

## The concept and dimensions of solidarity

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*Clouds, lingering yet, extend in solid bars  
Through the grey west; and lo! these waters, steeled  
By breezeless air to smoothest polish, yield  
A vivid repetition of the stars.*

—William Wordsworth, *Poems Dedicated  
to National Independence and Liberty*, 1807

*O God! that one might read the book of fate,  
And see the revolution of the times  
Make mountains level, and the continent,  
Weary of solid firmness, melt itself  
Into the sea!*

—William Shakespeare, *King Henry IV*,  
Part II, Act III, 1597

The export of concepts is the most effective technology of the politics of dependency. Their import, their accommodation in the cultural milieu of their reception, is a process both productive and violent. Concepts are never innocent. The intricate processes of concept formation often conceal a series of real-life battles and disarrays, antagonisms and acts of resistance, silences, suppressions and omissions. They are trajectories of revolution and change, but also of discovery, conquer and plunder. Most crucially, the historically and culturally specific crystallization of a concept is not just a reflection of our specific response to the political present. It delimits our political imagination and future aspirations. Yet this is not necessarily a lost battle. Unearthing the intricacies of concept formation may serve exactly the opposite end. It may open up a whole vista of new political possibilities. In a nutshell, political struggles and agonistic claims could hardly be meaningful, if the conceptual premises upon which they are founded, and from which they strive to depart, are not properly interrogated. This chapter sees itself as a minor contribution to this painful yet significant task.

Solidarity is the concept under scrutiny here; and it is an essentially contested concept. At the realm of praxis, confusion is often greater and its practical applications are at least problematic. Look at Europe, for example. EU responses to

both the economic and the refugee crises attest to that.<sup>1</sup> I hold however that the core problem with solidarity is neither that we have lost our faith in it, nor that we have come to believe that we no longer have the luxury of investing our hopes in it. The core problem is that even when we appeal to the obligations it generates, we mean something so different from and distant to what we once thought solidarity stands for. It may suffice to note here that—to the surprise of the unacquainted—the last article of Chapter IV of the Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union, a Chapter titled “Solidarity”, is dedicated to consumer protection.

This introductory chapter will not serve as a literature review on solidarity. To the contrary, it will attempt to unsettle some of the assumptions that are axiomatically taken for granted by the existing literature. My major complaint with many available accounts of solidarity is that they rather neglect its historical and cultural specificity, following a rather essentialist approach to the term. As a result, with some notable exceptions,<sup>2</sup> critique is often focused either on our deviation from the original, or on the hypocritical evocation of the term. Some of them<sup>3</sup> correctly point out the fallacies of a state-centric approach to the matter, typical of the English School within IR theory.<sup>4</sup> Some notable critique may be found in Critical Theory<sup>5</sup> or

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1. See Óscar García Agustín and Martin Bak Jørgensen, *Solidarity and the ‘Refugee Crisis’ in Europe*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. Evidence shows however that similar tendencies have been present before those crises erupted. See, for example, Jack Hayward and Rüdiger Wurzel (eds.), *European Disunion: Between Sovereignty and Solidarity*, London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
  2. Lillie Chouliaraki, *The Ironic Spectator: Solidarity in the Age of Post-Humanitarianism*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013.
  3. See, for example, Martin Weber, “The concept of solidarity in the study of world politics: Towards a critical theoretic understanding”, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 33, Issue 4, 2007, pp. 693-713.
  4. Barry Buzan, *From International to World Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004; Emmanuel Adler, “Barry Buzan’s use of constructivism to reconstruct the English School: ‘Not all the way down’”, *Millennium Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1, 2005, pp. 171-82; Mervyn Frost, *Ethics in International Relations: A Constitutive View*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996; Timothy Dunne and Nick Wheeler, “Hedley Bull’s pluralism of the intellect and solidarism of the will”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 1, 1996, pp. 309-23.
  5. See, for example, Max Pensky, *The Ends of Solidarity: Discourse Theory in Ethics and Politics*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008.

neo-Gramscian IR/IPE,<sup>6</sup> or in the literatures on global civil society<sup>7</sup> and transnational socio-political activism.<sup>8</sup> Others struggle with the implicit conflict between cosmopolitan and communitarian imaginaries of solidarity,<sup>9</sup> or between national interest and international solidarity.<sup>10</sup> Most however focus on the *whys* or the *hows* of solidarity, neglecting or depreciating the *where* of solidarity, its *locus* that determines eventually our responses to the problem of subjectivity. My proposal is that an excavation of the conceptual mutations of solidarity could allow us to provide new answers to the questions set by the literature and, hopefully, set some further, new questions. For this purpose, the conceptual analysis of the present chapter will mostly draw from a lexicographical survey of solidarity at least in its so far usage in English.

### The *Lexicon*

The etymology of the English term 'solidarity' has been commonsensically thought to derive from the French term *solidarité* (and *solidaire*). In one of the first recorded uses of the term in English, the revolutionary *People's Press* proclaimed in pregnant 1848: "Solidarity is a word of French origin, the naturalisation of which, in this country, is desirable."<sup>11</sup> The aim of establishing this, so to speak, 'French connection' during the period of its introduction in English is apparent. The revolutionary breadth of *solidarité* was seen as an indispensable component of a similar conceptualization of solidarity in English. Nevertheless, no matter how signif-

