seen as the glue that keeps a social group together, helping it face external threats and everyday problems. Literature depicts people in solidarity as marching shoulder-to-shoulder (Margalit 2017: 77). Albert Camus has spoken of a “solidarity in chains” to refer to a bond that emerges among individuals who together undergo a situation of extreme and unjust duress. The Czech philosopher Jan Patočka wrote of a “solidarity of the shaken” that emerged out of a shared experience of the horror and nihilism of war. More generally, the Finnish philosopher Raimo Tuomela has referred to the musketeers’ principle “all for one and one for all” (Tuomela 2013: 251). The example of workers’ struggles is perhaps the most paradigmatic case of solidarity relations, as here we find all the basic ingredients of in-group solidarity: (1) a distinct and (relatively) homogeneous group; (2) a shared goal, or cause; (3) strong mutual interdependence; and (4) conflict with an external agent responsible for the situation in need of redress. Ideas of care, serviceability, and mutual aid emphasise the concrete moral content of fraternity. We call this in-group solidarity because it refers to attitudes within a given social group.

Other scholars, such as Sally Scholz, have emphasised that solidarity as a political ideal is mostly concerned with actions through which we reach out to people that do not belong to our group. “Political solidarity [...] arises in response to a situation of injustice or oppression. Individuals make a conscious commitment to join with others in struggle to challenge a perceived injustice” (Scholz 2008: 34). Solidarity is a conscious reaction against injustice and oppression. The focus is not on helping exclusively those who belong to our group, but on reaching out to those who suffer injustice, no matter who they are, or to which group they belong. Group identification is necessary for the first type of solidarity, not for the second type.

1.1.3. Solidarity and size

A major factor defining solidarity is the size of the solidaristic group. Solidarity may occur among the members of a tight-knit small group such as a work-team, or among complete strangers whose relations are mediated through a voluntary association, or a tax system. Distinctions such as those between strong and weak solidarity, bridging and bonding relationships, community and society, thick and thin, micro and macro, universality and particularity, exemplify this trade-off. Size is usually key to determining which pattern of solidarity will emerge, because the tighter a group is, the stronger the degree of interdependence as well as personal involvement and mutual obligation it expects from its members. Symmetrically, the lighter the bond, the higher the number of individuals it can affiliate, as less direct personal involvement and commitment is required. Small solidaristic groups will tend to experience stronger forms of solidarity, whereas larger groups will tend to dilute solidarity to less costlier acts.

1.1.4. Solidarity and reciprocity

The questions of in-group vs. out-group solidarity and the size of solidaristic groups are both related to the question of how important reciprocity, or at least willingness to reciprocate, is to solidarity relations and practices. A crucial distinction in patterns of solidarity concerns the relations between solidaristic actors, which

can be symmetrical or asymmetrical. In the first case, each social actor can at least in principle play the role of the giver and of the donor, whereas in the second case donors usually are not the beneficiaries of solidaristic acts. Workers organizing in mutual aid societies establish symmetrical bonds, whereas benevolence is typically an act of asymmetrical solidarity. Generally speaking, out-group solidarity tends to be asymmetrical, whereas in-group solidarity can be both. Some authors query whether reciprocity or at least a displayed willingness to reciprocate the solidaristic behaviour is a requirement of solidarity relations, or whether solidarity relations are possible where only one party (the one taking obligations, incurring costs, or carrying additional burden) has the requisite solidaristic attitudes or engages in the requisite solidaristic behaviour (Meacham and Tava 2021, Prainsack and Buyx 2017).

1.1.5. Self-regarding and other-regarding

Solidarity is usually predicated on two different grounds. For some authors, solidarity is an insurance mechanism and, therefore, expresses a form of enlightened self-interest (Fernandez and Rubio 2012). For others, solidarity has a moral ground, since it emerges out of a desire to help others in distress, or out of a reaction against injustice (Scholz 2008). In other words, solidarity can form on the basis of both “self-enhancement” and “self-transcendence” (Schwartz 1992). Considered as self-regarding, reciprocity, as a criteria of solidarity relations, thus serves also to potentially distinguish solidaristic behaviour and attitudes from other similar attitudes such as charity or sympathy, which also involve a willingness to help others, but do not require the intention or expectation of reciprocity. Whether or not solidarity has a necessary dimension of reciprocity is also important to whether solidaristic behaviour and attitudes should be considered as acting within one’s “enlightened self-interest” or on the basis of generosity, benevolence, charity or other similarly motivated practices. The two should not, however, be understood as mutually exclusive, as generosity and altruistic behaviours can also be in one’s self-interest, even if not done for selfish reasons. Solidarity within the European context has been described as motivated by both attitudes, for example by Jacques Delors: “Solidarity mechanisms are not based on pure generosity but on enlightened self-interests” (Fernandez and Rubio 2012).

1.1.6. Levels of solidarity

Solidarity can take place at different levels: through individual acts, by participating in voluntary associations, or through formal political institutions. These three levels are important to distinguish different type of behaviours and social practices through which solidarity operates in society. The first level refers to individuals that act with solidarity toward others to whom they spontaneously offer support. The associational level refers to what we have called above “in-group solidarity”, that is, organisational processes through which a group of individuals sharing a similar fate take action to face this fate together. Indeed, solidarity is also a distinguishing feature of our unique social nature, and expresses itself in all the ways through which human agents associate together to alleviate the burdens of life. Self-help groups, mutual aid societies, parent or neighbourhood associations can all be considered different examples of associational patterns of solidarity.

A third and more abstract level concerns so-called “institutions of solidarity” which characterises political communities and which may take the form of compulsory commitment. In modern western societies, the most relevant institutions of solidarity are the welfare state and the tax system, through which social and economic burdens are redistributed amongst members of a political community according to needs and capacity. In other societies, solidaristic relations have taken on other forms, the best known being the gift. As studied by anthropologists particularly in Micronesian societies, the gift establishes obligatory bonds among social actors through which individuals in distress receive help from society. Whereas associational forms of solidarity tend to be interest-based, affiliating together individuals based on some common social, occupational, or cultural trait; institutional forms of solidarity are constitutive of the political community. Ranging from the level of a municipality to that of a large federal state or political union such as the European Union, institutions of solidarity unite all the members of the community. The EU Recovery Plan, but also the shared COVID-19 vaccine policy as discussed in section 4 are typical examples of institutional solidarity. But institutions of solidarity have another important political function since they serve, by way of participation in the institution, to also define who belongs to the community and who is perceived as a mere passer-by, temporary member, or stranger. The presence or absence of solidaristic attitudes towards migrants becomes a crucial indicator of how solidarity is perceived and construed within a community: each political community has to decide whether and to what extent members coming from other communities are entitled to the benefits of solidaristic bonds. Here, too, the EU migration policy provides a litmus test of the EU’s commitment to solidaristic values. This is one of the major reasons why issues of taxation and the welfare state are powerful indicators of where the bonds of community lie.

The three criteria of group size, type of relations, and their level are strictly interdependent. To begin with, the question of whether willingness to reciprocate is a necessary dimension of solidarity applies at all relevant “levels” of solidarity relations: inter-individual, inter-group, inter-organisational, and inter-state/national.

1.1.7. Moral and political solidarity

Solidarity is at the same time a moral and a political phenomenon. Like in the parable of the Good Samaritan, acts of solidarity are morally valuable because they illustrate generosity and willingness to help fellow human beings towards whom we have no other *prima facie* obligation. Acts of beneficence, e.g. volunteering, as long as they are examined on an individual level are typically taken to be acts of moral solidarity. Yet as scholars such as Robert Putnam have contended, once individual solidarity becomes organised, it takes on a political meaning.

Political solidarity thus may take two forms: (1) as social capital, through the manifold voluntary associations through which the willingness to help others in distress is organised; and (2) as institutional solidarity, through the political institutions such as the welfare state and the tax system by which citizens accept obligations in support of other citizens.

1.1.8. Relation to similar concepts

As mentioned above, depending on the ways that the idea of solidarity is defined and constrained, it can bear a greater or lesser similarity and overlap with a host of closely related moral and political ideas and practices including fraternity, charity, and benevolence. These distinctions are not philosophical hair splitting. The ways that we situate these ideas and associated practices in relation to one another have significant real-world consequences, especially when it comes to the institutionalising of solidarity practices.

Solidarity’s closest relation is probably fraternity. The two terms are often used interchangeably. There are, however, important historical and practical distinctions between the two notions. The distinction of solidarity from fraternity in democratic society relates to its impersonal nature, which is closely linked to historical processes of urbanisation and industrialisation where relations of mutual support developed between workers bound only by shared experiences of social, political, and labouring conditions. Rather than being dependent on strong personal links or kinship (*frater* in Latin), solidarity relations can be completely impersonal, and based solely on a shared commitment to social values. Solidarity is of course possible between individuals who share close personal bonds, but, essentially, it is not limited to such groups.

Solidarity as a willingness to shoulder burdens or costs on behalf of another can also be closely linked to the attitudes and practices of charity and benevolence (in the sense of kindly acts or gifts given out of generosity), or even more broadly altruism (actions motivated by a more general concern for the well-being of other humans or beings other than oneself). While not being mutually exclusive from these ideas, solidarity is potentially more constrained in several ways. Neither charity, benevolence nor altruism requires any perception or prospect of reciprocity on the part of the recipients of the charitable, benevolent, or altruistic behaviour; they are in essence individual attitudes held by the actor or doer of deeds. Solidarity, by contrast, refers to an at least perceived reciprocation of attitudes, if not always capabilities, between individuals, groups, associations, states, etc. What does this mean? When a person, association or state engages in behaviour that is termed solidaristic there must be a perceived expectation of a willingness to reciprocate the attitudes and actions involved. This capacity for reciprocation does not have to be immediate; hence, solidarity relations can occur between parties with asymmetric capabilities; but solidarity relations, if they are to be distinguished from charity and benevolence in a politically relevant fashion must entail this minimal dimension of reciprocity. This applies also to what we have referred to above as out-group solidarity. One cannot be solidaristic with others who one perceives as unwilling to reciprocate the attitude of mutual-support, whereas one can still be charitable or benevolent in such instances. Solidarity thus entails a perceived symmetry of attitudes if not actions or immediate capabilities. Solidarity is thus much more closely related to political attitudes of equality than charity or benevolence. This stems from its historical development in the context of horizontal mutual support, rather than vertical.

More controversially, a further distinction can be made pertaining to the target context or aim of solidaristic practices. While charitable, benevolent, or altruistic practices are not context-constrained, some have argued that solidarity practices should be defined and delineated from other similar practices by the fact of taking place and being aimed at political, legal, or institutional contexts (Meacham and Tava 2021; Habermas 2013).

1.2. Solidarity as a (European?) political value

Why is solidarity politically desirable in the first place? Solidarity is a fundamental European value as defined by the treaties and other foundational documents. Its place as a fundamental European value is closely connected to the development of the idea and related practices in the political and philosophical traditions of the two largest European political families: Christian Democrats and Social Democrats. More fundamentally, the reciprocal willingness to share costs, risks and burdens toward the aim of longer-term gain arguably increases the probability of achieving shared goals. Willingness to shoulder burdens and take risks with the aim of potentially longer-term political and socioeconomic goals is furthermore supported, in a virtuous circle, by the sharing of the risk, which can also mitigate individual risks. Thus, solidarity, when construed as a political relation among equals, facilitates collective decision-making, collective action (as it mitigates individual risks through risk sharing), and longer-term political action and planning (through collective decision-making, action, and risk/burden sharing). These are all characteristics that can be described as desiderata within a democratic society. Solidarity is thus not just a descriptive notion that indicates a certain form of human togetherness, but a fundamental or infrastructural dimension of democratic society. Subsequently, a democratic society should seek at the political, legal and social levels to foster forms of solidarity. When speaking of solidarity, it is therefore important to bear in mind that the term refers to very different social phenomena. All these phenomena have, however, something in common, which is the individual willingness to go beyond one's own self-interest in response to a sense of the value of a social bond. It is for this reason that solidarity has been defined as the "unspoken third pillar of democracy" (Gonthier 2000).

It has been argued that, "In its threefold shape, the concept of democracy encompasses the intuition that a society of free and equal individuals cannot function as a real democracy unless some specific kind of social glue bonds them together. Solidarity refers precisely to the distinctive type of social cooperation that is appropriate among free and equal citizens and it constitutes an irreducible element of the concept of democracy, one that is conceptually on par with the concepts of freedom and equality. Democracy, to this extent, does not denote only the political regime that is most appropriate for a community of free and equal citizens. More complexly, democracy denotes a form of society structured by forms of social cooperation that are appropriate among free and equal citizens" (Frega 2019, 12).

It is particularly during 19th century Europe that solidarity was progressively distinguished from fraternity as the third pillar of the democratic credo. It emphasises that besides the individual rights to freedom and equality, democracy is qualified by a specific understanding of social life as based on relations of mutual interdependence. The question introduced by the notion of solidarity mainly concerns the extent to which the successful pursuit of social life requires free and equal agents to accept some form of mutual obligation besides those that can be justified (even) on purely utilitarian grounds. The question of solidarity in a democratic society is therefore not whether or not solidarity, but how much, between whom or what type of entities (individuals, associations, states), and to what degree solidarity relations, or relations of mutual support should be formalised in legal and institutional form.

Even though several authors construe solidarity as the rejection of an individualistic and liberal vision of society, anti-liberalism is not a necessary ingredient of solidarity. There is no necessary conflict between solidarity and liberal visions of society. For example, the welfare state and other institutions of solidarity have been established and thrive in liberal societies.

Nonetheless, it is important to reiterate that despite some level of agreement at the theoretical level when it comes to the importance of solidarity for the functioning of democratic societies, there is no similar consensus about how to translate solidarity into policy (Köck 2019).

As mentioned above, solidarity ought to be analysed on three different levels. At the first and most basic level, solidarity refers to individual attitudes of mutual acceptance, cooperation, and mutual support in time of need. But solidarity is also inseparable from how a society is organised in two ways: (1) associational forms that directly or indirectly promote the spread of solidaristic behaviours; and (2) the political institutions of solidarity.

Associational forms are by definition voluntary. Examples are 19th century workers' associations, trade unions, but also self-help groups, parents' associations, clubs such as the Rotary and the Lions Club, and the Red Cross. Here solidarity takes on two forms. On the one hand, relations of mutual support among members. For example,

early stages of the labour movement were characterised by workers associating in order to share their limited resources to help each other, and on the other hand, contributing resources to help the needy. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as the Red Cross or Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) operate on this second principle: they ask those who have more to share part of their surplus with those who have less. Here there is a less clear distinction between in-group and out-group relations of solidarity.

Thirdly, political communities can take the form of solidaristic communities: a people or a nation sets up political institutions to organise its internal life, and a variable degree of solidarity is always incorporated into how institutions are designed. Participation in the solidaristic institutions of a political community is generally not voluntary, but an obligation(s) associated with membership.

We can identify at least two forms of political solidarity. On the one hand, through legal rights, a political community sets up formal protections to avoid discrimination and exploitation at different levels. By protecting employees from undue economic exploitation, by granting citizenship rights to migrants, by preventing discrimination based on gender, race, or religion, by promoting tolerance and respect for minorities, etc. These can be viewed as solidaristic practices insofar as individuals, groups or associations give up a possible gain in order to attain or maximise a shared social value. On the other hand, by enforcing mechanisms of economic redistribution: through redistributive tax schemes, through free access to health services and education, and by establishing universal welfare systems.

Since solidarity is a group practice, it implies the risk of exclusion: by defining who the subjects of solidarity are (workers, women, Christians, nationals), one always implicitly or explicitly establishes a boundary with respect to those who are excluded from the solidaristic bond.

If we understand solidarity to be a political desideratum for the reasons stated above, but also acknowledge that solidarity relations imply boundaries or conditions of exclusion, then, in a pluralistic and democratic society, it follows that the forms of symmetrical, in-group, or exclusive solidarity relations outlined above, should be complemented with “reaching-out” solidaristic practices in which there is an asymmetry between those who act according to solidaristic principles and those who are the beneficiaries of solidarity. This does not negate the criterion of reciprocity in solidarity relations but acknowledges at a practical level that the capability for reciprocity may not always be shared. To this end, authors have pointed out that the criterion of reciprocity does not need to be actualised or realised in the here and now for relations to count as solidaristic. Prainsack and Buyx (2017) have used the term “indirect reciprocity” to involve the type of reciprocity entailed in many institutional relations. Meacham and Tava (2021) have described a horizon of reasonable expectation of reciprocity, basically entailing that solidaristic relations come with the expectation that in a symmetrical or similar situation, the others involved – the recipients of solidaristic actions – would reciprocate if they could, or will when they can. Whether that expectation is eventually met or not is immaterial, though repeated disappointment of solidarity expectations, may presumably dampen motivations of solidaristic behaviour.

In relation to responses to the COVID-19 crisis, Margeret Levi has used the term “community of fate” (Levi 2020). This idea responds to concerns about overly strict reciprocity criteria in solidaristic practices while still maintaining the importance of reciprocity; “farsighted reciprocal altruism in which members are willing to make costly sacrifices on behalf of those with whom they believe their fates, and their descendants’ fates, are entwined but who may never be able to directly reciprocate”. Understanding the reciprocity criterion of solidarity practices in this manner also acknowledges solidarity’s potential proximity (rather than tension) with concepts such as global justice. Contemporary crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic or climate change illustrate global interdependence and open the possibility of envisaging a global “community of fate”. Such a view of solidarity acknowledges the proximity of solidarity and justice. From this perspective, solidarity is a response to a situation of injustice, no matter who the sufferer is. Solidarity is, to this extent, the willingness to join with others to challenge a perceived form of injustice or oppression (Scholz, 2008).

