RESEARCH ARTICLE

In Solidarity: Ma(r)king and rescaling solidarity boundaries towards migrants

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ABSTRACT: The core idea for this Special Issue is to reflect upon the dynamics of participation both by individuals and by groups acting in solidarity with migrants in different contexts at the individual, local and transnational levels. Using the concept of "solidarities" to address the relation between persons who have experienced migration and persons who have not, and between people and institutions, enables research to escape the "us vs. them" dichotomy, extending the debate on deservingness to society as a whole. Moreover, with the development of crossborder volunteering and the diffusion of multi-scalar partnerships between subnational governments and civil society organisations, solidarities are rescaled, and encompass new forms beyond national welfare mechanisms. Bringing together a rich collection of empirical cases that ranges from the reception of the Rohingya refugees in the Cox Bazar region of Bangladesh to border crossings along the Balkan route, from disaster solidarity in the Hanshin area in Japan to Ukrainian refugee reception in Italy, we explore acts of solidarity in different contexts as a way to try and make sense of when solidarity towards migrants is a political act, when it is about providing basic provisions subcontracted by the state to local or non-governmental actors, and when it is an act of defiance against the state.

1. Introducing the concept

In times of struggle, especially of collective struggle, it is not uncommon to end a petition, a manifesto, or an email with the expression "in solidarity". We stand 'in solidarity' with victims of oppression, of aggression, of war, of injustice. It is an expression meant to convey a shared intent, but also a sense of moral and symbolic support with a group.

In the face of multiple and intersecting crises over the past years, including a normalization of xenophobia and rising hostility towards racialized and migranticized groups in different world regions, movements of individuals who feel, stand, and act 'in solidarity' have emerged as a strong presence that developed in parallel and opposition to nativist populist ones.

This is not to claim 'solidarity' as some kind of novel phenomenon, nor one that can be declined in the singular. Harking back to the Latin solidus ("firm, whole, undivided, entire") and French solidarité ("communion of interests and responsibilities, mutual responsibility") solidarities have a long and rich tradition of taking place in many different settings and of being studied in social sciences from a number of angles: in the 1980s, Nancy Fraser posited that an ethic of solidarity is superior to an ethic of care because, as solidarity involves the standpoint of a collective, it is intrinsically a political ethic (Fraser 1986: 428). Kurt Bayertiz (1999) traced the main uses of solidarity in his seminal work as tied to a moral community, distinguishing between the 'factual' level of solidarity between individuals and the 'normative' dimension of mutual obligations to support each other. In the understanding of French legal history, solidarity has been seen as a form of collective responsibility and is close to the concept of 'fraternity', as a social practice that implies a shared but non-universal group of reference. But unlike other accounts of collective responsibility in moral theory and differently from notions such as fraternity or moral duties, solidarity "is not merely a matter of holding people liable for actions or for the failure to act. On the contrary, solidarity emphasizes positive duties arising from one's involvement in a collective or community" (Scholz 2013:1). So, while the concept of solidarity can be understood as an attitude rooted in empathy, it also has the capacity to acknowledge different positionalities and knowledges, and the power differentials within such positions (Hemmings 2012; hooks 1986; Mohanty 2003).

Whether it is mobilized in connection to working conditions and unions, as reaction to the plight of the poor, as mechanisms of everyday mutual support within a community, or as temporary measures put in place to respond to a disaster, solidarity holds a unique potential for effecting social and political change. As a form of 'politics of refusal' against unjust institutions, structural racism, colonialism, and others forms of oppression (Arruzza et al. 2019; Emejulu and van der Scheer 2022), solidarity has been termed as "the most important— sometimes the only—weapon of the powerless" (Kolers 2016).

Embracing this understanding of solidarity but also adding a layer of complexity to it, Liu and Shange (2018) coined the term 'thick solidarities' as a way to describe 'a kind of solidarity that mobilizes empathy in ways that do not gloss over difference, but rather pushes into the specificity, irreducibility, and incommensurability of racialized experiences.' Such solidarity practices require the de-construction of boundaries that separate different social justice projects and the acknowledgment of how different forms of injustice inform each other. This radical belief in "the inherent value of each other's lives despite never being able to fully understand or fully share in the experience of those lives" (Liu and Shange 2018) can prove important in countering narratives that create hierarchies of deservingness and of worth of different racialized and/ or underprivileged groups. For instance, the call to create 'a really hostile environment for illegal immigrants' in the UK put forward by Theresa May in 2013 (and reaffirmed by subsequent UK governments) was justified with the need to provide

