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Introduction

1. Why solidarity?

It may be questioned why solidarity should be considered as a subject for philosophical investigation. Indeed, the interest of this task is motivated by two considerations at least: firstly, some scholars have observed that the political and rhetorical uses of the term «solidarity» have grown in the last two decades and, even more significantly, seem to cross the ideological discrepancies of traditional political parties. Indeed, although historically the call for solidarity has been most successful and employed in socialist doctrines and policies, its reference can also be traced in conservative or nationalist political agendas or racist campaigns (Blais 2007; Giubboni 2012; Scholz 2015). In other words, a growing number of political actors, which also includes civil rights movements and supranational institutions such as the EU, refers to the idea of solidarity, which nevertheless seems to refer to distinct or even opposing subjects and normative implications; for example, just consider the contrast between the *provincialism* which is characteristic of nationalistic views of solidarity, on the one hand, and the cosmopolitan and by definition *transnational* ideal of solidarity, on the other. The acknowledgement of the multiplicity of linguistic uses of the term «solidarity», however, does not entail that the concept of solidarity is itself *essentially contested*, i.e. of no analytical use. On the contrary, a preliminary survey of the conceptual uses of the notion of solidarity could claim the valuable advantage of providing analytical tools to orient oneself in the political contexts in which the term is employed. Second, the singular fortune of solidarity as a philosophical concept justifies a special interest in a more thorough exploration of its analytical utility. In fact, if it is philologically correct to trace the modern concept of solidarity back to the Jacobin *fraternity* (Stjerno 2004, 26-30; Giubboni 2012, 527-531)¹, and taking into account the breadth of philosophical literature on the ideas of *liberty* and *equality* that complement the revolutionary triad (Carter 2001; Carter, Kramer and Steiner 2007), the difference in fortune and philosophical interest between them cannot fail to arouse some surprise (Munoz-Dardé 1999; Gould and Scholz 2007; Ferrara 2008)². At first glance, one might

¹ Clearly, the relationship of derivation of solidarity from fraternity does not imply a synonymy between the two terms, nor an identification between the corresponding concepts. Wildt (1999) notes that the provisional constitution of the International Working Men's Association, dating from 1864, distinguished universal fraternity, embracing workers all over the world, from the solidarity subsisting between fellow workers fighting for more specific interests and objectives. Nevertheless, some authors seem to use the two terms as synonyms; for example, the function Rawls (1971) assigns to fraternity, namely to inspire the demands of the principle of difference and subjective attitudes corresponding to the concept of civic solidarity, which will be introduced later in the paper. On the relationship between justice and fraternity in Rawls, see Munoz-Dardé (1999) and Laitinen and Pessi (2014, 14-15).

² In this regard, Bayertz (1999, 3) notes that the ambiguity of the notion of solidarity, unlike that of the concepts of freedom and equality, is not attributable to a multiplicity of alternative *theories*. In agreement with this observation, Pensky (2008, 1) qualifies the notion of solidarity as *undertheorized*.

suggest that this gap is motivated, at least in part, by the historical priority of sociology over philosophy in the scientific treatment of the concept of solidarity, which can be traced first and foremost to the sociological studies of Comte and Durkheim. A complementary explanatory track to the first one could refer to the frequent confusion, both linguistic and conceptual, between solidarity and *other* prosocial attitudes, such as altruism and sympathy, which have enjoyed greater consideration by moral philosophers (Singer 2015; Lecaldano 2013). Moreover, even with the remarkable exception of Marxism, it seems difficult to identify a tradition of social, political or moral philosophy that assigns a central role to the notion of solidarity; in this respect, it seems significant that the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* does not include an entry devoted to the concept of solidarity. Indeed, historical studies that have attempted to identify the main traditions on solidarity refer mainly to social theory, nationalism and Catholic social teaching, but rarely to philosophical traditions (Stjerno 2004).

2. An evocative word and a fuzzy concept: some historical preliminary remarks

The first occurrences of term “solidarity” are strictly modern and has their roots in the Roman law of obligations (Bayertz 1999, 3; Pensky 2008, 6). The legal-financial institution known as *obligatio in solidum*, that the Napoleonic code accepted it in 1804, encapsulates the status of joint liability of the cosignatories of a loan, that is, that each signatory declares himself to be liable for the debts of the whole group. This legal sense, or prefiguration of solidarity anticipates some aspects of the concept, as the mutual disposition to share one another’s fate. However, as Sangiovanni (2013) remarks, the switch from this technical legal use to a genuinely *social* use took place only half century later, with the pioneers of classic social theory, e. g., Fourier, Leroux, Comte, and Durkheim. Being more specific still, these authors saw in the concept of solidarity a possible solution to the problem of social order under the pressure of modern capitalism, urbanization and industrialization, that had disruptive effects upon local communities and family ties. Thus, the attractiveness of solidarity primarily consisted in its capacity to ensure social unity and fellow feeling among strangers – how and to what extent this capacity was to be performed was a more controversial matter.

It is no wonder, then, that from the real beginning of his conceptual history solidarity received a distinctively *sociological imprinting*, since it was invoked and framed to solve a sociological problem. Although it is historically uncertain when solidarity first appeared on the philosophical arena, because most classic social theorists were philosophers by training, there is a remarkable prior event to be incidentally mentioned. In fact, as Wildt (1999, 211) reports, whereas the term did not appear on Hegel’s writings, it actually does in a recently discovered transcription of his 1819-20 lectures on the

philosophy of law: in this context, «solidarisch» («solidaristic») is taken to be a feature of corporations. Significantly, the term is also employed in a Hegel's biography written by Karl Rosenkranz in 1844. As Zoll (2003, 21) remarks, this fact is quite surprising, for the term became popular only some decades later in Germany, where in Revolutions of 1848 the term «fraternity» was still largely used instead – and it seems reasonable to presume that the term «solidarity» was not yet common at that point.

Over the last century, philosophical discussion of solidarity did not entrench, at the very least, until the Nineties, when Habermas (1990) proposed the understanding of solidarity as the reverse side of justice. Whereas the latter pertains «the equal freedoms of unique and self-determining individuals», the former aims at «the concerns the welfare of consociates who are intimately linked in an intersubjectively shared form of life» (Habermas 1990, 244). In fact, Habermas argues that, insofar as we maintain that the agent that morality aims to protect is individuated through socialization, her personal integrity cannot be preserved «without the integrity of the lifeworld that makes possible their shared interpersonal relationships and relations of mutual recognition» (Habermas 1990, 243). Habermas did not elaborate on this claim systematically and, in his latest writings, he even abandoned it (Habermas 2015 [2013] 157, note 29; Habermas 2017 [2012]). However, many commentators proposed some readings and arguments to shed light on Habermas' claim on the complementarity of justice and solidarity (Rehg 1994; Honneth 1995; Pensky 2008). It might be said not accidental that it was a philosopher with a strong sociological equipment as Habermas to make solidarity familiar to the philosophical arena.

Since the *end* of the 1990s, an important volume on philosophical contributions on solidarity, edited by Kurt Bayertz, appeared in 1999 and prepared the terrain for a more systematic development of the debate. In the later years, some valuable contributions began to be published by political philosophers (Scholz 2008; Sangiovanni 2013, 2015; Koters 2016; Kymlicka and Banting 2017)³. Broadly put, the overall goal that most of them pursue is to reframe the concept of solidarity in a way that is *safe for liberalism*, so that solidarity can go hand to hand with typically liberal commitments – e.g. equal respect, and the separateness of persons. In fact, as Capaldi (1999) emphasizes, the concept of solidarity is commonly assumed to be read in a «communitarian» sense; although so called communitarian thinkers were more used to employ the term «community» rather than «solidarity», Capaldi claims that this line of political thought understood solidarity as having a *negative content* in terms of opposition to the liberal idea of person. In a similar vein, Portinaro (2002, XXXIX)

³ It is at least worth mentioning another philosophical field where solidarity have been recently imported, that is, bioethics, especially as a response to the influential paper from Ter Meulen (2015).

underlines that political liberalism, being based on the idea of individual autonomy, beware of the demands which stem from groups and communities.

Political philosophers tend to privilege oppression or iniquity as the adversity determinants which may justify political solidarity with others (Scholz 2008, Kokers 2016), thus taking the latter as intrinsically directed against a political enemy (Mouffe 2013, Michels 1914) –; on this reading, solidarity has been recently termed «fighting solidarity» accordingly (Laitinen & Pessi 2014, 10). This genuinely political understanding of solidarity is clearly summarized by Scholz:

Political solidarity arises in opposition to something; it is a movement for social change that may occur at many levels of social existence. The opposition that gives birth to political solidarity is an opposition to something that is human in origin. Natural disasters may inspire strong sentiments and even bonds of connection, but they do not inspire *political* solidarity. Political solidarity as I present it has a social justice content or aim; it opposes injustice, oppression, tyranny, and social vulnerabilities (Scholz 2008, 54).

Political solidarity is not the only kind of solidarity to be represented and discussed in the philosophical literature. In fact, it is quite common to be presented a distinction between social or group solidarity, civic solidarity, political solidarity, cosmopolitan solidarity, moral or human solidarity, and more (Habermas 2000; Bayertz 1999; Scholz 2008; Kokers 2014; Kymlicka & Banting 2017). However appropriate might be to operationalize solidarity for specific research purposes, I find this taxonomic differentiation as potentially confusing, especially because it is applied to a concept which is regarded as fuzzy per se. I think that a valuable contribution that a philosophical inquiry on solidarity could offer is to provide conceptual clarification on solidarity, and to shed light on its core structure behind its multiple and various empirical occurrences.

3. An outline of the thesis

Notwithstanding the increasing interest that solidarity recently attracted in social, political and philosophy, the foundations of a philosophical research field on solidarity have still to be laid. This thesis pursues the broad aim to contribute in this foundational work, and is organized and structured accordingly. The substantive goal of the whole research project that unfolds henceforth is to reach a definition of the concept of solidarity, which is not intended to overcome or dismiss our everyday intuitions and commonsensical understandings of solidarity, but rather to *make sense* of what is underpinned by them. In this respect, the approach I will avail of is only *weakly prescriptive* in relation to commonsense, and *straightforwardly descriptive* in terms of the proposed definition of solidarity. In other words, I am committed to a conceptual unpacking of solidarity, that is, to

understand what solidarity is; the justificatory problem (Kolers 2014, 7), that is, under which circumstances may solidarity be morally obligatory, permissible or forbidden, will be not considered. In fact, a philosophical account of solidarity should not only leave room for, but also make sense of cases of «dark solidarity», that is, solidarity for evil. Taking these cases seriously is intended to challenge a widespread presumption in favour of the alleged intrinsic moral value of solidarity, which is likely to underpin several wholehearted appeals and warnings that solidarity is in decline, paying remarkably little attention to the cases where solidarity might be directed toward morally controversial or even deplorable goals. Accordingly, more than two decades ago, Wildt expressed his protest «against the habit of labelling *everything that is good*, especially in ethics, with the worn trademark term “solidarity”» (Wildt 1999, 219; my emphasis). In the literature on solidarity, the claim that a rigorous definition of the concept must stick to a *descriptive* purpose and cover also dark solidarities is not underrepresented (Wildt 1999; Kolers 2016; Zhao 2019, Meacham & Tava 2021), and my attempt will be led accordingly.

The dissertation is divided in four chapters, that I will shortly present in what follows.

In Chapter 1, I will take the steps from Durkheim, who is by broad acknowledgement regarded as the pioneering theorist developing a systematic account of solidarity. Admittedly, this choice is not original for sure, but is motivated by both historical and conceptual reasons that will be argued in the chapter itself; moreover, and more importantly, I claim that the potentially original contribution of Chapter 1 is a conclusive focus on some questions that can be formulated out of Durkheim's framework and have been quite neglected by the commentators. One of such open questions, that is, the extent to which anthropological assumptions on human nature – and especially sociability – may influence any theorization of solidarity, will underly the whole development of the thesis.

Chapter 2 aims at shedding light on this intuition, which is elaborated in terms of an updated nomological reappraisal of human nature and a genuinely original concept that I propose, that is, the «anthropological load». By this concept, I mean a scalar property of social, ethical, and political concepts which indicates the extent to which the conceptual space for theorizing each of them is determined by anthropological assumptions. Following Durkheim's suggestion, I consider sociability as the most salient anthropological assumption for theorizing solidarity. Accordingly, at the end of Chapter 2 I present a possible strategy to frame the structure of the concept of sociability, that is, that of a dispositional and open cluster concept.

Chapter 3 is intended to unpack some core features that compose the cluster of sociability, that is, capacity of self-categorization, capacity of empathy, and capacity of being moved by prosocial motivation. For each of these features, it is proposed to adopt a definition borrowed from the pertinent scientific literature which will be selectively presented and discussed.

To conclude with, Chapter 4 takes the final and crucial step of the whole research project, that is, the definition of solidarity. The structure of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, I still present seven cases that are, at least intuitively, solidarity-evoking. In so doing, a phenomenological catalogue of solidarity will be provided, wide enough to give a flavour of the pervasiveness of the phenomenon; the remainder of the chapter will be devoted to the question whether all of these cases can be covered by a concept of solidarity, to be defined. The subsequent endeavour of defining solidarity, to be attempted in the second section, shall stick to the methodological guidance offered by Chapter 2. Thus, the definition of solidarity will be developed accordingly, that is, based on the sociability-related properties unpacked in Chapter 3. The third and conclusive paragraph of this chapter is intended to summarize in a table the way that the proposed definition captures the sample of examples.

Chapter 1. A glance at the classics: Durkheim's pioneering account of solidarity

There are both historical and conceptual reasons to begin research on solidarity with a reappraisal of Durkheim's framework. The *historical reason* is that Durkheim's account of solidarity, as it is outlined in *The Division of Social Labor* (1893, 1902), has been the most influent and discussed one up till now, to the point that it has been even considered as the sociology's first classic (Tiryakian 1994, 3). Being more emphatic still, one might even claim that anyone who aims at developing an account of solidarity should deal with Durkheim's views on it.

In addition, I hold three *conceptual reasons* to focus on Durkheim's framework.

Firstly, Durkheim tackled a number of questions, such as the relationship between individuals and their collective, that prefigure the agenda of current so-called social philosophy; as Ferrara (2002) has claimed, after all, Durkheim is retrospectively part of social philosophy's canon – although Durkheim himself took pains to make sociology epistemologically independent of philosophical premises.

Secondly, unlike previous social theorists such as Leroux – who claimed to be the first to introduce the concept of solidarity in philosophy –, Comte, and Spencer, Durkheim provided an accurate methodology to detect solidarity, that is, exploring the prevalence of criminal or civil law in a given society. It is due to this methodological distinctiveness that Durkheim refused to consider his eminent predecessors as worth of the qualification of sociologists. In this respect, then, Durkheim developed an epistemology of solidarity, namely a theory on the empirical conditions that make solidarity observable.

Thirdly, and more importantly, reading Durkheim's works one gets the striking impression that, quite paradoxically, he engaged to a large discussion on solidarity – about its causes and functioning - but never provided a definition of its concept per se. As I shall show in what follows, these two latter points – Durkheim's methodology and its abstention from providing any definition of solidarity – are conceptually linked.

Moreover, I hold two *systematic reasons* –namely, reasons that are strictly related to the organization of the dissertation as a whole – to start my research with a reappraisal of Durkheim's views on solidarity. I only report them here, but I assume that their content and pertinence will get clearer as the discussion of the related chapters will go in detail.

The first systematic reason is that, although Durkheim never provided a formal definition of solidarity, one may track down and reconstruct his views on other related concepts, such as altruism, empathy, and social cohesion among others. Developing these definitions, and highlighting what Durkheim believed to distinguish them from solidarity, might heuristically lead us to a provisional

and negative definition of solidarity. This track is particularly useful to prepare the discussion that will be led in the chapter on a conceptual analysis of solidarity.

Secondly, the aim of this chapter is to bring to light the influence of Durkheim's account of human nature on his views on solidarity, to prepare the terrain for an argument that will be extensively developed Chapter 2.

This chapter does not aim at providing an exhaustive discussion of Durkheim's works; on the contrary, highly selectively, it will be mostly focused on *The Division of Social Labour* (henceforth, *DSL*), *The Rules of the Sociological Method* (henceforth, *RSM*), and *Sociology and Philosophy* (henceforth, *SP*). Several other important Durkheimian works – as *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (henceforth, *EFRL*) will be mentioned only in passing or not at all, as well as many crucial interpretative questions about Durkheim's overall research – as the controversy on its continuity or discontinuity⁴ – will be overlooked. More cautiously, the goal of this chapter is to reconstruct and discuss Durkheim's view on solidarity as it is outlined in *DSL*.

This chapter is divided into three paragraphs; the first is devoted to Durkheim's practical concerns and reasons for the emancipation of sociology from philosophy. In the second one, corresponding to the second conceptual reason to deal with Durkheim, I shall focus on the account of solidarity that emerges from *DSL*, that I claim to be an epistemological theory of solidarity. In the third and final paragraph, corresponding to the third conceptual reason, I shall assess the grounds out of which Durkheim rejected the very idea of a conceptual analysis of solidarity per se.

⁴ For a reconstruction of this debate, see Rawls (1996) and Hawkins (1979).

1. The project of a science of social facts

In this paragraph, I shall provide an outline of Durkheim's intellectual life and methodological framework. In the first subparagraph (2.1.), I will provide an overview of Durkheim's historical context and practical concerns. In the second one (2.2.), I will discuss Durkheim's views on the limits of philosophy and the need for a rigorous method to understand social reality.

1.1 Durkheim: context and practical concerns

In approaching Durkheim's research, one should first and foremost consider some historical and biographical circumstances that can account for his overall practical concerns.

One of the persistent preoccupations along Durkheim's life (1858-1917) was undoubtedly the precariousness of the social order in modern societies and, being more specific still, in the France of his time⁵. To begin with the former topic, Durkheim was undoubtedly neither the only nor the first of his contemporaries to tackle the question of social order in modern societies, that was very current due to reasons that fell far beyond the specificity of French affairs. Many philosophers and early social theorists, in fact, concerned with the problem of social order under *modern* and *differentiated* kinds of societies. Stjerno suggests that this preoccupation with social order was triggered by the social impact of the development of capitalism in Western Europe in the nineteenth century⁶. There is no doubt that, as Stjerno states, «modern capitalism had disruptive effects upon local communities and family ties» (Stjerno 2004, 30). However, identifying the distinctiveness of modern societies with the spread of early capitalism would be tantamount to neglect the *multidimensional* character of the former, of which the latter is only a part. In fact, as Martinelli (2005, 10-11) points out, the modernization process involves several domains, that range from the aforementioned progressive

⁵ The empirical correlation between the experience of social conflict and warfare, on the one hand, and the practical concern for grounds of social order, on the other hand, is quite evident at the light of many cases in the history of moral and political philosophy. I take this to be the analogy between the historical contexts that gave rise to early modern moral philosophy, on the one hand, and classic social theory, on the other hand. Grotius, that grounded natural law in secular and rationalist foundations, was concerned with the destabilizing consequences of the Protestant Reformation on the international relations, the stability of which could no longer be granted by religious homogeneity; in this respect, religious wars in the sixteenth century were symptomatic of the break of the international moral order. As Schneewind (1998, 71) puts it, Grotius' preoccupation was that «if the nations in a dispute are as widely divided on the particulars of religion as the Protestant Dutch and the Catholic Portuguese and Spanish, then no appeal to the Bible or to specific Christian doctrines will help. Each side interprets the Bible in its own way, and each has its own understanding of the details of Christian doctrine. [...] The impossibility of finding a criterion to settle such disputes was one of the sources of the strength of Pyrrhonic skepticism in the seventeenth century. An overtly atheistic morality could not possibly have the standing to serve in settling a public issue, but neither Calvin nor the Thomists could provide the kind of doctrine Grotius needed». An analogous and eminent example of this correlation is Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), who lived through the bloody English civil war; like Grotius, he wrote about war and peace, although his concern was civil rather than international strife (Schneewind 1998, 83).

⁶ «This preoccupation [of early social theorists as Fourier, Leroux and Comte] with social order must be understood in light of the development of capitalism in Western Europe in the nineteenth century» (Stjerno 2004, 30).

formation of a global capitalist market to the structural differentiation through the division of labour, from the development of science and technology to the establishment of post-traditional values as individualism and rationalism⁷.

However, although the concern for social order raised by the impact of the modernization process was not an exclusively French matter – since «the need for a stable order, for harmony and social integration, was felt everywhere» (Stjerno 2004, 39) –, as a matter of fact most of the champions of classic social theory were French indeed⁸. In this respect, Stjerno suggests that within the French tradition of social theory there is a distinctive and perceivable «element of nostalgia, a tendency to look back at the past and to idealise conditions existing before the revolution of 1789, to a society that had all but disappeared» (Stjerno 2004, 41).

As Poggi (2003, 11) points out, the specificity of the French political and cultural conflict at Durkheim's time was traceable back to two tragic events: firstly, the Second Empire's defeat in the Franco-Prussian war (1870-1), that occurred during his childhood and contributed to «a strong (though in no way militant) patriotism [...] and a consequent desire to contribute to the regeneration of France - sentiments that were, in different forms, prevalent among intellectuals of his generation» (Lukes 1971, 41); secondly, the conflictual and bloody experience of the Paris Commune (1871). These misfortunes, Poggi continues, were commonly interpreted as the outcome of the French public debate's divide on the value of the French Revolution – that, to be sure, was largely debated also beyond the French boundaries. Moreover, a third and further disruptive factor for Durkheim was undoubtedly the increasing anti-Semitism tendency in France (Stjerno 2004, 30), that he, who was Jew, witnessed in his youth (Lukes 1971, 41), and culminated in the Dreyfus Affair; significantly, the latter is one of the few politic matters about which Durkheim took a public stand in 1898 with his famous reply *L'Individualisme et les intellectuels*, that appeared in *Revue Blue* (Pickering 2002).

⁷ More extensively, Martinelli (2005, 10-11) lists thirteen features that single out the modernization process, as the sociological debate led over the 1950s and the 1960s – that held Durkheim's functionalist framework as part of its intellectual grounding – fashioned it: «1. The development of science and technology [...] 2. Industrialization [...] 3. The progressive forming of a global capitalist market and the intensification of economic interdependence between different nation-states and between the various regions of the world. 4. Structural differentiation and functional specialization in different spheres of social life [...] 5. The transformation of the class system and the increase in social mobility [...] 6. Political development, meaning both the establishment of secular nation-states [...], as well as the rise in the political mobilization of movements, parties and representative associations that fight to defend their interests and establish collective identities. 7. Secularization, seen as 'the disenchantment of the world', the emancipation of civil society and scientific knowledge from religious control, and the privatization of faith. 8. The establishment of values typical of modernity, in particular, individualism, rationalism, and utilitarianism. 9. Demographic disturbances that uproot millions of people from their ancestral habitat [...] 10. The privatization of family life, its insulation from the social control of the community and the separation of the workplace from the home, and the liberation of women from patriarchal authority. 11. The democratization of education and the development of mass culture and mass consumption. 12. The development of the means of material and symbolic communication that embrace and unite the most disparate peoples and societies. 13. The compression of time and space and their organization according to the demands of industrial production and the world market».

⁸ The non-French minority in classic social theory is mainly German, and its most prominent proponents are Max Weber and Georg Simmel.

Against this background, it is easier to understand Durkheim's practical concern for the conditions of social order. To recall a previous statement, though, he did not start his research from scratch. In fact, Durkheim studied history and philosophy at the *École Normale Supérieure*, where he graduated in 1882 and became acquainted with several intellectuals from his generation, such as Henri Bergson – who did not hold him in high regard⁹. This philosophically-laden educational background, together with the circumstance that sociology was still far from gaining institutional and academic autonomy, enables us to make sense of the overall philosophical character of Durkheim's intellectual pantheon. As I shall show in the next subparagraph, though, Durkheim's leading *theoretical* concern is to move a step forward his philosophical forerunners.

1.2 Unpacking social facts: the limits of philosophy and the sociological method

To be sure, part of the reasons that led Durkheim to seek a distinctively sociological method is traceable back to his dissatisfaction with non-sociological approaches to sociological problems. From the very beginning of his research, Durkheim had been committed to the purpose of drawing sharp and clear discrimination between social sciences and other kinds of discourses on society. This epistemological intent is developed in *RSM* (1895), that is Durkheim's methodological groundwork; in this chapter, I shall mainly refer to this text as for Durkheim's views on the epistemological distinctiveness of social sciences, although this topic is tackled in several of later Durkheim's works. Although Durkheim frequently displayed prudence and diffidence toward the label of positivism, there is no doubt that he conveyed the influence of positivism – in particular, of its French tradition¹⁰ (Poggi 2003, 29; Lukes 1971, 70; 140). Being more specific still, Durkheim considered Saint-Simon as the founder of positivism and sociology, and Comte as the systematizer of his framework. However, he advocated an original account of positivism and sociology and presented his position as a kind of scientific rationalism – after all, the title *RSM* recall quite explicitly Descartes' *Discourse on Method*. In short, Durkheim's rationalism relies on the assumption that the human behavior «is capable of being reduced to relationships of cause and effect, which, by an operation no less rational, can then be transformed into rules of action for the future. What has been termed our positivism is merely a consequence of this rationalism» (*RSM*, 4). However, as Poggi (2003, 30) suggests, if by “positivism” we mean a project that endorses the application of natural sciences' methodology to the social domain, then we are not only enabled to label Durkheim as a positivist, but even to qualify

⁹ Recalling – and still confirming – his first impression about Durkheim, Bergson reported that «I have always thought that he would be an abstraction-monger. I was not so mistaken. With him, one never encountered a fact. When we told him that the facts were in contradiction with his theories, he would reply: “The facts are wrong”» (Chevalier 1959, 34).

¹⁰ Positivism formed in France in the first half of the Nineteenth century, before spreading across other western European countries in the second half of the century – as it is the case of English positivism, fostered by Mill and Spencer.

RSM as a positivist manifesto. To go more in detail with Durkheim's positivist commitment, Montuschi (2006, 25-6) presents him as a supporter of the assimilation of social sciences to natural sciences, that entails both a paradigmatic claim and an analogical claim. The former states that any discipline that aims at objective knowledge, as social sciences do, must *accept* the method of natural sciences: in this respect, Durkheim (*RSM*, 146, emphasis added) stated that «the term 'sociology' sums up and implies a whole new set of ideas, namely that social facts are interdependent and above all must be *treated as natural phenomena*, subject to necessary laws». On the other hand, the analogical claim states that in order for such methodological mimicry to be successful, the social scientist must *adapt* the method of natural sciences to the specificities of distinctively social facts. In this respect, Durkheim claimed that between social facts and natural facts there are both an isomorphism – as both of them are external and capable of coercion over individuals – and a difference: «what is exclusively peculiar to social constraint is that it stems not from the unyieldingness of certain patterns of molecules, but from the prestige with which certain representations are endowed» (*RSM*, 14)¹¹.

The reason why Durkheim was unsatisfied with Comte's metaphysical positivism was that it embedded a dogmatic commitment to the deterministic character of the Law of Three Stages. This theory describes «the progressive course of the human mind» (Comte 1853, 27) as articulated through three subsequent theoretical conditions, namely, «the Theological, or fictitious; the Metaphysical, or abstract; and the Scientific, or positive». Each age or condition is related to a specific kind of explanation, and the sequence from the first to the third – passing through the second, that is a mere state of transition – is determined with the force of «the *Law of human development*» (Comte 1853, 31, emphasis added). Although Comte held the Law of Three Stages to be supported by historical evidence¹², Durkheim identifies the hallmark of its dogmatic character in its ultimate purpose to culminate in a secular religion.

More importantly, the crucial point that Durkheim made his philosophical predecessors was pointed to Spencer above all¹³, and was methodological in nature; in fact, Durkheim thought that all putative sociological works that appeared until then were not worthy of this status, and were rather classifiable, pejoratively, as philosophical. The reason of Durkheim's dissatisfaction with philosophical accounts

¹¹ This twofold comparison between society and nature is so put by Lukes (1971, 79): «If the first step towards the foundation of a positive science of sociology was to see society as similar to the rest of nature in being subject to laws, the second step was to see it as distinct: to regard social phenomena as real, causally operative forces».

¹² «From the study of the development of human intelligence, in all directions, and through all times, the discovery arises of a great fundamental law, to which it is necessarily subject, find which has a solid foundation of proof, both in the acts of our organization and in our historical experience» (Comte 1853, 27).

¹³ At the beginning of the *Introduction* to *RSM* (18), Durkheim deplores that «in the whole of Spencer's work the methodological problem has no place». Significantly, however, he acknowledged that a chapter of Comte's *Course of the Philosophie Positive* «is the only original and important study which we possess on the subject».

of social phenomena, as law or marriage, was that they consisted in conceptual analysis, the starting point of which was an arbitrary generalization of commonsensical intuitions on their nature. Therefore, the unscientific character of the philosophical approach depended on its being not committed neither to any methodological discipline nor to the task of explaining empirical facts. Poggi (2003, 33) reports that when Durkheim had been asked why he abandoned philosophy even if he had had a philosophical education, he caustically replied that philosophers are allowed to say anything they think. This statement, as I shall argue, is not to be interpreted as the aim to get rid of philosophy; on the contrary, Durkheim took part in philosophical conferences his whole life and fostered an interdisciplinary cooperation between philosophy and sociology: as he puts it, «as [sociology] becomes more specialized, [it] will provide additional original matter for philosophical reflection» (*RSM*, 112)¹⁴. His preoccupation was related to the circumstance that «at the time, in France and in other parts of Europe, sociology was cultivated by intellectuals and scholars, but was not accepted as an academic discipline» (Poggi 2006, 151). Thus, Durkheim's attacks on philosophy should be traced back to his effort to emancipate sociology from philosophy, as the former needs a distinctive and rigorous method. As Durkheim puts it, when we approach social phenomena as philosophers would do,

instead of observing, describing and comparing things, we are content to reflect upon our ideas, analyzing and combining them. Instead of a science which deals with realities, we carry out no more than an ideological analysis. Certainly this analysis does not rule out all observation. We can appeal to the facts to corroborate these notions or the conclusions drawn from them. But then the facts intervene only secondarily, as examples or confirmatory proof. Thus they are not the subject matter of the science, which therefore proceeds from ideas to things, and not from things to ideas (*RSM*, 29).

The paradigmatic case of the arbitrariness and inaccuracy of the philosophical method is that of moralists who,

wishing to decide upon the moral worth of a precept, start by laying down a general formula for morality, and then measure the disputed maxim up against it. Nowadays we know how little value may be attached to such summary generalizations. Set out at the beginning of a study, before any observation of the facts, their purpose is not to account for them, but to enunciate the abstract principle for an ideal legislative code to be created out of nothing. Thus these generalizations do not summarize for us the essential characteristics which moral rules really represent in a particular society or in a determinate social type. They merely express the manner in which the moralist himself conceives morality (*DSL*, 36)

¹⁴ A similar statement is made in the preface of the first edition of *DLS*, where Durkheim argues that sociology «is not opposed to any kind of philosophy, because it takes its stand on very different ground. It may be that morality has some transcendental finality that experience cannot attain. This is a matter with which the metaphysician must deal» (*DLS*, 3).

The reason why I take this passage to be paradigmatic is that morality is the object of a wide part of Durkheim's sociological project – namely, the sociology of morality¹⁵. On the one hand, Durkheim took advantage of its philosophical education drawing both on the Kantian and the Aristotelian traditions when it comes to determining the nature of morality (*SP*, 16) that he described as both obligatory and desirable; on the other hand, he departed from them out of epistemological claim that one can assess a moral reality if and only if she has previously achieved an accurate description of it – and that such cognition requires a specific method. As Lukes (1971, 339) puts it, Durkheim «saw sociology, or the science of ethics, as going beyond the philosophical ethics of the past, by treating moral beliefs and practices as social facts». Although Durkheim claimed that the moral domain has its own specificity within the social realm¹⁶, it does not follow that he did not consider moral facts as a kind of social facts.

Thus, it is necessary to precise what Durkheim meant by the notion of social fact. This subject is tackled in *RSM*, where social facts are defined as follows:

A social fact is any way of acting, whether fixed or not, capable of exerting over the individual an external constraint; or: which is general over the whole of a given society whilst having an existence of its own, independent of its individual manifestations (*RSM*, 27).

These definitions encapsulate three features that single out the specificity of social facts, namely externality or objectivity, normativity or constraint, and «generality-plus-independence» (Lukes 1971, 11).

As for their externality to individual consciences, Durkheim argued that social facts «must be treated as things» (*RSM*, 7), that is, as entities that are opposed to subjective representations. Just as moralist wrongfully rely on generalizations of subjective representations of moral maxims, so philosophers fail in determining social facts by speculation and conceptual analysis, the starting point of which, once again, are subjective representations – or the «individual incarnations» (*RSM*, 23) – of social facts. To gain objective knowledge of social facts, an utterly different approach is needed:

[a social fact] is all that which the mind cannot understand without going outside itself, proceeding progressively by way of observation and experimentation from those features which are the most external and the most immediately accessible to those which are the least visible and the most profound. To treat facts of a certain order as things is therefore not to place them in this or that category of reality; it is to observe towards them a certain attitude of mind (*RSM*, 7).

¹⁵ Durkheim's whole project, to put it broadly, encompassed at least a sociology of morality, a sociology of knowledge, and a sociology of religion (Lukes 1971). In this chapter, I shall mainly refer to the first specialization field.

¹⁶ «The *sui generis* character which I see in moral phenomena does not allow us to make deductions regarding it from other phenomena. Moral facts are related to other social facts, and it is not a question of abstracting them, but they form, in the society, a distinct sphere» (*SP*, 37).

In other terms, as Poggi (2003, 41) puts it, whereas philosophers start their inquiry on social phenomena with a commonsensical or conceptual definition, the sociologist must determine it by means of empirical evidence. To put it in Hegelian terms, social facts are constituents of the objective spirit, as their content is culturally variable and is observable in laws, customs and shared morality. Moreover, social facts provide the terrain for the flourishing of moral life and education. As Habermas points out, Durkheim held to the view that «the *basic moral phenomenon* is the binding force of norms, which can be violated by acting subjects» (Habermas 1981, 164; emphasis added). Social facts present themselves as *pre-existing* given things to any *actual* individual¹⁷; this givenness is confirmed by the fact that our very first experience of the reality of social facts is provided by means of education, that ensures a cultural continuity among generations¹⁸. In this respect, I suggest that Durkheim makes an anti-Vichian statement, in that, against the *verum factum* principle¹⁹, he argues that, as a matter of fact, most of the social facts that any individual may experience have been already handed down by previous generations; in addition, and more importantly, even if we had contributed to the realization of certain social facts, little could we say about their nature and the reasons that drove us to realize them, inasmuch as we cannot rely on the motives out of which we take ourselves to have acted²⁰. This epistemic mistrust in the psychological self-knowledge does not have anything to do with Freud's works, that very likely Durkheim did not know (Lukes 1971, 433); more plausibly, Durkheim might have been influenced by Kantian moral psychology, that he certainly knew (Lukes 1971, 54; *SP*, 16 ss.; *DSL*, 316; *RSM*, 182). However, there is no doubt that Durkheim did not mean any ban to the scientific value of psychology, insofar as its aim «is to study mental facts from the outside, namely as things» (*RLS*, 8). Rather, from the epistemic mistrust in psychological self-knowledge does follow the need for external signs that make social facts perceivable (*RLS*, 9).

To describe the externality of social facts more systematically, Lukes (1971, 10) suggests that they can be arranged along a spectrum, on the one end of which we have «anatomical or morphological

¹⁷ «The system of signs that I employ to express my thoughts, the monetary system I use to pay my debts, the credit instruments I utilize in my commercial relationships, the practices I follow in my profession, etc., all function independently of the use I make of them» (*RSM*, 20).

¹⁸ «We accept and adopt [beliefs and practices fashioned and transmitted by previous generations] because, since they are the work of the collectivity and one that is centuries old, they are invested with a special authority that our education has taught us to recognize and respect. It is worthy of note that the vast majority of social phenomena come to us in this way» (*RSM*, 25).

¹⁹ The *verum factum* principle was first introduced by Vico in *De Antiquissima* and later recalled in *Scienza Nuova*. Against Cartesian epistemology, Vico argues that «full knowledge of any thing involves discovering *how* it came to be what it is as a product of human action» (Costelloe 2018).

²⁰ «It will be objected that, since [social facts] have been wrought by us, we have only to become conscious of ourselves to know what we have put into them and how we shaped them. Firstly, however, most social institutions have been handed down to us already fashioned by previous generations; we have had no part in their shaping; consequently, it is not by searching within ourselves that we can uncover the causes which have given rise to them. Furthermore, even if we have played a part in producing them, we can hardly glimpse, save in the most confused and often even the most imprecise way, the real reasons which have impelled us to act, or the nature of our action. Already, even regarding merely the steps, we have taken personally, we know very inaccurately the relatively simple motives that govern us» (*RLS*, 8).

social phenomena», such as population density and social cohesion among social units; then, in the middle of the spectrum, there are established social norms, that may be more or less formal – from social moral rules to positivized legal norms. Finally, on the opposite end of the continuum, we have what Durkheim called “social currents”, namely «relatively stable ‘currents of opinion’ or, at the extreme, ‘transitory outbreaks’ such as occur when ‘in an assembly of people, great movements of enthusiasm, of indignation or of pity are generated’» (Lukes 1971, 11).

The externality of social facts enables us to account for their normative power, that results from their being imposed by a super-individual moral authority. It is precisely in virtue of this super-individual moral authority, as Gilbert (1994) suggests, that individuals take themselves to be enabled to blame or punish non-fulfilment of expectations that stem from social facts. In other words, social facts have coercive power inasmuch as «they are *capable of* exerting an external constraint over the individual. [...] Certain ways of acting have a special status such that when I deviate from them other people will *take themselves to be justified* in reacting against me» (Gilbert 1994, 89). As for the kind of constraint that social facts can embed, Lukes (1971, 12) identifies five kinds of normativity that it can assume: 1) the *fear of sanctions* associated to the violation of established norms; 2) the *instrumental rationality* of the action required by established norms (e. g. in order for people to be able to communicate, they must speak a shared language); 3) the *ecological causal influence* that infrastructures and channels of communication have on economic life and migration; 4) the *psychological pressure* forced by social currents and collective emotions in gatherings and crowded contexts²¹; 5) the *cultural determination* of certain beliefs and habits, that are transmitted by various educational agencies.

Last, but not least, social facts are characterized by a third feature, that results from a combination of generality and independence of individual behaviour. Durkheim considered as general those factors that «are specific to particular societies, that is are neither strictly personal features of individuals nor universal attributes of human nature» (Lukes 1971, 14). But generality, fashioned in these terms, fails in distinguishing social facts by their «individual incarnations» (RSM, 23), that is, their internalization at the individual level. To fulfil this conceptual task, a further element needs to be added, namely general forms' independence of individual behavior. The circumstance that all the actual individuals in a group know the content of a popular saying is not enough to qualify the latter as a social fact – unless at the price of confusing the social fact with the sum of its individual refractions. The point with social facts is that not only they are general or spread *among* individuals, but rather that they are

²¹ «Thus in a public gathering the great waves of enthusiasm, indignation, and pity that are produced have their seat in no one individual consciousness. They come to each one of us from outside and can sweep us along in spite of ourselves. If perhaps I abandon myself to them I may not be conscious of the pressure that they are exerting upon me, but that pressure makes its presence felt immediately I attempt to struggle against them. If an individual tries to pit himself against one of these collective manifestations, the sentiments that he is rejecting will be turned against him» (RSM, 22).

general *because* of their being imposed *upon* individuals. Durkheim sets out this distinction in terms of the dichotomy of generality and collectiveness:

it may be objected that a phenomenon can only be collective if it is common to all the members of society, or at the very least to a majority, and consequently if it is general. This is doubtless the case, but if it is general it is because it is collective (that is, more or less obligatory); but it is very far from being collective because it is general. It is a condition of the group repeated in individuals because it imposes itself upon them. It is in each part because it is in the whole, but far from being in the whole because it is in the parts (*RSM*, 24-5).

In other words, the collectiveness of a way of thinking and acting is a sufficient condition of its generality, but not vice versa; moreover, Durkheim argued that collectiveness is also a necessary condition of generality: «if a mode of behavior existing outside the consciousnesses of individuals becomes general, it can *only* do so by exerting pressure upon them [as collective social phenomena do]» (*RSM*, 25; emphasis added)²². The point of importance for Durkheim here is that, whereas generality ultimately results in an *aggregative* sum of uniform individual behaviors, collectiveness entails a *qualitative* distinction between the group level and the individual. To be sure, this is not tantamount to postulate the existence of a super-subject or group-mind, though Durkheim quite often used ambiguous terms leaving this interpretation open – as when he describes social facts as expressing «a certain state of the *collective soul*» (*RSM*, 24; emphasis added). More cautiously, as Gilbert (1994, 91) puts it, Durkheim's account of social facts is «the conception of a *way of acting whose substrate is a social group*. Alternatively – and equivalently – it is a way of acting which *inheres in* a social group».

2. The division of social labour: an epistemology of solidarity

The aim of this paragraph is to account for the *epistemological* theory of solidarity that Durkheim outlined in *DSL*. In the first subparagraph (3.1), I will reconstruct the leading topics and aims pursued in this work. In the second one (3.2), I shall focus on the account of solidarity that it embeds.

²² It is far from being clear what Durkheim meant claiming that «none of these [collective] modes of acting and thinking are to be found wholly in the application made of them by individuals, since they can even exist *without being applied* at the time» (*RSM*, 24; emphasis added). This statement seems to suggest that the collectiveness of a custom or popular opinion can be given even in absence of its generality; in other words, this passage likely endorses the highly controversial view that generality is not a necessary condition of collectiveness.

2.1 The problem: making sense of social differentiation

The main question around which *DSL* revolves concerns the condition that is distinctive of industrial modern societies, namely the simultaneous increase of individual autonomy and interdependence among social units; as Durkheim put it,

how does it come about that the individual, whilst becoming more autonomous, depends ever more closely upon society? How can he become at the same time more of an individual and yet more linked to society? For it is indisputable that these two movements, however contradictory they appear to be, are carried on in tandem. (*DSL*, 7).

Durkheim's answer was that at the bottom of this double and opposite tendency, that is both centrifugal and centripetal, lies the increasing volume and impact of the division of labour. As for the centrifugal effect, Durkheim stressed that it applies to several social areas – not only within economic life and modern industry, then, but also within the sciences. In other words, both the factory worker and the scientist were subject to the same differentiation process. The age of the universal genius, capable of synthesizing human culture, was over, and it left room for an increasing multitude of skillful and more and more specialized scientists. But the resulting atomized and fragmented scenario, made of increasingly isolated social units, is only part of the story. In fact, the division of labour entails also a centripetal effect, inasmuch as the more specialized the functions are, the less self-sufficient the social units are. The concept of organic solidarity, as I shall show, was employed by Durkheim just to capture such social bond.

