A Precarious Solidarity

Between Christian Democratic & Social Democratic Understandings of Solidarity Concerning Re-allocation of Refugees
Abstract

The challenge of immigration has divided EU member states, political parties, media and academia as well as the electorate of EU countries, leaving political decision makers under tremendous pressure on both national and EU level. To alleviate the situation for highly burdened member states, the Commission has suggested a permanent relocation mechanism for refugees, but so far, many member states have been reluctant to accept higher shares of refugees. Some observers have labelled the situation a crisis of solidarity, challenging the idea of European integration, but also questioning the Union’s capacity to demonstrate solidarity between member states, and consequently its capacity to show solidarity with arriving refugees.

By looking at European Parliament debates, this paper examines the main differences between the European Christian Democratic and Social Democratic understandings of solidarity and how these differences become visible in relation to relocation of refugees and asylum seekers between EU member states. The findings suggest that while there is some convergence, Christian Democrats are more inclined to consider refugees as a threat and to advocate the need of securing external borders than their Social Democratic counterparts. Social Democrats also to a larger extent favour the idea of making relocation mandatory, while many Christian Democrats emphasize the importance of subsidiarity.

The findings can be associated with the foundational values of both party groups and their political understandings of solidarity. Most interestingly, however, this paper finds that the national level variance within these two party groups is frequently bigger, than between them – indicating that MEP’s understandings of solidarity are perhaps more strongly mediated by nationality than political affiliation.

Keywords: solidarity, Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, EU, discourse analysis, refugees, asylum seekers, migration
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1. Introduction

In social theory, religious teachings and ethics as well as in political discourse, solidarity has featured as a key concept in Europe. Early nineteenth century philosophers and sociologists saw solidarity as a ‘means for social cohesion and integration’ against the breakup of traditional feelings of togetherness and social bonds that eventually gave birth to modern society. In Catholic and Protestant social ethics, solidarity gradually replaced the idea of charity, the International Labour Movement came to use ‘class solidarity’ as the main slogan and weapon and early on it came to figure centrally within modern political discourse of two of the main political traditions in Europe, social democracy and Christian democracy. In time it became increasingly formalized and eventually found its institutional expression in the welfare state (Stjernø 2005, 1).

Solidarity, however, also appears in contexts beyond nation states and has become a frequently used concept within the framework of the European Union. Hence, solidarity also has a transnational/supranational expression/dimension. First mentioned in the Treaty of Rome of 1957, solidarity has been a reoccurring concept in EU policy framework, mainly framed in two ways with regards to European integration: first, as a founding European value, underpinning what Europe is all about, and second, as a functional and practical concept referring to policies that are supposed to translate the idea of solidarity into practice between member states (Mau 2007, 133-134).

These two ways of using and framing solidarity have sometimes resulted in theoretical disenchantment since solidarity becomes a term caught in tension between fact and norm. Applications of the concept have diverged accordingly (Bayertz 1999 ;Pensky 2008). For the purpose of studying solidarity in the EU, however, it is quite clear that the fact of solidarity between member states presupposes a certain degree of dedication to the norm (ideal) of solidarity, while the norm at the same time is contingent on certain institutional arrangements that make solidarity conducive to manifest itself.

While the concept itself has received surprisingly little structured scholarly attention for decades, it has remained a central aspect of European political language, and the 2008 financial crisis and the current refugee crisis have made it a pressingly urgent topic within the Union. The financial crisis striking asymmetrically across member states as well as the uneven exposure to migrant flows have arguably increased the distance between member states’ positions and attitudes on many policy issues, one of which is the charged and contested issue of redistribution of refugees among member states.

In his 2015 State of The Union speech, named “Time for Honesty, Unity and Solidarity” President Juncker of The European Commission described the refugee crisis as the “first priority” on the EU agenda, and the failure to relocate refugees from the most exposed countries (Italy, Greece and Hungary) to other member states as a failure of “common solidarity”. Furthermore, he argued that the emergency mechanisms of relocating 160,000 refugees, as well as the proposed permanent relocation mechanism, “requires strong effort in European solidarity” (State of The Union 2015).

In the following 2016 speech, Juncker referred to solidarity as “the glue that keeps our Union together” and that despite seeing signs of solidarity, “much more solidarity is needed” but it “must be given voluntarily… from the heart” and not from force. In direct reference to the
current refugee situation, Juncker stated, “We often show solidarity most readily when faced with emergencies.” (State of The Union 2016)

Managing the refugee crisis in terms of redistribution and relocation of refugees between member states has hence become a high priority issue, framed as a matter of solidarity. The debate on redistribution actualises some of the most important and classical features of solidarity: the idea of community and sharing burdens, risks and costs and taking responsibility for others; mutual recognition and sense of interdependence; and doing so in the name of ideals such as human dignity and rights, justice, equality as well as Christian ethics and duty. Accordingly, it captures very well the fact-norm tension mentioned above: As a matter of policy it is functionally concerned with the viability and functionality of the EU, and as an ideal it concerns the normative visions of what the EU should be. This understanding obviously presupposes the acknowledgment that refugees are generally considered a burden, a cost as well as increasingly a highly ‘securitized’ issue, which by this point should be an uncontroversial claim (Ross 2010, 39-40).

1.1 Why Study Solidarity and the Purpose of This Paper

Solidarity is an illusive concept that escapes clear-cut definitions. But concepts, especially those incorporated into the central ideological language of political parties, are rarely stripped of elements of power and serve to describe reality as it is, or should be. The fact that solidarity has become such a central concept in EU integration discourse as well as in relation to the refugee crisis arguably makes it an object of study in its own right. However, S-E Liedman suggests that, as solidarity again becomes a popular term this may be an indication that there are pressing problems that need to be defined, valued and made manageable (Liedman 1999, 26), i.e. that solidarity is being invoked to give solutions to contemporary problems. Whatever the diagnosis - individualism, consumerism, neo-liberalism and globalization as well as migration – the heightened scholarly interest in, and political invocation of solidarity may very well be “the quest for an antidote” as well as a possible reaction and, maybe answer, to a “(perceived) loss of social integration.” (Borgmann-Prebil, Ross 2010, 3)

Indeed, the problem of the redistribution of refugees among member states has also become an expression of a broader sense of crisis within the EU. Juncker (2016) characterizes this as a somewhat “existential crisis”, referring to fragmentation, lack of common ground, unprecedented populism and pre-occupation with domestic problems among member states, effectively making the scene of the EU one of contradiction rather than collaboration (State of The Union 2016). Furthermore, Borgmann-Prebil and Ross (2010) argue that:

“the increased invocation of solidarity appears to reflect a ‘crisis’ mentality increasingly dominant across many levels of contemporary discourse. Such crises may be perceived in relation to a range of settings: for example, over what ‘Europe’ is for, or because of feelings of economic insecurity or loss of identity. Such attitudes may be determined by searches for counterpoints to the (malevolent) marches of neo-liberalism and globalization, sentiments likely to be exacerbated by collapsing financial systems and their consequences... The relevant ‘crisis’ here usually consists of threats to solidarity itself...” (Borgmann-Prebil, Ross 2010, 2)

Hence, besides being an object of study in its own right, the invocation of solidarity itself gives us an indication that the context from which such invocations are being made is important, and
that its invocation is part of a diagnosis of contemporary challenges. The refugee crisis in general, but the redistribution of refugees in particular, launches some of the main dimensions of solidarity mentioned above. Solidarity is important to study but we need to understand what we mean by it, since it is being invoked as an ‘antidote’ to the current state of affairs. And the question of how solidarity has and is being politically constructed, as well as how attitudes about solidarity are mediated by their context and the fundamental values underpinning political discourse, becomes central for this purpose.

The purpose of this paper is to meet this challenge by exploring differences in the way two main European political parties – the Social Democrats (S&D) and Christian Democrats (EPP) – apply and understand solidarity in relation to relocation of asylum seekers between member states. Before exploring how these differences become visible in European Parliament (EP) debates on relocation of asylum seekers, I also briefly try to conceptualise the idea of a transnational European solidarity against the background of contemporary challenges facing European integration. I do this by using the following questions:

1.2 Research Questions

1. How can we conceptualise a transnational European solidarity and how do the main traits of such a solidarity relate to Social Democratic and Christian Democratic understandings of solidarity?

2. How do the main differences between Social Democratic and Christian Democratic understandings of solidarity become visible with regards to relocation of asylum seekers between EU member states?

1.3 Limitations and What This Paper is not About

For this paper, a number of important limitations have been made. First, I will not attempt to create a fixed definition of solidarity. This simply reflects the acknowledgement that solidarity means different things for different people but also because solidarity is closely connected to other concepts.

Secondly, the empirical material for the analysis consists of debates from 2014-2016, but obviously there have been relevant debates before and after that. The included debates, however, are chosen because of their connection to the immediate refugee crisis in 2015, the references to solidarity and the preparation and adoption of the common European Migration Agenda.

Finally, this paper is not about European integration per sé although parts of the first research question necessarily will touch upon this subject.

I have chosen to use and explore the Social Democratic and Christian Democratic understandings of solidarity for three reasons. First, both party groups have arguably spearheaded European integration. Second, within the context of the European Parliament both party groups traditionally figure as central players in building majority coalitions and they have in general had a huge influence on politics in Europe. Third, and most importantly, they have both played a pivotal role for the evolution of solidarity as a political concept.
2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Solidarity in Pre-industrial and Industrial Society: From Mechanical to Organic Solidarity

In its most basic understanding, solidarity refers to how individuals are connected and bound together into a cohesive group or community. The concept came to the fore of mostly sociological theory following the transformations carried by industrialization, the growth of market economies, and increasing individualism in the late 18th century. In Tönnies’ words, the transition from gemeinschaften to gesellschaften. Its application was to explain how these new, post-agrarian communities, could maintain cohesion since social relations and the relatively static hierarchies had been disrupted. In this sense, Durkheim argued that pre-industrial communities were held together by a mechanical solidarity, which is generated somewhat automatically by internalized norms, common beliefs and values, resulting in a conscience collective that by default kept things in order and connected individuals in a common awareness (Hechter 2001, 14588).

Durkheim argued that the growth of individualism and gradual disintegration of internalized and collectivized norms, values and beliefs resulted in a decline of the conscience collective and hence effectively undermined the idea of mechanical solidarity. The question then became, and perhaps still is today, what makes society possible? Durkheim’s answer was that industrial societies were kept together by organic solidarity, a form of solidarity generated through the division of labour and the realization of “…individuals’ mutual functional interdependence”. (Towards the end of his life however, Durkheim regarded common values and norms as the foundation of all types of societies) (Hechter 2001, 14588).

2.2 As a Theoretical and Political Concept

The appeal of solidarity as a theoretical concept as well as a political ‘tool’ lay in its emphasis on reconciling individualism and social cohesion, in other words making society possible and coherent, despite the growth of market economies, individualism as well as the development of judicial and economic individual rights. It inherited the political position of the French revolutionary idea of fraternity, as a concept concerned with governing and regulating inequality within a society of otherwise equals. Solidarity could be perceived of as something similar to the fabric of society, the ties that, in spite of inequality and breakup of traditional ties, bind people together. As such it could be politically mobilized in two ways; one, as an end in itself, with a somewhat emancipatory quality concerned with that very inequality as a problem, and two, a concept that could be mobilized by conservative anti-revolutionary forces, concerned with maintaining cohesion and order through an appeal to communitarianism. Hence, this dual and somewhat paradoxical character can be described as a concept that promises “…to reconcile individual independence and social cohesion…” (Procacci 2001, 14586).
2.3 Solidarity, Rights and the State

Initially (and both for Durkheim and Comte) then, solidarity is concerned with the prevalence of collective and common interests and cohesion over that of self-interest and individualism. Against the background of individual rights gaining salience, Comte proposed replacing the emphasis through a new systemic understanding of mutual duties, rather than individual rights, thus giving priority to common interests and reducing the tension between the goals and interests of the state and those of individuals (Procacci 2001, 14586).

It was through Durkheim’s work on the division of labor, however, that solidarity became the core of scientific sociology. He insisted that objective underlying causes produced by the division of labor and specialization generated in society the very functional interdependence that was a prerequisite for solidarity. This is the essence of organic solidarity. The division of labor “…increased social dynamics and mutual dependence…”, but the production of solidarity itself was still contingent on how labor was distributed and how internal social bonds were being politically represented and publicly perceived. Hence, solidarity was also a political question which is why for Durkheim the role of the modern democratic state was that of a balancing act of organizing solidarity by a correct equilibrium of social cohesion and individual liberty (Procacci 2001, 14587).