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6. See, for instance, Kees Van der Pijl, *Transnational Social Classes*, London: Routledge; Mark Rupert, *Producing Hegemony*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995; Randal Germain and Michael Kenny, "Engaging Gramsci: International Relations Theory and the New Gramscians", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 1998, pp. 3-21; Craig C. Murphy, "Understanding Gramsci: Understanding IR", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 3, 1998, pp. 3-21.
  7. Mary Kaldor, *Global Civil Society: An Answer to War*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003; John Keane, *Global Civil Society?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
  8. Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998; Roland Bleiker, *Popular Dissent, Human Agency and Global Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
  9. Andrew Mason, *Community, Solidarity and Belonging: Levels of Community and Their Normative Significance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka (eds.), *The Strains of Commitment: The Political Sources of Solidarity in Diverse Societies*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2017; Craig Calhoun, *Nations Matter: Culture, History, and the Cosmopolitan Dream*, New York: Routledge, 2007; Lawrence Wilde, *Global Solidarity*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013.
  10. Jean-Marc Coicaud and Nicholas J. Wheeler (eds.), *National Interest and International Solidarity: Particular and Universal Ethics in International Life*, Tokyo, New York, and Paris: United Nations University Press, 2008.
  11. "1848 *People's Press* II. 161/2." Quoted from the Oxford English Dictionary [OED], under 'solidarity', 1.

icant establishing this conceptual connection might have been at the times, its perpetuation may nowadays prove to be less revealing than obscuring for two reasons. First, it misses a more ancient etymological connection to the Latin (Roman) *solidus* and the English word *solid*, a point to which I will return below. Second, it conceals the ruptures of meaning in the conceptual history of solidarity, which is longer than we may think.

More than a century after the establishment of the revolutionary ‘French connection’, for example, the ‘Polish connection’ allowed for the reconceptualization of solidarity as almost a synonym to the everyday people’s struggle against ‘communist totalitarianism’. As the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) interestingly notes respectively, “the French origin of the word is frequently referred to during the period of its introduction into English use. Latterly also the English rendering of Polish *Solidarność*, the name of an independent trade-union movement in Poland, registered in September 1980 and officially banned in October 1982.”<sup>12</sup> The conceptual impact of *Solidarność* was so significant that the OED records the first meaning of *solidarity* as following: “1.a. The fact or quality, on the part of communities, etc., of being perfectly united or at one in some respect, esp. in interests, sympathies, or aspirations; *spec.* with reference to the aspirations or actions of *trade-union members*.”<sup>13</sup>

The quotes provided by the Dictionary are even more revealing than the recorded meanings. Already seven years before its use in the *People’s Press*, the term was first used in English less as a revolutionary concept than as one reflecting the Roman Law principle *obligatio in solidum*: Solidarity is collective responsibility. The solidary is the collectively responsible.<sup>14</sup> Even during the revolutionary period of 1848, the term returns with more national (rather than class) connotations, to describe the ideological driving force behind the struggle for the Italian unification.<sup>15</sup> This conceptual transition from class to nation, as the new dominant political *locus*, within which solidarity became meaningful, is retained in the following decade, this time discussed as a typical English (national) trait.<sup>16</sup> Of course this hardly implies a full abandonment of the socialist conceptualization in the post-revolutionary period. To the contrary, the two conceptual faces of solidarity continued

12. OED, under *solidarity*, 1.a.

13. Emphasis added.

14. “1841 H. DOHERTY *False Assoc. & its Remedy* 24 Solidarity, Solidary. Collective responsibility. Collectively responsible.” Quoted from OED, first quote entry under ‘solidarity’, 1.

15. “1848 GALLENGA *Italy* 429 Actuated by a feeling of national solidarity—to borrow a French word—which induced all of them to run the same risk.” Quoted in *ibid*.

16. “1856 EMERSON *Eng. Traits* v. 103 One secret of their power is their mutual good understanding. They have solidarity, or responsibility, and trust in each other.” Quoted in *ibid*.

to coexist in a Janus form, as a synonym both to social (or national) cohesiveness, uniform action and trust,<sup>17</sup> and to class unity often transcending state borders.<sup>18</sup> Their core difference, of course, is one that concerns their relation to the existing order. Whereas the former became meaningful within the given order, the latter strived to subvert it.

It is exactly during this formative conceptual period of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, that the *locus* of solidarity —the space within which solidarity becomes politically meaningful— is first disputed. According again to the OED, in 1852 the Tory *Fraserians* are recorded “hiving up” the phrase “the solidarity of the peoples!”<sup>19</sup> The following year, while recognizing it was vain to strive against the use of the word, Anglican archbishop and poet Richard Chenevix Trench used solidarity in his *Proverbs and Their Lessons* as a ‘proverb’ referring to the bond that unites “all the nations of Christendom”.<sup>20</sup> It only then comes normal that the *locus* of solidarity was eventually traced, beyond class or religion, in race, most notably the English race to serve the interests of the Commonwealth. Thus Canadian businessman and author Samuel Edward Dawson spoke of “the grand idea of the solidarity of England and the English race throughout the world” in his 1884 *Handbook for the Dominion of Canada*.<sup>21</sup>

Of course, the metaphorical (or ‘transferred’, according to the OED) sense of solidarity further facilitated the disassociation of the concept from its revolutionary, class-related and internationalist connotations. The most notable authors quoted in the OED could now talk of the solidarity ‘of Breton and Welsh poetry’, of all translations of the Jewish scriptures, of all “the organs of speech that act and react upon each other”, or of “the solidarity existing between all parts of the lung”!<sup>22</sup> As the concept was incorporated in the English vocabulary to convey

17. “1877 BROCKETT *Cross & Crescent* 157.” Quoted in *ibid*.

18. “1885 *To-day* III. 83 [Strike manifesto] But if, on the contrary, you design this strike as a step toward a final and definite solution of the great labour question, if you would make it the means of teaching the worker the absolute necessity of combination and of unity, if having secured the adoption of Solidarity you will build upon this a superstructure of Education, if you will learn why you are poor, [etc.]” Quoted in *ibid*.

19. “1852 *Fraser’s Mag.* Jan. 28 We have hived up one of his phrases—the ‘solidarity of the peoples!’” Quoted in *ibid*.