Finally, we note that the term “European solidarity” is often used by European leaders in times of crisis to call for cooperation between Member States (see, as a recent example, the coordinated response to wildfires in Greece and Spain⁷). European solidarity is relatively well developed at this level based on the reciprocity of countries and enlightened self-interest. However, the promotion of interpersonal solidarity between European citizens on the one hand and between EU institutions and citizens on the other is rather neglected (Pornschnegel, 2021). This lack of transnational solidarity risks putting European social cohesion at risk. Therefore, European

⁷ <https://agenceurope.eu/en/bulletin/article/12310/15>

solidarity must be a tangible asset of citizens, beyond a buzzword. Sophie Porschlegel (2021) puts forward four recommendations on how to go about it:

- “The EU should rethink its concept of solidarity: move away from a purely transactional understanding and shift towards a definition that allows for the emergence of solidarity between European citizens.
- The EU’s cohesion agenda should be consolidated and widened to include interstate and interpersonal solidarity mechanisms rather than only interterritorial ones.
- The EU should better support national solidarity mechanisms, as they are the basis for social cohesion in the EU27.
- The EU should establish the conditions necessary for interpersonal solidarity to emerge in Europe.”

1.3. The psychological dimension of solidarity

Thus far, we have addressed solidarity largely as it is treated in philosophical and political theory literature. Solidarity as addressed in psychology literature has many similarities but also some relevant differences. This section addresses the treatment of the concept in psychology literature. Solidarity (in psychology usually called “prosocial behaviour”) represents a broad category of acts (which include caring, sharing, donating, helping, and volunteering) that are defined by some significant segment of society and/or one’s social group as generally beneficial to other people (e.g., Penner et al. 2005). In other words, it refers to behaviours that are intended to benefit others at a cost to the self (Jensen, 2016). The large body of literature on prosocial behaviour shows concern for the role of the situation (for example, clarity of need, number of bystanders, norms) or to the identification of relevant person-related aspects of helping behaviour (such as perception of need, taking responsibility, self-efficacy, empathy) (Bierhoff, Klein, & Kramp 1991; Sala, Punie, Garkov & Cabrera 2020; Latané and Nida 1981). Below we will refer to both individual and contextual sources of solidarity behaviour.

1.3.1. Solidarity motivated by both self- and other-concern motives

Psychological research has pointed to different motivational roots of solidarity. Solidarity can be formed on the basis of both “self-enhancement” and “self-transcendence” motives (Schwartz 1992). Scholars of social capital formulate the same idea by distinguishing between bonding and bridging forms of social capital (Putnam 2000). Specifically, benevolence and conformity values both promote cooperative and supportive social relations. According to Schwartz (1992), benevolence values derive from the basic requirement for smooth group functioning and from the basic human need for affiliation. Most critical are relations within the family and other primary groups. These relations emphasise voluntary concern for others’ welfare (helpful, honest, forgiving, responsible, loyal, true friendship, mature love). Conformity values, on the other hand, derive from the requirement that individuals inhibit inclinations that might disrupt and undermine smooth interaction and group functioning. Conformity values emphasise self-restraint in everyday interaction, usually with close others (obedient, self-discipline, politeness, honouring parents and elders). Benevolence and conformity values both promote cooperative and supportive social relations. However, benevolence values provide an internalised motivational base for such behaviour. In contrast, conformity values promote cooperation in order to avoid negative outcomes for self. Both values may motivate the same helpful act, separately or together.

Schwartz (1992) indicated also that universalism values, that derive from survival needs of individuals and groups, combine two subtypes of concern – for the welfare of those in the larger society and world and for nature (broadminded, social justice, equality, world at peace, world of beauty, unity with nature, wisdom, protecting the environment). Finally, achievement as a value particularly associated with the pursuit of social approval, may temper self-interest and even elicit prosocial behaviour in situations where acting prosocially will bring public acclaim.

Other research addressing the origins of solidarity focuses on social motives. Social motives involve the individual’s preferences for particular patterns of outcome distributions between the self and the opponent or such contextual and situational factors as rewards, instructions from superiors, or social relationships. Earlier work on prosocial behaviour suggested that there is no solidarity with selfish motivations – as personal gains are an unintended by-product and not the goal of the prosocial act (Batson & Shaw 1991; Weiner 1980). Recent work, however, stresses that people may support others also to reduce the negative affective state evoked by people’s suffering (Crocker et al. 2017; Penner et al. 2005). Thus, prosocial behaviours may be driven by both

self-concern and other-concern motives. Low other-concern is similar to having an egoistic social motive, or attaching a zero weight to the importance of the opponent's outcome. High other-concern is similar to having a prosocial social motive, or attaching a positive weight to the opponent's outcome (Korsgaard, Meglino, & Lester 1996).

To sum up, even though from a moral standpoint solidarity seems to require willingness to help others, from a psychological standpoint solidaristic behaviour does not necessarily need these other-regarding attitudes, since conformity seeking may well suffice to achieve it.

These different motives may be initiated automatically or deliberately (Shi et al. 2020). The reflective model of prosociality holds that humans are born as creatures with non-moral and purely egoistic tendencies, and that prosocial behaviour requires exerting reflective control over this egoistic instinct (Metcalfe & Mischel 1999). In contrast to the reflective model, Zaki and Mitchell (2013) have proposed an intuitive model of prosociality, which suggests that prosocial behaviour often arises from intuitive, hot, or System 1 preferences, representing an impulse of its own. Indeed, some evidence has supported an intuitive model of prosociality showing that prosociality increases under time pressure or intuitive priming (i.e., instruction to respond as quickly as possible without deliberation). Other researchers have demonstrated, however, that intuition favours prosocial behaviour in certain social contexts but not others (Rand et al. 2016). It turned out that the most important moderators that facilitate intuitive prosociality are moral identity, social value orientation, and personality traits honesty-humility, and a perceived emergency that requires immediate response.

1.3.2. Group-based motivation for solidarity behaviour

Even though in-group solidarity can be described as any kind of bond that holds a group or community together, the literature tends to emphasise the importance of identification with others as the most important factor eliciting solidarity. That is, psychologically, a sense of solidarity tends to emerge out of the active identification of oneself as a part of a group in a way that implies an investment of some nature in the group (Cureton 2012).

The recognition of similarity with one (or more) persons in one relevant respect can take many forms: it entails the awareness of being associated, by choice, by "fate", or other circumstances, with others (Turner et al. 1987). In that sense, solidarity needs some sort of unity within the group, or a sense that the members of the group share something and have a stake in its well-being. Sometimes, solidarity is characterised by shared consciousness, and it arises within societies where members are bound together by what they share in common (Calhoun 2002; Scholz 2008). It emerges when there is a shared culture and belief-system, reinforced by rituals, symbols, and sanctions for nonconformity. In other words, members have a common way of being and doing within the world that goes largely unchallenged (Fararo & Doreian 1998).

Indeed, a vast body of research demonstrates that the salience of social identity invokes a set of processes which impact upon intra- and interpersonal phenomena in such a way as to produce the conditions of coordinated joint action. Therefore, in various ways, social identity creates spontaneous forms of mutual social support and social organisation. When people see themselves and others as members of a common group, they have an expectation that they will agree on issues of relevance to the group (see also Abrams et al. 1990; Turner 1991). Without shared group membership there is no expectation of agreement, no tendency to support the views of others, no necessary convergence. In consequence, the willingness to help others is less probable. If people feel that they share beliefs and values with others, they are more likely to respect them and also to trust them. It also makes them more able to cooperate with others since they can be confident that their efforts will be devoted to bringing about the same ends (for reviews of the relevant literature, see Haslam, 2001; Hogg & Terry, 2001; Tyler & Blader, 2000).

The importance of identification is confirmed by studies that show that institutions of solidarity such as the welfare state tend to be more generous where a society is more homogeneous and/or where migration rate is lower (Alesina et al., 1999; Gilens, 1999). Even though other studies show that this correlation might be less significant in European countries than as has been observed in the US (Eger & Breznau, 2017), shared membership helps facilitate the solidarity necessary for welfare state development (see also Nicoli et al 2020 for research pertaining to support for EU-wide welfare state mechanisms).

Although the (largely) experimental results are clear, the question remains regarding what social policy initiatives and practices can help foster solidarity-generating identification with out-groupers.

1.3.3. Out-group solidarity and common group identity

Gaertner and Dovidio (2004) demonstrated that when members of different groups are induced to conceive of themselves as a single group (i.e., members of the European Union), rather than as two completely separate groups (e.g., Germans and Poles; Europeans and immigrants), attitudes toward former out-group members will become more positive through the cognitive and motivational forces that result from in-group formation – a consequence that could increase the sense of connectedness across group lines. Thus, whereas it may be impossible to overcome the social categorisation process, it may be possible to affect the level of category inclusiveness people use when categorising others, including themselves. Thus, it may be possible to engineer a recategorisation or decategorisation of perceived group boundaries in ways that reduce the original intergroup bias and conflict.

Gaertner and Dovidio (2000) claim that common in-group identity may be achieved by increasing intergroup interdependence, the salience of existing common superordinate memberships (e.g., the EU), or by introducing factors (e.g., common goals) that are perceived to be shared by the members. As they proposed initially (Gaertner et al. 1989; see also Gaertner & Dovidio 2000), the development of a common in-group identity does not necessarily require each group to forsake its less inclusive group identity completely. As depicted by the “two subgroups within one group” representation (i.e., a dual identity), it is possible for members to conceive of two groups (e.g., Poles and Germans) as distinct units within the context of a superordinate identity (e.g., the EU).

When group identities and the associated cultural values are central to members’ functioning or when they are associated with high status or highly visible cues to group membership, it would be undesirable or impossible for people to relinquish these group identities. If, however, people continued to regard themselves as members of different groups but all playing on the same team or as part of the same superordinate entity, intergroup relations between these “subgroups” would be more positive than if members only considered themselves as “separate groups.”

Although most evidence concerning the positive effects of common identity comes from research on ethnic bias, prejudice, and discrimination, there are also some studies showing that perceived similarities increase helping and cooperative behaviours (Antal, Ohtsuki, Wakeley, Taylor, & Nowak 2009; Colman, Browning, & Pulford 2012; Fischer, Kastenmüller, Frey, & Peus, 2009; Riolo, Cohen, & Axelrod 2001). There are many reasons for this. Perceived similarity signals some degree of kinship, trustworthiness, likability, and opportunity to form a group. It increases likelihood of re-encounter (i.e., “birds of a feather flock together”) and thereby reciprocity as well as reward and punishment by previously met individuals and their social network. Perceived kinship, trustworthiness, and likability, sharing group membership, reciprocity, reward, and punishment all motivate prosociality and specifically cooperation in social dilemmas (Rand & Nowak 2013). It follows, that perceived similarity does as well (Koch et al. 2020).

Importantly, however, Dovidio et al. (2016) demonstrated that the strategy of emphasising common group identity may help to stabilise relations between groups in conflict, but this approach may be less effective for achieving stable and equitable relations between groups co-existing long-term within the same society. The researchers suggested that to improve intergroup relations under these conditions, policies must accommodate the goals and needs of members of majority and minority groups – preferably simultaneously. For example, for the majority group, an important goal that needs to be addressed could be to maintain a one-group representation. This is because it draws attention away from differences between groups and reduces the likelihood of collective action that challenges the status quo. Minority groups may prefer a dual identity, valuing their historical identity or contemporary identity, as well as the shared identity with the majority group. Feeling respected and treated fairly are critical elements of stable, positive intergroup relations (e.g., Shnabel et al. 2008).

1.3.4. Social norms

Solidarity takes on a normative dimension when solidarity relationships are based on shared values or norms. A social norm is a rule or principle that specifies actions that are required, permissible or forbidden independently of any legal or social institution (Sherif 1936). Thus, the norms can be characterised as (a) rules or principles (b) with independent normativity and which generate (c) intrinsic motivation and (d) punitive attitudes toward

violators. Following social norms means that people expect others to act in certain ways and not in others, and they care about whether or not others are following these norms. Thus, for example, communal sharing relations can be strengthened by a social norm for communal sharing. Social norms for communal sharing involve social exchange, designating uncertain resources as common goods to be shared with other members of the social group (Fiske 1992). The group members might obey the norm voluntarily if their individual goals are in line with the normatively required behaviour, or they might be forced to obey the norm because their individual goals differ from the normatively required behaviour, in which case the enforcement of the norm presupposes that norm violations are punished (Fehr & Fischbacher 2004).

Social norms are often categorised as either descriptive or injunctive norms. Descriptive norms communicate patterns of behaviour that individuals want to conform to on the condition that most other people also perform the behaviour, whereas injunctive norms communicate what one should do in a given situation (Bicchieri 2016; Cialdini, Reno & Kallgren 1990). These norms influence behaviour by changing one's social expectations of how others behave. They also change the expectations of how others expect us to behave. A social norm could accomplish this by leading an individual to believe that others expect them to be prosocial, and that others will punish them for being selfish. This changes the individual's social expectations, and leads them to expect negative consequences for contravening a norm – consequences which they avoid by following the norm. Another way that a social norm could push an individual toward a prosocial/cooperative choice is by changing their set of preferences so that prosocial behaviour/cooperation becomes the option with the highest expected reward (e.g., by making individuals feel good by helping, or ashamed of being selfish). These "internalised" social norms could be thought of as moral norms, the critical difference being that they are not conditioned as strongly on social expectations as are social norms. Importantly, increasing the strength of norms can be accomplished by increasing people's perceptions of the frequency of certain (e.g., solidaristic) behaviours that close social network members are performing (descriptive norms) as well as what close social network members approve of (injunctive norms).

To sum up, psychological mechanisms through which norms influence solidarity behaviour refer to: (1) social expectations that require us to represent others' beliefs and desires about what we should do; (2) mental-state reasoning (i.e., the ability to infer the mental states of others, anticipating others' social preferences; Takagishi et al. 2010); and (3) self-conscious emotions (e.g., violations of social norms are associated with shame or guilt; (Tangney 1995)).

Some research has demonstrated that where group norms are prosocial, people may actually compete to act more positively towards others (Jetten, Spears, & Manstead 1996). In that case, strong normative processes in the in-group may lead to support for both in-group and out-group members. A good example of how this prosocial norm operated was the new German experience of "welcoming culture". The other identity process that can strengthen solidarity towards others is the reputational process. This process is related to the expectation of an out-group-favouring behaviour to be the socially approved form of action and of being aware of the reputational costs of violating this in-group's norm. In addition, for helpful behaviour to occur we have to have either particular strategic reasons for wishing to be seen to help others (Hopkins et al. 2007), or else to have specific and explicit norms for helping them (Reicher et al. 2005).

Theories of social psychology and political science suggest that a common set of norms can unify individuals who would otherwise be divided by their ethnic or religious identities (Paluck & Green 2009). Norms need not reflect the one-sided imposition of cultural practices that out-group (e.g., immigrant) communities find foreign or threatening to their own identities; rather, they could emerge as the result of a dialogue and mutual adaptation by both in-group (e.g. host) and out-group (e.g., immigrant communities). Choi et al (2019) provide experimental evidence that the enforcement of common social norms of good citizenship (e.g., don't litter) can reduce bias against immigrants driven by perceptions of ascriptive (religious) differences. Another example comes from a study run during the COVID-19 pandemic. Bourgeois et al. (2020) demonstrated that people's own sense of duty is a strong predictor of prosocial behaviour, especially in a health crisis. In these studies, when Canadians think following the rules helps society, civic mindedness fuels compliance and makes people almost immune to other people's (mis)behaviours. Yet, for those who see compliance with public health recommendations as a personal choice, perceptions of other people's behaviour become particularly important. Similarly, research on civic duty is compelling with respect to its impact on behaviour. Civic duty refers to a sense of responsibility toward society.

1.4. Discussion and examples

In this section, we discuss applications and examples of solidarity with the aim of expanding the semantic area of the concept. The definitional framework provided above is put into practice to show how the different dimensions we have distinguished are relevant for understanding practices of solidarity in contemporary times. Some of the examples we provide are clearly instances of solidarity, whereas others remain at the margins of the concept or are contested.

1.4.1. Intergenerational solidarity

Intergenerational solidarity is defined by the connection and exchange between generations (Tobio 2010). The connection is what keeps generations together, highlighting interaction and mutual support; exchange refers to what generations give to and receive from each other. The greater the interaction, mutual affection, resemblance among group members, shared norms, frequent contact, and commitment to the group, the more solidarity the groups show (Künemund 2008). Intergroup solidarity is consolidated at a micro-level (several generations of a family) and a macro level (beneficiaries, inactive generations, versus taxpayers, the active generations) (Walker & Fong, 2010). Therefore, intergenerational solidarity is developed in the private sphere of family, community relationships, and the public sphere of social policies. Importantly, in recent years it has been mostly described by its scarcity, absence, or difficulty (Figueiredo 2007; Sousa Figueiredo & Cerqueira, 2004): at a micro level by the abandonment of older persons, and at a macro level by the inability of the active population (taxpayers) to ensure the social protection of the non-active (beneficiaries).

One important barrier for intergenerational solidarity is ageism, i.e., negative attitudes towards the elderly (Officer & de la Fuente-Núñez 2018). The negative stereotype of older people as highly homogenous, frail and helpless, unable to make valuable contributions to society, affects older as well as younger populations (Ayalon et al 2020; Corporation for National and Community Service, 2016). A large body of research has demonstrated that self-perception of aging is associated with functional health outcomes (Levy, Slade, & Kasl 2002), cognition (Levy 2003), and even longevity (Levy, Slade, Kunkel, & Kasl 2002). Negative age stereotypes can be internalised by people of all ages and when these views become self-relevant, influencing older persons' beliefs about their aging, they can detrimentally impact health (Levy 2009). Such findings hold significant implications not only for the quality of life of the elderly but also for healthcare funding and policy. In addition, this negative portrayal of older adults and aging may affect younger people as they also internalise negative messages about old age and aging. For instance, in current public discourse portraying older people as susceptible to the negative effects of the COVID-19 outbreak, younger people tend to view themselves as immune to the virus and, thus, engage in risk behaviours (Ayalon et al. 2020). By relying on and perpetuating age-based stereotypes, we not only further age-based discrimination, but we also shut out and ignore many layers of complexity, individuality, and agency (Rauvola et al. 2022). Modern ageism, cited by the previous authors, is a "subtle but equally damaging form of age-based discrimination and stereotyping wherein problematic and reductive beliefs and values about younger and older generations are treated as justified and legitimate". Generationalism, that is "the belief that all members of a given generation possess characteristics specific to that generation, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another generation", is a form of modern ageism (Rauvola et al., 2019).