Significantly, Durkheim did not only acknowledge the *fact* of specialization, as part of a broader differentiation process. Rather, he appealed both to the modern emergence *and* appraisal of specialism, being the latter complementary to the scorn toward the generalist aim to explore various scientific disciplines, without handling any of them:

today that general culture, once so highly extolled, appears to us merely as a flabby, lax form of discipline [...] The man of breeding, as he once was, is for us no more than a dilettante, and we attribute no moral value to dilettantism. Rather, we perceive perfection in the specialist, one who seeks not to be complete but to be productive, one who has a well-defined job to which he devotes himself and carries out his task, plowing his single furrow (*DSL*, p. 35).

This survey on the social perception of what counts as an appropriate education raises the doubt whether here Durkheim was merely describing an observable moral tendency, or he is also committing to an evaluative stance on it. In this respect, recalling the previously mentioned distinction between subjective and objective representations of morality, Durkheim introduced a further distinction between a descriptive and a normative stance toward morals and claimed that the former

is methodologically prior to the latter (*SP*, 19). In other words, «because what we propose to study is above all reality, it does not follow that we should give up the idea of improving it» (*DSL*, p. 4), provided that our normative claims are based on a well-informed descriptive account of the present morals and the corresponding social structure. One of the leading arguments in *DSL*, in fact, is that a change in the social system entails a change in the nature of morality; more precisely, as Lukes puts it, the main systemic change occurred in industrial societies was that

the [integrative] functions once performed by ‘common ideas and sentiments’ were now, in industrial societies, largely performed by new social institutions and relations, among them economic ones [and] that this change involved a change in the nature of morality [and solidarity] (Lukes 1971, 139).

In other words, the division of labour increasingly filled in modern societies the integrative role that was once filled by epistemic and moral consensus; as a consequence of this systemic change, the contents of shared morality changes in turn²³. We might be so justified – as Durkheim took himself to be – in doubting the moral value of tradition and heredity in the allocation of individuals to social roles in favour of equality of opportunities, *inasmuch as* society increasingly differentiated and flexible. Although Durkheim cautiously remarked that «the sociologist’s task is not that of the statesman» (*DSL*, 24) – that is, he does not have to outline in detail social policies and reforms –, he also held to the view that sociology may provide helpful and trustworthy clarification as for civic and moral controversies:

[suppose that,] apart from the present existing order of morality maintained by the forces of tradition, new tendencies more or less conscious of themselves are appearing. The science of morals allows us to take up a position between these two divergent moralities, the one now existing and the one in the process of becoming. It teaches us, for example, that the first is related to an order which has disappeared or is disappearing, and that the new ideas, on the contrary, are related to recent changes in the conditions of collective existence and are made necessary by these changes (*SP*, 30).

Thus, one might read *DSL* as a normatively laden work, and not as a merely descriptive sociological picture of society at his time. More emphatically, Cladis (2005, 387) suggests that it is precisely in virtue of his «sensitivity to the historical» that Durkheim, far from being tied to any status quo, was exposed to social change and diversity. In this respect, a remark on the “positivistic” commitment of Durkheim discussed in the previous paragraph is needed. For if, on the one hand, it is accurate to consider Durkheim committed to the positivistic treatment of social facts as things – that is, as real entities opposed to their subjective representations –, it would be a distorted reading, on the other

²³ «Morality develops over the course of history and is dominated by historical causes, fulfilling a role in our life in time. If it is as it is at any given moment, it is because the conditions in which men are living at that time do not permit it to be otherwise. The proof of this is that it changes when these conditions change, and only in that eventuality» (*DLS*, 3).

hand, to ascribe to him the “neo-positivistic” divide between science and morals, or facts and values. A prominent Durkheimian interpreter as Rosati claims that among the various ideologically-laden readings of Durkheim’s political thought²⁴, the most recent interpreters agree on the *normative commitment* of Durkheim’s account of sociology; as Rosati (2002, 83) puts it, according to this pattern sociology turns out to be «a kind of scientific analysis associated with the concern for ethical and normative issues, that is, for the conditions that make good life in modern societies possible»²⁵.

This metatheoretical question is of the highest importance to make sense of Durkheim’s approach to the phenomenon of social differentiation through the division of labour. In fact, in the introduction of *DSL* Durkheim formulated the key question about the division of labour, that is, whether it is only a law of nature or it is also a «moral rule for the human conduct [...]. Whatever *assessment* we make of the division of labour, we all sense that it *is*, and increasingly so, one of the fundamental bases of the social order» (*DSL*, 35, emphasis added).

To be sure, the original aspect of Durkheim’s discourse on the division of labour did not point to its actual increasing embeddedness in modern societies, but rather to the proper *assessment* of its function. As a matter of fact, the social phenomenon of the division of social labour was far from being emerged only at Durkheim’s time; the very technical term had been previously coined by Adam Smith, as Durkheim acknowledged (*DSL*, 33), before being lent to biologists. The main polemical goals faced in *DSL*, in fact, were the accounts of the division of labour proposed by Durkheim’s predecessors, such as Spencer – who carried the inheritance of Smith and the Manchester School. Yet also Comte’s view on the division of labour is largely discussed by Durkheim. In what remains of this section, I shall report the most salient criticisms that Durkheim made toward Comte and Spencer. In Durkheim’s view, Comte was right in detecting a double effect of the division of labour, both centripetal and centrifugal. On the one hand, he saw the division of labour as the main source of the growth of industrial societies and of social solidarity. On the other hand, he highlighted its dispersive effects as the collapse of the shared sense of community and the related decrease of commitment to the common good and the public interest. However, Comte did not succeed in accounting for this paradoxical ambivalence consistently (Lukes 1971, 141). His authoritarianist appeal to the unifying function of the State as the only remedy for the threat of social disintegration was symptomatic of his mistrust in the societal integrative sources.

On the contrary, Spencer fostered a diametrically opposite view, according to which industrial societies’ harmony was ensured by the complementarity of needs and occupational differentiation,

²⁴ Interpreters are divided on the ideological collocation of Durkheim’s political thought. Lukes (1971, 78) reports that it switched from markedly conservative views until the Eighties, to more reformist concerns for social justice and social change that emerged in the middle of the Nineties.

²⁵ Quotes from Italian texts are translated by the writer.

and the resulting mutual cooperation guided by self-interest. The more the process of social differentiation would have developed, the less necessary, *pace* Comte, would have been the state regulation. In other words, industrial solidarity – or, as Durkheim labels it, «contractual solidarity» (*DSL*, 158) – would consist in the spontaneous harmony of needs and services, formalized in a system of private contracts. As Durkheim observes, tracing back this view to theories of social contract is at the very most intuitive, but ultimately wrongheaded; in fact, the abstraction from particular and not generalizable interests which theories of social contract require is incompatible with the acknowledgment of the social differentiation – of social roles and expectations, of competences and interests – generated by the division of labour. As Durkheim puts it,

for such a [social] contract to be feasible, at any given time all individual wills should be in agreement regarding the common foundations of the social organization and consequently every individual consciousness should pose to itself the political problem in all its generality. But in order to do this each individual must step out from his own sphere; all should equally play the same role, that of the statesman and the constituent member of society (*DSL*, 159).

Durkheim acknowledged that Spencer was right in identifying the division of labour as the source of social solidarity in modern societies, yet he remarked he was mistaken «about the way in which this cause produces its effect and, in consequence, about the nature of the latter» (*DSL*, 158). The main criticisms that Durkheim made against Spencer were the following: first and foremost, the complementarity of interests is not a reliable foundation for stabilizing social order, as it can only ensure an «external bond» (*DSL*, 160) among individuals; moreover, self-interest is variable and its antagonistic potential is not inferior to its integrative power: «self-interest is indeed the least constant thing in the world. Today it is useful for me to unite with you; tomorrow the same reason will make me your enemy» (*DSL*, 161).

The second criticism is empirical in nature, and states that Spencer is mistaken about the claim that industrial societies are characterized by a decrease of positive social control – that is, a social intervention which «constrains a person to act, whilst negative control constrains him only to abstain from action» (*DSL*, 162). Even if Spencer was right in claiming that positive control diminished in industrial societies, he would nonetheless have to concede that, «whether positive or negative, this control is nevertheless social» (*DSL*, 162). Therefore, even only negative rules, that are constantly growing in industrial societies, determine the influence on the individual conduct – that is then far from springing more and more completely from private initiative.

The third and last criticism against Spencer is that if, one the one hand, it is true that contractual relations increase in industrial societies, on the other hand, such growth is only possible as a set of non-contractual conditions are granted. In a well-known passage, Durkheim claims that

in a contract not everything is contractual. The only undertakings worthy of the name are those that are desired by individuals, whose sole origin is this free act of the will. Conversely, any obligation that has not been agreed by both sides is not in any way contractual. Wherever a contract exists, it is submitted to a regulatory force that is imposed by society and not by individuals: it is a force that becomes ever more weighty and complex (*DSL*, 165-6).

In other words, the institution of private contract relies on conditions that the sole individuals cannot ensure, as only society can give it binding force and regulate its functioning²⁶. In this respect, Durkheim distinguished between a negative and a positive solidarity; the former is largely traceable back to Spencer's contractual solidarity, and the part of restitutive law that correspond to it is the system of real rights, that the owners dispose over their possessions (*DSL*, 93). Thus, negative solidarity is only *improperly* and *derivatively* considerable as a kind of solidarity, in that its function

is not to link together the different parts of society, but on the contrary to detach them from one another, and mark out clearly the barriers separating them. Thus they do not correspond to any positive social tie [...] The very expression 'negative solidarity' that we have employed is not absolutely exact. It is not a true solidarity, having its own existence and specific nature, but rather the negative aspect of every type of solidarity. The first condition for an entity to become coherent is for the parts that form it not to clash discordantly. But such an external harmony does not bring about cohesion. On the contrary, it presumes it. Negative solidarity is only possible where another kind is present, positive in nature, of which it is both the result and the condition (*DSL*, 94).

Ultimately, the reason why Spencer failed in capturing the non contractual conditions of the validity of private contracts is that he held to an individualist view, that is, flattened at the level of individual relationships to the detriment of the pre-existing bond among individuals and the collective group²⁷. As Ferrara (2002, 423) summarizes it, the leading objection raised by Durkheim toward Smith and Spencer is that «ultimately no society, not even a complex one, can do without common values *altogether*. Before the invisible hand can operate, in other words, there has to be an *invisible handshake*». Seemingly, according to Watts Miller (2002, 145), Durkheim held to the view that mutual respect depends on an antecedent mutual attachment.

²⁶ Rosati (2001, 17-8) sees in a non-contractualist stance and in the related inquiry into the pre-contractual conditions of social order, the hallmark and quintessence of the genuine sociological research.

²⁷ In Spencer's view, «individuals would only be dependent upon the group to the extent that they depended upon one another, and they would not depend upon one another save within the limits drawn by private agreements freely arrived at» (*DLS*, 160).

2.2 Solidarities and their empirical hallmarks

To be sure, one further theoretical reference that Durkheim took in high regard and tackled in *DSL* was Tönnies' account of social evolution. In his classic *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* – that was known and even reviewed by Durkheim (1889) –, Tönnies introduced a dichotomy that would have established a paradigmatic conceptual tool to understand social change. Drawing on everyday language, Tönnies claimed that even at the commonsensical level the difference between the value-laden concepts of community and society may emerge:

all kinds of social co-existence that are familiar, comfortable and exclusive are to be understood as belonging to *Gemeinschaft*. *Gesellschaft* means life in the public sphere, in the outside world. In *Gemeinschaft* we are united from the moment of our birth with our own folk for better or for worse. We go out into *Gesellschaft* as if into a foreign land. A young man is warned about mixing with bad society: but ‘bad community’ makes no sense in our language. Lawyers may use the term ‘domestic society’ when they are thinking of such a relationship merely in its social and public aspects, but ‘domestic community’ with its infinite effects upon the human soul will be understood intuitively by anyone who has ever experienced it. In the same way, an engaged couple recognizes that in entering into marriage they are embarking upon a total community of life (*communio totius vitae*); but a ‘society of life’ would be a contradiction in terms (Tönnies 1887, 18).

Tönnies' overall intent was to demonstrate that, as the historical process of social evolution continues and individuals get more and more emancipated from the yoke of tradition and ascriptive bonds, societal relationships are increasingly widespread at the expense of community relationships. The main hallmarks of the social kind of community (*Gemeinschaft*) are the *small-scale* volume and the *spontaneity* of cooperation, that overflows from communities' «real organic life» (Tönnies 1887, 17); conversely, the ideal type of society (*Gesellschaft*) is characterized by *large-scale* volume, *self-interested* cooperation, and more *universalist values*, as it gets increasingly regulated by contracts. Although Tönnies did not seemingly use the term “solidarity” in a technical fashion, it is plausible to ascribe to him the view that solidarity – provisionally meant as a kind of relationship involving mutual cooperation and concern – decreases together with the recession of community. In other words, as Bayertz puts it, Tönnies held to the view that «social evolution [...] no longer appears as a gradual transformation of solidarity, but as a *gradual desolidarization*, at the end of which isolated individual remain» (Bayertz 1999, 13; emphasis added).

On the contrary, Durkheim's account of social evolution was that of a transition from a *kind* of solidarity to *another*, that is, of a transformation of solidarity rather than a decrease of it. The famous distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity, that Durkheim employed to capture the

difference between traditional and industrial societies, results from the interaction of the concepts of collective consciousness, individual consciousness, and division of labour.

By «collective or common consciousness» (*conscience commune*), Durkheim meant «the totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of a society [that] forms a determinate system with a life of its own» (*DSL*, 63). As Schweikard and Schmid (2013) point out, Durkheim's concept of collective consciousness anticipates several aspects and features of the latest and largely debated theories of collective intentionality. The most typical example taken by Durkheim to illustrate the everyday occurrences of collective consciousness' impact are collective emotions²⁸, such as indignation for a shameful comment by a fellow, that is

in each part because [they are] in the whole, but far from being in the whole because [they are] in the parts [...] An outburst of collective emotion in a gathering does not merely express the sum total of what individual feelings share in common, but is something of a very different order [...] If it is echoed in each one of them it is precisely by virtue of the special energy derived from its collective origins. If all hearts beat in unison, this is not as a consequence of a spontaneous, pre-established harmony; it is because one and the same force is propelling them in the same direction. Each one is borne along by the rest (*RSM*, 25)²⁹.

Collective consciousness and its states, then, are not reduceable to their individual units and occurrences and, in this respect, they have a life on their own. Such a *metaphysical* stance, that has been termed “social realism”, underlies Durkheim's *methodological* socialism or holism, opposed to methodological individualism. However, as Lukes remarks, in order to tackle methodological individualism neither it is necessary to commit to holism, nor to social realism:

[Durkheim] need only have claimed that ‘social’ facts cannot be *wholly* explained in terms of ‘individual’ facts; instead, he claimed that they can *only* be explained in terms of social facts. Denying methodological individualism does not entail acceptance of ‘methodological socialism’ or holism. In other words, it would have been enough to have claimed that no social phenomenon, indeed few human activities, can be either identified or satisfactorily explained without reference, explicit or implicit, to social factors (Lukes 1971, 20; emphasis added).

²⁸ An important tradition on collective emotions explicitly traces itself back to Durkheimian framework, especially in relation to his *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, that I do not discuss in this chapter. As Salmela points out, the main contemporary adherents to this Durkheimian tradition on collective emotions are Collins, Scheff, and Summers-Effler. According to this tradition, «solidarity is understood first and foremost as an affective bond of attachment, produced and reinforced through intense collective emotions that relevantly similar individuals experience in their interaction rituals» (Salmela 2014, 55). In this respect, these authors take the iteration of collective emotions to be both necessary and sufficient condition for solidarity to arise and reinforce.

²⁹ A very similar claim is made in *DLS* (272-3): «It is doubtless a self-evident truth that there is nothing in social life that is not in the consciousness of individuals. Yet everything to be found in the latter comes from society [...] [When it comes to social facts], it is indeed rather the form of the whole that determines that of the parts».

Moreover, it is worth noting that in later works, as *EFRL*, Durkheim abandoned the notion of collective consciousness in favour of the concept of collective representations, the reason being that the latter was not accurate enough for his analytical purposes; actually, the concept of collective consciousness encompasses beliefs and sentiments of any kind (cognitive, moral, religious) and fails in capturing their differences (Lukes 1971, 6). However, as long as we focus on earlier works as *DSL* and *RSM*, the point with collective consciousness is that it is not only metaphysically irreducible to individuals, but it is even *genetically* prior to them; in other words, «society does not find ready-made in individual consciousnesses the bases on which it rests; it makes them for itself» (*DSL*, 273). To be sure, this does not amount to state that collective consciousness would not collapse in absence of a substratum of individuals, but rather that most of individual consciousnesses' contents are originated by society and not by their own psychological lives.

Durkheim claimed that societies characterized by a high degree of volume, intensity, and determinateness of collective consciousness are in mechanical solidarity. Apparently, the volume of collective consciousness and individual consciousness are inversely proportional. Therefore, in mechanical solidarity the individual consciousness is comparable to a mere appendage of the collective one, in that follows it in all its movements; this makes sense of the title of the second chapter of the first part of *DSL*, namely «Mechanical Solidarity, or Solidarity by Similarities».

Inasmuch as solidarity is the object of sociology, it is regulated by the methodological principle according to which any social fact is «not wholly and entirely within any one of us; one must therefore find some *external signs* which make it perceptible» (*RSM*, 9; emphasis added). Durkheim claimed that such “external sign” of (a kind of) solidarity is to be found in the structure of (a kind of) common or positive law, and that the latter reveals the former. However, as Lukes (1971, 160) remarks, Durkheim nowhere satisfactorily justified this correspondence claim.

The primary empirical hallmark of mechanical solidarity, according to Durkheim, is the predominance of repressive or criminal law over restitutive law within the legal system. Whereas restitutive law – that encompasses civil law and commercial law, among other codes – aims at restoring the state of affairs antecedent to the crime and at repairing damage, repressive law embeds an expiative purpose: it does not merely aim at compensating an injustice, but at taking revenge on behalf of the collective consciousness' offended sentiments. Historical evidence of this originally passionate and non-utilitarian character of criminal law was found by Durkheim in those codes of primitive people which «do not aim to punish fairly or usefully, but only for the sake of punishing» (*DSL*, 68), and that punish even putatively blameworthy animals or inanimate objects involved in the perpetration of the crime.

As Durkheim put it, «the bond of social solidarity to which repressive law corresponds is one the breaking of which constitutes the crime» (*DSL*, p. 57). In this respect, it is worth noting that Durkheim assumed a *formal* definition of crime, that is, a definition based on relational properties rather than on intrinsic properties; an act constitutes a crime, Durkheim argued, «when it offends the *strong, well-defined* states of the collective consciousness. [...] We should not say that an act offends the common consciousness because it is criminal, but that it is criminal because it offends that consciousness» (*DSL*, 64; emphasis added). As the quotation shows, Durkheim inserted strength and determinateness of the offended collective sentiments among the necessary conditions for an act to be qualified as a crime. Durkheim claimed that the former feature would enable the definition to account for the *slowness* of the evolution of criminal law, whereas the latter would make sense of the fact that within this legal pattern there is a predominance of *perfect* duties over imperfect ones (*DSL*, 63).

On the contrary, industrial societies, differentiated by the division of labour, are characterized by a prevalence of restitutive law over criminal law; this change, according to Durkheim, is traceable back to the minor volume, intensity, and determinateness of collective consciousness. Such a massive retirement of collective consciousness leaves larger room for individuation, that opens the way for the increase of optional values, lifestyles, and subgroups. In this respect, as Giddens (1998, 20) remarks, Durkheim rejected the Comtian reactionary claim that universal consensus (*consensus universel*) is a necessary condition of social solidarity since organic solidarity provides social cohesion under conditions of increase of kinds of freedom and ethical pluralism. To be sure, this is not tantamount to claim that social solidarity can be given even in absence of *any* consensus, but more cautiously that it does not require a *universal* consensus. Thus, organic solidarity is solidarity that is not merely grounded in differences of any kind but on *complementary* differences, that establish mutual interdependence among social units.

Social integration fostered by organic solidarity is no more based on the strength of the collective consciousness, but on a set of institutions and relationships that arise by the division of labour³⁰. In this respect, Durkheim claimed that the division of labour cannot be reduced to a mere “egoistic harmony”, namely a «spontaneous agreement between individual interests, an agreement of which contracts are the natural expression» (*DSL*, p. 160) – that is, Spencer’s views on division of labour. In fact, Durkheim highlighted that contracts can play their integrative function only within a context of mutual trust and social control that is always and already non-contractual, and are the content of the morals of modern societies. Here, so to say, lies the resistant core of collective consciousness in

³⁰ As Miller (2017, 71) points out, Durkheim optimistically assumed that «markets can be ‘moralized’ by regulation so that participants’ understanding of their relationship is transformed from antagonism into solidarity».

an age marked by the increasing domain of individuation and difference: however more abstract and general, it never passes away. Its contents are more and more secular, rational and human-oriented rather than societal-oriented, such as individual dignity, equality of opportunities, and social justice. According to contemporary interpreters as Tiryakian (2005) and Cladis (2005), a prominent occurrence of the resurgence of collective consciousness' unifying moral force³¹ is the generalized, transnational consternation displayed in the aftermath of September 11.

A consequence of this change in strength and contents of collective consciousness, according to Durkheim, is the rise of the conditions of possibility of sociology itself; since it aims at studying moral fact as analogous to natural facts, under different cultural circumstances it would have clashed with a strong resistance by religion, as long as morals was taken to be a religious matter:

doubtless opposition was less fierce so long as scientists limited their studies to the material world, since in principle this had been abandoned to the disputations of men. [...] But it was above all when man himself became an object of scientific study that resistance became powerful. In fact the believer cannot help being repelled by the idea that man should be studied as a natural being, analogous to other beings, and moral facts studied just as are the facts of nature. We know to what extent these collective feelings, in the different guises they have assumed, have hampered the development of psychology and sociology (*DSL*, 225).

To be sure, however, Durkheim took this development of morals as being still underway, and far from being achieved. In other words, he believed that there is a time-lag between social differentiation lead by the division of labour and moral evolution, namely the development of morals that are coherent with the new social scenario. As Durkheim (*DSL*, 178) pointed out, «in our present-day societies this [cooperation-centered] morality has still not developed to the extent which from now onwards is necessary for them». Significantly, this concern is more extensively articulated in the final pages of the conclusion of *DSL* (316-18).

3. Durkheim and the concept of solidarity

DSL is a sociological classic, and pathbreaking in its methodology and terminology. It has had a large reception ranging far beyond the sociological field. Unsurprisingly, then, it has been the object of several and serious criticisms. In the first subparagraph, I shall discuss some criticisms and conceptual difficulties that prepare the terrain for the discussion of the definition of solidarity itself, that will be treated in the second subparagraph.

³¹ Using a term that Durkheim would have introduced only in his sociology of religion as it is outlined in *EFRL*, September 11 generated a state of transnational “collective effervescence”, that is, the state through which ritualized practices reinforce social solidarity.

3.1 Solidarity in Durkheim: historical, interpretative and conceptual questions

The first criticism that I shall present is empirical in nature and points to the *historical inaccuracy* of Durkheim's theory of social evolution. In fact, several interpreters accuse Durkheim of having provided insufficient historical references to substantiate the dichotomy of mechanical and organic solidarity. In other words, for this dichotomy to be empirically grounded, it should correspond to a couple of both large and uniform sets of observed societies. Poggi (2003, 83) remarks that the set of societies in mechanical solidarity is almost empty, whereas the set of societies in organic solidarity is too heterogeneous. Furthermore, Lukes (1971, 159) underlines that Durkheim «vastly overstated the role of repressive law in pre-industrial societies, and its insignificance in industrial societies. He had no knowledge (nor was much available) of the manifold ways in which the principle of restitution operates in primitive societies».

A second problem concerns the *nature of the dichotomy* of mechanical and organic solidarity: interpreters disagree on whether such a distinction aims at outlining ideal social types or at making concrete descriptions of different phases of civilization. In other words, is the nature of this dichotomy historical or conceptual? Lukes (1971, 148) endorses the latter reading, whereas Santambrogio (2002, 113) supports the former. Quite convincingly, Lukes appeal to the passage where Durkheim claimed that «if therefore this social type [that is, organized or industrial societies] is nowhere to be observed in a state of absolute purity, likewise nowhere is organic solidarity to be met with in isolation. But at least it frees itself increasingly from any amalgam, just as it becomes increasingly preponderant» (*DSL*, 148). In other words, traits of mechanical and organic solidarity can be given simultaneously, as the concepts are not intended to denote concrete historical societies. On the contrary, Santambrogio (2002) does not justify his stance, but it may be supported by reference to Durkheim's large discussion of the empirical and historical *causes* that brought about the transition from traditional societies to modern societies. Among these causes, he mentioned the increase of population volume and density, and the more and more widespread urbanization (*DSL*, Book II). Whatever the more plausible of the two readings is, the point I hold to be of importance here is that undoubtedly solidarity is not an inheritance from modernity, but an omnipresent feature of any society, however variable in kind. This claim would oppose the widespread consideration of solidarity as a typically modern concept and phenomenon. As a consequence, the relative modernity of the term “solidarity” should not lead us to restrict its application to modern societies *only*. More importantly still, if the latter argument is sound, solidarity might be considered as a *basic category* in Berlin's terms, namely as a concept that captures

those «central features of our experience that are invariant and omnipresent, or at least much less variable than the vast variety of its empirical characteristics» (Berlin 1980, 165–66).

A third difficulty arises as Durkheim seemed to consider society as a *morally-laden concept*. As Durkheim puts it,

every society is a moral society. In certain respects, this feature is even more pronounced in organized societies. Because no individual is sufficient unto himself, it is from the society that he receives all that is needful, just as it is for society that he labours. Thus there is formed a very strong feeling of the state of dependence in which he finds himself: he grows accustomed to valuing himself at his true worth, viz., to look upon himself only as a part of the whole, the organ of an organism (*DSL*, 178).

Plausibly, Durkheim here was arguing the moral value of industrial or organized societies to oppose the view that sees in them only «economic grouping[s]» (*Ibid.*), that is, self-interested cooperative aggregations. In fact, Durkheim argued that «co-operation also has its intrinsic morality» (*Ibid.*), although the latter is still under development in industrial societies. In addition, since «the qualification ‘moral’ has never been given to an act which has individual interests, or the perfection of the individual from a purely egotistic point of view, as its object» (*SP*, 17), the ethics of cooperation is not reduceable to a system of maxims that point to the maximization and harmonization of individual self-interests. Thus, as for the moral dimension, the main difference between traditional and industrial societies is that, whereas the latter is based on individual-oriented values, in the former the society, out of the overwhelming strength of collective consciousness over individuals, looks upon its constituents «as things over which it has rights» (*DSL*, 178); significantly, in fact, Durkheim notes that it is precisely in virtue of the predominance of collective consciousness that is so highly frequent to observe forms of proto-communism within traditional societies:

where the collective personality is the sole existing one, property itself is inevitably collective. It can only become individual when the individual, freeing himself from the mass of the people, has also become a personal, distinctive being, not only as an organism, but as a factor in social life (*DSL*, 141).

In addition, and more controversially, one might wonder whether Durkheim, claiming that «every society is a moral society» and that «co-operation also has its intrinsic morality» (*DSL*, 178), was not only arguing that, *as a matter of fact*, any society cannot do without some moral consensus, but was committing to the more ambitious view that any shared morality ensuring social solidarity is as such *intrinsically valuable*. After all, Durkheim considered the search for social solidarity as a *moral need* (*DSL*, 51). This evaluative claim, whatever ascribable to Durkheim or not, seems quite unconvincing, as we can think of groups that, as Nazis or Mafia-type organizations, are assuredly in solidarity out of shared values, the content of which is nonetheless far from being morally valuable. As Tuomela (2013, 243) puts it, when solidarity involves morality, «it often involves only ‘group morality’, not

necessarily full-blown morality based on universalization»³². It seems plausible to ascribe to Durkheim the view that every society maintains a *moral basis* to be held together in solidarity, and that the moral judgement on the *contents* of that basis is a relevant issue, but not a sociological task to fulfil.

A fourth question concerns the *natural boundaries* of solidarity: whatever solidarity ultimately is, is it an exclusively human phenomenon? What does distinguish it from the varieties of cooperation and prosocial behavior, such as filial love, that we can observe all over the animal realm? On the one hand, Durkheim assumed that solidarity entails the *capacity to value* one's belonging to a group, and that this condition is more evident in modern societies (*DSL*, 178). Assuredly, such capacity of evaluative judgement seems to be exclusively human property. On the other hand, Durkheim's dichotomy of mechanical and organic solidarity clearly entails an analogy with the natural realm³³; the point is to establish to what extent this analogy can go. Some passages seem to foster an extension of this analogy, such as where Durkheim insisted that the division of labour, that under normal conditions entails organic solidarity, can be observed in action already at the biological level; moreover, Durkheim explicitly stated that the division of social labour is only a specific form of a broader biological process.³⁴ Other passages point to the isolation of man from non-human animals, beginning with a higher degree of sociability: Durkheim held that «the smallest [human associations] we know of are more extensive than most animal societies. Being more complex, they are also more changeable, and the conjuncture of these two causes results in social life among human beings not becoming fixed in a biological form». In other words, it seems that more prominent sociability in humans accounts for the larger volume of their associations, whose increasing complexity makes a distinctively social kind of causes to emerge. Out of this process, «the [human] organism takes on “spiritual” shape» (*DSL*, 270). It seems to me that it would be plausible to qualify sociability as a scalar property that men hold in a higher degree than animals, in Durkheim's view, and that enables

³² It is worth noting that Tuomela (2013) supports an account of solidarity that does not in all cases involve morality, unlike Durkheim's framework.

³³ Mechanical solidarity: «We only use this term for it by analogy with the cohesion that links together the elements of mineral bodies, in contrast to that which encompasses the unity of animal bodies» (*DLS*, 102); organic solidarity: «This solidarity resembles that observed in the higher animals. This is because each organ has its own special characteristics and autonomy, yet the greater the unity of the organism, the more marked the individualization of the parts» (*DLS*, 102). Cfr. Giddens (1998, 22-3).

³⁴ «The recent philosophical speculations in biology have finally caused us to realize that the division of labour is a fact of a generality that the economists, who were the first to speak of it, had been incapable of suspecting. Indeed, since the work of Wolff, von Baer and Milne-Edwards we know that the law of the division of labour applies to organisms as well as to societies. It may even be stated that an organism occupies the more exalted a place in the animal hierarchy the more specialized its functions are. This discovery has had the result of not only enlarging enormously the field of action of the division of labour, but also of setting its origins back into an infinitely distant past, since it becomes almost contemporaneous with the coming of life upon earth. It is no longer a mere social institution whose roots lie in the intelligence and the will of men, but a general biological phenomenon, the conditions for which must seemingly be sought in the essential properties of organized matter. The division of labour in society appears no more than a special form of this general development» (*DLS*, 34).

the former to overcome the threshold over which social causes can arise. Once again, though, it seems empirically arguable that the smallest human associations are larger than most animal societies if we just think of the volume of associations of bees or ants.

3.2. Solidarity in Durkheim: questioning the absence of a definition

The final question that I shall discuss is perhaps the most striking, and points to the above third conceptual reason to explore Durkheim's account of solidarity, that is, that it does not result in a definition of solidarity *itself*. Interestingly, this *abstention* on the nature of solidarity has been underlined by only a few interpreters (Tiryakian 2008, 307; Watts Miller 2002, 141). Moreover, as far as I can tell, even by these authors little has been said about the reasons that led Durkheim to this stance. I suggest that Durkheim took himself to have good epistemological and methodological reasons to refrain from engaging with the challenge of defining the nature of solidarity. According to him, once we detach the concept of solidarity from its concrete and empirical varieties, the only element left would be an abstract notion of sociability that is useless to any scientific inquiry, for it would not be related to any specific social kind:

what remains of social solidarity once it is divested of its social forms? What imparts to it its specific characteristics are the nature of the group whose unity it ensures, and this is why it varies according to the types of society. It is not the same within the family as within political societies. We are not attached to our native land in the same way as the Roman was to his city or the German to his tribe. But since such differences spring from social causes, we can only grasp them through the differences that the social effects of solidarity present to us. Thus if we neglect the differences, all varieties become indistinguishable, and we can perceive no more than that which is common to all varieties, that is, the general tendency to sociability, a tendency that is always and everywhere the same and is not linked to any particular social type. But this residual element is only an abstraction, for sociability *per se*, is met with nowhere. What exists and what is really alive are the special forms of solidarity – domestic, professional, national, that of the past and that of today, etc. Each has its own special nature. Hence generalities can in any case only furnish a very incomplete explanation of the phenomenon, since they necessarily allow to escape what is concrete and living about it. Thus the study of solidarity lies within the domain of sociology. It is a social fact that can only be thoroughly known through its social effects.” (DSL, 53-4).

Thus, the first claim that Durkheim made here is the methodological statement that we can know social facts only by observing their consequences and empirical signs, such as law³⁵. The second

³⁵ «In science we can know causes only through the effects that they produce. In order to determine the nature of these causes more precisely science selects only those results that are the most objective and that best lend themselves to

claim is that, out of the former, we are not allowed to do any jump to one from the manifold, as once we abstract from the specific differences of the empirical forms of solidarity the only residual element is a general tendency to sociability; in other words, according to Durkheim, there is no essence or nature of solidarity, since «each has its own nature». So far, it seems that Durkheim acknowledged only family resemblances among forms of solidarity.

However, a little further, Durkheim seemed to contradict the first claim when it comes to the *nature* of the *crime*, out of the assumption that «the essential properties of a thing lie in those observed wherever it exists and which are peculiar to it» (*DSL*, 57)³⁶. It is far from being clear why such a methodological claim should not apply to solidarity as well.

To understand what Durkheim actually meant when he employed the concept of solidarity, Watts Miller (2002, 142) suggests that it was likely to designate a kind of «union of lives» based on two necessary conditions; the first condition is an averagely strong and widespread sense of *fellow-feeling*, and the second is that such a sense of belonging is directed to a *group* rather than to face-to-face interpersonal relationships. Watts Miller supports this reading of Durkheim basing it on the normative interpretation of the morally-laden character of solidarity, that I just discussed in the third criticism above; as he puts it, the reason why Durkheim was so interested in the problem of solidarity was traceable back to «his interest in moral life. Solidarity is a crucial moral value – the source of morality itself» (Watts Miller 2002, 143).

The second condition mentioned above is of the highest importance, as it prepares the terrain to distinguish solidarity from altruism – as well as from compassion and charity –, being the latter related to *thou-centred* interpersonal relationships, whereas only the former is genuinely *we-centred* (Laitinen, Pessi 2014, 2). In fact, a further way to understand what Durkheim meant by «solidarity» would be to proceed *negatively* to identify the concept, that is, by what he took it *not* to be. In what remains of this paragraph, I shall suggest some plausible and useful distinctions in relation to Durkheim's framework.

The first conceptual distinction concerns classic sociological categories as social solidarity, social cohesion, social integration, and the social order. This task is far from being undemanding, as these concepts are often taken as interchangeable (Rosati 2000, 24). Rosati also claims that the

quantification. Science studies heat through the variations in volume that changes in temperature cause in bodies, electricity through its physical and chemical effects, and force through movement» (*DLS*, 53).

³⁶ «Assuredly crimes of different species exist. But it is no less certain that all these species of crime have something in common [...] No matter how different these acts termed crimes may appear to be, at first sight, they cannot fail to have some common basis. Universally they strike the moral consciousness of nations in the same way and universally produce the same consequence. All are crimes, that is, acts repressed by prescribed punishments. Now the essential properties of a thing lie in those observed wherever it exists and which are peculiar to it. Thus if we wish to learn in what crime essentially consists, we must distinguish those traits identical in all the varieties of crime in different types of society. Not a single one of these types may be omitted» (*DLS*, 57)

interchangeability of these concepts applies to Durkheim's framework as well, but I shall suggest that there are enough elements in his works to draw a distinction among them. As for social cohesion, it may be said that it is *one* of the *external signs* of social solidarity, although Durkheim did not define it straightforwardly, and even nowadays the methodology for its measure is still controversial – for example, it is debated whether the increase of the criminality rate is either a cause or an effect of the decrease of social cohesion (Colozzi 2008, 9-10). Generally speaking, there are two dimensions of social cohesion, corresponding with the micro or macro level of analysis adopted. In the latter case, social cohesion results in the degree of success of social policies intended to prevent social exclusion to occur; this kind of social cohesion is part of the conditions that ensure the social order. At the micro level, social cohesion comes out to be the intensity of the interpersonal relationships among one's primary and secondary groups, and the degree of dynamism of the Third Sector; according to the approach inaugurated by Lockwood (1992), social integration is the outcome of the combination between the micro dimension of social cohesion, and the systemic integration (e. g., between States and markets).

As for social integration itself, it might be said that, unlike social cohesion, it was considered by Durkheim not as an external sign of solidarity but rather as a *function* that might be performed by solidarity³⁷. In other words, it is first necessary to distinguish among solidaristic and non-solidaristic kinds of social integration, e. g. systemic integration³⁸. Secondly, isolating solidaristic integration, it is worth noting that Durkheim singled out two subkinds of it: to recall his core intuition, in fact, whereas in pre-industrial societies the function of social integration was granted by common beliefs and sentiments – that is, by mechanical solidarity –, in industrial societies it is performed by institutions raised as a consequence of the division of labour – that is, by organic solidarity³⁹.

To conclude the discussion of this first cluster of strictly sociological familiar concepts, I shall turn to the distinction between solidarity and the social order. The latter notion is less value-laden and ambitious than the former, as social order only requires the conditions that ensure a *modus vivendi* among self-interested citizens, that is, a stabilization of behavioural expectations; on the contrary, the idea of social solidarity goes beyond social order, as the former also involves «the dimension of sharedness, the experience of common goods or activities, the sense of shared stakes, that found and

³⁷ For an original and valuable elaboration on Durkheim's account of solidarity and social integration, see Santambrogio (2002).

³⁸ Münch (1994), for example, reports economic, cultural and systemic modes of social integration, that are added to the one ensured by solidarity.

³⁹ It is worth mentioning that after the first edition of *DLS* Durkheim manifested an increasing scepticism about the integrative force of organic solidarity. Schiermer (2014) suggests that Durkheim maintained only the concept of mechanic solidarity in the background of the later ritual-symbolic framework – developed in *EFRL* – and got rid of the concept of organic solidarity. Thijssen (2012) emphasizes that «Durkheim's plea for the installation of some kind of neocorporations, notably in his preface to the second edition of *Division* (1902), can clearly be interpreted as a mechanical rescue operation for a moribund organic solidarity».

make possible the very respect of contracts» (Rosati 2000, 25). In this respect, social order seems to presuppose only *negative* solidarity, that Durkheim considered to be possible only as derivative and dependent on positive solidarity. It might be even said that Durkheim held social order as *conceivable* only in terms of social solidarity.

When it comes to the analysis of the grounds of mutual attraction and association, Durkheim distinguished quite interestingly solidarity from sympathy or empathy⁴⁰; for the latter is in action when *similarity* is the cause of mutual attraction, whereas solidarity presupposes *complementary differences* among individuals⁴¹. Each of these kinds of associations embeds a figurative mechanism, that is, a mode to relate the self-image with the representation of others:

when union derives from the similarity between two images, it consists in an agglutination. The two representations become interdependent because, being indistinct from each other either wholly or in part, they fuse completely, becoming one. They are only solid with one another in so far as they are fused in this way. On the contrary, in the case of the division of labour, they remain outside each other and are linked only because they are distinct (*DSL*, 50).

Each of these kinds of associations produces different feelings and relationships. This theory of “social collage” is undoubtedly useful as it enabled Durkheim to account not only for societal relationships but also for the most basic kinds of grouping as friendship. However, a doubt arises here: as mechanical solidarity is by definition «solidarity by similarities» (*DSL*, 57), as it is based on the large epistemic and moral consensus embedded by collective consciousness and leaves little room for individuation, should not it be considered as a sympathetic relationship rather than a solidaristic relationship, out of the just reconstructed distinction? In this case, the only solidaristic relationship that would fit with the mechanism of associations of complementary images of the self and the other would be organic solidarity. On the contrary, Durkheim considered social bonds based on similarities and complementary differences to be both kinds of solidarity. The most plausible reading, I think, is that the distinction between solidarity and empathy/sympathy is *psychological* rather than sociological, as it concerns the mechanism of association of ideas, that is, «the manner in which individual ideas combine together» (*RSM*, 12) – which Durkheim took to be still «reduced to those few propositions, very general and very vague» (*Ibid.*)⁴². If this reading is sound, then it would be

⁴⁰ There is no evidence that Durkheim treats sympathy and empathy as different concepts.

⁴¹ «Dissimilarity, just like resemblance, can be a cause of mutual attraction. However, not every kind of dissimilarity is sufficient to bring this about. We find no pleasure in meeting others whose nature is merely different from our own. Prodigals do not seek the company of the miserly, nor upright and frank characters that of the hypocritical and underhand. Kind and gentle spirits feel no attraction for those of harsh and evil disposition. Thus only differences of a certain kind incline us towards one another. These are those which, instead of mutually opposing and excluding one another, complement one another» (*DLS*, 45).

⁴² A similar state of advancement applies to social psychology, that is assigned the task of determining «the laws of collective ideation» (*RSM*, 12).

possible to maintain the distinction between solidarity and empathy/sympathy at the psychological level, without redrawing the distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity.

More complex still is the distinction between solidarity and altruism that Durkheim allegedly had in mind. To be sure, Durkheim considered altruism as an epiphenomenon of solidarity, as «everywhere that societies exist there is altruism *because* there is solidarity» (*DSL*, 153; emphasis added). This statement is relevant or Durkheim views on human nature, as it rejects the view that the civilization process «places egoism as the point of departure for humanity and makes altruism, on the other hand, a recent phenomenon» (*Ibid.*). Thus, Durkheim continued, «these two springs of behaviour [egoism and altruism] have been present from the very beginning in every human consciousness» (*DSL*, 154). However, such Durkheimian view on the co-originality of egoism and altruism has to be pondered in relation to other passages, in which the former seems to be depicted as more primitive or “natural” than the latter, and the collective authority of society is described as the anti-egoistic force. In this respect, it is only inasmuch as man is subject to the «salutary pressure of society that moderates his egoism» (*DSL*, 312) that he becomes a moral being⁴³. To confirm this reading of the moralization process of the human being as an increasing restraint that society applies to natural egoism, Durkheim often described it as an overlapping of "second nature" over the primitive one:

A life lived in common is attractive, yet at the same time coercive. Undoubtedly constraint is necessary to induce the man to rise above himself and *superimpose upon his physical nature one of a different kind*. But, as he learns to savour the charm of this new existence, he develops the need for it; there is no field of activity in which he does not passionately seek after it. This is why, when individuals discover they have interests in common and come together, it is not only to defend those interests, but also so as to associate with one another and not feel isolated in the midst of their adversaries, so as to enjoy the pleasure of communicating with one another, to feel at one with several others, which in the end means to lead the same moral life together» (*DSL*, 18; emphasis added).