20. “1853 TRENCH *Less. Prov.* 29 The ‘solidarity’ (to use a word which it is in vain to strive against) of all the nations of Christendom.” Quoted in *ibid*.

21. “1884 S. E. DAWSON *Handbk. Canada* 107.” Quoted in *ibid*.

22. “*transf.* 1867 M. ARNOLD *Celtic Lit.* 68 The solidarity, to use that convenient French word, of Breton and Welsh poetry. 1876 L. STEPHEN *Hist. Eng. Th. 18th C.* I. 220 Disputing the solidarity of all the writers of Targums. ... 1860 MARSH *Lect. Eng. Lang.* 284 The organs of speech act and react upon each other; there is, to use a word, which if not now English soon will be, a certain solidarity between them all. 1898 *Allbutt’s Syst. Med.* V. 67 The solidarity existing between all parts of the lung.” Quoted in *ibid*.

diverse and often conflicting meanings (and serve a vast array of interests), the difference between the literal and the metaphorical evaporated. According to the OED quotes under this first meaning of solidarity, the word was even used to describe a loose form of alliance (a most beneficial policy option for Napoleon that, unlike his nephew, never chose to follow in his relations to England)<sup>23</sup> or Tory party allegiance.<sup>24</sup> One of the most notable OED references is a quote from William Stubbs' *Constitutional History of England* (Vol. II),<sup>25</sup> at least to the extent that it engulfs most of the conceptual mutations mentioned above, perhaps in the most tragic or farcical manner. There solidarity was evoked to address not only the rising concept of national (English) solidarity, but most crucially the bond between the king (Edward I) and his people in the body politic of the rising English nation. It definitely deserves a quote more extended than the one provided by the OED:

Edward intended to be wholly and fully a king, and he struggled for power. For twenty years he acted in the spirit of a supreme lawgiver, admitting only the council and the baronage to give their advice and consent. Then political troubles arose and financial troubles. The financial exigencies suggested rather than forced a new step, and the commons were called to parliament. In calling them *he not only enunciated the great principle of national solidarity*, but based the new measure on the most ancient local institutions. He did not choose the occasion, but he chose the best means of meeting the occasion consonant with the habits of the people. And when he had taken the step he did not retrace it. He regarded it as a part of a new compact that faith and honour forbade him to retract. And so on in the rest of his work. ... Edward I had systematized and defined the several functions of a form of constitution that worked well, although not without difficulties, under his own hand. His system was the system of a king who felt himself at one with the nation he governed, who was content to act as the head and hand of the national body. In sharing political power with his people, he gave to the parliament more than was consistent with a royal despotism, he retained in his own hands more than was consistent with the theory of limited monarchy. He was willing to have no interest apart from his people, but he would not be less than every inch a king. The share of power which he gave was given to be used in concert with him; the share that he retained was retained that he might control the aims and exertions of the national strength. There was what is called, in modern phrase, *solidarity between him and his people*. He had not calculated on

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23. "1862 GRATTAN *Beaten Paths* II. 378 Would he not have found his best policy [in] an alliance, if not quite a solidarity, with England?" Quoted in *ibid*.

24. "1884 *L'pool Mercury* 18 Feb. 5/2 The member for Woodstock here repudiates all solidarity with his leaders." Quoted in *ibid*.

25. "1875 STUBBS *Const. Hist.* xvi. II. 310 There was what is called, in modern phrase, solidarity between him and his people." Quoted in *ibid*.

the succession of a race that would maintain a separate interest, apart from or opposed to that of the nation.<sup>26</sup>

At least in this first meaning, the OED returns to the concept almost a century later, in the conservative early 1960s, and in a rather pejorative sense. Of course, the early Cold War did not allow much space for a socialist concept to prosper in the English speaking world. As a result, the concept was normally associated with the contours of the ideological rival, the Soviet Union and its 'satellite states', which (were seen as) finding refuge in a long bygone conceptual trajectory in their anti-colonial struggle, already at work. The dominant and sweeping discourse of the times in the West, and in Great Britain in particular, was functionalism. The working class and its unions had already shown signs of compromising class solidarity and ideological allegiance in the name of a new instrumentality.<sup>27</sup> In the more revolutionary 1970s however the socialist conceptualization of solidarity returned with a revival of its mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century internationalism.<sup>28</sup> By the 1980s, the concept of solidarity fully returned in the English vocabulary in its most sanctioned sense. As noted above, the Polish Solidarity movement allowed for the accommodation of the concept of solidarity within the accepted English jargon, devoid of any Soviet or communist association. A new type of socialist solidarity emerged that could well fit within the conservative Christian milieus of the West and call for a new form of emancipation, this time, against Soviet rule.<sup>29</sup>

26. William Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England in Its Origin and Development*, Vol. II, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896, pp. 310, 324, emphases added.

27. "1962 *Listener* 31 May 935/1 These gangs have group-cohesiveness (in our present jargon) or solidarity (in socialist jargon), but they are against society. 1963 *Daily Tel.* 5 Feb. 10/2 Twice as many countries are attending this conference as were at the Afro-Asian States conference in Bandung in 1955; but the great difference is that those now meeting are merely 'solidarity organisations'. 1968 *Listener* 6 June 713/1 Well before the last election, sociologists were telling us that an increasing number of working-class people were beginning to look at politics instrumentally rather than in terms of class solidarity or ideological allegiance." Quoted from OED, under 'solidarity', 1.