Furthermore, since interdependence between people was considered a fact of society, it followed that “…everybody had to be guaranteed from some common risks, and reciprocally that all must do their part in financing common protection according to their means.” This idea of sharing social risks hence gave birth to the insurance model but also lay some of the foundations for the early 20th century welfare state through institutions of welfare and pension schemes (Procacci 2001, 14587).

2.4 The Evolution of Social Rights: From Altruism to Right

The evolution of social rights, tailing civic and political rights, occurred in accordance with the logic of equality and full membership within a political community. Marshall most famously dealt with this question, arguing that beyond formal civic and political rights, meaningful membership within political communities necessitate something approaching economic and social equality (Bayertz 1999, 23). According to this reading, the evolution of solidarity as a right is based on the idea that social equality is a precondition for meaningful membership in a political community, accordingly altruism will not suffice to meet the criteria of full membership.

Furthermore, the evolution of rights, from civil rights (18th century), through political rights (19th) to social rights (20th century), is an evolution of politics, not ethics or altruism (Bayertz 1999, 23). Or, as Baldwin (1990, 299) puts it:

“Solidarity(…) is only misleadingly analogous to altruism. An individual sentiment, altruism is generally confined to the narrow circles of the like-minded. Solidarity(…) has been the outcome of a generalized and reciprocal self-interest. Not ethics, but politics explain it.”

Here Baldwin brings up the central importance of reciprocity in comparison to altruism. Altruism rests on the individuals’ dependence on the other, whereas solidarity implies mutual
dependence. This also explains why Baldwin emphasises that the evolution of the western welfare state cannot entirely be explained through class struggle, since the system simply cannot be sustained without reciprocity. The support of the middle class is pivotal for its sustainment as is the notion of universality – if the middle class considers itself only as a contributor it will not support it (Liedman 1999, 35). In this sense, “Solidarity is the child of interdependence…” (Baldwin 1990, 33).

### 2.5 Three Perspectives on Solidarity

Empirically, it is inherently difficult to conduct research on solidarity since the mechanisms that generate compliance with collective norms and obligations are difficult to isolate. Theoretically, however, the different perspectives on solidarity and how to study it can fruitfully be divided into three types: normative perspectives, structural perspectives and rational choice perspectives (Hechter 2001, 14589).

According to the **normative perspectives**, solidarity is generated by norms and values. For normative theorists socialization is very important for the attainment of solidarity since they argue that interactions between rational, self-interested individuals are not enough to explain solidarity. If such actors will benefit from ignoring mutual collective obligations, they will do so. However, through socialization otherwise self-interested actors can take part in collective values and internalized norms and it is those values and norms that “…make individuals fit for social life by removing the conflict between the individual’s interest and that of the relevant collectivity.” Accordingly, as individuals are socialized into harmony with collective values and norms, they will tend to adhere to corporate obligations, be that on the state or community level. Hence, according to this view, solidarity is most likely to materialize and thrive in socially homogenous societies (Hechter 2001, 14589).

**Structural perspectives** usually consider solidarity to be the outcome of collectivized individual rational action. Solidary collectivities are formed against the background of commonly identified and shared material interests. Through mutual interaction individuals may discover common interests that bind them together, especially in asymmetrical conditions in which the group perceives itself as being “…threatened by powerful antagonists.” If such mutual interaction occurs regularly, for example in the workplace, this may generate affective feelings and identification with each other that strengthens compliance with corporate obligations as well as the formulation of collective interests (Hechter 2001, 14589).

As for **rational choice perspectives**, they pose the question why “truly rational individuals” would join a groups’ pursuit and struggle towards common interests when it is possible to reap the rewards without participation. It is simply possible to benefit from other peoples’ activities and rational actors will free ride if they can. Hence, despite communally identified and formulated interests the outcome is minimal solidarity. For rational choice theorists rational individuals join forces and form collective solidarities only in order to “…obtain goods that they either cannot produce on their own, or that they cannot attain as economically.” These groups then generate rules and mutual obligations between individual members since some kind of organization is needed for obtaining the goods. Individuals then become dependent on each other and the group for access to the goods, and the more dependent they become, the more they are inclined to conform with mutual rules and obligations (Hechter 2001, 14589).
These three sociological perspectives on solidarity spell out a more fundamental division between essentially *descriptive* (structuralist, rational choice) and *normative* applications of the concept. Before we move on it is worth bringing some clarity to what this descriptive-normative tension is all about.

### 2.6 Descriptive and Normative Applications of Solidarity

The descriptive-normative tension of solidarity produces some ambiguities about how to understand and study solidarity. At the centre of these ambiguities is the tension of a concept caught between fact and norm, that is, the ambiguity between descriptive and normative applications of the concept (Pensky 2008, 1). However, we should first emphasise that one reading does not rule out the other, and that solidarity is both factual and normative. This produces two levels of analysis:

> “*a factual* level of actual common ground between individuals and a *normative* level of mutual obligations to aid each other, as and when should be necessary.”  
> (Bayertz 1999, 3 – original emphasis)

In contemporary political theory solidarity can be used as a synonym for community as well as a political value sometimes in tension with individual freedom, but usually invoked for balancing that freedom in order to make it substantial, and second, keep society together. Central to this understanding is an idea of some sort of boundaries, whereas in moral philosophy and normative ethics (*normative application*), solidarity often refers to a concept of membership within a *moral* community, or refers to the collective bonds that tie individuals together, at once limiting and generating their “capacities for solitary moral reflection” (Pensky 2008, 1-2).

This normative application at least goes back to Kant, and is based on the idea of mutual recognition in the sense that in order to regard oneself as an autonomous moral agent, one has to consider oneself included in an *abstract* community of all others who count as free and equal actors. Its ambition can then be said to be universal; what ties these actors together in morality, and hence solidarity, is the mutual recognition constitutive of both the individual agent as well as the community itself, and hence not necessarily national boundaries as we understand them. Accordingly, some particularistic features belonging to the descriptive application of solidarity (such as ethnicity, language, national narratives, religion), can enter into tension with “universalist principles of modern constitutional democratic states” (Pensky 2008, 1-2), in the sense of making salient those very boundaries that its universalist, normative application is trying to erase. In other words, and at the centre of the descriptive-normative tension, is the acknowledgement that the descriptive application presupposes the very boundaries that the normative application is trying to transcend.

These two traditions for conceptualizing solidarity produce disparate political and moral connotations. On the one hand, the moral-universalist application and its Enlightenment republican variant of fraternity presuppose an idea of “unconditioned social and political symmetry not just between individuals in social group but between social groups overall”, that is freedom and equality reconciled, whereas within its other descriptive conceptual line, mostly 19th and early 20th century conceptions, “solidarity specifies a strong bonding between members of subordinated groups in a condition of socio-political asymmetry.” (Pensky 2008, 3) We can say that in the latter, solidarity has a clear demarcation within, for example, the working class,
and it has a ‘direction’ in the sense of alleviating conditions of socio-political asymmetry, whereas the former refers to the normative ideal of all humans’ mutual recognition and recognized interdependence and hence that everyone is connected in a global community of shared responsibilities and solidarities. The obligations within the normative understanding hence transcend the mere logic of self-interest and rational choice perspectives.

For the purpose of this study, **solidarity can be considered**: through a *functional* lens as a fact, which keeps societies together. In this case, the EU.

It can also be observed as:

a *norm and value* – something we should strive for because it is considered good in itself. This perspective also entails a vision of a certain society of justice and of values underpinning that society. For this case, fundamental norms and values of the EU.

Finally, solidarity can also be understood as:

an *instrument*, which can be invoked and mobilized to meet contemporary challenges. For this study, the refugee crisis and general sentiments of disintegration represent such challenges, towards which solidarity is being invoked.

### 2.7 Political Applications: Social Democratic (SD) Solidarity

Stjernø (2005) distinguishes analytically between four aspects of solidarity: First, what is its foundation or basis? Second, what is its objective or function? Third, who is included, who is excluded? Fourth, to what extent does its collective orientation allow for individual freedom and individuality? (2005, 16) Furthermore, he argues that there are three main political traditions of thought that have developed our political understanding of solidarity: Marxist, social democratic and Christian democratic traditions.

When we speak of solidarity in a political context, we often think of the working class and the idea of class solidarity, the struggle of employees against employer, of worker against capitalist. According to Stjernø (2005), the idea of traditional *class solidarity* was generated by the common experience of insecurity and poverty within the industrial workforce, an experience that gave birth to an ideological resistance. Furthermore, material scarcity was dealt with by collaboration which then gives it a *practical* dimension as well (Stjernø 2005, 337).

Hence we can say that this type of class solidarity was both a means to change certain existential living conditions as well as becoming an *end in itself by means of its ideological dimension*. We can perhaps say that besides being an instrument of struggle for improved living conditions, it is also a vision of society based on a solidaric order.

According to Stjernø the social democratic application of solidarity is based on a transition from the original Marxist application. There are arguably three main Marxist revisionists and theorists that facilitated the transition from Marxist to a social democratic understanding of solidarity.
In Germany, Karl Kautsky published *The Class Struggle* in 1892 which came to be very influential for subsequent social democratic party programmes. Kautsky argued that social democracy entailed a society in which the economy was based on solidarity, primarily the solidarity generated among the industrial working class. However, as the working class would continue to grow and become more influential, its ideas and feelings of solidarity would come to bear on *every* wage earner. Hence, this revised former Marxist understandings in the sense of opening up and broadening solidarity to include those outside the working class and consequently becoming concerned with the interests of other classes, including the middle class. Furthermore, this also entails the beginnings of acceptance of difference between classes and Kautsky also insisted that the worker’s party become a national people’s party representing all those who were considered employed and exploited (Stjernø 2005, 47-49, 59).

Eduard Bernstein and Ernst Wigforss carried these ideas further. Observing that Marxists predictions (that the bourgeoisie and middle class would become proleratarianized and the working class becoming a majority) had not materialized, Bernstein argued that social democracy needed to develop “…concrete policy reform and generate alliances with other classes and groups in order to establish a new majority in Parliament.” (Stjernø 2005, 49). Bernstein was concerned with three core ideas which he insisted were central to socialist ethics: *equality, community* and *solidarity*, and the ideas of *freedom* and *autonomy*. He argued that absolute equality was not possible and that freedom/autonomy was part of a good society. Consequently he maintained that “Solidarity had to be balanced against individual freedom or autonomy, and equality had to be balanced against individual freedom.” (Stjernø 2005, 50).

Simultaneously, Wigforss developed these ideas in Sweden and both of them introduced elements beyond the narrow understanding of class based self-interest into the socialist conceptual foundations of solidarity (Stjernø 2005, 51). From narrow class-based definitions of interest, the change entailed a broadening of those definitions as well as the introduction of other values, such as *freedom, autonomy, equality* which were to be balanced against each other. Politics was supposedly the instrument for generating and maintaining this balance, but equally so, solidarity was considered that which kept society together by a “…feeling of community between those who are included.” – a notion very much reflecting Durkheim’s original definition (Stjernø 2005, 59).

The transition is in fact from an *instrumental view* to a more *normative understanding*. The original Marxist solidarity was primarily considered as a means to achieve socialism through workers’ organization and struggle (and entailed a vision of international socialism), whereas contemporary social democratic solidarity entails a much broader articulation. This transition, he argues, has entailed a change in all four aspects of solidarity (its *foundation, objective, inclusiveness*, and *collective orientation*) listed above and he describes it in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC SOLIDARITY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOUNDATION</strong></td>
<td>The <em>foundation</em> is not seen as interests, but as ethics, humanism, empathy and compassion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVE</strong></td>
<td>The <em>objective</em> of solidarity is not socialism, but the creation of a feeling of community, social integration and sharing of risks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INCLUSIVENESS</strong></td>
<td>The concept has broadened to <em>include</em> not only workers, but a range of other groups and issues as well as acceptance of difference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COLLECTIVE ORIENTATION</strong></td>
<td>The relationship between loyalty and subordination to a <em>collective</em> on the one hand, and individual freedom and right to choose on the other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
hand, has been strongly reformulated, but still has a strong collective orientation and emphasis on collective solutions.

(Stjernø 2005, 199)

Hence, the modern social democratic concept of solidarity is more a reflection of Durkheim’s interdependence and organic solidarity through all of society, than it is restricted to the idea of class based self-interest and struggle, as formulated by the early labour movement. As we have seen it is a very broad and liquid concept, but Stjernø nonetheless finds three core components that are in eliminable:

- the emphasis on collective solutions for solving social problems;
- the state should carry responsibility for social welfare;
- people should have sympathetic and empathic attitudes towards those who are in need, discriminated or oppressed (Stjernø 2005, 202).