help to individuals framed as 'more deserving' of solidarity, feeding a highly stratified process of integration and disintegration (Hinger and Schweitzer 2020). This stigmatization and dehumanization of some individuals and communities portrayed as threatening, and as 'undeserving' (or less deserving) of solidarity, compared to those 'truly vulnerable' and in need, is far from an isolated case. Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022—and as studied in some of the articles in this Special Issue—we have witnessed an outpour of solidarity towards Ukrainians fleeing the war. This has however also demonstrated how solidarity can apply selectively to some categories of migrants while excluding others (racialised and Romani minorities fleeing the same war, for instance), and how the transnationalization of social, political and economic processes both affects and is affected by local social movements, associations and faith groups.

This Special Issue particularly contributes to civil society solidarity activism towards people on the move. In that sense, the empirical cases of this collection almost hardly include 'traditional' actors of solidarity such as governments and states, for which solidarity is generally understood either in terms of social and/or economic duties that states have towards each other (Silvestre 2022), or as welfare provisions as a form of 'national solidarity' that is increasingly challenged by processes of neoliberalisation and globalisation (Wilde 2007; Banting and Kymlicka 2017).

This is not to say that the issue of solidarity towards migrants has emerged as a critical one across all the abovementioned understandings of the concept. 'Solidarity' has also been used in an exclusionary interpretation of 'chauvinist welfare' to be afforded exclusively or primarily to citizens excluding newcomers to the body politics (Kymlicka 2015; Paugam 2011). At the regional levels, solidarity is tied to the matter of distributive justice that requires a reform of the EU asylum system and a duty to act in solidarity by all Member States as co-responsibility (Corcodel and Fragkou 2023; Milazzo 2023). But a renewed conceptual and theoretical framework for solidarities is strongly tied to work carried out by activists, city networks, collectives or migrants themselves (Cantat and Feischmidt 2019; Mallet 2024).

This Special Issue thus stems from what we feel is a need to explore and better understand how the multifaceted, messy phenomena of solidarity has evolved in a diversity of locations, levels, and interpretations, tied to migration. We do so thinking of migrant solidarity always as "contingent, contested and 'situated' in its content and practice" (Routledge and Driscoll Derickson 2015).

2. Understanding and framing migrant solidarity

This Special Issue employs the concept of "solidarities" to address the relation between persons who have experienced migration and persons who have not, as well as between people and institutions. Differently from the debates revolving around the concepts of integration, inclusion or incorporation, a solidarities approach enables us to challenge the "us vs. them" dichotomy, or at least to nuance how such categories of inclusion/exclusion are created (and reproduced), extending the debate on deservingness to society as a whole.

Anthropologists, geographers, sociologists and political scientists have shown a growing interest in the concept of solidarity, especially in reference to 'migrant solidarity' vs. 'national solidarity' (della Porta and Steinhilper 2021). But how can acts of solidarity be understood in different contexts, how do different players practice it, and towards whom? When is solidarity towards migrants a political act, when is it about providing basic provisions subcontracted by the state to local or non-governmental actors, and when is it an act of defiance against the state?

We invited authors to explore solidarity practices in different settings, spanning ad hoc initiatives or networks mobilized for specific purposes (as in reaction to a 'crisis' event or natural disasters, of which the

article by Peruzzi Castellani (2023) is a good example), as well as longer-term coalitions and alliances (such as antiracist solidarities or religious bonding networks, but also NGOs working on social inclusion more broadly) and settings in which the changing structural conditions over time end up altering the very nature of the acts of migrant solidarity, such as an initial crisis event that morphs into a new normality, as in the case of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh illustrated by the article by Salsabeel and Leera (2023).

The cases that contributors have chosen to explore range widely in geographical scope, as well as in the actors involved in the acts of solidarity, the concrete ways in which these acts of solidarity have taken shape, were carried out and received. The ways in which 'solidarity' as a concept is employed is also declined somewhat differently according to each context, while maintaining its core tenants.

In the case of Bangladesh, Salsabeel and Leera (2023) showcase "that solidarity is not just a Western practice" by looking at solidarity towards the Rohingya refugees, which has gone from an emergency situation to a prolonged refugee crisis which has, in turn, generated a series of different 'stages' of solidarity and of institutional reactions.