28. "1971 I. DEUTSCHER *Marxism in our Time* (1972) v. 109 The perennial conflict between national egoism and international solidarity becomes more and more visible. 1974 *Socialist Worker* 9 Nov. 6/4 The building workers called a solidarity strike. 1977 *Time* 4 July 7/3 In the months since then, Soviet ideologues have opened a campaign to increase 'fidelity to the principles of internationalist solidarity'—party jargon for rallying round Moscow's flag." Quoted in *ibid.*

29. "1980 *Times* 26 Sept. 6/4 The Warsaw daily *Zycie Warszawy* quoted members of the Solidarity free trade union movement as rejecting reforms of the old unions as mere name-changing. 1980 *Economist* 18 Oct. 46/1 Over 20 unions, including Mr Lech Walesa's Gdansk-based Solidarity (an umbrella organisation representing 50 small unions, and claiming a total membership of over 4m), have applied to register with the courts in Warsaw. 1982 *Times* 9 Oct. 1/5 The Polish Parliament yesterday voted for a new trade union law that sounds the death knell of Solidarity. *Ibid.*, In broad outline, the bill dissolves all registered trade unions including Solidarity." Quoted in *ibid.*

The second meaning ascribed to *solidarity* by the OED is that of the “community or perfect coincidence of (or between) interests.” This second meaning does not only further disassociate the concept from its revolutionary aura, by conceptually relating it even to the allegiance between ‘conservative interests’.<sup>30</sup> It reveals a non-agonistic conceptual horizon, by returning the concept to its original commercial and fraternal underpinnings. In a nutshell, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the English were well using the concept to address the solidarity of commercial interests or the ‘fraternal’ solidarity of interests, typical of merchant guilds.<sup>31</sup>

The third and final meaning of *solidarity* discussed by the OED is no other than that of Civil Law: “A form of obligation involving joint and several responsibilities or rights.” As Edward Poste commented in his 1875 *Gai Institutiones or Institutes of Roman Law by Gaius*, “Correality and Solidarity agree in this, that in both of them every creditor is severally entitled to receive the whole object of the active obligation, and every debtor is bound to discharge the whole object of the passive obligation.”<sup>32</sup> Is it that by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the English language had already misappropriated the concept to serve those ends that could be accommodated in the dominant (monarchical, conservative, capitalist, etc.) schema of the times? Lexicographical evidence seems to support this assertion, at least if we accept that the aforementioned ‘French connection’ is the concept’s own *etymon*, as widely accepted. Yet this could hardly be the case. After all, besides *solidarité* (and *solidaire*), the OED adds at the etymological roots of solidarity the English word *solid* and the Latin *solidus*.

Before closing these short remarks on the meanings of solidarity, let us briefly return to the first quote herewith provided by the Dictionary and mentioned above in passing: Hugh Doherty’s 1841 *False Association & Its Remedy*. The history of the concept so far discussed is well summarized in the conceptual workings of this very first use. According to the *Dictionnaire Étymologique de la Langue Française*, the word *solidarité* first appeared in French in 1765.<sup>33</sup> Often recognised as the one who coined the term, Charles Fourier only used it in 1808.<sup>34</sup> August Comte may

30. “1876 *Contemp. Rev.* June 138 The cr, y was raised as to the solidarity of the Conservative interests.” Quoted from OED, under ‘solidarity’, 2.

31. “1874 M. E. HERBERT tr. *Hübner’s Ramble* ii. ii. (1878) 518 To establish a solidarity between their commercial interests. 1890 *Gross Guild Merch.* I. 97 A compact body emphatically characterized by fraternal solidarity of interests.” Quoted in *ibid*.

32. “1875 POSTE *Gaius* iii. 396.” Quoted from OED, under ‘solidarity’, 3.

33. See Oscar Bloch and W. von Wartburg, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue française*, Paris : Librairie classique d’Eugene Belin, 1928.

34. Charles Fourier, *Théorie des quatre mouvements et des destinées générales suivi du Nouveau monde amoureux*, Paris, 1808, p. 269. See Charles Gide and Charles Rist, *Histoire des doctrines économiques depuis les physiocrates jusqu’à nos jours*, Paris : Librairie de la société du recueil, 1909, pp. 671-73.

have played a key role in popularizing the concept, but it was first extensively discussed by one of Fourier's disciples, Hippolyte Renaud, in his 1842 *Solidarité, Vue Synthétique de la Doctrine de Charles Fourier*. As noted above, it was Irish Hugh Doherty, himself a Fourierite, who introduced the word into English in 1841 with socialist connotations,<sup>35</sup> whereas a German translation of Renaud's book introduced *Solidarität* into German in 1855.<sup>36</sup> In that sense, it might be less important what Fourier meant by *solidarité* than how the concept was popularized by his followers, Fourierites like Renaud. It might be less important what he wrote than how he was read. The writings of Fourier's, or even Renaud's, were less significant than their productive misreadings. The act of translation—the creative transfer of a concept from one cultural system to another—further facilitated this productive misreading. Very few things have admittedly changed in this linguistic transfer from *solidarité* to solidarity. Yet, neither Fourier nor Renaud could any longer control the meaning of solidarity. Fourier died four years before the publication of Doherty's book. Yet he, as an author, has been 'dead' (unable to authoritatively control the meaning of his work) since 1808, when his *Quatre Mouvements* was first published.<sup>37</sup>

So what was the meaning of solidarity when first introduced in English? Which was Doherty's conceptualization? Interestingly enough, Doherty only referred to the concept twice, once in his introductory notes on the 'vocabulary' used, and once at the end of his book. In the former, he only defined solidarity as collective responsibility and the solidary as collectively responsible.<sup>38</sup> As mentioned above, this definition hardly stands as one that alone carries along the revolutionary spirit of French *solidarité* into English. It rather imbues the concept with what was already at work in the English cultural milieu, that is, a semi-legal, semi-political concept of joint and several liability (or mutual and collective responsibility),

35. In 1844, another Fourierite, American Parke Godwin, used the term in regret, as an "uncouth" word. Parke Godwin, *A Popular View of the Doctrines of Charles Fourier*, New York: J.S. Redfield, Clinton Hall, 1844.