The modern concept, in fact, is so broad and loosely defined that it analytically can borrow itself to at least two (rational choice and normative) of the main sociological perspectives listed above, whereas the older structural perspective perhaps should be substituted with a functional one.

2.8 Christian Democratic (CD) Solidarity (and comparison)

In western European politics the language of Christian democratic solidarity has been the main ideological challenger to its social democratic counterpart (Stjernø 2005; Hall forthcoming; Bayertz 1999). Although it shares some similarities with the social democratic concept, some differences are important to note. I will focus on these similarities and differences instead of attempting to provide a full account of how this concept has developed.

During the 1960’s papal catholic teaching began to integrate solidarity as an explicit interclass concept into its writings, with an emphasis on and concern for social integration. Accordingly this tradition followed the Durkheimian concept of solidarity. However, in its protestant version, solidarity was more exclusively concerned with the relationship between the rich and the poor world and was less concerned with social integration (Stjernø 2005, 239).

According to Stjernø (studying the Norwegian KrF, German CDU and Italian CD), the Christian democratic parties introduced the term at different points in time, with varying ideas of what the concept implies, but overall central aspects of Catholic social teaching reoccur in all party programmes. As such, it is less standardised and more fragmented than its social democratic counterpart. However, in terms of what the various parties see as the basis of solidarity, Christian Democrats have been more consistent than their Social Democratic counterparts (Stjernø 2005, 240):

“Their religion and the command to love one’s neighbour, and equality before God, have been a stable foundation, although not always mentioned in programmes.”

Furthermore, in comparison to the development of Social Democratic Solidarity they have longer emphasised social integration and collaboration across class lines, arguably making the
CD concept more **inclusive**. They emphasised solidarity not only to integrate various middle strata and working class, **but to include all classes** (Stjernø 2005, 240).

Like Social Democrats, Christian Democrats have gradually incorporated new aspects and contemporary challenges of modern society into their idea of solidarity. *Democrazia Cristiana* (DC) in Italy was early to address the question of the so-called Third World (in 1943), and in 1963 it was argued that relationships with poorer nations should be considered a matter of solidarity. In the 1970s their German and Norwegian counterparts followed suit. The welfare state was described as an aspect of solidarity by the German CDU in 1971, the Italian CD in 1979 and the Norwegian KrF in 2001. Furthermore, at different points in time issues of gender emancipation (CDU 1985), intergenerational relationships (CDU 1981), ecology (KrF 1977) and ethnic minorities (KrF 1981) became incorporated into the language of solidarity (Stjernø 2005, 241).

If we return to Stjernø’s analytical differentiation of the four aspects of solidarity (its **foundation**, its **objective**, **inclusiveness**, and **collective orientation**), we can see some differences in the CD’s concept of solidarity compared to the social democratic concept:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC SOLIDARITY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOUNDATION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several interwoven elements such as the idea of man and women created in the <em>image of God</em>, and a Christian emphasis on human <em>dignity</em> calls for solidarity with the poor and weak in order for everyone to live in dignity. Furthermore, <em>interdependence</em> between all humans is seen as a foundation that gives a <em>duty</em> to every individual to take part in society and strive for the common good, realizing God’s will.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The creation and maintenance of a “… society with social <em>integration</em> and social <em>harmony</em> between individuals and groups. This is also a society where <em>justice</em> prevails.” Emphasis on norms, community and values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INCLUSIVENESS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad and encompasses all classes. But is also more concerned with social and cultural harmony, tradition, religion and the integration between the group and the individual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COLLECTIVE ORIENTATION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not as strong as with the SD solidarity concept since the CD concept emphasises the <em>person</em> herself as well as the principle of <em>subsidiarity</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Stjernø 2005, 242).

If we return to the three main sociological traditions of conceptualizing solidarity we find that similar to the social democratic concept, the CDs concept is **functional** in the sense that it is concerned with what holds society together (interdependence, social harmony and integration), and it is **normative** as it proscribes individual responsibility and duty, but also in its emphasis on justice, human dignity and Christian ethics and relations with the so-called third world. However, in terms of **rational choice and self-interest**, it is difficult to detect any direct emphasis on this similar to the SD concept, other than perhaps the implicit idea that it is in each persons own *interest* to comply with the proscribed norms and practices of society.
Finally, in comparison to the social democratic concept of solidarity, the Christian democrats have emphasised more strongly and for a longer time the idea of Europe and the European Union as a matter of solidarity. The first and second world war and insurgence of nationalism among European nations were considered a loss for the universal and uniting ambitions of the Catholic Church. After the wars, European Christian democrats were pioneering in developing European transnational collaboration and worked hard for the establishment of the EC. For them, European unity and solidarity was to be based on three foundational values: the Christian religion, peace and democracy. This dedication to a transnational European unity increased the convergence of different European CDs, eventually culminating in the common adherence to the European People’s Party (EPP) ideological platform, spelling out the foundational values of Catholic social teaching: “personalism, freedom and responsibility, equality, justice, subsidiarity and solidarity.” Freedom is considered the basis for justice and solidarity, but the programme declares that all values are interdependent, universal and equally important (Stjernø 2005, 241-244).

The table below summarizes the comparison of the Social and Christian Democratic traditions of solidarity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Social Democratic</th>
<th>Christian Democratic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INCLUSIVENESS</td>
<td>Not only workers but a range of other groups. Acceptance of difference.</td>
<td>Broad, all classes. But also concerned with cultural harmony, religion and integration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLECTIVE ORIENTATION</td>
<td>Reconciling subordination and individual freedom, but stronger collective orientation than CD.</td>
<td>Weaker collective orientation than SD. Emphasis on the individual and subsidiarity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before I continue into the analysis and present the similarities and differences between the EPP’s (European People’s Party group) idea of solidarity and the S&P’s (Socialists and Democrats group) idea, I will discuss the idea of transnational solidarity and the EU as well as some of the internal integration challenges and external, contextual challenges. I will briefly explore the notion of transnational solidarity, both as a fact but more importantly as a solution to perceived shortcomings of the traditional nation-state as the main vehicle for social solidarity. The difficulties and shortcomings are explored in relation to the 2008 financial crisis, economic globalization and migration.
3. European Solidarity

3.1 Solidarity and the Nation-State

Historically, and in both the social democratic and Christian democratic tradition, the idea of solidarity has primarily been connected to the fact and narrative of a common nation state. Specifically, the manner in which the welfare state developed can be considered a distinctive part of nation-building in the sense that politically constructed ideals of social justice were incorporated into the idea of the nation at the same time as they were institutionalized and gained legitimacy in and through social policy programmes. Political leaders pursuing the creation of a welfare state often had to tie their programmes to certain images of the nation in order to build coalitions strong and broad enough for welfare reforms. Consider for example how Per Albin Hansson coined the vision of the new Swedish welfare state as *folkhemmet* (the People’s home), thus making egalitarian ideals a part of a national narrative and identity (Hall forthcoming, 375-376).

What’s more, welfare states were able to legitimize themselves through their social welfare policies aimed at reducing, or at least, managing the inherent dysfunctional and unequal consequences of capitalism (Pensky 2008, 43). This came after the world wars where a majority political consensus arose that supported the idea of state policies aimed at generating economic and social equality. Redistributive vertical taxation, horizontal social insurance schemes, enhancement of workers’ rights, the provision of non-market based social services and the idea of a social citizenship as envisioned by T.H. Marshall became the cornerstones of national welfare policies and enjoyed broad support (Miller 2006).

Furthermore, although contested, from a European perspective it has been common to associate social solidarity with the development of the generous high-tax welfare state that gradually came to be its institutional expression (Wilde 2007, 172). Stjernø (2005, 2), for instance, defines social solidarity in relation to redistributive taxation as “… preparedness to share resources with others by personal contribution to those in struggle or in need and through taxation and redistribution organised by the state (…) solidarity implies a readiness for collective action and a will to institutionalise that collective action…” (my emphasis).

For observers such as Stjernø it follows that the recent decades of neo-liberal restructuring of the world economy poses a serious threat to the basis for social solidarity, since Europe has largely experienced a scaling back of the generous high-tax welfare state to be replaced by a low-tax ‘competition state’ (Wilde 2007, 172).

3.2 Background for the Analysis: Globalization and Trans-national Solidarity

While there is little doubt that social solidarity politically has been forged between classes against the background of common national identity, there are nonetheless scholarly debates about the extent to which social solidarity actually has its basis in the idea of the nation and a primordial understanding of nationality, or whether it flows from the very visions of social justice and equality that are being raised and become prominent in national discourse (Hall forthcoming, 369). Who is right and who is wrong is beside the point for this paper and is in many ways only a matter of emphasis, since solidarity is just as much a politically and rhetorically constructed term as anything else (Bayertz 1999; Liedman 1999).
Furthermore, on the surface, the supposed tension between universalist and cosmopolitan solidarity on the one hand, and particularistic and exclusive types of community solidarity on the other is frequently exaggerated, since it is possible for individuals to feel attached to and believe in universalist principles as well as feeling loyalty and solidarity to a particular exclusive community such as the nation state (Ross 2010, 31-33). In other words, one type of solidarity does not rule out the existence of the other – even though they might conflict, examples of which can be found in EU integration debates and the top down drive for creating supranational solidarities out of the tensions between potentially supranational policies and somewhat fragmenting, existent national solidarities (Borgmann-Prebil & Ross 2010, 20).

What seems evident is that the very legitimacy underpinning national discursive ideals of social solidarity comes partly from a politically mobilized idea of the nation, ‘sameness’ and national belonging, but probably more importantly from how welfare state policies are publicly considered able to alleviate gross economic inequality, as well as dedicate themselves to ideals of social justice (Pensky 2008, 43). To reiterate, the legitimacy and public support for within nation-state social solidarity presupposes appeals to national belonging, but depends on the extent to which political leaders and national policies are successful in delivering on their promise to alleviate gross economic inequality, as well as how successfully solidarity is incorporated into a politically constructed narrative of the state.

However, this source of legitimacy, and also the extent to which political leaders are able to deliver comprehensive welfare, presupposes that nations are able to manage and control their national economy, a task that in recent decades of increasing economic globalization has become more difficult. Since the 1970s rates of economic growth in OECD countries have fallen by half and even if contemporary governments want to expand redistribution and maintain levels of generosity, most of them face severe economic restraints (Hall forthcoming, 381). Besides the declining rates of economic growth, immigration and ageing of the national population are obviously two factors that challenge the generosity of the systems. But perhaps more importantly, economic globalization severely curtails the abilities of national governments to “…direct their own political destinies.” (Pensky 2008, 43)

While economic globalization is certainly nothing new, its pace, size and “border-blurring consequences” have become more immediate in recent decades. According to Habermas, economic globalization compels nation-states to act as if they were market actors. The freedom of capital and information flows, facilitated by innovations in information and communications technology, make national boundaries as well as national-regional tariff zones increasingly obsolete. Hence multinational corporations are increasingly free to choose among different investment and labour climates, enabling production and manufacturing to be situated where it is cheapest and capital to be invested where it produces the biggest revenue (Pensky 2008, 43-45). In this type of climate nation-states:

“...find that the tools of traditional domestic policy are increasingly ineffective in exerting meaningful unilateral control over their relative position in the global competition for creating favourable environments for capital investment. And the few remaining tools that are still available to them – deregulation, tax cuts, and the dismantling of social-welfare systems – all have rather high long-term costs.” (Pensky 2008, 44)
Furthermore, the prospects might be harmful for the very legitimacy of the nation-state as well as political stability. If governments find themselves restrained in gaining revenues from corporate taxation - because of fear of making the corporate climate less attractive compared to other countries - they rarely have other choices but to cut back on welfare spending and/or increase other forms of taxation. From a taxpayers’ perspective, this can very well be harmful for the legitimacy of governments. And following the abandonment, or at least refiguring, of full employment as a domestic policy goal, the gradual generation of a permanent excluded underclass, the growth of the precariat and loss of good middle-class jobs, increasing levels of immigration and socio-economic segregation, governments might be facing a situation that in the long run is harmful for political stability (Pensky 2008, 44;Hall forthcoming, 382; Stjernø 2005, 342).

