Solidarities: Normative Claims, Rhetoric and Sociological Analyses

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> *If you tell me I can't understand you because of my color or you can't understand me because of your sexual orientation or she can't understand us because of her faith, well, if you can't have empathy how will you ever have solidarity? (Cleve Jones, interviewed by Alexander Sammon 2016)*

At least since the spread of COVID-19 in Western Europe, solidarity has once more become a much-discussed topic. Recalling the past, we observe that after the end of the *social democratic age* (Dahrendorf 1983), the notion prevails, also in Switzerland, that thanks to social insurance and mutual family support, society provides sufficient solidarity to compensate for the inequalities generated by the market economy and made permanent by inheritance law. However, as the pandemic creates new inequalities and accentuates old ones, there is a renewed call for solidarity replacing the decades of neoliberal appeals to individual responsibility. Thus, young people are expected not to infect the old. And those of the working population experiencing financial consequences from the (partial) shutdown and even private companies are demanding state solidarity – as they did during the financial crisis. Finally, the economically weaker countries are hoping that the globally produced vaccine will eventually reach them.

Apart from the appeal to the willingness of the population and the public authorities to show solidarity, the controversial question arises of whether and to what extent the COVID-19 pandemic is actually contributing to greater solidarity at all. On the one hand, there has been solidarity with the infected, the unemployed, pensioners and at-risk groups and applause for the caregivers. On the other hand, as the stock market boom among other things shows, the coronavirus crisis has also produced a number of winners, be it the digital economy and medical industries, online trading or the banking sector.

It is not a new phenomenon that solidarity rhetoric rarely manifests itself in solidary behavior toward all people. Looking back, we gather that the appeal to solidarity often was and is instrumentalized by political actors to enforce particular interests. For example, even the history

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of social insurance shows that since it was founded, certain groups have been excluded and get no public aid. In other words, the call for universal, inclusive solidarity, as the UN Charter on Human Rights calls for, is still a special case. Calls for solidarity usually exclude certain social categories, be they slaves, people of color, of a different creed or gender, foreign workers and companies, or citizens of other nation states. Therefore, it makes sense to view the real world as a conglomerate of social entities whose solidarities are limited to specific social categories.

The editorial is structured as follows: it first presents how solidarity is conceptualized in sociological theory and political debates. Thereafter, it addresses the connection between solidarity and human rights. This is followed by three sections about social policy as institutionalized, *large* solidarity, the new longing for *small* solidarities, and the question of cross-category loss of solidarity through neoliberal identity politics. The editorial concludes with a retrospect and an outlook on the topic of solidarities as well as an overview of the four core articles and the two complementary Forum articles of this issue.

Solidarity in Sociological Theory and Politics

Etymologically, *solidarity* basically refers to the Roman *obligation in solidum* where solidum means *dense* or *solid. Obligation in solidum* refers to the solidarity that all members of a community used to have as they were liable for existing debts of the community and its individual members. Although this principle of solidarity survives until today in corporate law and private insurance, the origin of the concept of solidarity is primarily associated with the French Revolution and the 19th century labor movement inspired by Karl Marx. The demand for *fraternité* (initially) meant that the male members of a nation state were to deal with social problems and to defend themselves against external enemies in a solidary way. In consequence, solidarity was considered a way to deal with the suffering from alienation and pauperism in the wake of capitalism (Marx 2004 [1848]) or the effects of individualization when moving from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* (Tönnies 1987). Of course, women, slaves, and members of linguistic minorities often questioned whether they, too, were among the brothers. Women with a critical stance were often told that they would be accepted into brotherhood as soon as they fulfilled their military service (Nollert 2009).

In line with the importance solidarity had during the creation of the French nation state, it is hardly a coincidence that French sociologists (Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim) were among the first to deal with the phenomenon of solidarity in modern society. Doing so from a value-free (*wertfrei*, Max Weber) sociological perspective increasingly replaced the normativity of the concept and turned it into an analytical one, characterizing social groups whose members communicate, cooperate, and assist each other in times of need affectively, cognitively, and materially (Diewald 1991).