36. See Arthur E. Bestor, Jr., "The Evolution of the Socialist Vocabulary", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 1948, pp. 259-302.

37. See Roland Barthes, «La mort de l'auteur», in *Le bruissement de la langue. Essais critiques IV*, Paris : Seuil, (1967) 1984, pp. 63-9. This argument may be particularly applicable in the case of Fourier and the relation of his ideas with those of his followers. "Fourierists, who emerged as a movement led by Victor Considérant when the Saint-Simonian movement fragmented at the end of 1831, revered Fourier, but few could ever have read his works. Their ideas quickly diverged from those of their master." Pamela Pilbeam, "Fourier and the Fourierists: A case of mistaken identity?" *French History and Civilization: Papers from the George Rudé Seminar I*, 2005, p. 187.

38. Hugh Doherty, *False Association and Its Remedy; or A Critical Introduction to the Late Charles Fourier's Theory of Attractive Industry, and the Moral Harmony of the Passions*, London: Office of the London Phalanx, 1841, p. 24.

along with an already standardized view of a civilized (Christian) Europe as opposed to a barbarous Orient (Russia and Turkey). What remains to be answered of course is the crucial question about the *locus* of solidary responsibility. Who are the ones to stand solidary to each other? At least in this respect and at least in its overtone on the cultural supremacy of the 'civilized' (Protestant/Catholic Christian, incidentally) nations of Europe discussed in medical terms, Doherty's (Irish/British/Catholic) socialist reading of solidarity is not that different or distant from the one later developed in the conservative discourse discussed above:

It is not enough for civilized nations to cultivate art, science, and productive industry at home, then; they must civilize their neighbours also, if they wish to be secure from danger. A nation is but a simple member of humanity, and so long as any other nation is suffering under the evils of ignorance, privation, and depravity, *the whole body of the human race is more or less affected by then individual affliction*. There is an inevitable solidarity, or mutual and collective responsibility, between all the nations of the earth, and all the individuals of each nation. *If one country is infected with pestilential disease, all the others are exposed to the dangers of contagion*; if neighbouring states are allowed to remain in poverty, under the illusions of military glory, they will, sooner or later, conquer and spoliage their opulent neighbours. In fact, *if we do not civilize barbarians, they will finally reduce us to barbarity*. The civilization of Europe is constantly exposed to destruction by the barbarians of Russia and Turkey, who are now as well skilled in the improved arts of war as we are. This is, perhaps, the only science which they have borrowed from us, because it is more in harmony with their barbarous designs of conquest, and the enslaved ignorance of their population, than are our refined arts of industry and peaceful progress.<sup>39</sup>

One could hardly resist noting that the 'solidary' Europe envisioned by Doherty, and many others at the times, is hardly different from where Europe stands today:

According to the most advanced state of incoherent civilization in Europe, peace is the natural policy of England, France, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Prussia, Belgium, and Holland. *They ought to unite in a temporary, if not permanent, alliance*, for the sole purpose of successively reducing, by threats, or by force, the military and naval forces of Russia, Persia, Turkey, and Egypt, to the lowest possible standard compatible with the necessities of self-defence, in case of insurrection or invasion. They would be rendering an immense service to these barbarians, by obliging them to turn their attention to the conquests of industry at home, when all prospects of satisfying their martial am-

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39. *Ibid*, p. 156, emphases added.

bition by spoliating conquests abroad were effectually and permanently cut off.<sup>40</sup>

Who then is the solidary and to whom? The above analysis already implied that our answer to the question of solidary subjectivity unavoidably depends on our answer to the question about the *locus* of solidarity, the political space within which the obligations arising from the principle first become meaningful. Once again, a lexicographical survey of the *solidary* and other related words further reinforces the argument that solidarity is characterized more by conceptual intricacies and ruptures than by an imagined gradual deviation from a revolutionary *etymon* of French origin. According to the OED, the word *solidary* derives from the French *solidaire*. As in the case of *solidarity*, though, the Dictionary further records its connection to the word *solid*. The French word *solidaire* is presented by the OED as absolutely naturalized in the English language. Although no meanings are recorded in the Dictionary, the quotes provided indicate that the *solidaire* (as a naturalized adjective) means the one who is a) sympathetic or a supporter of certain ideas,<sup>41</sup> b) firmly connected or depended upon something else,<sup>42</sup> c) allegiant to the community (nation) one belongs,<sup>43</sup> d) or a perfect synonym to the solidary, a counterpoint to the *solitaire* (*solidaire/solitaire*).<sup>44</sup>

As to the adjective *solidary*, the OED records two meanings. The first derives from Civil Law: “joint and several” (liability, responsibility etc.). Interestingly enough, the first quote entry here, H.T. Colebrooke’s 1818 *Treatise on Obligations and Contracts*, precedes Doherty’s first recorded use (1841) of solidarity in English by 23 years, thus infusing its own conceptual aura upon the meaning of the latter.<sup>45</sup> The second meaning of the solidary further politicizes the above legal meaning. The solidary is the one “characterized by or having solidarity or community

40. *Ibid*, p. 162, emphasis added.

41. “1845 MACAULAY *Let.* 1 Mar. (1977) IV. 244, I certainly did suppose that you considered yourself as *solidaire* for doctrines which the cabinet has repeatedly and emphatically proclaimed.” Quoted from OED, under ‘*solidaire*’.

42. “1877 W. R. ALGER *Life of Edwin Forrest* I. i. 25 When volition put rigidity into his muscles the centre was *solidaire* with the periphery.” Quoted from *ibid*.