In the Portuguese context explored by Magano, Sousa, Costa, Bäckström, and Albuquerque (2023), the authors adopt a definition of solidarity that is close to the idea proposed by Cantat and Feischmidt of "situated practices of solidarity" (2019), but also propose the dimension of "self-centered" solidarity in relation to institutions and NGOs working with migrants and refugees. What this conveys is that while solidarity functioned as the driver behind the reception process of refugees who arrived in Portugal in recent years, it also entailed a humanitarian/developmentalist approach and "created expectations and emotions regarding the people to be welcomed and the circumstances in which this would occur, which, in many cases, were not fully met."

In untangling the differentiated solidarity afforded in Italy to Ukrainians fleeing the war, and compared to other refugees or asylum seekers, Bolzoni, Donatiello and Giannetto (2023) adopt Agustín and Jørgensen's typology of solidarity (2019) that distinguishes between 'autonomous', 'civic' and 'institutional' solidarity, but choose to group the 'civic' and the 'autonomous' kinds of solidarity together, while keeping these separate from 'institutional solidarity'. This framing allows them to analyze different kinds of solidarity performed by common citizens, organized and non-organized civil society, and institutions in light of recent regulatory arrangements introduced (in Italy and Europe more broadly) to cope with the 'Ukraine emergency'.

In cases in which border crossings are explicitly addressed, such as articles by Trucco (2023), Battisti and Bruno (2023), and Fortarezza (2023), we see that solidarity is analyzed more from the point of view of a 'social movement', with solidarity practices of grassroots activists taking center stage through bottom-up, pro-migrant initiatives acting either in public spaces, private homes, or through social media and WhatsApp groups – but always in opposition to shrinking institutional spaces.

In Japan, an already 'shrunk' institutional space, in the sense of it being characterized by various forms of legislative, bureaucratic, and judicial repression (della Porta and Steinhilper 2021), is also the departing point from which Peruzzi Castellani (2023) traces the development of 'disaster solidarity': solidarity that sprung up as a response to a specific disaster, the Great Hanshin Earthquake in 1995, and almost incidentally had to address a migrant population that had been up until then ignored by the institutions.

Across the board, by exploring the gap that exists between solidarity actions as they are carried out by individuals and local organizations, and the lacking or insufficient support offered to migrants by state institutions, all authors employ solidarity not merely as an object of study, but also as an epistemic and methodological tool of analysis (Fortarezza 2023).

3. Moving away from methodological nationalism

The collection of articles presented here efficiently challenges the traditional unit of analysis of solidarity: the modern nation-state. We find the employing and unpacking of the concept of solidarity within the field of migration studies helpful. Indeed, one issue that has gained increasing attention in migration studies over the past years is what has been called "methodological nationalism" (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2002; Magalhães and Sumari 2022). The attempt to overcome the naturalization of the nation state as the main unit of analysis has seen a growing body of research that explores supranational, regional, and local settings in theorizing migrant reception and settlement (Glick-Schiller 2015; Filomeno 2017; Caponio and Jones-Correa 2018; Magazzini 2018; Magazzini, Chiozza and Rossi 2019). This Special Issue builds upon this work, but also stretches the boundaries of the "geographies of solidarities" studied beyond the local, by showing how these solidarities take place not only in specific localized settings - for instance at a borderzone city, or in a particular province - but also happen along fluid physical and virtual networks, at transnational level.

Indeed, while attempting to overcome methodological nationalism, many have fell in "methodological localism" (Desille, Rauchle, von Breugel, Triviño-Salazar, and Schmiz 2023; Filomeno 2017). A substantial contribution of this Special Issue lies in the rich empirical work on the related embeddedness of the local with other actors, institutions, laws, spaces, realities, experiences and practices, located at various scales; and a detailed analysis of their relations and changes over time. The solidarities analysed in this SI are neither abstract/ solely theoretical reflections, nor isolated case studies of progressive localism: what links the different accounts compared in this collection is an understanding of solidarity as a practice that is tied to the negotiations of urban life.