However, from the very beginning of sociology there was a dispute as to whether solidarity is based on emotional, familial or ethnic ties (we-group) or the voluntary pursuit of rational interests (community of purpose) or coercion (private contracts, contributions to the state). The definition in the renowned *Wörterbuch der Soziologie* (eng. *dictionary of sociology*) is instructive in this regard. There, *solidarity* refers to

togetherness, agreement, close connection, community consciousness, joint action; principle of orientation and behavior which takes on a different meaning depending on the basic ideological-sociopolitical orientation. According to the point of view of liberalism and bourgeois ethics, either as solidarity of interest, the agreement, union, unification that has come about merely [...] for the purpose of asserting common, similarly directed individual interests, or as community solidarity, the unity of will, feeling and action based on 'inner' solidarity, 'we-group' and attitude (Hartfiel/Hillmann 1982: 691, translated by M. Budowski and M. Nollert).[2]

Here, a clear distinction is made between a liberal (community of purpose) and communitarian (we-group) perspective. These two perspectives are taken into account in Emile Durkheim's two types of solidarity. He distinguishes between *mechanical* solidarity, based on similarities and correspondences in consciousness and hence with emotional attachment (we-group), and *organic* solidarity, which results from the division of labor and functional differentiation (community of purpose). Durkheim anticipated that in modernity or the market society, organic solidarity would gain importance at the expense of mechanical solidarity: "Thus, it is an historical law that mechanical solidarity which first stands alone, or nearly so, progressively loses ground, and that organic solidarity becomes, little by little, preponderant." (Durkheim 1960: 174)

Ferdinand Tönnies (1887) provides a similar pattern of arguments; he also predicted that the *we-group solidarity* based on emotional attachment predominant in communities would lose ground to the interest-oriented *purpose solidarity* in modern societies. If we compare Tönnies and Durkheim's reception, it is striking that in the German political arena, the change from the supposedly warm *we-group solidarity* to the cold *purpose-oriented solidarity* was comparatively more regretted than in France. Accordingly, already in 1924, in his book *Grenzen der Gemeinschaft (*eng. *The limits of community),* Helmut Plessner warned that political forces striving for an exclusive *we-group solidarity* on the level of nation states (e.g., *Volksgemeinschaft*, eng. ethnic community) endanger the liberal achievements of modern societies, such as democracy, protection against arbitrary state power, and freedom of speech.

Of course, solidarity was also an important albeit indirect topic in the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The famous sentence "all history has been the history of class struggles" in the Communist Manifesto (2004 [1848]) is based on the premise that lower classes can only be successful in their struggles against the ruling class when their members show solidarity across state boundaries. Accordingly, the transition to a socialist formation of society presupposes the realization of the motto "Proletarians of all countries, unite!". However, as the history of the 20th century documents, wage earners in capitalism still wait to be unified. On the one hand, social democratic parties contributed to emerging social partnerships by showing solidarity with entrepreneurs within the framework of nation states during the world wars. On the

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[2] The original reads: "Zusammengehörigkeit, Übereinstimmung, enge Verbundenheit, Gemeinschaftsbewusstsein, gemeinsames Handeln; Orientierungs- und Verhaltensprinzip, das je nach weltanschaulich-gesellschaftspolitischer Grundorientierung einen anderen Sinn erhält. Nach dem Standpunkt des Liberalismus und der bürgerlichen Ethik entweder als Interessens-Solidarität, die bloss [...] zum Zwecke der Durchsetzung gemeinsamer, gleichgerichteter individueller Interessen zustande gekommene Absprache, Vereinigung, Einigung oder als Gemeinschaftssolidarität, die auf 'innerer' Verbundenheit, Wir-Gefühl und Gesinnung beruhende Einheit des Wollens, Fühlens und Handelns" (Hartfiel/Hillmann 1982: 691).

other hand, the Bolsheviks distanced themselves from Marx's transnational solidarity postulate shortly after the Russian Revolution, celebrating a patriotic socialism as early as the 1920s (see Stalin's doctrine since 1924: *Socialism in one country*) and subsequently defending it with extreme brutality against immigrants and cosmopolitan Marxists and Trotskyists, among others.

Two other authors considered classics of sociology are especially important for empirical solidarity research. Georg Simmel, together with Karl Marx, is considered as father of the sociology of conflict (Turner 1975). He developed three theses that still deserve attention today: The notion of *divide et impera* highlights the functionality for rulers to try to prevent solidarity efforts between the ruled as far as possible. Similarly, the laughing third (*tertius gaudens*) benefits from the quarrel between two opponents. In social psychology and political science, much attention has been given to the thesis that solidarity in a social entity, be it a family, a group, or a nationality, is fostered by an external threat, be it real or imagined. Finally, the chapter *The Intersection of Social Circles* in Simmel's *Sociology* (1908) is also relevant: Similar to Durkheim and Tönnies, he assumes that traditional *we-group solidarities* characterized by ascriptive features no longer dominate modern societies; rather, these are characterized by diverse solidarities that are interest-driven, voluntarily and purposively chosen by individuals and therefore unstable.