Both of these processes undermine the basis for a social solidarity that is rooted in the nation-state as they reinforce and sharpen, rather than lessen conflicts over resources and their redistribution. Furthermore, for many observers this process of scaling-back of welfare states carries with it a starker separation between those who consider themselves major contributors to welfare redistribution and the perceived beneficiaries of such redistribution (Boräng 2015, 219-220). In other words, it exacerbates the logic of ‘us’ and ‘them’ and makes salient questions of conditionality of solidarity provisions – through questions of the deservingness and identity of those considered beneficiaries. It should be no surprise then that across Europe, immigrants are invariably considered least deserving of solidarity, since they are not considered part of the majority population (identity) (Kymlicka 2015, 10; Van Oorschot 2000).

I return to these dimensions of deservingness and identity (conditionality) of solidarity under the heading Precariousness of A European Solidarity. But first, I briefly chart what kind of European transnational solidarity is being envisioned as a replacement for the old and, for many, increasingly obsolete type of national solidarity.

3.3 European Solidarity – a Solution?

As nation states are finding it increasingly difficult to live up to their commitments on fostering social solidarity and face severe constraints in reducing economic inequality, the question of a trans- or even post-national European solidarity becomes more important. However, the extent to which an EU-type of solidarity between all of the Union’s citizens is possible hinges upon a number of dimensions that either foster or mediate solidarity. And while a transnational type of solidarity is necessarily different than a national type of solidarity (Mau 2007, 142), two core dimensions of what explains the national type still seem indispensable for the viability of a transnational solidarity. The first dimension concerns the identity of the community, and the second concerns harmonizing and equalizing social policy and living standards through deepened European integration.

3.3.1 Common Identity and Common Social Policy

According to Habermas, a so-called Europeanization of solidarity would require that “…the solidarity previously reserved for the nation state needs to be extended to all citizens of the EU…” in a manner that fosters a sense of responsibility between all people from different member states (Mau 2007, 133). First and foremost this requires that people from all member
states have the ability to identify with each other as essentially members of the same political community. In its first most basic instant this requires that nations and their people need to acknowledge the fact of mutual interdependence between them and a recognition of that interdependence. This simply implies a rationality of self-interest to account for cooperation and solidarity, because what one part does affects the other and vice versa. However, for most observers interdependence and self-interest is not enough to neither explain nor foster social solidarity. As Baldwin succinctly puts it: “Without some sense of collective identity, or community or ‘sameness’, even a shared predicament is unlikely to prompt mutual aid.” (Baldwin 1990, 33)

What explains this reluctance or inability to expand the boundaries of social solidarity is, what David Miller calls a piece of ‘psychological speculation’, which nonetheless is well supported by ‘considerable evidence at small-group level.’ (Miller 2006, 13) The argument is simply that people will be more willing to aid and “redistribute in favour of others when they see those other as like themselves in certain respects, and also when they regard them as ‘playing fair’ – as showing willingness to reciprocate when it is their turn to make a contribution.” (Miller 2006, 13-14) The example of the breakdown of the Greek economy and references to ‘lazy Greeks’ springs to mind and somehow illustrates the immediate difficulties associated with this in European context. Furthermore, this also confirms the abovementioned trend of the increasing conditionality of solidarity in terms of deservingness and identity for beneficiaries of social solidarity.

Habermas has arguably spearheaded the intellectual development of an idea of a transnational European citizenship and solidarity for EU citizens. He argues that the EU in fact rests upon “an expanded basis of solidarity”, but that this solidarity in many ways has been forged by a top-down drive for European integration. For Habermas, the institutions, which are supposed to foster and maintain a sense of transnational solidarity:

“... will only have a realistic chance of gaining political legitimacy if they are demanded by a civil population that has already come to understand itself as unified by more than national-state solidarity...” (Pensky 2008, 47)

This is not an impossible task though, as Habermas among others claims that belongingness and solidarity are children of a nation-generated narrative - “an abstraction in order to facilitate social integration in modernity” (Pensky 2008, 58) – and hence they are constructed and can be subject to a deconstruction and re-articulation, which broadens their boundaries.

However, for the time being, prospects for generating such an idea of transnational European solidarity and identity are slim, since the EU faces so many integration challenges to bring its people together. And some of the main challenges simply reflect the fact that EU member states are very different when it comes to social and economic conditions and developments. For Habermas, it is impossible to develop an “all-European civic solidarity” if the social and economic inequalities between member states become structurally consolidated. Without completely wiping out cultural differences, the EU must according to Habermas guarantee what he calls “uniform conditions of life”, which concern a chosen spectrum of social conditions of life that can be considered acceptable and equally distributed (Habermas 2011, 82).

This is the task of European integration and harmonizing of living standards and possibilities in life, but it has in many respects failed to materialize. First of all, social policies that concern people’s living conditions have yet to become integrated and supranationalized in the same
manner as economic policies. According to Fritz Scharpf this reluctance simply reflects the fact that governments and their populations are not willing, or ready, to ‘let go’ of their welfare state models, but are nonetheless politically and economically constrained by EU regulations on economic integration, which require liberalizations and market competition laws. However, the perceived necessity to Europeanize social policy becomes confronted with the reality that European Welfare States are very different – “… not only in levels of economic development and hence in their ability to pay for social transfers and services but, even more significantly, in their normative aspirations and institutional structures.” (Scharpf 2002, 645)

Besides being an example of the very heterogeneous character of EU member states, the reluctance to Europeanize social policy also reflects, as mentioned above, the fact that citizenries across member states are interested in keeping their welfare states, rather than Europeanizing them, because they have enjoyed broad public support and been successful in providing security against the insecure and unequalizing effects of the market economy. According to Mau, this is for many considered “… as a hindrance to the extension of the boundaries of solidarity.” (Mau 2007, 133) In other words, solidarity remains primarily rooted in the nation-state.

That being said, there are nonetheless indications of a European populace that is becoming increasingly interested in seeing a supranationalization of some social policy areas – for example in the areas of poverty, social exclusion and regional aid, for which a majority of Europeans prefer to see a joint European responsibility. Regarding health and social welfare, however, Europeans still prefer national welfare institutions and competencies before Europeanization (Mau 2007, 139).

This discussion has tried to chart some of the main challenges concerning European integration and the need to develop a European solidarity as a viable response to contemporary challenges facing nation-states – challenges that are assumed to undermine the bases for nation-state solidarity. Migration is also part of these challenges, especially considering the prolonged refugee crisis that increasingly strains a number of member states.

There are several debates and academic traditions for understanding what the EU actually is, and these also inform how we understand and take stock of EU’s attempt to meet a challenge like the refugee crisis. Providing a full account of these debates is beyond the scope of this paper and arguably beside the point. I will simply conclude by referring to Andrea Sangiovanni, that the EU, despite its contested nature and all its shortcomings, should be understood “… as a way for member states to enhance their problem-solving capacities in an era of globalization, while indemnifying each other against the risks and losses implicit in integration.” (Sangiovanni 2013, 6)

In the next section I will discuss some of the precarious factors related to a contemporary understanding of European solidarity. I start by drawing up the contemporary context from which European solidarity is supposed to manifest itself as a response to the challenge of the refugee crisis. Afterwards I chart some of the abovementioned precarious factors, which can be considered harmful for the strength and depth of European solidarity.
3.5 The Contemporary Precariousness of European Solidarity

Sources of Insecurity Related to Globalization, Immigration and Socio-economic Changes

The point here is not to examine in depth how these processes related to globalization translate themselves into attitudes of solidarity or towards redistribution. But it is perhaps suitable to mention a few of these that seem particularly relevant for the present study. It should be noted that many studies emphasize cultural, historical, institutional and psychological factors that explain difference in solidarity attitudes across Europe, and obviously the mere heterogeneity of European countries calls for caution in terms of generalizing across them. However, what seems reoccurring throughout the literature is that solidarity in general, and attitudes towards redistribution in particular, are mediated by socio-economic factors. And this relationship is particularly strong when immigration becomes an issue of salience.

While high levels of immigration initially can reduce support for redistribution, this relationship seems to be strongly mediated by socio-economic relations and development (Hall forthcoming). Furthermore Mau and Burkhardt (2009) find that when it comes to support for redistribution in a context of high immigration, individual level factors explain more of the variation than contextual or differences across countries, but that the share of variance explained increases on the country level when macro-indicators such as GDP, unemployment rate and welfare regime type are included. In other words, that economic wealth, welfare regime and a strained labour market bear on attitudes towards redistribution (Mau, Burkhardt 2009, 220-222). Furthermore, one of the strongest indicators for welfare chauvinism is to what extent individuals factually are or simply perceive themselves as economically vulnerable (Mewes, Mau 2012, 148-150,).

What seems clear is that rising levels of economic insecurity, and the restructuring of both the welfare state as well as the economy, have a broad impact in terms of socio-economic strata. Gerard Delanty (2008) has drawn attention to this more specifically in relation to the middle class. He argues that at the heart of a “crisis of European solidarity” lies a general climate of anxiety about the present and the future. He explains the recent surge in widespread xenophobia across Europe as a result of anxiety and insecurity, that in turn are related and mediated most profoundly by questions of peoplehood (in light of EU integration and immigration) as well as changes in socio-economic relations. Specifically he argues that the current phase of European integration occurs in fundamentally different circumstances than in its early days, and that the so-called “New Economy” of knowledge, technology and global markets produces distinct changes in socio-economic relations: “…the number who have insecure employment has risen considerably, as has that of the marginalized.” (Delanty 2008, 686) Furthermore, the new economy has generated greater insecurity for the middle classes since education and professional occupations no longer guarantee the same rewards as before, resulting in a perceived precariousness of social situation and the threat of stagnant upward mobility (Delanty 2008, 686).

Finally, Kriesi has observed that globalization produces winners and losers, and that the established parties (such as SD and CD) have failed to respond to this reality, creating a political space of discontent that could be mobilized by the new populist right (Kriesi, Pappas, 2015, 3). Analyzing populism in relation to the 2008 Great Recession, Kriesi et al. argue that the electoral success of populist right wing parties is due to their mobilization of the “…cultural anxieties of the ‘losers’”, since economic interests were so heterogeneously distributed among ‘losers’. As such, the support for right wing populism is not best explained by economic indicators, but
rather by cultural mobilization of discontent. However, Kriesi et al. do suggest a strong relationship suggesting that right wing populism becomes more intense if coupled with economic hardship, and that the recent economic crisis in its uneven impact also gives some explanation to the varying strength and durability of right wing populism across Europe (Kriesi, Pappas 2015, 3, 323-324).

Finally, Mau (2007) has brought attention to the fact that we should always expect a substantial degree of conditionality when it comes to solidarity between states and, in this case, also EU member states. According to Mau governments will first and foremost consider their own available resources, political support and domestic problems, before they are willing to act in solidarity towards other states or peoples. The point here is not whether states are more or less solidary today then they were before, but that the mechanism determining the extent of solidarity is heavily mediated by a supply-based calculation, rather than a needs-based variable. In other words, EU member states – perhaps to a larger degree than individual persons or smaller communities – will firstly assess their willingness and ability to act solidary against the background of domestic issues (internal, supply), rather than in relation to the level of severity of the external need. This is especially salient for a highly heterogeneous community like the EU and in relation to refugees coming from outside of Europe (Mau 2007, 139).

### 3.5.1 Securitization

It is impossible to talk about solidarity in relation to the theme of migration, without reflecting upon how migration has gradually transformed into a subject, which has become increasingly securitized.

According to the Copenhagen School, the theory of securitization in short is based on the premise, that security threats are socially constructed, and therefore it is very difficult to measure threats and to decide, whether they are real or just politically framed as threats (Léonard 2010, 235).

According to Jef Huysmans, the securitization of migration in the EU and in member states has developed around three themes, which are internally related. These concern internal security in the Union and its member states, cultural security and questions of identity and the crisis of the welfare state (Huysmans 2000, 758).

For the EU, the securitization of migration is intimately connected to the securitization of the internal market. The central element is that the abolition of internal border controls, transnational flows of goods and capital, and services and people can challenge public order and the rule of law. According to Huysmans (2000, 758), this “…link has been constructed so successfully that it has obtained the status of common sense.”

What’s more, the downgrading of internal border controls was quickly followed by an urgent perceived necessity to strengthen external border controls, and these were clearly spelled out in early EC policy documents on the issue (for example in the Schengen Agreement and The Single European Act).