An important means to combat this stereotypical perception of older people is to refrain from broad age-based categorisations, resulting in sweeping generalisations, a lack of differentiation, and demonstrate that older adults are an extremely heterogeneous group, differing in life experiences, cultural backgrounds, genetics, and health histories (Fingerman & Trevino, 2020). It is also important to promote a better understanding of the realities of the groups and the challenges they face (see I-S Age Platform Europe, <https://www.age-platform.eu/>). Ageism and categorisation can be overcome by stressing that we are all in this together rather than emphasising age as the critical variable, by individualising communication and interaction, by drawing on personalised rather than generalised messages, and by invoking references to individual people (Ayalon et al 2020; European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations).

Generational exchange of resources heavily depends on the state, the market, and the volunteer sector. At the macro level, there is a distribution of costs, benefits and risks between adults who pay taxes, buy services, or give their time on the one hand, and, for example, children, and the elderly, or disabled who receive care resources on the other. A focus on fiscal payments shows differences in what younger cohorts are currently paying and estimates of future payments to be received, thus concluding that intergenerational transfers are unequal. At the micro level, family generations give one another support along with life-changing roles as time

goes by. It seems that one possible way to foster interaction, cooperation, and solidarity between the different age groups is keeping older people in employment as long as possible and helping to transfer their knowledge and experience. Importantly, skills transfers can happen several ways, from younger to older and from older to younger, and within or outside the labour market. Measures aimed at promoting work-life balance can support longer working careers, and so contribute to the sustainability of pension systems (see Green Paper, EC 2021). Many older people may also bring valuable contributions through volunteering outside of their own families. By helping others in need, older people not only have a high social impact on their neighbourhoods and communities, in return they may also feel more useful and fulfilled, which improves their sense of wellbeing and health.

1.4.2. Welfare state solidarity

Welfare state solidarity is a specific and paradigmatic instance of the legal/political-institutional level of solidarity; commitments, obligations and entitlements for both individuals and associations are defined and enforced within a legal and political framework with specific legal consequences for non-compliance. Social security systems within welfare states enable citizens to insure themselves against social risks, poor health and other risks, and redistribute to less advantaged members of a society. They facilitate the development of human and social capital through provision of public education, public health and other instruments (Vandenbrouke 2020). Welfare-state institutions can be considered as solidaristic in so far as they entail reciprocal relations of cost or burden sharing in view of specific societal or political ends (increased well-being or social capital for the participants). Where welfare-state institutions and their embedded relations differ from other conceptions or examples of solidarity has to do with their legal status and concretisation. The legal status of such relations precludes case-by-case consideration of motivation or deserts; in other words, because welfare-state solidarity is legally and institutionally embedded, the particular motivations or attitudes of individuals who participate in these relations are not relevant to their status as solidarity relations. Broader political and societal support for welfare state solidarity institutions may of course depend on motivational and other attitudes towards solidarity.

The motivational neutrality described above can also be observed in other forms of solidarity relations/praxes between associations, institutions, or states where the obligations and responsibilities entailed by the solidarity relations are specified in a legal framework. Welfare-state solidarity is particularly relevant to questions of the scale of solidarity groupings, in-group/out-group, and symmetrical/asymmetrical relations between solidaristic actors (as discussed above in the definitional framework). It is a particularly sensitive topic in relation to discussions of European solidarity as the nation-state has been the historical scope of welfare-state solidarity relations. Studies have shown that openness to EU-wide welfare measures is correlated to feelings of European identity, reinforcing the relation between solidarity and political identity (Nicoli et al. 2020).

1.4.3. Non-competitive economy (third sector, cooperatives).

Cooperation is usually considered a proxy of solidarity, and the cooperative movement is often associated with the idea of workers' solidarity. There are different reasons for this. Historically, cooperatives were set up with the aim of uniting workers in order to avoid exploitation. By setting up a cooperative, workers established the principle of their equality (one person, one vote), and rejected the principle of their subordination to an external employer. By doing this, they also accepted the burden of a shared economic risk, since to start the business they had to invest their own personal resources in it, hence taking an additional risk when compared to standard capital-intensive enterprises (Dow 2003). Secondly, in countries where the cooperative firm is state-sanctioned, coops are usually entitled with privileges such as reduced tax burdens because the state recognises that they serve a unique social function. Since its beginning in the UK in the late 18th century, cooperativism has been understood as a non-exploitative, thus solidaristic, model of economic production. Later, consumer cooperatives further expanded this intuition. Cooperatives are intended as non-profit enterprises, based on the principle that their main aim is to help individuals (workers, consumers, citizens) achieve some basic social goals such as getting a job, buying food and other basic goods, building a house, rather than earning profits.

Even today, in most countries cooperatives cannot make profits. Surplus has either to be reinvested in the cooperative or devolved to the larger cooperative system to help it grow. With respect to this latter motive, coops achieve a second level form of solidarity, which is the solidarity among cooperative units. In the Spanish Mondragon Corporation, each cooperative belonging to the network delivers part of its surplus to the

cooperative system. In Italy, when a cooperative dissolves, the remaining capital cannot be redistributed to the associates, but goes into a fund which serves to help set up new cooperative enterprises.

The third sector, that part of a society or economy comprising actors that are both non non-state and not-for-profit organizations or associations, including charities, voluntary and community groups, cooperatives, etc., is similarly designed as a model of economic activity which aims at delivering basic services (sanitary, social, health, cultural) without having the aim of economic profit. Even though cooperatives operate in the third sector, the two are formally independent. What they have in common, though, is a shared social view of the economy as an exchange system based on the reconciliation between competitiveness (efficacy and efficiency in the production of goods and delivery of services) and solidarity (willingness to deliver goods/services to the needy at prices they can afford).

1.4.4. Market as anti-solidaristic? Or solidaristic interpretations of the market?

A debate exists concerning the ambiguous relation between the market and solidarity. According to many scholars, markets and solidarity (or market rationale and solidarity rationale) lie at the opposite extremes of a continuum. On the one hand, there is the selfish behaviour of rational individuals pursuing their greedy self-interest. On the other hand, there is the socially oriented behaviour of individuals giving away something they have, bearing costs and risks for the sake of others. To that extent, some have also considered that liberal and market-based societies such as the United States exhibit lower levels of solidarity than social-democratic societies in which market space is reduced, and the state has a larger role in the production and delivery of goods and services. Particularly in the first decades after WW II, the opposition between liberalism and socialism pointed to the solidaristic function of the state. This interpretation lends itself to criticisms of different sorts. On the one hand, states may fail to produce solidarity, particularly when the powers of the state become the weapon of the majority to curb or exploit religious, cultural, or ethnic minorities. On the other hand, as the discussion of the third sector and of cooperatives above has shown, markets do not seem to be intrinsically immoral or anti-solidaristic. What seems to matter is, rather, how markets are organised and regulated through state and supra-state norms. Cooperatives are business actors that operate in the market, often achieving levels of competitiveness superior to capital-intensive firms. Yet they do it in ways that promote solidarity among workers, but also broader solidarity, insofar as they exchange individual profit for the pursuit of social goals such as helping the needy.

1.4.5. Devolution and subsidiarity

Devolution is the statutory delegation of powers from the central government of a sovereign state to govern at a subnational level, such as a regional or local level. It is a form of administrative decentralisation. Devolved territories have the power to make legislation relevant to the area, thereby granting them a higher level of autonomy. The European subsidiarity principle aims to ensure that decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen. Except in cases where a higher political level has exclusive competence, action at a higher level should not be taken unless it is more effective than action taken at a more local level. Before being embedded in the EU charters, subsidiarity was a founding principle of the “social doctrine of the Church”, which states that “Just as it is gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so also it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do. For every social activity ought of its very nature to furnish help to the members of the body social, and never destroy and absorb them” (Pope Pius XI 1931). Devolution and subsidiarity point to the implication expressed above that to be effective, solidarity ought to refer to a cohesive community. The smaller the community, the stronger the solidaristic bond. In addition, individual activation and contribution to the common good are usually easier when interactions are direct and involve persons one knows. People may prefer contributing to the well-being of their own neighbourhood, where the results of their action will be visible than more impersonal mechanisms of redistribution at the state level. The association between solidarity and devolution may, however, be objected to on the opposite ground that the smaller the community, the smaller the solidaristic group. Indeed, welfare or tax devolution may give rise to the opposite anti-solidaristic result of better off communities taking all their benefits and leaving less privileged communities without the means necessary for the development of their members.

1.4.6. Civil disobedience

Civil disobedience is the active, professed refusal of a citizen or a public officer to obey certain laws, demands, orders, or commands of a government. Civil disobedience must be nonviolent in order to be called “civil”. Civil disobedience is usually predicated on reasons of fairness: a citizen or a public officer may decide to refuse to obey or apply a law he/she considers illegitimate or unjust. Civil disobedience usually implies the willingness to incur some personal costs for the sake of a common good whose beneficiary may be the community at large to which one belongs, or a specific group of individuals. As such, civil disobedience seems to have a direct link with solidarity. Examples of citizens’ civil disobedience are refusal to pay taxes one considers illegitimate, but also willingness to help terminal ill people to end their lives in countries where assisted suicide is unlawful (Italy). Civil servants may similarly refuse to apply laws they consider incompatible with higher moral principles. To establish whether civil disobedience may count as an act of solidarity, one has to establish the basis on which the act is committed (or omitted). For example, doctors refusing to participate in the procedure of abortions on religious grounds cannot be considered as acting on behalf of solidarity. On the other hand, doctors refusing to give government personal information on those they assist to protect them against specific punishments (e.g., when revealing the status of undocumented migrants would cause their expulsion or imprisonment).

1.4.7. The Solidarność movement

Solidarność was a mass democratic social movement in communist authoritarian Poland. It was independent of the party/state authorities and openly operating against communism. It was seen as a symbol of the fight for individual freedom in a state ruled in an undemocratic manner. Initiated by the workers’ strike in the Lenin Shipyard of Gdańsk on 7 August 1980, a year later it had nearly 10 million members (about one-third of the country’s working age population). Its popularity was attributed to being able to attract and unite all groups in Polish society and renew the nation’s sense of identity. This was possible as Solidarność was a very eclectic movement, referring to various ideological sources. Almost everyone could find something with which they could identify. Left-wing adherents saw it as a powerful mass movement dominated by the large industrial working class, emphasising social and political egalitarianism. Right-wing adherents, on the other hand, saw Solidarność as mainly the driving force of the conservative revolution, taking place under the patronage of the Catholic Church in the name of conservative, Christian, and national values. Thus, by combining such values as individual freedom, equality before the law, truth, patriotism, dignity, and above all, broadly understood interpersonal solidarity, Solidarność became a beacon of hope for a better future for many people. As a solidaristic movement, it was also strengthened by the presence of a common enemy, i.e., communism, and a shared religion that bound members of all sections of society. Finally, although Solidarność was repressed by the government and threatened by a Soviet military intervention, it universally renounced the use of violence in its actions and effectively avoided the temptation to undertake terrorist activities. Solidarność, led by Lech Wałęsa, triggered a real social change that led to the end of communism in Poland and ultimately the whole of Eastern Europe.

The Polish Round Table Talks (6 February – 5 April 1989) between Solidarność and communist government, eventually launched Poland’s transition to parliamentary democracy and a primarily market-based economy (Veugelers, de Groot and Stolk, 2017) and contributed to a series of events that led to the end of communism in Eastern Europe (Welsh 1994). Poland has a constitution that protects civil rights and freedoms and the rule of law. Nevertheless, the respect for such democratic principles is currently being scrutinised in Poland (and Hungary).⁸ This fragmentation of political values within and between EU Member States can also have an impact on solidarity as a societal value across EU Member States. (EU, 2012).

1.4.8. Solidarity in EU asylum and migration policy and debates

Solidarity is often discussed in terms of its role, meaning, and appropriate scope in relation to a common European policy on asylum and migration. The ECs 2020 proposal for “The New Pact on Migration and Asylum”, specifically recognises “that no Member State should shoulder a disproportionate responsibility and that all Member States should contribute to solidarity on a constant basis.” The “New Pact” and specifically the reference

⁸ See, for instance, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/es/IP_19_1957

to inter-state EU solidarity emerged from the EU “migration crisis” which began in 2015. Due in large part to the civil war in Syria, there were 1.3 million asylum claims made in the European Union in 2015 (compared to roughly 594k in 2014; by 2020 the number of applications had fallen to roughly 471k). These asylum seekers arrived primarily (though not exclusively) via Mediterranean Sea routes, placing enormous pressures on a small group of EU Member States. According to Eurostat, in 2015 “Germany accounted for 24.6 % of all first-time applicants in the EU. It was followed by Spain (86 400, or 20.7%), France (81 800, or 19.6%), ahead of Greece (37 900, or 9.1%) and Italy (21 200, or 5.1 %).”⁹

The aim of this section is not to provide an analysis of EU migration and asylum policy, but rather to provide a brief explanation of the multi-faceted ways that the value of solidarity is evoked in discussions concerning migration and the variety of solidarity practices involved in this policy area. These ways correspond to the distinctions and levels of solidarity outlined in our definitional framework.

At the broadest end of the spectrum, the willingness at individual, associational/organisational, and governmental levels to welcome, attempt to support, and civically integrate asylum seekers, refugees, or vulnerable migrants more generally is perceived as one of the paradigmatic forms of what we have called above out-group solidarity. In such cases, the focus for the one practicing solidarity is not on helping those sharing an in-group or social identity, but rather with those who have suffered some injustice or at an even more fundamental level share in the fundamental human trait of vulnerability (what the philosopher Hannah Arendt argued was the basis for solidarity). Support for migration or admittance of asylum seekers as a solidarity practice should be seen as distinct from arguments made on the basis of self-interest, for example due to the economic or cultural benefits of immigration; though in practice the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Nonetheless, solidarity practices require a dimension of burden or cost-bearing. In practice, at the individual, organisational, and governmental level support for solidarity practices towards migrants may be higher if the practitioners of solidarity perceive some other similarity as strengthening the normative requirement of the solidarity bond, e.g., religion or ethnicity. Remaining at this very broad level, resistance to out-group solidarity vis-à-vis migration and asylum policy can also be understood by those in favour of restricting migration or accepting asylum seekers as a form of in-group solidarity. This sentiment is captured well in the slogan “our own people first”, where, at least at face value, the attitude is not against solidarity practices per se, but prioritises in-group over out-group solidarity.

At the individual and organisational (associational) level, solidarity towards migrants and would-be asylum seekers can often incur considerable legal and physical risks. Amnesty International has argued “European governments, EU institutions and authorities have deployed an array of restrictive, sanctioning and punitive measures against individuals and groups who defend the rights of people on the move, including by using immigration and counter-terrorism regulations to unduly restrict the right to defend human rights”. NGOs engaged in humanitarian sea rescue efforts have also raised concerns about the criminalisation of what they consider humanitarian and solidaristic practices (Cusumano and Villa 2020). While it is of course logical that NGOs would argue against criminalisation of what they consider to be solidarity practices, the risk incurred, including risk of prosecution, adds to the solidaristic dimension of the practice (see above section on civil disobedience).

At the level of the European Union, “European Solidarity” has been appealed to in discussions of the pressures on Member States due to migration, and it is explicitly referenced in the EC proposal for “The New Pact on Migration and Asylum”. Solidarity as risk and burden sharing between Member States is understood largely in terms of the costs of processing, settlement, and potential return of migrants, including asylum seekers. In the language used by the European Commission, solidarity is explicitly linked to the “fair” distribution of risks and burdens related to migration management. This point is significant because it elevates or equates the status of solidarity to that of justice as fairness in the distribution of risks and burdens.

⁹ As these figures are from the end of 2021, they do not even account for the crisis caused by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine beginning on 24 February 2022; this sudden outbreak of war has caused the world’s fastest-growing displacement crisis since World War II. In its first six weeks, the conflict forced over a quarter of Ukraine’s population to flee their homes, and an estimated 7.7 million Ukrainians are now internally displaced, with nearly 3.5 million taking refuge across the border in Poland; a significantly fewer number of those fleeing the invasion entered neighboring countries such as Romania, Slovakia, Moldova and Hungary (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 24 April 2022).



Promoting solidarity through education: the [knit a square project](#). Montessori school TEMS (Spain and UK)

Also significant from the perspective of solidarity is that “The New Pact on Migration and Asylum” delegates responsibility for implementing solidarity between Member States to the EU as a whole. The wording of the EC seems to imply that in the area of migration and asylum European institutions and policy should function as solidarity mechanisms, responsible for the fair distribution of risks and burdens. It is important to point out here that the solidarity relations referred to in the descriptions of the “The New Pact on Migration and Asylum” are between EU Member States, and specific to the alleviation of various pressures (costs) associated with migration and asylum.