Max Weber's (1978 [1922]) concept of social closure is also of interest for research on solidarity, as it points at processual aspects. He considers the process of solidarization as the basis of exclusion. Later, Frank Parkin (1979) further elaborates the idea and understands the process of solidarization as a means to reduce discrimination. The underlying idea is that groups seek to exclude other groups from access to resources and to labor and product markets on the basis of ascriptive characteristics (religion, ethnicity, gender, etc.). According to Parkin, this process of exclusion works best when the excluding groups act in solidarity with their own group by means of codifying discrimination in law and when this is met with little or no resistance from the excluded groups. Vice versa, exclusion can be eliminated if those excluded are able to unite in solidarity (*solidarism*) and fight against such practices with civil society and democratic instruments at their disposal.

However, and this makes the closure concept particularly interesting for the analysis of modern conflicts, even excluded people are not immune to discrimination against other groups. Parkin calls this phenomenon *dual closure*. It manifests itself, among other things, in aversion and the advocacy of legal barriers against people of other color, religion, or nationality. This has been documented in the many varieties of fascism and, more recently, right-wing populism. Parkin thus also criticizes Marx, who in his view exaggerated the potential of solidarity of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. That supremacy, countervailing power, and dual closure are equally based on solidarity is also impressively illustrated by Heinrich Popitz's (1968) *Prozesse der Machtbildung* (eng. *Processes of Power Formation*) and Norbert Elias and John L. Scotson's *Established and Outsiders* (1965).

In sum: A look at the history and sociology of solidarity documents that solidarity is used as a normative demand in everyday political life and as an analytical category in sociology to describe how people live together. Marx's writings further show that combining normative and analytical perspectives is possible; he calls both for transnational solidarity and sociological re-

flection on the central question of when and under what circumstances a class in itself transforms into a solidary class for itself. However, to be able to fight against exclusion the ability to unite, as in forms of civil society movements or organizations, and viable conditions for the use of democratic instruments are necessary.

Solidarity and Its Connection to Universal Human Rights

The origin of the modern idea of solidarity, as described above, lies in the revolutions of the 18th century; this solidarity has been institutionalized to varying degrees via social movements and conflicts in today's welfare states. This solidarity usually requires that the state within the framework of a social contract demands that the population and in particular citizens give up some of their freedoms in favor of their protection and in order to provide for those who cannot take care of themselves. However, the very idea of the social contract and the rights it contains (civil, political and social citizenship) only becomes meaningful when "sociality, social cooperation or social solidarity" (Scholz 2014: 50) make the social contract and rights possible. According to Scholz, the Enlightenment and the related notions of brotherhood and equality represent an attempt to formulate universal principles of solidarity that achieve a "minimal understanding of our shared interests in order for rights to be meaningful in a society" (Scholz 2014: 53), and this consists of ascribing dignity and granting rights to people. However, the enforcement of rights requires institutions and practices to be effective and enable social belonging, thereby creating a certain structure of access to resources and of inequalities (Turner 2007). Although global solidarity is stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and finds an institutional basis in the United Nations, this *large* solidarity referring to global solidarity lacks power on its own and relies on nations to make this type of solidarity work.

Social Policy as Large Solidarity

With regard to the emergence and development of modern welfare states, the distinction between *small* and *large* solidarities, i.e., between informal and voluntary on the one hand and institutionalized solidarities on the other hand, is particularly helpful. Generally, it is assumed that in traditional societies, people in need can mainly resort to small solidarities, i.e., the support of the family or clan. In modern, capitalist societies, small solidarities are eroding – for whatever reasons (migration, demographic changes or social change). Once small solidarities have eroded and where there is a lack of large solidarities, people who cannot or can no longer provide for themselves and/or others by selling their labor face an existential catastrophe. Thus, as the families' and clans' capacity for solidarity slowly declined in the 19th century, the demand for large solidarities emerged. For the workers' movement, the creation of social insurance against the risks of illness, accident, job loss, and old age as well as the creation of progressive, redistributive taxation had top priority. Large solidarity manifests itself primarily in the political will as well as the ability to provide material support to people in need and to organize an economic redistribution from privileged social positions at the top to the disadvantaged positions at the bottom of the social order. Accordingly, large solidarity means that institutions through

social policy and social work support people who are in need because they are ill, have an accident, are disabled or cannot gain a foothold in the labor market and that there is a social redistribution of resources from the healthy, employed and wealthy people to those in need.