Salsabeel and Leera (2023, this issue) explore the community and political responses to the reception of Rohingya refugees in the Bangladesh region of Cox Bazar. Even though the national level is deemed important to define who has the right to asylum (Bangladesh is not a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol to the Convention), the Cox Bazar local historical proximity and the pressure of the international community are brought to the fore to show the importance of intersecting different scales. In disentangling these different levels of analysis, the authors illustrate how the political parties that dominate the national political life shape the narrative on the reception of migrants, in the attempt to harness international approval, but it is ultimately the local communities that have been (and are) on the 'frontlines of solidarity'.

In the context of another conflict, Bolzoni, Donatiello, and Giannetto (2023, this issue) analyze the reception of Ukrainians displaced from the war and taking shelter in Italy in the aftermath of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022. Here too, a multiplicity of actors and institutions located at different scales intersect to facilitate the settlement of Ukrainians in the first months following the beginning of the war: de-territorialised Ukrainian institutions such as the Ukrainian General Consulate in Milan, or the Orthodox church; international actors such as NPO Danish Refugee Council or the Rotary Club; the European Union which set the legal framework for the activation of the temporary protection; the State of Italy and its asylum reception system inherited from various historical events (such as the Yugoslavia war, or the more recent 2015 peak of refugees' arrivals in the Mediterranean region); the Piedmont region including regional government offices, Civil Protection service, and prefectures; Piemonte municipalities and local associations; private actors including the Compagnia di San Paolo, a private bank foundation based in Turin; and citizens and compatriots.

In exploring how space is conceived, mobilized, and shaped by political struggles that challenge the violence of border and migration control, Maestri and Hughes (2017) have already shown how space is actively and strategically used within multiple processes of political subjectivation, and more strongly in spaces where

exclusionary logics materialize. This is the case of borderzone cities. Fortarezza (2023, this issue) focuses on Trieste, an Italian city bordering Slovenia, and Trucco (2023, this issue) looks at Ventimiglia, an Italian city bordering France. An activist interviewed by Fortarezza (2023) stated: "Piazza della Libertà [in Trieste] and the Bosnian border are inextricably linked, the beginning and the end of the 'game'" (p. 500). While looking at different markers of activism, contestation and solidarity, they point out the fluidity of practices across borders and the existence of a transnational dialogue among solidarity groups: at the same time, a glocal space of solidarity has developed, encompassing more formalized and professionalized areas, generally cooperating with institutions at different scales or calling them to action, alongside a less formalized area loosely connecting local, national and transnational activists.

This 'glocal' dimension is also present in the digital spaces researched by Battisti and Bruno, in the form of the *mediapolis* (Silverstone 2006), "an open and collective space-city built as much by the media as by individuals and [which] would not exist without participation" (Battisti and Bruno 2023: 513).

In the case of Portugal, despite the asylum request process taking place within a national framework, the article by Magano et al. (2023) shows that the participation in the reception process is, in practice, effectively made up of either individual citizens who expressed their willingness to help to the National Association of Portuguese Municipalities, of "3rd sector" institutions, as well as of a range of networks and charitable bodies (the Union of Portuguese Misericórdias, the Union of Mutualities or the National Confederation of Solidarity Institutions).

In the emergence of widespread, grassroot disaster solidarity in Japan, we see the process of developing response mechanisms to a need moving successfully in the opposite direction, with spontaneous and very localized initiatives eventually being institutionalized and spreading to the national level. Additionally, in the Japanese case, the local, geographical dimension of where the 1995 earthquake took place is key to understanding how the response to the crisis developed, since its urban and relatively multicultural characteristics allowed for, and fostered, a specific type of solidarity (civil society led, youth based, multi-lingual etc.).

The scale at which acts of solidarity take place, their sustainability or failure, ultimately is always intimately linked to the context (place and time) in which they develop. It both shapes and is shaped by the existing markers/ boundaries of solidarity (what are its external 'borders') as well as by the actors (or 'makers') of solidarity, to which we turn in the next section.

4. Markers and makers: how different bodies negotiate and act in solidarity

As outlined above, with the development of cross border volunteering and the diffusion of multi-scalar partnerships between subnational governments and (often transnational) civil society organizations, migrant solidarities have been rescaled, and encompass new forms beyond national welfare mechanisms. But who is carrying out acts of solidarity, and what are the dynamics at play between the 'providers' and 'receivers' of solidarity, as well as between solidarity makers and the institutions? How do different (both physical and institutional) bodies deal with the legal and/ or practical obstacles when carrying out acts of solidarity? And what –or who– determines the mechanisms of co-optation and/or cooperation of acts of solidarity, rather than confrontation or criminalisation of those same acts on behalf of institutions?