Overall the area of migration has become increasingly intertwined with a discourse of security, to such an extent that security has become an “institutionalized mode of policy-making”, which systematically transfers and incorporates security concerns of terrorism, drugs traffic and money-laundering (Huysmans 2000, 760), as well as arguably more recently economic
migration and welfare tourism, into the discourses of migration. In fact, the distinction between so-called legitimate asylum seekers, and so-called illegal immigrants, such as economic migrants, becomes extremely blurred in this context, as the highly securitized field of migration has a tendency to link illegal immigrants and asylum seekers together, resulting in a collapse of the political and intelligible ability (or will) to distinguish between the two (Huysmans 2000, 763). The consequence is accordingly, that refugees and asylum seekers also become part of the securitized field of migration, and consequently that for example politicians can and sometimes will transfer the issue of migration and asylum seekers into an issue of security. In other words, asylum seekers can be framed and discursively constructed as a security problem, rather than a human rights matter (Huysmans 2000, 757).

3.5.2 A Precarious European Solidarity?

On the basis of chapter three, I now summarize some of the main findings associated with the idea of a transnational European solidarity. The summary table does not include all of the elements mentioned above, but will focus on the variables which arguably should come into play in relation to refugees and the redistribution of refugees among member states.
4. Method of Analysis

4.1 Discourse and Discourse Analysis

Most basically, discourse refers to sets of written or spoken statements that occur under specific circumstances and in particular contexts, relating to a theme or, most frequently in politics, specific problems and challenges that need to be addressed. What’s more, discourse also concerns the explicit as well as implicit rules and conventions that govern what can be said or written on the theme or problem (Bergström, Boréus 2000, 17).

According to Ruth Wodak, discourse also is a way to signify “…a particular domain of social practice from a particular perspective.” (Wodak 2003, 135) For this paper then, discourse should be considered a way in which the concept of solidarity acquires meaning from the particular perspective of Social and Christian Democrats in relation to the field of migration and relocation of refugees. Discourse both informs and shapes social and political procedures and political subjects, while simultaneously the institutional, political and social settings also inform and shape the discourse (Wodak 2003, 135). In other words, the manner in which the relevant parties talk about and discuss the refugee situation also affects the perception of the situation and, therefore, what can be done about it.

Discourse Analysis (DA) entails the study of written and spoken statements in all possible forms. Language constitutes itself and acquires meaning in a social setting, but language is also productive and constitutive of that very setting. Following the logic above about how discourse signifies particular domains of social practice from certain perspectives, it follows that language also constitutes its context as well as social phenomena like identity, beliefs and relations as well as the very concepts used to signify the contextual fields of such phenomena. Accordingly, discourse draws boundaries for political action by shaping the field so that some actions and practices are considered needed, feasible and right, whereas other actions and practices are excluded (Bergström, Boréus 2012, 354-355).

For Norman Fairclough, discourse represents the world, signifies it as well as constructs it in terms of meaning (Fairclough 1992, 64).

Underlying these assumptions about the constitutive capacity of language and discourse are the ontological and epistemological positions of social constructionism, which objects positivism and instead claims that conventional knowledge can never be produced from entirely objective perspectives, but is always informed by what we perceive to be true and to exist. Historically, culturally and politically specific social processes construct systems of knowledge and beliefs, and hence the concepts used to signify such systems will inherently vary and cannot claim universal validity. Hence, we need to understand and take stock of how such conventional or taken-for-granted systems make certain actions and beliefs possible, and on the other hand, how they make others impossible (Burr 1995, 4-5).

For the purpose of this paper, DA can inform us about how the concept of solidarity is being constructed and filled with different meanings in relation to the context of migration and relocation of refugees – at the same time being part of a broader diagnosis, which proscribes certain actions, whilst excluding others. I elaborate on how I specifically proceed with analysis under heading Application of Political Discourse Analysis.
4.2 Why use discourse analysis for studying solidarity?

Although many people will intuitively be able to answer the question ‘what is solidarity’ it is nonetheless a concept, which for different people might imply different things. What’s more, people might very well say and consider themselves to know what acting in solidarity implies, but that still tells us very little about how individuals and groups can have different motivations and systems of belief, which underpin their solidarity. If we consider again Stjernø’s (2005) four different analytical aspects of solidarity, its foundation, its goal, degree of collective orientation and level of inclusiveness, we can ask why and on what basis are people solidaric (foundation and goal), how they are solidaric and to what extent they consider it more important than individual freedom (collective orientation), as well as towards who and who not solidarity should be extended (inclusiveness/exclusiveness). It is hence not a fixed term, but a concept that acquires meaning through the specific political context that either enables or constrains specific actions and strategies, the challenges it is being discursively mobilized to address, as well as from the ideological position the speaker holds.

According to Claus Offe, if there are debates about problems or even crises of solidarity, these should be studied by methods such as DA and ‘sociology of political knowledge’, that is by methods “… that assume that ‘reality’ and our action-relevant knowledge about it is the result of ‘rhetoric’, of strategic interpretations and negotiations.” (Offe 2007, 124) The role of rhetoric and strategic interpretations also plays a big part in the debate on refugees and solidarity, because party groups want to be able to set the agenda in order to implement their political solutions.

Furthermore, Stjernø argues that an ideological concept like political solidarity serves several functions for political parties as it gives identity to parties and distinguishes them from adversaries. In addition, political concepts serve to generate positive connotations within the established as well as potential electorate, and they also serve the purpose to highlight specific political issues and challenges the party wishes to address and represent. Most importantly, however, concepts such as political solidarity are flexible and may be given new meanings according to contextual changes, if they are to be successful in attracting or maintaining electoral support. Therefore, “… political concepts should not be too precise and concrete” (Stjernø 2005, 255), which is why DA is suitable for an analysis of the political concept of solidarity in the present context, since DA explores and is concerned with how such concepts are constructed, filled with different meanings as well as how it is positioned in relation to other important concepts and political issues.

4.3 Application of Political Discourse Analysis

It is no controversial claim that the refugee situation at the borders of the EU as well as within the EU have been framed in terms of a crisis – a crisis in and of itself, but which also reinforces the sense of disintegration and crisis of solidarity in the EU. And the relocation of refugees between member states has been presented as one component in a package of dealing with the crisis, as well as a way to enhance solidarity between member states and towards arriving and waiting asylum seekers. The arguments for and the motivations behind the proposed solutions become “ways of representing reality” (Fairclough N, Fairclough I 2012, 85).

As I mentioned above, systems of knowledge and beliefs and political concepts are constructed and reproduced somewhat passively (sometimes deliberately) by historical, cultural and
political-social processes and actively by (political) actors with vested interests. For the purpose of this study, we are dealing with two major political party groups who both have spearheaded the political articulation of solidarity, which nonetheless escapes clear-cut definitions. In addition, the context is migration and the redistribution of refugees between EU member states, which places solidarity adjacent to a range of other concepts relevant for the discourse as a whole.

Following Isabela and Norman Fairclough (2012, 88-89), for my analysis, I will begin at the level of what I call the diagnosis. That is, how Christian (EPP) and Social Democrats (S&D) respectively describe the situation. This gives me the possibility quite quickly to be able to see some differences in how the party groups actively or passively chose to represent reality, and therefore their proposed courses of action to solve the problem.

The proposed courses of action – the means – will be informed by the description of reality (the challenge), but also by the parties’ ideological platforms and understandings of solidarity, which we can call the political ends.

For this paper, I find it sufficient to structure the analysis in the following manner:

How do party members:

- Describe reality (the challenge);
- Propose the course of action (the means);
- Relate the challenge and the means to their political ends and definition of solidarity.

In order to do this, I have used Stjerno’s categorization of EPP and S&D solidarity to develop tables for comparisons between the two as well as for being able to relate the description of reality and proposed course of action to the ideological platforms of the party groups.

In addition I develop an outline of what can be considered traits of a contemporary European solidarity, which I apply interchangeably together with the EPP & S&D solidarity schemes.

4.4 Critical Reflections on Methodology and Empirical Material

Applying this type of political discourse analysis involves a number of challenges. First, although the Isabela and Norman Fairclough provide some step-by-step examples on how to proceed with the analysis, Norman Fairclough has earlier argued for a somewhat liberal approach when applying DA to specific studies. In other words, that his DA models should be tailored in terms of relevance for the purpose of the study (Jørgensen, Phillips 2002, 76). For this study I basically only use the first step, which is concerned with the link between the description of reality (diagnosis) and the proposed course of action. On the other hand I also incorporate my own categorization schemes of the different types of solidarity, and I would not be able to import these schemes into any fixed step-by-step model.

Empirical Material

For the analysis I use four European Parliament debates between 2014-2016 – arguably the years before, during and after the refugee crisis in Europe reached its peak. Obviously there are a number of other debates about the same topics within this timeframe, that are not included.
The first consideration here is related to the fact that transcribing these debates is extremely timeconsuming. The debates are available at the European parliament’s website, but they are not yet translated, so the only way to access them is by listening to the translation of the live recordings. Between the debates available I chose the ones which I considered *most specifically* dealt with the question of relocation of refugees among member states. Furthermore, as you go through and listen to some of the other debates you get an understanding of what are the topics discussed and what do the arguments look like, and I assessed that the main arguments are quite similar throughout the chosen timeframe.

Finally, since the debates are transcribed on the basis of live audio-translations, there is always a risk that some details are missing or that some of the translations are not fully correct. I have no possibility to control for this.
5. Analysis

5.1 Background: Redistribution of Refugees Between EU Member States

In May 2015, the so-called European Migration Agenda was adopted by the EU Commission, a policy document outlining common priorities in the area of migration, asylum and border policies. The common Agenda is modelled to generate comprehensiveness, consistency and a unified common approach to the challenge of migration, asylum and border policies. The Agenda identified a number of “immediate (short-term) EU policy actions, or proposals” as a response to the continued and increasingly acute situation concerning the arrival of asylum seekers through the Mediterranean and south-eastern borders (Carrera, Blockmans, Gros, Guild 2015, 3-4).

The policies and proposals concern strengthening the capacities for border surveillance and control, increasing logistic and financial support for so-called ‘frontline’ member states, increasing efforts and capabilities for fighting the smuggling of migrants as well as identifying and dismantling trafficking networks and businesses. Furthermore, “a relocation mechanism for 20,000 refugees from outside the EU”, and an extra €50 million 2015-2016 budget supporting this relocation scheme. Finally, the Agenda proposes a “temporary and emergency-driven relocation mechanism for asylum seekers within the EU for those member states confronting higher influx” of refugees. This particular proposal is drafted as an emergency mechanism, but the intention is to develop and propose a permanent system for redistribution of asylum seekers more evenly among member states (Carrera, Blockmans, Gros, Guild 2015, 3-4).

The idea here is to temporarily change the guiding rule of the Dublin regulation, which states that it is the EU member state of first entry of asylum seekers, which is responsible for the asylum application. This temporary emergency redistribution system introduces a new distribution key, which allocates responsibility between member states on the basis of criteria such as population, GDP and unemployment (Carrera, Blockmans, Gros, Guild 2015, 4).

So far, upon the Commission’s initiative, the member states have adopted a Resolution (22 July 2015) for relocating 40,000 “persons in clear need of protection” from Greece and Italy, which subsequently was complemented by another Council Decision for the temporary relocation of additional 120,000 asylum seekers from the same countries (Carrera, Blockmans, Gros, Guild 2015, 4).

The decision for the relocation was adopted by the European Council in September 2015, applying to “persons arriving on the territory of Italy and Greece from 25 September until 26 September 2017, as well as applicants having arrived on the territory of those Member States from 24 March 2015 onwards. (Council Decision (EU) 2015/1601 of 22 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece)

The council decisions for relocation are so-called ”Non-legislative enactments”, which means that the Parliament has been consulted and given the choices of approving or not approving the proposals (Procedure file: Provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece: relocation of applicants).
The decision itself states that "the Council noted the willingness and readiness of Member States to take part, in accordance with the principles of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility between the Member States", and that the Council therefore decided to adopt the decision (Council Decision (EU) 2015/1601 of 22 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece).

However, apart from a few member states that have shown some degree of willingness to receive relocated asylum seekers, the overall picture is disappointing. As of the 22. February 2018, of the total of 160.000 people, only 11.954 people have been relocated from Italy and 21.767 from Greece (“Member States’ Support to Emergency Relocation Mechanism” 22. Feb 2018).

5.2 The Context of the Debates and The EPP’s and S&D Groups’ General Positions on The Emergency Relocation Mechanism

I will start by presenting the debates of the analysis as well as the overall positions taken by the S&D group and EPP group respectively with regards to the proposed relocation mechanism. Both party groups voted in favour of the Emergency Relocation Mechanism, and overall there is a convergence among the big political groups about the necessity and urgency to adopt the Council Decision for relocation.