Historically, large solidarity did not refer to globally but to nationally institutionalized solidarity, limited to members of the state, and often even only to occupational categories (*corporatism*). Until today large solidarity, however, in general has not included housewives and mothers doing unpaid work and the self-employed. Decommodifying social insurance and progressive taxation models were institutionalized in most countries of Western Europe as well as in North America and Australia at the latest after the Second World War, with disproportionately less large solidarity institutionalized in liberal welfare regimes than in conservative and social democratic ones.

New Longing for Small Solidarities

Since the end of the 20th century, however, voices from Western and also Eastern European countries are increasingly distancing themselves from these large solidarities, advocating the resurrection of small solidarities that exclude those that do not belong to the we-group. Since the change of power in various liberal regimes (Thatcher, Reagan), neoliberalism has become politically very influential. Its protagonists, above all Friedrich von Hayek and the Mont Pelerin Society (Nollert 2005), have been sharing the view that the welfare state threatens the market economy and therewith economic freedoms and that the losers of the capitalist competition thereby become dependent on the welfare state (cf. Hirschman 1991). Their credo has been that there is no necessity for more state solidarity (welfare) to improve the situation of those affected but that instead individual responsibility and a fair deal between the state and the beneficiaries of social transfers (workfare) are necessary. However, the Mont Pelerin Society did not fundamentally question solidarity as a value. It basically rejected that social support to those in need should happen institutionally by means of compulsory contributions or taxes. In their view, solidarity was desirable primarily as voluntary commitment, as it happens in the context of families, friendships and charitable organizations. Therefore, from a neoliberal perspective, *intergenerational solidarity* does not mean mutual support of different age cohorts (i.e., institutionalized old-age provision) but the ability to transfer economic, cultural and social capital between the generations of individual families. Thus, the old liberal argument that this intrafamilial solidarity cannot be reconciled with the meritocratic postulate of equal opportunity is losing importance in the debate on intergenerational justice (Budowski and Nollert 2010).

Recently, so-called tribalist forces have also questioned large solidarities embedded in nation states in favor of small ones. Such forces emerge from modern, digitally embedded neotribalism (Maffesoli 1996) or revitalized pre-modern tribalism (religious, ethnic, linguistic communities, clans or even families) which turn away from the imagined community of the nation state (Anderson 1983; Sloterdijk 1998). Similar to communitarianism (e.g., Taylor 1992; Kymlicka 1995), its advocates consider people to be identified primarily as members of groups or communities that distinguish themselves from the rest of the population by some specific characteristic (see Richardt 2018). Leaders of such groups no longer focus on universal solidarity, encompassing all people per se, but on solidarity between people within smaller or larger groups.

Thus, the liberal claim for civil, political and social rights for all humans is no longer important, whereas creating autonomous, internal solidary legal spaces for groups with particular attributes (religion, ethnicity, color, etc.) is. Consequently, solidarity does not become manifest in material redistribution in favor of people in need but in the elimination of discrimination or, in other words, the recognition of claims of specific social groups (Fraser/Honneth 2003). Large economic solidarities are replaced by solidarities with emancipatory and autonomous claims of social groups of different sizes.

Loss of Cross-Category Solidarity Through Neoliberal Identity Politics?

Of course, eliminating discrimination is necessary and fundamentally important. However, it could provoke upheaval if so-called identity politics privilege certain groups one-sidedly and deny solidarity to disadvantaged groups that are weak in conflict and organization, such as long-term unemployed and poor men who are white, heterosexual and atheist (Hochschild 2016). Furthermore, as the example of South Africa after the end of Apartheid has already shown (Leibbrandt et al. 2010), a reduction in discrimination does not automatically entail a reduction of economic inequalities. Therefore, it would be naïve to assume that the gap between the income of top positions in companies and employees with low wages would decrease if the proportion of women in top positions increases (see Leicht 2016; Aaberge et al. 2018).