This *homo duplex* model of human nature is more detailed in later Durkheimian works (*EFRL*, Durkheim 2005), but still maintains both the *dualistic* character that was – at least implicitly – already held in *DSL*, and the *social genesis* of the moral dimension. As Hawkins (1979, 161) puts it, according to this anthropological account appetites and desires of the individual are rooted «in a biological and psychological constitution that is counteracted by moral rules created by the social milieu»⁴⁴.

Significantly, society shares the distinctive feature of morals (*SP*, 16) and the sacred, namely, to be both desirable and coercive. Yet more importantly, the anthropological account that emerges from

⁴³ «Men need peace only in so far as they are already united by some bond of sociability. In this case, it is true that the feelings that cause them to turn towards one another modify entirely naturally promptings of egoism» (*DLS*, 95).

⁴⁴ To be sure, not *every* aspect of Durkheim's anthropological view in portraited in *DLS* is still maintained in later works. I shall get back to this point in the second chapter.

the reported passages it that human beings are inclined to associate first and foremost as a *preferable option than anarchy*, and only once associated – and subjected their egoistic impulses to the constraints of the shared ethos – they get enabled to «savour» the *intrinsically valuable benefits* of social life. As Lukes (1967, 83) puts it, «Durkheim saw human nature as essentially in need of limits and discipline. His view of man is of a being with potentially limitless and insatiable desires, who needs to be controlled by society».

Concludingly, it seems plausible to ascribe to Durkheim an account of altruism as an epiphenomenon of solidarity, that is, its ability to orientate *individual* behaviour. Far from being, as Spencer claimed, «a kind of pleasant ornament of our social life» (*DSL*, 178), altruism is likely to become «its fundamental basis» (*Ibid.*) as societies get more and more large and complex. The opposition to Spencer's and utilitarian views on society and the division of labour is at its most clear when Durkheim rejected their accounts of altruism as «scarcely more than a private virtue, which it is laudable for the individual to pursue, but which society can very well do without (*DSL*, 95)⁴⁵.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I first highlighted the importance of Durkheim's historical context to understand the reasons of his *practical concerns* for social order, that would have been theoretically articulated in the fundamental question about the conditions that make social integration of industrial societies possible. Moreover, I underlined the ambivalent character of Durkheim's view on philosophy, that he caustically contests as for its *methodological negligence*, but the canon of which he actually and largely draws on; when it comes to found sociology as an autonomous scientific discipline, provided with a distinctive methodology, though, Durkheim aimed at fostering a fruitful interdisciplinary relationship between it and philosophy.

Then, I reconstructed the most relevant criticism raised by Durkheim toward Comte and Spencer as for the basis of social order in industrial societies, and the discussion of Tönnies overall account of the social change occurred with the modernization process. The complementary *pars construens* of these critical discussions were Durkheim's views on the modernization process as a transition from the predominance of societies in mechanical solidarity, that is, solidarity by similarities, to a prevalence of societies in organic solidarity, that is, solidarity by difference. The most relevant

⁴⁵ This objection is proposed again in other passages: «but if co-operation is not the whole of morality, we must not place it outside the ambit of morality either, as do certain moralists. Just like the Utilitarians, such idealists make it out to consist exclusively of a system of economic relationships, of private arrangements that are sparked off solely by egoism» (*DLS*, 219).

outcome of this section is what I proposed to qualify as an *epistemology of solidarity*, that is, a theory about the conditions that make solidarity knowledgeable and eligible for a scientific inquiry.

Finally, I introduced the insufficiently discussed *abstention* on solidarity that Durkheim considered as a logical consequence of its epistemological and methodological pattern. I suggested that, in fact, Durkheim's arguments are not so convincing, and that within his work it is possible to find some tracks for the definition of the concept of solidarity itself.

Chapter 2. Solidarity, anthropologically-laden concepts, and the need for a philosophical anthropology

In the final paragraph of the previous chapter, I touched upon Durkheim's view on human sociability, and I assumed that such matter may have some relevance for the Durkheimian account of social solidarity.

By broad acknowledgement (Machery 2008, Samuels 2012, Tooby and Cosmides 2016), philosophical anthropology or theory of human nature play many theoretical roles within *scientific enterprises*, but little has been said about its role in social, ethical, and political theorizing⁴⁶. One of the core claims of this chapter is that philosophical anthropology⁴⁷ *also* plays a theoretical role in *social, ethical, and political theorizing*⁴⁸, and that such role is by far more crucial than it has been commonly acknowledged. However, the importance of philosophical anthropology for practical philosophy has been hardly discussed so far, let alone elaborated as a *core methodological issue*.

In the first section of this chapter, I shall attempt to fill this gap by arguing that *any* social, ethical, and political concept is, to a certain degree, influenced by one's anthropological assumptions⁴⁹ about *certain* salient human traits. Moreover, in the second section I shall suggest that we might introduce a property that captures the *variability* of the definition of a concept *independently* on the underlying anthropological assumptions, and that such property might be referred to as the "anthropological load" of that concept. I shall also argue that, more specifically, the anthropological load of solidarity is *high*, and this might be shown by means of a spectrum to the opposite ends of which we assign opposite anthropological views on human sociability, that I hypothesize to be the *human trait* the most salient for solidarity. As a complement to this *diagnostic* argument on solidarity, the second section also elaborates on a proposal for a dispositional understanding of sociability.

⁴⁶ Although Samuels (2012, 4) explicitly focuses only on «the status of human nature in the sciences», he just touches upon the far-reaching statement that «human nature has often been expected to play a central role in moral theory». The vagueness of this sentence may help to make sense of my interest in dignifying the importance of human nature for practical philosophy as well.

⁴⁷ By "philosophical anthropology", I do not refer to the 20th century German line of thought that is commonly related to this label. Rather, what I aim to do in this chapter is to tackle philosophical anthropology as a *systematic matter*, that revolves around the idea of the human nature. This strictly theoretical understanding of philosophical anthropology is assumed by many contemporary philosophers and social scientists (Koo 2007, Sayer 2011, Clammer 2013, Andina 2020). Indeed, as Clammer remarks, «philosophical anthropology was and to some extent still is considered to be the "philosophy of man", and as embodying Humanist concepts or indeed as being the philosophical expression of Humanism, especially during and after the European Renaissance. Correspondingly, the central concern has been the concept of human nature» (Clammer 2013, 22).

⁴⁸ Henceforth, for the sake of brevity, the old-fashioned label "practical philosophy" (or practical concepts) will be employed to encompass social, ethical, and political theorizing (or social, ethical, and political concepts).

⁴⁹ Henceforth, when I use the terms "anthropological load", "anthropologically-laden", and so forth, I take them to be related to *philosophical anthropology*, rather than to full-fledged anthropology.

The key question this chapter aims to answer may be so formulated: *how and to what extent our anthropological assumptions affect the conceptual space for theorizing solidarity*⁵⁰?

1. Detecting anthropologically laden concepts: what is at stake?

Before presenting a methodology to detect the anthropological load of practical concepts, a couple of preliminary questions needs to be addressed: a first question is why the analytical potential of philosophical anthropology for practical theorizing has been so neglected so far. In the first subparagraph (1.1), I shall answer this question suggesting that traditional essentialism on human nature is one of the main cultural factors owing to which the very notion of human nature seems to be less and less scientifically and philosophically appealing. In the second subparagraph (1.2), I tackle a second preliminary question, that is, why philosophical anthropology can make a difference in practical theorizing at all. I shall argue that philosophical anthropology is unavoidable for social, ethical, and political theorizing as such.

1.1 Anthropological essentialism under attack

The concept of human nature «has fallen in disrepute» (Machery 2008, 321) in many areas across philosophy and social sciences. A remarkable number of cultural agents and factors played a part in bringing about this scenario, and for sure it is not my presumption to provide an exhaustive historical explanation of it. There is no doubt, though, that some of the fiercest attacks on human nature are traceable back to several champions of postmodernism (Foucault 1966, Rorty 1989, Bauman 1993), and some prominent philosophers of biology (Hull 1986, Ghiselin 1997)⁵¹.

To be sure, these critiques are underpinned by different methodological frameworks, technical terminologies, and evaluative orientations; that being said, I suggest that the target of their joint multilateral attack share *some core features*, that such features are encapsulated by the *essentialist*

⁵⁰ By “conceptual space”, I refer to the extensional reach of a concept, which is to say, the set of entities that a concept captures and defines.

⁵¹ In so doing, I do not deal with other influent philosophical fields which tackle the specificity of human beings, which nonetheless are at the very least worth mentioning, that is, anti-speciesism and the grounding of human equality. As for the former camp, many anti-speciesists contend that human rights should be extended to animals, out of a debunking of the presumed human exceptionality (Singer 1975). As for the latter, moral and political philosophers interested in human equality seek non-trivial and normatively significant features that can ground human equality despite their being variable in degree (Carter 2011). It is not my intention to discuss in detail these sources of problematization of human specificity for two reasons: firstly, because my ultimate interest in this matter is theoretical rather than historical, and points to the decline of a *specific* account of human nature (that is, anthropological essentialism), against which many postmodernists and philosophers of biology converge – whereas the same does not apply to other debates on human nature. Secondly, inasmuch as I commit to a broader historical claim (that is, that human nature has fallen in disrepute), neither make I any claim to exhaustiveness, nor mean I to dismiss the influence of other debates to the decline of the concept of human nature per se.

*notion of human nature*⁵², and that the acknowledgement of this substantial intersection entitles us to situate these critiques on a *common terrain*. To be sure, anthropological essentialism is one of the main historical and cultural factors that may account for the scientific and philosophical decline of the notion of human nature⁵³; in what follows, I shall focus on some highly instructive discussions on anthropological essentialism to verify whether it is a tenable view –and, in the negative case, whether the concept of human nature would be to dismiss together with it.

Anthropological essentialism about human nature is not a self-standing thesis, but an instance of kind essentialism⁵⁴. Thus, it seems sound to start with the discussion of the human nature from the standpoint of philosophy of biology. As Samuels puts it, kind essentialism holds that K is a natural kind if and only if:

- E1. All and only the members of a kind share a common essence.
- E2. The essence is a property, or a set of properties, that all (and only) the members of a kind must have.
- E3. The properties that comprise a kind's essence are intrinsic properties.
- E4. A kind's essence causes the other properties associated with that kind (Samuels 2012, 7).

To be an essentialist about human nature is to hold that for human species, there is an essence that meets conditions E1-E4⁵⁵. However, Samuels (2012, 8-11) argues that there is enough evidence from evolutionary biology to embarrass an anthropological essentialist. A first empirical charge concerns the poor set of human properties that may fit with E2, namely both *exclusively and universal human properties*⁵⁶. For those properties that seemingly apply to *all* human beings, can be met in non-human organisms *also*, for instance ingroup-outgroup bias⁵⁷ (Tooby & Cosmides 2016, Masuda & Fu 2015) or mechanisms to learn fear of snakes (Hagen 2016), and thus do not satisfy the exclusiveness condition. On the other hand, those properties that are potentially good candidates for satisfying the exclusiveness condition, as the capacity to speak, fail to be universal and intrinsic to human beings, because the unfolding of such capacity requires exposure to language (Machery 2008, 323). In addition, as Machery emphasizes, «even if a property were both distinctive and universal, this state of affairs would be contingent. It would not be a necessary property for being a human» (Machery

⁵² Henceforth, “anthropological essentialism” will be used as a shorter label to mean essentialism about human nature.

⁵³ For a discussion of *other* cultural factors that have made a difference for the scientific decline of the human nature, see Sayer (2011, 99-105).

⁵⁴ For an overview of the debate on species essentialism, see Ereshefsky’s SEP entry (Ereshefsky 2017).

⁵⁵ Machery’s definition of the essentialist notion of human nature encompasses E1-E3, as it is maintained as a «set of properties that are separately necessary and jointly sufficient for being a human. Furthermore, the properties that are part of human nature are typically thought to be distinctive of humans» (Machery 2008, 322).

⁵⁶ To be sure, there is at least one universal and exclusive feature that all human beings indisputably share, that is, to be members of the human species. However, such property is trivial and not characterizing enough to meet E4.

⁵⁷ In-group favoritism is the tendency for individuals to cooperate with in-group members more strongly than with out-group members.

2008, 325). A second, and more strictly epistemological difficulty for anthropological essentialism arises insofar as it takes kinds to be individuated by presumed intrinsic properties (E3), which seems to stand in contrast with the assumption that species are individuated by *genealogical relations*, that is upheld by most evolutionary biologists. For anthropological essentialism may consider an atom-for-atom duplicate of President Trump (call him President Trump II) living on Mars to be a human being, as it shares all of President Trump's intrinsic properties; individuation through intrinsic properties, in other words, may work even ignoring genealogical relations⁵⁸ at all – inasmuch as President Trump II would be indistinguishable from President Trump even in absence of any genealogical relation between them.

This example verifies, it might be said, a failure in *virtual synchronic comparison* between genealogically unrelated candidates to human membership. A third difficulty for anthropological essentialism may arise as a *virtual diachronic comparison* is at stake: suppose that human phenotypes change dramatically over evolutionary eras; if some intrinsic properties were regarded by such evolution, then the first virtual future generation being lacking such properties would not count anymore as members of the human species, *despite* their appropriate genealogical relations to ours. Thus, anthropological essentialism seems to be hardly compatible with evolutionary biology. It is small wonder, then, that Hull (1978, 1986) famously questioned the biological tenability of the very idea of human nature, insofar as it relies on supposedly invariable properties instead of genealogical relations⁵⁹; Buller (2005, 419) reappraised and inflamed Hull's scepticism, arguing that «the idea of a universal human nature is deeply antithetical to a truly evolutionary view of our species». For, Buller continues,

one and the same species may evolve so significantly that characteristics that typify a species at one time period cease to typify it at a later time, and another set of characteristics may become typical of that species. If species were natural kinds, however, a species could not undergo such significant change [...] As biologists understand them, species don't exhibit the features of natural kinds (Buller 2005, 442).

However, both Machery (2008) and Samuels (2012) rejected this ultimate conclusion, suggesting that Hull's and Buller's arguments – as well as the biological critiques just discussed – deal a lethal blow to anthropological essentialism *only*, and that more fine-grained accounts of human nature may be safe for evolutionary biology and still play some of the valuable roles that anthropological essentialism was expected to.

⁵⁸ By “genealogical relation”, following Samuels (2012, 10), I refer to a species' location on a phylogenetic tree.

⁵⁹ «[P]articular organisms belong in a particular species because they are part of that genealogical nexus, not because they possess any essential traits. No species has an essence in this sense. Hence there is no such thing as human nature» (Hull 1978, p. 358).

Machery (2008) recommends a *nomological* account of human nature, that is intended to be «consistent with the historical nature of species and with the variability of the traits possessed by conspecifics» (Machery 2008, 326). A nomological account holds that human nature is «the set of properties that humans *tend* to possess *as a result of* the evolution of their species» (Machery 2008, 323; my emphasis). At least two components of this definition, that have been highlighted by italics, are worth expanding on. First, the nomological account abandon any claim to human universality and exclusiveness encapsulated by E2; it only requires that there are some properties that are shared by *most* humans – regardless their being possessed by non-human organisms also –, and in addition, that this commonality occurs *as a result of* a specific causal evolutionary process. Thus, on this account at least some room for changes in the human nature over time is left, and in so doing it avoids one important pitfall that anthropological essentialism runs into; though, this account also enables us to acknowledge *lawful regularities as species-typical*⁶⁰, and in so doing it meets the descriptive condition that human nature is traditionally expected to satisfy – which is to say, that human nature should give at the very least a flavour of *what humans are like*.

However, as Samuels (2012) rightly remarks, the nomological account cannot play many other theoretical roles that the notion of human nature traditionally played. Machery is perfectly aware that such framework cannot be definitional of kind membership – which is to say that it does not play a *taxonomic* role at all⁶¹. Moreover, Samuels argues that the nomological account also has a limited *causal-explanatory* capacity, for «if human nature *just is* the set of human-typical regularities, then it clearly cannot be the *cause* of these regularities, underlying or otherwise» (Samuels 2012, 18). It is assumed that, in order to have a causal-explanatory capacity, human nature must *underly* an entity's more superficial properties, and in so doing it can account for their *emergence* – which is to say, E4 mentioned above.

To avoid this collapse of the *explanans* (human nature) on the *explanandum* (human-typical regularities), Samuels proposes a switch to a *causal-essentialist* account, that shares many assumptions with the nomological view but is intended to play a major causal-explanatory role. In a nutshell, Samuels reframes the notion of essence in a purely causal-explanatory sense: «essences are entities – mechanisms, processes, and structures – that cause many of the more superficial properties and regularities reliably associated with the kind» (Samuels 2012, 20). Human nature is thus identified with a set of mechanisms and processes of various sorts that causally explain the co-

⁶⁰ Machery (2008, 327) remarks that for a property to be part of human nature, it is not sufficient that it has perdured over generations; for it has to be explainable out of its *evolutionary history*. For example, the belief that the water is wet, that is likely common to most humans, stems more likely from perceptual experience than from the evolutionary modification of more ancient traits.

⁶¹ Samuels (2012, 25-6) argues that virtually *no* account of human nature may play the kind-individuating or taxonomic function in a way that is safe for evolutionary biology.

variation of several species-typical properties; such mechanisms and processes can be classified depending on whether they operate at the phylogenetic or ontogenetic level. For instance, selection and mutation are evolutionary mechanisms that operate at the phylogenetic level, whereas biological processes involved in the development of the neural tube operate at the ontogenetic level.

Thus, it is simply *false* that the acknowledgement of evolutionary facts compels to wipe out the very notion of human nature; it only rules out, at the most, anthropological essentialism, and closes the way to some roles – as the taxonomic function – that it commonly played. Thus, theories that, as nomological and causal-essentialist account, are compatible with an evolutionary understanding of our species, do provide a scientifically tenable and feasible terrain to reframe human nature. In the remainder of this chapter, indeed, I shall theorize sociability out of a nomological account of human nature.

More importantly still, both the nomological and the causal-essentialist accounts provide good reasons to prefer genealogical evolutionary explanations of human nature over social or cultural ones (Machery 2008, 326), that is exactly the opposite of what *social constructionist* accounts of human nature do hold. This brings me to deal with the post-modernist family of critiques of the human nature, the anti-essentialist commitment of which does not rely on naturalistic concerns, but rather on a radical historicization of reason. Rorty is a famous proponent of this postmodern and post-metaphysical⁶² standpoint, and I shall discuss his view as typical or representative of this line of thought.

It might be said that, just as anthropological essentialism is an instance of kind essentialism, Rorty's rejection of the very idea of a human nature is not a self-standing thesis as well, but rather an instance of a broader *anti-essentialist* commitment. Geras (1995, 2) suggests that anti-essentialism and anti-realism are for Rorty the two sides of the same coin, that he labels as anti-foundationalism. In other words, anti-foundationalism entails a twofold rejection: on the one hand, it dismisses the idea that things hold an intrinsic nature – as essentialism claims –, that Rorty (1989, 21) considers to be a remnant of the idea «that the world is a divine creation»; on the other hand, but relatedly, anti-foundationalism gets rid of the realist idea of things as they are *in themselves*, apart from descriptions and uses that humans make of them: «the world is out there, but descriptions of the world are not. Only descriptions of the world can be true or false. The world on its own - unaided by the describing activities of human beings – cannot» (Rorty 1989, 5). Rorty's anti-foundationalism is intended to lead to radical social-constructionist implications for human nature.

⁶² Although postmodernists typically endorse post-metaphysical commitments as, for instance, the rejection of «the dream of acquiring metaphysical knowledge as derived from supposedly self-justifying *a priori* first principles (Koo 2007, 106), the reverse is not true. A post-metaphysical thinker as Habermas (1987, 1992), for instance, still maintains an illuminist faith in the project of modernity – that it does not consider as a *failed* project, but rather as an *unfinished* project.

In a nutshell, social constructivism on human nature maintains that

there is nothing “beneath” socialization or prior to history which is definitory of the human. Such writers tell us that the question “what is it to be a human being?” should be replaced by questions like “what is it to inhabit a rich twentieth-century democratic society?” and “how can an inhabitant of such a society be more than the enactor of a role in a previously written script?” (Rorty 1989, XIII)

This anti-essentialist approach recommends a *deflationary attitude* to human nature; indeed, strictly speaking, there is no such full-fledged thing as human nature out there⁶³. On the contrary, the presumed metaphysical substance of human nature dissolves into the extraordinary variety of cultural forms that human society may assume. But such a radically constructionist approach is doomed to encounter several theoretical pitfalls.

First and foremost, to say that man are *just* what socialization and cultural patterns makes of them is tantamount to overestimate and virtually set no limit on human *plasticity*. As Koo pointed out, «although human beings are no doubt much influenced by their sociocultural environment, they are not so plastic as to be able to *totally transcend* their biology (Koo 2007, 108). Indeed, discussing the «limits of human adaptability» (Geras 1995, 67) is just part of what philosophical anthropology is about. Thus, a systematic discourse on human nature is expected to run a *negative* task, that is, to indicate limits on human plasticity, out of human biology. It is worth noting that this last statement is by no means incompatible with evolutionary biology: after all, it is true that a biologically plausible account of human nature as Machery and Samuels attempts to outline must be capable of leaving room for *evolutionary change* – unlike anthropological essentialism –⁶⁴, but it is also expected to acknowledge «a sense in which human nature is fixed. More-or-less by definition, laws of nature exhibit fixity in the sense that they are in some sense counterfactually robust» (Samuels 2012, 16). In other words, a scientifically respectable account may make sense of the traditionally acknowledged human nature’s *resistance to change*, which is to say that human nature «is supposed to set limits on human flexibility. That is, human nature is presumed to be, in some sense, *hard to change*» (Samuels 2012, 6). After all, this claim is supported by a massive body of knowledge from ethology, cognitive psychology and other neurosciences, that proved that social patterns and human modes of living and thinking «are not infinitely variable, as relativist cultural anthropologists maintained, nor depend on

⁶³ To the extent that social constructivism maintains an antirealist attitude towards human nature, then this label applies to Foucault as well, who famously denied that human nature is a full-fledged scientific concept (Chomsky & Foucault 2006). Indeed, he was overtly sceptical that human nature can unpack universal human attributes as separable from the social forms of life where such properties are actually observed. Rather, Foucault considered human nature in the guise of an epistemological indicator intended to designate a certain type of discourse in relation to others, as theology or history.

⁶⁴ As Samuels explicitly points out, a nomological or causal-essentialist account of human nature «won’t capture the idea that human nature is *strictly impossible to alter* [...] But it is far from clear that a replacement notion of human nature – one that seeks scientific respectability – should seek to capture such ideas» (Samuels 2012, 16; my emphasis).

historical factors and cultural conventions only, as they also correspond to species-typical cognitive and behavioural predispositions» (De Caro & Marraffa 2016, 151).

A second critique of Rorty's social constructionism is perhaps even more serious and undermines its *logical self-consistency*. For it seems that, by arguing that humans are *completely* socially determined, Rorty is implicitly conceding that humans *universally* share a common *susceptibility to social factors* as norms and values. This acknowledgement would amount to a crucial essentialist concession that may be lethal for Rorty's anti-essentialist stance, for at least two senses of human nature would be in so doing implicitly assumed (Geras 1995, 48-54), and so Rorty would eventually end up with endorsing anthropological essentialism. For firstly, Rorty seems to acknowledge that there is at least one feature – that is, susceptibility to social factors – that *all* human beings share cross-culturally and trans-historically (call it “*universality claim*”); secondly, this feature would plausibly apply to human beings *only* (call it “*human exclusivity claim*”), as Rorty states that «the *only* thing we share with all other humans is the same thing we share with *all other animals* – the ability to feel pain» (Rorty 1989, 177). Thus, in so saying not only Rorty contradicts the previous statement that «there is nothing to people except what has been socialized into them» (Rorty 1989, 177) – for he acknowledges a *pre-social* human commonality, that is susceptibility to pain –, but he also leaves no room for generalizing susceptibility to social factors to nonhuman animals *also* – insofar as he claims that susceptibility to pain is the only one commonality we have, and that is not distinctive of humans. A third quote from Rorty (1989) completes the puzzle:

human beings who have been socialized – socialized in any language, any culture – do share capacity which *other animals lack*. They can *all* be given a special kind of pain: They can all be humiliated by the forcible tearing down of the particular structures of language and belief in which they were socialized (Rorty 1989, 177).

Here Rorty makes an even more explicit commitment to both a universality claim and a human exclusivity claim, for he describes the susceptibility to humiliation as distinctively and universally human – and by “human”, he means a being «who have been socialized [...] in any language, any culture», and in so doing he assumes human susceptibility to social influence. Thus, Rorty seems to hold that all humans universally and distinctively share susceptibility to social factors and a related susceptibility to humiliation, that is a subset of a non-distinctively human susceptibility to pain. Thus, it seems that at least two *formal hallmarks* of anthropological essentialism, that is, the universality claim and the human exclusivity claim, are implicitly at work in Rorty's anti-essentialist critique. As the previous discussion of Machery and Samuels highlighted, universality claims and exclusivity claims – as well as the broader essentialist framework they are part of – are not only biologically controversial, but also not necessary for a scientifically respectable account of human

nature. In this respect, it is important to point out that the purpose of the discussion of Rorty's anti-essentialism is not to restore the scientific and philosophical tenability of essentialism, but rather to bring to light that Rorty's anti-essentialism ultimately rely on essentialist assumptions and is not a viable and self-consistent option.

In conclusion, anthropological essentialism is the shared target of philosophical-biological and postmodernist critiques; indeed, I hold that such essentialism can be indicated as one of the main reasons why human nature has fallen in disrepute. What I attempted to underline in this subparagraph is that, whereas Machery and Samuels promote valuable strategies to reframe human nature in non-essentialist terms, Rorty does not even conceive conceptual space for a non-essentialist account of human nature. In other words, it might be said that, by rejecting essentialism and the very notion of human nature *at once*, Rorty is throwing out the baby with the bathwater.

1.2 Philosophical anthropology matters

The discussion of Rorty's anti-essentialist critique of human nature led above is a good starting point to answer the second preliminary question formulated in the chapter's introduction, namely, *why* philosophical anthropology can make a difference in practical theorizing at all. For Rorty's implicit essentialist commitments may be symptomatic of a broader *unavoidability* of certain assumptions on human nature for formulating meaningful discourses on social, ethical, or political subjects. In fact, apparently Rorty cannot consistently underpin the *moral* claim that humiliation is an instance of pain that is distinctive of humans, unless out of the anthropological assumption that humans share a susceptibility to social factors. This example provides the structure of the argument I shall discuss in this paragraph, that is, that certain anthropological assumptions are *necessary*, owing to the *nature* of the social, ethical or political subject that is at stake.

It is of the highest importance to specify what I shall *not* endorse in this section and forth; first, I do not intend to commit to the historical claim that most contemporary practical theories are ultimately based on no anthropological assumption and are thus, so to say, anthropologically-neutral. After all, in this section I shall argue that such endeavor would be inherently unsuccessful and even unfeasible, and the previous discussion of Rorty's critiques of anthropological essentialism should be convincing enough so as to count as an instructive case study supporting this view. A second historical claim that I shall by no means defend is that most contemporary practical theories neglect their assumptions on human nature, leaving them hidden in the background as if they were uncontroversial or unneeded. Although this might be true for a relevant sample of contemporary influential moral and political theories (e. g. Kokers 2016), it is not my purpose to generalize the scope of this small-scale

observation; such an aim would call for a massive historical-philosophical body of knowledge that I am not endowed with.

The scope of my claim is narrower indeed, and is that the importance of philosophical anthropology for practical philosophy has been hardly discussed so far, let alone elaborated as a methodological issue. In other words, what I aim to report and criticize is a philosophical neglect toward the *core systematic position* that human nature maintains in practical theory, and toward the *extent* to which our views on human nature may affect practical theorizing.

Some relevant exceptions to this widespread neglect of this deep systematic relation between the theory of human nature and practical theorizing, though, are worth mentioning.

Sayer (2011) is undoubtedly one of the only social theorists who properly emphasized the importance of assumptions on human nature for practical philosophy. The final goal of Sayer (2011) is to account for the ethical dimension of human beings, that is, «what [it is] about people that makes them both ethical subjects and objects of ethical concern» (Sayer 2011, 98). Quite properly, Sayer underlines that for *such topic* to be tackled, it is necessary to start from an account of human social being; but he just adds a *broader claim*, that is,

it's *impossible* to avoid making assumptions about human nature in social science – even those who believe we are purely socially or culturally determined presuppose that we are susceptible to such determination – so it's better to make these assumptions explicit, rather than risk leaving them unexamined. We *need* a philosophical anthropology. [...] Much moral and political philosophy discusses at length how people treat or should treat one another while saying remarkably little about what kind of being people are, in terms of their capacities and susceptibilities, beyond having a capacity for reason, and even less about the societies in which they live (Sayer 2011, 98-9; my emphasis).

This argument can be unpacked in three separate claims; firstly, Sayer reports a *habit* that is quite common among social scientists and practical philosophers, that is, to keep implicit or even neglect their own assumptions on human nature. Secondly, Sayer argues that social and political theory encompass topics that are *not neutral* to such assumptions, which makes it «impossible» to refrain from them. Thirdly, and consequently, Sayer qualifies such habit as *methodologically bad*, inasmuch as it is tantamount to dismiss a constitutive part of the matter at stake.

In accordance with this methodological analysis, some pertinent remarks from Ryan (2012) are worth spending some time on:

if any viable ideological position *implies* the possession of an image of human nature, this is far from suggesting that most cultures have felt any great need to articulate that image. Indeed, it is arguable that this possession, like many others, is noticed only when it is lost. [...] Human nature is *intrinsic* to moral

and political argument, and the need for an explicit account is the more urgent when moral and political argument becomes fiercer and gets more swiftly down to basics (Ryan 2012, 220; my emphasis).

Ryan's argument is twofold, for he first states that an account of human nature is *intrinsic* and therefore, at the very least, implicitly at work in practical philosophy – which is roughly traceable back to Sayer's second claim isolated above. Secondly, Ryan suggests that the conceptual salience of the image of human nature may vary depending on the *specific subject* at stake in the practical domain. For example, in case of political conflicts that come close to civil war, they raise questions about the bases of legitimacy, and they imply views of human nature, and a lot more of course⁶⁵.

A third source of due emphasis on this point is the *incipit* of Pandolfi's introduction to his valuable essay on the history of the idea of human nature (Pandolfi 2006):

There is no need to spend too much time warranting an essay entitled *Human Nature* as part of a series devoted to the “lexicon of politics”. For no political ideology could ever renounce to the enormous potential of political legitimacy that is intrinsic to the concept of nature and, more specifically, of human nature. [...] Human nature is implicitly involved in *every* political issue or controversy. [...] Whatever cultural pattern unpacks it, any discourse on human nature is *inherently political*. (Pandolfi 2006, 7-10; my emphasis).

I deem highly significant that the very first sentence in the introduction seems to point to the saliency of human nature for political theory as a *self-evident fact*. Nonetheless, soon after Pandolfi gives us a substantive reason for such saliency, that is, that human nature is a core source of political legitimacy and public justification – an intuition that Ryan suggested as well, as noted earlier. It should be small wonder that human nature maintains such influence on the political realm, if one just realizes the extent to which political discourses revolving around equality depend on a previous understanding of what counts as a human being – that is, as a being that is morally eligible for claiming a fair share of a certain good. In short, the debate on the basis of human equality (Carter 2011) can be also framed as a debate that investigates certain properties that are part of human nature.

Thus, it seems that Sayer's, Ryan's and Pandolfi's methodological arguments share the focus on the endorsement of a common point, that is, that a number of assumptions on human nature lie *at the heart* of practical philosophy. This claim might be justified even only by the trivial acknowledgement that social, ethical, and political theory ultimately have to do with *human behaviour and action*⁶⁶, and that in so doing they *must* revolve around a set of assumptions on the human being, that is the subject and – mostly, at least – the object of such behaviour and action; on the contrary, this systematic

⁶⁵ I am extremely grateful to Prof. Ryan for expanding on this point in a private conversation.

⁶⁶ Santambrogio (2019, 5-7) emphasize that the scope of sociology itself revolves around human practices and their underlying mindsets.

constraint does not seemingly apply to other philosophical fields as, for instance, formal logic or philosophy of mathematics, that deal with a more genuinely *ideal* ontological domain or region. Thus, it seems that the nature of the arguments tackled by practical philosophy implies a salience of anthropological assumptions, that is not traceable as intrinsic to other philosophical fields.

An attempt to detail this idea has been made by Durkheim (2005 [1914]), as he justifies why an account of human nature is necessary for sociology:

although sociology is defined as the science of society, in reality it cannot deal with human groups, which are the immediate concern of its research, without in the end tackling the individual, the ultimate element of which these groups are composed. For society cannot constitute itself unless it penetrates individual consciousnesses and fashions them 'in its image and likeness'; so, without wanting to be overdogmatic, it can be said with confidence that a number of our mental states, including some of the most essential, have a social origin. Here it is the whole that, to a large extent, constitutes the part; hence it is impossible to try to explain the whole without explaining the part, if only as an after-effect (Durkheim 2005 [1914], 35).

In the typically Durkheimian holistic vein, the definition of individual comes out to be crucial insofar as individual consciousnesses is, «to a large extent» – that is, excluding that group of states of consciousness that are brutally self-regarding, such as sensory appetites –, a product of the “poietical” action taken by society on its constituents, by means of educational agencies and social control. It is important though to specify that the concessive conjunction «if only as an after-effect» must not be taken too seriously, for to be sure Durkheim did not uphold that society is a mystic free-floating entity, but rather that most individual states have a social origin that cannot be accounted in individualistic terms; in other words, here we are having to do once again with Durkheim’s attack against methodological individualism, that had been already discussed in the first chapter.

The idea that an account of human nature is a *building block* for any theory of society, as well as for any view on the relation between individual and society, or social solidarity, has been schematically summarized by Mooney (2014, 35):

Homo Economicus	Homo Sociologicus	Homo Inconstantus	Virtue Ethics and Critical Realist Personhood
<i>View of the Person</i>			
Individual is autonomous and rational	Individual fills social roles	Individual narratives are constantly shifting; persons have no enduring characteristics	Human persons have capacities that emerge through interaction with the world and other persons; human actions and societies are oriented toward a telos
<i>View of Society</i>			
Society is exogenous to the individual	Society is a bureaucratically managed set of role exchanges; social life is highly predictable	Roles and traditions have disappeared; social life is highly unpredictable	Social structures are ontologically real and causal. Social life is both predictable and unpredictable
<i>Relations between person and society</i>			
Individuals relate strategically to society and to others to fulfill egoistic needs	Individuals bring nothing unique to society; one individual can be replaced by another individual role-player	Neither the person nor society is ontologically real and both lack enduring characteristics	Human action can either reconstitute or transform social structures
<i>View of Altruism, Morality, and Social Solidarity</i>			
Altruism, morality, and social solidarity are part of a strategy to fulfill egoistic needs. Social interaction produces exclusively external goods that can be separated out to individuals. Virtues promote individual ends but need not serve the good of others	Altruism, morality, and social solidarity have no objective referent outside of social conventions and roles. Virtue is not possible because the good has no referent outside a particular situation and because the individual has no intention other than to follow prescribed rules	Altruism, morality, and social solidarity only arise out of momentary impulses. Interest in others' welfare or the common good is unstable. Virtue is not possible because the person is constantly changing his identity and shifting his concerns	Altruism, morality, and social solidarity arise out of personal commitments to ultimate concerns. Social practices oriented toward attaining virtue sustain both personal goods and the common good. Persons and societies depend on one another for their flourishing

Table 1: Competing views on human nature in social sciences (Mooney 2014, 35).

This table has the merit to foreground the core systematic role played by anthropological assumptions on social and political theory. However, I do not endorse every detail of its arrangement: as I shall discuss in the fourth chapter, there are good reasons to treat altruism as *part* of our view of the person itself – that is, as part of our philosophical anthropology –, rather than as part of a social, ethical or political theory.

2. Sociability as the anthropological determinant of solidarity

Whereas the previous section attains to practical theorizing in general, the following is specifically focused on solidarity. The purpose of this section is to explore in which terms solidarity can be unpacked at the light of its anthropological constituents. In what follows, I shall first (2.1) propose that the concept of “anthropological load” can be employed to quantify and qualify the

anthropological assumptions underlying social, ethical, and political concepts. In fact, I shall test on the concept of solidarity a methodology based on the notion of anthropological load.

Secondly (2.2), the discussion shall focus on the concept human sociability; in this respect, I shall question the what kind of concept sociability is, and suggest that it might be fruitfully framed as a dispositional property and as an open cluster concept.

2.1 Solidarity as a highly anthropologically-laden concept

Once the relevance of anthropological assumptions for social and political theory owing to the *nature* of these fields is verified, a further question is worth considering: are *all* social, ethical, and political concepts *equally* influenced from our background philosophical anthropology? I shall argue that a negative answer is more plausible, which is to say, that certain practical concepts are *more* anthropologically-laden than others, and that this variation is determined by the *structures* of these concepts themselves. This argument is expected counterbalance the philosophical neglect toward the extent to which our anthropological assumptions may affect practical theorizing, and to present a promising strategy to fill this deplorable void in contemporary practical philosophy.

In a highly instructive paper, Lukes (1967) showed that the Marxian concept of alienation and the Durkheimian concept of anomie – that some interpreters take to be synonymous, whereas others think that the one is a specification of the other – embed ultimately different hypothesis on the relationship between social conditions and individual psychological states, and suggested that a relevant part of the difference between these hypothesis is traceable back to «the fundamental divergence in the views on human nature they presuppose» (1967, 74). Thus, on Lukes' reading, anthropological assumptions *do indeed make a difference* in the construction of the concepts of alienation and anomie, and the unpacking of such assumptions is expected to shed light on the structure of such concepts.

A further case in this direction is examined by Hawkins (1979), who emphasized that noticeable changes in Durkheimian account of social solidarity from *The Division of Social Labour* (1893) to *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912) seem to have stemmed from substantive changes in Durkheimian account of the human nature. In other words, in accordance with Lukes, Hawkins' reading implicitly assumes that anthropological assumptions *underly* the concept of solidarity, so that a change in the anthropological building block is likely to bring about a change on the upper layers, where the elaboration of solidarity takes place.

These antecedent conceptual analyses suggest that the search for a method to *detect* the influence of anthropological assumptions on practical philosophy might be fruitful, and I shall attempt to test such method on the concept of solidarity. For such purpose, in the remainder of this section I shall assume

a provisional definition of solidarity, that is, mutual aid among fellows belonging to the same group (Abbagnano 1964, 796). Such definition is quite commonsensical indeed, and is compatible with both small-scale and large-scale ranges of action and grouping. It is the core goal of the following chapter, though, to turn this commonsensical definition into a philosophically convincing one.

My first claim is thus the introduction of the notion of the “anthropological load” of a concept, by which I refer to a property of degree that captures the *variability* of the definition of a concept *dependently on* the anthropological model assumed.

The second step is to verify whether remarkable consequences for the conceptual space for solidarity *do follow* as we shift from certain anthropological assumptions to opposite ones; to be sure, the broad label “anthropological assumptions” must be case-by-case specified or focused on *one* particular anthropological trait in order for the test to be feasible. The selection of the anthropological trait should be preferably guided by reliable reasons about its *salience* for the concept whose anthropological load is questioned. As for solidarity, I first hypothesize that human sociability is the anthropological trait the most salient for solidarity; if the anthropological load of solidarity will come out to be high, this outcome will be tantamount to providing a good reason in support of the salience of human sociability for solidarity. In any case, it might be said that such hypothesis converges with Durkheim’s statement – discussed in the first chapter – that, as we abstract solidarity from its empirical references, «we can perceive no more than that which is common to all varieties, that is, the general tendency to *sociability*» (DSL, 53-4).

The third step is thus to outline a sociability-based anthropological spectrum the ends of which encapsulate respectively the most pessimistic and the most optimistic readings of human sociability. Roughly put, the idea of sociability is related to the human tendency to associate and live together. Maurer (2013) provides a detailed historical focus on the vibrant debate on sociability that took place over the Eighteenth Century, with a special view to British philosophy. Mauer opportunely summarizes such debate recalling Hutcheson’s (2006 [1730]) partition of the British debate on human sociability and selfishness: on the one hand, there are those who base human sociability on self-interest, that is, on the consideration that, all things considered, «living in this way will be of the greatest benefit to each man» (Hutcheson 2006 [1730], 203); thus, on this reading, sociability is only natural in a secondary sense, that is, as a reason-driven arrangement. On the other hand, there are those who maintain that

human nature is not sociable only in this secondary sense for the sake merely of our own advantage or pleasure, whatever it may be, but is in itself immediately and primarily kind, unselfish, and sociable without regard to its advantage or pleasure (Hutcheson 2006 [1730], 206).

Whereas Pufendorf and Hobbes were ascribed by Hutcheson to the former view, Cumberland, Cooper and Shaftesbury were related to the latter. The list of references might be retrospectively extended so that it can include some possible forerunners of these lines of thought of sociability – for instance, Grotius and Machiavelli can be good candidates for having prefigured, respectively, the more optimistic and the less optimistic views. In what follows, though, I shall pick Aristotle and Hobbes as proponents of the classical antipodes on human sociability, out of the large influence that by broad acknowledgement their anthropological views have been exercised over the history of philosophy. To mention just a representative example of this trope, suffices to say that De Waal (2006, 3) clearly opposes Hobbes' views as holding that «we are asocial, even nasty creatures rather than the *zoon politikon* that Aristotle saw in us. Hobbes explicitly rejected the Aristotelian view by proposing that our ancestors started out autonomous and combative, establishing community life only when the cost of strife became unbearable».