43. “1942 WYNDHAM LEWIS *Let.* 27 Jan. (1963) 316 But one cannot help feeling *solidaire* with the nation to which one belongs.” Quoted from *ibid*.

44. “1962 *Times Lit. Suppl.* 3 Aug. 556/2 They must be made not ‘*solidaire*’ (to use M. Neveux’s words) in a shared, superior understanding of the plight of the figure on the stage, but made ‘*solitaire*’ as they realize that they each, alone, share his fate.” Quoted from *ibid*.

45. “1818 COLEBROOKE *Obligations* xiv. 149 The solidary obligation can hardly arise, without such an express provision. 1875 POSTE *Gaius* iii. 398 Election to sue the principal debtor discharges a Correal surety, but not a Solidary surety. 1895 *Law Times* XCIX. 465/1 Anyone who has grasped the difference between a correal and a solidary obligation.” Quoted from OED, under ‘solidary’, 1.

of interests." The quote entries here are admittedly striking. Besides Doherty's own 1841 reference discussed above, one more from 1848 conceptually connects solidarity to the "great human family". A third one from 1867 connects it to the community of Christians "solidary in sentiment and interests", who live abroad in countries (then imagined) as 'barbarous' and 'exotic' as Turkey.<sup>46</sup> The struggle for the conceptual appropriation of solidarity and the solidary is also evident in the uses of the adverb *solidarily*.<sup>47</sup>

This conceptual (and spatial) connection of solidarity with communities of *interests*, rather than with the implicit internationalism of humanity or of the working class, let alone with a revolutionary potential, is further evident in the conceptual schematization of other derivative words, such as a) the adjective *solidaric*, meaning the one "characterized by solidarity or community of interests" or the noun *solidarism*, meaning "a theory of social organization based on solidarity of interests", both etymologically deriving from solidarity and the French *solidaire*,<sup>48</sup> b) the noun and adjective *solidarist*, meaning "a believer in or advocate of solidarism", or the adjective *solidaristic*,<sup>49</sup> and c) the rare verb *solidarize*, deriving from the French *solidariser*, meaning in a transferred (metaphorical) or reflexive sense "to bring to solidarity".<sup>50</sup>

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46. "1841 [see SOLIDARITY 1]. 1848 *Tait's Mag.* XV. 251 Regarding as solidary, or indissolubly connected together, all the members of the great human family. 1867 VISCT. *Strangford Selection* (1869) II. 64 A struggling Christian population, solidary in sentiment and interest with all other Christian populations in Turkey." Quoted from OED, under 'solidary', 2.
47. "1870 *Pall Mall G.* 25 Aug. 4 It would not be well to make the French living in Germany responsible for the misdeed, but France herself ought to be made to answer solidarily for it. 1892 *Temple Bar* June 156 It belongs to us as a community, and we are collectively and—what is the word?—solidarily responsible for its use." Quoted from OED, under 'solidarily'.
48. "1874 LANGE *Comm. Zephaniah* 28 The solidaric connection of the false Gods with the kingdom of Satan. 1894 *Thinker* VI. 72 The central position of Christ in regard to humanity, and His solidaric fellowship with it as its head. 1906 E. KELLY *Progr. Working Men* ii. ii. 113 The main object to be secured will be described as Solidarity; those who want to secure it as Solidarists, and the doctrine itself as Solidarism." Quoted from OED, under 'solidaric'.
49. "1884 C. POWER *Philistia* I. i. 4 The polyglot crowd of democratic solidarists. 1957 [see PERSONALISM b]. 1968 *Economist* 28 Dec. 27/3 Further evidence of an 'instrumental collectivism' as opposed to a traditional 'solidaristic collectivism'. 1969 P. WORSLEY in Ionescu & Gellner *Populism* 224 These independent commodity-producers were not simply 'petty-bourgeois' individualists, as their solidarist political associations demonstrate. 1974 B. JESSOP *Traditionalism, Conservatism & Brit. Pol. Culture* ii. 32 The distinctive attribute of secular voters is an absence of solidaristic class consciousness rather than commitment to deferential norms." Quoted from OED, under 'solidarist'.
50. "1886 *Pictorial World* 8 Apr. 328 An arrangement of solid facts and figures to prove the solidarising effects of American republican institutions over those of the Britisher. 1888

It is with the conceptual mutations of *solidity* (or *solidness*, of *solid state*, or the obsolete *solidiousness*) though, that the pre-revolutionary prehistory of solidarity—and of course its etymological connection to the Latin *solidus*—is fully disclosed. Etymologically deriving from the French adjective *solidité* and the Italian *solidità* or the Latin *soliditāt-em*, and all of them from the Latin *solidus*, *solidity* enjoys six recorded meanings. Some of them are traced as early as 1532 and are mostly connected to the qualities of being *solid* or substantial in various figurative or transferred senses and applications (geometry, science etc.).<sup>51</sup> The sixth sense however is striking. It is defined as a synonym to solidarity and its first recorded use dates back in 1706! Yet, in what sense? This prehistory of solidarity is no other than the legal/commercial sense of the *joint obligation or liability of creditors*.<sup>52</sup> And with *solidity* let us now turn to the *solid*, from which all the above derive.

More than apparent, the etymological connection between solidarity and the English (noun and adjective) *solid* is recognized by the OED. According to the Dictionary, the noun *solid* is presented as an adaptation of the French *solide* and the Latin *solidum*. Its many meanings mostly relate to bodies that are thick and of an unbroken mass. As an adjective, the word *solid* etymologically derives from the modern Latin-based *solide/solido* or the Latin adjective *solidus*. The meanings recognized by the OED date back to Chaucer's 1391 *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, and they mostly signify the one who is whole (as opposed to *hollow*), unbroken, dense or of massive consistency, steady, firm and continuously coherent, hard and compact, solidified, consolidated, united, unanimous, undivided, united in approval or opposition, intimately or closely allied, on friendly terms with another, sturdy, well-founded or established, substantial, marked or characterized by a high degree of religious fervour or seriousness, vigorous; in a body or as a whole, unanimously. Similarly, the adverb *solidly* has come to mean firmly and securely, with valid ar-

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*Standard* 4 Feb. 5/6 Germany has, in a measure, solidarized herself with Austria, and that solidarity has its charges." Quoted from OED, under 'solidarize'.