For Nancy Fraser (2015), the parallelism of less discrimination and more economic inequality comes as no surprise. Mainstream neoliberal feminism is mainly interested in reducing inequalities between well-qualified men and women and not in a cross-category decrease of economic inequalities such as solidarity with poor men or with low-skilled, low-paid women or unpaid female care work that would at least reduce inequalities between women:

> As I see it, the mainstream feminism of our time has adopted an approach that cannot achieve justice even for women, let alone for anyone else. The trouble is, this feminism is focused on encouraging educated middle-class women to "lean in" and "crack the glass ceiling" – in other words, to climb the corporate ladder. By definition, then, its beneficiaries can only be women of the professional-managerial class. And absent structural changes in capitalist society, those women can only benefit by leaning on others — by offloading their own care work and housework onto low-waged, precarious workers, typically racialized and/or immigrant women. So this is not, and cannot be, a feminism for all women! But that is not all. Mainstream feminism has adopted a thin, market-centered view of equality, which dovetails neatly with the prevailing neoliberal corporate view. So it tends to fall into line with an especially predatory, winner-take-all form of capitalism that is fattening investors by cannibalizing the living standards of everyone else. Worse still, this feminism is supplying an alibi for these predations. Increasingly, it is liberal feminist thinking that supplies the charisma, the aura of emancipation, on which neoliberalism draws to legitimate its vast upward redistribution of wealth. (Gutting & Fraser 2015)

Walter Benn Michaels (2006) similarly argues that the current diversity boom and the praising of cultural diversity in big companies and universities distract from a lack of solidarity and inequalities between the members of categories:

> *The argument in its simplest form, will be that we love race – we love identity – because we don't love class. We love thinking that the differences that divides us are not the differences between those of us who have money and those who don't but are instead the differences between those of us who are black and those who are white or Asian or Latino or whatever. (Michaels 2006: 6)*

Of course, this criticism of particularist lobbying by so-called advocacy groups is not new. Since the 19th century, working women and mothers have been complaining that the solidarity appeal "proletarians of all countries unite" and the decommodifying welfare state neglect working women's concerns. Moreover, at the end of the 20th century, economically weak, poorly qualified and non-white women in particular began to accuse *white feminism* of a lack of sensitivity to racism and classism (see, in particular, Meulenbelt 1988; Crenshaw 1989).

Thus, it is no surprise that some countries are recently facing unholy alliances between neoliberalism and neo- and traditional tribalism that rally against or at least ignore the large, redistributive solidarities of the welfare state (see also Fraser 1995). In this sense, even multiculturalists have nothing against neoliberal austerity policies as long as their cultural segregation efforts (such as no-go zones) are tolerated by the political authorities (Ghadban 2005). In other words, the slogan against large solidarity is no longer limited to the neoliberal credo *More freedom, less state!* but now encompasses the tribalist one: *More cultural freedom and small solidarities, less state and large solidarity!*

Solidarities: Retrospect and Outlook

Solidarity is an old concept. As early as in Ancient Rome, a regulation existed that economic actors support each other in times of need. However, the demand became politically relevant and transferred to the nation state level only after the French Revolution. Fraternity is, however, not merely a political goal but – as the sociology of conflict postulates – in the first place a crucial prerequisite for achieving solidarity.

In the 19th century, the classics of sociology were primarily concerned with the analytical question of what forms of solidarity exist and how the extent of social solidarity can be determined and preserved in modern society. Durkheim, Tönnies and Simmel agreed that solidarity in traditional societies is based primarily on similarities and emotional, ascriptive bonds as well as othering and border- and boundary-making, whereas in modern, functionally differentiated societies embedded in nation states, it is based on diverse, enriching relationships with others, similar economic interests and the common interest in a prosperous division of labor. In contrast, Marx's view contains the old revolutionary demand for cross-social category solidarity, thereby transcending the nation-state framework. In other words, solidarity should not be analyzed on the basis of a methodological nationalism (Wimmer/Glick Schiller 2003) but institutionalized on a global level – as the workers' movement had still hoped it to be in the second half of the 19th century. As we now know, this demand has remained unfulfilled. While social-

democratic parties in Western Europe since World War I have focused on the creation of large solidarities (social transfers and progressive taxation) embedded in nation states, the Bolsheviks in the 1920s already bid farewell to both bourgeois rights and liberal democracy and to Marx's demand for transnational solidarity. Surprisingly, the cosmopolitan demand for cross-national or rather global solidarity was revitalized and codified as *global solidarity* in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thus, since the Second World War, the United Nations guarantee a minimal understanding of common interests across nation states and solidary validity and implementation of rights (Scholz 2014) within the imagined global community (Anderson 1983).

Presently, the Western welfare state no longer seems threatened by Soviet communism and Western European fascism but by neoliberalism and tribalism. On the one hand, neoliberal economists and politicians rally against compulsory (large) solidarity carried out by means of redistribution from the rich to the poor and progressive taxation. Their supporters push for more individual responsibility and what they call voluntary solidarity, with its strongholds based in the family and charitable organizations. On the other hand, large solidarities are being undermined, particularly by religious and ethnic groups that primarily demand recognition and the elimination of discrimination. Often these groups claim more legal freedoms whilst ignoring the claims of other disadvantaged groups and maintaining economic inequalities between individuals and between social groups.