1.4.9. Solidarity in the COVID-19 crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic and related economic, social, and political crises have brought the concept of solidarity to the forefront of European public and policy discourse in a variety of ways. The concept of solidarity has been invoked, praised, and debated at all three of the levels described above: individual, associational/organisational, institutional/governmental (including among EU Member States). During the pandemic, the value of solidarity has been linked to the behaviour of individuals, the formation and behaviour of associations for mutual aid, the restrictions of some fundamental liberties, fiscal policy at all levels of government (including at the level of relations between EU Member States). It is also related to the existence of a European vaccine policy (including purchase and distribution), and can be connected to wider questions and controversies relating to vaccination and herd immunity. This has also brought the concept of solidarity – with its prioritisation of in-group relations – into potential conflict with claims and concerns about global justice in relation to vaccine distribution and accessibility (this will be examined below). Claims and calls of and for solidarity have utilised various forms of in-group or “group-similarity” including intergenerational, local community, national, and European. As solidarity rhetoric was ubiquitous during the pandemic, it is helpful to be specific about the different forms of solidarity at play (or not).



photo by Rianne Letschert, president, Maastricht University

Individual solidarity practices during the pandemic included various forms of mutual aid and burden sharing (doing the shopping for vulnerable members of the community being a prime example, see the photo from Maastricht, Netherlands). These forms of risk or burden bearing, can also be (and have been) institutionalised through neighbourhood associations or other mutual aid organisations. Respecting or complying with rules limiting personal freedoms has also been portrayed (rightfully) as a form of solidarity insofar as it has entailed a demand of a sacrifice on the part of some to benefit others in the community by not engaging in activities that might raise infection rates and raise risk levels for vulnerable members of the community, such as the elderly, those with co-morbidities, front-line workers, or those unable to comfortably isolate. The trope of intergenerational solidarity has been utilised in this context.

Again, at the individual level, a form of rational vaccine hesitancy can, to an extent, also be linked to the inverse of solidarity. This would be the case if an individual would choose to forego a vaccination (COVID or otherwise) with the belief that others will be vaccinated and herd immunity created without that individual being subjected to the risk (however minor) of a vaccine – the free-rider scenario. To the contrary, receiving a vaccine with the motivation that it reduces risk (by reducing virus transmission) for vulnerable others could be understood as a solidaristic act. It can also be argued that not making attempts at “queue jumping” during initial periods or in areas of vaccine scarcity was a kind of minimal solidaristic act as it involved taking on some risk, or maintaining some risk for longer than might be necessary in order to expedite the risk mitigation of other more vulnerable individuals.

European solidarity has also been invoked in relation to EU vaccination procurement and distribution. The EU vaccine strategy pooled procurement of vaccines across the Member States. This has in theory (we don’t know of course how purely national vaccine strategies for Member States would have panned out) ensured better access to vaccines for smaller Member States; it also ensured that distribution of available vaccines across Member States was proportional to population rather than the purchasing or political power of individual states. Although we cannot say with certainty how alternative situations would have unfolded, the rationale behind the pooling of vaccine procurement efforts does involve dimensions of solidaristic practices (Greer 2020), to the extent that larger, wealthier Member States may have been able to purchase vaccines at the national level in a manner allowing for faster delivery (although this is debatable). Problems with vaccine delivery and rollout notwithstanding, in the joint procurement process for vaccines there was an element of risk or cost bearing towards specific social and political ends, namely ensuring a return to the free movement of citizens and goods and the resumption of economic and social activity that was put on hold due to the pandemic as swiftly as possible. This can also be seen as the emergence of a potential trend toward an increased level of institutionalised solidaristic practices, in this case public health, being addressed at the EU level, and the European institutions subsequently becoming a greater loci of solidaristic practices among Member States, and subsequently European citizens (who are required to engage in solidaristic practices, however indirectly, by law). There is the potential for the formation of a virtuous circle here. Research has shown that feelings of European identity are correlated with positive attitudes towards EU-wide welfare schemes (Nicoli et al. 2020). The success of EU-wide institutionalised solidarity practices has the potential to increase sentiments of European identity, and subsequently support for cross-country institutional solidarity practices. (The initial challenges facing the EU vaccine programme also posed a potential threat to feelings of support for EU-wide solidarity practices at the institutional level.) How this dynamic would interact with the principle of subsidiarity is a matter for further investigation. Moreover, it is clear that solidaristic practices, institutionalised at the EU level, cannot be separated from the self-interest of either Member States or their citizens; they are agreed to by the MSs at least in large part (if not solely) because they would be understood to be beneficial to individual MSs and citizens. Institutionalisation of solidarity practices at the EU level beyond monetary transfer must demonstrate efficacy. The question vis-à-vis calling certain practices solidaristic or not also involves the motivations of Member States and citizens. If properly solidaristic practices are motivated by sentiments beyond self-interest and efficacy, then the dimension of identity also must play an important role in delineating the community of solidarity, i.e. in formulating the exclusivity conditions of the solidarity group. However, identity and efficacy are also potentially linked: greater efficacy of solidarity practices at EU level may lead to stronger European identity, and hence more willingness to participate in EU-wide solidarity practices at the institutional level. More research is needed to

better characterise the relation between the provision of social goods at a particular level (local, national, European) and the correlate effect on subjective social identification with that level.¹⁰

The EU is also a contributor to the WHO's COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access or COVAX scheme. "COVAX is the vaccines pillar of the WHO's Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator" [...] "Its aim is to accelerate the development and manufacture of COVID-19 vaccines, and to guarantee fair and equitable access for every country in the world." COVAX also makes use of a solidarity principle as it aims to pool resources and facilitate cost or burden sharing to ensure some level of equitable distribution at a global scale. As viruses do not respect borders, participation in COVAX also helps to ensure that the spread of COVID-19 can be limited. A question can be asked as to whether the EU's partial participation in the COVAX scheme can be understood as being motivated by solidarity principles or global justice principles (or why it matters). In this instance, it could be said that the EU has shown willingness to bear costs to help vulnerable members of the global community (not without some rational self-interest), but has not agreed to share risks, as EU Member States (like nearly all other rich nations) are acquiring their own vaccine supply outside of the COVAX scheme. This is, at least in part, likely linked to the fact that the COVAX scheme aims at a vaccination rate of 20% across all participants before that 20% can be exceeded in any individual participating state. It might be said that the EU limited the scope of its own vaccine solidarity mechanisms in order to maximise efficiency and outcomes for its own population. Strong relations of in-group solidarity and risk-sharing have their limits. Beyond the boundaries of solidarity is the space of (global) justice. As US president Joe Biden recently said: "We're going to start off making sure Americans are taken care of first," [...] "But we're then going to try and help the rest of the world." Further investigation of the role of the solidarity principle and solidaristic practices in the global efforts toward vaccine development and rollout would include a discussion of the role of intellectual property law.

The shared financial commitments exemplified in the expansion of the EU Solidarity Fund to include major public health emergencies are a clear example of institutionalised risk-sharing or cost-bearing mechanisms. This is a clear-cut instance of how European institutions institutionalise and facilitate solidaristic practices at the Member State level. The question of the boundaries of such highly institutionalised solidarity relations again poses the issue of the tension between claims of solidarity, claims of justice, and prescriptive claims about the expansion of what Margaret Levi calls the "community of fate". As one might expect, the European Commission's COVID-19 EU Solidarity Fund is available to EU Member States and "countries involved in negotiations with a view to joining the EU". The European community of solidarity is limited by institutional arrangements, which further reinforce relations of mutual inter-dependence creating not just a community of mutual self-interest, but aiming to create, institutionalise, and generate awareness of a European "community of fate" vis-a-vis the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent economic, social, and political crises. The point is that institutionalisation of the European "community of fate" through institutionalised solidarity practices aims at a positive feedback loop wherein the acknowledgement and support of the idea of a European "community of fate" is reinforced by effective solidarity practices.

The COVAX scheme attempts to expand awareness and solidaristic practices relating to a "community of fate" stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic to a global level, at least in regard to the development and distribution of testing materials, vaccines, and medicines.

Although a common social identity can serve as the foundation of democratic citizenship and support for institutionalised solidarity practices, and crises can serve as catalysts for expanding solidaristic practices, some analysis has also revealed that solidarity at the person-to-person level, in the form of people supporting others recognised as similar to oneself in a salient fashion can be undermined during the crisis (e.g., Prainsack 2020). Threats perceived as related to the pandemic have the potential to undermine positive collective responses. While intergroup threats (framed as COVID-19 is "foreign" disease spread by outsiders) can temporarily increase feelings of in-group identification and in-group solidarity, it also sharpens the boundaries of who is inside – and who is outside – the group, triggering greater prejudice towards the latter. Moreover, in the long-term, threats not only undermine out-group but also in-group solidarity. Thus, this can lead people not only to seek out less group-based social support but also to provide less support to other in-group members who are in need (Jetten et al. 2020). One approach to mitigating the downsides of group threat involves framing COVID-19 as an intergroup threat in which the out-group is not another nation or community of people but rather the virus itself (another way of expressing the idea behind expanding the community of fate). This does pose the question of

¹⁰ The SOLPAN (Solidarity in times of a pandemic) study is an important pan-European initiative to examine solidarity practices at different levels in different European as well as non-European countries during the pandemic. <https://digigov.univie.ac.at/projects/solidarity-in-times-of-a-pandemic-solpan/>

how the “expanded community of fate” will be maintained post-crisis. Such an approach seeks to emphasise common humanity as an expanded shared in-group and has been found to improve intergroup attitudes (Wohl & Branscombe 2005). Thus, it seems that solidarity in a crisis like COVID-19 is a function of shared social identity, and shared social identity is a function of the creation of inclusive social categories. Whether this happens depends on history, contemporary context, and leadership (see Jetten et al., 2020). Dovidio et al. (2020) suggest that, on the one hand, it is possible to draw on historically established superordinate memberships (e.g., as members of the same local community, organisation, nation or, indeed, as global citizens confronting shared global challenges such as climate change and the fires, floods and droughts it brings across the globe). On the other hand, it is possible to create new inclusive identities forged by common fate or by interdependence in the face of a shared loss or a mutual enemy: expanded “communities of fate”. Solidarity rhetoric from European leaders is an example of such an approach. For instance, European Council President Charles Michel’s statement: “This pandemic is putting our societies under serious strain. The well-being of each EU member state depends on the well-being of the whole of the EU. We are all in this together” clearly emphasises the economic interdependence of the individual Member States in the EU: if one fails, all are in danger. Also, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, presented common European identity as the key mechanism through which Europe could overcome early setbacks in responding to the pandemic: “When Europe really needed an ‘all for one’ spirit, too many initially gave an ‘only for me’ response” (Wheaton & de la Baume, 2020).

Wallascheck (2021) correctly noted that the EU summit in July 2020 vividly demonstrated that showing and declaring solidarity in the short term is just one side of the coin. The other is the institutionalisation of solidarity for the long-term outcomes and the societal and economic impact of the pandemic. Lasting solidarity requires agreeing on structures and mechanisms that Member States can rely on in the instance of future crises they may face. Thus, while the EU recovery fund might have been a first step towards a more institutionalised solidarity scheme, the limited time-frame as well as a tightening of the rules and conditions through repeated criticism have served to weaken the idea of European solidarity among EU Member States in pandemic times. At present, the multiple pressures and risks within the EU and its neighbours, brought to the foreground by the war in Ukraine, make ever clearer the need for the establishments of a more robust European solidarity structure.

To conclude this discussion, and in order to matter and resonate with the wider European public, the idea of solidarity also rests upon educational institutions which can give attention to solidarity (conflicts) in curricula and convey ideas of solidarity between students and teachers in class (see also Kymlicka in this issue). Such educational opportunities can lay the ground for citizens to support future European solidarity actions and even structures that are missing so far.

1.4.10. Two major crises and a global opportunity for solidarity

From an optimistic point of view, we might hope that two of the ongoing major European and global crises, the war in Ukraine and climate change could trigger a new impetus for and new forms of global solidarity, that is solidarity with people worldwide. We use the word optimistically as we have observed that the kind of social optimism that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic regarding forms of global solidarity did not live up to more hopeful expectations. Some authors have pointed out that the many calls for global solidarity during the pandemic raised questions about who we consider to be part of our scope of justice and thus who warrants consideration in allocation questions, for instance concerning vaccine distribution (Bal et al. 2022), as people were expected to be solidaristic with disadvantaged countries and populations in the world. Any surge of solidarity among states and also feelings of empathy among people and with nature emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic seem to have vanished relatively quickly as states and populations have pushed for a return to “normal”. Then, the war in Ukraine and the high number of refugees generated a new wave of solidarity from the EU and its citizens with an outpouring of support from citizens and states for the millions of refugees. Likewise, climate change seems to have reached a point of no return. It is no longer a problem for future generations but one that starkly confronts current populations around the globe, though with a decidedly unequal distribution of risk. Climate change is also a large driver for the migration patterns that interact with European solidarity dynamics. Whilst the European Green Deal appears to be a powerful policy to transform our economies and societies, the war in Ukraine and subsequent crises in energy prices and cost-of-living (relating to various factors) illustrate the complex web of interrelations that solidarity relations function within. Questions about solidarity at the European or global levels cannot be separated or treated abstractly from these global conditions and events.

Out of these dramatic facts, two disruptive questions arise: can human solidarity globalise? And what role can education play for global citizenship in this respect? The examples mentioned are so recent that, due to the lack

of evidence, we can only speculate. In every case, the contemporary condition of shared destiny urges a global locus for institutions, reciprocity, and empathy. As Richard Falk has written in a recent essay (Falk 2021):

As the COVID-19 pandemic slowly subsides, it is not clear what lessons will be drawn by political leaders and the public around the world. Entrenched power, wealth, and conventional wisdom have demonstrated the overwhelming resilience of the global order even while the virus continues to ravage many national societies. Despite some notable exceptions revealing extremes of solidarity or discrimination, efficient competence or irresponsible partisanship, this reversion to the status quo occurred at all levels of social organization from the village to the world, especially the sovereign state.

Falk adds that “never had the self-interest of the species so vividly and concretely coincided with an ethos of global solidarity. And yet such an ethos did not materialize. We must search for explanations and correctives”, as in the view of Falk, “global solidarity would benefit humanity functionally, ethically, ecologically, and spiritually.” For this, the development of education for global citizenship (GCED), the UNESCO response to big challenges including peace and sustainability, is needed to empower learners of all ages to understand that wars and climate challenges are global as well as local issues so that they become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable societies.¹¹

Promoting a sense of global solidarity through education would benefit humankind if it is approached as a form of problem solving. This pragmatism could be applied, for instance, to the global manufacture and sale of vaccines; to better manage climate change; or to reduce the risks of future wars, such as the extremely dangerous one we are currently witnessing in Europe. We need to see all these global issues through the lens of human solidarity to find responses that are also global. For example, as Falk writes, we need to “treat vaccines in the midst of epidemics or pandemics as part of the global commons rather than as a source of national diplomacy, international property rights, and pharmaceutical profits”. Likewise, “with climate change, whether we will manage a displacement of national and financial interests based on general global well-being depends on achieving an unprecedented level of global solidarity”. Similar assertions could be made for nuclear non-proliferation where in the current security narrative proliferation and the myopic hegemony of a few governments prevail over the well-being of people. There are nonetheless positive examples. Citing the devastating fires that occurred in the summer of 2022 in France, in which other EU countries (Germany, Greece, Poland, Romania, and Austria) helped, president Macron cried out “European solidarity is at work!”, while thousands of firefighters were involved.¹²

1.5. Solidarity and/through education

Although it is likely to be a proclaimed goal of education ministries around the world, it is rare that such institutions specify (perhaps only formally) and evaluate the values and virtues they strive to fulfil. But choosing the optimal ways to transmit virtues and values is a very important step in instilling them. In the case of solidarity, we know that helpful, solidarity-oriented students play an important role in the learning process. They help in disseminating knowledge within the classroom, especially in higher education, and are key to motivating other students and teachers as well.

1.5.1. Educating for solidarity as a European value

Educational systems may be the best places not only to transmit knowledge but also to prepare new generations to live and to contribute to their families, communities, nations and the world. As a humanistic and inclusive value, with worth in democratic societies (as discussed up to now), solidarity is a core value to be transmitted in education and as with the Lisbon values, one having universal validity.

Having an open mind, with an appreciation of different perspectives on reality, different ways of framing experience, different basic assumptions or theories, is essential to seeing programs not as manipulation and teachers as convincing and credible sources of information. It is also essential to show tolerance of and respect for members of the school community (and human beings in general), who at times hold highly varied views, beliefs, and ideals.

¹¹ UNESCO. Global citizenship education. <https://en.unesco.org/themes/gced>

¹² According to the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS), from July 2022 onwards France has seen a record number of burnt areas, with already more than 47,000 hectares burnt since the beginning of the year.

Because solidarity can be a crucial virtue and social glue that holds society (or political entities) together, especially when it is the most necessary, for example, in the recent crises and challenges in the EU discussed above (), it is appropriate for a supra-national economic and political union like the EU to seek out and promote policies in education that aim to foster solidaristic relations between its citizens, especially across Member State boundaries.

The importance of reinforcing the European community with deep-rooted solidarity was clear already at the 1948 Congress of Europe in The Hague and at the European Cultural Conference in 1949. Both proposed education as a means to create “a European spirit” that would help to secure the success of European integration. At these conferences, just after the end of the Second World War, it was stated that the European project would only be successful if a way could be found to instil a clear sense of belonging to its citizens that went beyond a political or economic union. Floyd Allport (as early as 1927) and a number of other writers later found that the most universally valid criteria of sense of group belonging are psychological. Individuals who belong to a certain political organisation are aware that they belong to it and, further, this awareness, in the case of the EU – “European spirit”, is an essential part of their group identity itself. The recognition at the above-mentioned conferences of education as a basis for closer ties between people and countries in the EU, can be found in many documents and practices. For instance, the 1995 White Paper on Education and Training recognises the social integration function of education and training that always has maintained a purpose for developing individuals on a personal level, and in the context of European integration, to foster a set of common values, pass on cultural heritage and teach self-resilience (St. John 2021). In more recent EU strategies, education and solidarity have also been interwoven. Thus, at the beginning of the 21st century, the stated objective of the European Council was “to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” (European Council 2000). As we can see, knowledge is directly connected with social cohesion. This position was confirmed a decade later in the “Education and Training 2020” framework that pointed to the importance of education on all levels: from early childhood education to lifelong education, from a national and regional level, to programs like Erasmus+ (wider than EU), in formal and informal ways. Besides knowledge obtained through education in narrower, “technical” ways, European education policy has always also emphasised (in various ways) solidarity and the need for people to feel a sense of belonging, as one of the fundamental goals of the EU, and we might say as a prerequisite for its existence.