According to the standard reading of Hobbes' philosophical anthropology (Schneewind 1998, 86; Mori 2012, 93; Pacchi 2009, 39; Cavarero 2013, 103-114), man is by nature *selfish* and *aggressive* toward his conspecific fellows; the pre-political state of nature was famously depicted by Hobbes by means of Plautus' formula «*homo homini lupus*» (Hobbes 1983 [1642], 24): given the scarcity of natural resources and that all men are equally able to kill one another⁶⁷, mutual competition gives rise to a condition of «war of all men against all men» (*bellum omnium contra omnes*). Thus, it is out of fear of death, rather than in virtue of a supposedly natural social propensity, that humans abandon the natural state and gather in a civil society⁶⁸. Following Hampton's reading of Hobbes' philosophical anthropology (1995), it might be appropriate to consider fear as an *intrinsic* property and sociability as an *interactive* property of humans (Hampton 1995, 8); in fact, whereas fear-related psychological mechanisms are possessed by a human in virtue of his or her being human, sociability-related passions seem to be acknowledged by Hobbes only as developing over time, which is to say that the latter require a continuative exposure to proper social interactions – a condition that is hardly met in the state of nature. In evolutionary terms, it might be said that in the state of nature sociability comes out to be a reason-driven and survival-enhancing arrangement, and only in the civil state sociability-related properties can flourish: as Hampton puts it, «we desire society only insofar as it has *instrumental value* for us, which means that our individuality grounds our sociality, not the reverse» (Hampton 1995, 9; my emphasis).

⁶⁷ In this respect, Cavarero (2013, 112) emphasizes the core position of homicide in the Hobbesian definition of equality; for human capacity for killing is considered by Hobbes, however different in degree, a veragely equal, inasmuch as even the physically weakest one is strong enough to kill another «either by secret machination or by confederacy with others that are in the same danger with himself» (Hobbes 1651, XIII, 1).

⁶⁸ «The passions that incline men to peace, are fear of death; desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living; and hope by their industry to obtain them» (Hobbes 1651, XIII, 14).

A clarification is needed on this point; the standard reading of Hobbes' account of human nature maintains that the latter supports *psychological egoism*. This label designates the view that «no person is ever motivated by any passions other than those that have benefit to their own self as an object» (Gert 2006, 167). However, it is controversial whether this label actually applies to Hobbes; for instance, Gert (1998, 2006) reports a massive textual evidence to support a kinder reading of Hobbes, to the detriment of the standard interpretation. Quite usefully, Hampton distinguishes among three senses of psychological egoism, in order to prepare a fine-grained reading on Hobbes' view of human nature; the taxonomy unfolds as follow:

PE1: the position that all of my actions are caused by my desires.

PE2: the position that all of my actions are caused by my desires and that they are in pursuit of a self-regarding object of desire.

PE3: the position that all of my actions are caused by my desires and that my desires are produced in me by a “self-interested” bodily mechanism. (Hampton 1995, 23).

Whereas PE1 encapsulates a view of practical deliberation that considers desires as the psychological trigger and reason as only instrumentally involved, the remainder options of the taxonomy are specifications of PE1 and are intended to shed light on a subtle distinction between “self-regarding” and “self-interested” desires. In fact, whereas the former attains to the *content* of our desires, the latter regards their *generation*. PE2 maintains that all desires that move us have a self-regarding content, which is to say that whatever the concrete object we pursue is, we pursue it just as a good to ourselves: «of the voluntary acts of every man, the object is some *good to himself*” (Hobbes 1996 [1951], XIV, 88). For instance, consider this anecdote about Hobbes reported by Aubrey:

One time, I remember, goeing in the Strand, a poor and infirme old man craved his almes. He, beholding him with eies of pitty and compassion, putt his hand in his pocket, and gave him 6d. Sayd a divine (scil. Dr. Jaspar Mayne) that stood by — “Would you have donne this, if it had not been Christ's Command?” — “Yea”, sayd he. — “Why?” quoth the other. — “Because”, sayd he, “I was in paine to consider the miserable condition of the old man; and now my almes, giving him some relief, doth also ease me” (Aubrey 1898, 352)

The reason Hobbes gave the theologian to account for his charity fits quite well with PE2; indeed, Hobbes' being charitable to the beggar is not motivated by an other-regarding desire – e. g., to aid the beggar –, but ultimately by a self-regarding one – e. g., to get a good reputation. PE2, however, does not make any statement on how our desires are generated, which is the object of PE3. In other words, PE3 pertains to the cause of desires, rather than to their content. In Hobbes' account, all desires are generated by bodily mechanisms that are biologically designated to pursue pleasure-producing

and pain-avoiding objects. Thus, strictly speaking, we do not desire pleasure, for pleasure figures as an explanatory factor accounting for the process of creation of our desires.

Both Hampton (1995, 19-24) and Gert (2006, 166-68) provide good reasons, out of historical and textual evidence, to reject that Hobbes endorsed PE2. For instance, Gert (2006, 166-68) contends that PE2 is inconsistent with several social passions acknowledged by Hobbes, as indignation, benevolence and charity, which do imply concern for *others' evils*⁶⁹.

Nevertheless, for the purpose of this theoretical discussion, I shall assume, *arguendo*, that Hobbes' account of human nature endorses not only PE1 and PE3, but PE2 as well. After all, this does not seem to be too much of an assumption, since even Hampton concedes that «calling him a psychological egoist in this second sense [i. e. PE2] is not an unreasonable mistake, especially because elsewhere in Leviathan he makes statements that seem to be explicit admissions of this interpretation of psychological egoism» (Hampton 1995, 22). Moreover, also Schneewind remarks that Hobbes often gives the impression that selfishness is so entrenched in human psychology that it «seems [...] to be the main and perhaps *sole* operative human motive» (Schneewind 1998, 86; my emphasis).

Hobbes' rejection of the Aristotelian account of human sociability is implicit in some passages from *The Leviathan*: «men have no pleasure, (but on the contrary a great deal of grief) in keeping company, where there is no power able to over-awe them all» (Hobbes 1998 [1651], XIII, 5). However, Hobbes' anti-Aristotelian stance is never as clear and explicit as in the following passage from *De Cive*:

the greatest part of those men who have written ought *beginning of* concerning Commonwealths, either suppose, or require us, or beg of us to believe, that Man is a Creature born fit for Society. The Greeks call him ζῷον πολιτικόν [...] Which Axiom, though received by most, is yet certainly False, and an Errour proceeding from our too slight contemplation of Human Nature; for they who shall more narrowly look into the Causes for which Men come together, and delight in each others company, shall easily find that this happens not because naturally it could happen no otherwise, but by Accident: For if by nature one Man should Love another (that is) as Man, there could no reason be return'd why every Man should not equally Love every Man, as being equally Man, or why he should rather frequent those whose Society affords him Honour or Profit. We do not therefore by nature seek Society for its own sake, but that we may receive some Honour or Profit from it; these we desire Primarily, that Secondarily (Hobbes 1996 [1642], I, II).

⁶⁹ The same remark is endorsed by Rawls (2007, 45), that also suggests that it is plausible that «Hobbes's largely self-centered, or self-focused [which is at any rate different than selfish or egoist], account of human nature serves, in effect, as an emphasis for the purposes of a political conception» (Rawls 2007, 46). Thus, on Rawls' reading, Hobbes' emphasis on human self-centrism is not to be taken too seriously – which is to say, as an account of what actual persons in the real world are like –, but as deliberately selective out of Hobbes' genuinely political concern for the social order problem.

Hobbes' reference to the Aristotelian doctrine of human sociability is explicit in this passage⁷⁰, and thus confirms the appropriateness of the dichotomy that I am proposing here. After all, Aristotle is the ideal opponent of Hobbes' «radical individualism» (Hampton 1995, 6), that is, the view that the individual is conceptually prior to society, and the basic properties that humans share are not products of their social existence. On the contrary, Aristotle held that society is conceptually prior to the individual; this view is reflected by the famous definition of man as a naturally social being (*zoon politikon*), which is to say that he cannot flourish and achieve self-realization outside society (Miller 1995, 28; Reale 1974, 119; Cambiano 2010, 129-30). To be sure, the foundations of society (or *polis*, in Aristotle's lexicon⁷¹) are *in part* based on human inability to survive in solitude: «the state is one of those things which exist by nature, and [...] man is by nature an animal fit for a state [*zoon politikon*]. Anyone who by his nature and not by ill-luck has no state is either a wretch or superhuman» (Aristotle 1995, 3–1253 1-7). Commenting this passage, Saunders observes that, in all likelihood, what Aristotle meant by the claim that man is an animal «fit for a state» is that he is *normally* born endowed with the *capacity* for developing the cooperative virtues that are necessary to live in a state; a man who were born lacking such potential (*dunamis*) would be, on Aristotle's view, «“a wretch”, because the co-operative virtues are essential to life in a state, *which is in turn essential to happiness*; for without co-operators, he has to fight to live, and therefore lacks leisure [...] The inference seems extreme: hermits may have only minimal happiness» (Saunders 1995, 69). Thus, sociability serves *also* survival-enhancing functions, as it does on Hobbes' account. But in Aristotle's view, there is *much more* than mere physical survival at stake in sociability, as the latter is necessary *not only* to survive, but also to flourish as a human being, which is to say, to *live well*. Sociability is then not a mere practical arrangement, but a propensity that is part of human nature and sets certain constraints for human flourishing and happiness. A similar view has been recently endorsed by relational accounts of personhood, that foreground an «intrinsic human need to look out for others, and to be looked out for» (Prainsack & Buyx 2017, 51); this understanding of personhood has important entailments for human psychology, for «if others play a role in shaping our identities and our interests, then very few things that we do are exclusively self-regarding or solely self-interested» (Prainsack & Buyx 2017, 50).

⁷⁰ This anti-Aristotelian stance upheld by Hobbes is also confirmed by Schneewind: «in explaining what moves us to live with one another, Hobbes not only departs from Aristotle; he goes beyond the limits of Grotianism. He rejects the idea of natural sociability. We are not “by nature” political beings, we have no natural desire to come together, and we are not moved to society by love of other people» (Schneewind 1998, 86).

⁷¹ To be sure, I do not intend to equalize *polis* and society as they refer to different kinds of association, arisen in very distant eras (Santambrogio 2015).

Accordingly, Hobbes' account of sociability is rational-instrumental – i. e., a reason-driven and survival-enhancing option to promote one's self-interest in the state of nature⁷² –, whereas Aristotle maintains a natural-teleological stance on sociability – i. e., sociability is a propensity that is part of human nature per se, and not the outcome of a practical reasoning.

Once the diametrically opposed views on human sociability are outlined, the following step is to place them on the ends of the sociability-based spectrum to test how the shift from the one to the opposite affects our conceptual space for theorizing solidarity. For I claim that, shifting from the left and most anthropologically pessimistic end of the spectrum to the right and most anthropologically optimistic one⁷³, at least two consequences follow.

The first consequence is a broadening of the conceptual space available for *defining* solidarity. For if we assume a Hobbesian-inspired anthropology, solidarity seems to be conceivable as self-regarding cooperation *only*; as we shift to an Aristotelian-inspired optimistic anthropology, a broader set of *other-regarding* relationships and social phenomena can be encompassed by the concept of solidarity, from personal to civic friendship. This point pertains to the explanatory power of such accounts of human psychology, and as Habermas remarks, «it is especially *unrealistic* to assume that *all* social behaviour is strategic action and can thus be explained as though it were the result of egocentric utility calculations. The explanatory power of this sociological model is obviously limited» (Habermas 1996, 337; my emphasis).

The second consequence resulting from a shift from the left to the right end of the spectrum is a broadening of the conceptual space available for *appreciating* solidarity. If we assume a Hobbesian-inspired anthropology, solidarity may be given an instrumental value *only*, just as our broader desire for society: as Hampton emphasized, this amounts to claim that «we desire society only insofar as it has instrumental value for us, which means that our individuality grounds our sociality, not the reverse» (Hampton 1995, 9). As we shift to an Aristotelian-inspired anthropology, solidarity may be assigned an *intrinsic* value also – this is why, I suggest, Aristotle is able to acknowledge, beside utility-based and pleasure-based kinds of friendship, also a rarer non-selfish and virtue-based kind of friendship: «perfect friendship is the friendship of men who are good, and alike in virtue; for these wish well alike to each other *qua good*, and they are good *in themselves*» (Aristotle 2009, 1156b 7-9; my emphasis).

⁷² As Habermas pointed out, Hobbes «wants to explain why absolutist society is justified as an instrumental order from the perspective of all participants, if only they keep to a strictly purposive-rational calculation of their own interests» (Habermas 1996, 90).

⁷³ It might be contested that, by the employment of terms as “optimistic” and “pessimistic” in relation to opposite accounts of sociability being compared, an underlying evaluative stance is betrayed. I do not think that this counts as a reason to dismiss such terminology, inasmuch as several Hobbes’ commentators ascribed him a “pessimistic” view of human nature (Gert 1998, 5; Hampton 1995, 22).

In the remainder of this subparagraph, I shall examine some troublesome or ambiguous respects affecting my argument.

I shall first discuss two possible *historical* criticisms that revolve around the way I fashioned the sociability-based spectrum. One may have doubts about the capacity of such spectrum, as *hybrid* accounts of human sociability, as Kant's (2015 [1784], 61) famous view on human "unsocial sociability" (*ungesellige Geselligkeit*), could be barely placed within it. A second objection might be rather based on the *accuracy* of the readings of Hobbes' and Aristotle's views on human sociability that I proposed. In this respect it is of the highest importance to specify that the nature and purpose of the sociability-based spectrum, as well as the relevance of Aristotle and Hobbes for its formulation, are *theoretical* rather than historical. As noted earlier, I only picked these philosophers out of their massive historical-philosophical influence. Thus, should it come out, say, that Hobbes had a less pessimistic view of the human nature than that I presented (Hampton 1995, 19-24; Gert 2006, 157-174; Rawls 2007, 41-48), nothing invalidating my argument would follow. For my argument relates solidarity to possible variations of sociability, and its validity does not rely on historically entrenched anthropological schemes. Indeed, even if *no* actual philosopher would have *ever* endorsed the pessimistic anthropological view I ascribe to Hobbes, this would not make any difference for the *conceptual* implications for solidarity that such view would carry.

There are also three *conceptual* worries that I consider worth mentioning here. The first conceptual criticism stems from a scepticism on my method's effectiveness in capturing the anthropological load of *other* social, ethical and political concepts. Thus, the criticism may continue, for the definition of solidarity as *highly* anthropologically-laden concept to make sense, at least one good example of a less or even *lowly* anthropologically-laden concept is needed. In other words, it may be questioned that the case of solidarity is convincing enough to justify the claim that a concept's anthropological load is a matter of degree, unless at least one convincing example of lowly anthropologically-laden concept is at hand. Yet identifying lowly anthropologically-laden concepts may be a demanding endeavour to accomplish, out of a conceptual reason: I earlier argued that the selection of the human trait (e. g., sociability) out of which the anthropological spectrum is fashioned should be ideally guided by good reasons about its salience for the practical concept (e. g., solidarity) whose anthropological load is questioned. In absence of good reasons in favour on the salience of an anthropological trait for the practical concept at stake, thus, one can only *hypothesize* such salience. Once the anthropological spectrum is outlined, the following step is testing whether important consequences for the conceptual space for theorizing that practical concept do follow, reversing the assumptions about the presumably salient anthropological trait. If the outcome of the test is positive and the anthropological load of such concept comes out to be high, this amounts to a *good reason* in

support of the salience of the anthropological trait; in other words, to verify one concept's *high* anthropological load leads to verify indirectly the *salience* of the anthropological trait assumed. The problem is that this ex-post validation cannot be supplied when it comes to detecting *lowly* anthropologically-laden concepts. In fact, if reversing the salient anthropological assumptions leads to *no* remarkable consequence on the theorization of the practical concept, then the outcome of the test is negative, which is to say that the practical concept at stake is lowly anthropologically-laden. However, and here lies the core of the criticism, in this negative case the salience of the anthropological trait assumed does not gain any ex-post validation from the outcome of the test. One might then challenge the *arbitrariness* of the choice of the "salient" human trait in relation to which the practical concept came out to be lowly anthropologically-laden, and deny that such low anthropological load was properly diagnosed.

I do not have a knock-down argument against this criticism, that would deserve a broader discussion indeed. In this section, I confine myself to suggest that a possible example of lowly anthropologically-laden concept may be individuated in *negative freedom*; for the purpose of discussion, I propose that *free-will* may be a good candidate to provide an anthropological marker on a rough negative freedom-oriented spectrum; in this case, however, it seems to come out that negative freedom is a *lowly anthropologically-laden* concept, as assuming a compatibilist or incompatibilist view on free-will – that is, competing views on the assumed anthropological marker, namely free-will – seem not to make a crucial difference in determining one's *normative* views on negative freedom. In other words, not because one maintains a certain stance on free-will is per se constrained to uphold a certain view on negative freedom.

The second conceptual worry is that for the notion of anthropological load to make sense at all, a sharp line must be drawable between the class of anthropological assumptions or human traits, on the one hand, and social, political and moral concepts on the other hand. However, it may be questioned that some concepts can be uncontroversially assigned to the former or to the latter domain. For instance, is labour a trait of human nature (e. g. as a human need), or a practical concept? However, a grey area is trackable in most conceptual distinctions, and is not a reason for dismissing such distinctions; for instance, it is not because of the twilight that we are supposed to get rid of the dichotomy of day and night.

The third and last conceptual worry is that my argument on the anthropological load might be interpreted as reducing the complexity of the structure of practical concepts. In other words, it may be argued that theorizing practical concepts is not affected by the sole influence of anthropological assumptions, but by a number of other assumptions and premises. For example, it is quite plausible that theorizing solidarity involves not only our views on human sociability, but also a theory of

society, a theory of the relation between individuals and society, and other salient conceptual ingredients may be added. I do not think that this remark actually counts as a criticism toward my argument, unless out of a wrongheaded reading of the latter. For by no means have I argued that anthropological assumptions are the *only* conceptual ingredient having an influence on practical theorizing; on the contrary, I proposed that our image of human nature might be considered as the *building block* of practical theorizing – which reflects the claim that any practical concept is, at least to a certain degree, anthropologically-laden – and that multiple layers are embedded in a practical theory. Thus, it is not my intention to claim that for theorizing a practical concept one should *exclusively* pay attention to the underlying anthropological assumptions, without any regard to other classes of assumptions. Rather, I claim that one cannot theorize a practical concept *unless* out of a number of assumptions on human nature, and that accordingly it is methodologically sound to make such assumptions explicit. The reason why I put anthropological assumptions at the centre of this section is that, unlike other classes of relevant assumptions, their importance for practical philosophy has not been properly discussed so far.

To sum up, if it is true that – on a *metatheoretical* stance – solidarity is a highly anthropologically-laden concept, it follows that the background anthropological views are highly crucial for its definition; thus, the next step of my research is more genuinely *theoretical* and is to outline a philosophical anthropology *out of which* theorizing solidarity.

2.2 Sociability as a disposition

The child survives thanks to services which natural affection inspires. The grown man goes through life requiring affection, and is fortunate indeed if he obtains it from worthy persons whose expectations spur him on to achievements. Geniuses, it is said, can do without such a climate, not so ordinary men. We are affective creatures, and moved by our affections (De Jouvenel 1963, 53).

This quote from one of De Jouvenel's most mature theoretical-political works, *The Pure Theory of Politics*, is pertinent to the scope of this chapter for a number of reasons: first and foremost, it is largely consistent with much developmental evidence supporting the core role of social interaction for human flourishing (see Appendix for discussion of this literature). Secondly, and in accordance with the methodological analysis lead in the first section of this chapter, De Jouvenel's interest in philosophical anthropology is inseparable from political theory: indeed, the previous quote continues with the statement that «working upon men's affections is characteristic of Politics» (*Ibid.*), which is to say that a proper knowledge of human emotions' levers is a constitutive part of politics; in this respect, it is significant that the second section of *The Pure Theory of Politics* is devoted to a

genuinely philosophical-anthropological topic, that is, «Setting: ego in otherdome». Thirdly, it implicitly traces back human sociability to the emotional domain of human nature. This brings me to the core argument of this subparagraph, the aim of which is to propose that sociability might be fruitfully conceptualized as a *dispositional property* and as an *open-cluster concept*.

Sociability is a fuzzy concept, that is often mentioned by philosophers and social scientists in a variety of uses but rarely endowed with a clear definition. Sociability suffers from an ambiguity between a subjective sense and an intersubjective one: on the one hand, it is a property that is ascribable to individuals but, on the other hand, it can be manifested in concrete intersubjective contexts only. I suggest that such ambiguity can be rather maintained as a tension which is constitutive of the concept, and the upcoming proposal is intended to make sense of this respect. In fact, I shall consider sociability as a *dispositional property*, namely, a kind of property that is individuated by the manifestations that its bearer brings about, given certain conditions. Dispositional properties, in other words, *dispose* their bearers to do certain things and to behave in certain ways, and while the properties are always instantiated in the individuals, the appearance of their manifestations depend upon the instauration of a particular context. For instance, water bears the disposition to boil, which becomes manifest when the liquid is heated at over 100 degrees at sea level – but the manifestation – the boiling – may remain latent if such condition is not met. As for sociability, I am proposing that it is a dispositional property instantiated by human *individuals*, whose manifestations become observable only under *intersubjective* contexts. Moreover, I shall treat sociability as a trait of human nature, that is, a property that carries a reliable *descriptive* power on humans; in other terms, sociability is a property which sheds light on what humans are like⁷⁴.

Before addressing this issue in detail, it is worth mentioning a premise that is intended to clarify what I do *not* aim to do in the remainder of this section. In fact, I propose that the concept of sociability can be framed in terms of a disposition. To exhaustively understand dispositionalism, namely the view that certain or all properties are dispositions, a full-fledged commitment to a particular metaphysical view is necessary. This is because disposition attributions are metaphysically neutral (Williams 2019) and must be consequently grounded into more fundamental powers, causal bases, properties, and so forth. In what follows, though, I shall confine myself to the *ascription* of sociability as a species-typical dispositional property instantiated by humans, refraining from a deeper metaphysical commitment on the nature of its grounding, which is not relevant to my research.

Framing sociability as a disposition carries a number of consequences. For a dispositional property may be instantiated by an individual, but its manifestations may still remain *latent* in that individual

⁷⁴ Insofar as dispositions are dispositional properties, it follows that they are a specific kind of properties; thus, in this section I shall refer to sociability both as a disposition and as a property.

(Choi & Fara 2018); for instance, the fragility of a glass is not visible, unless certain conditions are met (e. g., a violent collision with another body). Analogously, we might expect that a child's sociability shall neither flourish nor become behaviourally observable if that child were born on an utterly uninhabited island. Of course, it might be questioned whether a child's sociable disposition would not become manifest *at all*, if that island were at the very least populated by gregarious species that would adopt and rear her. I see the point of this remark. After all, cases of feral children have been reported throughout history and have always caught the imagination of writers and readers; however, such cases are singular events that cannot fill a proper sample and, accordingly, most of the literature about them is anecdotic (Sobel & Li 2013, 295-7). In other words, there are good reasons to be hesitating to draw reliable developmental conclusions from these sporadic cases, even only on consideration of the fact that «it is not possible to separate out all the factors that brought these unfortunate children to the condition in which they were found. Physical and emotional damage are influential to an unknowable degree» (Sobel & Li 2013, 297). In a similar vein, when it comes to comparing feral children with autistic children, Bettelheim confronts the same methodological difficulty, by means of the acknowledgement that «from historical accounts of most of the feral children, diagnosis cannot be established. But, the more detailed the accounts, the more definitely do they seem to signalize autistic children» (Bettelheim 1959, 455). However, the view of sociability that I am about to outline is intended to leave conceptual space for cases of humans who got *socialized* among non-human animals; in other words, according to my account of sociability, it would be conceptually possible to conceive of Mowgli-like cases. This brings me to unpack the five core features of sociability as a dispositional property, as I aim to fashion it.

Firstly, human sociability does not need to cover properties that are *universal* nor *distinctive* of humans; indeed, in line with the nomological account that I endorsed in section 2.1, our quest for human nature should be oriented toward features that are entrenched in our species' evolutionary history, regardless of their being universally shared by *all* human beings, and by human beings *only* – as anthropological essentialism would claim. Thus, there might be human sociability-related properties that are common to other species, and there might be human individuals lacking one or more human sociability-related properties.

Secondly, I consider human sociability as characterised by an *open cluster* of properties, which is to say, as a non-definitive set of features which do not yield necessary nor jointly sufficient condition for an entity to be classified as sociable. As a conceptual tool to describe objects, the cluster has had many philosophically fruitful employments – e. g. Tripodi (2009) frames “womanness” as a cluster concept – and it is even possible to single out different varieties of cluster (Parsons 1973). Opting for the open cluster to conceptualize sociability is recommendable for two reasons at the very least; first

and foremost, inasmuch as sociability is part of a broader nomological picture of human nature, it must be assumed to be the outcome of an evolutionary history. This naturalistic commitment leaves open the possibility that, over evolutionary eras, sociability might evolve to the point that it comes out to share hardly anything with the best description of it that we can afford at the moment. The second reason to opt for the open cluster attains to the nature of the ontological regional domain the concept is part of; for sociability is part of human nature, but cannot be *defined* as accurately as other human properties as, say, opposable thumb. Indeed, sociability is too much more *multi-faced* as a phenomenon than opposable thumb, inasmuch as more variables are involved in the description of the former. Thus, it seems sound to settle for a loose conceptualization of sociability, and the open cluster fits the bill with this purpose. Accordingly, not only being understood as an open cluster makes sociability not exhaustively unpackable by definition, but it would be also an unnecessary attempt in this direction. In line with this claim, I will only propose a selective, provisional, and ostensive catalogue of sociability-related features.

Thirdly, human sociability is a *scalar property*, rather than a range or binary property (Carter 2011, 548–9); this amounts to say that being sociable is a matter of *degree*, and is not the kind of property that is either possessed or not possessed among human beings –the same applying to most non-human animals as well. This move enables us to make sense of the acknowledgement that, as a matter of fact, human beings tend to possess sociability with remarkable interpersonal variations. Indeed, I shall assume that a human being who instantiates a *proper subset* of the open cluster –i.e., if she instantiates at least one feature listed by the open cluster –counts as a sociable human being. The more sociability-related features a human being instantiates, the more sociable that individual is.

Fourthly, inasmuch as sociability is framed as a dispositional property, it is one thing to *instantiate* sociability, and another thing to make one's sociable disposition *manifest* through observable behaviour. The possible discrepancy between one's sociable disposition and the extent to which such disposition is visible – rather than latent – enables us to distinguish among individual traits that are full-fledged part of the sociability open cluster, on the one hand, and social actions and practices which are undertaken out of such traits, on the other hand. This distinction is of the highest importance for the definition of solidarity to be presented and discussed in chapter 4.

As a fifth point, it should be noted that each feature appearing in the following catalogue is put in dispositional terms; for instance, there is no explicit reference to empathy per se, which is not strictly a property, but rather to «displaying empathy», which in contrast is. However, to be sure, the property of displaying empathy does presuppose that empathy per se exists, as a capacity, an emotion, or whatever else it might be framed as. In chapter 3, I will in fact focus on the discussion of a), b) and c), that are taken to be the most salient sociability-related features for understanding solidarity.

- a) *Being empathic*
- b) *Being moved by prosocial motivations (egoism, altruism, collectivism, principlism)*
- c) *Being able to categorize the self*
- d) *Being compassionate*
- e) *Being able to feel shame*
- f) *Being able to feel guilt*
- g) *Experiencing the need for recognition*
- h) *Experiencing the need for belonging*
- i) *Experiencing the need for care*

Before concluding this section, let me provide a couple of remarks that are intended to shed light on how such loose catalogue of features is systematically related to the remainder of this chapter.

The first comment is that, according to the *nomological* account of human nature of which such concept of sociability is part of, it must be assumed that, for each sociability-related property, an evolutionary explanation must be available. If no explanation of such sort is at hand, it must be assumed that there is one. To be sure, it can be shown that such epistemological condition can be met for most of the features listed above; for instance, Turner (2014) provides a long-term evolutionary explanation of negative social emotions as guilt and shame, that has been discussed in the previous subsection. As for empathy and altruistic motivation, a number of evolutionary arguments are unfolded by De Waal (2006, 2013). However, a follow-up remark is needed at this point; for one thing is the methodological principle that a philosophical account of sociability should rely on the best scientific accounts available for its explanation, and another thing is to *reduce* sociability to its evolutionary history. In this spirit, following Darwin, De Waal (2013) suggests that it may be conceptually proper to set the evolutionary history of a trait apart from its possible uses; in other words, we should better distinguish the *process* of natural selection from its *products*. For instance, empathy and altruistic motivation might have resulted, in the long run, as fitness-enhancing traits in a highly competitive process as natural selection is, but the evolutionary history of a trait does not preclude new and different uses of it. Indeed, De Waal considers the nonrecognition of such distinction as a specific fallacy, that he refers to as the «Beethoven error». In fact, his point is that it is not the case that a nasty process *ipso facto* produces nasty outcomes:

to think so is what I have dubbed the “Beethoven error”, since it is like evaluating Ludwig van Beethoven’s music on the basis of how and where it was composed. The maestro’s Viennese apartment was a messy, smelly pigsty, strewn with waste and unemptied chamber pots. Of course, no one judges

Beethoven's music by it. In the same way, even if genetic evolution proceeds through death and destruction, this doesn't taint the marvels it has produced (De Waal 2013, 25 **epub**).

The second conclusive remark is that, however only roughly listed so far, the sociability-related catalogue provides enough space for *other-regarding desires* to be distanced from PE2, that is, the claim that the content of all our desires is self-regarding. As we have seen in the previous section, such pessimistic view is located to the left end of the anthropological spectrum, and opposed to an Aristotelian-inspired account of sociability. It might be said that my own account of sociability can be placed, at the moment, on the right side of the spectrum – this is why it could be labelled as a kind of *moderately optimistic* view of human sociability. In fact, it is true that my account would leave conceptual room for an individual who only instantiates one sociability-related property, say, need for recognition, and thus meets the condition to be individuated as a sociable being – that is, to instantiate a proper subset of the sociability cluster. On principle, an individual who seeks recognition from his fellows can act out of self-regarding motives only, and thus ultimately behave like PE2 would expect him to. However, I do not think that this is a real issue for my account to keep the distance from PE2; in fact, assuming that such individual were actually triggered by self-regarding motives *only* – which seems too much of an assumption –, not only would this case be *not representative* and *not exhaustive* on how people generally act in the real world, but it could well be classified as a case of a *lowly* sociable being. As noted earlier, inasmuch as sociability is a scalar property, beings can be more or less sociable, depending on how many sociability-related features they instantiate.

Conclusion

In the first section of this chapter, I argued that an empirically informed and conceptually developed account of human nature is essential to a convincing defense of any social, moral or political theory. A further sub-claim of this chapter is that we have to outline a sort of measure that could track the level of dependency of a theory on an anthropological account and, in particular, on a specific human trait that is specifically salient for the issue at stake. I proposed that the notion of «anthropological load» might suit this purpose, and tested it on the concept of solidarity, showing that the salient anthropological property it is most tied to is human sociability.

The second section of this chapter is consequent to the methodological argument unpacked in the first part, and aims to sketch the view of the concept of human sociability that my definition of solidarity shall be based on. For the purpose of this chapter, I confine myself to the framing of sociability as a dispositional property and as an open cluster concept, listing a provisional, loose and open set of

features; plus, I concede that a human being who instantiate even only one of such properties can be entitled to be attributed sociability. In this section, thus, I attempted to unpack the *structure* of the concept of sociability; it is a task of the following chapter to narrow the focus and expand on some sociability-related properties, that are possible ingredients for a convincing philosophical account of solidarity.

Chapter 3. Unpacking sociability: the psychological determinants of solidarity

The concept of sociability has been acknowledged a key position in accounting for solidarity in Chapter 2. In fact, it has been shown to be the anthropological trait the most salient for solidarity, and framed both as a disposition and as a cluster concept. Several social emotions, needs, and capacities can be plausibly traced back to such cluster, a provisional list of which has been attempted in the second chapter's ending. However, it seems reasonable to assume that, just as sociability is not the only one but the most salient anthropological trait that is salient for theorizing solidarity, the same differentiation applies to the properties that articulate the sociability cluster, some of which shall be presumably more influent on solidarity compared to others. In what follows, I will focus on three psychological properties of the sociability cluster that are most plausibly involved in solidarity, that is, self-categorization (1), empathy (2), and other-regarding motivations (3). In this section, I shall provide an overview of these concepts, which need a proper theoretical analysis before being assessed and possibly associated to explain solidarity in Chapter 4.

1. Self-categorization and the psychological reality of social groups

Self-categorization theory (henceforth, SCT; Turner 1987) is a prominent social-psychological framework, some core insights of which are still maintained and unsurpassed over the contemporary debate in this field. To ensure a proper understanding and appreciation of the core novelties embedded by Turner's theory, it is well worth presenting a number of preliminary considerations.

By broad acknowledgement, groups provide a constitutive field where human sociability takes place. As Brown & Pehrson (2020, XI) puts it, «groups provide people with a sense of who they are – and who they are not – and much of what happens within and between groups can be understood as attempts by people to express, clarify, or defend their *social identity*». Thus, groups and group belonging are endowed with an anthropological or existential tone⁷⁵, in that they are an unavoidable social experience to which every human being as such is subject (Speltini & Palmonari 1999, 20). To be sure, however, the same consensus does not apply neither to the ontological status that groups are acknowledged – which is to say, whether groups are mere nominal fallacies or rather something more than the sum of their parts – nor to the causal explanation of group-related phenomena. From the

⁷⁵ Interestingly, a similar concern for the human condition is often pointed as part of the metatheoretical background of social ontology as well. For instance, De Vecchi (2009, XIV) describes Gilbert's research on social ontology as guided by an existential concern; after all, it is Gilbert herself who admonishes that we cannot even hope in a proper understanding of the human condition, unless and before we have a good explanation for the sense of the collective we (Gilbert 2009, 1).

social-psychological standpoint, a theory of social groups means is required to account for the processes underlying group behaviour and, in so doing, it cannot but tackle «the relationship of the individual to the group» (Turner 1987, VII).

As a broad characterization of the research field, social psychology aims at shedding light on the intersection between the psychological life and the social domain and places itself, accordingly, at the border between psychology and sociology (Speltini & Palmonari 1999, 11). Indeed, Allport (1962) considered the nature of the relationship between the individual and the group as social psychology's «master problem». Perhaps surprisingly, the research interest of social psychologists toward groups has not been unvaried and uniform over the last century. In fact, Speltini and Palmonari report that, two decades after the foundation by Kurt Lewin of the «Research Centre for Group Dynamics» at the MIT in 1945, a European tradition of research on groups put down roots in the 60s along the line of the works by Tajfel, Moscovici, and others. In the 70s and 80s, on the contrary, groups received a lower attention as ontological individualism and the increasing employment of experimental methods – to the detriment of methods as intercultural comparison and interviews – entrenched in social psychology (Turner 1987, 24; Speltini & Palmonari 1999, 15-17)⁷⁶. However, social psychology has boasted a number of theoretical approaches on social groups. Provided that it would exceed the scope of this section to provide an exhaustive historical survey on such a rich body of research (Speltini & Palmonari 1999, 11-47; Turner 1987, 2-18), suffices to say SCT is, in Turner's words, «the product of a distinct European tradition of research on social categorization processes and social identity initiated by the late Henry Tajfel» (Turner 1987, VIII). Significantly, the book itself is explicitly dedicated to Tajfel (Turner 1987, X). However, for the purpose of this chapter, I will only touch upon some respects of Tajfel's influence on Turner's research, setting apart the latter's debts to antecedent and competing frameworks, as the interdependence theory based on the work of Sherif, Ash, and Lewin.

Three respects of continuity and discontinuity between Tajfel's social identity theory (henceforth, SIT) and Turner's SCT are worth highlighting here, before presenting the specific commitments of the latter. First and foremost, both theories situate themselves somewhere in between the group mind thesis (LeBon 1895, McDougall 1921) and individualism on groups (Allport 1924). According to the former view, groups maintain some mental properties over the consciousness of the individuals which compose them. As an example, on LeBon's «law of mental unity of crowds» (1895), it is mental unity and not physical proximity which defines a crowd, that reflects the shared qualities of an ethnos and,

⁷⁶ In a consonant vein, in a former publication (Brown 2000, 7), Brown laments that the mainstream handbooks and journals in social psychology in vogue at that time payed remarkably little attention for group processes, compared to interpersonal or dyadic relationships and individual cognitive processes that had been more systematically studied until that time.

by leveraging individual instincts and emotions over reason, leads people to act as unconsciously as primitive beings. The collective mind thesis, on LeBon's account, can be explained by three core processes – deindividuation, contagion, and suggestion – in virtue of which crowd actions are virtually unthinkable by the individual crowd members on their own (Brown & Pehrson 2020, 3). On the contrary, Allport's strategy against the group mind thesis is, at the very least, twofold: a first argument is epistemological, and claims that whatever the presumed group mind is like, it cannot be independently verified, that is, that it is not observable or touchable apart from the individuals that comprise it. However, Allport also claimed that «there is no psychology of groups which is not essentially and entirely a psychology of individuals» (Allport 1924, 4). In other words, the individual is the only psychological reality and there is no distinctive group psychology (Turner 1987, 10). Both Tajfel and Turner reject these views and uphold the *psychological reality of the group*, which is to say, that the concept of group maintains a theoretical relevance – and not a mere descriptive convenience, as even Allport conceded – and plays an explanatory role in accounting for social behaviour. To be sure, however, acknowledging the psychological reality of the group does by no means indulge any metaphysical commitment to the notion of group mind as such; in fact, the former refers to the claim that group psychology cannot be reduced to individual psychology, that is, that there are social processes which causally affect the psychology of the individual, and change the nature of her responses accordingly.

A second continuity between SIT and SCT is that both aim at tackling an entrenched epistemological prejudice that can be traced back to early mass psychology of the last century as well as LeBon's group mind thesis presented above, that fostered the view that social behaviour is remarkably more likely than individual behaviour to release the most primitive and violent human instincts (Speltini & Palmonari 1999, 18-20; Moscovici & Doise 1991, 42). As Brown puts it, according to this view, «all that is good about human conduct resides within the moral integrity of individuals, and the primary effect of groups is to corrupt this and drag us to a baser, more dangerous level» (Brown & Pehrson 2020, 174). Such rough prejudice over group behaviour typically leads to unilaterally overemphasize unsettling group phenomena as «diffusion of responsibility» and «deindividuation»⁷⁷ to the detriment of the *socio-cognitive* basis of group behaviour and the resulting prosocial outcomes (Turner 1987, 67).

⁷⁷ The «diffusion of responsibility» or «bystander effect» is the sociopsychological phenomenon where the more people share responsibility for helping, the less each person feels individual responsibility and, accordingly, motivation to undertake prosocial action (Brown 2020, 174; Speltini & Palmonari 1999, 18; Gattino 2006, 57; Mucchi Faina 2001, 83-4). «Deindividuation» is a notion that has been framed in different ways, all of which characterize groups «as a potential threat to self-awareness and self-restraint» (Brown & Pehrson 2020, 184-5). More on deindividuation will be said later.

Accordingly, and to get to the third matter of continuity, both SIC and SCT are based on a socio-cognitive architecture the core of which is the notion of social categorization, that is, «a cognitive representation of a social division into groups» (Turner 1987, 27). This cognitive process underpins the accentuation of intracategory similarities and intercategory differences, which account for several behavioural and evaluative phenomena that can be experimentally tested. Thus, Tajfel investigated the minimal conditions for intergroup discrimination and ingroup favouritism; in particular, he challenged the view that group processes and group-related phenomena – e. g., ingroup favouritism – can be accounted in terms of interpersonal attraction and interdependence for individual need satisfaction, which amounted to an individualistic reading of interdependence theory. To test this view and the related predictions, Tajfel and his colleagues (Tajfel et alii 1971) designed a number of experimental situations, a representative variant of which is set as follows: a sample of schoolboys was randomly divided in two groups out of ostensibly arbitrary criteria⁷⁸, so as to create a manipulated input for social categorization that was utterly independent of possible determinants of interpersonal attraction or interdependence for need satisfaction. Group membership was anonymous, that is, each subject was aware of which group she personally belonged, but did not know the affiliation of the others; moreover, no interpersonal or intergroup contact took place during the experiment – in this respect, the experiment's groups were purely cognitive, artificial and minimal groups. When asked about awarding money to pairs of anonymous others identified only by group membership and a personal code number, the subjects' responses were straightforwardly oriented to ingroup favouritism and intergroup competition. In fact, not only did most of the pupils give more money to ingroup than outgroup members but, more importantly, they were also willing to award less in absolute terms to ingroup members so as to award them *relatively* more than outgroup members. These findings were replicated in a number of experimental settings (Wetherell 1982; for a latest review see Brown & Pehrson 2020, 23-26). Thus, as Turner remarks,

it follows that interpersonal interdependence and attraction are *not necessary* conditions for group formation, since the very conditions of these experiments are designed to eliminate such factors as alternative explanations of the results. [...] [The subjects] seem to like the people in their group just because they are ingroup members rather than like the ingroup because of the specific individuals who are members. [...] Imposing a shared group membership upon people can be *sufficient* to generate attraction between them (Turner 1987, 29; my emphasis).

However, beyond these shared theoretical commitments, there is a twofold theoretical difference between SIT and SCT, that Turner himself emphasizes. First, whereas in Tajfel's early works on

⁷⁸In this experiment, schoolboys were assigned out of their preference of one of two abstract artists, Paul Klee and Vassilijs Kandinsky.

intergroup behaviour the major explanatory notion was the search for positive ingroup distinctiveness (Turner & Tajfel 1979, 44) – i. e., people are motivated to emphasize respects under which their ingroups can be seen as positively different from outgroups –, Turner poses social identity as the «social-cognitive basis of group behaviour, the mechanism that makes it possible» (Turner 1987, IX). In other words, SIT proposes a motivational hypothesis to account for intergroup discrimination, while SCT core claim is social-cognitive and aims at a broader goal, that is, «how individuals are able to act as a group at all. [...] Logically speaking, the current theory [SCT] is more general and can be seen to include the former [SIT] as a derivation» (Turner 1987, 42). Secondly, whereas Tajfel frames the interpersonal-intergroup continuum as varying from «acting in terms of self» to «acting in terms of group» (Tajfel 1978), Turner considers the latter to be an expression of the former (Turner 1987, VIII-IX); in other words, according to SCT, *both* individual and group behaviour are expressions of «acting in terms of self», as they just differ in the level of abstraction, as we shall see in a moment. To summarize a number of distinct yet related assumptions that underly SCT (Turner 1987, 44-49), suffices to say that the self is referred to as a psychological system, whose cognitive unities or elements are self-concepts. It is assumed that any individual holds multiple self-concepts, and that self-categorizations constitute a specific form of self-concept. A self-categorization is defined as «a cognitive grouping of oneself and some class of stimuli as the same (identical, similar, equivalent, interchangeable, and so on) in contrast to some other class of stimuli» (Turner 1987, 44). Just as other self-concepts, self-categorizations are governed by a situation-specific functioning: a self-categorization can become salient over others depending on the interaction between the subject and the situation, and thus produce a corresponding self-image, that is, a subjective experience or perceptual output.