Until now in Switzerland, in contrast to, for example, Great Britain or France, powerful unholy alliances between neoliberalism and neo- and traditional tribalism are not yet discernible. Popular votes in recent years and the parliamentary debates document that the large solidarities institutionalized in social insurance, social assistance, and progressive taxation and the social partnership between workers and employers created after World War II still enjoy popular support. Moreover, manifestations of cultural parallel socialization of groups whose solidary behavior ends at ethnic or religious boundaries have not (yet) been discerned. However, cracks are beginning to show on the one hand with regards to social assistance for refugees, who are treated differently than the Swiss, and on the other hand with regards to other people receiving social assistance, as the principle of *foster and demand* (ger. *Fördern und Fordern*) integrated possibilities to sanction into the system.

Finally, we need to take into account developments in the area of social media. Of course, the media that are not monitored by the state already allow neoliberals and tribalists to disavow large solidarities. However, the new social media also make it possible for neo-nationalist to recelebrate their imagined national communities and for cosmopolitans of all political positions to recall their demand for global solidarity between all people, regardless of gender, age, religion, ethnicity, social origin, etc.

Contents of This Special Issue

This issue of Sozialpolitik.ch contains four contributions that address different aspects of solidarity. The first article of this issue on solidarity, *The experience of solidarity in Poland under communist rule and thereafter by* Magdalena Solska, scrutinizes in which way solidarity was conceptualized in the bottom-up *Solidarność* movement in Poland and how it has developed over time. *Solidarność* "was characterized by a peaceful character, very good organization, and

the truly unprecedented cooperation between workers, intellectuals, farmers and the Catholic Church". Based on historical accounts of the events in the 1980s and press interviews with *Solidarność* members, key aspects of the concept of solidarity and its relation to the present-day situation are elaborated. Analytically distinguishing between different types of solidarity – the structural, the rational choice, and the normative type – Solska argues that the key aspects were not primarily rooted in organizing against the communist system. Due to the national history and particular circumstances in Poland at that time, the common norms and values of Catholic thought played an important role in revitalizing the national tradition and identity which underlay solidarity. Poland carried out the "three moments or sequential steps of solidarity", leading from "recognition of factual solidarity, i.e., human interdependence as an anthropological fact" at the beginning of the movement to "solidarity as an ethical imperative" to "solidarity as a principle enshrined in policies and institutions" today. Solidarity was institutionalized – yet with rather particularistic redistributive programs – from 2016 onwards. These programs focus on the worse-off and families and aim at the culturally conservative, mainly rural population, in line with the Catholic Church. At the same time, the current government – because of its unilaterally introduced reforms and polarizing discourse – has weakened institutions necessary for solidarity, e.g., those creating a common good and ensuring a justified or legitimate distribution thereof. Starting with informal solidarity based on the *Solidarność* movement's ideas of "human dignity, mutual aid, participation and a demand for life in truth", Poland experienced a phase of loss of large solidarity due to implementing the market economy that focusses on competitiveness and economic growth. It left a majority of the population that had initiated and developed solidarity within the *Solidarność* movement behind and triggered a mass emigration, in particular of young Poles. More recently, Poland has nonetheless institutionalized some types of solidarity (i.e., redistribution programs), yet at the cost of furthering other societal, mainly cultural divides, such as those between conservatives and progressives or religious and secular groups.

Zsófia S. Ignácz addresses the aspect of institutionalized horizontal Europeanization, i.e., the support for institutions that distribute goods/resources, in her article on *Similarities between European and national solidarity. An empirical thought experiment about attitudes towards redistribution.* To do so, she analyzes whether national attitudes towards redistribution converge with European attitudes towards redistribution and whether the underlying mechanisms of solidarity are similar or vary. European solidarity is broadly understood as "the attitudes and the actions related to extending support to others (both individuals and collective actors) in the European social space with whom one does not share the same national social space". Cross-national research suggests that European citizens rather accept fiscal solidarity at the European level. This stands in contrast to civic solidarity within a nation, which is conditional on cultural factors and possibly also social standing. Against the backdrop of the debate on European solidarity, Ignácz justifies her thought experiment: "[I]f we view solidarity, i.e., the readiness to support others, as a necessary ingredient of society, then the investigation of national and European solidarity can reveal a new facet of existing discussions on the similarities and differences between national societies and a *European* society". For this purpose, Ignácz applies questions on institutionalized solidarity in the Transnational European Solidarity Survey (TESS) operationalized by means of "generalized attitudes relating to the principle of redistribution

between individuals". The results of the structural equation modeling provide empirical evidence that indeed the degree of support for redistribution between the national and the European level is comparable and also suggest that the mechanisms behind the support for redistribution are similar at both levels: similarities exist between the two spatial levels (country and European level) and analogies can be identified. Zsofia Ignatz's article shows that important insights can be gained from contrasting national and European processes.