Although both party groups have the same position with regards to the relocation mechanism itself, the analysis will show that there are still differences between them when it comes to other related themes that connect to the broader debate on solidarity. These related themes will be organized and analysed chronologically as follows before I conclude with a summary and discussion:

5.3 Empirical Material: EP Debates and Party Group Positions

EP Debate: Provisional Measures in the Area of International Protection for the Benefits of Italy and Greece, 08.09.2015

This debate concerns the first round of emergency relocation of 40.000 persons over two years to which almost all member states have agreed on. Dimitris Avromopolous, member of the Commission, says in his opening statement that this is a sign of member states’ “…considerable efforts to show solidarity…”, and that the emergency relocation of persons from Italy and Greece is an integral and vital part of dealing with the migratory challenge. The purpose of the relocation is twofold: “to relieve the pressure on Italy and Greece and to ensure the dignified treatment of the persons concerned.” In other words, there is an acknowledgment that the ability to provide dignified treatment to migrants rests on the Union’s ability to share responsibility. And hence, the EU’s ability to show external solidarity with arriving migrants is contingent upon its will and effectiveness in establishing and maintaining internal solidarity between member states in terms of relocation.

Furthermore, the relocation mechanism is coupled with other measures such as the setting up of hotspots for the implementation of relocation and registering of asylum applications, as well as with the return of migrants to third countries and the investigation and fight against criminal networks, such as human traffickers. All of these measures are set out in the Common Agenda on Migration.

Jeroen Lenaers, speaking in the name of the EPP group initiates the debate by saying that there is clearly a need for a binding system of relocation and he is happy to see parliament coming behind the proposal, since “…the voluntary system clearly is not working…”. However, he stresses that relocation is only one part of the common agenda on migration, and mentions “efficient return policy”, “better agreements with third countries”, fighting trafficking as well as addressing the root causes for migration in conflict areas as equally important. Without those measures, “we wont attack the real problems”, he concludes. (08.09.2015)

Iliana Iotova, on behalf of S&D group, in a similar vein maintains that a permanent binding mechanism is more crucial than ever, and that the council must adopt the decision “…in the name of European solidarity.” What’s more, she brings attention to the Dublin regulation and argues that it is not working because some member states at the borders are under too much operational and administrative pressure, and consequently calls for the establishment of operational hotspots. Finally, she wants to see measures to stop trafficking, but argues that “…non of these measures will be really applicable unless Europe actively takes part in conflict solving in third countries.” (08.09.2015)

**EP Debate: Migration and Refugees in Europe, 09.09.2015:**

In this debate a number of other topics are more strongly emphasized in the various opening statements. The discussion on solidarity is more directly connected to the question of how to manage external borders, how to deal with economic migrants and repatriation of those who are not eligible for international protection. Furthermore, the debate revolves more generally around how to find a correct balance between solidarity and responsibility – implying, in other words, that if we show too much solidarity, we are not acting responsibly. On the other hand, too little solidarity is considered not responsible neither with regards to international obligations as well as the internal functioning of the Union. Following up on this, Frans Timmermans, First-Vice President of the Commission, somehow presents the context in which this debate finds itself:

“There are those who sell the illusion that simply by closing all the borders and sending everyone back we could solve this problem. There are also those who maintain that by simply opening all the borders and letting everybody in we could solve the problem. These are illusions… completely impossible in terms of practicality.” (09.09.2015)

Federica Mogherini, also of the Commission, continues on the interrelatedness between external and internal responses, and argues that there cannot only be an external response, nor merely an internal, but that “the two dimensions of our action – and of our identity and our response – reinforce one another or weaken one another.” (09.09.2015)

Speaking on behalf of the S&D group, Gianni Pittella is pleased to see the level of agreement among political groups, but criticises some governments and party groups for trying to “gather
votes” by making migration an issue that can be solved by building walls and “putting fences across the sea” to “try to stop thousands of people from moving”. Furthermore, he argues:

“Here we begin to see the beginnings of some convergence between the political groups... the idea here is that we actually set up a permanent system which can be triggered when the need is there, because there are going to be crises in the future.”
(09.09.2015)

Representing the EPP group, Augustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra similarly argues that migration is both an urgent phenomenon, but also a phenomenon, which is going to persist for some time, and therefore that:

“we really think we have to set up some kind of binding permanent mechanism... so that we can welcome refugees with dignity...all member states have to show solidarity and we have to help those who need our help...”
(09.09.2015)


The following debates occur in April and September 2016 and both clearly reflect the disappointment with the pace of relocation. This is reflected in the opening statements made by rapporteurs and members of The Commission. Besides the widely shared perception that relocation needs to be implemented more quickly, effectively and on the basis of solidarity, the same issues, concerning securing external borders, defining who is eligible for protection and consequently repatriation of those ineligible as well as the Dublin regulation reform, are reoccurring.

In these debates, however, the differences of how the EPP and the S&D party group diagnose the situation, and hence the courses of political action, diverge more explicitly. Both agree on enforcing and making the relocation mechanism more efficient, but concerning the external dimension of responses and solidarity, they propose quite different suggestions. The initial statements representing the groups’ respective views illustrate this quite clearly:

Salvatore Domenico Pogliese, on behalf of EPP, speaks about the success of the EU-Turkey agreement, particularly with regards to containing migratory flows:

“... the results have been excellent when it comes to containing the flow through the Balkan routes, and I think that the debarkations in Greece have gone down by 90%, and I think the determination to be effective shows that we really are able to fight.”
(14.09.2016)

In comparison, the S&D representative Miltiadis Kyrkos is concerned that:

“frontline countries Greece and Turkey are still finding it very difficult to handle the flows of refugees... and people are waiting to be moved around Europe, but Europe refuses to open its door... and we need to remember that there are over 7000 people waiting, and there is no response to their desperate need.”
(14.09.2016)
Here we see an example of quite substantial divergence in the sense that what the EPP group considers to be a success, the containing of migratory flows through stricter border management and repatriation agreements with Turkey, the S&D considers to be a failure, since “Europe is refusing to open its door” and respond to waiting “people’s desperate needs”.

This will be the first point for which I will map the differences between the EPP group and S&D group’s positions: The struggle about how to define the situation and hence what course of action is needed. After that, I proceed to the discussion about containing migratory flows versus legal ways of entry into the EU and how this discussion relates to solidarity.

5.4 Realism and Diagnosis of the Situation

In many instances, we see that the S&D group and the EPP group have diverging views on what they consider realistic and how they diagnose the situation. Consequently, MEP’s suggest different solutions and courses of action to meet the challenges they identify. At the centre of this disagreement is the discussion about responsibility versus solidarity, about securing external borders versus establishing legal pathways into the EU and about security.

Arnaud Danjean (EPP) calls for finding the right balance between solidarity and responsibility:

“Commissioner, your proposal reflects the incredible complexity that is in trying to find a proper balance between necessary solidarity when it comes to refugees and the member states, and the sense of responsibility that means we have to admit that we cannot welcome everyone. And I am sorry to see that we in fact very often take part in a caricature of debate between proposals that are meant to give us a sense of good conscience, and unrealistic proposals that actually support the myth of zero migration.” (09.09.2015)

Furthermore, he argues that the chaotic and confused manner in which migration is being handled undermines “the spontaneous generosity that we actually can expect from our societies.” For dealing with these problems he suggests the following courses of action:

“Of course we have to have to have a list of safe countries, we have got to have a much more energetic return policy and we have to have a proper external border (...) and we have to have diplomatic solution.” (09.09.2015)

In another debate, however, Caterina Chinnici from the S&D highlights that migration is not an emergency but a structural reality and challenge:

“Migration is not as much an emergency as it is a structural problem, and a systemic response is needed from all member states.” (12.04.2016)

Luigi Morgano (S&D):

“It is known that as a result of demographic changes, the European economy needs migrants. (But) well before the economic reasons, they are (part of) humanity and our own history – Europe was a continent of refugees for centuries.” (09.09.2015)
This statement is rare, because the speaker argues that migrants are an economic asset and necessity for Europe. Anna Maria Corazza Bildt for the EPP group also considers refugees as a future asset for Europe:

“It is time to change the rhetoric. In the short-term, yes, refugees are a cost, but in the long-term Europe needs them. They are a benefit to our society.” (08.09.2015)

Marc Tarabella (S&D) argues, that the only viable and realistic solution to the refugee crisis is one that incorporates solidarity and humanity, and consequently that a solution without these elements is unrealistic in the long run:

“In such a situation, the role of politics is not to stir up fears or to entertain fantasies, but to act in accordance with the principles and values that underpin our rule of law. Europe must assume its responsibility. People who fear for their lives should be allowed to apply for asylum in their country of origin in order to avoid jeopardizing their lives by crossing the Mediterranean in extremely dangerous conditions. In any case, there will be no viable solution without solidarity and without humanity.” (09.09.2015)

Roberta Metsola (EPP):

“Walls and fences do not work and neither does simply throwing money at the issue. We need more than band-aid solutions that serve to make us feel better before the next emergency exposes its inadequacy. And yes, we need a binding permanent distribution mechanism for people in need of protection, and we needed this yesterday.” (09.09.2015)

Kati Piri (S&D) argues, that what some governments consider a success – containing and blocking the flow of refugees entering member states – really is a way of ignoring the problem:

“A number of governments in Europe are satisfied to note that the flow of refugees has gone down in their country, and they look away when we talk about the tens of thousands of refugees living in deplorable situations, who are stuck in Greece and everyday arriving in Italy. Some people here actually think this is a clever and proper way of dealing with other potential refugees by scaring them away, and hoping they go to Greece or Turkey” (14.09.2016)

Tomás Zdechovsky of the EPP has an interesting counter-argument. He argues that most refugees in fact only want to apply for asylum in a few EU countries, and consequently that it is unfair and unrealistic to try to enforce a relocation scheme, which would force refugees to places they do not want to go:

“They only referred to three countries where they want to be relocated – Sweden, Germany and the UK. Commissioner, these people don’t want to go to Estonia, Romania or Czech Republic. How can we encourage these people to go to these countries? If we retain these people in these countries, I do welcome the EU-Turkey agreement, it’s a good agreement.” (14.09.2016)
Part of his understanding, however, is that many refugees are in fact economic migrants: “a lot of them are economic migrants, it is true that there are refugees amongst them.” and that the relocation mechanism is not working, and that it is “nonsense” to impose allocations and sanctions for member states not willing to take in refugees or migrants.

In another debate, EPP member Zdechovsky again points to the “unrealistic” nature of the report, which is being discussed concerning relocation of asylum seekers:

“I believe in many respects the report is unrealistic and a matter of the past. The model of reallocation that it supports is unfeasible completely, it appears. (...) I have pointed out earlier that refugees do not want to stay in certain countries. (...) Why do we keep on insisting on nonsensical quotas!” (12.04.2016)

One of Zdechovsky’s party group members paints a different picture, however, arguing that relocation must occur faster and member states should be forced to accept their burden in order to alleviate situations in countries like Greece. This member is from Greece and therefore possibly has her own country’s fate at heart:

“The proposal (...) is something not working properly because some of the binding parts aren’t strict enough. (...) They key to this is in the political commitment and solidarity shown by member states in Europe, which means we have to apply the decision properly.” (Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi (EPP), 14.09.2016)

Gianni Pittella on behalf of S&D:

“Sometimes I think that the quarrels are a bit unreal. When we see people start to build walls and putting up fences across the sea, and we try to stop thousands of people from moving. What we’re actually talking about here is propaganda. Does anybody think that by doing this we are actually going to solve the issue of migration? It’s a joke if you think that’s the way of solving the problem!”