The assumption the most relevant for my purposes, though, is the distinction of *least* three levels of abstraction of self-categorization (Turner 1987, 45):

- a) the superordinate level of the self as human being, whereby similarities with other humans are highlighted and contrasted with differences with other forms of life. This level of self-categorization encapsulates *human identity*, based on an interspecies comparison.
- b) The intermediate level of the self as a group member, whereby similarities with ingroup members are highlighted and contrasted with differences with outgroup members. At this level of self-categorization *social identity* is framed, as a result of an intraspecies and intergroup comparison.
- c) The subordinate level of the self as a specific individual person, whereby the unique and distinct respects of one's personality are highlighted and contrasted with differences with her

ingroup members. Accordingly, one's *personal identity* is defined out of an interpersonal and intragroup comparison.

This social-psychological architecture is built upon the same cognitive equipment, and maintains a *hierarchical* and, so to say, *concentric* structure. In fact, as Turner points out, «the more inclusive the self-category, the higher the level of abstraction, and each category is *entirely* included within another category (unless it is the highest or superordinate level category) but is *not exhaustive* of that more inclusive category» (Turner 1987, 45; my emphasis). For instance, golden retrievers and border collies are members of and entirely included within the category of “dog”, yet they are not exhaustive of it, for there are several others breeds that are members of such category as well. Moreover, a comparative relation between different stimuli implies a higher level identity in terms of which the comparison is elaborated; for instance, golden retrievers and border collies can be compared and even contrasted as being more or less “nimble”, “furry”, “affectionate”, and so on, but it would be pointless to compare them as “forms of life” – which both are, yet at a too much more abstract level – or as “cats” – which they are not at all. Indeed, perceiving both golden retrievers and border collies as different breeds of dogs implies their higher level similarity as “dogs”.

Categorizations of any level follow the «principle of meta-contrast», or «meta-contrast ratio», which is so say, «a symbolic computation in which the average inter-category difference forms the numerator and the average self-‘ingroup other’ [i. e. intracategory] difference constitutes the denominator» (Brown & Pehrson 2020, 20). The outcome of this ratio amounts to a quantitative measure of the extent to which a subset of stimuli will be likely perceived as a single entity or group (Turner 1987, 47). For instance, if we enter a courtyard where three golden retrievers (D_1, D_2, D_3) and three border collies (D_4, D_5, D_6) are playing, we shall subsume the former trio under the category “golden retriever” as an outcome of the cognitive procedure stated above – that is, the more similar are D_1, D_2 and D_3 and the more different they are from D_4, D_5 and D_6 , the more likely the former trio will be categorized by the perceiver as a single entity or group.

Moreover, in virtue of same cognitive mechanism it is possible to define the prototypicality of a stimulus, that is, the extent to which the latter is representative of a category as a whole; in fact, the prototypicality of a stimulus is determined by the meta-contrast ratio between the mean perceived difference between the stimulus and outgroup members – i. e., intergroup comparison – and that between the former and the other ingroup members – i. e., intragroup comparison. As Turner sums up, «the higher the ratio, the more prototypical the ingroup member» (Turner 1987, 47). Thus, to get back to the previous example, the higher the meta-contrast ratio between the perceived difference between D_1 and D_4, D_5 and D_6 , and the perceived difference between D_1, D_2 and D_3 , the more prototypically will D_1 instantiate the golden retriever breed.

What has been said so far applies to most of categorizations per se and to all levels of self-categorization for sure. Now it is time to discuss the main implications of the presented socio-cognitive architecture for group phenomena and thus to focus on social identity in particular.

A first entailment is that there is a «functional antagonism» between the salience of a level of self-categorization and the others. For instance, when a situation makes salient one's social identity, then an accentuation occurs in the perception of intragroup similarities and intergroup differences; as a consequence, one's personal identity will be blurred, as its categorization depends on the perception of intragroup differences; the same can be said, in this case, of one's human identity, that is foregrounded when intergroup similarities are highlighted. In other words, as Turner puts it,

there tends to be an *inverse relationship* between the salience of the social and personal levels of self-categorization. Social self-perception tends to vary on a continuum from the perception of self as a unique person (maximum intra-personal identity and maximum difference perceived between self and ingroup members) to the perception of the self as an ingroup category (maximum similarity to ingroup members and difference from outgroup members) (Turner 1987, 49; my emphasis).

Put in this terms, the functioning of self-categorization could be proposed as a socio-psychological basis for Habermas' well-known claim that solidarity stands in a complementary relation with justice – as its «reverse side» (Habermas 1990, 244) – where the latter pertains «the equal freedoms of unique and self-determining individuals», while the former aims at «the concerns the welfare of consociates who are intimately linked in an intersubjectively shared form of life» (Habermas 1990, 244). In fact, Habermas argues that, insofar as we maintain that the agent that morality aims to protect is individuated through socialization, her personal integrity cannot be preserved «without the integrity of the lifeworld that makes possible their shared interpersonal relationships and relations of mutual recognition» (Habermas 1990, 243). Under this respect, Habermas' claim can be well rephrased in SCT terms, that is, that the purpose of morality is to protect both individuals' *personal* and *social* identity; SCT also adds to this claim that, as a matter of fact, self-perception is more often than not located in the middle of the continuum between the personal and social level of self-categorization (Turner 1987, 49), and does not excludes that «personal levels are not also social in terms of their content, origin and function» (Turner 1987, 46), thus in line with the theory of individuation through socialization that Habermas embraces.

The relation between the uniqueness of each individual and the groups' tendency to promote uniformity and similarities, though, remains a core topic for SCT and social psychology itself indeed. As stated earlier, Turner is preoccupied that SCT does not encourage the epistemological prejudice that individuals are likely to get morally corrupted by groups' force and social influence; to tackle this view, not only Turner unpacks a complex socio-cognitive mechanism as self-categorization, but

he also worries about distinguishing between deindividuation and depersonalization. In facts, however incidentally, Turner points out that, whereas *deindividuation* entails a «loss of individual identity, [and] a loss or submergence of the self in the group» (Turner 1987, 51), *depersonalization* refers to «the process of “self-stereotyping” whereby people come to perceive themselves *more* as the interchangeable exemplars of a social category *than* as unique personalities» (Turner 1987, 50; my emphasis). Phrased in these terms, depersonalization refers to a shift to the intermediate level of self-categorization and social identity, which does not amount to a loss of personal identity per se. In addition, and more importantly, depersonalization plays a crucial explanatory work as it serves as «the basic process underlying group phenomena» as «group cohesiveness», «cooperation and empathy», «emotional contagion and empathy» (Turner 1987, 50) and, as directly although only incidentally mentioned in some passages, «solidarity» (Turner 1987, 41 and 52).

Group cohesiveness, or social cohesion, is defined as «mutual attraction between ingroup members» (Turner 1987, 57), rather than as *interpersonal attraction* toward others as unique and individual persons. In a sense, the two are even in contrast, because perceiving an ingroup member that this distinction can be drawn and justified is a relevant attainment for SCT that, as stated earlier, pursues the explicit aim to demonstrate that «group behaviour is psychologically different from and irreducible to interpersonal relationships» (Turner 1987, 66). In fact, as Hogg recalls,

traditionally in social psychology the social group has been described as a psychological entity by means of the concept of cohesiveness and has been gradually equated with this concept. Furthermore, group cohesiveness actually [...] has been *reduced* to interpersonal attraction. The result has been the disappearance of the group as a theoretical entity distinct from processes of interpersonal attraction (Hogg 1987, 89; my emphasis).

As a consequence of depersonalization following from situational determinants which make one's group membership salient, group cohesion can be descripted, accordingly, as a form of «intragroup attraction» (Hogg 1987, 89). Thus, the causal direction is from ingroup categorization to intragroup attraction; this conclusion states the opposite than interdependence theory, according to which we have a group only to the degree that people maintain a mutual interpersonal attraction, based on the perception that the association fulfils satisfactorily their individual needs (Turner 1987, 20). In a nutshell, it is self-social categorization, and not interdependence, to provide the basis of group formation and social attraction. There are many *empirical determinants* of group cohesion, as sharing a common fate, being on the same boat, a common enemy or threat, to name a few; all of these factors have a common feature, that is, are «cognitive unit-forming relations» (Turner 1987, 52), for they all tend to promote the salience of intragroup similarities and intergroup differences, and thus encourages the perception of self and others as a cognitive unit.

A similar explanation applies to *social cooperation*. In fact, just as depersonalization turns one's self-perception social, it also affects one's interests accordingly. In other words, perceived identity between oneself and ingroup members is likely to foster identity of interests, and thus a *depersonalization of self-interest* indeed. In fact, social cooperation «reflects not an interdependence of separate, personal self-interest, but a *cognitive redefinition* of self and self-interest and hence has a strong element of *altruism*» (Turner 1987, 66; my emphasis). Such altruistic component of social cooperation is twofold: it first entails an «emphatic altruism» which consists in perceiving the ingroup goals as one's own; secondly, it implies an «emphatic trust» that other ingroup members will share one's own goals (Turner 1987, 65).

To sum up, SCT seems to provide quite a promising explanatory power to account for a number of social phenomena, and it seems promising to examine how solidarity can be figured out in these terms – and thus distinguished from related phenomena as group cohesiveness and social cooperation accordingly. After all, there are at the very least few remarkable endeavours that take this strategy seriously (Bierhoff and Küpper 1999, Mucchi Faina 2001, Gattino 2006, Monroe 2014), which will be discussed in the second section of this chapter. However, before taking this step, it is now the time to discuss empathy first, and other-regarding motivations second, as other possible candidates to be causally involved in solidarity.

2. Empathy, sympathy, and the intersubjectivity of social emotions

Whereas self-categorization is strictly tied to the line of research following Turner's socio-psychological framework, the same cannot be said of empathy, which is a highly controversial and debated concept. However, the relevance of empathy to understand sociability and, more broadly, human nature is undisputed: as Batson summarizes, «empathic processes are certainly key elements of our social nature» (Batson 2011, 20). Many attempts to define empathy and unpack its functioning have been proposed, and an exhaustive survey would fall beyond the scope of this thesis. Thus, I shall confine myself to present a sample of accounts of empathy, so as to give a flavour of the core questions at stake, and to elaborate a motivated preference for one account of these.

As a broad philological premise, suffices to say that the very first occurrences of the English word «empathy» are traceable back to Edward Titchener in 1909; the word itself is fashioned as the English translation from an ancient Greek term, that is, ἐμπάθεια – «empatheia», resulting from the combination of ἐν («en», i. e. «in», «at») and πάθος («pathos», i. e. «passion» or «suffering»). Titchener, on his part, intended «empathy» as an English translation of «Einfühlung» (i. e. «feeling into»), a German word employed by Robert Vischer and Theodor Lipps between the ending of the

XIX century and the beginning of the XX (Donise 2019, 18; Lecaldano 2013, 13; Hunt 2007, 239; Stüber 2019). Before the word «empathy» was circulated, «sympathy» was used instead to designate empathy-related phenomena (Stüber 2019). In fact, Hunt suggests that the notion of empathy as it were elaborated from the last Century forth does largely overlap with the notion that the Scottish Enlightenment's major figures – e. g. Adam Smith and David Hume – theorized as «sympathy» in the XVIII Century. However, as we shall see in a moment, the *concepts* of empathy and sympathy are rarely equated in the contemporary debate. Thus, as it is actually quite traditional to do, Smith and Hume will be taken as the starting point of this quick presentation of the debate on empathy and sympathy.

As Lecaldano (2013, 39-41) remarks, the ways Smith and Hume framed the analysis of sympathy share a number of common premises. Firstly, they both understand sympathy as a trait – however essential – of a bigger picture of human nature rather than as a cosmic force, as Shaftesbury maintained instead. In other words, sympathy was considered by Smith and Hume as an individual and psychological property, to be unpacked out of an ex post inquiry on human nature⁷⁹. Secondly, and accordingly, both of them determined the range of action of sympathy within the social world, that is, in the domain of social behaviour and interaction. It follows from this premise that the ways sympathy operates are susceptible to cultural and historical variables, and thus sympathy may be performed differently depending on the specificities of the social context where it takes place. A third respect which is worth highlighting is that both Hume and Smith stand in opposition to Hobbes' «egoistic anthropology» (Lecaldano 2013, 45), and put sympathy at the centre of the respective accounts of human nature so as to make sense of the *pre-political* disposition to sociability that humans maintain, in accordance with the Aristotelian line of thought. In other words, sociability is not a contingent, purposeful or strategic attitude that takes over under institutional settings, but rather a core mechanism underlying the life of passions and emotions.

However, as we set these shared premises aside, Hume and Smith proposed quite different accounts of sympathy. In fact, it is true that both theorists depict sympathy as a principle underlying and governing the life of all – i. e. whether prosocial or antisocial – human passions: «whatever other passions we may be actuated by; pride, ambition, avarice, curiosity, revenge or lust; the soul or animating principle of them all is sympathy» (Hume 1960 [1740], 363). Yet, whereas Hume considers sympathy as a neutral psychological mechanism, Smith takes a further step posing sympathy as the

⁷⁹ To be fair, Hume did not consider sympathy to be an exclusively human property: indeed, he does mask as «evident» that « sympathy, or the communication of passions, takes place among animals, no less than among men. Fear, anger, courage and other affections are frequently communicated from one animal to another, without their knowledge of that cause, which produced the original passion.» (Hume 1960 [1740], 398). In another remarkable passage, Hume describes the «force of empathy» as operating «after the same *manner* thro' the whole animal creation» (Hume 1960 [1740], 328).

source and ground of moral consciousness and moral judgement (Lecaldano 2013, 41; Donise 2019, 9). To put this core difference more sharply, Lecaldano remarks that Hume maintains that sympathy is only a necessary condition for morality, whereas Smith takes it as a both necessary *and* sufficient condition for morality (Lecaldano 2013, 42).

To enter only the core of Hume's views on sympathy, suffices to say that he took the latter to operate at two different levels at the least; at a first level, which is observable in the early childhood and in non-human animals, sympathy functions as an instinctual mechanism of emotional contagion which makes possible that passions, emotions, and beliefs turn intersubjective. An everyday example of how emotional contagion works is «a newborn infant's reactive cry to the distress cry of another» (Stüber 2019); in cases like this, no «mediating projective imaginative activity» is needed for the emotional response to occur (Darwall 1998, 264). So understood, sympathy is more undergone than undertaken. However, at a second level, «extensive sympathy» (Hume 1960 [1740], 386) operates with the assistance of imagination and embeds more cognitive processes accordingly. In fact, extensive sympathy enables one to put herself in someone else's shoes and to understand how it feels to be in that condition. As Lecaldano emphasizes (Lecaldano 2013, 49), whereas emotional contagion is too rough and primitive to differentiate one's individuality from others', extensive sympathy makes it possible to draw and appreciate the distinction with the other with whom the self is in sympathy. However, on Hume's account, sympathy remains a neutral mechanism that does not add any further affective tune to the emotions and passions that it makes intersubjective.

This latter feature of Hume's understanding of sympathy is an ideal starting point to present the core specificities of Smith's account. In fact, while accepting much of Hume's epistemology, Smith proposed a quite different conception of sympathy, which he understands as a sort of *emotion* arousing when one stands in harmony with others' emotions and passions. In other words, Smith holds that when one is in sympathy with another, the former is pleased of converging with the latter's response to a certain situation. Thus, sympathy not only makes emotions intersubjective, but also constitutes an emotion itself. In addition, beside this emotional content, sympathy corresponds with an evaluative stance, for morally praising another's emotional response is tantamount to sympathize with it (Lecaldano 2013, 53; Donise 2019, 10). So understood, sympathy is placed at the centre of an account of human nature that aims to dismiss and surpass Hobbes' psychological egoism, and thus rejects the claim that all emotions can be deduced by self-love. As Smith puts it,

Sympathy, however, cannot, in any sense, be regarded as a selfish principle. When I sympathize with your sorrow or your indignation, it may be pretended, indeed, that my emotion is founded in self-love, because it arises from bringing your case home to myself, from putting myself in your situation, and thence conceiving what I should feel in the like circumstances. But though sympathy is very properly

said to arise from an imaginary change of situations with the person principally concerned, yet this imaginary change is not supposed to happen to me in my own person and character, but *in that of the person with whom I sympathize*. When I condole with you for the loss of your only son, in order to enter into your grief I do not consider what I, a person of such a character and profession, should suffer, if I had a son, and if that son was unfortunately to die: but I consider what I should suffer *if I was really you*, and I not only change circumstances with you, but I change person and characters. (Smith 1976 [1759], 317; my emphasis)

Key to Smith's account, then, is that sympathy, just as Hume's «expansive sympathy», enables the observer to «respond to the other person's situation as from her standpoint rather than to her reaction or to an imagined version of it» (Darwall 1998, 267). However, it is worth repeating that, unlike Hume, Smith associates sympathy with an emotional content as well as with an evaluative stance. So far, this survey has only encompassed two accounts that had been elaborated in a time when the terminological choice between «empathy» and «sympathy» was not available yet. In the ending of this section, an attempt to balance these discrepancies between terms, concepts and related phenomena will be undertaken. Before undertaking this concluding remark, which is after all the primary objective of this survey, it is now opportune to take a step beyond Hume and Smith, and present some later developments of the debate, along the lines of research they prefigured.

As Stüber points out, in fact, the study of empathy evolved along multiple lines of research over XX century. To mention just a couple, a primary tradition, which has even dominated the philosophical discussion on empathy, is traceable back to the early German philosophical circles in late XIX century; within this intellectual terrain, just before being translated as «empathy» by Titchener, «Einfühlung» was having an early currency as a technical term, especially owing to the influence of Robert Vischer (1873) and Theodor Lipps (1905). However, whereas Vischer understood empathy as the human capacity of filling a perceptual object with the observer's feelings, thus animating inanimate objects (Donise 2029, 18-20), it was only with Lipps that empathy would have been «transformed [...] from a concept of nineteenth century German aesthetics into a central category of the philosophy of the social and human sciences» (Stüber 2019). In fact, according to Lipps, empathy does not have primarily to do with the way we relate with aesthetic objects, but rather with intersubjectivity, that is, the way we relate with other people; in other words, as Lipps puts it, empathy is always the «experience of another human» (Lipps 1905, 49). Empathy, on Lipps's account, is based on an innate disposition for motor mimicry, that is, a capacity for mind-mirroring the mental life of another human being. The contemporary philosophical debate on the problem of other minds is much in debt with Lipps pioneering research; indeed, Lipps can even be considered as an early proponent of «simulation theory» that, in rival opposition to «theory-theory», has provided an influential and

variously elaborated strategy to account for our epistemic awareness of other people's mental states (Stüber 2019, Deonna & Nanay 2014).

However, for the purpose of this section, I shall primarily focus on a psychological field of research on empathy instead, which flourished in the second half of XX century. As Stüber points out,

the discussion of empathy within psychology has been largely unaffected by the critical philosophical discussion of empathy as an epistemic means to know other minds or as the unique method of the human sciences. Rather, psychologists' interest in empathy-related phenomena harks back to eighteenth century moral philosophy, particularly David Hume and Adam Smith [...] Here empathy, or what was then called sympathy, was regarded to play a central role in constituting human beings as social and moral creatures allowing us to emotionally connect to our human companions and care for their well-being (Stüber 2019).

To be sure, the affinity between this psychological line of research and the Scottish Enlightenment tradition is not the only reason to prioritize the former over other philosophical debates on empathy. A second reason encouraging this choice is that part of the literature in the psychological research on empathy is produced by social psychologists, some of whom – e. g. Batson – also dealt with the broader inquiry on prosocial attitudes, which will be discussed more in detail in the subparagraph to come. A third, more substantive reason is that empathy, understood more – yet not exclusively – as a disposition to emotional responsiveness to others' distress than – yet not exclusively – as a purely cognitive ability, seems more promising as an explanatory tool to be considered in an account of solidarity, whose affective dimension is often taken for granted, or even foregrounded as the nature of solidarity (Heyd 2015).

Martin Hoffman elaborated over decades one of the most comprehensive and influential accounts of empathy within the psychological literature, with a view to its implications for moral development (Hoffman 2000). According to Hoffman, empathy is a biologically based disposition for altruistic behaviour that unfolds over six developmental stages at the least, that can be roughly sketched as follows:

1. *Reactive newborn cry* (until the six month, Hoffman 2000, 66), which can be assimilated to *emotional contagion* as it was intended by Hume as the more basic form of empathy (Stüber 2019); at this stage, empathic responses are quite passive – being probably based on innate mechanisms of mimicry –, short-lived although vigorous in intensity, and underpinned by a perception of the other as still undifferentiated and unseparated from the «global psychological entity» (Hoffman 2000, 66) of the self.
2. *Egocentric empathic distress* (end of the first year, Hoffman 2000, 67), where the other's distress arouses distress in the bystander, that seeks relief for *her own* reactive distress. It is

worth noting why Hoffman labels this early form of empathic response with an apparent oxymoron: it is clearly «egocentric» as it leads to a search for self-comfort, but it also embeds «prosocial properties» as it is «contingent on another's actual distress» (Hoffman 2000, 69-70). To give an example, suffices to consider the case of a kid who witnessed the physical suffering of another person, and crawled to her mother to be comforted (Radke-Yarrow & Zahn-Waxler 1984, 93).

3. *Quasi-egocentric empathic distress* (early second year, Hoffman 2000, 70) takes one step forward to the previous stage, in that the bystander who experiences empathic distress does not seek comfort for herself, but rather attempts to relieve *the victim*. At this stage, thus, the empathic response is prosocial not only as for its situational cause, but also as for the intended direction of its purpose. However, although the prosocial effort is an actual achievement of this stage, the children are not yet capable of elaborating helping strategies that fit with the victim's needs. This cognitive limitation, thus, affect the actual help that children can offer for, as Hoffman points out, at this stage «children have inner states but do not [yet] realize that others have their own independent inner states. [...] They know the other is in distress but are still egocentric enough to use helping strategies that they find comforting. A 14-month-old boy responded to a crying friend with a sad look, then gently took the friend's hand and brought him to his own mother, although the friend's mother was present» (Hoffman 2000, 70). However, as Denise emphasizes (Denise 2019, 118), it is worth noting that it is at this stage that children begin to acknowledge that the empathic distress that they experience stems from the other and not from themselves.
4. *Veridical empathic distress* (middle of the second year, Hoffman 71) finally leads to *appropriate* prosocial behaviour, that is, an emotional response that undertakes strategies which are based on the understanding of the needs that are other from one's own. Significantly, at this developmental stage, children can recognize themselves in a mirror, and have thus reinforced their own sense of separateness from others. Veridical empathy is thus «mature» empathy, and as such continues to develop through life (Hoffman 2000, 72). This cognitive advancement is exemplified by Hoffman with the case of the 2-year-old David who brought his own teddy bear to comfort a crying friend, who was accidentally hurt when the two were struggling over a toy. When it didn't work, David paused, then ran to the next room and returned with the friend's teddy bear; the friend hugged it and stopped crying» (Hoffman 2000, 71-2).
5. *Empathic distress beyond the situation* is a refinement of veridical empathy which develops with the increased awareness that the others' distress can be not only arouse in the immediate

situation but also as part of a larger pattern of life experience. Thus, empathic response evolves accordingly, namely leading to helping strategies that are based on «what [one imagines] to be the other's chronically sad or unpleasant life condition» (Hoffman 2000, 80). Two features of this stage are worth highlighting for the purposes of this section: first, empathic distress gets sharpened when the observers' representation of the other's life reminds them of similar events in their own past. When this *life history commonality* is detected, then what Hoffman calls «self-focused role taking» takes place – as a distinct cognitive process than «other-focused role-taking», whereby one only imagines the victim's chronically sad state (Hoffman 2000, 80). A second due remark is that empathic distress beyond the situation, as such, may occur even in the *victim's absence* and be aroused by means of imaginative processes.

6. *Empathy for a distressed group* is «the most advanced form of empathic distress» (Hoffman 2000, 85). This stage is possibly the most relevant for solidarity as well, especially if combined with SCT, for it requires that social categories and group concepts have become part of one's socio-cognitive equipment. Moreover, this form of empathy can be conducive to align one's political preferences with the claims of the least well-off and thus to endorse redistributive schemes and social justice. However, empathy for a distressed group does *not* have to be or to turn political, the same applying to solidarity: in fact, a possible trigger of this response is any situation which leads the observer to empathize «with an individual and then [realize] he is an exemplar of a group or category of people who share his plight» (Hoffman 2000, 85). As an example, Hoffman reports the case of a student who empathized with a Down Syndrome child both as a unique individual and as one of several people «that life has dealt an unfair hand» (Hoffman 2000, 86).

A further component of Hoffman's account is the alleged distinction between empathic and sympathetic distress, with the latter being a *qualitative transformation* of the former taking place from stage 3 – i. e., quasi-egocentric empathic distress – forth. In other words, a sympathetic conversion applies to the last four stages of empathic distress, which are thus *also* stages of sympathetic distress (Hoffman 2000, 89-90). Hoffman hypothesizes that, as the self-other differentiation is acquired, the bystander's distress turns into a *feeling of concern* for the victim now regarded as a separate psychological entity. As stated earlier, from quasi-egocentric empathic distress forth children help not only to relieve their own responsive distress, but also to comfort the victim: «sympathetic distress component of empathic distress is thus the child's *first truly prosocial motive*» (Hoffman 2000, 88; my emphasis).

Hoffman's account of empathy and sympathy has been vastly discussed and criticized. For instance, Preston and De Waal (2002) endorses Hoffman's view of empathy (Stüber 2019) and is particularly

interested in the acknowledgement of its early development in life (De Waal 2006, 24). Within the broader endeavour toward a cross-species understanding of empathy, De Waal accepts the distinction between emotional contagion and empathy – which he roughly intends as veridical empathic distress, on Hoffman’s terms – and accordingly depicts sympathy a feeling of concern for another’s plight, that leads to prosocial motivation. Availing himself of a Russian doll metaphor, De Waal (2006) claims that emotional contagion based on perception-action mimicry lies at the core and is the basis for the more complex empathic processes, including empathic concern.

Daniel Batson, another champion of empathy and prosocial motivation, confronted Hoffman’s account – «the best known altruistic view» (Batson 1987, 72) – since the very early phase of his research. Indeed, most of Batson’s criticisms pertain to Hoffman’s account of prosocial motivation, which will be presented in the following subparagraph; for the scope of this section, suffices to say that Batson proposes a definition of «empathic concern» to refer «to *other-oriented emotion elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone in need*. [...] Empathic concern is not a single, discrete emotion but includes a whole constellation. It includes feelings of sympathy, compassion, softheartedness, tenderness, sorrow, sadness, upset, distress, concern, and grief» (Batson 2011, 11). Batson notes that his concept of empathy is roughly correspondent with Hoffman’s «sympathetic distress» (Batson 2011, 12). As it has been remarked (Songhorian 2014) it is doubtful whether Batson’s own definition of empathy is not actually too broad to discharge a proper conceptual work. However, Batson provides both positive and negative characterizations of the concept of empathy which he proposes, that provide useful clarification. To begin with the latter, Batson takes the concept of empathy *not* to cover at least seven phenomena that are often described as empathic mechanisms or expressions (Batson 2011, 11-20). To mention only a couple of representative distinctions, suffices to say that Batson considers *accurate* knowledge of the other’s beliefs and emotions as being *not* necessary for empathic concern as such to occur. In fact, one may be well experience genuine empathic concern out of a false perception of the other’s internal states which are considered as relevant to properly understand her condition and to respond accordingly. However, in this case, prosocial action will be more likely to be misguided and unsuccessful (Batson 2011, 13). Nor empathic concern can be equated with, or reduced to, *emotional contagion*; this distinction, it might be said, is quite broadly accepted in literature, and Hoffman’s account presented earlier puts it in developmental terms, framing emotional contagion – e. g., reactive newborn cry – as a rudimentary empathic distress reaction. However, Batson is sceptical that this developmental reading provides the best interpretation for the evidence which is presumed to support it; indeed, he suggests that plausible alternative explanation should be considered at the very least – for instance, since the infants in Hoffman’s study were tested just before feeding time, it is worth wondering whether such crying may

be a competitive response that increases the chances of getting food or comfort. Thus, empathy is not meant by Batson as leading one to feel what another person feels. It is not my intention to discuss all of the seven distinctions argued by Batson, for it would be definitely unnecessary for my purpose (Batson 2011, 11-20; for a critical reconstruction, see Songhorian 20??, 101-106). What is more recommendable at this point is rather to focus on the positive traits with which he endows his concept of empathy. In fact, as stated earlier, Batson understands empathy as an «*other-oriented emotion elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone in need*». The *congruence* of an empathic arousal, however, is not to be equated with an accurate insight of the other's inner states, as already remarked; Batson's definition only requires that the empathic arousal matches the «*valence*» (Batson 2011, 11) of the other's inner state, that is, positive when the perceived welfare of the other is positive, and negative when the perceived welfare is negative. Moreover, empathy is *other-oriented* in the sense that «it involves feeling *for* the other—feeling sympathy for, compassion for, sorry for, distressed for, concerned for, and so on. Although feelings of sympathy and compassion are inherently other-oriented, we can feel sorrow, distress, or concern that is not oriented toward someone else, as when something bad happens directly to us» (Batson 2011, 11-12). Thus, an empathic response, which is by definition demanded to be other-oriented, may range within a domain of emotions not all of which are *inherently* other-oriented.

Admittedly, I do not have substantive reasons to prefer Batson's account of empathy over others. It is worth repeating that the debate on empathy is too multifaced and complex to be handled in a thesis which does *not* have empathy as a subject. The reason I shall adopt Batson's account is that it is embedded as a core assumption in an inspiring paper on empathy and SCT (Tarrant, Dazeley & Cottom 2009), which proposes a reading on how the two are likely to interact, which is a surprisingly neglected research topic in socio-psychological literature. In fact, it is true that there is some previous research on the extent that self-categorization moderates the relationship between empathy and subsequent behaviour; an important contribution in this matter is offered by Stürmer, Snyder, Kropp & Siem (2006) who, discussing the results of two experimental settings, conclude that the collected evidence suggest that «when common group membership is salient, the perception of group-based self-other similarities regulates the empathy-helping relationship» (Stürmer, Snyder, Kropp & Siem, 2006, 953-4). This proposition is remarkably in line with the core SCT theoretical hypothesis, that is, «that the depersonalization of self-perception is the basic process underlying group phenomena [as] emotional contagion and empathy» (Turner 1987, 50). In other words, Stürmer and colleagues' research demonstrated that social self-categorization actually plays a causal role in affecting empathy-motivated helping, as «empathy had a stronger effect on helping when the helpee was an ingroup member than when the helpee was an outgroup member» (Stürmer, Snyder, Kropp & Siem, 954).

However, little has been said about how self-categorization may influence the arousal of empathic emotions *as such*, that is, at an earlier step than prosocial attitudes and associated behaviour. Tarrant and colleagues' study is intended to contribute to fill this gap in literature. They designed three experimental settings tested on Keele University students (E1, E2, E3) to verify different hypotheses revolving around the intuition that social self-categorization carries some effects on the experience of empathy. The core structure of all experimental designs was fashioned so that, at the experiment outset, social identity of the participants was made salient, informing them that the experiment was specifically intended to measure Keele University students' empathic responses to the experiences of other people.

The subsequent steps and results of the experimental settings can be so summarized: in E1, the only between-groups variable to be manipulated was target university group membership, so that a sample of participants was informed that the target belonged to their own group, whereas the other sample was informed that the target belonged to Staffordshire University. As the subjects were presented the transcript of a radio interview ostensibly given by the target student where she described the dramatic situation she was coping with, their empathic response was measured out of a self-report delivered in terms of fifteen emotions, only six of which were associated with empathy – sympathy, soft-heartedness, warmth, compassion, tenderness, and moving – in accordance with Batson's account. Then, they were asked to complete nine items related to their action intentions in response to the target's situation; only three of these options tapped helping behaviour: show support, show sympathy, and find out how to help.

	Ingroup target (and SD)	Outgroup target (and SD)
Empathy	7.40 (1.44)	6.13 (1.68)
Helping	7.76 (1.13)	7.01 (1.86)

Table 3. Effects of target group membership on empathy and helping intentions (Experiment 1; Tarrant, Dazeley & Cottom 2009, 432)

The results of E1, as the authors comment, «provided direct evidence in support of the hypothesis that empathy is experienced more strongly for ingroup members than it is for outgroup members. The experiment also demonstrated an effect of social categorization on helping intentions, which was mediated by empathy» (Tarrant, Dazeley & Cottom 2009, 432).

In E2, not only target group membership was manipulated, but also ingroup norms, compliance to which is considered by SCT as a core determinant of positive social identity; the one sample was put in an *empathy norm condition*, that is, informed that previous research demonstrated that Keele

University students typically display intense empathic responses to the plight of others, and that they do so in a remarkably higher extent than students from other universities. The other sample, instead, was put in an *objective norm condition*, thus told that previous research highlighted an averagely lower level of empathic responses to the others' distress. After reading the transcript of the ingroup or outgroup target, students were asked to report how good they think other ingroup members are at taking the perspective of other people, and how inclined to experience compassion, tenderness and sympathy when they learn about the experiences of others. Finally, they had to report their emotional reactions to the manuscript, in terms of nine emotions four of which are associated with empathy – compassion, empathy, moved, and sympathy.

	Empathy norm (and SD)	Objective norm (and SD)
Ingroup	5.59 (.124)	5.60 (.84)
Outgroup	5.75 (.92)	5.10 (1.22)

Table 4. Effects of target group membership and ingroup norm on empathy (Experiment 2; Tarrant, Dazeley & Cottom 2009, 436).

The results of E2 showed that participants under empathy norm condition reported higher levels of empathy for the target outgroup member than did participants under objectivity norm condition. In other words, these outcomes suggest that when ingroup norms promote or even prescribe empathy for outgroup's distress, then the empathic response of ingroup members is likely to be enhanced. Interestingly, Tarrant and colleagues notice that, as the E2 results suggest, the norm manipulation did *not* affect empathic responses for the ingroup target; however, this outcome does not have to be taken as an indicator that empathy toward ingroup members is not affected by ingroup norms. In fact, they account it out of the experimental setting, designed in such a way which

led participants to interpret the norm information as pertaining only to the treatment of outgroup members. In Experiment 2, as in Experiments 1 and 3, the participant instructions made social identity salient at the experiment outset. Because of the depersonalization of the self which occurs following self-categorization (Turner et al., 1987), the 'other people' referred to in the subsequent norm manipulation may have been categorized by participants as not 'one of us' (i.e. not part of the ingroup). If so, it seems appropriate that the norm manipulation only influenced empathy for targets beyond that ingroup (i.e. outgroup members) (Tarrant, Dazeley & Cottom 2009, 440).

Finally, E3 was designed so that the only between-groups variable being manipulated was ingroup norm, and not the target group membership. Thus, participants were faced with the interview transcript of an individual member of a stigmatized group, that is, a person with AIDS – half of the

sample under empathy norm condition, and the remaining half under objectivity norm condition. After reading the transcript, participants were asked to report their emotional response in the terms designed in E2. Then, the authors questioned the students' attitudes toward the outgroup, by means of items as for instance «for most AIDS victims, it is their own fault that they contract AIDS». Finally, in order to check ingroup norm manipulation, participants were asked to report the extent to which they believed members of the ingroup experience empathy when thinking about people with AIDS.

	Empathy norm (and SD)	Objective norm (and SD)
Empathy	5.47 (.88)	4.96 (1.23)
Attitudes	4.75 (.73)	4.38 (.80)

Table 5. Effects of ingroup norm on empathy and attitudes towards the outgroup (Experiment 3; Tarrant, Dazeley & Cottom 2009, 438).

As a general comment, Tarrant and colleagues observe that, in line with the result of E2, students under empathy norm condition reported higher levels of empathy for the target outgroup member than did participants under objectivity norm condition. However, there is an additional evidence, qualitatively different than results from previous experiments: in E3, induced empathic arousal mediated an enhancement of the attitudes of students toward target outgroup *as a whole*, and not only as an individual. Thus, it is likely that the individual target outgroup was perceived in terms of her group membership (Tarrant, Dazeley & Cottom 2009, 441), for this group-scale empathic reaction to take place – so converging to a large extent with Hoffman's «empathy for a distressed group» presented above.

As a provisional conclusion, suffices to say that Batson's account of empathy as an «other-oriented emotion elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone in need» will be henceforth assumed in the discussion to come. Tarrant and colleagues, out of such account, elaborated an experimental study whose core contribution is «demonstrating that empathy for outgroup members can be induced through the activation of group norms», in remarkable accordance with SCT.

3. Prosocial motivations

In this section, a last sociability-related set of properties needs to be discussed, that is, the sphere of the so-called prosocial motivations. As an historical premise, it can be observed that the debate on prosocial motivation and behaviour has been systematically tackled by social scientist relatively

recently: as Hoffman puts it, «it is in this end-of-millennium, first-world context of competitive individualism and little caring for others that some of us study prosocial moral behaviour» (Hoffman 2000, 1). In this respect, it is also worth recalling that, according to some (Mucchi Faina 2001, 83; Gattino 2006, 56), the empirical research on this topic flourished as an attempt to make sense of the well-known murder of Kitty Genovese, which happened in 1964 in New York. Newspapers reported that the attack was witnessed by 38 people, none of whom had intervened in any helping way. However, as Brown & Pehrson recall, this event reconstruction left much to be desired and were indeed repeatedly contested; in fact, «only three named witnesses are known to have seen the attacker and victim together, none of whom would necessarily have realised that a murder was to take place. Moreover, the police were called but failed to respond» (Brown & Pehrson 2020, 174). Subsequent and more accurate accounts of the murder, though, did not succeed in preventing the huge impact it had on the public sphere and the social sciences as well, with a particular view to the «bystander effect» mentioned in the first section. In addition, as stated earlier, according to some commentators (Speltini & Palmonari 1999, Brown & Pehrson 2020), detrimental influence on the evolution of social psychology, for it fuelled the epistemological prejudice that group and mass behaviours are more likely to bring about antisocial outcomes.

To be sure, in line with the previous sections, I do not even consider to attempt a historical summary of the debate. In what follows, I shall rather propose a focus on prosocial motivations and, more in detail, egoism, altruism, collectivism, and principlism.

As a first step, it is appropriate to question the intended meaning of «prosocial». In fact, as a matter of fact many authors lament that the very label «prosocial» is quite vague (Mucchi Faina 2001, 83) and covers a wide domain of phenomena, from motivations to behaviour. In this discussion, I shall primarily deal with prosocial *motivations*, and leave prosocial behaviour in the background; thus, concepts as egoism, altruism, and collectivism will be regarded as motivations and not as behaviours. In addition, I will not equate prosocial motivation with moral motivation, although the overlap between the two is sometimes suggested and, on my view, misleading (e. g. Hoffman 2000). Roughly put, I claim that being a motivation being prosocial is not a sufficient condition for it to be moral as well; this point is symmetrical to the statement that egoistic motivation does not have to be morally blameworthy per se and, more importantly, egoism might count, under certain circumstances, as a prosocial motivation as well (Batson 2011, 26).

In fact, to dig deeper into the concept of prosocial motivation, it is useful to premise that, following a standard and broad definition, central to commonsensical and technical uses of the term is the acknowledgement that a motivation is basically why people do what they do. However, to be sure, motivations may stem from very different sources or mechanisms. For instance, a motivation can be

grounded in a cognitive judgement – e. g. motivating reasons are reasons that explain why one did something, (McNaughton & Rawling 2018)⁸⁰ – or in an emotional reaction – e. g. empathy, on Batson’s reading – and be remarkably more or less conscious accordingly (Good 2008, 406). Prosocial motivation is standardly defined as *motivation to benefit someone else* (Batson 1998; 2006; 2011 see Amerio 2004 for a critical assessment)⁸¹, and Batson frames it as a *goal-directed situational force* (Batson et alii 2008, 135-6; Batson 2011, 20-21). Drawing on Lewis’ (1951) account of goals as force fields operating within the current life space of the individual, Batson takes motives as goal-directed forces in this field. An agent who pursues a prosocial motive, thus, is guided by a force toward the goal to which the latter is referred, and strives until the desired state of affairs – which does not have to be conscious (Batson 2011, 21) – is reached. However, behind the broad determination underlying the category of prosocial motivation, many differentiations are to be acknowledged properly. In what follows, I shall follow Batson’s taxonomy of prosocial motivations: egoism, altruism, collectivism, and principlism.

To begin with, even *egoism* might be, under certain circumstances, a prosocial motive. At this point, it is useful to recall the variants of psychological egoism (PE) distinguished by Hampton in relation to Hobbes’ account of human nature, which were already presented in the second chapter:

PE1: the position that all of my actions are caused by my desires – i. e. thus excluding reasons as a potential motivational trigger.

PE2: the position that all of my actions are caused by my desires and that they are in pursuit of a *self-regarding* object of desire.

PE3: the position that all of my actions are caused by my desires and that my desires are produced in me by a *self-interested* bodily mechanism. (Hampton 1995, 23).

It is worth repeating that, whereas PE1 has to do with what counts as a psychological determinant of an agent deliberation, PE2 determines the *content* of our desires that are action-motivating, and P3 attains to the self-interested design of the bodily mechanism where desires are *generated*. It is in accordance with PE2 that Batson qualifies egoism, which is taken to refer to «*a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing one’s own welfare*» (Batson 2011, 20). A number of entailments of this definition needs to be discussed, before addressing the prosocial potential of egoism. First, as egoism is defined in relation to its content, it is based on a sharp distinction between instrumental goals and ultimate goals:

⁸⁰ Motivating reasons are standardly distinguished by normative reasons, that is, reasons why one *should* or should not do something. However, since in this thesis I do not deal with the question of the moral justification of solidarity, I leave this kind of reasons aside.

⁸¹ In line with this broad characterization of prosocial motives, Hoffman argues that empathic distress does count as a prosocial motive *because* it leads the agent to «alleviate the victim’s distress» (Hoffman 2000, 33).

ultimate goals are the valued states the individual is seeking to reach. [...] It is the ultimate goal that defines a motive; each different motive has a unique ultimate goal evoked by an opportunity to obtain or maintain some valued state. *Instrumental goals* are sought because they are steppingstones to ultimate goals. When the ultimate goal can be reached more efficiently by other means, an instrumental goal is likely to be bypassed (Batson 2008, 136)

So understood, a prosocial motivation is egoistic when the ultimate goal of the helper is self-benefit. There is empirical evidence for at least three categories of self-benefit that might be sought by the helper, and qualify her motivation as egoistic accordingly: gaining rewards, avoiding punishment, and reducing aversive arousal – each category encompassing a number of possible self-benefits, that are summarized in the table below.

1. Receiving material, social, and self-rewards

Payment	Praise
Gifts	Honor
Reciprocity credit	Enhanced self-image
Thanks	Mood enhancement (maintenance)
Esteem	
Heaven	Empathic joy

2. Avoiding material, social, and self-punishments

Fines/imprisonment	Recrimination
Attack	Sanctions for norm violation
Hell	
Censure	Shame Guilt

3. Reducing aversive arousal

Escape from distressing situation	
Escape from discrepant situation	
Escape from unjust situation	

Table 6. Possible self-benefits from benefiting another (Batson et alii 2008, 137).