Eveline Odermatt addresses a highly topical issue of solidarity in her article *Discontinuities within continuities: solidarity, (im-)mobility and migration between refugee crisis and COVID-19 crisis*. She compares the *solidarity practices* towards migrants and among migrants in the so-called refugee crisis in 2015 with those in the present COVID-19 crisis. She understands the notion of crisis as a "disruption of what is considered normal". Odermatt argues that the COVID-19 crisis highlights the "manifold ambivalent meanings of mobility and solidarity" and depicts the way "COVID-19 impacts upon migrants' capacity to become solidarity actors and how COVID-19 shapes forms of solidarities towards migrants."

Following three borrowed justificatory principles for solidarity: "*proximity to the supporting person or group* (cultural, spiritual, or physical); the *intensity of needs* (economic, medical or political), and *the giving capacity* (material wealth, stability of democratic institutions)", she states that migrants' characteristics and motives for becoming solidarity actors do not differ from those of local citizens. Indeed, the role of migrants in supportive networks across borders has been a given for a long time. However, migrant solidarity through associations, remittance practices or their return to their home country equipped with new ideas, behaviors values, knowledge, skills and qualifications became differently framed around the turn of the millennium: Migrants turned into potential drivers, actors or agents of development. However, that potential strongly depends on their capacity to act due to social and economic inequalities, and this capacity depends on basic conditions provided by changing migration regimes. During the refugee crisis, informal and formal solidarity was high. Thereafter, the financial and social giving capacities of migrants were restrained in different ways, e.g., mobility was hindered by means of increasingly militarized border controls; settlement is tackled with deportations; or by taxing migrants' remittances (as is the case in Italy). The COVID-19 crisis exacerbated these barriers, as unemployment increased, borders were closed, and mobility was restrained, trapping many thousand migrants in transit countries, unable to reach their destinations.

The general decrease in solidarity towards vulnerable groups over time not least due to the lack of a perceived emergency situation and the focus on rulebreakers since 2018 has furthered a call for "exclusive membership" and a democracy equipped with "the right to decide who belongs to the community and control over membership". This, too, has intensified with the COVID-19 crisis. Odermatt argues that the long duration of the crisis has nurtured *neo-nationalism* and *neo-tribalism* and the retreat into the family as simple solutions to regaining control. Nonetheless, new forms and understandings of solidarity are emerging in the situation created by COVID-19: (1) the solidarity of migrants with citizens at risk and other *newly emerging forms of sociability* between locals and migrants (2) the understanding of global interdependencies, and (3) the change in valuation of low-skilled migrants that have become recognized as essential for the system as workers in food processing plants or carers across Europe. (4) The COVID-

19 crisis has imposed on citizens experiences of unpredictability, an inability to plan and a feeling of temporariness that could be transformed into more compassion for migrants and therefore a greater understanding and solidarity. Concluding, Odermatt demands vigilance to reverse the new migration restrictions once the crisis is under control.

Finally, Jürgen Mackert looks at solidarity from a theoretical perspective in his article *Social life as collective struggle: closure theory and the problem of solidarity* by asking which conditions are necessary to enable solidarity. Against the current backdrop of intensifying economic exploitation, political disenfranchisement, social marginalization and cultural repression, he argues that social closure theory could provide a theoretical lens to analyze the "intensified struggle for life chances", as such struggles can be conceived of as *closure struggles*. Many social groups have started to speak out and organize, yet a large number of social groups have not. Closure theory explains why and how one group denies another group political, economic, social and cultural participation based on solidarization and monopolizing resources. However, closure theory by Weber, Parkin and Murphy does not spell out what conditions the excluded need to be able to organize, solidarize and usurp access to life chances, in short: to participate in closure struggles. In contrast to Weber and previous theorists on social closure, Mackert follows Neuwirth (1969) and adopts a *relational methodological perspective*. He shifts the focus to strategies that undermine the capacity to construct a political identity for collective social action to keep social groups "powerless and dependent, leaving them in weak positions in today's struggles for democracy, security, rights, resources and a life in dignity", depriving them of their life chances. He locates such strategies in the "manifold […] processes of economic exploitation, political disenfranchisement, social marginalization and cultural repression". These are presented as rooted in: liberalism and capitalism, historically resulting in "White racial supremacism" that deprives certain groups of social dignity, and "settler colonialism" that deprives them of economic and political opportunities. Such strategies, or "politics of social closure by the powerful", rely on discrimination, superiority and even eliminatory practices to hamper a social group's ability to draw boundaries, develop a political identity and close their community to become collective actors. As Mackert argues by further developing closure theory, collective action consists of "highly complex and complicated social processes" that need to be analyzed in the relationship between the powerful and the powerless as well as among members of the same group. Closure struggles are key for understanding social life in general and struggles for democracy and participation in particular.