Rather, another party colleague, Elly Schlein (S&D) urges the EP to realise, that the Dublin regulation is obsolete, that national self-interest leads to inadequate responses to the challenge and that the situation calls for more sharing of responsibility:

“We would have liked the commission to be bolder, calling for a complete overhaul and holistic approach to migration, rather than letting governments’ self-interest prevail which then leads to inadequate approaches to migration and security. We need an overhaul of Dublin, not just cosmetic changes – Dublin is over. The report is calling for solidarity to be placed at the heart of our policy and a fair sharing of responsibility. (...) We wouldn’t have got here if member states would have kept their responsibilities.”
(12.04.2016)

However, Georgios Kyritsos (EPP) in the same debate says that:

“These last weeks we have had a reduction of flows by 80 % - this is very positive. Because we don’t want a Europe that is a castle. We want a Europe that will accept refugees and people who need protection and are poor, but a Europe that will not endanger its own social and political systems. Only the fact that all the people who have a problem on the planet are seeking a better fate in Europe – this shows that in spite of...
The examples above show, that there is a political and rhetorical struggle occurring between the party groups about how to define the situation, what constitutes a “success” or “failure” and hence also what courses of action are presented as necessary and “realistic” to address the issue. We see considerable convergence on many aspects, but some of the latter EPP statements clearly demonstrate an internal friction within the EPP as several members argue that mandatory quotas and other suggestions in the report are nonsensical, “unrealistic” and hence not a feasible or desired course of action (Fairclough N, Fairclough I., 2012).

The struggle for privilege to determine and assess the situation in terms of realism, responsibility and solidarity also sets the scene for other, related themes and therefore serves as the starting point from which to present suggestions to other issues – one of which is about security, external borders and humanitarian corridors.

5.5 Securitization: Securing External Borders and Containing Migration versus Legal Ways of Entry and Humanitarian Corridors

One of the most apparent differences between the S&D and EPP concerns the external dimension of solidarity, and is found in the S&D’s emphasis on creating and opening legal ways, or so-called humanitarian corridors into the EU on the one hand, and the EPP’s preoccupation with controlling external borders, containing migratory flows as well as repatriation of those not eligible for protection.

For the EPP, the need for securing external borders is connected to the functioning of internal open borders (Schengen) – in other words, internal mobility and security are only possible if the external borders are completely controlled. This is also framed as a matter of safeguarding European values. Artis Pabriks on the debated holistic approach to migration:

“... our border agency and more secure European external borders as a contribution to this holistic approach. This is because we cannot survive with our current values and Schengen system of open internal borders without fixing our external borders.”

(12.04.2016)

We see in this argument that the internal functioning and values of the EU (‘Schengen’, ‘our values’) are directly related to the functioning of external dimensions (EU’s borders). This is an interesting remark because it indicates that the ability to show solidarity and act in solidarity rests upon the ability to fully control the very boundaries of that very solidarity. Accordingly this captures the functional-normative interplay of solidarity and the two levels of analysis (Bayertz 1999; Pensky 2008): Securing and ‘fixing’ external borders is framed as a prerequisite for the EU itself, and consequently also for its ability to demonstrate solidarity. In addition to being explicit about this priority, by using the word ‘fixing’ the MEP indicates that something is broken or not functioning and hence this becomes the central action that is needed and proscribed (Fairclough N, Fairclough I., 2012).

Furthermore, Michaela Sojdrova from the EPP argues along the same line with the assumption
that Europe is not a safe place, and hence security measures are needed before accepting more refugees:

“Dear colleagues, listen also to those who have a different experience: Those of us who believe that solidarity should go hand in hand with security. (...) We have nothing against refugees but what we call for are security measures for ALL Europeans and for refugees, so that Europe is a safe place for all(...) That is why we call for an immediate control of our external borders so that Europe becomes a safe place.” (12.04.2016)

Another EPP representative reflects similarly explicitly to the theme of securitization. Milan Zver:

“... we hear that there has been infiltration of terrorists among migrants with the task to radicalize migrants. This is a proof that the security situation and the migrant situation are related. Thirdly, securing the external border (...) we needed this yesterday, we need more support for FRONTEX.” (12.04.2016)

By explicitly connecting migration with security, this speaker transforms the debate of migration into a debate of security (securitization) – or rather, he adopts a security-based approach to migration, rather than a human rights-based approach (Huysmans 2000; Léonard 2010). By connecting refugees and terrorists together, the debate logically revolves around security, instead of solidarity or human rights.

Some EPP members do, however, urge other members not to mix refugees and illegal or economic migrants with each other. Pervenche Berès from the S&D:

“Some try to confuse the issue with refugees who have a right to stay and economic migrants that have to be sent back. The fact is that we have refugees in our countries and they will probably stay here for some time.” (12.04.2016)

Furthermore, some S&D MEPs point to the fact that the heavily guarded borders of Europe as well as the lack of legal pathways into Europe have devastating consequences for refugees and asylum-seekers. Juan Fernando López Aguilar:

“So what we need is a permanent mechanism of solidarity (...) and safe pathways into the EU. It is vital we have these safe pathways to the EU so that those who want to come have a future as EU citizens, and don’t die in the attempt to become so.” (12.04.2016)

Another S&D colleague, is also concerned with the consequences of the lack of legal and regular pathways into the EU:

“And we will see after the summer how many of them are still there and how many are still alive, haven’t drowned in the Mediterranean, because we still haven’t managed to (...) allow for regular transport.” (Knut Fleckenstein, 12.04.2016)

And finally, a third S&D MEP is concerned with the fact that:

“These are people who have legal rights to be welcomed in Europe. There is no legal point of entry though, because of the lack of common asylum policy, there is no door
for them to knock at and they end up climbing in through the window and we see thousands of deaths.” (Javi López, 12.04.2016)

This last speaker also draws the conclusion, that “there is no legal point of entry though, because (my emphasis) of the lack of common asylum policy” – in other words, the course of action suggested here is to create legal entry points or humanitarian corridors, which should be incorporated into the common asylum policy. This view represents the opposite of the securitization of migrants. Furthermore, these three S&D MEPs connect the need for legal points of entry into the EU to solidarity – implying perhaps, that it is not possible to show solidarity without the creation of humanitarian corridors of entry, whereas we above observed Artis Pabriks (EPP) indicating that closed and controlled borders are the very prerequisite for being able to show solidarity.

However, as mentioned before the analysis, there is considerable convergence between S&D and EPP in general when it comes to the broad strokes of the debate. Party lines don’t necessarily reflect individual MEPs positions and individual positions do not necessarily reflect the party line. In this context, I simply highlight that there are more EPP members who are preoccupied with controlling borders and dealing with migration as a matter of security than S&D members, and more S&D members want to see legal pathways into the EU.

A statement from Michal Boni (EPP) is a good example of major points of convergence between S&D and EPP.

“Challenging this phenomenon, we need to establish well-coordinated European policies oriented at making our borders secure and under smart control. But at the same time we need solidarity in our location of the refugees, better organised transit measures and new procedures for Dublin schemes. (...) There is only one honest political message: be open to solving the human dimension of the problem and separate the matters of refugees and terrorists rather than connect them. (...) The added value of the report is to look at legal migration as an opportunity for ageing European societies and for solving the problem of shortages on the labour markets.” (12.04.2016)

The examples above (except the last statement from Boni) also illustrate two very different approaches to migration more generally. On the one hand, there are those (mostly EPP members) who use words such as “fight” and “combat” migration and the “success” of closing migration routes, while on the other hand, there are those (mostly S&D) members arguing that migration cannot and should not be “combated”, but “managed”:

“Migration should not be combated but managed, and you manage it by using policies and instruments available by combining foreign policy and national policy. (...) You manage it by using the political will to implement the founding principle of the Union, the principle of solidarity and sharing of responsibility.” (Kashetu Kyenge (S&D) 12.04.2016)

There are, however, several points of convergence between party groups when it comes to the discussion about solidarity as a European value and as one of the cornerstones of the EU. The next part shows some examples of such convergence.
5.6 Solidarity as a European Value: A Point of Convergence

The analysis so far has revolved around topics and concepts, which MEPs bring up in relation to solidarity. As we have seen, in some cases the purpose is to transform the debate on solidarity into questions concerning security and responsibility, which frequently are framed as being in conflict with solidarity, or serve as a prerequisite to solidarity. In other instances we see how solidarity figures alongside these other concepts, but overall we can say that the concept of solidarity never emerges in a conceptual vacuum. Rather it is always invoked in relation to other concepts and questions, such as the external borders and responsibility – i.e. solidarity is balanced against that background of other identified concerns. We can say then that there is an ideological struggle for the privilege to define solidarity – or we can accept the fact that solidarity simply is a liquid and interrelated concept, which always acquires parts of its content from the political context and from other concerns that are considered or framed as important.

Solidarity can be considered a tool mobilized to challenge disintegration and polarization. It can also be completely functional as a phenomenon, which simply holds things together. But solidarity can also be a foundational value underpinning a collective entity like the EU as well as a value in and of itself.

Several MEPs from both the S&D and EPP group remind each other of this in the debates and also how any response to the refugee crisis must be formed on the basis of solidarity.

“We have a concept of Europe – it is not just a place on the map. Europe is an idea based on solidarity. We could have a common asylum and common migration policy, share the burden, have a proper relocation scheme and integration into the labor market.” (Javi López (S&D) 12.04.2016)

In the same debate another S&D member reminds other MEPs of the former “model power” which EU used to represent:

“We have been internally solidaric and externally as well – we were showing pluralism and tolerance. Can we still say that we give the same image now? The humanitarian crisis shows that we are chipping away of our model power that we have had before. We can only rebuild that type of EU that humanity so needs if we are able to properly respond to this humanitarian crisis.” (Enrique Guerrero Salom, 12.04.2016)

For this speaker, EU’s solidarity rests on internal and external solidarity as well as pluralism and tolerance. These are considered the very foundations of the previous “model power” success of the EU. This also resonates well with the identity-aspect of solidarity, which in theory should be less salient for social democrats (Acceptance of difference) than some Christian Democrat MEPs, who occasionally seem more preoccupied with social and cultural harmony and identity in general.

Several EPP members, however, also argue along the same lines as this S&D MEP. Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi makes clear that the adoption of a common migration policy with binding mechanisms for relocation is a matter of European values and principles:

“The migration crisis calls on the EU to face its principles and its values! Here and now we need to change our mentality and our approach to this problem.” (12.04.2016)
For Roberta Metsola (EPP) harmonizing standards and sharing the responsibility for the refugees is also necessary, if the fundamental values of the EU are to persist:

“We like to say that we are a Union of shared values, but we are not yet a Union of shared responsibility and that is our collective failure. Refugees are running away from war, from death. Prime Ministers simply cannot afford to look away. Every single state must fulfill its moral and legal obligations to address the situation. (…) Send an unequivocal message that Europe also stands with the voiceless. Let us be an example for the world.” (09.09.2015)

These statements also reflect the normative-functional interplay of solidarity (Bayertz 1999; Pensky 2008), as the speakers highlight that Europe itself is worth nothing without its values and as a normative model power, and that very functioning of the EU hinges upon its ability to deliver on its values of shared responsibility and solidarity. The sense of urgency in these remarks also reflects the fact that the values are at stake if the EU fails to deliver comprehensive solutions for relocating refugees, which mirror those values.

5.7 Examples of Exclusive Forms of Solidarity

Although a very uncommon trait, there are some examples of exclusive forms of solidarity in the sense that MEPs are either unwilling to relocate refugees because of fears about social harmony, integration and security as well explicit statements about the will to accommodate Christian families, but not others:

“I did not vote in favor of the Report. This is not because I am against solidarity – it is the opposite in fact. It’s needed, it’s necessary and it shows humanity. I would like to see help given to Christian families coming to the Czech Republic for example. They have escaped prosecution from the Islamic State.” (Michaela Sojdrová (EPP), 08.09.2015)

For some of these arguments, the cultural threats posed my migrants as well as the identity of migrants become salient. Here, solidarity with refugees as well as internal solidarity with other member states is subordinate to issues about security and cultural threats. Milan Zver (EPP) argues:

“I am against this culture which assumes that we should exchange and (ex) change our culture with migrants. And we should make clear, that when the situation is safe, migrants should go home and rebuild their own countries.” (12.04.2016)

Also from the EPP, Laszlo Tokés asserts that “Europe´s values, culture, identity and future are at stake…” and describes the arrival of refugees as an invasion of conquerors:

“We should protect national (...) communities, rather than promote illegal invasion of conquerors. (...) The Acceptance of Christ´s commandments in no way applies to those who threaten (...) the Christian roots of our continent.” (09.09.2015)

A party fellow in the same debate highlights his concerns about refugees coming to Europe:
“Also to be considered are the epidemiologic and terrorist risks posed by this chaotic movement of hundreds of thousands of people.” (Mihai Turcanu (EPP) 09.09.2015)

Here we see a few examples of exclusive forms of solidarity in the sense that the identity of the refugee becomes highly salient. Recalling Miller (2006) this resonates well with the idea, that solidarity will more easily be extended to people – and, in this case, cultures - recognizable to oneself. And it is no surprise to find this line of reasoning more prevalent within the EPP camp than within the S&D group, as mentioned before. The aspect of identity is also intimately connected to a general securitization of (illegal) migrants and refugees and an unwillingness or inability to distinguish between the two (Huysmans 2000).