51. "1532 MORE *Confut. Tindale Wks.* 720/2 The trouth of Goddes woorde hath his solidyte, substaunce and fastnesse of and in it selfe. ... 1647 CLARENDON *Hist. Reb.* i. §166 No Kingdom in the solidity of the Laws was more Secure than England. ... 1804 GOUV. MORRIS in *Sparks Life & Writ.* (1832) III. 213 Prussia has grown up so fast that there is a want of solidity. 1866 SEELEY *Ecce Homo* iv. (ed. 8) 36 Human relations gained a solidity and permanence which they had never before seemed to have. ...". Quoted from OED, under 'solidity', 1.
52. "1706 tr. *Dupin's Eccl. Hist. 16th C.* II. iv. ix. 431 note, Solidity in the French Law is a joint Obligation entred into by several Creditors, by which every one of the Obligees binds himself to pay what they all owe in Common, upon the default of the rest. 1818 COLEBROOKE *Obligations* xiv. 149 This solidity in respect of creditors is very rare: it is not to be confounded with indivisibility of obligation. *Ibid.*, The effects of solidity towards creditors, when it does occur, are as follow. Each of the creditors, being so for the whole, may consequently demand the whole [etc.]." Quoted from OED, under 'solidity', 6.

guments or reasons, or on good grounds, really, thoroughly and truly, seriously, solemnly and earnestly, continuously, unanimously. Similarly, the verb to *solidify* acquired the transitive meaning of rendering solid, firm or compact (with the transferred sense of concentrating and consolidating), and the intransitive meaning of becoming solid. These meanings are also met in the derivative words *solidifiable*, *solidification*, *solidified*, *solidiform*, the obsolete *solidatively*, and *solidifier*.<sup>53</sup>

The second etymological source of the above concepts is traced by the OED in the Latin word *solidus*, primarily meaning a gold coin of the Roman Empire, originally worth about 25 denarii, and later (1387) a shilling.<sup>54</sup> The derivative noun *solidate* has come to mean respectively “a piece of land of the annual value of a solidus or shilling”, and as past participle the solid and hard. The derivative, now rare verb *solidate* means to make solid or firm, to consolidate. Similarly, the also obsolete and rare *solidation* means the consolidation or strengthening. What is it that makes this reference to *solidus* so conceptually significant? What could this etymological connection tell us about the meaning of solidarity?

Although I find the etymological connection of solidarity to a past word of monetary use to be significant by itself, this is not the aim of my argument. I would first like to turn our attention to the implicit meaning noted above of a consolidated whole, united, compact and firm. It is not coincidental that the Latin *solidus* derives from Latin adjective *sollus*, meaning whole, entire, unbroken, ὅλος in Greek,<sup>55</sup> which in turn etymologically derives from the Proto-Italic *\*solnos*, from the Proto-Indo-European *\*sol(h<sub>2</sub>)nós*, and finally from *\*solh<sub>2</sub>-* (“whole”). It is the quality of being a member of this *whole* that serves as the spring of all mutual obligations we have so far associated with the idea of solidarity. It is therefore also not a coincidence that solidarity is conceptually connected (in a post-revolutionary context) to the pagan-republican *harmony* (Gr. ἀρμονία, Lat. *concordia*) or to *political* (or *civic*) *friendship* (Gr. φιλία πολιτική, Lat. *amicitia*), both pertaining to relations among the member of urban elites; to the Old Testament and Christian idea of brotherly fraternity (*fraternitas*) of Men and the love of neighbour (*caritus*);<sup>56</sup> to the relations between members of monastic and knight Orders, of companies and merchant guilds of common interests, of students or alumni, and of men of the same class, occupation or pursuits. It is this unbroken whole that

53. “1894 DRUMMOND *Ascent of Man* 269 [War] the purifier of societies, the solidifier of states.” Quoted from OED, under ‘solidifier’.

54. A second, still surviving meaning is that of the sloping line first used to separate shillings from pence (i.e. 12/6), and later in writing fractions, and for other separations of figures and letters.

55. See Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879.

56. Hauke Brunkhorst, *Solidarity: From Civic Friendship to a Global Legal Community*, trans. Jeffrey Flynn, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005, pp. 2ff.

further allows the birth of ethicopolitical responsibilities and legal liabilities that are communal and in whole, joint and several.<sup>57</sup> In a nutshell, the concept of solidarity is defined by our answer to this question: Who is our ‘neighbour’? Who is the one with whom we form this solid whole? Put differently, the conceptual dimensions of solidarity are by definition spatial. In still other words, the content of its politics is primarily defined by its *locus*.

### The *locus* of solidarity

Recent developments in Europe —mostly in connection with the so far responses to the economic and the refugee crises within the European Union— do not leave much space for optimism. The locality of solidarity is constantly shrinking, and the component of internationalism, implicit in the concept of solidarity as still imagined, is unfortunately exhausted in practices that serve more as contemporary mutations of compassion and mercy, as well as of old practices of interventionism, protectionism and dependency. Yet these unsettling practices are not merely reflected at the level of conceptual history. Conceptual battles, mutations and ruptures are not the mere mirrors of political developments. They serve both as (one of the many) battlefields of political antagonism and as generators of the cultural milieus that accommodate (or abolish) them. Hence, rather than noting our distancing from the revolutionary, internationalist or humane *etymon* or origin of solidarity, or the hypocrisy of policies that mask the most inhumane practices with the most humane of pretexts, including solidarity, a post-critical critique ought to proceed at and develop from a deeper analytical level. Our efforts need to focus more on the political relocation of solidarity as imagined and practiced today. To my understanding, this presupposes upsetting the dominant practices and discourses that delimit our political imagination and the *locus* of politics itself (and of Europe).