European solidarity is especially important in times of challenges, both on an individual and on the state level. It is necessary that actors think politically and respond to the position of the group and people around them, rather than from an egoistic position. We must always make an effort to realise solidarity and not merely take it for granted, hence the role of education in fostering prosocial and solidaristic attitudes is essential.

Public solidarity is highly variable and depends on issues: it different than that with respect to people who have suffered from natural disasters, the unemployed, or migrants; or toward people who are more similar to us (by profession, country of origin, race or generation). All empirical studies and collected data show differences in attitudes towards solidarity depending on a wide range of factors.

If we turn to the more specific question of how to foster solidaristic attitudes in education, we can perhaps look to the four main components outlined in the definitional framework above: common values and goals, risk sharing, equality and trust (St John 2021: 191). While solidarity is a varied and multifaceted concept, education towards solidarity could focus on programmes that foster these aspects or dimensions.

Educational institutions remain good places to cultivate virtues like solidarity despite a wider individualistic cultural context, in large part because schools and other educational institutions are places where students and other members of society often experience and can learn to value community. In this sense, schools are ideal settings for hands-on learning about the relationship between the community and the individual, the rights and obligations of each, and the virtue of participating in creating a “good” community (Staub 1987). For instance, school settings can be a kind of laboratory for the prerequisites for solidarity, and in this sense provide good preparation for later experience in the outside world in ways that can hopefully inoculate students against individualistic pressures once they leave the school, and help maintain their values. If students learn to value prosocial behaviour and critical loyalty in the school setting, they will arguably be more likely to transfer this “knowledge” and live by these virtues in communities they later enter, and in their role as citizens.

Some psychological knowledge about ourselves and people in general can also be useful. Improving one's capacity to perceive oneself, to understand some psychological tendencies of and processes in human beings, and an awareness of these tendencies and processes in oneself can profoundly affect the mode of relating to each other by individuals and members of groups.

For instance, there is a tendency among human beings to create an us/them differentiation and to devalue "them". When self-interest motivates people to deviate from their moral values, it is a common tendency to create justifications. The potential to understand and recognise these and other psychological processes in oneself can have profound effects. It is possible to bring this understanding of human psychology closer to the lived experience of students by using the study and discussion of literature and documentaries with vivid examples of real-life situations, and not just psychological handbooks in order to help students connect their knowledge of psychology (and in this case the psychology of solidarity) to familiar or real-life contexts.

Through education, students should be informed about different perspectives of reality, different cultures and ways of life, but also that all people share in a common humanity with each other. Understanding "the other" as a potential "I" is a necessary foundation for feeling empathy and acting, if necessary, for the sake of the benefit of others.

Even among people who have learned to care about others' welfare, caring can be limited to people in their surroundings, from their group, or to those similar to them. To create more inclusive solidarity relations, extending the boundaries of "us" is essential. For that purpose, we can reinforce of positive actions: from praising a child to promoting such acts in media, we can point to the example of role models who show solidarity for people regardless of their group membership, or encourage people to experience relations to various people: from university exchanges like in Erasmus+ to informal everyday experience. The key point is the inclusion of methods for facilitating these forms of behaviour throughout the educational trajectory of students.

Psychologists from the humanistic approach (Maslow, Rogers) and from the positive psychology school (Seligman) emphasise the importance of fulfilling not only basic human needs but also the full development of the personality in order to optimise caring for others and expressing solidarity. It is obvious that unsatisfied, anomic people, who do not perceive justice in society and see themselves as the aggrieved party, will hardly have compassion or take care for others in society.

Through education, we change individuals, empower them with skills for life and make it easier for them to fulfil their basic needs. When satisfied people with fulfilled basic needs constitute the majority in one community or country, it is easier to implement social norms regarding other's wellbeing that make possible positive feedback loops that lead, among other things, to higher levels of solidarity. When there is more solidarity, all obstacles are easier to overcome.

1.5.2. The European Declaration on Global Education

In November 2022, at the European Congress on Global Education, the Global Education Network Europe (GENE), together with the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the OECD, UNECE, and UNESCO set out a vision and commitment towards Global Education in 2050. In the preamble of its final declaration,¹³ the participants of the gathering affirmed their awareness of "people's right to learn, to critically reflect on their place in the world, to respond and to act in solidarity, as global citizens with planetary responsibility" and the important contribution of education – and Global Education in particular in this respect.

Moreover, the declaration refers to "the potential for technology to play a central role in offering user-oriented and inclusive educational solutions, building global connectivity, and increasing solidarity, while also acknowledging the potential for technology and social media to divide people and undermine democracy". The dilemma of the potential of technology to increase solidarity versus the undermining of democracy, notably due to the proliferation of fake news in our post-truth era, needs to be addressed urgently at schools and universities. Otherwise, the risk of polarisation (and therefore of less solidarity among citizens) will be higher and higher.

¹³ The European Declaration on Global Education to 2050. The Dublin Declaration. A European Strategy Framework for Improving and Increasing Global Education in Europe to the Year 2050.
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f6decace4ff425352eddb4a/t/636d0eb7a86f6419e3421770/1668091577585/GE2050-declaration.pdf>

1.5.3. Education and democratic citizenship

“Schools, along with their teachers and curricula, have long been identified as the critical link between education and citizenship, as the locus from which democratic citizens emerge” (Niemi & Junn, 1998, pp. 2-3).

The Council of Europe emphasises the importance of many aspects of democratic citizenship, especially because of the rapid social changes that are bringing about possibilities of various threats to democratic culture both in Europe and globally, such as extremism, violence, social exclusion, and many other challenges.

The importance of education for democratic citizenship is self-evident. Strengthening solidarity ties can serve as a binding force in preserving social ties, groups cohesion, and, caring for members in need. Strong solidarity relations can also serve as a barrier against arbitrariness of the authorities, and against neglect of the powerless, and thus an important dimension of citizenship education

One of the most significant books on the role of education in forming democratic and responsible citizens is Amy Gutmann's *Democratic Education* (1987). She makes a distinction between forms of political socialisation, including values, that tends to focus on both what she calls “unconscious” and “conscious” social reproduction. Democratic citizenship is understood as consisting of habits and competences that require cultivation without which they will not sprout, or will sprout but wither quickly (Ichilov, 2003). Many authors agree that the democratic purpose of education should include the teaching of tolerance and mutual respect, a common set of values, and democratic practices for everyday functioning within pluralistic society. Education is a necessary engine to cultivate the value of solidarity as a virtue using both content, curriculum, and practices of relating to a democratic social climate in schools (where for instance, children have right to openly question, to organise help for a friend whose parents cannot pay for an excursion, or who need some medicine or some other kind of support, just to give some relevant examples). The experience of schooling is a basis for experiential learning, which can become a permanent (or long-standing) characteristic in adult life.

Concerning democratic citizenship, Joseph Camilleri opts for the term “dialogical citizenship” as dialogue offers the most promising bridge between the plural and the universal. A dialogical relation is not one that aims at a synthesis or resolution of conflict between positions but emphasises instead continued openness and exchange of ideas and positions. Camilleri affirms that “if the individualistic, state-centric model of citizenship is in crisis, the cosmopolitan conception is but a small advance, for it retains the same individualistic approach”, and “while cosmopolitan blueprints extend the rights and duties of citizenship to all human beings regardless of national boundaries, their emphasis remains on the individual citizen as voter and claimant of political and civil rights, as a member of an atomized world”. He also states that collective solidarity in one form or another is becoming rather more than less important. A range of solidarities beyond nationalism have come to the fore to express rising levels of discontent, marginalisation, or simply feelings of homelessness. Many find in religious, tribal, ethnic, racial, civilizational, and increasingly ecological solidarities more convivial ways of living in time and space, or simply the promise of a new home. These identities operate as much across as within national boundaries (Camilleri, 2015).

Besides textbooks, many informal acts and formal procedures in educational institutions (schools, universities) can contribute to the development of values like solidarity. An open classroom climate, operationalised by students' feelings that they can freely participate and express themselves in a supportive environment, seems to have a greater effect than formal instruction. In their classical study, Almond and Verba (1963) report that adults with the highest levels of political efficacy were those who remembered discussing and debating social and political issues in school. Cases where children help a classmate in need have been shown to have much stronger and more durable effects in forming solidarity as a personal trait than only theoretical learning of values or about solidaristic practices. Traits are dispositions that can be applied in a broad range of situations. Remembrance of the suffering of a school friend or classmate can stay with and initiate feelings of empathy towards those in need in adult life. The common or shared success of classmates can also create lasting and generalisable effects, among others, about the importance of unity, and these effects can be implemented in other areas and on other levels, in times of crises.

Discussions of controversial issues (close to children's interests), in an open, supportive environment allows the transmission of information through active and experiential learning and long-lasting outcomes connected with self-confidence, trust and benevolence toward others. As elaborated earlier, when one is assured in his/her own capabilities, when trust in others is established and positive views on human nature in general are developed, possibilities are opened up for expressing solidarity in many different situations.

1.5.4. How can teachers foster a sense of solidarity among students?

Teachers can create solidaristic environments by encouraging students to think critically. World events of recent years, in particular the triumph of populism in several countries, including inside the EU, have given a boost to intolerance in the forms of racism, Islamophobia, LGBT-phobia, misogyny, xenophobia, etc. Students should be educated to act in solidarity, stand up for fairness, and, most importantly, lead change. However, teachers suffer from overwhelming stresses in many European schools. It is close to impossible for them to address the apprehensions and anxieties that many students have in the face of these challenges and the difficulty to challenge these hateful narratives. What can they do then?

One preliminary action is to identify discrimination caused by intolerance in the classroom. For example, being attentive to comments often whispered on the playground. When teachers witness signs of hate, they can then invite students to discuss the veracity of their comments. This fosters critical thinking, the way to combat prejudices and stereotypes, in a way that instead of being directive or reprimanding, allows students and teachers to engage in constructive conversations. Such skills need to be acquired as the counterbalance to strive successfully in our VUCA¹⁴ world.

Teachers can then use world events as subjects for discussion. For instance, the exclusion of minorities carried out by populist governments and politicians can be powerful educational opportunities to promote solidaristic behaviours. Being aware of the different experiences of students becomes extremely important for teachers who, despite their limited role, can grasp those opportunities while inviting all to engage in a critical exploration of the variety of students' viewpoints.

Experiential learning turns out to be key through supporting students in seeing and empathising with the oppression of others and standing in solidarity with them. For instance, when a politician makes degrading comments against women, engaging in discussions with boys about gender equality cannot help but be beneficial to solidarity with oppressed women in the world (the interdiction of women to study in Afghanistan is a paradigmatic case). Critical thinking can also be applied to learn about racial inequality. Simply discussing the benefits of having white skin in certain political and institutional contexts can trigger solidarity-building discussions. Of course, these actions may require taking teachers out of their comfort zone and they need to be trained beforehand.

Teachers need also to be attentive to narratives of disadvantaged people, who are often not in classrooms or are underrepresented there. At the same time, they can invite students to reflect on where they fit into the general picture of our societies, devoting time to thinking about unconscious prejudices and biases. For instance, exploring what our socio-economic status, religious identity, or ethnicity may mean to other students. All of the above requires not only educating the educators but also their time and efforts. Students should galvanise social change, whilst educators and the educational systems need to commit.¹⁵

1.5.5. Solidarity-related competences: *LifeComp*

LifeComp (Sala, A. et al., 2020) is the European framework for the personal, social and learning to learn key competence, which aims at establishing a shared understanding and a common language for life competences.¹⁶ *LifeComp* was published by the European Commission in 2020, at the worst moments of the COVID-19 pandemic. At those times, the world seemed to correspond to a VUCA situation, as probably not seen in Europe since WW II. A major personal, social, and political thought arose in the minds of many, namely solidarity. Solidarity among

¹⁴ VUCA stands for Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous. The term has been in widespread use for three decades, particularly in the context of organisations and leadership. The notion was created by the US Army War College to describe the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity of the world after the end of the Cold War. The current pandemic and the war in Ukraine are VUCA contexts.

¹⁵ In relation to the educational needs of teachers, see the JRC series **Inno4Div**: Educational needs of Teachers in the EU for inclusive education in a context of diversity, structured in 3 volumes: Vol 1. Teachers' Intercultural Competence, Working definition and implications for teacher education (Shuali T. et al. 2020); Vol 2. Literature review on key enabling components of teachers' intercultural and democratic competence development and their associated barriers (Simó et al, 2020); and Vol 3. Part 1 Assessment guidelines for teacher education and training practices on intercultural and democratic competence development (Tenreiro et al. 2020).

¹⁶ https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/lifecomp_en

neighbours, social groups, and States (the European recovery fund was then created albeit not without difficulties due to disparate interests and views of the Member States). A kind of sociological optimism was pervasive in the Zeitgeist. While the population was suffering from the confinements prescribed by governments, an empathetic feeling permeated many individuals, in principle, increasing the solidaristic behaviour towards others and the environment. In this context, *LifeComp*, a collaborative process carried out through several consultations with experts, came up with the definition of competences at the personal and social levels that relate to solidaristic attitudes and behaviours, which can be fostered through education. We highlight two *LifeComp* competences for their particular relevance and put forward several pedagogical practices subsequently found in the *LifeComp into Action* (Sala, A. and Herrero Rámila, C., 2022), the implementation guidelines developed later on.

In the Personal Area of *LifeComp*, the competence *Empathy* is defined as “the understanding of another person’s emotions, experiences and values, and the provision of appropriate responses”. *LifeComp*, citing Kremer, J., & Dietzen, L. (1991), states that empathy is at the root of all prosocial behaviours and provides a basis for coping with stress and resolving conflicts, comprising three aspects: the ability to recognise emotions in others; to cognitively take the perspective of others and share emotional states with them; and the ability to offer an appropriate response to others’ emotions. Without those preconditions, solidaristic behaviours could hardly be manifested. Empathy involves awareness of diversity, the ability to acknowledge and accept that people from different cultures may hold different values or have different experiences, and that this is part of the richness of humanity (Sala, A. et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the ability to take people’s perspectives does not necessarily imply endorsing them. One can feel empathetic and still disagree with others’ attitudes or values. In every case, *LifeComp* states that educational interventions aimed at increasing the ability of perspective-taking, developing self-awareness, and providing positive experiences of otherness help in developing empathy.

The second *LifeComp* competence to note is *Collaboration*, in the social area, basically defined as an engagement in group activity and teamwork that acknowledges and respects others and their contributions. As highlighted in the conceptual framework, Bandura already asserts that people need to develop their capacities to co-participate in collective activities and ventures and to embolden others to collaborate, deploying collective agency (Bandura, A. 2017). One case is that of the classroom itself. Helpful students can have a fundamental role in the learning process. Beyond sharing knowledge (with lesson notes or homework, for instance), such students can be a central element of motivation for those students who need more support (Tomás-Miquel, J.V. & Capó Vicedo J., 2019). According to these authors, although current research on this topic has especially focused on students’ motivations and attitudes towards solidarity as a general ethical concept, less attention has been paid, despite its importance, to the specific study of solidarity inside the classroom. Responding with further research to the question may help lecturers to broaden their knowledge about the behaviour of students at university, allowing a better organisation of working groups and teaching activities (Tomás-Miquel, J.V. & Capó Vicedo J., 2019). The link between these hypotheses with the claims made in *LifeComp* is self-evident.

Finally, a *LifeComp* competence extremely relevant for solidarity is *Critical Thinking*, i.e., the assessment of information and arguments to support reasoned conclusions and develop innovative solutions. Critical Thinking is the “Learning to Learn” area of *LifeComp*. Perhaps more than ever, our VUCA world demands that students address important cognitive biases. For instance, “the confirmation bias, the tendency to favour ideas that confirm our existing beliefs, only remembering details that support those beliefs and ignoring the information that challenges them; the availability bias, the tendency to judge the probability of an event based on how easily an example of those events comes to mind; or the belief bias, the tendency to evaluate the logical strength of an argument based on the believability of its conclusions” (Sala, A. and Herrero Rámila, C., 2022).

Bringing empathy and collaboration together, *LifeComp into Action* (Sala, A. and Herrero Rámila, C., 2022) refers to the need to engage with students holding different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, so that learners’ interaction is created in the class through small and diversified groups with different ethnicity, gender, socio-cultural background, learning styles or learning interests. To create a basis for cognitive empathy, possible activities proposed by the authors are peer-to-peer interviews, sharing personal objects or stories about them, “Two facts and a lie” when peers have to guess one wrong fact out of three statements about each learner, “Guess who?” when each student shares a fact about themselves anonymously, and everyone has to guess whose fact it is (Sala, A. and Herrero Rámila, C., 2022). Others are raising awareness about stereotypes and role-playing around social or moral dilemmas (e.g., about historical issues). As said in the same guidelines, empathy is a multidimensional construct that includes being aware of others’ emotions, understanding them, and caring for others. It is about people in the in-group feeling the emotions of those in the out-group, and therefore deploying prosocial behaviours that would lead to solidarity.