Two debates on solidarity are critically reviewed in the complementary *Forum*. In the first contribution, *Frühkindliche Bildung und Erziehung zur Solidarität: eine Black Box* [eng. *Early childhood education and solidarity education: a black box*], Margrit Stamm takes the high expectations put in early childhood education to enable equality of opportunity as starting point. Implicitly, participation is considered a key factor for fostering solidary action. Stamm questions whether early childhood education can live up to these expectations, as research shows that children from the middle classes benefit from better learning conditions than children from lower classes or disadvantaged milieus. Moreover, the intensive education style practice in middle class families and daycare centers is almost exclusively focused on the development of the individual and unique child and their needs. This stands in contrast to lower classes or families

from disadvantaged milieux that rather focus on the necessities of the group and therewith foster solidarity and community.

Bringing together Durkheim's (1960) concept of mechanical solidarity with Tranov's (2012) concepts of individualistic solidarity and norms of solidarity, Stamm conceptualizes acting in solidarity as requiring the abandoning of self-interest, passing up rewards and accepting longer-term disadvantages. She convincingly provides argumentative support and empirical evidence from previous studies for the thesis that from an educational science perspective, preschool childhood threatens to become a new key area of the social reproduction of educational inequality and that this happens at the cost of solidarity-based behavior.

Franz Schultheis' article *Familiale Solidarität und gesellschaftliche Reproduktion* [eng. *Familial Solidarity and Societal reproduction*] addresses the various ambivalences of solidarity regarding the family and societal reproduction due to the struggle of the legitimate place of solidarity in society. The article traces the history of the struggle to monopolize the legitimate definition of (morally valuable) solidarity back to the Catholic social notion of the *holy family*. This notion conceptualizes the family as the haven of solidarity, both inclusive and exclusive at the same time and as such Janus-faced. In this line of argument, the family has been idealized and mythologized in familialism and stylized as a bastion of a pre-modern world in which production and reproduction coexisted harmoniously under one roof – the *oikos* – before being torn apart by the capitalist economic order, its anonymous market logic, utilitarianism and the calculating *homo economicus* that accompany it. From this perspective, familialism can be considered a conservative critique of capitalism.

The second strand of argument from the 1960s onwards in Europe and North America conceptualized the family as the core unit for the patriarchal rule, a pillar of capitalist property individualism, and as the place where gender inequality and patriarchal domination are structurally intertwined and reproduce social and gender inequalities.

These two strands of thought stand in opposition to each other over the course of time: the solidary family or welfare family, and the welfare state, with issues of moral value and issues of the right to solidarity clashing. The struggle, cooperation and competition for the legitimate understanding of the common good of solidarity was solved in some countries with conservative welfare regimes, with the family as the basic pillar of solidarity manifest in the principle of subsidiarity as formulated 1931 in the *Social Encyclical Quadragesimo Anno*, and with social-democratic regimes in others, such as in Sweden, where solidarity became relegated to the state as a state-centered model of social security developed.

Schultheis further depicts aspects of the family as an anthropological constant and strategies through which families reproduce societal structures, such as strategies of fertility or marriage. He concludes that

> *political debates about the family, from issues such as marriage or inheritance law to child benefits and tax allowances, to debates about equal rights and adoption rights for same-sex couples, are never simply isolated detailed questions of civil or social law but have a socio-political character insofar as they each have regulatory implications. Therefore, the claim to interpretative sovereignty over family matters also always*

means a claim to the legitimate interpretation of normative foundations of social order. In other words [...], Affaires de Famille *are always profoundly* Affaires d'Etat *[translation by M. Budowski and M. Nollert].*

We hope this issue on solidarities provides our readers with ample food for thought.

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