It is not the space here, nor necessary for my purposes, to account in detail for each of these self-benefits and the related functioning. Suffices to say that Hobbes' self-reported motivation to help the old beggar to relieve his own distress, aroused considering the miserable condition of the latter, fits perfectly with this motivational terrain and, more specifically, within the reducing aversive arousal category. In fact, as Batson and colleagues (2008, 139) observe, «the general idea of aversive-arousal reduction is that it is upsetting to see someone else suffer, and people prefer not to be upset. To eliminate this aversive arousal, one option is to relieve the other person's suffering because it is the stimulus causing one's own suffering».

As the very etymological root of the word suggests, *altruism* is egoism's antonym. Needless to say, the very concept of altruism so understood had been highly controversial and contested since before

the word was first coined by Comte to denote those social behaviours driven by an unselfish desire to «live for others» (Comte 1851, 556). Indeed, it might be that the burden of the proof rests on the supporters of the view that any non-egoistic motivation may even exist, let alone a genuinely altruistic one; as Batson (1987) caustically remarked commenting Hoffman's account of altruism, «that egoistic motives can underlie prosocial behaviour [...] cannot be denied. The issue in doubt is whether egoistic motives are the whole story, or only part. [In addition], given that egoistic motives exist and altruistic motives may or may not exist, parsimony clearly favors an exclusively egoistic view» (Batson 1987, 74). Building upon Comte's definition, Batson claims that altruism is a «motivational state with *the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare*» (Batson 1987, 67; Batson 2011, 20). However, it has been repeatedly argued that, even when a helper's goal is to increase another's welfare, the former would be interested in achieving this goal and expect some satisfaction or pleasure in succeeding; thus, under this light, alleged altruism only pertains to an instrumental goal, the ultimate goal of which remains straightforwardly egoistic – i. e. to increase oneself's welfare. Batson tackles this argument, which labels as «psychological hedonism», observing that it seems so rely on a twofold confusion; first, it neglects the distinction between the self as a bearer of desires – i. e. «Who has the desire?» – and the self as an object of desires – i. e. «Whose welfare is desired?». Second, it fails the acknowledgement of two version of hedonism, that is, weak hedonism – i. e. the view that goal attainment always bring pleasure – and strong hedonism – i. e. the view that the attainment of personal pleasure is always the goal of human action. It should be of no surprise that *only* strong hedonism, which can be equated with PE2, is inconsistent with altruistic motivation. In fact, Batson accepts weak hedonism and claims that altruistic motivation does exist, that is, that it is possible to be motivated to increase another's welfare as an ultimate goal (Batson et alii 2008, 140; Batson 2011, 22). On this reading, altruism has still much in common with egoism; in fact, each is referred to a goal-directed motive, whose content is the purpose to increase someone's welfare. However, Batson (2011, 22) insists that the distinction between egoism and altruism is *qualitative*: it is grounded in the content of the ultimate motive at stake, and not in the intensity or force of the motive. Plus, and accordingly, a motive cannot be egoistic and altruistic at the same time, because at least two different ultimate goals – one directed to increase the self's welfare, the other to promote another's welfare – would be involved in that case. However, a single individual can have egoistic and altruistic motives at a certain moment, inasmuch as he maintains more than one sole ultimate goal; to the extent that these motives are equally strong and point at different directions, the self is subject to motivational conflict. To be sure, though, the same action can be underpinned by more than a single motive, inasmuch as it is aimed at achieving more than one ultimate goal which are not conflicting.

So far, altruism has been described with regard to its concept, but little has been said about the mechanisms underlying its arousal. In this respect, Batson has tied his name to a well-known proposal, that is, the so called «empathy-altruism hypothesis» (henceforth, EAH; Batson 1987, 2011; Batson et alii 2008). Key to this account is the claim that

feeling other-oriented emotion elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of another person in need (i.e., empathic concern) produces a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing that person's welfare by having the empathy-inducing need removed (i.e., altruistic motivation). The more empathy felt for the person in need, the more motivation to have the need removed (Batson 2011, 29).

On the stronger reading of this idea, empathic concern produces altruistic motivation and, more importantly, all motivation produced by empathic concern is altruistic; a weaker reading is also possible, that is, that empathic concern may produce other forms of motivation as well – e.g., egoistic motivation or moral motivation. Batson deems as plausible both versions, but considers more extensively the former out two reasons: first, it leads to clearer prediction and, second, it has been the version of EAH the most tested (Batson 2011, 29). This is not the place for an accurate survey on the massive body of research testing EAH, since thirty-one experiments were conducted only from 1978 to 1996 (Batson 1987, Batson 2011; for a critical review see Nichols 2001); in a nutshell, however, most of the experimental designs were set so as to expose the subjects to another's distress, and to observe their reaction under manipulated conditions of empathy – low vs high – and ease of escape – difficult-escape condition vs easy-escape condition. In fact, a setting admitting ease of escape reduces «the attractiveness of helping as a means to reach the egoistic goal of reducing one's own empathic arousal. Ease of escape should not, however, affect the attractiveness of helping as a means to reach the altruistic goal of reducing the other's suffering» (Batson 2011, 96). Significantly, Batson collected strong evidence confirming EAH predictions, and inconsistent with predictions based on a aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis; the key EAH prediction being confirmed is that, in high-empathy and easy-escape conditions, helping rate is much higher than aversive-arousal-reduction hypothesis would predict.

To be sure, however, to endorse the strongest reading of EAH implies that empathic concern produces only altruistic motivation, but does not push so far as to claim that an individual feeling empathic concern is *only* altruistically motivated. In fact, an individual may also experience egoistic motives arising from sources other than empathy as well. For instance, a necessary condition for empathy to occur, that is, perception of another as in need, can trigger egoistic motivations as well – e. g., helping to reduce aversive arousal (see Table 6 above). It is worth noting that Batson does not claim that empathy is a necessary condition of altruistic motivation as such, and remains agnostic about other possible sources. Thus, the empathy-altruism hypothesis leaves room for others altruistic-arousing

mechanisms to operate; it can be incidentally noted that by acknowledging this point some readings of Batson's account may be contested, as Bierhoff and Küpper (1999, 143) who suggested that, if the empathy-altruism hypothesis were valid, then it would follow that «the scope of altruistic responses will be very limited since they are focused on single individuals who elicit empathy». In fact, not only Batson insists that altruism might arise out of sources other than empathy, he also argues that, once «the Eden of simplicity provided by the myth of universal self-interest» is abandoned, then a broader world of prosocial motives can be explored: «once parsimony [which *ceteris paribus* favours egoistic over altruistic explanations of prosocial behaviour] ceases to rule, the possibility arises that much territory previously assumed to lie within the Garden may not» (Batson 2011, 209). Batson proposes that, beyond egoism and altruism, at least two prosocial motivations are worth considering: collectivism and principlism.

Collectivism is «motivation with the ultimate goal of increasing the welfare of a group or collective» (Batson 2011, 216; Batson 2008, 143)⁸². The scope of the target collective might be small or large – «from two to over two billion» – and cover a wide range of human relationships or associations, from family to sport team, from nation to the whole humanity. More importantly, although group membership might make collectivism toward one's ingroup more likely, it is not a necessary condition for it to arise. In fact, one might as well be motivated to undertake action to benefit an outgroup that is persecuted or oppressed.

Significantly, Batson mentions SCT at this point, as a possible explanation of the form of collectivism based on group membership. As stated earlier, SCT claims that, when ingroup membership is made salient, then depersonalization of the self takes place; this process can account for a number of group phenomena as group cohesion and cooperation, and certainly affects prosocial motivations accordingly, whether altruistic or collectivistic. However, Batson doubts that SCT can *actually* maintain the distinction between egoism and other forms of alleged prosocial motivation: when the self is depersonalized, «one sees oneself as partner, team-member, woman, European, New Yorker, etc., and sees all members of the collective as interchangeable exemplars. If this kind of group-level self-categorization occurs, then acting to benefit the group or another group member is an expression of self-interest. The motivation is *not* collectivism; it is a special case of egoism» (Batson 2011, 217; my emphasis), or «depersonalized egoism» (Batson 2011, 218). In other words, on a SCT-based reading, collectivism would turn out to be a particular form of egoism that presupposes that the boundaries between the self and the group are blurred to the point that self-interest is depersonalized and perceived as indistinct from group interest (Turner 1987, 65). Thus, if genuinely other-regarding

⁸² Gilbert (1994) proposed a similar motivational concept, referred to as «groupism», that arises when «one acts as to promote what one perceives as “our” goals, needs, and so on».

– i. e. directed to another’s welfare – collectivism can ever be given, Batson proposes an alternative explanation, that relies on a firm conceptual distinction between the self and the group. Accordingly, Batson continues, the distinction between self-regarding and other-regarding motivations can stand. However, evidence supporting the possibility of collectivism so understood is not strong enough yet, as Batson himself concedes (Batson 2011, 220). Moreover, it may be observed that the implications of depersonalization can be described in terms other than Batson’s reconstruction; in fact, SCT does not seemingly entail that collectivism is group-expanded egoism but rather that, when group membership is salient, depersonalization leads to a «cognitive redefinition» (Turner 1987, 66) of one’s self-interest. To the extent that depersonalization brings about a group-level shift in one’s self-interest, then it qualitatively alters the motivational forces which are released accordingly. To acknowledge that the perception of the boundaries of the self and the target ingroup are blurred by depersonalization does not seem enough, I think, to assimilate the resulting motivation to egoism as Batson understands it. It may be even suspected that Batson is making depersonalization collapsing on deindividuation, that Turner accurately distinguishes; as stated earlier (see section 1 of this chapter), unlike deindividuation, depersonalization does *not* entail «a loss in individual identity [or] submergence of the self in the group [...]. It is the *change* from the personal to the social level of identity, a change in the nature and content of the self-concept corresponding to the functioning of self-perception at a more inclusive level of abstraction» (Turner 1987, 51). In addition, Turner provides much experimental evidence suggesting that ingroup categorization remarkably increases prosocial motivation and behaviour, to an extent that Batson’s account of collectivism cannot meet yet.

Although I do not claim to dismiss at all Batson’s version of collectivism, in the remainder of this thesis I shall stick to SCT’s explanation of this prosocial motivation. After all, Batson’s account of prosocial motivation can be consistently accommodated with SCT or, at the very least, it seems to leave room for the former to operate as a motivational source. For instance, it is plausible that, under cases where ingroup categorization is salient, SCT can indicate a source of altruistic motivation other than empathy – which, it should be recalled, is not considered by Batson as the *only* possible source of altruistic motivation.

To conclude with, *principlism* is «motivation with the ultimate goal of upholding some moral principle—for example, a principle of fairness or justice, or the utilitarian principle of greatest good for the greatest number» (Batson 2011, 220; Batson et alii 2008, 144). As this broad characterization suggests, principlism is intended to refer to universalist views of morality, and thus covers remarkably different accounts, as deontological ethics and some variants of utilitarianism. Batson remarks that most moral philosophers supporting principlism, from Kant forth, looked askance at altruism and

collectivism – the former as constitutively circumscribed, the latter as possibly encouraging harm toward outgroups – and sought alternative prosocial motivations. Core to principlism is basing prosocial motivation on serving an impartial and universal moral principle as a ultimate goal; thus, an agent so oriented is acting out of principlism, whereas an agent whose ultimate goal is to benefit another or a group as a whole is acting out of altruism or collectivism respectively. However, principlism has at least two structural weaknesses. First, it is motivationally tenuous and «often overpowered by self-interest» (Batson et alii 2008, 144), as it has been acknowledged even by proponents of moral universalism themselves. As an example, Habermas concedes that «moral answers [delivered by a post-conventional moral consciousness, and derived by an impartial and universal moral principle] retain only the rationally motivating force of insights» (Habermas 1990 [1983], 109) and that, accordingly, discourse ethics – i. e. the moral view that he proposes – requires as a condition of social effectiveness to be applied in «forms of life that are rationalized in that they [...] support motivations for translating insights into moral action» (Habermas 1990 [1983], 109). A second weakness of principlism is that its alleged agent-neutral and prosocial purpose might surreptitiously promote one's self-interest; in fact, not only, as also Durkheim maintained (see Chapter 1), «self-reports cannot be trusted to reveal a person's motives (Batson 2011, 23), but principlism is particularly threatened by the psychological mechanism of moral rationalization:

We are good at justifying to ourselves (if not to others) why a situation that benefits us or those we care about does not violate our moral principles: why we have the right to a disproportionate share of the world's natural resources; why dumping our nuclear waste in someone else's backyard is fair; why attacks by our enemies are atrocities, but attacks by our side are necessary. The abstractness of most moral principles, and their multiplicity, make rationalization easy (Batson et alii 2008, 144).

Motive	Ultimate Goal/ Valued State	Need-State Emotions	Strengths	Weaknesses
Egoism	Increase one's own welfare.	Many, including pain, distress, discomfort, fear, anxiety, shame, guilt, pleasure, praise, pride, etc.	Many forms; powerful; easily aroused; strong emotional base in pleasure-pain.	Benefiting others, whether individuals or society at large, relates to egoistic motivation only as an instrumental means or an unintended consequence.
Altruism	Increase the welfare of one or more other individuals.	Empathic concern, including sympathy, compassion, tenderness, empathic distress, empathic anger, etc.	Powerful; focused on other's welfare as ultimate goal; may generalize to group of which other is a member; strong emotional base in empathic concern.	Empathy-induced altruism is limited to individuals for whom empathy is felt; welfare of society at large relates to altruistic motivation only as an instrumental means or an unintended consequence.
Collectivism	Increase the welfare of a group or collective.	Group pride, esprit, loyalty, patriotism, collective shame, collective guilt, etc.	Powerful; focused on welfare of the group as ultimate goal; strong emotional base in group pride, loyalty, patriotism, etc.	Limited to group; welfare of individuals in need relates to collectivist motivation only as an instrumental means or an unintended consequence.
Principlism	Uphold some moral principle (e.g., fairness, justice, greatest good, do no harm).	Disgust, anger at violation of propriety principles; possibly moral outrage at violation of conflict principles.	Directed toward universal and impartial good.	Moral principles are abstract and varied; conflict moral motivation is easily corrupted; it is vulnerable to oversight, rationalization, and self-deception; lacks a strong emotional base; is experienced as a motivational "ought" not "want."

Table 7. Four Motives for Benefiting Other Individuals and Society at Large (Batson 2011, 214).

Conclusion

This tentative and partial unpacking of sociability focused on three sociability-related features, that is, social categorization of the self, empathy, and prosocial motivation. To be sure, insofar as sociability is framed as a cluster concept to accommodate it with an evolutionary understanding of human nature, a *full* unfolding of the concept is neither virtually possible, nor conceptually necessary for my purpose. In fact, what I actually needed and, possibly, accomplished is an account of sociability to be located on the right end of the anthropological spectrum outlined in Chapter 2, so as to prepare the terrain for the theorization of solidarity to be led.

As Batson et alii (2008) summarize the same point just made,

if empathy can produce motivation with the ultimate goal of increasing the welfare of another, then the assumption of universal egoism must be replaced by a more complex view of motivation that allows for altruism as well as egoism. *Such a shift in our view of motivation requires, in turn, a revision of our underlying assumptions about human nature and human potential.* It implies that we humans may be more social than we have thought: Other people can be more to us than sources of information, stimulation, and reward as we each ultimately seek our own welfare. We can care about them for their sakes, not only for ours (Batson et alii 2008, 142; my emphasis).

The italics in the previous quote is not accidental, but intended to emphasize that, as anticipated in Chapter 2, altruism as a prosocial motivation is taken to be a sociability-related property and, by extension, part of a view of human nature; this *anthropological* understanding of altruism, although shared by prominent authors as Hoffman (1981) and Batson, is not broadly acknowledged: suffices to recall that Mooney (2014) classifies altruism as part of a social or moral theory, whereas Monroe frames it in overt behavioural terms as «*action* designed to benefit another, even at the risk of significant harm to the actor's own well-being» (Monroe 1996, 4; my emphasis).

Finally, it is worth recalling that, as sociability is encompassed by a *nomological* account of human nature (see Chapter 2), each sociability-related property has to be endowed with an evolutionary explanation. If no explanation of such sort is at hand, it must be assumed that there is one. Although I did not focused on possible evolutionary explanations in this chapter, they are not difficult to find in literature; in fact, Turner insists on the adaptive significance of group formation, which presumably «directly produced solidarity, cooperation and unity of action and values so as to make the successful attainment of shared goals more likely» (Turner 1987, 40-41). Hoffman maintains that «empathy became a basic part of human nature through natural selection» (Hoffman 2000, 61), and so seems to do Batson, who argues that the capacity to value another's welfare intrinsically is not a violation of the principles of natural selection (Batson 2011, 53).

Chapter 4. Solidarity: its phenomenology and definition

In this chapter, the final and crucial move of the definition-construction is about to be made. Thus, it seems appropriate to summarize the previous steps which have led the discussion until this point. The first chapter ended with a number of open questions on Durkheim's account of solidarity, that have been largely unexplored or at the very least downplayed by most commentators. For the purposes of this chapter, it is worth mentioning how bizarre it is that Durkheim, despite his being widely recognized as a prominent theorist of solidarity, refrained from providing a definition of the concept of solidarity per se. However, Durkheim glossed such assertion adding that, if one were to insulate the concept of solidarity from its empirical incarnations, he would be left with a «general tendency to sociability, a tendency that is always and everywhere the same and is not linked to any particular social type» (*DSL*, 54).

The second chapter can be presented as an attempt to take this line of research more seriously than Durkheim himself did, pursuing the aim to advocate the claim that the concept of sociability is a core constituent of that of solidarity. In other words, any view of solidarity entails an assumption on sociability, just as any social, ethical or political concept relies on a number of anthropological assumptions that are salient for the concept construction. Thus, theorizing solidarity demands that one first advances one's view of sociability, as a matter of methodological accuracy concerning the proper concept construction. I proposed that sociability can be framed as a cluster concept, which accommodates it with a nomological understanding of human nature.

The third chapter aims at taking a further step, by unpacking three core sociability-related properties, that is, the capacity of categorizing the self, that of being empathic, and that of being moved by prosocial motivations.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. In the first section, I still present seven cases that are, at least intuitively, solidarity-evoking. In so doing, a phenomenological catalogue of solidarity will be provided, wide enough to give a flavour of the pervasiveness of the phenomenon; the remainder of the chapter will be devoted to the question whether all of these cases can be covered by a concept of solidarity, to be defined. The subsequent endeavour of defining solidarity, to be attempted in the second section, shall stick to the methodological guidance offered by Chapter 2. Thus, the definition of solidarity will be developed accordingly, that is, based on the sociability-related properties unpacked in Chapter 3. The third and conclusive paragraph of this chapter is intended to summarize in a table the way that the proposed definition (section 2) captures the sample of examples (section 1).

1.Pictures of solidarity

The following chapter is intended to prepare the terrain for the development of an account of solidarity. My assumption is that a philosophical enquiry on solidarity should take our commonsensical intuitions on solidarity both as a starting point and as an *explanandum*. Thus, in what follows, I shall report a number of examples of solidarity picked out of ordinary and historical experience, that are intended to be aligned just as rings to be crossed by a light ray, which is expected to spring from the definition of solidarity under construction. In this respect, I assume that a good theory of solidarity should aim at clarifying through conceptual analysis our commonsensical intuitions on solidarity, however vague and nebulous the latter can be. However, such a descriptive engagement should not lead to conflate theory into common sense, since not *every* description of a social event as an occurrence of solidarity is *ipso facto* epistemically trustworthy.

In fact, as stated in the introduction, solidarity is said in many ways in everyday conversations and the linguistic uses of the term are too many to count. Thus, it should be of no surprise that the following selected set of examples of solidarity covers quite different social, political and cultural contexts. Indeed, such an inclusive and various sample is intended to give a flavour of the pervasiveness of solidarity within historical and ordinary experience. More importantly still, comparing such a differentiated set of cases should enable their core similarities, if any, to emerge even more brightly than a more homogeneous sample could.

Such cases must be interpretable and acknowledgeable as instances of solidarity by the man on the street, that is, even in absence of a thorough theory of solidarity at hand.

1.1 “Juntos somos mas fuertes”: sport teams solidarity

The whole Athletic Bilbao squad have shaved their heads in solidarity with one of their teammates who has just undergone chemotherapy for the first time. Defender Yeray Alvarez, 22, was first diagnosed with testicular cancer last year and underwent surgery in December. However, a routine post-op medical conducted last month revealed an anomaly. Yeray has since begun his treatment, with his teammates vowing to stand beside him every step of the way (Wright 2017).

There is a number of respects about this story that result immediately solidarity-evoking. To begin with, it provides the reader with a sense of *cohesiveness* of the team group, resulting from the latter standing by a teammate, Yeray, facing a critical condition. In other words, the team as a whole undertakes prosocial action toward a fellow, which is then intended to result in some kind of *benefit* to him, out of internal group cohesiveness. In this vein, Iker Muniain, a highly-rated Athletic Bilbao player, tweeted a picture of the squad arm-in-arm along with the caption «Juntos somos mas fuertes»

(«Together we are stronger», Davis 2017). A second respect which is worth highlighting is that, in this case, what seems to trigger the group is a condition of *adversity* affecting a fellow, which the former intends to tackle or at the very least to alleviate. Thirdly, it is interesting to note how the team decided to aid Yeray, that is, by *sharing his fate* having their heads shaved; as Zhao (2019, 5) puts it, cases like this seem to be guided by the maxim that «what happens to part of the group should happen to the entire group». It remains to be questioned, though, whether fate-sharing is an intrinsic property of solidarity, or just a possible way to perform it – that is, a contingent or accidental arrangement. Moreover, a further matter to investigate is the *ground* of solidarity in this case – a foundation that may be based on shared identity, shared experience, shared goals, or elsewhere. Finally, there is no reason to assume that *group membership* does not play any motivational work; in other words, it seems plausible to suppose that the group action is triggered by the circumstance that the object of solidarity (i. e. Yeray) is a *teammate*, and not merely a colleague or a person. However, it might be given a case where the object of solidarity is utterly *external* to the group subject of solidarity – which Tuomela (2013) classifies as «external solidarity» –, or that at least *some* group members ascribe to the undertaken prosocial action a broader reach than the whole group does: for instance, the midfielder Óscar de Marcos said «this is not *only* for Alvarez [Yeray] but for *all* those people who suffer from this disease» (Davies 2017; my emphasis). However, it is still true that the group action has been triggered by Yeray's distress and adversity and *only then* it could be possibly extended to all people sharing the same condition, and not the other way around.

1.2 “That’s the power of unity”: uniformity-based group solidarity

Everybody stands up, please. Now do as I do. These are a few warm-up exercises to loosen up your muscles. Especially the legs. And now in unison. Left, right, left, right, left, right... [...] I want to show you something. Good. You feel it? *We’re becoming a single unit. That’s the power of unity.* [We have to keep it up] until we’re in step. You know that from dancing, right? Left, right...A rhythm like this can cause bridges to collapse. [...] This exercise has one more purpose. Wieland’s anarchy class is below us. I want the plaster to fall off the ceiling onto our enemy!

This speech is excerpted from the script of *Die Welle* (2008), which in turn is a film adaptation of Todd Strasser's novel (1981). In this passage, we have a flavour of an early step of Prof. Rainer Wenger's socio-political experiment, which is globally intended to demonstrate his students how easily the masses can be manipulated. Thus, once the students accept and acknowledge Wenger as the social group's leader, he establishes a number of rules and social practices that all of the group

members are expected to stick to, as long as they are willing to be part of the just formed social movement “The Wave”. For instance, he insists on his students to address him as “Herr Wenger”, instead of “Rainer”, thus paying a major reverence toward his social role as a leader. Beside this and others discipline-enhancing tricks, Wenger implements several solidarity-producing arrangements, based on uniformity – e. g. adopting a distinctive uniform and salute – and sense of community or fellow-feeling⁸³. As for the latter purpose, Wenger adjusts the classroom disposition by placing students with low grades beside students with good grades, so as to they can learn from one another and realize how unity makes strength. Moreover, as the quoted passage illustrates, Wenger makes his students experience the cohesive effect of marching together in the same rhythm, and reinforces it by means of the targeting of a common enemy – i. e. the anarchy class held by Wieland, a “rival” history teacher sceptical toward Wenger’s methods.

As the experiment goes on, the signs of an entrenching solidarity among the “Wavers” increase together with their hostility toward the out-groupers. The most evident example of this trend is when the bullies Sinan and Bomber strive successfully to protect Tim, the class outcast, from a pair of anarchists. Once the latter were kicked out, Sinan and Bomber gave Tim their phone numbers, to be used in similar cases of danger. This episode is of the highest significance insofar as we consider that Sinan and Bomber used to bully Tim himself, before grouping together in “The Wave”. Thus, it is worth questioning the reasons who drove Sinan and Bomber to go to bat for Tim even in absence of antecedent friendship bonds among them, let alone of agent-neutral moral beliefs about helping out-groupers or strangers in need, that are unlikely to be strongly motivating, if at all, for a bully mindset. A plausible explanation can rather rely on the change of social roles orchestrated by Wenger, who aimed at neutralizing the existing centrifugal forces flowing within the classmates, such as subgroups and interpersonal conflicts. Once “The Wave” had been established, Sinan and Bomber were expected to look at Tim’s under a different light, that is, as a group fellow, and to behave accordingly. In other words, *group membership* set in motion several normative expectations that stood in contrast with and prevailed over the antecedent bullies-victim scheme of interaction among the three of them. The maxim that group fellows should aid each other in case of *need or adversity* is likely included in such set of normative expectations that a good fellow should stick to, and was indeed repeatedly encouraged by Wenger himself.

⁸³ This methodological partition reflects the twofold motto that Wenger inculcates in the students that, in the book version – where this character’s name is Ben Ross –, is «strength through discipline, strength through community».

1.3 “È la stessa cosa” (this is the same thing): Mafia solidarity

The duty of solidarity among [Mafia and 'Ndrangheta] affiliates is supreme, especially toward members who are on the run or are in prison. This kind of duty constitutes a basic feature of the mafia community [...] The first three rules of the statute developed by the Setta degli Stoppaglieri, a group active in Monreale and the surrounding area in the 1870s, were – according to Antonino Cutrera – the following: 1) to help each other [...] and to revenge the offences to the associates with blood; 2) to provide and foster, by all means possible, the defence and liberation of the member who was unfortunate enough to fall into the hands of justice; 3) to distribute among associates (following a criterion set out by the chiefs) money deriving from blackmail, extortion, and thefts carried out together, giving more to needy members when distributing the booty (Paoli 2003, 86).

«One precise obligation of the members of the honored society is to intervene to help the *threatened* associate, passing him the *sferro* or *arma infame* [a knife or firearm], if he by chance lacks it, and to defend him, if he is losing» (Castagna 1967, 63; my emphasis).

It should be of no surprise that the constitutive embodiment of solidarity is considered to account for the longevity and wealth of centuries-old organized crime institutions as Mafia and 'Ndrangheta. After all, it is thoroughly reported that Mafia relies on an organizational strength which is demanded to hold together a wide systemic network, that necessarily overcomes the limited ties of kinship. In this respect, Gambetta collects a wide body of historical evidence showing that even succession, pace *The Godfather*, «is not a family affair», but is more often than not guided by meritocratic rather than hereditary criteria, that are intended to «guard the organization against the creation of internal factions, thus maintaining solidarity» (Gambetta 2009, 207-8).

There are countless instances and examples of how Mafia solidarity⁸⁴ takes place. To be sure, as the passage above expounds, Mafia solidarity is underpinned by a complex system of norms, codes and codicils (*codicilli*) (Lupo and Savatteri 2010) – which is more prominent of a feature in Mafia solidarity than in the other examples presented so far; thus, precepts and rules are the ideal starting point to encapsulate case studies of Mafia solidarity. More importantly, the duty of solidarity can get more or less demanding as a context-relative matter; for instance, Paoli emphasises that «the duty of solidarity is particularly strong *in prisons*, where imprisoned “men of honor” should put aside all the disagreements that might have seen them opposed in the outside world» (Paoli 2003, 81; emphasis added). As an agent-relative duty, Mafia solidarity can also underpin financial arrangements, that is, redistributive practices, as the opening quote illustrates. Indeed, this redistributive function of solidarity is of the highest importance for reinforcing the sense of community, in that «in both Cosa

⁸⁴ Henceforth, the label “Mafia solidarity” is intended to cover all those social rules and practices that underpin solidarity in both Mafia and 'Ndrangheta organizations.

Nostra and the 'Ndrangheta, the feeling of common belonging among the members of each family is strengthened principally by sharing the proceeds of some illegal activities» (Paoli 2003, 85). It is thus worth emphasizing that «Mafia morality» (Paoli 2003, 82) plays a core function in maintaining social solidarity within the families.

To be sure, *group membership* plays a key role in Mafia solidarity as well, and it often associate with an *antagonistic scheme*. In fact, the duty to aid a threatened fellow handing him a weapon applies only insofar as the latter is recognized as a group member, and the opponent as an out-grouper – e.g., a rival Mafia group member. Under direr situational circumstances, e. g. in prison, the salient social group of reference may broaden, so as to include all Mafia families as opposed to a common enemy, e. g. the State and its officials, thus calling for a mutual complicity among Mafiosi from rival families. After all, Mafia group membership is not exclusively based on kinship, but still it is strongly *ritualized* so as to enable the inclusion of a non-kin party in a family affair: «the expression “è la stessa cosa” (this is the same thing) is used in the Sicilian consortium in order to introduce a “man of honor” to a third affiliate. [...] In the 'Ndrangheta the analogous, though weaker, expression “this is a friend of ours” is heard on similar occasions» (Paoli 2003, 76).

1.4 “Nosism” and solidarity under dehumanization

The request for solidarity, for a kind word, a piece of advice, even just a sympathetic ear, was permanent and universal [in death camps], but it was rarely satisfied. [...] In August 1944, it was very hot at Auschwitz. [...] The Kapo had assigned me a corner of the cellar to clear of rubble. It was adjacent to a large room filled with laboratory equipment that was being installed but had already been damaged by the bombs. Running vertically down the wall was a two-inch-diameter pipe that terminated in a spigot close to the floor. Was there water in it? I tried opening the faucet, I was alone, no one could see me. It was stuck, but by using a stone as a hammer I was able to turn it a couple of millimeters. A few odorless drops came out, and I collected them on my fingers: it looked like water. [...] How much water can a two-inch pipe one or two meters in length contain? One liter, if that. I could drink it all immediately, it would have been the safest thing. Or leave a little for the next day. Or split it evenly with Alberto. Or reveal the secret to the whole work squad. I chose the third option: egotism expanded to the nearest person, which an old friend of mine has rightly called “*nosism*” – we-ism. We drank all the water, in short greedy sips, taking turns under the faucet, just the two of us. Secretly. But on the march back to camp I found myself next to Daniele, who was covered with gray cement dust, his lips cracked and his eyes glazed over, and I felt guilty (Levi 2015, 2464-2465).

This witness, which encapsulates an invaluable piece of human experience and suffering, provides a lot of food for thought about solidarity. In a descriptive respect, solidarity is depicted as a *social need*

that may be met in greater or lesser extent, as a result of the combination of a number of psychological, normative and environmental factors. In fact, the death camps were designated to implement a dehumanization regime, intended to deprive the deported of any moral status, to subject them to the rules of the camp, which were «incredibly complicated» and «innumerable» (Levi 2015, 67), and to reduce them to a permanent condition of sleeplessness, starvation and thirst – and much more of course. Under these extreme circumstances, where everyone's life is constantly at stake, it is small wonder what the «the primary rule of the camps» sounded like, that is, «to look out for oneself first of all» (Levi 2015, 2307). Indeed, Ella Lingens-Reiner reported, as a concentration camp survivor, an even sharper way to put it: «how was I able to survive Auschwitz? My principle is: I come first, second, and third. Then nothing. Then me again, and then all the others» (Lingens-Reiner 2015). To be fair, not all concentration or death camp survivors converge on this overtly egoistic conclusion – or at least, not in such radical terms. To mention just one discordant example, Richard Glazar, a Jewish originary of Czechoslovakia who survived to Treblinka death camp, reported an interestingly different social experience: when asked why mutual support and help were so widespread under such centrifugal forces, Glazar replied that

One felt it. One knew it. This is how it was. It gave us a certain *feeling of solidarity*. I think this was particularly important because it was a death camp. Egoism and selfishness had no place in this camp. Perhaps in other camps but not there. Mostly these little groups were based on the country of origin. [...] We were in a death factory. [...] *Given these horrible, degrading, slavelike conditions, we had to get together with somebody else.* What kept us going was the idea that we could do something. We always tried to do something to counteract this tremendous helplessness and dependence and our participation in this terrible crime (Tec 2003, 189; my emphasis)

As Tec puts the point out of a broad body of research and witnesses, «the more dire the conditions under which one was forced to live, the greater the need for solidarity and compassion among those sharing them» (Tec 2003, 148). After all, Glazar's words suggest a causal connection between the camps' dehumanizing conditions, on the one hand, and the strive for engage in solidarity, on the other hand.

It is worth questioning whether so divergent reports of the experience of solidarity in death camps, that is a largely disputed matter (Todorov 1997, 71-90; Maida 1993), can be accommodated and subsumed under a unitary, consistent reading. However, the reach of this question falls beyond the scope of the ongoing research. Thus, it seems wiser to confine the ongoing discussion to a selected order of considerations.

First and foremost, both accounts take solidarity as the *antonym* of «egoism», «selfishness» or «egotism». This opposition, which can aim for plausibility on commonsense, is not novel to this thesis (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 3). For the purpose of this comment, it is worth noting that the foundation of this dichotomy is less evident than a first glance would suggest. In fact, as anticipated in the second chapter, there is a number of senses that egoism might assume, which can shift from a variant of psychological egoism to a straightforwardly moral one (Shaver 2019). As a consequence, depending on the sense of egoism which is referred by the survivors' reports, a correspondent sense will apply to their use of solidarity as well. After all, both narratives include a number of descriptive respects – e. g. depicting solidarity as a human social need, or as a feeling – intertwined with evaluative stances – e. g. suggesting that more solidarity is morally better than less, or presenting egoism as a «rule of the camps». In other words, as well as egoism, solidarity seems to fluctuate between a descriptive and an evaluative content, which many scholars consider to be intrinsic to the concept itself (Bayertz 1999; Pensky 2008).

A second comparative remark may question the grounds of solidarity in both cases. For Levi describes a distributive dilemma that he finally decides out of a *relational* criterion, that is, by picking «the nearest person» as the exclusive co-beneficiary of the scarce primary good at stake. «Nosism» is, as Levi puts it, at the boundary between overtly egoistic motivation and altruistic or collectivistic motivation; however, it remains suspect of enlightened and forward-looking egoistic motivation, based on the expectation that the co-beneficiary shall reciprocate under similar circumstances. To be sure, antecedent relationships are only one of a number of possible foundations for a decision in this case. To mention just an alternative course of action, one could have opted for a needs-based principle, be it understood under the proportional variant, the weighted-priority one, or else (Brock and Miller 2019).

A third and last comment is that both reports pose solidarity more as a *response* to a critical situation than as a stable and given state of affairs. In fact, Levi prefaces the dilemma with the preliminary statement that the request for solidarity were higher than fulfilled, suggesting that the death camp's conditions made it both more urgent and unsatisfied. Glazar's version seemingly endorses the former, yet not the latter aspect of Levi's account: it denies that the need for solidarity was largely unmet in Treblinka death camp, but he as well emphasizes solidarity as a joint reaction to the camps' «horrible, degrading, slavelike conditions». This reactive aspect of solidarity is worth mentioning, since some philosophers consider intrinsic to solidarity to be aimed at «overcoming a significant adversity» (Sangiovanni 2015, 345).

1.5 “Like cells of a community”: humanitarian solidarity and its critics

We all are like cells of a community that is very important. Not America. I mean the human race.... every other person is basically you. You should always treat people as though it is you. That goes for evil Nazis as well as for Jewish friends who are in trouble (Tony, Dutch rescuer; see Monroe 2014, 91).

With this assertion, Tony offered Kristen Monroe a moral self-report of his actions as a rescuer under World War II. Monroe (1994; 2004; 2012; 2014) collected this and plenty of other interviews with over 100 people who lived through World War II and categorized them into bystanders, rescuers and Nazi supporters. The core goal of Monroe's research over time has been to demonstrate the crucial influence of a number of psychological factors, especially the perception of the relationship between the self and the others, on moral choice. To put it negatively, Monroe intends to question the extent to which rational choice theory can account for our ordinary moral experience that she claims to be, more often than not, driven by a «preconscious, spontaneous choice». The psychological mechanisms that lie behind this account of moral choice is the object of Monroe's endeavour. In fact, Monroe puts in relation a number of cognitive ingredients that are intended to reconstruct the psychological structure of the participants interviewed. As a summary, she collected the resulting data in the following template:

CRITICAL PARTS AND DIFFERENCES → MORAL CHOICE

	RESCUER	BYSTANDER	NAZI SUPPORTER
VIEW OF SELF/OTHERS	All part of the human race	Groups, Ostrich	Community, victims under siege, Aryan Superiority, elitist
Others	Humans Complex/ Forgive Nazis	Strangers Aristotelian dissipation of moral energy: Psychological distancing -> out-groups lesser	Distance = threat Aristotelian dissipation of moral energy: Psychological distancing -> out-groups lesser
WORLDVIEW	Mixed	Deterioration	World Harsh
Ontological Security	Mixed	Weak	Threatened
Values, Attitudes	Human wellbeing core of ethics	Mixed	Cultural, racial superiority
Agency	Ability effect change	Low efficacy Passive, helpless	Larger forces, historical forces provide agency
CATEGORIZATION SCHEMA	Inclusive, broad porous boundaries	In/out group Exclusive	Rigid, hierarchical Exclusive
IDEALIZED COGNITIVE MODELS/ CANONICAL EXPECTATIONS	Good life = helping others	Good life = material wellbeing, affluence	Community Key Good life = follow leader, group

→ MORAL SALIENCE, FELT IMPERATIVE TO ACT

→ MENU OF CHOICE OPTIONS PERCEIVED AS AVAILABLE.

IDENTITY TRUMPS CHOICE

Table 7: The main differences among the rescuers, bystanders, and Nazi supporters (Monroe 2014, 100)

To make sense of this table, one has to consider that all of the interviewed subjects were asked whether they were aware of the ongoing Holocaust during World War II, what they knew about it and in which terms it entrenched in their moral experience. In other words, the focus of the interviews was set on the attitude that people had toward the persecuted Jews, to dig deeper and seek the underlying psychological structure. Thus, it might be said that readiness to perform humanitarian solidarity under high risk conditions was at stake in Monroe's interviews and research, rather than a general disposition to solidarity at all; after all, Nazis maintained a strong sense of internal solidarity, as the case of Florentine shows – a woman who kept on promoting Nazist propaganda even in Post-War, and indeed «is one of the people who shows the strongest sense of solidarity with her group» (Monroe 2014, 102).

The data collected and schematized by Monroe highlight that disposition to highly onerous humanitarian solidarity is strongly associated with evaluative and cognitive contents which determine one's ethical perspective, that is, «a sense of connection with the person in need that then leads to a felt imperative to act to alleviate the person's suffering» (Monroe 2014, 88). According to Monroe, all people have an ethical perspective, however different the evaluative and cognitive contents can be depending on cultural factors as religion, education, environment, and so on. As a consequence, a Nazi's ethical perspective is most likely to be triggered when the object of solidarity is recognized and categorized as part of her particular group; conversely, a person who maintains more inclusive categorization boundaries and upholds universalist moral values will undertake prosocial action even if the object of solidarity is not part of her particular group, or have no antecedent relationships of any kind with her.

As an upshot, it might be said that Monroe takes humanitarian solidarity to be an attitude that brings about prosocial action toward a stranger facing an *adversity*; such an attitude is most likely to be driven by an ethical perspective filled with inclusive categorization boundaries, universalist moral values, and much more of course. Moreover, Monroe (2014, 91) underlined that all of the interviewed people did not report any «agonistic choice», and acted out of an irreflexive determination of will; accordingly, Monroe claims that humanitarian solidarity does not result from a practical reasoning or economic calculus, but rather from a perception of one's identity and relation to others. This is why Monroe emphasises expressions like «sense of [humanitarian] solidarity» throughout her text. So far, the focus has fallen more on the meaning of the «sense» in the expression «sense of [humanitarian] solidarity», exploring its underlying psychological presuppositions and mechanisms. However, it is now to be questioned whether humanitarian solidarity, that is the object of such «sense», does make any sense at all. In other words, is humanity a community providing a proper scope for solidarity to flow? After all, rescuer Tony's words reported explicitly a sense of belonging to humanity as a community, and point at it as the foundation of his solidaristic action.

A troublesome respect of humanitarian solidarity is the presumed *unconditional inclusiveness* of its group membership, which is particularly evident as Tony emphasises that it would even apply to «evil Nazis», who perpetrated massive violations of human rights out of an overtly racist ideology. However appealing the idea of humanitarian solidarity might sound, it has been vastly criticized owing to the vagueness of the foundations on which humanity group membership is presumed to be based. For instance, Rorty (1989) argued that the concept of solidarity embeds a «contrastive force» that entails an antagonistic partition between the “us” in solidarity against the “they”, or “others”⁸⁵,

⁸⁵ «This analysis takes the basic explanatory notion in this area to be “one of us” - the notion invoked in locutions like “our sort of people” (as opposed to tradesmen and servants), “a comrade in the [radical] movement”, a “Greek like

with the latter set being « also made up of human beings – the wrong sort of human beings» (Rorty 1989, 190). In this respect, Rorty conceives solidarity as constitutively based upon a *particularistic* sense of community.

To support this claim, Rorty offers a deflationary argument against humanitarian solidarity and an empirical one. To begin with the former, as a first step, Rorty claims that humanitarian solidarity calls for some universal commonalities encompassed by human nature and, as a second step, he discusses the rejection of the latter notion, by flagging it as an untenable metaphysical presupposition. As a consequence, Rorty claims that the notion of human solidarity is ultimately groundless and should be dismissed as rhetorical flourishing. Rorty's deflationary argument is at the very least weakened by the critical discussion on his views on anthropological essentialism, led in chapter two; however, his scepticism on humanitarian solidarity has been pursued by means of other strategies (Heyd 2015; Derpmann 2014).

As for his empirical argument, Rorty claims that if one were to ask the rescuers under World War II whether their action was driven by humanitarian solidarity,

perhaps sometimes they [would], but surely they would usually, if queried, have used more parochial terms to explain why they were taking risks to protect a given Jew - for example, that this particular Jew was a fellow Milanese, or a fellow Jutlander, or a fellow member of the same union or profession, or a fellow bocce player, or a fellow parent of small children (Rorty 1989, 190-91).