Out of *LifeComp into Action*, we summarise below relevant teaching strategies to foster Empathy (for more details descriptions see the guidelines):

- Think/Write/Pair/Share: an activity to allow learners to engage in meaningful dialogue with their peers, strengthening their communication competence, self-confidence, and motivation to participate in the learning activities. The educator launches a question on a given academic topic. Learners will think individually (think), write down their answer (write), find a partner (pair), and discuss their response with the partner (share). This activity requires little preparation and is an easy way to get all the learners actively engaged with the topic. Moreover, the discussion in pairs provides a safe setting for learners to hone their communication competence.
- Text to Self, Text to Text, Text to World: an activity to help learners deepen their learning, fostering strategic reading and establishing the habit to connect the ideas they find in a text with their own experiences and beliefs, with events that are taking place or took place in the world or another domain of knowledge, and with what they know from other texts. The educator gives each learner a copy of a text and sample “connection statements” that can help them establish connections between what they read and their experience (Text to Self), what is happening in the world (Text to World), and what they read in other texts (Text to Text). Learners answer the questions individually and share their thoughts with their peers at the end of the activity.
- Accountable talk: to allow learners to discuss and justify their ideas, contesting or endorsing each other’s opinions respectfully and based on accountable evidence. The educator divides the classroom into groups of up to five people, chooses a topic, and asks a question that provokes discussion but does not have a single, correct answer. The group has to answer the question to reach a common position. The learners need to use the “accountable stems” to discuss and reach an agreement. The activity ends with learners self-assessing the quality of their discussion.
- Fishbowl: an activity aimed at improving the learners’ communication skills. It provides a setting in which all participants are invited to listen to others and express their points of view, respecting turn-taking. The learners are seated in two concentric circles, all facing the centre. The learners in the inner circle discuss a text, presenting their point of view on the text’s central idea(s), the author’s intention, their conclusions, etc. The learners in the outside circle listen silently to the discussion and take note of the effectiveness of the group discussion.
- Role-playing: an active and participatory strategy to foster meaningful learning. It helps learners to take the perspective of others and hone their critical thinking, communication, and empathy competences while increasing their understanding of a given topic. The educator chooses a dilemma, a problem, or a real-life situation they want their students to reflect on and ensures that learners have access to the essential information they need to act meaningfully on it. They assign each learner a role (whether as an actor or an observer) and invite learners to take the perspective of the characters to understand and better embody their goals, motivations, and emotions. The educator invites learners to enact the role-play, keeps track of time, and invites learners to reflect on the whole activity upon its completion.

As regards Collaboration, in addition to Accountable talk, *LifeComp into Action* identifies others like:

- Reciprocal learning strategy: to help learners increase their capacity to self-direct their learning and improve their comprehension of a topic or procedure, coaching each other through resolving an exercise or problem. Learners are divided into pairs. Both learners have different sets of questions. Moreover, learner A has the answers to the questions of learner B and vice-versa. While learner A is the player, learner B is the coach and helps their partner solve the problem. Learners then switch their roles so that A is the coach and B is the player.
- Jigsaw: an activity to allow learners to analyse a large amount of content in a short time while fostering collaboration and peer learning. Learners are divided into “home groups”. Each learner analyses a piece of text individually. Then the educator re-arranges learners into “expert groups” where all the members have worked on the same text. In the expert groups, the learners will discuss the text, extract the most important information and prepare a short presentation. The learners will then return to their “home group” and explain the text piece that has been worked on by the “expert group”. This pedagogical strategy promotes cooperative tasks that improve the solidarity attitude.

We end this section by referring to *GreenComp*, the European Sustainability Competence Framework (Bianchi et al., 2022).¹⁷ Implicitly, solidarity is part of what in *GreenComp* are called “sustainability values”, i.e., the support

¹⁷ https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/greencomp-european-sustainability-competence-framework_en

of equity and justice for current and future generations and learning from previous generations about sustainability. As stated before, sustainability, and in particular the climate change crisis, call for global solidarity, which undoubtedly can be taught so that students acquire a sense of commonality with future generations. Having empathy for nature is also part human empathy.

Concerning *Critical Thinking*, in addition to the practices identified in Empathy and Collaboration, *LifeComp into Action* identifies “*Anonymous peer assessment*”, an activity that aims to help learners develop strategic knowledge about a given assignment they will perform, better understand the criteria for the evaluation, and hone critical thinking. This activity also helps students to learn how to provide constructive feedback, which is key for developing solidaristic behaviours.

1.6. Indications for future policy guidelines

1.6.1. Introduction

While developing full-blown policy guidelines for promoting solidarity at the EU level is beyond the scope of this document, in this section we offer a set of indications concerning how to identify policy guidelines consistent with the theoretical and methodological approach to solidarity developed in this paper.

The EU is a political entity endowed with a distinctive normative power which acknowledges solidarity as one of its founding values. As a political entity, the EU may promote “EU solidarity”, understood as a set of values that strengthen EU’s identity as a political community. However, the EU may also promote solidarity on a more general basis as an ethical, social, and political value.

When discussing solidarity at the EU level, one first has to acknowledge the unique status of the EU, which is a supra-national entity to which no political community corresponds so far. The EU lacks the political identity of national peoples, which usually sets the boundaries within which political solidarity is exercised. Moreover, its large size renders deep solidaristic actions difficult to adopt. Not by chance, of all the political institutions established so far at the EU level, those more directly related with solidarity, such as the welfare state and the tax system, remain to be developed.

According to the definition provided at the outset, solidarity can take place at the individual, group, and political level; it can be of an in-group and of an out-group type. To promote solidarity, the EU may initiate actions that operate at each of these levels.

1.6.2. Promoting individual solidarity at EU level

Individual solidarity refers to individuals’ willingness to help others, even in the absence of strong collective identities. As such, it does not refer directly to a political trait but to a moral and psychological attitude of openness and welcoming of others. The EU, like any other political entity, can promote solidarity as an individual attitude. As discussed above, the educational system remains the most effective institutional tool to promote solidaristic attitudes.

Three major policy reform areas may be identified.

1.6.2.1. School curricula

The first concerns school curricula. Even though school curricula remain in the exclusive competence of national states (and often even of lower-level political entities such as regions), the EU could initiate a political process aimed at defining common value-based curricula cores with two goals. The first would be to emphasise at a broad and general level the meaning and value of solidarity as a moral and political value, in the same manner in which some states offer modules in civic education. The second would more specifically target EU solidarity in

terms of the shared awareness of the EU as a political community. That awareness would provide the background for the future development of institutions of solidarity at the EU level.

1.6.2.2. *Exchange opportunities*

The second policy reform area concerns exchange opportunities, which to date remain extremely rare and limited to university students. Establishing regular student exchanges on the model of the Erasmus+ program would certainly help develop a sense of belonging to the same community. Moreover, by promoting exchange for secondary students, mobility would also be offered to those that will not later attend university. Given that low mobility and low educational achievement are positively correlated, and that both are positively correlated with anti-EU sentiments, this move would hopefully be effective in increasing EU solidarity.

1.6.2.3. *European educational institutions*

The third policy reform would consist in creating EU educational institutions, such as secondary schools and universities. Professors could come temporarily from the different EU Member States, programs would be delivered in different languages, and a deeper sense of EU identity would ensue. The European schools available to children of the employees of European institutions may serve as a model here in terms of multi-lingual education at the secondary level. The YUFE (Young Universities for the Future of Europe) Alliance may serve as a helpful model at the tertiary or university level.¹⁸

1.6.3. Promoting group solidarity at the EU level

Group solidarity refers to voluntary organised forms of collective organisation. Group solidarity is achieved through voluntary organisations based on need or shared interest. Any association created with the aim of mutual support, or with the aim of reaching out to people in distress, directly increases solidarity.

1.6.3.1. *Promoting EU-level in-group solidaristic associations*

Historically, trade-unionism provides a form of group solidarity that has mostly developed at the national level, but that has also been characterised by strong international ties. The EU has so far promoted the international organisation of trade unionism in a mild way. In a rapidly changing work environment (JRC 2019), opportunities to explore the fostering of EU-wide workers' associations or networks of associations for independent workers and platform workers should also be explored as possible mechanisms for fostering solidarity relations in a changing world-of-work.

1.6.3.2. *Promoting solidarity in the economy*

Our definition above suggests less obvious yet crucial dimensions of group solidarity such as cooperatives and the non-profit economy. Both promote a more inclusive society that reduces economic inequalities and does not leave behind those less fit for or willing to engage in economic competition. Both economic forms, however, cannot prosper without appropriate institutional support, notably in the form of legal statutes that help them compete with capital intensive firms, or tax deductions, dedicated financial institutions, and other privileges. These privileges would be justified by the social benefits these institutions would promote, in the same manner in which, historically, incorporation was granted in exchange of social benefits.

¹⁸ See, www.yufe.eu

1.6.3.3. Promoting EU-level out-group solidaristic associations

With reference to out-group solidarity, international NGOs such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) or the Red Cross epitomise organised efforts to reach out to people in distress that have traditionally been organised at the national level, but who in a globalised world would strongly benefit from a EU-level organisation.

1.6.3.4. Intergenerational solidarity

With respect to the aging population of the EU, the inclusion and participation of older people in society are some of the main political priorities (e.g., Green Papers on aging, EC 2021). Therefore, the debate is mostly focused on the negative challenges of aging, such as the need for increased expenditures on pensions, healthcare, and social protection systems. However, the creation of links between younger and older generations should not be seen in strictly financial terms. It is important to increase awareness that all generations are interdependent, thus they need to cooperate for real economic and social benefits. They also need to understand that they may equally contribute to dealing with current societal challenges (see Age Platform Europe). Thus, enhancing solidarity entails placing equal importance on the promotion of cooperation and interchanges between generations by strengthening the mutual understanding of the situation within groups and the common challenges faced. One way to enhance awareness of the diversity of age groups is by fostering regular interaction among people from different age groups. Regular interactions would enable them to get to know each other better, learn from their respective experiences and cooperate in their everyday lives (see, for example, the Generations@school¹⁹ project regarding the issue of how facilitating direct relations between generations can serve to overcome stereotypes related to age). It is also important to empower all generations to play an active part in society, e.g., in ensuring adequate social and care services, supporting work-life balance, and promoting age diversity in employment and all areas of life. For the EU's older population, developing competences for healthy and active aging is important for lifelong democratic participation.

1.6.4. Promoting institutional solidarity at the EU level

Institutional solidarity refers to those measures that can be implemented uniquely through political institutions, such as the welfare state and taxation.

1.6.4.1. Promoting EU-level in-group solidaristic institutions

Since its origins, all attempts at creating a fiscal EU have failed. Even the 2008 financial crisis did not help to move things forward. Yet a new beginning probably dawned during the COVID-19 crisis, with the issuing of the Recovery Fund. The Recovery Fund provides the first attempt ever to issue public debt at an EU level, thus for the first time implementing at the EU level one of the central pillars of institutional solidarity, namely the idea that those who have more must give to those who have less. With the recovery fund, the EU is acting for the first time as a single political community that creates common debt to help its members who are more in distress.

Even though in the EU different types of solidaristic funds existed previously – the Solidarity Fund proper, but also the Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, and the Regional Development Fund – the Recovery Fund brings the idea of EU solidarity to a new level.

1.6.4.2. Promoting EU-level out-group solidaristic institutions

With regard to out-group solidarity, what comes to the fore are those measures through which the EU supports states, groups, and individuals outside its confines.

Three major instances can be evoked here:

¹⁹ <https://www.generationschools.org>

- The first concerns migration.
- The second concerns the COVID-19 crisis and vaccine policy.
- The third concerns more broadly the EU's "normative power", that is its capacity to promote solidarity as a political value that is inseparable from institutional achievements such as the rule of law and democracy. In its role as a peace-keeping actor, but also in acting as a political and economic actor in its areas of influence, the EU ought to pursue its role as a normative power by making assistance and resources conditional not only on the respect of human rights, but also on the adoption of policies that promote solidarity.

Table 2. Levels of solidarity

Levels of solidarity	In-group	Out-group
Individual	Curricula Educational exchanges EU schools and universities	
Group	EU trade unions EU cooperative legislation	Red Cross Man and the Biosphere (UNESCO) ²⁰
Institutional	Eurobonds Recovery Fund EU redistributive programs	COVAX scheme; Peace-keeping; Refugees & migration policies ²¹

Source: Authors' elaboration

²⁰ <https://en.unesco.org/mab>

²¹ These are examples where solidarity could be a relevant and salient value, not where it necessarily is one.

2. Part B. Empirical analysis

Solidarity has a multifaceted structure and can be expressed in very different contexts and areas, as well as at different levels of individual and group interaction. It is a phenomenon that occurs and manifests itself to different degrees in different people, groups and institutions, and in relation to different people and groups. It also relates to both attitudes (especially on an interpersonal level) and practices/behaviours (at all levels).

However, solidarity can, at least to some extent, be measured. The degree of its presence can be determined by examining the presence of agreed indicators. Below, we present an analysis of a set of solidarity indicators that are present in the European Social Survey's (ESS) core modules. The selection of indicators was based on the definitional framework, the examples of solidarity practices, and subsequent discussion. We present the analyses of data from nine waves of European Social Surveys collected between 2002-2018. As the core modules of the ESS were unchanged during these rounds, a longitudinal analysis of a few selected items was possible. The ESS involves interviews with nationally representative samples of citizens above 15 years of age from several European countries.

2.1. Item selection

Section H of the ESS questionnaire ("Human Values"), contains three questions that we consider reasonably close proxies for the concept of solidarity. As cautioned above, one needs to note that they refer to different levels of solidarity, and therefore important limitations would emerge in any analysis. Advantageously, these items have been included in all the ESS rounds so far, from ESS1 to ESS9, which provides an opportunity to track changes in the responses to these questions longitudinally.

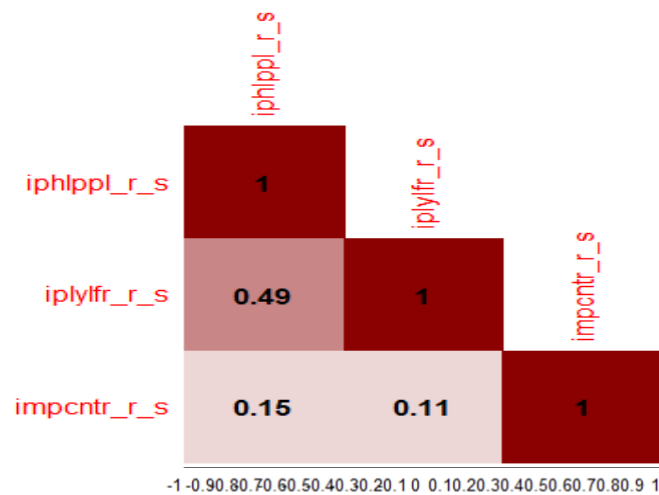
These items are as follows:

- "It is important to be loyal to friends and devoted to people close",
- "It is important to help people and care for others' well-being";
- "To what extent do you think [country] should allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe to come and live here".

All the responses were given on a 5-point scale (1 = "agree strongly" to 5 = "disagree strongly").

First, we checked if these items correlate with one another. All responses were scaled between 0 and 1 and then averaged. The higher the score, the higher the indication of solidarity. In the analysis we used separate items as only two of them correlated each other ("Helping family" and "helping others", $r=0.49$). These two items are not strongly correlated with accepting immigrants from poorer countries (see Figure 1). Thus, in the analysis below we focus on separate items.

Figure 1. Correlations between solidarity indicator items



Source: ESS questionnaire ("Human Values"). Authors' elaboration.

Note: The more red a square, the higher correlations

iplylfr – Important to be loyal to friends and devote to people close;

iphlppl Important to help people and care for others well-being;

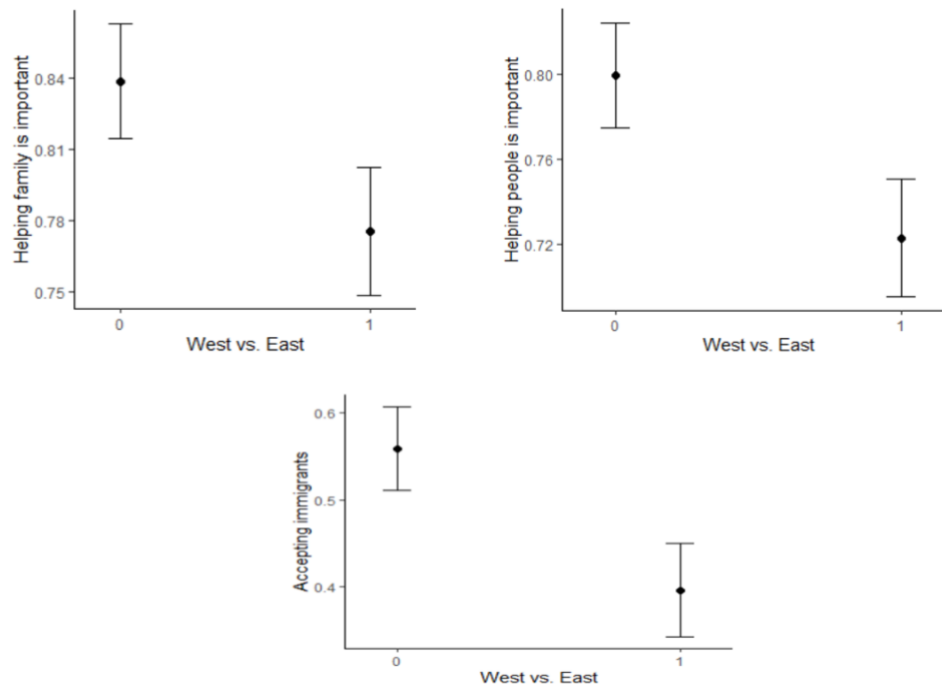
mpcntr – Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe

1.2. Solidarity (measured by three separate items) and its comparisons between EU countries

To test the differences between EU countries on these solidarity indicator items we used multilevel models (analysis in R; main packages: lme4, lmerTest, ggeffects).