The distance we have covered so far is indeed great and the conceptual *detour* of solidarity attempted here aimed not at identifying the *etymon*, the one and true origin to which solidarity needs to return, but at revealing this distance and unearthing the antagonisms in this development. In the works of Marx, Lassalle, Bernstein and Kautsky, as well as in the later works of Emile Durkheim, the con-

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57. In that sense, we can better appreciate both the rise of solidarity as a legal/commercial concept, and the historical content of similar relevant policies in other cultural milieus. In the Byzantine Empire under the Macedonia dynasty, for example, the ‘allelegyon’ (*ἀλληλέγγυον*) policy introduced by Basil II (1002) provided so that the wealthy nobles would have to pay for the taxes of the poor. Admittedly this policy has been highly romanticized in retrospective, becoming part and parcel of a narrative that traces the archaeology of the solidarity for the poor and the working class. The contemporary reader should not neglect however that this policy may be better appreciated in the wider context of an Emperor’s strategy of deterring the constant claims and rising power of the wealthy, while enjoying the full support of his army and people.

cept of brotherhood, for example, is syncretized with that of solidarity, connoting freedom from slavery and paid labour, as well as the alliance against the tyrants.<sup>58</sup> Sixty years earlier, one of the maxims of the French Revolution “*liberté, égalité, fraternité*” claimed for freedom and equality for all men in the context of a universal, global brotherhood that knows no limits, political or national. As we well know, however, these ‘universal’ principles came to be eventually substantiated only within the context of the modern nation state and of interstate relations. This historical development till nowadays seems both tragic and farcical: From the brotherhood of humanity to Napoleon’s *code civil*, from the solidarity of the Paris Commune to the maxim “Order and Progress” of the Third French Republic, and from that to Pétain’s “Work, Family, Homeland”; eventually, from the first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the moral norm, the contemporary *spirit* of human behaviour, of humanitarianism, philanthropy and the politics of mercy and compassion, and then to humanitarian intervention and the Responsibility to Protect.<sup>59</sup> Indicative is also the fact that although the Constitution of the United States has included in its provisions the Title of Nobility Clause, it is devoid of any reference to the concept of brotherhood (*fraternité*) or, more understandably, solidarity. In the American Declaration of Independence, similarly, the French slogan is turned into “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”. An explicit reference to *fraternité* may be absent, yet it remains implicit and pertaining to a (male and white) aristocratic elite.<sup>60</sup>

The tragedy and the farce in the conceptual development of solidarity do not merely concern the inability to substantiate its claim to universality beyond the strict confines of the nation state. They primarily relate to a paradoxical political process and a respective political aporia: every time a universal claim is articulated, it always already entails a series of misrepresentations, silences and exclusions. Realizing the unavoidability of this paradox and of this aporia could hardly serve as a source of political pessimism or discouragement from agonistic politics. To the contrary, this realization is the *sine qua non* condition that may allow politics to remain always open and constantly contested.

The conceptual detour of solidarity discussed here suggests that solidarity does not only define the *how* but also the *where* of politics. To whom am I solidary? Which are the limits of the political context, within which we are called to provide

58. See in more detail Steinar Stjernø, *Solidarity in Europe: The History of an Idea*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

59. See, for example, David Campbell, “Why fight? Humanitarianism, principles and post-structuralism”, *Millennium Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 3, 1998, pp. 497-521. See also Tonny Brems Knudsen, *Humanitarian Intervention: Contemporary Manifestation of an Explosive Doctrine*, London: Routledge, 2012.

60. See Sibyl A. Schwarzenbach, “Fraternity, solidarity, and civic friendship”, *AMITY: The Journal of Friendship Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2015, pp. 3-18.

for the fragile balance between equality and freedom, defining eventually the very content of justice? Could we meaningfully talk of the content (the *how*) of solidarity and of the rights we are called to balance within the *locus* of solidarity, yet outside the political context of a community that defines ethically and legally their content and practically substantiates their exercise? Most crucially, is that possible free from the danger of imposing a Western-like reading of these rights, repeating an age-old (neo-)imperialistic tradition, which continues to formulate both the content of Culture and that of Man?

Even if we accept the difficulty and the dangers implicit in the above questions, are we ready to theoretically accept the consequences of equating the concept of the Citizen with that of Man? If the Rights of Man (and of the Woman) could be substantiated only as civil rights, are we ready to accept a smaller or lesser 'human' content to all those subjects devoid or deprived of citizenship (i.e. *sans-papiers*, illegal immigrants)? To what extent could we meaningfully expect the demonstration of a spirit of solidarity in Europe toward both asylum seekers and those economically weak countries that are first called to deal with those flows, when we have already related solidarity with consumer protection; or when we have already limited its scope, its dimensions and its *locus* within the confines of the nation state or those of the 'European way of life'? I do not pose those questions as moral dilemmas. I propose them as starting points for further thought and action. The true impasse is not the one that (we think) we have inherited from the Ancients, but the one delimited by our political imagination. Those limits were not deterministically set by an Aristotelian view of political life (*βίος πολιτικός*), as we normally think, but through a series of axiomatic, ontological assumptions that prevent us not only from recognizing the human beyond the precincts of citizenship, but from accepting that the political (and Europe) should be found somewhere else from where we have traced it so far.