It’s quite clear, however, that this type of concern and exclusive solidarity is connected to a broader concern about the internal functioning and internal solidarity of the EU itself, as large numbers of refugees or migrants are considered a threat for social harmony, traditions and European culture.

For some MEPs, most frequently from the S&D group, the internal functioning and solidarity of the EU simply hinges upon the ability to relocate refugees and share burdens and risks accordingly. For some EPP members, however, this type of reasoning does not resonate well with their idea of solidarity.

5.8 Relocation and Collective Orientation: Mandatory Solidarity versus Genuine Solidarity

Although the S&D and EPP party groups overall voted in favor of adopting binding mechanisms for relocation of refugees there is some variance within the party groups. Within the S&D, members almost invariably support the idea of mandatory relocation, whereas numerous EPP members state clearly that they oppose the idea of mandatory relocation schemes and quotas. On some occasions political and technical reasons are given, but more often EPP arguments against mandatory relocation schemes are matters of principle. One of these principles was also reflected in Juncker’s State of The Union (2016), which I referred to in the Introduction. Juncker stated that much more solidarity was needed, but that it “must be given voluntarily… from the heart”.

For some of the EPP members, this idea of a sort of “Genuine Solidarity” – given from the heart – weighs heavily with regards to establishing permanent binding mechanisms for relocation of refugees. It’s also important to recall that Christian Democrats hold the principle of subsidiarity in high regard – also in relation to solidarity – and this might make them less inclined to support mandatory, centralized policies, as opposed to their S&D counterparts. A few distinct perspectives are worth noting, the first of which is that “solidarity cannot be enforced”:

“According to this index, the social progress of the so-called old member states is considerably higher than the so-called new ones. Exactly these states have problems with the acceptance of refugees and the index of social progress clarifies why. They have problems ensuring dignified living conditions for a big part of their own (my emphasis) population. It is not fair to force upon them the obligation… (…) The submitted report still sticks to such criteria as GDP, which do not reflect reality when
determining the quota of the enforced (my emphasis) solidarity. The poor half of Europe must reject it.” (Anna Záborska (EPP) 12.04.2016)

Here we see an objection of the idea of “enforced solidarity”, which, for several EPP members seems to be a contradiction in terms. This perspective also brings up the issue of how different circumstances for member states must bear on levels of responsibility. The argument is quite straightforward that we simply cannot expect the same levels of responsibility and generosity for “the poor half of Europe” compared to richer member states. And consequently that the relocation of refugees carries with it an “enforced solidarity” as the opposite to a genuine solidarity.

This argument also resonates well with Habermas’ (2011) concerns, that for Europeans to genuinely be able to be connected in solidarity, some basic level of uniform living conditions is a prerequisite. In other words, Europeans are still far from each other – in terms of geography, politics, culture, language and living conditions and standards.

While there is no explicit reference to a “genuine” solidarity, the abovementioned argument – and Juncker’s statement - still implies that there is such a thing, and perhaps “it must come from the heart” for it to have any value and practical purchase.

Earlier I referred to Arnaud Danjean (EPP) who claimed that the migration situation was being handled in a “totally confused and chaotic manner, that actually undermines the spontaneous (my emphasis) generosity that we actually can expect from our societies.” If we bring these two arguments together, we can perhaps argue, that there is an assumption about a type of spontaneous European solidarity, which is the opposite of an enforced European solidarity. Furthermore, Danjean connects the viability of our spontaneous generosity directly to the need for “a list of safe countries”, a “much more energetic return policy” and “proper external borders.” (09.09.2015) In other words, solidarity and generosity appear spontaneously, not when enforced, and they do so more readily if the conditions above are met.

Another speaker, Kinga Gál (EPP) asserts that:

“To want to help is something that is part of our DNA. So is compassion of course – it is human. We need to help those who really (my emphasis) need our help (…) and to do that we need to master the situation at Europe’s external borders.” (09.09.2015)

Here we see another example related to the idea of spontaneous solidarity, where the MEP argues, wanting to help is part of our DNA and that compassion is a part of being human. According to this view, solidarity is perhaps best understood as altruism and empathy – as matters of sentiment. However, the logic is similar to the other examples above: mastering the external borders of Europe is a prerequisite for the ability to show solidarity.

Elena Valenciano (S&D) in contrast argues, that to be able to act in solidarity Europe must move beyond emotions and feelings:

“… if this is a EU that is worthy of its name then I think we ought to try to solve the crisis in a coordinated way and on the basis of solidarity. (…) We have to move from emotions and feelings to action, which is actually what is asked for.” (09.09.2015)
If we consider these arguments to reflect the main party lines of the EPP and S&D, we see many of the main traits related to Stjerno’s four aspects of solidarity:

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<th>FOUNDATION</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Harmony between individuals and groups. Justice.</td>
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<td>OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>OBJECTIVE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharing of risks, social integration, feeling of community.</td>
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<td>Broad, all classes. But also concerned with cultural harmony, religion and integration.</td>
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<td>INCLUSIVENESS</td>
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<td>COLLECTIVE ORIENTATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not only workers but a range of other groups. Acceptance of difference.</td>
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<td>COLLECTIVE ORIENTATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reconciling subordination and individual freedom, but stronger collective orientation than CD.</td>
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While basically all S&D members in general favour mandatory relocation of refugees, many EPP members oppose this idea. This clearly reflects the difference between the party groups when it comes to the level of collective orientation, which is stronger for the S&D type of solidarity, whereas its counterpart emphasises subsidiarity.

In general, the Christian Democratic tradition is more inclined to consider solidarity as an expression of altruism and human decency than the Social Democratic, which has been more pre-occupied with solidarity as a right, a principle and that it should be institutionalized, as opposed to spontaneous or voluntary.
6. Conclusions and Discussion

Overall, the EPP group and the S&D group hold quite similar positions with regards to the overarching themes of these debates: The majority of both groups agree that the relocation scheme needed to be accelerated, made mandatory and that the ability to do so was necessary for the functioning of the Union, as well as a test for the very idea of internal European solidarity between member states and external solidarity with people in need of protection.

The Difference Within Party Groups

Perhaps the most interesting finding in this analysis is that the variance within the party groups in many cases was bigger than between them. This was a surprising finding and therefore also proved difficult to analyze as a point of its own. What we see – especially in the EPP group – is that most members opposing the mandatory relocation scheme, and expressing concerns about border controls, cultural and religious integration and threats concerning refugees, were from Eastern European countries, whereas more liberal EPP members almost invariably came from Western or Southern European countries. In some cases, S&D members from Eastern Europe also occupied similar positions.

This finding perhaps reflects the fact that both party groups are big and represent the increasingly crowded and diverse center of European politics. It is also testimony to the fact that Europe is culturally, politically and historically more heterogeneous than we sometimes tend to assume. Most importantly, however, the variance within these party groups most of all reflects the reality that living conditions internally in member states are enormously different and their exposure to external migrant flows and other potential “threats” are extremely unevenly distributed across the continent.

“Without a sense of common identity, not even a common predicament is likely to prompt mutual aid.” (Baldwin 1990)

It is reasonable to assume that this lack of uniformity impairs the ability of the East to understand the West, the South to understand the North and vice versa. If we follow Habermas (2011), Miller (2006) and Baldwin (1990) we can conclude, that this lack of uniformity is a severe impediment for the ability to generate a transnational European solidarity. The type of solidarity, which both party groups agree, is needed to deal with challenges such as the refugee situation.

Securing External Borders or Creating Legal Pathways into the EU

One point on which the EPP and the S&D group diverge most clearly is the issue about the emphasis on securing external borders versus creating legal pathways into the EU. EPP members almost invariably highlighted the need to secure external borders as a high priority for security reasons and for the ability of the Union to deal with the refugee situation in responsible, realistic manner. Several S&D members argued, however, that migration cannot be contained simply by closing or controlling borders, rather that there was a need to establish
safe and legal pathways into the EU as a matter of principle and to avoid situations like the one on the Mediterranean.

Both party groups agreed, however, that the internal and external dimensions of solidarity were connected, in the sense that the EU needs to exercise effective control of its borders if it is to be able to maintain reasonable levels of order and internal solidarity among member states.

The difference in this case was mostly about emphasis, as more EPP members were vocal about closing or controlling external borders. In addition, several EPP members explicitly connected (illegal) migrants and refugees to matters of security, whereas many S&D members argued that migration and security are different things and should be kept separate.

**Collective Orientation and Spontaneous Solidarity**

Although many EPP and S&D members agree that the relocation scheme should be made mandatory, several EPP members argue, that this type of “forced” solidarity is neither feasible in practical terms nor desired in principle terms. This is a quite clear point of divergence and also reflects the ideological background of the party groups’ respective understanding of solidarity. For the S&D, the sharing of risks and burdens is regarded as an important part of solidarity, and the collective orientation is much stronger than for the EPP who emphasize subsidiarity and the individual.

This divergence also reflects the fact that the S&D has as one of its foundations the idea that solidarity is a right, whereas the EPP emphasize more strongly the spontaneous act of showing solidarity.

**The Dimension of Identity and Inclusiveness**

A final point of considerable divergence concerns the identity of the migrants and refugees. While there is no real example of a S&D MEP who brings up the issue of culture and/or identity, a number of EPP MEPs address this as a concern. Miller (2006) raised the point that people will be more willing to aid and “redistribute in favour of others when they see those others as like themselves in certain respects, and also when they regard them as ‘playing fair’”. This resonates well with some of the concerns of a few EPP members who, firstly, frame migrants and refugees as a threat and, secondly, frequently bring up the issue of economic migrants who are not eligible for protection. The level of inclusiveness is perhaps narrower than for the S&D, which also have the acceptance of difference as a foundational value.

The concerns of these EPP members might be informed by ideological considerations about social harmony, religion and integration, but the difference seems also to be based, again, on geography. It is mostly Eastern European members who express such concerns.
The Precariousness of Solidarity

This paper has shown the main traits associated with the idea of a transnational European solidarity. They revolve around identity and identification, reciprocity and conditionality, security and perceived threats, uniform or unequal living conditions, interdependence and bona fide effort. We have seen that the mechanisms behind solidary action are necessarily different between states or peoples than the mechanisms within states. And we have seen the importance of identity and identification in that regard. But we have also seen ways in which solidarity can be expanded, broadened and re-articulated just like any other political concept or human sentiment.

The title of this paper indicates that we are experiencing a time where invocations for solidarity are being met with insufficiency, and this paper has also shown how some people characterize the refugee crisis as a crisis of solidarity and a crisis of values. But it has also demonstrated, that the many other concepts and values associated with solidarity shape the content and meaning of solidarity.

The paper has also shown two major European party groups battling over the right to define the refugee situation out- and inside of the EU, and how that definition shapes political action and priorities and hence, the shape, scope, direction and depth of solidarity. The exercise has at least proven one point: There is no purchase in trying to create a rigid definition of solidarity, because it is too malleable, contextual and interrelated with other terms. In this debate it has frequently been juxtaposed to responsibility.

But it has also been related to identity; border controls; the individual versus collective orientation; realism versus naivety; uniform or radically unequal living conditions; and the internal-external dimensions and how they relate to one another.

Some of these differences and convergences reflect the difficulty associated with providing a clean-cut definition of what solidarity actually means. They also reflect the fact that solidarity for different people will mean different things, that definitions change over time and that our understanding of solidarity also develops in tandem with contemporary challenges. We sometimes see it rise to meet the challenges. On other occasions, we are left emotionally disillusioned, intelligibly disappointed.

Whether crisis or not, it is impossible to draw any conclusion on whether we have more or less, or a different type of solidarity today than we did in the past. To do that you would have to be able to measure solidarity, have a historically stable definition and some kind of index to compare through time.

Perhaps the most fundamental question is: where does solidarity come from? Does it primarily come from the individual level, ushered by spontaneous empathy and human compassion, as some Christian Democrats would argue? Or does it rather come from principles of social justice and rights, that we are somehow socialized to internalize and believe in, like some Social Democrats would like to believe?

The answer is probably both. And solidarity at times refers to all of the abovementioned traits, and at other times relates to other traits. Perhaps the one single element, which is always a prerequisite for the ability to show solidarity lies in the physical or imagined encounter with a
stranger. As Sven-Eric Liedman puts it: The ability to see oneself in others – att se sig själv i andra.
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