First, we test the differences between Western and Eastern EU countries. Western EU countries declared significantly higher levels of these solidarity indicators measured by each item, in comparison to Eastern European countries (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Differences between Western and Eastern European Countries



Source: ESS questionnaire ("Human Values"). Authors' elaboration.

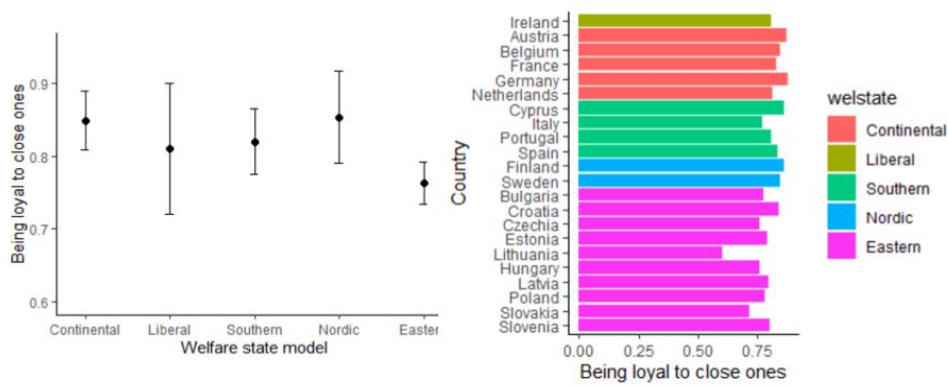
Next, we compared countries differing on welfare state regime, i.e., indicating whom and how much a state helps when their citizens are in need, regarding solidarity. To classify countries on their welfare state model we used the classification of Esping-Andersen (1990), with an extension for the Southern type (Bonoli, 1997; Ferrera, 1996), and the Eastern type (Fenger, 2007). Thus, there were five welfare state models:

- *Liberal (decommodification is low and the state offers modest insurance plans and means-tested assistance; Ireland);*
- *Continental (a moderate level of decommodification, and welfare provision is limited to those who have occupational status; Austria, Belgium, Germany, France, The Netherlands);*
- *Southern (the welfare state system is highly fragmented: These states tend to offer very generous benefits in one area but very modest provisions in another, they lack articulated minimum social protection, and there is little governmental intervention in welfare provision; Cyprus, Italy, Portugal, Spain);*
- *Nordic (has a high level of decommodification and generous universal welfare; Sweden, Finland);*
- *Eastern (residualisation of underfinanced and institutionally fragmented, but universalist welfare states and high level of informality of welfare provision; Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Slovenia, Slovakia).*

We used multilevel models (analysis in R; main packages: lme4, lmerTest,ggeffects). Welfare state model is introduced as the main independent variable, so the differences effects represent differences in average across the countries under particular welfare state models. In every model, age, gender, and education are controlled for. Being a citizen of a country is also accounted for (random intercept model).

First, we found significant differences between Continental vs. Eastern welfare state on being loyal to close ones and marginally significant between Nordic vs. Eastern type ($p = 0.08$). The differences between countries are illustrated in Figure 3.

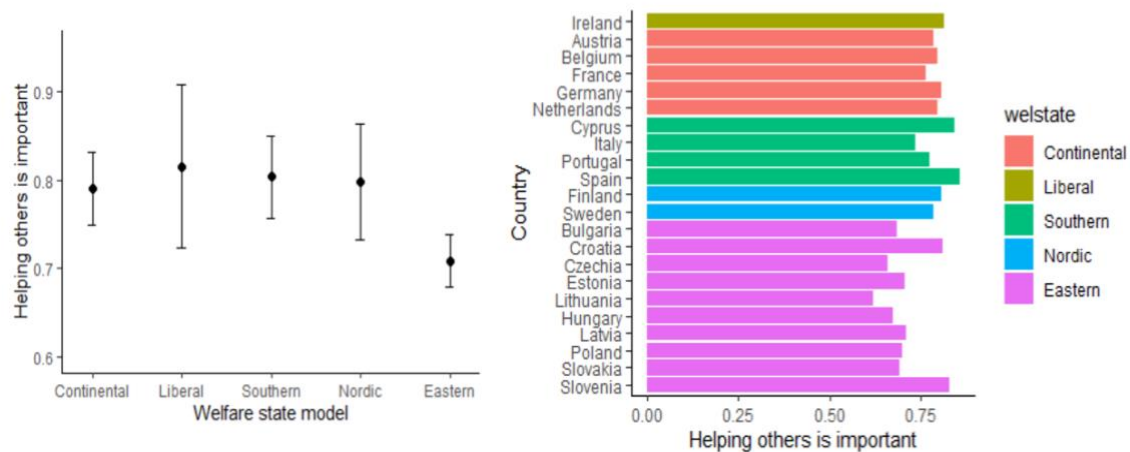
Figure 3. Differences between welfare state regimes and solidarity measured by being loyal to close ones.



Source: ESS questionnaire ("Human Values"). Authors' elaboration.

Next, we found significant differences between Continental vs. Eastern welfare states on helping others and marginally significant differences between Nordic vs. Eastern type ($p = 0.10$). The differences between countries are illustrated in Figure 4.

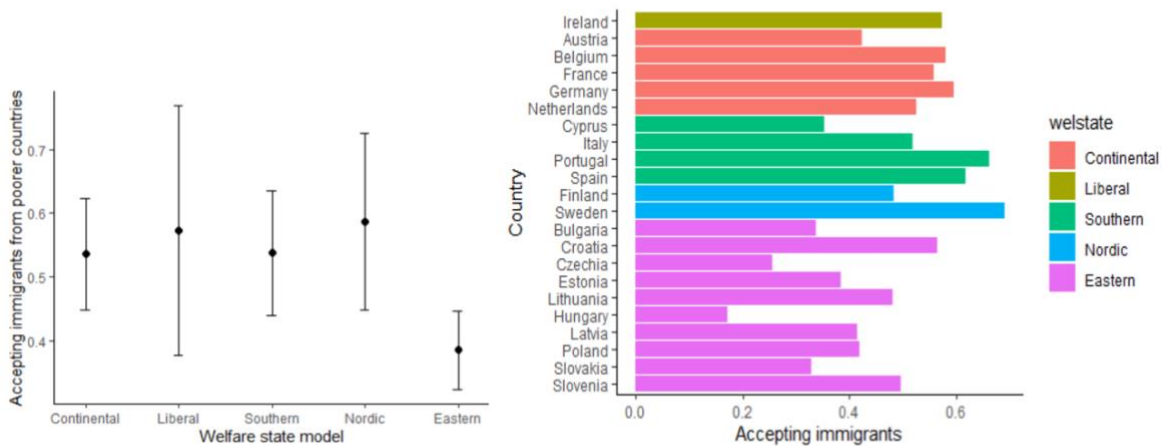
Figure 4. Differences between welfare state regimes and solidarity measured by willingness to help others



Source: ESS questionnaire ("Human Values"). Authors' elaboration.

We found significant difference between Continental vs. Eastern welfare states on accepting migrants and marginally significant differences between Nordic vs. Eastern type ($p = 0.07$). The differences between countries are illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Differences between welfare state regimes and solidarity measured by accepting immigrants

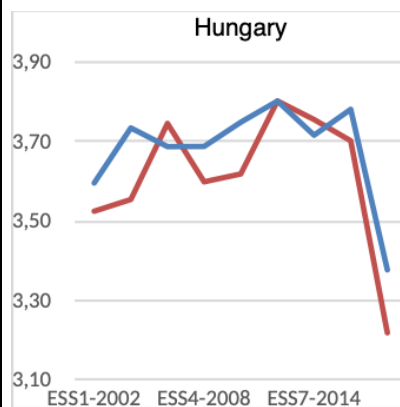
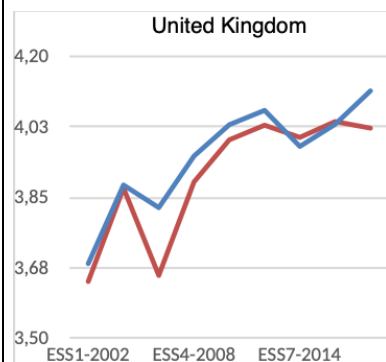
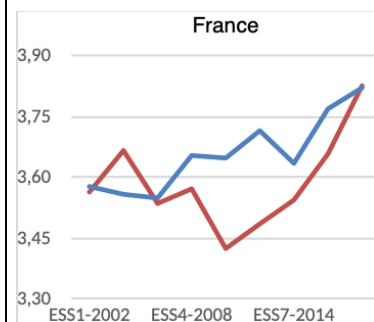
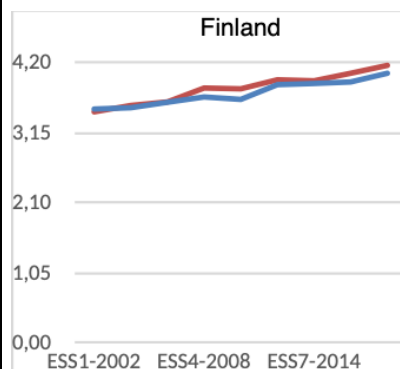
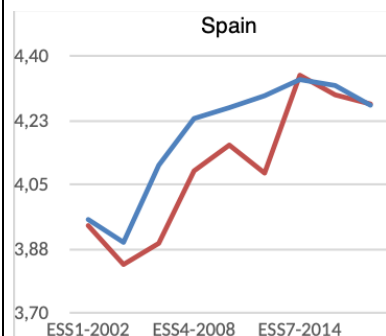
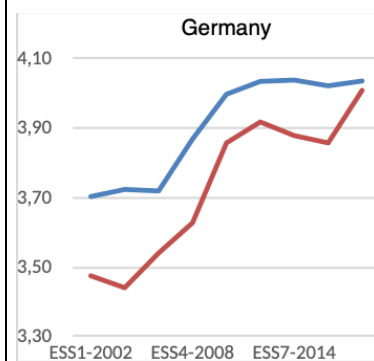
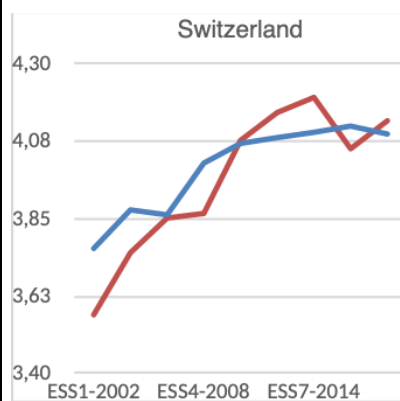
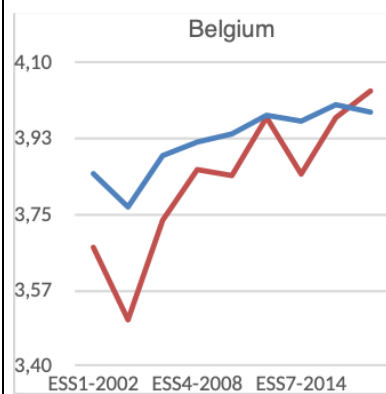


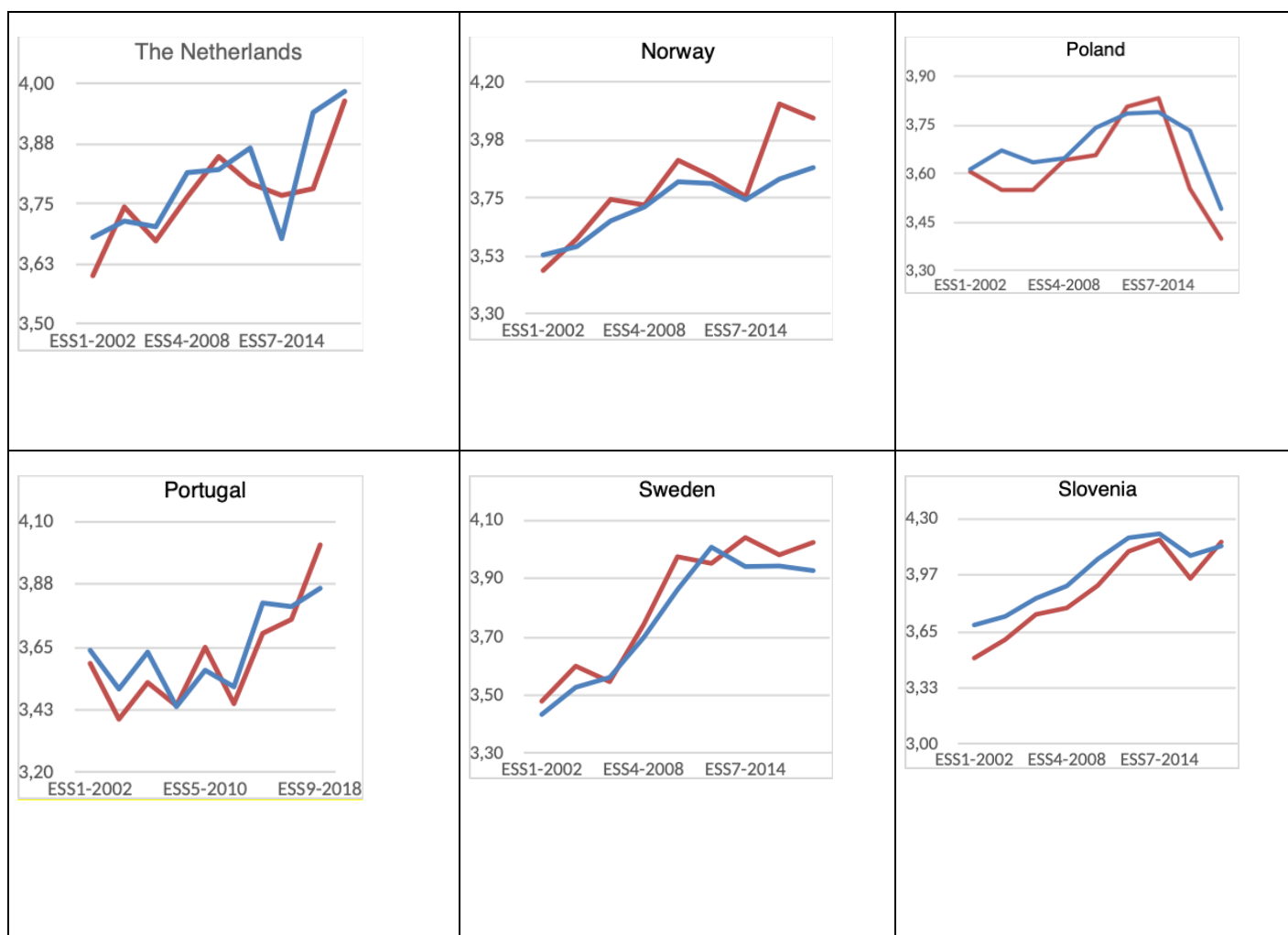
Source: ESS questionnaire (“Human Values”). Authors’ elaboration.

Summing up: these results show that there are some differences between EU countries in their willingness to help others (close relations, other people and immigrants from poor countries), i.e., Western European countries and those with Continental welfare state regime are more willing to show solidarity toward others than people from Eastern countries with Eastern-type of welfare state regimes. Importantly, however, we observed a quite high variability among Eastern countries.

Finally, we offer the results of an analysis of the responses to the “importance to help people and care for others’ well-being” by country. The graphs below show the average in the nine waves of the ESS, where the blue lines correspond to citizens above 21 years old and the red ones to those below that age.

Figure 6. Responses to the item “importance to help people and care for others’ well-being” by country





Source: ESS questionnaire ("Human Values"). Authors' elaboration.
 These 15 European countries are selected as the item is used in the nine waves.

In general, the importance that European citizens attach to helping people and caring for others' well-being in these 15 countries is longitudinally increasing. The responses by the general population are consistent with those of young people, except in Sweden, where young people show more orientation to help others whilst that of the general population has decreased in the last two waves. The evolution is similar in Switzerland and Belgium. In Germany, both for the general population and for young people, this orientation is increasing, albeit much more for young people. In the UK the opposite occurs: the general population shows more orientation towards helping others, whilst that of young people falls slightly. The abrupt decline is notable, both in the general population and in young people of Hungary and Poland. One could think of the political reaction in these countries to the immigrant "crisis" that started in 2015, although this should be confirmed with further analyses of public opinion studies. Elements such as the discourses of the last governments in these countries may have influenced public opinion. In any event, such a decline can be understood as an example of the dynamism of the orientation towards solidarity in our European societies.

1.3. Other results

We also checked if these three solidarity items correlate with other items referring to similar concepts like trust, activism (civic society participation), helping others, attitudes to redistribution, attitudes to LGBT rights, social capital, attitudes to immigration (see Table 3)

Table 3. Items referring to or similar to solidarity concepts

```

# generalized trust
ppltrst_s # most people can be trusted
pplfair_s # most people try to be fair
pplhlp_s # most people try to be helpful

# social capital - civic activity
contplt_r_s # contacted political
wrkprty_r_s # work for a party
wrkorg_r_s # work for organization
pbldmn_r_s # taking part in demonstration

# the government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels
gincdif_r_s

# gay rights
freehms_r_s # gays and lesbians free to live life as they wish
hmsfmlsh_s # ashamed if close family member gay or lesbian
hmsacd_r_s # gay and lesbian couples right to adopt children

# EU unification
euftf_s

# social capital
sclmeet_s # meeting people socially how often
inprdsc_s # how many people you can talk to
sclact_s # take part in social activities

# being member of discriminate group
dscrgrp_r_s

# EU engalrgement
vteubcmb_r_s # 42k cases with NA - removed

# important (Schwartz values)
iphlppl_r_s # helping others important
iplylfr_r_s # helping family important
ipeqopt_r_s # equality important

# immigariton items
imsmetn_r_s
imdfetn_r_s
impcntr_r_s
imbgeco_s
imueclt_s
imwbcnt_s

```

Source: ESS questionnaire ("Human Values").