In other words, in Rorty's account Tony's «humanitarian solidarity» is actually grounded in particularistic foundations, just as the solidarity stubbornly maintained by Florentine. I am sympathetic to Rorty's claim that the two cases share some core features, but the claim that humanitarian solidarity actually hides a particularistic foundation is to be justified more convincingly than Rorty's strategy can do.

Moreover, Rorty has also very little empirical evidence to offer in defence of his claim, which is more based on speculative suppositions than on historical records and interviews. Conversely, Norman Geras (1995, 7-46) underlines that a prominent body of knowledge encompassed by the Holocaust research stands in contrast with Rorty's claim, inasmuch as it results that a relatively high number of rescuers helped people with whom they had had no antecedent relationship, and reported to have been motivated by «universalist commitments» (Geras 1995, 21). After all, Monroe's research comes to a consonant conclusion, at least as for the universalist content of the psychological motivation who drove the rescuers' action – as Tony's self-report illustrates.

ourselves” (as opposed to a barbarian), or a “fellow Catholic” (as opposed to a protestant, a Jew, or an atheist). I want to deny that “one of us human beings” (as opposed to animals, vegetables, and machines) can have the same sort of force as any of the previous examples» (Rorty 1989, 190).

To sum up, Monroe accounts for humanitarian solidarity out of a psychological theory of moral motivation, which relies on one's perception of self-identity and her relationship with others. In this respect, Monroe argues that such motivation is largely preconscious and spontaneous. However, she says remarkably little about the salient commonalities that underpin the categorization of humanity as a community, and just sticks to the fact that Tony and other rescuers seem to act out of a perception of the self and the other as «cells of a community».

1.6 Standing up for social change: when solidarity turns political

Ostersund, Sweden — A Swedish student activist stopped the deportation of an Afghan man [named as Bismallah S. in court proceedings] this week by refusing to take her seat on a packed Turkish Airlines flight, and her dramatic video of the tense standoff has gone viral. The student, Elin Ersson, initially bought a ticket because she believed that a 26-year-old man from Afghanistan was being deported to Kabul from Landvetter Airport in Gothenburg via Istanbul. When she got on the plane, the 26-year-old was not there, but an Afghan deportee in his 50s was with the Swedish authorities. Ms. Ersson, 21, live-streamed the standoff on the flight late Monday on Facebook, and footage of the 14-minute video shows her in tears, at times being confronted by crew members and angry passengers. But she also garnered some support. “I’m not going to sit down until this person is off the plane,” she says in the video, “because he is most likely to get killed if he is on this plane when it goes up.” [...] In the end, both the Afghan man and Ms. Ersson left the plane. It’s likely that the man’s deportation will be carried out later. [...] “I’m trying to change my country’s rules,” she tells a seated passenger. “He is going to die –because it’s Afghanistan” (Anderson and Karasz 2018).

Ersson’s standing up and halting the flight departure to prevent Bismallah’s deportation has been largely qualified by the press and the main public commentators as a demonstrative act of solidarity. A number of respects of this story are to be unpacked, for they disclose some core features of political solidarity – that is, definitely, the kind of solidarity which caught most of the philosophical attention over the last decade (Scholz 2008; Kolers 2016; Banting and Kymlicka 2017).

To be sure, Ersson did not take the defence of Bismallah’s out of antecedent relationship⁸⁶, or out of particularistic commonalities as native country or ethnicity. Rather, Ersson’s prosocial action was arguably driven by *normative reasons*, as her own self-report suggests; in fact, she later told Swedish media «I did it as an individual, activist and fellow human being. [...] My point of departure is that

⁸⁶ To be fair, Elin Ersson’s original plan was to stop the deportation of a 21-year-old Afghan friend whose asylum application had been rejected. However, as she arrived at the airport, she was told he had already departed. Thus, she had purchased a ticket for a flight where another Afghan man, namely Bismallah, S., was being deported. It should be clear, though, that Ersson’s core motive was grounded in a political commitment more than on antecedent relationships, if we consider that she is a volunteer with an organization that fights the forced return of Afghan asylum seekers whose applications have been rejected (Anderson 2018).

he is human and deserves to live. In Sweden we do not have the death penalty, but deportation to a country at war can mean death» (Crouch 2018). At first glance, one might question whether we are actually just in front of one more case of humanitarian solidarity, of the sort described above. However, a crucial remark has to be noted: whereas the latter brings about a highly costly prosocial action that remains *secret* between the subject and the object of solidarity – i. e. hiding a Jew at the risk of oneself life –, Ersson’s action did entail a personal cost yet its core sense was *demonstrative*, and intended to promote social change. This core difference, indeed, underlies the distinction between moral solidarity, that is often maintained as the «universal extension of social solidarity» (Scholz 2015, 728) – based on «some shared characteristics and similarities» (Scholz 20008, 5) – and political solidarity, which is «political activism aimed at social change» (Scholz 2008, 5). However, political solidarity can be grounded in moral reasons as well – for instance, Kokers’ account frames political solidarity as a «perfect duty of equity» (Kokers 2016, 8).

Interestingly, political solidarity entails a partition between a “we” and a “they” as well, although the protest group’s boundaries have to be inclusive enough to enable the call for the support of outsiders. Accordingly, it has been proposed to refer to political solidarity as to «fighting solidarity» (Laitinen and Pessi 2014, 10). However, Kokers (2016) provided useful clarification on this point, by drawing a distinction between agonism and antagonism:

Agonism is not antagonism. Typically, political struggle is against other actors. But that is not a logical necessity; the struggle might be to galvanize an apathetic group or unify a fragmented one, in which case the struggle in question is not against any agent but against a phenomenon or mindset. Moreover, one can think highly of one’s opponents and not question their motives. One can even invite them in, and hope to find common ground. That said, however, political struggles do tend to be waged against other actors, and so solidarity will most often pit us against individuals or groups who represent divergent positions. This opposition need not be permanent, but it is characteristic of solidarity (Kokers 2016, 39).

In the case in object, it is trivially true that Ersson’s stance is agonistic, because by her sole standing up she posed a political issue *concerning* an Afghan deportee and *sided with* him at once. However, to be sure, Ersson’s demonstrative action was primarily directed to the single case at stake, but also intended to make a more far-reaching and systemic political point: «I’m trying to change my country’s rules», she said. In this respect, given that Ersson’s political target was the asylum and return policies in effect, then she also implicitly directed her protest against a political actor, that is, the Swedish government in power at that time.

To be sure, this case is not to be considered as representative of the *volume* that political solidarity can take on, that may well overcome the reach of an individual’s demonstrative action as Ersson’s.

For instance, Scholz (2008, 34) argues that «the collective of political solidarity is usually a smaller group acting in response to a larger group but it could also be a less powerful group (regardless of size) responding to a more powerful group (regardless of size)». Kokers also privileges the discussion of large-scale examples as the abolitionist movement or the civil rights movements. However, this is not tantamount to deny that Ersson's individual protest is accountable as political solidarity. After all, even Kokers himself makes an individual case of political solidarity that has much in common with Ersson's:

suppose Rosa Parks sits down on the bus and remains seated when a white passenger boards and finds no place up front to sit. The driver demands that Mrs. Parks yield her seat and, when she refuses, has the police remove her from his bus. It seems built into the concept that solidarity with Rosa Parks would require each of us, if we were on that bus, to get off the bus with her –to refuse a public service to which we were entitled and for which we had paid (Kokers 2016, 28).

On Kokers' account, as stated earlier, solidarity is a reason-driven and agent-neutral duty of equity, and thus applies to each moral agent as such. In these terms, it might be said that acting in defence of Bismallah was required from the moral duty of solidarity, and Ersson would have behaved accordingly even if she had encountered no support at all from the other passengers in the flight. In other words, political solidarity can entrench in social and civic movements – whose structure and organization is the object of social ontology – but does not need to, and in principle can be performed by single individuals.

1.7 Civic solidarity: large-scale cooperation schemes

How [...] should we view someone who feels no particular degree of commitment to his or her state, or to other citizens and residents qua citizens and residents, someone who merely complies with law, but would happily pay lower taxes and be done with the welfare state (on which they do not depend)? Or someone who merely complies out of fear of punishment, but who would gladly avoid taxes could they get away with it? Such people see no reason to act in solidarity with others. But, if I am right about the reasons grounding commitments of solidarity, they are mistaken about the reasons they have. [...] They have reasons, that is, to be disposed to pay greater costs than they envisage for the maintenance and reproduction of a system on which they, and others, depend so fundamentally. [...] However, notice that if they do continue to support the state by complying with law, and thereby continue to contribute to the reproduction of state institutions, they are still owed the fair return captured by principles of egalitarian justice, even if they do not acquire the dispositions constitutive of solidaristic action (Sangiovanni 2015, 355).

The assumption that the welfare state is a mechanism of solidarity in modern societies is thoroughly present in the philosophical literature which equates such schemes with “civic” (Scholz 2015, 730-2) or “redistributive” solidarity (Banting and Kymlicka 2017, 4). The core claim shared by most proponents of such line of thought is that every political community needs some sort of collective protection for those citizens that are more likely to be affected by social vulnerability and social exclusion (Scholz 2015, 730-2), and that welfare state schemes fit the bill with this demand. However, it is quite common to have this argument relying on *moral* grounds; indeed, civic or redistributive solidarity is often framed as a duty that governing bodies have to their citizens (Bayertz, 1999, 21), or as a virtue of institutions (Laitinen and Pessi 2014, 7).

The welfare state provides a specifically modern mechanism performing solidarity, whose successful outcome results in an increase of societal cohesion within the political community. As Carlo Burelli and I proposed elsewhere (Burelli and Camboni, forthcoming), it is worth considering solidarity as a function of modern societies, that operates both producing societal cohesion-related feelings – which is its *process* – and as welfare transfers – which is a distinctively modern mechanism of solidarity. According to this reading, solidarity discharge a social function which goes both ways: on the one hand, redistributive policies contribute to reinforcing feelings of societal cohesion; on the other hand, such feelings support redistributive policies as they “tend to cause people to seek out situations in which there are strong feeling of cooperation, mutual identification, and similarity of status and position’ and inequalities result in a ‘loss of mutual identification’”.

It may be questioned which of the two triggers came first, and there are conflicting views about this problem. There are those who claim that ‘a direct sense of community membership based on loyalty to a civilisation that is a common possession’ (Marshall 1950, 96) is a precondition for redistributive policies to be established. On the other hand, alternative approaches as the ‘power source theory’ claim that the historical development of welfare state can be accounted in purely strategic terms, thus without postulating any antecedent national cohesion holding together the population (Banting and Kymlicka 2017, 7-8). According to the latter position, it is not societal cohesion which causally contributed to the existence of welfare state, but other social factors as self-interest and conflict among competing political actors.

An etiological account as that we propose can remain agnostic on this question. As we argue more in detail in our paper, these accounts do not explain the first appearance of the phenomenon, which can be the result of random mutation – e. g. in hearts – or human intention – e. g. in microwaves – just as well. Etiological accounts rather look at how a certain organism spread and persist through time, and go on to populate the world. The same can be said for solidarity: it is a function of societies

independently from how it arises, whether by strategic conflict or by mutual acknowledgment. Indeed, as Banting and Kymlicka (2017, 8) point out:

[the power resource approach aims] not as denying the long-term importance of solidarity, but rather as helping to explain its origins. Inclusive welfare states or expanded enfranchisement may have initially arisen as a result of strategic behaviour by actors motivated by partisan or particularistic interests, but these reforms set in motion an evolutionary process which over time contributed to a more comprehensive sense of solidarity' (Banting and Kymlicka 2017, 8).

Indeed, some authors push even further this broad acknowledgement, suggesting that the relation between solidarity as a set of feelings and solidarity as a set of transfers constitutes a virtuous circle that, once set in motion, accelerates its momentum: solidarity as a set of transfers requires the substratum of fraternal feelings, yet this is in turn reinforced by the transfers. The etiological-functional account of solidarity that we propose can make sense of this virtuous circle claiming that, whatever reason – whether merely instrumental or straightforwardly moral – brought about the establishment of a welfare state scheme, the persistence of the latter can be accounted only in virtue of its functional work.

However, it is no mystery that such virtuous circle may run into disruption and bring about distorted side effects, such as a purely private and hedonistic enjoyment of the benefits supplied by the welfare state. For instance, Habermas noted that although social rights are conceptually compatible with non-democratic regimes, their function in democratic regimes is to ensure that citizens have their private autonomy granted, which is a precondition for the positive exercise of their rights of political participation, which in turn is a genuinely democratic practice of solidarity (Habermas 1996). Such side effect, that Habermas labels as “syndrome of civil privatism” (Habermas 1996, 78), may be explained as a social dysfunction of the welfare state, according to the etiological functionalist account.

Once solidarity is understood, at the large-scale level, as a function of society that modern societies entrust to welfare state schemes, it is worth questioning how it is entrenched at the *motivational* level. In fact, it is trivially true that social protection policies rely on a sufficiently high rate of tax-paying compliancy. However, very different motives and reasons can be underlying such compliancy. As Sangiovanni points out in the opening quote, one might be willing to cooperate in welfare state schemes out of moral reasons – e. g. because she believes that it is morally required to contribute to social protection schemes, as a consequence of her interdependency on the support of other citizens and residents –, just as she might be guided by solely pragmatic or strategic reasons – e. g. because she does not experience any sense of commitment or attachment to the state, and is only motivated by the fear of punishment. A functionalist account of solidarity can also remain agnostic about the

self-regarding or other-regarding nature of the reasons and motives that determine one's tax-paying compliancy, but offers a ground for the justification of a moral reason to cooperate: as long as welfare state schemes' function is to reproduce and foster social cohesion and the sense of collective protection, it is in every citizen's and resident's interest to support them to prevent the collapse of the social fabric. In other words, understanding solidarity as a function can make sense of the *interdependency* of the social units, a feature that Durkheim described as particularly salient in modern societies, owing to their higher degree of differentiation. So understood, the sense of interdependency can be related to *fate-sharing*, in that one's wealth and social luck is partly intertwined with and depending on others cooperation, and thus modern societies can be described as complex systems whose social units must cooperate to ensure their own benefit and the stability of the whole at once.

2. A sociability-based definition of solidarity

It is now time to employ the theoretical toolbox fine-tuned until now, so as to accomplish the expected goal of this thesis, that is, to deliver a definition of solidarity accordingly. The definition will be presented and unpacked with a twofold focus: to discuss each component of the definition, and to keep track of its definitional power over the sample of examples of solidarity set out in the previous section. I claim the validity of the following conceptual definition of solidarity (henceforth, D):

D: Solidarity is a reason-driven action that is (i) aimed at benefiting a whole ingroup or an ingroup member (ii) that is facing an adversity, (iii) sustained by an altruistic or collectivistic motivation elicited by situation-specific self-categorization.

2.1 Solidarity is a reason-driven prosocial action

First, solidarity is *action* and, in so doing, differentiated from physical behaviour, the distinction of which is controversial and debated, to name just a research field, in philosophy of action. As a broad premise, different levels of action are to be distinguished, and a provisional taxonomy might include at least «unconscious and/or involuntary behaviour, purposeful or goal directed activity [...], intentional action, and the autonomous acts or actions of self-consciously active human agents» (Wilson & Shpall 2016). To be sure, each of these concepts can be elaborated in remarkably different ways, and it is not my intention to enter the related debate here; however, I shall take as a necessary condition for solidarity to be *purposeful action*, that is, instrumental or goal-oriented action (Kolers

2016, 33)⁸⁷. In addition, I shall assume that behaviour counts as action only when reason -driven (Nida-Rümelin 2019, 22); in other words, acting expresses reasons, whereas behaviour per se may be also determined by non-epistemic conative states, or nonconscious causes – e. g. motor mimicry. Let me incidentally note that, in a similar vein, Batson claims that a similar constraint applies to prosocial motivations, which he understands as inherently goal-directed: «if an individual acts reflexively or automatically without any goal, then no matter how beneficial to another or to self the result may be, the act is neither altruistically nor egoistically motivated» (Batson 2011, 22).

Reasons for action have not been discussed so far, for I do not consider them as part of the sociability cluster, that is understood in overtly *psychological* terms. Reasons for action can be «normative» in different senses; for instance, Habermas (1994) differentiates among a pragmatic, an ethical and a moral employment of practical reason, whose shared function is to guide the agent's deliberative process, yet out of different kinds of reasons respectively – pragmatic or prudential, ethical, and moral. All the reasons have the power of «justifying choices among alternative available courses of action» (Habermas 1994 [1991], 8), and reflect the core ability and function of practical reason, that is, «to justify corresponding imperatives» (Habermas 1994 [1991], 9). In Habermas, the corresponding imperatives or normative reasons resulting from each employment of practical reason are, respectively, «strategic directions for action», «clinical advice», and «moral judgements».

First, «strategic directions for action» are the outcome of the pragmatic employment of practical reason, and provide the agent with the most economic and effective guidance to reach a goal, that is *assumed as given* – e. g., given the end of reaching my workplace in time, what should I do at the light of the circumstance that my bike is broken? Thus, normative reasons resulting from a pragmatic employment of practical reason can be equated with hypothetical imperatives, on Kant's terminology. Second, stemming from the ethical employment of practical reason, «clinical advice» is intended to shed light on the agent's self-understanding, that is, her self-concept as a unique individual committed to lifegoals, projects which uplift her to her ideal anthropological self-image. Within this domain, practical reason is taken to frame the core question «what should I do?» in terms that have little to do with instrumental strategies, and straightforwardly question the individual's *ultimate* goals, which are defined by her «strong evaluations» (Habermas 1994 [1991], 72): «Who am I, and who would I like to be?» (Habermas 1994 [1991], 4); as an example, choosing a career is an ethical question. Importantly, the ethical employment of practical reason does not belong to individuals only; in fact, being it based on a first-person perspective, it can also be posed by the first-person *plural* point of

⁸⁷ In this passage and in the remainder of the chapter, I shall equate the labels «purposive» and «purposeful», the former being employed by Wilso and Shpall (2016) and the latter by Kokers (2016) to denote the same concept, however characterized in broad terms.

view of a group: «evaluations express what in a given case is more or less good and useful or bad and harmful “for me” or “for us”» (Habermas 1994 [1991], 62; my emphasis). For instance, when two or more ingroup members jointly undertakes an interpretation or assessment of their shared history as members of *that* group, a collective ethical employment of practical reason is involved. Thus, ethical reasons maintain a constitutive reference to an agent’s – whether individual or collective – self-concepts and their normative force is strictly *agent-relative* accordingly, that is, «it applies to a particular person in virtue of their being in the relevant situation» (Kolers 2016, 143).

Instead, and finally, moral employment of practical reason addresses the core question «what should I do?» in terms of how one ought do, that is, in a Kantian flavour, examining whether our maxims are compatible with the maxims of others. Discourse ethics (1990 [1983]) aims at reframing the Kantian account of morality as cognitivist, universalistic and formal, yet characterizing the moral point of view in communicative and intersubjective terms; moral norms are understood as resulting of a dialogical use of reason, which aims at mutual understanding and consensus on «how practical conflicts can be settled in the common interest of all» (Habermas 1994 [1991], 24). Aiming at impartiality and categorical force, unlike ethical reasons, moral reasons are *agent-neutral*, that is, «an “ought” that is dependent on neither subjective goals and preferences nor on what is for me the absolute goal of a good, successful, or not-failed life» (Habermas 1994 [1991], 8). Accordingly, moral reasons are accessible only inasmuch as one enter a discourse assuming a decentred or post-conventional stance, whereas ethical reasons do not call for this reflexive abstraction: they can be accessed only «within the *unproblematic* horizon of a concrete historical form of life or the conduct of an individual life» (Habermas 1990 [1983], 108; my emphasis). However, moral reasons result from intersubjective validation of contested norms whose moral validity is decided by the application of the moral discourse principle (U): «All affected can accept the consequences and the side effects its general observance can be anticipated to have for the satisfaction of everyone's interests (and these consequences are preferred to those of known alternative possibilities for regulation)» (Habermas 1990 [1983], 65). To be sure, ethical reasons can enter the moral discourse, insofar that they meet this universalization principle; however, and importantly, ethical reason by definition do *not* have to be universalized.

To anticipate the discussion of a subsequent component of D – i. e., prosocial motivation –, it is useful to insist on a difference between ethical reasons and moral reasons, that is, their *motivational power*. In fact, Habermas concedes that the cognitive switch to the moral point of view entails at least two troublesome consequences that discourse ethics has to address: the first is *decontextualization*, that is, the fact that moral reasons are accessible only by means of an abstraction «from the local conventions and historical coloration of a particular [i. e., ethical] form of life». The second problem

affecting moral reasons is *demotivation* – i. e., the fact that, so understood, moral reasons «retain only the [weak] rationally motivating force of insights» (Habermas 1990 [1983], 109). To cope with this twofold constitutive limitation that affects moral norms and ensure that they can become effective in practice, Habermas developed a number of compensatory strategies; for instance, he argued that the moral point of view plays a core function in democratically legitimate lawmaking: «in virtue of the legitimacy components of legal validity, positive law has a reference to morality *inscribed* within it» (Habermas 1996 [1992], 106; my emphasis). Law, in turn, provides moral reasons with a motivational supplement in that its requirements are associated to sanctions, which amount to strategic reasons for their observance.

To sum up this point, Habermas claimed that moral reasons maintain at least *some* motivational force (Habermas 1996 [1992], 151), which is nonetheless weaker than ethical reasons do, in virtue of the latter being intertwined with and accessible from the singular or plural first person perspective of an individual whose self-understanding is framed in terms of personal or social identity. Let me incidentally note that, however Habermas does not explicitly mention or consider Turner's SCT, he seems to assume that a psycho-cognitive mechanism not too dissimilar to self-categorization is involved in taking an ethical or moral point of view. In fact, he claims that

With moral questions, humanity or a presupposed republic of world citizens constitutes the *reference system* for justifying regulations that lie in the equal interest of all. In principle, the decisive reasons must be acceptable to each and everyone. With ethical-political questions, the form of life of the political community that is “in each case our own” constitutes the *reference system* for justifying decisions that are supposed to express an authentic, collective self-understanding. In principle, the decisive reasons must be acceptable to all members sharing “our” traditions and strong evaluations (Habermas 1996 [1992], 108; my emphasis).

If one were to understand this vague notion of «reference system» in terms of SCT, it could be said to relate to the human level of self-categorization when moral reasons are at stake, whereas ethical reasons – especially when collective – seem to be even conceivable only at the light of a social categorization of the self.

It might be said that the main psychological motivation moral reasons can rely on is *principlism*, on Batson's terms (see Chapter 3, section 3). In fact, principlism is defined as «motivation with the ultimate goal of upholding some moral principle» (Batson 2011, 220; Batson et alii 2008, 144), and is typically related to universalist accounts of morality, as Habermas' discourse ethics. To take one step beyond Batson's analysis, it should be specified that principlism does not necessarily dispose the agent to *prosocial* behaviour; in fact, in line with the Kantian tradition, moral norms can be divided into duties to oneself – e. g., the duty to perfect oneself' abilities – and duties to others – e. g., the

duty to foster the happiness of others –, for a one-sidedly other-regarding conception of morality could hardly make sense of the categoricity of moral imperatives (Kant 2018 [1797]). It is mainly duties to others that prescribe prosocial behaviour and, accordingly, I claim that principlism typically operates as a prosocial motivation when associated with a duty – i. e., a moral reason – to others. Ethical reasons, on their part, have stronger motivational force than moral norms, and can be arguably related with prosocial motivations especially when group membership is made salient. In fact, it is true that ethical reasons can encapsulate the constituents of *both* individual *and* social identity, depending on whether, under a given situation, the agent is understanding herself in terms of her personal life story, *or* in terms of her valued belonging to a significant group. However, it seems plausible to suggest that, whereas individual ethical reasoning may often lead the agent to take self-regarding decisions – e. g., pursuing a certain professional career, or deciding for a city life or a country life (Rehg 1995, 49) –, group-based ethical reasons are more likely to promote group identity, and encourage altruistic or collectivistic behaviour among group members⁸⁸ – e. g., creating a sport team anthem which encapsulates the group’s history and values.

It remains to be said something specific about pragmatic reasons and their relation with prosocial motivation. In fact, pragmatic reasons and the pragmatic employment of reason are virtually involved in *any* action plan as such, so as to determine its feasibility and indicate effective goal-oriented strategies. However, I have doubts whether solidarity can be ever driven by pragmatic reasons *only*. To be sure, people do often associate out of interdependence for mutual need satisfaction; for instance, consider a handful of students joining in a condominium timeshare agreement for vacation purposes. They do not value the association as an end in itself, but only as instrumental to individual benefits that would be unaffordable for each student alone. Rehg (2007) proposes that «voluntary instrumental associations» – henceforth, VIA – of this sort realize solidarity, yet two remarks have to be noted about his view. First, Rehg assumes a definition of solidarity as a «property of intentional groups [which] involve a kind of social bond [based on] each member’s interest in a common good». Thus, unlike D, Rehg’s definition does not consider any prosocial motivation to be a necessary condition for solidarity, and can leave room for VIA as a result of this *motivational neutrality*. Second, Rehg concedes that accepting that VIA can be regarded as solidaristic sounds somewhat *counterintuitive* (Rehg 2007, 10), and indeed much of his effort is to accommodate VIA with *non-solely-instrumental* kinds of associations – that he exemplifies with orchestras and sport teams and labels, borrowing a well-known Husserlian and Habermassian term, «irreducibly social lifeworld solidarities» (Rehg 2007, 11) – within the same account of solidarity.

⁸⁸ See Woodard (2003) for an inspiring discussion on group-based reasons for action.

Unlike Rehg, I will not consider pragmatic reasons and egoistic motivation for association as jointly sufficient for solidarity; however, it is at least logically possible the extreme case that the agent is driven by pragmatic reasons yet is also moved to do so by *strong* altruistic, collectivistic or even principistic motivations elicited by non-epistemic or nonconscious sources. When an individual is driven by pragmatic reasons and egoistic motivation to commit herself to a joint project or venture, I take it as a form of *instrumental cooperation* rather than solidarity.

To be sure, the threefold partition proposed by Habermas and unfolded in this section cannot be exhaustive of normative reasons. However, I take it as a working taxonomy, enabling to sketch the view of solidarity as reason-driven action. The core claim argued here is that solidarity is *not* driven by purely pragmatic reasons.

As a conclusive upshot of the commentary to the first part of D, it should be noted that solidarity is understood as operating at a different level than sociability-related features as self-categorization, empathy, and prosocial motivation as such. In fact, since the latter are respectively defined as a socio-cognitive process, an emotion and a motivation, their range of action is first and foremost psychological. It can be objected that, understood as an emotion, empathy might be externalized – e.g. by facial mimicry – and, in so doing, result in a behavioural state; however, and remarkably, it does not have to. Thus, whereas solidarity takes place in the realm of social interaction, the sociability-related features that underpin its occurrence remain mostly anchored to individual psychology. In a nutshell, D takes solidarity not to be a property that individuals bear, but rather as a thing that individuals make happen.

2.2 Solidarity is [...] aimed at benefiting a whole ingroup or an ingroup member facing an adversity

First and foremost, I take solidarity to be aimed at benefiting a whole ingroup or an ingroup member; this statement needs only a couple of clarificatory comments. First, D does not rule out the possibility that an agent aims at benefiting an *external particular social* group or one of its members; rather, D simply requires that for solidarity to occur, the reasons and motivations informing action must be of a certain kind – respectively, ethical or moral (see 2.1) and altruistic or collectivistic (see 2.3 below). For instance, most Jews rescuers were not Jews in turn (1.5), and did not help the Jews they helped out of a shared *social* group membership, in contrast with what Rorty claimed (see 1.5). Thus, human solidarity *is* solidarity inasmuch as it is elicited by human categorization of the self and the recipient, and particular social group memberships are backgrounded. To be sure, if one understands external solidarity as aimed at benefiting an external group – *whether* social or species-related – or one of its

members, then it seems to be little room for it to be captured by D. In fact, altruism and collectivism require that benefiting an individual or a whole group constitutes a *ultimate goal* (Chapter 3, section 3; see also 2.3 below); thus, helping an outgroup *when social* – and not human – categorization of the self is made salient seems to be possibly grounded in *internal collectivism*: in this case, the ultimate goal of prosocial action is to increase the agent’s whole ingroup’s welfare – e. g. in terms of reputation, that is, in terms of the external perception of the group norms and values – and actual help toward the outgroup is only an instrumental goal. To the extent that internal collectivism so understood is the motivation to help an outgroup, and the other conditions are met, then the action can count as solidarity or, as Tuomela (2015, 246) puts it, «external solidarity»⁸⁹.

As a complementary comment about this part of D, it is worth questioning how costly solidaristic action might be, once it is understood as oriented to benefit another. This matter does not lie at the centre of the current debate on solidarity, yet some loose insights are provided in literature; for instance, Sangiovanni (2015) claims that a necessary, yet not sufficient condition to act in solidarity is the disposition to «share significant costs» for the shared goal. While putting the notion of «significant costs» in quite vague terms, key to Sangiovanni’s account is that «someone who is only willing to pay minor costs to support the struggle, and who is disposed to abandon it as the going gets tough, cannot be said to act in solidarity with his partners» (Sangiovanni 2013, 346). Sangiovanni’s concern is that an unspecified disposition to incur costs to promote a shared goal would leave room for interest groups or NGO’s donors to count as acting in solidarity. On the contrary, Kokers (2016, 63) suggests that the significant costs condition might be successfully captured by the fate-sharing condition, that both him and Sangiovanni include in their account; so understood, costs are determined by the fate-sharing that is required by solidarity, yet they not have to be set over a certain threshold to enable the action to count as solidarity. For instance, on case 1.6, Ersso n opted for civil disobedience, which led her to be «found guilty of violating Sweden’s aviation laws and fined £250» (Crouch 2019); in this case, Sangiovanni’s significant costs condition, however loosely defined, would be fairly met. However, consider another example, following Kokers: suppose that when Rosa Parks is ejected from the bus, a white bus rider «gets off the bus with her, *sharing her fate* as one who is denied his basic civil right to public accommodation. *But this needs not be a significant cost*; the white bus rider might have been getting off at the next stop anyway, or might find that he enjoys the camaraderie of walking with others, and does not experience a bus boycott as burdensome» (Kokers 2016, 63; my emphasis). As Kokers’ example shows, it does not seem that cost-bearing must be

⁸⁹ Let me specify that I borrow Tuomela’s terminology, but there is remarkable difference between the case of extemal solidarity that I acknowledged and Tuomela’s understanding of the concept of external solidarity: whereas on the former reading external solidarity is individual action, on the latter it is *group action*.

significantly demanding for the action for it to be described in terms of solidarity. In fact, costs involved by solidarity are remarkably variable within the sample of cases presented in section 1, and range from shaving one's own head to risk one's own life by hiding stranger Jews from Nazis. Fate-sharing seems promising to make sense of *how* solidaristic action can be structured so as to increase another's welfare; accordingly, if we understand fate-sharing on Zhao's terms, as «the commitment [...] to making it so that the others are no longer deprived of that thing, or [...] to forgoing oneself what the others are deprived of» (Zhao 2019, 6), I take it to be a *necessary* condition of solidarity. Whereas in most cases fate-sharing is performed as a *self-depriving* action – e. g., 1.1 or 1.6 –, there are cases where it is *positively* accomplished in terms of resources-sharing with needy others – e. g., 1.4 or 1.7.

However fate-sharing is case by case fashioned, I understand it to appear in solidarity as an instrumental goal to increase the other's welfare as a ultimate goal. It is true that in some cases, especially the self-depriving ones, it may be doubted that the agent aims at sharing another's fate as an end in itself, that is, as an ultimate goal. However, I claim that also in this cases the ultimate goal of the agent is to benefit the recipient; for instance, in 1.1, the teammates plausibly aimed at comfort their fellow's distress by shaving their heads and, in so doing, sharing a piece of his fate as an expressive or symbolic strategy.

Relatedly, a core point to be commented in this part of D concerns the «adversity» affecting the ingroup member who the agent intends to relief. It is quite broadly acknowledged that solidarity is *responsive* to some perceived plight that another is coping with (Arnsperger and Varoufakis 2003), or purposefully oriented to jointly overcome a shared adversity (Sangiovanni 2013). As stated in the introduction, political philosophers tend to understand solidarity as political struggle aimed at fighting injustice; however, in so doing, they deliberately rule out natural disasters or diseases as possible targets of solidaristic action per se. I do not think this politicization of adversity is necessarily a pitfall when it comes to solidarity, and I am sympathetic to possible reasons behind this move – i. e., to confine solidarity to the political arena so as to gain a firmer grasp on the concept, or to establish a connection and continuity with the early working-class movements' employment of the word and the concept of solidarity itself. Moreover, there might be cases where the supposed line between «natural» and «social» adversities cannot be drawn in such sharp terms, and the dichotomy itself may be even misleading. For instance, once it is accepted that climate change is anthropogenic, and that the likelihood of, e. g., severe weather events consequently increases over time, the foreseeable effects which shall impact more and more current and future generation will be, at least in part, accountable to past human action; this sole acknowledgement opens the way for addressing climate justice (Caney

2020) as a matter of political solidarity in the terms that Scholz understands the latter, that is, as unfolding «an opposition to something that is *human in origin*» (Scholz 2008, 54; my emphasis). That said, I do not need to dig any deeper into the alleged distinction between «natural» and «social» adversities, for my account does not need any specification in this respect. It was not by chance that team support toward a cancer-diagnosed fellow was presented as a case of solidarity (1.1), without any potential injustice to fight being involved. In fact, what is necessary for solidarity, on D, is that adversity affecting the recipient is *perceived* as such by the agent; it is logically possible that the agent's processing of the situation has some discrepancies with the recipient's. For instance, suppose that in case 1.3 the Mafia associate is *unaware* that a rival family associate is pointing a gun at him just behind his shoulders; in this case, the recipient does not perceive any adversity forthcoming, and the salvific intervention of the agent is based in the belief that a fellow's life is threatened. However, it can be presumed that, on D, most cases of solidarity are underpinned by a shared perception that the recipient is coping with an adversity, although this does not have to lead her to *call for help herself* – which happens just in case 1.5 of the sample, according to most reports collected by Monroe (2014). As a concluding comment, let me add that, although a cognitive discrepancy between the agent's and the recipient's perceptions of the adversity may be given, the *successfulness* of solidaristic action is likely to increase as the discrepancy gets thinner, other things equal. The extent to which this gap is likely to get bridged will depend, at least in part, on the agent's observational ability; capacity for role-taking and responsiveness to others' plights can thus be recommendable attitudes to cultivate in this respect, especially toward the voiceless, as Kokers insists: «listening for when those on the bottom demand answers is, then, always a skill to cultivate when learning to see and acknowledge inequity» (Kokers 2016, 115). To the extent that the agent's and the recipient's processing of the situation as an adversity are congruent, solidarity is more likely to be successful, thus answering the conclusive question formulated by Scholz – that is, what qualifies as a successful solidarity (2015, 733).

2.3 Solidarity is [...] sustained by altruistic or collectivistic motivation elicited by situation-specific self-categorization

The comment on this last part of D will presuppose prosocial motivation concepts presented in Chapter 3. The first content calling for clarification is that motivation underlying solidarity must be non-egoistic; in fact, egoism has been presented as a described as a motivational source that, under certain circumstances, may lead to prosocial behaviour. However, as stated earlier (2.1), I claim that the combination between egoistic motives and pragmatic reasons cannot bring about solidarity, yet instrumental cooperation can easily prosper on such an attitudinal terrain. In fact, when individual

agency is so structured, the ultimate goal is to pursue self-benefit and the other is valued only as a potential facilitator to obtain the desired state. On Habermas' terms, in this case no communicative action takes place, but only strategic action and, accordingly, only pragmatic reasons inform the agent deliberative process⁹⁰. So as to keep solidarity distinct from instrumental cooperation, non-egoistic motivation is a necessary yet not sufficient condition for the former.

This first statement might raise doubts about whether all the sample cases are informed by non-egoistic motivation. The more suspect examples in this respect are plausibly 1.4 and 1.7; in fact, what if Levi's motivation for sharing a poor source of water with Alberto was ultimately that, in so doing, the latter would have been more likely to reciprocate in the long run? In this case, Levi's action would not count as solidarity at all, but rather as based on an enlightened egoistic motivation. However, since in his self-report he explicitly refers to Alberto as his «nearest person», he seems to endow his action with an affective ground: he did not describe Alberto as a potential reciprocator, but rather as a significant other, with whom a valuable relationship had been established. Insofar as this reading is sound, and that Levi's action was oriented to benefit Alberto as a ultimate goal, the former might count as solidarity.

As for 1.7, one might question, in line with Sangiovanni's statement (Sangiovanni 2013, 355; see 1.7), how should we consider the taxpayer whose law compliancy is purely based on pragmatic reasons and egoistic motives, e. g. to avoid penalties for tax evasion? In line with Sangiovanni's account, D would not regard this case as solidaristic. In fact, key to my understanding of solidarity is not the mere effect of benefiting another, but the underlying structures that inform his prosocial action, in terms of reasons and motives. However, I see no reason not to consider as solidaristic the virtuous case of the taxpayer who willingly plays her part so as to support the welfare state and, under a redistributive regime, to contrast inequality of resources. In this case, unlike the others, the recipient of solidarity is *anonymous* and can be taken by the agent to be referred to as a group – e. g. the artificial group of the least well-off in a given society. Moreover, in this case solidarity takes place within a social welfare system and is, in this respect, *institutionalized* – i. e., it is mediated by bureaucratic agencies and its operating is regulated accordingly; however, D captures solidarity as behaviour, and not straightforwardly as a social function, although Carlo Burelli and I have developed the latter reading elsewhere (Burelli & Camboni forthcoming; see also 1.7).

⁹⁰ The distinction is introduced and extensively discussed in Habermas (1981). Put in a nutshell, «Whereas in strategic action one actor seeks to influence the behaviour of another by means of the threat of sanctions or the prospect of gratification in order to cause the interaction to continue as the first actor desires, in communicative action one actor seeks rationally to motivate another by relying on the illocutionary binding/bonding effect (Bindungseffekt) of the offer contained in his speech act» (Habermas 1990[1983], 58).

Thus, altruism and collectivism unfold the dyadic prosocial motivations which may underly solidaristic action. It might be doubted that principlism does actually fit with the requirement of D about the aim of solidaristic action, i. e. to benefit another; in fact, whereas altruism and collectivism motivate the agent to benefit an individual or a group *as a ultimate goal*, principlism drives her to uphold a moral principle and to act lawfully *as a ultimate goal*. To follow Batson's discussion, just consider Kant's second formulation of the categorical imperative, which requires that we should never treat any person as a means but always as an end. According to this view,

to act on altruistic motivation, i.e., with the other's welfare as an ultimate rather than an instrumental goal, is to treat the other as an end. If successful, such action produces a result in accord with the persons-as-ends imperative. *But such action is not morally motivated according to Kant because the altruistic goal is to increase the other's welfare, not to serve principle.* It is not enough that one's action be consistent with the principle; the action must be carried out to uphold the principle (Batson 2011, 221; my emphasis).

If one accepts this straightforward deontological view of morality, that also underlies Habermas' understanding of «moral reasons» (2.1), then a switch in the *ultimate* goal embedded by motivation occurs that draws a sharp distinction with altruism and collectivism; in fact, principlism is motivation to follow a moral rule or to act in accordance with a moral reason, that is agent-neutral and can be universally accepted. In this respect, as stated earlier (2.1), principlism can be defined as the motivational force of moral reasons. It is not my intention to deny that one could be guided by principlism and moral reasons to an action which brings about, as an unintended consequence – i. e., as an effect of the action which is not a goal itself –, an increase in another's welfare. Indeed, analogously to previous discussion on 1.4 being suspect of *purely* egoistic motivation, it has to be admitted that some examples might lie in a grey area between altruism and collectivism on the one hand, and principlism on the other hand. The most controversial cases in this respect are, it seems to me, 1.5 and 1.6.

To begin with the former, let me first say that I cannot straightforwardly accept Monroe's conclusion that most Jews rescuers did what they did out of a largely preconscious – i. e. not reason-driven – determination of the will; such reading, in fact, would dismiss the understanding of solidarity as action, and distinct from behaviour. I concede that there may be cases where decisions must be taken too much shortly to permit a proper rational deliberation – e. g. 1.5 and 1.6 –, but this does not make such decisions utterly indifferent to reasons. In other words, I do not take reasons to be action-guiding only when one is faced with a dilemma or an «agonistic choice» (Monroe 2014, 91), as Monroe seems to assume. In this respect, it is worth recalling the Dutch rescuer Tony's self-report, which clearly accounted for his alleged solidaristic action out of a sense of belonging to humanity, described as an

organism that every human being is a cell of. I take this kind of self-report as unpacking a moral reason; a *reason*, because it is presented by Tony as informing his deliberation, and *moral* because it is framed on the human level of self-categorization. The latter respect seems supported by the following observation by Monroe: «all participants interviewed emphasized the importance of identity. [...] For rescuers like Tony, all human beings – even “evil Nazis” – are classed in the same category. All rescuers expressed this sense of being people strongly connected to others via bonds of a common humanity» (Monroe 2014, 91). On SCT terms, Tony’s human identity was made salient by the situation he faced: species intragroup similarities – i. e., being sentient (at risk of severe pain and death), having valued relationships (threatened by belonging to a persecuted social group), moral agency (at risk of being coercively oppressed), to name a few – were accentuated to the detriment of intergroup differences – i. e. race, religion, values, and so on – which in turn were subjectively perceived as less relevant at that moment. In terms of motivations, which is what counts the most for this case to be captured by D, it can be said that Tony’s action was motivated by altruism – i. e., helping a Jew in need as a ultimate goal – *and* principlism – i. e., following a moral principle, e. g., helping the needy – *at the same time*. If this motivational ascription is correct, then 1.5 would count as solidarity according to D, which requires as a necessary condition that motivation is at least in part altruistic *or* collectivistic, without precluding other *consonant* – i. e., not conflicting – motivations being involved. In fact, it should be recalled (see Chapter 3, section 3) that the same action can be underpinned by more than one prosocial motive, inasmuch as the former is aimed at achieving more than one ultimate goal which are not conflicting.

Similar considerations apply to case 1.6. As Ersson told Swedish media, «My starting point is that he [the deportee onboard the plane] is *human* and deserves to live» (Crouch 2019; my emphasis). Matching this self-report with the previously mentioned Ersson claims, that is, «I’m trying to change my country’s rules», it seems likely that she was moved by principlistic *and* altruistic motivation. Thus, it seems plausible that 1.6 as well counts as solidarity, according to D.