The correlations are presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Correlations between items related to the solidarity concept

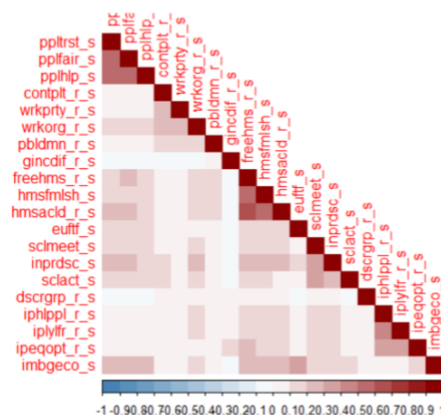
Includes questions about:

- trust,
- activism (civic society)
- helping others,
- attitudes to redistribution,
- attitudes to LGBT rights,
- social capital,
- attitudes to immigration (only 1 item instead of 5),

Details about the items presented on the next slide and in the excel codebook

Item about including a country in EU omitted – most cases had missing data for this question (around 42k cases with missing data)

The more red a square – the higher correlation between two variables



Source: ESS questionnaire ("Human Values"). Authors' elaboration.

It seems that items referring to LGBT rights, trust, and helping others constitute one factor that covers some aspects of solidarity (in our conceptualisation); items referring to activism and support in social networks revealed the second factor that can be called "social capital". Indeed, according to other authors, sexual orientation is a social justice fault line associated with social inequalities in the health and well-being of LGBT people (de Wit et al. 2022), whilst social activism is required to address sexual orientation-related health gaps, similar to social action on social inequalities in health related to the socio-economic position (Marmot, 2017). In addition, the stigma of sexual orientation, in particular, is a fundamental cause of social inequalities in health (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2013). LGBT communities founded on the solidarity between LGBT people and their allies are essential to enabling social activism for equal rights and creating supportive environments.

1.4. Solidarity related phenomena across nine waves of ESS

1.4.1. Interpersonal trust

According to many authors (for example, Putnam) interpersonal trust and trust in institutions along with social contacts are components of social capital and are indirectly but closely related to social cohesion or unity; one meaning of the concept of solidarity is simply unity. In Table 2 we present results of around 400 000 answers (about 45 000 in each wave) about trust on interpersonal level, where higher score means more trust. The range for each claim is from 0 to 10.

Table 4. Interpersonal trust (scores averaged across nine waves)

Descriptive Statistics	Mean	Std. Deviation
Most people can be trusted or you can't be too careful	5.05	2.47
Most people try to take advantage of you, or try to be fair	5.65	2.28

Most of the time people are helpful or mostly looking out for themselves	4.97	2.31
Trust people total	15.6772	5.93

Source: ESS questionnaire ("Human Values"). Authors' elaboration.

Analysing the results of nine ESS waves we can conclude that respondents were on average very constant, that is, answers were almost the same (on average) in all nine rounds.

1.1.2. Trust in social institutions

Again, we will present descriptive results first.

Table 5. Trust in social institutions

Descriptive Statistics	Mean	Std. Deviation
Trust in the country's parliament	4.38	2.61
Trust in the legal system	5.11	2.71
Trust in the police	5.02	2.75
Trust in politicians	3.51	2.41
Trust in political parties	3.46	2.39
Trust in the European Parliament	4.42	2.50
Trust in the United Nations	5.11	2.60
Social trust sum, max. 70	33.20	14.29

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Regarding measures of different aspects of trust (in people, in institutions), we can conclude that people, on average, have a moderate level of trust, and even lower than moderate trust toward politicians and political parties.

Again, analysing the results of nine waves we can conclude that the level of trust in institutions is also constant throughout the years.

1.1.3. Social contacts

Social contacts are similar measures, like interpersonal trust, but here, respondents were asked about their own social contacts.

Table 6. Social contacts

	Never/less	Every day/more	Mean	Std. Deviation
How often do you meet socially with friends, relatives, or colleagues	1	7	4.78	1.59
The number of people with whom you can discuss intimate and personal matters	0	6	2.69	1.47
Participation in social activities compared to others of the same age	1	5	2.71	0.94
Social contact	2.00	18.00	10.21	2.97

Source: ESS questionnaire ("Human Values"). Authors' elaboration.

All three measures are below the theoretical average. That could reflect people's alienation and feeling of loneliness in a rapidly changing world. This could even be interpreted as a call for more closeness and therefore potential for building solidarity on different levels. The variety of individual differences is again salient.

1.1.4. Respecting sexual minority rights

This could be considered as an indicator of inclusion of different groups into society, and can be connected with solidarity of minority group causes. Answers range from 1 to 5, and the items were included in the survey only in 2016 and 2018 (with almost the same results).

Table 7. Attitudes toward sexual minority groups

	Mean	Std. Deviation
SUM of the 3 below	10.70	3.29
Gays and lesbians should be free to live life as they wish	3.84	1.18

Ashamed if close family member gay or lesbian	3.79	1.27
Gay and lesbian couples should have the right to adopt children	3.00	1.44

Source: Source: ESS questionnaire ("Human Values").

The opinions are divided on questions of adopting children, and other indicators of relationships toward these groups are significantly more positive than negative.

1.1.5. (Un)welcoming migrants

As mentioned in the main text, and as is well-known, the large number of migrants, especially in 2015, was an immense political challenge for the whole EU. As a minority group/group in need, attitudes toward migrants have consistently been connected to solidarity in the literature. The scale ranges from 1 (welcoming) to 4 (unwelcoming) with respect to migrants.

Table 8. (Un)welcoming migrants

	Allow many	Allow none	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sum of 3	3.00	12.00	7.79	2.45
Allow many/few immigrants of same race/ethnic group as majority	1	4	2.86	0.88
Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority	1	4	2.49	0.93
Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe	1	4	2.43	0.94

Source: ESS questionnaire ("Human Values"). Authors' elaboration.

Respondents, on average, rather reject than accept immigrants. It is interesting that migrants from poorer countries and other ethnic groups (since they were seen as more vulnerable) were more welcomed than immigrants from the same race and ethnic groups as European respondents. This can be interpreted as an expression of solidarity toward those in need, but it is contrasted with very unwelcoming attitudes toward those who are not seen as vulnerable or fleeing an existential threat. It is very important to point out that there are extreme differences among respondents on these items. For instance, 17.7% of respondents would allow no immigrants from poorer countries, and 11.7% would allow as many as possible. Two thirds are equally divided between those who would allow "some" and "a few". There were almost no differences at different points of time.

1.1.6. Influence of migrants

This is also one potential indicator of solidarity: positive (higher score) or negative (lower score) with respect to the impact of migrants on host societies.

Table 7. Influence of immigrants to host countries

	B a d	Go od	Me an	Std. Deviation
Immigration bad or good for country's economy	0	10	5.1 3	2.54
Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants	0	10	5.3 4	2.66
Immigrants make the country a worse or better place to live	0	10	4.9 5	2.41
Sum of 3	0	30. 00	15. 47	6.8

Source: ESS questionnaire ("Human Values"). Authors' elaboration.

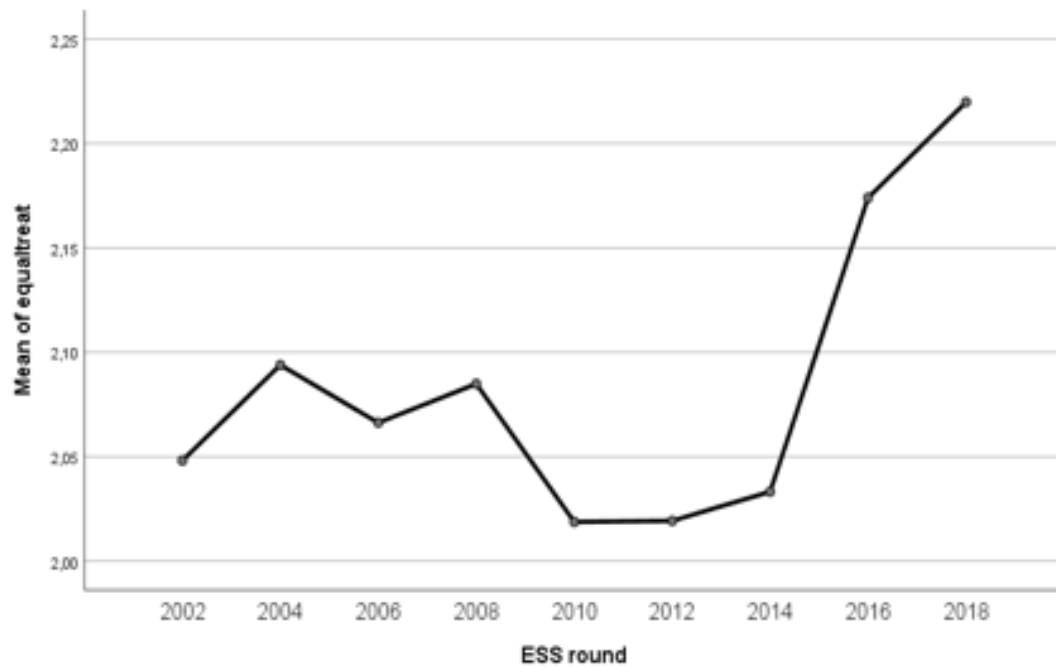
The average answer is again around the theoretical average, and there are individual differences. However, it is again important to emphasise here that the three statements from the table may not express any manifestation of solidarity, but are rather only indirect indicators.

The relationship between the welfare state and the concept of solidarity is discussed above. There was a question regarding social equality, formulated in terms of government obligations to reduce differences in income levels. The scale was from 1 (agree strongly) to 5 (disagree). Results lean strongly to the "left", that is, average answers were about 2.18 in 2002 and then dropped to 2.00 after the economic crisis (in the 2010 and 2012 rounds).

Regarding further European unification, opinions are again around average (5.3 on scale 0 to 10), and again with high individual differences.

There were also three questions that are sometimes included in longer psychological scales on solidarity on a personal level, measuring psychological disposition to express solidarity in different situations. We did not present the results of such studies because they usually have some specific goal and have been conducted on a very limited sample, usually on psychology students, and therefore are not so useful for our purpose here. In the ESS these are statements about persons: treating people equally, helping others and caring about them, and expressing loyalty and devotion. Respondents' answers range from 1 (very much like me) to 7 (not at all like me).

Figure 7. Treating people equally

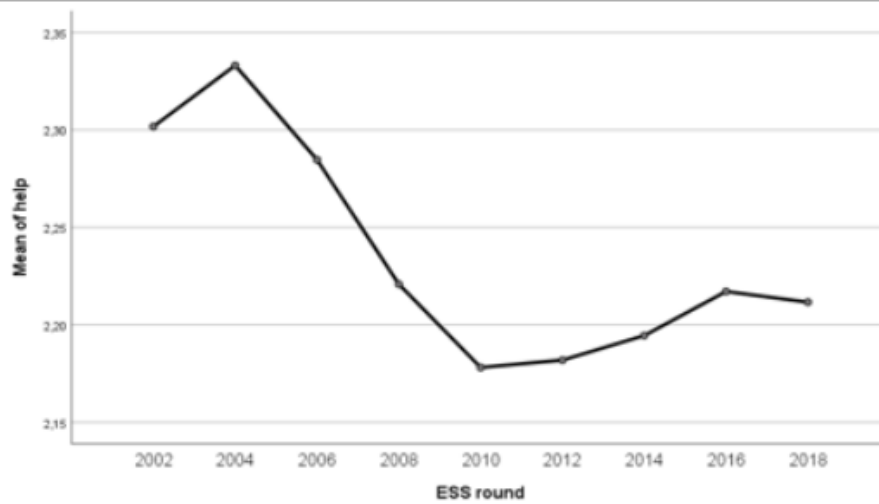


Source: ESS questionnaire ("Human Values"). Authors' elaboration.

Although there is a movement from 2016, it is clear that people consider themselves much closer to the pole "treating people totally equally", than to the very distant opposite pole. These results strongly reinforce a positive relationship to solidarity, or to be precise, this aspect of solidarity (egalitarianism).

The same conclusion can be derived from the next statement about helping others and caring about them. Furthermore, Fig. 6 shows that, despite disparate results in the different countries around 2016 and beyond, some disruptions were detected in EES8 and EES9. Our very preliminary hypotheses are that these movements are related to socio-political phenomena such as the migration crisis of 2015, the Brexit referendum in the UK in 2016, and several terrorist attacks that strongly impacted public opinion. We insist that to verify such a hypothesis further research should be carried out using other empirical sources.

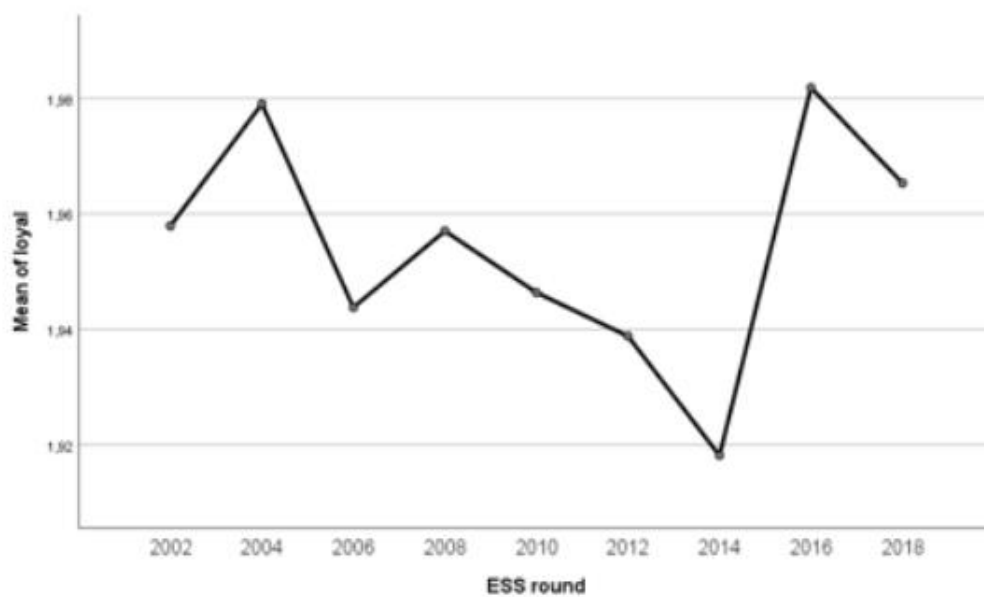
Figure 8. Helping others and caring about them



Source: ESS questionnaire ("Human Values"). Authors' elaboration

Finally, almost all people, strongly see themselves as those who express devotion and loyalty. A similar disruption occurs around 2015-2016, probably linked to the above-mentioned crises.

Figure 9. Devotion and loyalty



Source: ESS questionnaire ("Human Values"). Authors' elaboration

3. Guidelines for further empirical research on solidarity in the EU

As we have demonstrated above, there are only three items in the ESS core modules that are closely linked to the definition of solidarity. Importantly, these items do not highly correlate with each other. This fits with the findings in the definitional framework that solidarity is a multifaceted concept. This highlights the need to develop a cohesive measurement embracing all or more aspects from our definition, that is, in-group and out-group solidarity analysed on individual, group, and institutional solidarity levels. Developing a valid measure that focuses on solidaristic attitudes and behaviours is beyond the scope of this project; however, it would constitute an added value in the study of several relevant topics concerning solidarity (e.g., intergeneration, immigration, new/old EU countries, more affected by COVID-19, etc.). At this stage, we show initial findings that can stimulate theoretical and conceptual developments, which could be used to develop the basis for generating the items of such a new measure.

Considering the lack of both theoretical and methodological instruments that we encountered, we see a scope for the JRC or other institutions to open a specific call for a project regarding the study of solidarity. This is a topic with enormous societal implications, thus deserving more in-depth methodological attention, which would involve the use of other techniques in addition to surveys (e.g., cross-national focus groups and experiments), in order to be adequately addressed and tackled.

4. Conclusions

The notion of solidarity is a complex one in terms of definition, scope and levels. Starting from a working definition – the willingness to accept forms of obligation or to bear costs and risks with the aim of providing help or support to others to whom one is not otherwise bound through personal relations, such as family members – we have analysed conceptual aspects of solidarity such as in-group and out-group, size, relation with reciprocity, self-regarding and other-regarding, levels of solidarity, moral and political implications, and the relation to similar concepts such as fraternity, altruism, charity, and benevolence. It is our specific intention to analyse the notion of solidarity as a European value.

As a European value, solidarity can be seen as a key factor and salient value in relation to several of the crises that the European Union has been facing in recent years, starting from the migration crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and, more recently and still ongoing, the war in Ukraine and cost-of-living crisis. All of these have represented profound challenges to the European integration process and foregrounded solidarity mechanisms and practices across the different levels described above.

Measuring solidarity is a problematic task as it is context-dependent, subject to interpretation, and longitudinally affected by the many disruptive events of our volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous times. It is therefore thought provoking to observe how the value evolves in well-known surveys like the ESS. We acknowledge that, since this work started in early 2022, these measures might have varied as a consequence of the war in Ukraine and the acceleration of the energy crisis and climate change.

Contemplating the promotion of solidarity in the European Union is necessary for our continued integration and building a stronger Union. Nevertheless, we think that education for European and global solidarity is necessary for the obvious reason that the major issues humankind is facing are global. For this reason, there are two needs: (1) to promote solidarity as a value across the European Union and more broadly as a global value; and (2) to incorporate learning about solidarity into education curricula. On this second point, some of the teaching practices presented in other JRC studies and discussed in this report can be inspirational.

Finally, we invite researchers to further survey the evolution of solidarity in the EU, as it can give policymakers important indications of the robustness of European integration and allow educators to develop further pedagogical practices.

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