Instead, it seems to me that there are little doubts about 1.3 – about little has been said until now – being fully captured by D. On the contrary, this case is a quite powerful indicator of another significant feature of solidarity, that is, that it does *not* require antecedent interpersonal attraction in terms of *individual* identity; in fact, Sinan and Bomber did not blatantly like Tim as a person, and were even used to bully him before joining the Wave together. How come they intervened so as to avoid that Tim were beaten up by the anarchists then? According to D, Sinan and Bomber processed the situation as making their membership to the Wave salient; their prosocial behaviour were thus guided by ethical reasons – i. e. group norms demanding that Wavers look after each other, when in need – and, plausibly, altruistic motivation –i. e. to help Tim as an ultimate goal. However, consider

that helping Team is just an instrumental goal, the ultimate goal being the reinforcement of the Wave's supremacy over rival groups. In this case, the ultimate goal of Sinan and Bomber's joining the fight would be to benefit their ingroup as a whole – i. e., internal collectivistic motivation –, rather than benefiting Tim as an ingroup member. Collectivistic motivation, in this variant of 1.2, would miss a core complementary element to bring about solidaristic action, that is, the perception of an adversity threatening the recipient – i. e., the Wave as a whole ingroup –; in fact, it seems unlikely that Sinan and Bomber perceived the Wave *as a whole* to be threatened by the anarchists' attack directed to Tim. If this were the case, though, a collectivistic reading of their action would lead it to meet all the criteria that D set out for solidarity.

As a conclusive remark, it is worth spending some time on the extent that empathy might be involved in accounting for the sample of cases of solidarity; in fact, it has not been mentioned so far, and does not appear in D. This omission is not accidental, but based on the claim that is neither a necessary *nor* a sufficient condition for solidarity. To recall how empathy is defined on Batson's account (see chapter 3, section 2), suffices to repeat that it is an «*other-oriented emotion elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone in need*» (Batson 2011, 11); relatedly, the strong reading of the empathy-altruism hypothesis (EAH) embeds at least the following claims (Batson 2011, 29), that I assume as valid here:

- a) that empathic concern is a sufficient yet not necessary condition for altruistic motivation to arise – e. g. personality and internalized values can arguably lead to altruistic motivation, and not entail empathic concern (Batson et alii 2008, 143);
- b) that all motivation produced by empathic concern is altruistic, that is, possible egoistic motives in the individual feeling empathic concern have to stem from other sources.

I also add a number of claims deriving from the combination of EAH with SCT, although not proposed or considered by Batson, as far as I know:

- c) situation-specific self-categorization is a sufficient condition to increase the likelihood and the intensity of empathic concern (Tarrant, Dazeley & Cottom 2009; see chapter 3, section 2), yet it is not a necessary condition for the latter to be elicited;
- d) that empathic concern is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for collectivistic motivation to arise.

As for c), I think it is worth stressing that empathic concern can stem from sources *other* than self-categorization; Batson presents a number of mechanisms that may facilitate empathic concern, such as motor mimicry (Batson 2011, 15), and projection into the other's situation (Batson 2011, 17), which at the very least do not presuppose self-categorization. Consistently with c), it should be noted that SCT claims that self-categorization is a sufficient, and not necessary condition of interpersonal

attraction, as well as of empathic concern and altruism understood on Batson's terms. After all, the circumstance that Sinan and Bomber helped Tim out of salient ingroup membership prevailing over their *personal* disliking him looks quite unexpected just at the light of the fact that helping behaviour can be elicited by interpersonal attraction, which on its part does *not* have to be grounded in self-categorization.

As for *d*), that empathic concern is not a necessary condition for collectivism inasmuch as the latter might be aroused by self-categorization without the former being involved; if we assume the already mentioned *collectivistic reading* of Sinan and Bomber solidaristic behaviour, it would be perfectly plausible to make sense of it in terms of compliancy with ethical or group norms – i. e., that Wavers should look after each other – or group interests – i. e., to affirm the Wave over rival groups. Moreover, empathic concern is not a sufficient condition for collectivism, because one can think of cases when one is empathic with a group, without having a consequent motivation to benefit it as a ultimate goal; for instance, if attending a live music festival I feel empathic concern toward a band being booed, it does not have to follow a collectivistic motivation to benefit them as a ultimate goal. In addition, EAY defines altruism as a sufficient condition for *altruistic* motivation, and the claim that the same applies to collectivistic motivation would need more research and evidence to be supported.

To sum up, empathy is to be taken seriously as a prominent source of altruism which, on its part, constitute a potential motivational basis for solidarity.

3. Matching D with the sample

In concluding this chapter, let me just integrate the following table, whereby is proposed a schematic summary of how D can account for the sample presented in section 1. As the previous discussion argued, it is possible that each single case embeds more than a single kind of reasons for action or prosocial motivations. It has to be considered that the motivational requirement of D is that action is undertaken out of at least an altruistic *or* collectivistic motivation; it is well possible that both these motivations are operating in the agent's mindset at the same time, just as it is possible that egoistic and principlistic motivations are involved to a certain extent. In this respect, it is useful to take a step back to how Batson presents the egoism/altruism dyad:

there are some cases in which the motivation is most likely exclusively egoistic, but there are a large number of cases in which the motivation might be at least *in part* altruistic. A mother rushes across the playground to comfort her child, who has fallen and skinned a knee. A middleaged man tearfully decides to acquiesce to the quiet pleas of his cancer-riddled mother and have her life-support removed. [...] In

each of these cases, the motivation might be *partially* altruistic. But for each, and for any other case in which we help, one can also give an *exclusively* egoistic account» (Batson 2011, 209; my emphasis).

As the italicized words of the quote show, Batson acknowledges that altruism and egoism do not have to exclude each other, and the very goal of his theory is to dismiss *exclusively* egoistic accounts of human motivation. As for D, it claims that what counts for solidarity is that underlying motivation is not *exclusively* egoistic or principistic, or resulting of a combination of both.

«Picture of solidarity»	<i>Reason for action</i>	<i>Target: ingroup member/adversary</i>	<i>Prosocial motivation</i>	<i>Level of categorization of the self</i>
“Juntos somos mas Fuertes” (1.1)	Ethical	Yeray Alvarez (teammate) / diagnosed with cancer	Altruism/Collectivism	Social identity: sport team membership
“That’s the power of unity” (1.2)	Ethical	Tim (Wave member) / bullied by two rival outgroup members	Altruism/Collectivism	Social identity: Wave-group membership
“È la stessa cosa” (1.3)	Ethical	Associate / threatened by firefighter	Altruism	Social identity: Mafia-family membership
“Nosism” (1.4)	Ethical	Alberto (close friend) / thirsty	Altruism	Social identity: Relationship with the “closest person”
“Like cells of a community” (1.5)	Moral	Jews (mostly stranger) / at risk of being arrested and deported	Altruism/Principlism	Human identity
“Standing up for social change” (1.6)	Moral	Bismallah S. (stranger) / about to be deported	Altruism/Collectivism/Principlism	Human identity
“Civic solidarity” (1.7)	Ethical/ Moral	Anonymous strangers (least well-off) / risk of poverty and social exclusion	Collectivism/Principlism	Social identity: State-membership

Table 8. Matching D with the sample of examples of solidarity

Appendix: survey on evolutionary research on sociability in humans and other primates

The interest in the nature of the human/non-human divide is not an abrupt novelty for this thesis, and indeed lies at the heart of philosophical anthropology⁹¹, but little has been said so far about the evolutionary body of knowledge on which a philosophical account of human sociability must rely. When it comes to sociability, a trivial starting point is that humans are not the *only* animals that are capable of grouping. Encephalized animals as monkeys and dolphins display a relatively sophisticated capacity of social organization – e. g. social hierarchies, social play, and cooperative hunting (Fox, Muthukrishna & Shultz 2017; Silk 2007). Even social insects, whose cognitive capacity is by far lower than primates' and dolphins', «show all levels of social organization, from solitary species where conspecific individuals rarely meet to eusocial species with large, persistent colonies, where groups of individuals (“castes”) perform different tasks (division of labour)» (Leonhardt, Menzel, Nehring & Schmitt 2016, 1277)⁹². Thus, not only humans are not exclusively social, but even the encephalization level does not seem an effective criterion to grasp the roots of sociability.

A more promising strategy to encapsulate the difference between human and non-human sociability is, firstly, to reframe exclusivity claims on human sociability in *genealogical* terms, that is, as the adaptive outcomes of natural selection pressures, which entail no *metaphysical* gap among humans and other primates. A second methodological premise is to *confine* the comparative analysis to human and other primates; this restriction is due to space limits, as well as to the obviously major evolutionary proximity of humans to other primates. De Waal (2013) provided what might be qualified as an anatomic reason supporting this restriction of the discussion:

we have the emotions of a social animal, and not just any animal, but a mammal. Previous attempts at biological explanations of human behaviour have suffered from too much emphasis on genes, and too many comparisons with social insects. [...] Insects possess none of the neural circuitry that mammals evolved for empathy and caring. Even if insect behaviour resembles ours on the surface, it doesn't rely on the same processes. It's like comparing the chess play of computers and grandmasters: they may come up with the same moves, but get there in totally different ways (De Waal 2013, 196; emphasis added).

⁹¹ «While norms and discourses are important they don't seem to work on non-humans – on lumps of rock or plants – so *there must be something about humans* that makes them susceptible to such norms and discourses» (Sayer 2011, 98; my emphasis). In a consonant vein, Geras caustically remarks that «it is not because they have not been socialized, or socialized properly, that [non human] animals do not read Heidegger» (Geras 1995, 53).

⁹² Interestingly, solitary insects are capable of communication as well, although it is restricted to sexual context (Leonhardt, Menzel, Nehring & Schmitt 2016, 1277).

An appealing hypothesis on the *phylogenesis* of humans' and primates' sociability is provided by Turner (2014) by means of a cross-species comparison that he and Maryanski call evolutionary sociology. Tackling the question of why humans are so emotional, Turner seeks a «long-term evolutionary explanation» (Turner 2014, 11), that he pursues after the rejection of the naive socio-cultural explanation of emotions, which is untenable as the neuroanatomical locus where emotions raise is the subcortical region of the brain, and not the neocortex.

Perhaps strikingly, cladistic analysis –which is to say, a reconstruction of those traits of a set of extant species that are presumed to be related – suggests that

the last common ancestor of humans and the great apes was *virtually solitary* [...] [He] was not very social, did not form strong ties among adults, was promiscuous, and was not prone to form groups of any sort, beyond mother-offspring groups that disbanded with offspring reached puberty» (Turner 2014, 14; my emphasis).

The *explanandum*, thus, is not merely why humans are emotional, but rather why humans are dramatically *more emotional* and, consequently, *more social* than their ape core. Turner's core intuition is that, for human sociability to develop as an adaptive response to environmental selective pressures, a more fine-grained emotional palate should have been shaped.

A first consequence following from cladistic analysis, then, is that there are evolutionary limits to the statement that humans are *naturally* sociable, as the Aristotelian-inspired account of sociability claims; more precisely, from an evolutionary-sociological standpoint, «our ape nature is the exact opposite to what is often posited as “natural” to humans [...] The story of hominin evolution, then, is one where natural selection work to *increase sociality* and the capacity for group formation» (Turner 2014, 14-15; my emphasis).

Turner opts for an appealing long-term evolutionary explanation of the roots of human sociability; a massive explanatory work is played by an *ecological* argument. For on the one hand, monkeys were enabled by their capacity to eat unripe fruit to prosper on the verdant areas of the trees, where there is more food and room, which fostered grouping; in contrast, great apes occupied the terminal areas of the trees, where space and food were more scarce and poor: this environmental niching was clearly incompatible with large grouping, inasmuch as in order to survive individuals had to be free to migrate toward new feeding areas. Moreover, about 10 million years ago Africa cooled down, which led to a shrinking of the tropical forest in favour of savannas; this environmental change was lethal for most great apes, forced to seek food in the ground and lacking bioprogrammers for grouping that would have enabled cooperative food foraging and collective defence. On the other hand, monkeys, which were already endowed with the neurological equipment for grouping, had an overall successful adaptation to the terrestrial habitat. This is why, compared to monkeys, apes «represent less than 5%

of all species of primates [and] are thus one of the great evolutionary failures in evolutionary history» (Turner 2014, 15-6). What enabled our hominin ancestors to survive in African savanna, escaping the mass extinction of apes, was an evolution in neuroanatomy which made human «the most emotional animal on earth» (Turner 2014, 16) and, even more importantly, *capable of solidarity*, inasmuch as «building up in solidarities was critical to survival of hominin on the savanna» (Turner 2014, 25). Turner does not introduce any technical definition of solidarity, that he sometimes vaguely refers to as «social bond» or «loyalty to group» (Turner 2014, 21); nevertheless, he clearly underlines the core role of sociability as enabling humans to join up in solidarity, and his sociological-evolutionary hypothesis on the rise of human sociability is worth discussing. For Turner remarks that in all likelihood, subcortical areas of human brain – inherited from reptiles –, evolved considerably earlier than neocortical area, which began to grow only with *Homo erectus* about 2 million years ago; and all structures of the subcortical area are involved in the production of emotions, although not all of them correspond to full-fledged emotional centers. Turner's core hypothesis, thus, is that the increase of subcortical area occurred as an adaptive response to intense selection pressures on our hominin ancestors, forced to group to survive in a predator-ridden savanna environment. The evolutionary salience of environmental and climatological conditions for primates' sociability is also highlighted by De Waal:

Bonobo solidarity is made possible by a habitat that permits more social cohesion than that of chimpanzees. In their quest for dispersed food, chimps need to split into small parties or travel long distances alone. Bonobos are different. They stay together, wait for those who have slowed down, and join a chorus of “sunset calls” to bring the community together while building night nests high up in the trees. They obviously love company. Access to enormous fruiting trees as well as abundant nutritious herbs on the forest floor support their close-knit society (De Waal 2013, 44).

Against this evolutionary background, the study led by Van de Vliert and Lindenberg (2006) on the joint influence of wealth and climate on prosocial behaviour carries even more significance. For the authors collect some empirical evidence supporting the hypothesis that, on the one hand, rich countries with extreme climates display higher rates of «weak solidarity», which presupposes a certain systemic interdependence which provides normative integration among different groups, by means of values that are universalizable enough to this purpose, as tolerance and respect for strangers; on the other hand, it is argued that in poor countries with extreme climates «strong solidarity» – which is based on the salience of demanding normative expectations of mutual aid within small groups' members, but leaves room for opportunistic behaviour toward out-groupers – is more prominent (Van de Vliert & Lindenberg 2006, 215).

Thus, it might be said that humans' sociability does not convey climates and environment less than our closest primates. The superior cognitive equipment by means of which humans deal with emotions, however, marks a relevant difference with other primates.

For apes, Turner continues, are capable of emotions, but do not have neocortical control over them (Turner 2014, 18); in other words, apes are *affected* by their own emotions, rather than *reflexively* controlling them: only humans have the ability to control and modulate instinctive emotional reactions through intellectual processes such as reasoning, rationalizing, and labeling one's experiences (Hariri, Bookheimer & Mazziotta 2000). Moreover, three-fourths of the primary emotions – namely happiness, fear, anger, and sadness – are negative, and Turner argues that «negative emotions do not promote bonding of solidarity» (Turner 2014, 18). However, the latter presumption is quite contestable, as one might reply, in a Hobbesian vein, that fear of predators and violent death could be strong enough to motivate social grouping and cooperative defence. Turner does not consider this fear-centred hypothesis, for he argues the *only* negative emotions that can be used to promote solidarity are *second-order* emotions, as shame and guilt, which increased social control and arose only as a more sophisticated neuroanatomical structure had evolved in apes.

As for the human neuroanatomical evolution, Turner claims that «selection first worked on controlling noisy emotional outburst by expanding and thickening neuro-nets between the prefrontal cortex and subcortical emotion centers. [...] With this increased control, the neurology to expand the variations in negative emotions would be at place» (Turner 2014, 18). Even more importantly still, Turner argues that such neurological control on emotions «is one of the big differences between ape and human brains» (*Ibid.*) The affirmation of this neuroanatomical difference prepares the terrain for a statement which admittedly sounds like an *exclusivity claim*, that is, that «the origins of the *uniquely human emotions* of shame and guilt are an outcome of natural selection pushing combination strategies for negative emotions» (Turner 2014, 19; my emphasis).

However, how can uniquely human second-order negative emotions as guilt and shame promote solidarity? According to Turner's account, they can do so inasmuch as they are inherently related to conceptualizing and interiorizing normative expectations and moral rules, the capacity for which calls for a sense of the self as an object of evaluation:

shame and guilt are emotions of social control because they cause individuals to monitor and sanction themselves over their success or failure in meeting normative expectations and abiding by the dictates of moral codes. [...] People are motivated to avoid shame and guilt, and if they feel that they have violated moral codes or not met expectations of others, they become motivated to change their behaviors and make apologies to others, which can only work to increase solidarity and the power of groups regulated by expectations and moral codes (Turner 2014, 20).

Turner's core argument, thus, aims at accounting for the increase of sociability along the evolutionary line that connects humans to their most remote ancestor; it is then an explanation that tackles a long-term phylogenetical process.

In this respect, it is interesting to compare Turner's explanatory account of human sociability with De Waal's studies on primatology – more precisely, on chimpanzees and bonobos. De Waal does not engage in an evolutionary explanation as on a long-term reach as Turner's, for he states that we just do not have a reliable access to the most plausible aspect of the last common ancestor of humans and the great apes. In fact, De Waal argues,

the rainforest doesn't permit fossilization—everything rots away before it gets to this point—which is why we lack early ape fossils. Nevertheless, we can be sure that our progenitor would fit the common definition of an ape: a large, tail-less, flat-chested primate with grasping feet. It remains perfectly acceptable, therefore, to say that we descend from apes, just not from any of the current ones (De Waal 2013)

More cautiously, De Waal maintains that humans are part of the same phylogenetic family tree as great apes (e.g. chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas and orangutans) and lesser apes (e. g. gibbons and siamangs), but the analysis of DNA suggests that humans are closer to chimpanzees and bonobos than to any other ape, as table 2 shows below.

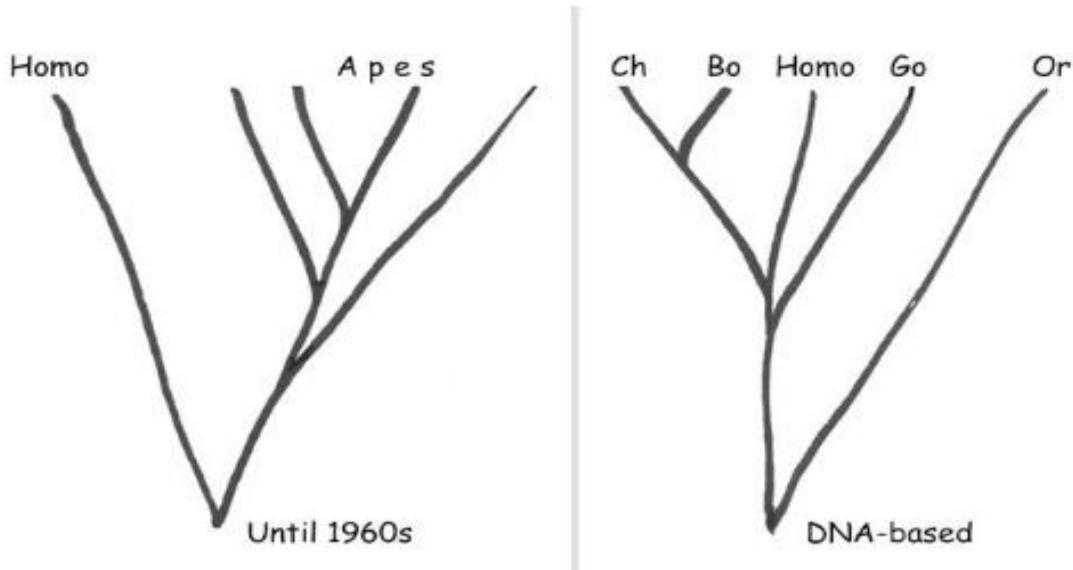


Table 2: «Until the 1960s, humans enjoyed their own branch on the evolutionary tree separate from the apes (left). DNA-based trees (right), however, place humans closer to chimpanzees (Ch) and bonobos (Bo) than to gorillas (Go) and orangutans (Or)». Both the table and its description are quoted from De Waal (2013).

Interestingly, De Waal emphasizes how the proper placement of bonobos in the family tree enriches and integrates our evolutionary understanding of human sociability, that was used to be more

chimpanzee-centred before (De Waal 2013). However, once their evolutionary relationship with our species is acknowledged, bonobos

show that our lineage is marked not just by male dominance and xenophobia [which constitutes part of our *chimpanzee-related* genetic inheritance] but also by a love of harmony and sensitivity to others. Since evolution occurs through both the male and the female lineage, there is no reason to measure human progress purely by how many battles our men have won against other hominins. Attention to the female side of the story would not hurt, nor would attention to sex. For all we know, we did not conquer other groups, but bred them out of existence through love rather than war (De Waal 2013)

To be sure, on its part, bonobos' kind character must not be overstated or overtly idealized. For it is true that bonobos are more mild, peaceful, and empathic than chimpanzee (De Waal 2013), but this does not by no means entail that there is no room for aggressivity in bonobos' world; after all, De Waal often recalls that «all animals are competitive by nature and cooperative only under specific circumstances»(De Waal 1997). When it comes to bonobos, several cases of group attacks, especially by females against males, have been observed so far (De Waal 2013). The point with the “kinder” character of bonobos is that their higher capacities for empathy and for sexual conflict resolution enable them to better promote social order and harmony. On their part, compared to bonobos, chimpanzees are more hostile toward conspecific strangers, and their attacks are averagely more lethal. To sum up De Waal's argument on empathy and altruism in primates, it might be said that our ape core is not as egoistic and conflictual as in the neo-Hobbesian views on human sociability. On the contrary, like any other mammal, natural selection pre-programmed most primates – and, thus, humans – for attachment and bonding, especially to their offspring, so as to ensure the raise of the young fellows (De Waal 2013). This broad statement is specified by two separate claims by De Waal; firstly, it prepares the terrain to the claim of *commonality of the basic social needs*, according to which humans ultimately share with other primates a cluster of social needs: «just like us, monkeys and apes strive for power, enjoy sex, want security and affection, kill over territory, and value trust and cooperation» (De Waal 2013). Secondly, primates' bioprogrammers for bonding are closely related, in De Waal's view, to the capacity for empathy, which provides the *natural bases of altruistic behaviour*; empathy is mostly a mammalian trait (De Waal 2013) or, more precisely, that «it evolved in the context of parental care, which is obligatory in mammals» (De Waal 2006, 24). The latter clarification is crucial insofar as De Waal emphasizes that «maternal care is the prototypical form of altruism, the template for all the rest» (De Waal 2013; emphasis added). I shall get back to the most salient *theoretical* respects of De Waal's views on empathy and altruism in the next subparagraph. For the purpose of this section, it is enough to conclude that De Waal assumes, in line with Darwin's spirit, a standpoint which highlights humans' «*emotional continuity* with other animals» (De Waal

2013; my emphasis) over the cognitive superiority of the formers. Out of this statement, De Waal argues that the emotional roots of human morality are by far antecedent to the phylogenesis of our species, and that what is an exclusively human property is rather the cognitive equipment to develop a *moral theory*; however, human morality is based on the same social instincts and emotions underlying prosocial behaviour in other primates⁹³.

From the vantage point of developmental and comparative psychology, Tomasello (2009; 2019) tackles the matter of human sociability by means of behavioural experiments on human infants and primates which lead to results that is interesting to scrutinize against the background of De Waal's account. Tomasello collects and reports some evidence comparing infants and other primates' altruism, which he analytically articulates along three domains: generosity (e. g. sharing a good), helpfulness (e. g. offering a service), and informing (e. g. sharing information) (Tomasello 2009, 5). Being more specific still, when it comes to *generosity*, it seems that chimps are *much less* ready to share food or other goods with other conspecifics than human infants are. In the simplest version of an experimental setting, a chimp subject was faced with the choice of pulling in one of two boards, on each of which two reward trays were put – each tray being accessible to only one of two chimp subjects placed in separate cages. In front of a setting where one board offered only one food portion, accessible to the agent chimp, and the other board offered two food portions, accessible to both chimps – which is to say where the same effort from the pulling chimp would have been enough to ensure a food portion for both chimps – most chimp subjects

pulled indiscriminately, as they seemed to be focused only on the possibility of acquiring food for themselves. [...] [On the contrary,] 25-month olds and school-age children in a very similar paradigm select the equitable option more often than the selfish option (Tomasello 2009, 23).

It is worth noting that an important experiment by Brosnan and De Waal (2003) on capuchin monkeys, which is repeatedly quoted and commented in many others works from De Waal (2006, 2013⁹⁴) and led him to suggest that capuchin monkeys can be ascribed a proto-moral sense of equity, is also quoted and integrated by Tomasello (2009, 21-28) with discussion on other similar experiments. Out of such behavioural evidence, rejecting De Waal's conclusion, Tomasello remarks

⁹³ As Darwin put it, «any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts, the parental and filial affections being here included, would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience, as soon as its intellectual powers had become as well developed, or nearly as well developed, as in man» (Darwin 1982 [1871], 71–72).

⁹⁴ «A few years ago, we demonstrated that primates will happily perform a task for cucumber slices until they see others getting grapes, which taste so much better. The cucumber eaters become agitated, throw down their veggies, and go on strike. A perfectly fine food has become unpalatable as a result of seeing a companion get something better. We labeled it *inequity aversion*, a topic since investigated in other animals, including dogs» (De Waal 2013). The experiment is also quoted in De Waal (2006, 44-49).

that «chimpanzees do not seem to care *at all* about the food others may or may not be receiving» (Tomasello 2009, 22; my emphasis).

As for *helpfulness*, Tomasello reports that, in similar experimental patterns, chimps showed themselves to behave *as averagely altruistic* as human infants. In this domain, to be sure, being altruistic is less costly than in a sharing pattern. In fact, in front of an experimental task, such as helping a human fetching out-of-reach objects, infants and human-raised chimps displayed a high cooperation rate, and there was no reason or evidence to assume that they expected any reward (Tomasello 2009, 7-11)⁹⁵.

However, even more importantly, Tomasello contends that *informing* is an *exclusively* human practice of altruism. For Tomasello remarks that informing does not have to occur by means of linguistic skills; on the contrary, human infants do share information even in their pre-linguistic phase – which lasts until their twelfth month –, and they do so by pointing. The same is not true of apes, which «do not point for one another, and when they do point for humans, they do so mainly to get humans to fetch food for them. Indeed, in all observed cases of apes pointing for humans, the motive is directive (imperative)» (Tomasello 2009, 15). In other words, when apes seem to avail themselves of nonverbal interaction patterns that humans use for communicative purposes – which is to say, to share some information with others –, the formers do so for non-communicative purposes, as instrumental or imperative ones. Thus, it follows that informing is an exclusively human kind of altruism, and sheds a new light on the comparison of primates' and human sociability.

It is now important to highlight that, beyond the methodological and substantive differences between the two accounts, De Waal and Tomasello also share some core intuitions on human sociability; it is of the highest significance, in this respect, that both De Waal and Tomasello refer to the same ideal sociability-related anthropological spectrum as the one I proposed in this chapter, on the ends of which Hobbes and Aristotle or Rousseau are placed. But more importantly, both De Waal and Tomasello side with the *anti-Hobbesian* view of human sociability (De Waal 2006, 3-6; Tomasello 2009, 3), arguing that humans maintain, by their very nature – as it evolved as an adaptive response to environmental selection pressures – a social propensity; in other words, it would be telling a misleading story to present sociability as a mere outcome of culture and socialization, or as a fruitful reason-driven strategy. As De Waal puts it,

⁹⁵ Tomasello remarks that similar results were achieved also with mother-raised chimps: «we realize that there may be many reasons that human-raised chimpanzees would help the human—who, after all, controls their world—and so in another study we gave mother-raised chimpanzees the opportunity to help one another. In the study, one chimpanzee watched while another struggled to open a door to a room. The observing ape knew from previous experience that the door could be opened by removing a pin. Surprisingly, observers removed the pin and helped their group-mate gain access to the room» (Tomasello 2009, 10-11).

there never was a point at which we became social: descended from highly social ancestors – a long line of monkeys and apes – we have been group-living forever. Free and equal people never existed. Humans started out – if a starting point is discernible at all – as interdependent, bonded, and unequal. We come from a long lineage of hierarchical animals for which life in groups is not an option but a survival strategy. Any zoologist would classify our species as *obligatorily gregarious* [...] we are social to the core (De Waal 2006, 4-5).

Moreover, De Waal often emphasizes that the evolution of social instincts and social emotions is not only antecedent, but also more explanatory of human sociability and morality than more recent phylogenetical developments as, for instance, prefrontal cortex; in this respect, De Waal argues that «neuroscience seems to be lending support to human morality as evolutionarily anchored in mammalian sociality. We celebrate rationality, but when push comes to shove we assign it little weight» (De Waal 2006, 56).

A complementary insight stems from Franks (2014, 271-2), who emphasizes the *developmental* priority of emotion over cognition, which Turner related to the phylogenetical antecedence of subcortical over neocortical evolution – out of the broader statement that generally, in animals, ontogenesis (the sequences of human development) reflects phylogensis (the sequences of the history of the species). The ontogenetical evidence at stake is that human infants «can imitate all of the facial gestures of a caretaker signalling primary emotions within weeks of birth, whereas it takes years of babbling for an infant to begin to reproduce human speech phonemes and syntax» (Turner 2014, 17). In this vein, Franks recalls Tredwai et al. (1999) neurological re-examination of the old and well-known Spitz studies of infants in foundling homes and nurseries; famously, Spitz (1946) reported dramatic health problems and massive failures in social development in infants raised in foundling homes in almost impersonal and isolating social environments – compared to another sample of infants raised in nurseries –, where sanitation was prioritized to the detriment of cuddling and affective care. This experiment, Franks comments, shows the «interactive nature of normal human brain development [...]. Nature had done its job but the social environment had not [...]. Human nature could not develop because *our natures are inherently social* and require social interaction as a foundation for growth» (Franks 2014, 271; my emphasis). In neurological terms, isolation is so harmful for human development inasmuch as it deregulates the production of chemicals – as oxytocins and epinephrine – that begins in the womb, and nourishes the limbic system; a deregulation of such chemicals, which may follow from a lack of social interaction after birth, is often conducive to depression. Moreover, anxiety and fear stemming from social isolation can bring about an excessive release of glucocorticoids, which in turn may damage the prefrontal cortex and be conducive to a lack of impulse control.

Franks emphatically underlines the analogical outcomes of Spitz' experiment and Harlow's study on infants monkeys (Harlow 1958) a sample of which was detached by their natural mother and entrusted to a metal surrogate mother endowed with a milk dispenser, another sample of infant monkeys being "reared" by a cloth surrogate mother. Harlows noted that the former group of subjects were remarkably more fearful toward new objects, and Franks comments that «such similarities among species speak to a similarity in the fundamental natures and needs of such social animals» (Franks 2014, 272).

I do not object such conclusion *per se*, but I think it needs further clarification. For if, on the one hand, both Spitz' and Harlow's experiments provide consistent evidence on the importance of social interaction for infant humans' and monkeys' health, on the other hand at least two remark are worth mentioning. Firstly, such experiments concern humans' and monkeys' sociability only under the *developmental* respect, which is of undeniable help for understanding human and monkey's natures, but it does so with a particular view to the ontogenetical perspective. Secondly, but relatedly, one may question to what extent such experiments are telling about humans and monkeys' sociability *beyond* the developmental respect; for even the last common ancestor of human and great apes, that was virtually solitary and by far less sociable than monkeys and humans, was «not prone to form groups of any sort, *beyond* mother-offspring groups that disbanded with offspring reached puberty» (Turner 2014, 14; my emphasis). Thus, the importance of maternal care for offspring seem to be common to most species of primates, which nevertheless differ in their degree of sociability. As Silk puts it,

humans differ from most other animals and from virtually all other primates, in the *extent* of our dependence on cooperation. [...] Humans do not limit altruism to family and close acquaintances. We donate to charity, give blood, vote, avoid littering, join political demonstrations, and participate in conservation initiatives. [...] Non-human primates also act altruistically, but the extent and deployment of altruism in primates groups is much more limited than it is in human societies (Silk 2007, 115; my emphasis).

Even De Waal, whose main research goal has been to shed light on our neglected ape core, acknowledges that plausibly only humans are capable of expanding their concern over to society as a whole (De Waal 2006, 55).

To sum up, there are several evolutionary and developmental reasons to reject a neo-Hobbesian view of human sociability, and suggesting that a scientifically tenable one should be placed on the opposite end of the spectrum, in a neo-Aristotelian vein. Turner's argument states that, in all likelihood, our last common ancestor with great apes was not as sociable as humans are; such evolution occurred as an adaptive response to environmental selection pressures above all, by means of specific

neuroanatomical developments which led to a neurological control over emotions of which other apes are not capable, and enabled a more differentiated emotional palate –involving uniquely human emotions as shame and guilt – to take place. De Waal sheds light on the continuities among humans and their closest apes (e. g. bonobos and chimps), to the point that the strongest commonalities can be traced back to their basic social needs, and the natural basis of altruistic behaviour. Tomasello places more emphasis on the exclusively human domains of prosociality, as sharing information, but agrees with De Waal that humans hold, before and beyond socialization and culture, a natural propensity to altruistic behaviour which is in large part shared with other primates. Finally, Franks reports sociobiological evidence supporting the importance of social interaction for the proper flourishing of human nature, with a special view to the developmental priority of emotion to cognition. The strong relationship among emotions, sociability, and solidarity, that shall be discussed in the further section, is enlightened by Franks himself: «Emotions are what make rationality possible but, equally important, they are what allows humans to respond to each other, form bonds, and develop solidarity» (Franks 2014, 273).

Conclusion

Let me summarize the core achievements of the theoretical work embedded in this thesis, so as to ponder both the related stronger and weaker points.

As a first comment, the upshot of the first chapter is that Durkheim foregrounded solidarity as a key concept to explain macro-social phenomena as the social order, social evolution, and moral change, yet he refrained from giving a definition of the concept of solidarity per se. As repeatedly emphasized along the thesis, Durkheim claimed that detaching solidarity from its empirical incarnations – e. g. family, domestic, and national solidarity – would lead to the acknowledgement of «a general tendency to sociability, a tendency that is always and everywhere the same and is not linked to any particular social type. But this residual element is only an abstraction, for sociability per se, is met with nowhere» (*DSL*, 53-4). I stand against Durkheim’s neglect toward conceptual analysis of solidarity, which he motivated out of his broader dissatisfaction with philosophical explanations of social facts (see Chapter 1, 2.2), but I take the conceptual link between solidarity and sociability as a promising subject to investigate. In this respect, I claim that putting this twofold Durkheimian stance – i. e., the fruitlessness of conceptual analysis of solidarity per se *plus* the sociability-solidarity conceptual link – at the centre of a philosophical attempt to define solidarity is an ideal starting point. Moreover, although I do not propose a full-fledged original reading of Durkheim whole framework, I claim that his stance on the definition of solidarity per se is a widely underestimated passage; this statement is to be emphasized, for Durkheim is quite standardly taken as a classic theoretical reference for understanding solidarity, but remarkably little attention is generally paid for the passage in *DSL* that I highlighted.

The second core contribution that my research offers is *methodological*, and has been argued in Chapter 2. Admittedly, the notion of «anthropological load» (Chapter 2, 2.1), which underpins the method I proposed and employed, could be undoubtedly fashioned and refined more in detail than I actually did; I acknowledged some explanatory limitations that the concept, understood as I put it, may have, and I surely neglected or missed others. However, if I can be permitted such a self-defence, the originality of a novel concept is often counterbalanced by a certain indeterminateness, which shrinks only over time, with further elaboration enlightened by proper discussion. Notwithstanding the less convincing respects on the concept of anthropological load, I still claim the core intuition which it is intended to encapsulate, that is, that the construction of social, ethical, and political concepts cannot be simply free-fluctuating over anthropological assumptions; as a consequence, when facing this endeavour, one should consider carefully and make explicit the anthropological assumptions underlying the theoretical proposal that she is arguing.

Relatedly, a third proposal embedded in this thesis is *substantive*, and concerns the reappraisal of the concept of sociability (see Chapter 2, 2.2, and Chapter 3), which is often referred to in vague and unspecific terms; in fact, whereas the concept had been virtually elaborated since ancient Greek philosophy – e. g. the Aristotelian view of man as «*politikòn zōon*» can be regarded as a seminal account of sociability *ante litteram* –, the related philosophical literature is remarkably poor when it comes to conceptual analysis of sociability. In this respect, my proposal of framing sociability as an open cluster concept and as a disposition is intended to take a step to fill this literature gap, beyond the pivotal conceptual work that it plays in the construction of the definition of solidarity. To be sure, however, further discussion and elaboration on sociability could be worth considering, for it is plausible that it is not only salient for theorizing solidarity, but other social, ethical, and political concepts as well.

It is worth spending some more time, and the remainder of this conclusion, to comment the fourth core content of my research, that is, the sociability-based definition of solidarity (D) discussed in Chapter 4. For a start, it should be noted that D has the merit to situate solidarity in the realm of action, thus at a distinct level from prosocial motivations and attitudes, with which it is often confused or conflated by the ordinary language – and, not unusually, by philosophers. Second, D seems capable of capturing all of the sample examples that are intuitively solidarity-evoking, and thus can claim a *definitional power* that put it in line with commonsense. However, as stated earlier (Chapter 4, Introduction), I do *not* claim that a definition which aims to make sense of our intuitions on solidarity is, as such, required to be consistent with *every* linguistic use of the word «solidarity» – that, as just remarked, can often lead to an overlap of the *concept* of solidarity with that of other related phenomena. Thus, I take commonsense to provide an inspiring starting point to investigate solidarity, and the purpose of a philosophical inquiry is to make sense of our intuitions on solidarity, thus maintaining a *weak prescriptive* stance over commonsense – i. e., D rules out certain phenomena as non-solidaristic –, yet is not so distant from our everyday intuitions on solidarity.

A further respect that needs to be recalled is that D seems to make sense of a broadly acknowledged feature of solidarity, that is, a «we-centric» cognitive and motivational structure; in fact, it has been argued that ethical or moral reasons and altruistic or collectivistic motivations can trigger solidarity depending on the recipient being regarded as part of a salient group – i. e. a particular social group or the whole humanity, respectively – in terms of which the agent categorizes herself at the light of a given situation. Several full-fledged theories of solidarity attempted to account for such we-centrism that is presumed to be distinctive of solidarity; for instance, Tuomela explains group solidarity in terms of a we-mode approach (Tuomela 2013, 242–63), whereas Stjerno considers as constitutive of solidarity a twofold perspective relation, that is, that «between an “I” and its identifications with a

“we”, and the relationship between a “we” and a “they”» (Stjerno 2004, 17). On my definition, solidarity is underpinned by reason and motives that are elicited by situation-specific self-categorization; in other terms, when the self is faced with an ingroup member – or a whole ingroup – facing an adversity, the former’s group membership is made salient. As a consequence, ethical and/or moral reasons, on the one hand, and altruistic and/or collectivistic motivation are more likely to inform the agent’s deliberation. We-centrism, under this light, can be meant as a feature of the agent’s deliberative structure underlying solidarity. In fact, whereas self-categorization operates at the social level, then one is motivated to help out of her belonging to the same *particular* group as the recipient facing an adversity (e. g. 1.1., 1.2, 1.3); when human categorization of the self is made salient,, then altruistic or collectivistic motivation is determined by *human membership* (e. g. 1.5, 1.6). In any case, solidarity is thus guided by the categorization of the recipient as part of the same particular or human group as the agent.

Furthermore, I suggest that understanding of solidarity in terms of SCT is interestingly useful in another respect, that is, to reorganize and reframe in socio-cognitive terms a quite common taxonomy between different kinds of solidarity, presented in the introduction. To give just a flavour of the idea, suffices to say that family solidarity, national solidarity and human solidarity can be traced back to a correspondent level of self-categorization, which indicates the *scope* of the we-centrism of solidarity – i. e. social for the first two examples, and human for the third one. If we are to abstract the core structure that empirical solidarities share, SCT is quite a powerful explanatory tool to this purpose. Relatedly, SCT can help to make sense of *multiple identities*, e. g. a black female worker; in fact, any individual holds multiple self-categorizations, as Turner acknowledges (see Chapter 3, section 1), and the circumstance that a particular social self-categorization is salient for informing the agent’s deliberation depends on the specificity of the situation. Moreover, it is often argued (Rorty 1990, Derpmann 2014, Heyd 2015; see Chapter 4, 1.5) that solidarity entails *partiality* or *exclusion*; this is certainly true when social categorization of the self is made salient, yet is not exhaustive of solidarity on D’s terms. In fact, when human membership is made salient, moral reasons can operate in relation with motivations as altruism or collectivism, and principlism; in fact, rescuer Tony’s self-report (Chapter 4, 1.5) clearly grounds solidaristic action in the categorization of the self and the other as human beings, or to use his own words, «as cells of a community» (Monroe 2014, 91). The broadest level of self-categorization identified by Turner is humanity, that is thus excluding toward non-human beings; however, it is not this interspecies exclusion, but rather *intrahuman* exclusion that Rorty, Derpmann and Heyd – among others – plausibly have in mind when arguing that solidarity entails partiality. That said, the possibility of «solidarity with the more-than-human world» (Scholz 2018;

see also Chapter 1, 3.1) remains still quite underdiscussed in the literature, and is a valuable topic to consider for future research.

To be sure, several more respects of solidarity need to be investigated in future research. As an example, it would be worthy to extend on the psychological determinants that are involved by human self-categorization. For instance, Fuchs (2017) argues that *dehumanization*, i. e., «the members of [a] discriminated group are regarded and treated as inferior, subhuman beings», is likely to underly – although not exclusively – massive violation of human rights as, paradigmatically, genocides; in this respect, dehumanization constitutes a failed or missed human self-categorization. As a consequence, one's emotional and behavioural response toward the target human being facing is altered to an extent that not only the latter, but the former as well is dehumanized: «spontaneous feelings of empathy towards outgroup members are suppressed or dissociated by the perpetrators through adopting attitudes of self-detachment and self-reification. Thus, the failure of recognition and empathy leads not only to a dehumanizing view of the victims, but also to a dehumanization of the perpetrators themselves» (Fuchs 2019, 10)⁹⁶.

Possibili integrazioni: cosa rimane di Durkheimiano? Che cos'è il contrario della solidarietà? Altri fattori antropologici (es. suscettibilità al clima) non rientrano nella definizione? Cosa succede quando la solidarietà è reciproca (Joint action?)?

⁹⁶ It has to be noted that in his valuable paper, Fuchs assumes an account of empathy that is other than Batson's, which has been assumed as valid in this thesis (Chapter 3, section 2).

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