In Europe, while solidarity has increasingly come to be employed by EU institutions and Member States as a 'system' to redistribute asylum-seekers among EU countries (EPRS 2020), therefore privileging the 'inter-state solidarity' dimension over the 'human solidarity' one (Corcodel and Fragkou 2023), with the notable

exception of Ukrainian refugees (Silvestre 2022), the cases presented in this Special Issue all take stock of the role of the human dimension in acting in solidarity with migrants and refugees. In other words, the articles in this Special Issue acknowledge the importance that the mobilization of ethnicity, religion, racialization and migrant status or other identity markers play in the politics of solidarity and in who participates in various solidarity movements.

We consider this to be an important contribution: while a rich literature exists on the acts of solidarity and the characteristics that define them (Butcher 2010; Lassen 2018; Cantat 2020), the study of actors or 'makers' of solidarity has so far been less developed. In building multi-scalar connections between the local and transnational actors, we observe that the various identity ma(r)kers behave differently and have different drives, expectations, and capacities. This collection of articles aims at offering an insight into how activists, participants, academics, and refugees can forge a common ground which is transversal, while exploring the specificities of different groups (ethnic or religious-based initial responses as opposed to secular NGOs, or self-organized solidarity networks, for instance).

In the first article of the issue, the cultural proximity and the religious obligations that bring together the Rohingya people and the local people of Cox Bazar, mostly Sunni Muslims, are seen as "a driving factor in the host population's sympathetic behavior" (Salsabeel and Leera 2023). As for the international community, besides an important mediatic coverage of the Myanmar 2017 persecutions and the consequent arrivals in Bangladesh, pressure was also exercised through the International Court of Justice (ICJ): in 2019 the Gambia filed a lawsuit at the ICJ against Myanmar for being responsible for genocide against the Rohingya. Beyond symbolic actions, however, it was the individuals and local communities residing in the Cox Bazar region which became the main actors of solidarity, while the too bureaucratic asylum system was sidelined. Over time, this solidarity eroded as conditions worsened for the local population that found itself outnumbered by refugees and struggling to stretch the existing services to a situation which became one of prolonged crises. This points to the necessary plasticity and dynamism of solidarity responses in fast-paced social and political contexts.

This also puts into proportion the European debates around asylum reception, reminding us that most refugees and migrants are hosted by non-Western countries, in contexts in which solidarities and migration are subject to different narratives and solidarity networks are under-researched. If the case of the Rohingya in Bangladesh shows us the dissonance between an official welcoming national posture and an eroded local reality, in Europe acting in solidarity towards migrant persons has become an increasingly risky activity criminalized by governments, especially in contentious contexts.

Hence one strategy developed by solidarity makers in response to these risks is online activism. Battisti and Bruno (2023, this issue) focus on virtual solidarity and show the extent to which online activism has a direct correspondence with offline activism and is in fact a possible intermediary: "The NS [online activist] series of posts "Diario di bordo" is a kind of thematic column on the Balkan route which reports daily on the life stories of migrants and volunteers on the route. It constitutes a significant example of the narrative experience that best embodies on the one hand the collection and transmission of stories, appeals and photos received directly from migrants in distress, and on the other hand the constant updating of solidarity actions carried out on the border, to empower and spread awareness of their need" (p. 519). In this sense, even though anonymity and visibility had to be negotiated, this did not minimize the power of personal stories on the potential solidarity responses.

This negotiation (between the risks of criminalization and empowerment) is also salient in Trucco's work (2023, this issue). Focusing on territorial bans issued against 'No Border' activists in Ventimiglia as a specific

case of criminalization of solidarity and comparing it to other and more mediatized cases - like the one of Cédric Herrou and other French citizen labeled as 'solidarity smugglers' - her article helps to disclose how criminalization also shapes solidarity and what is considered as (good) solidarity in specific contests. In particular, she shows how the judicialization of solidarity does not necessarily participate in increasing the visibility of migrant persons, nor in resolving the paradox of "visibility without presence" (Desille, Paté, and Bacon 2021). Her work thus contributes to integrating law and legality into the picture, by addressing "the potential for activists to turn their own trials into weapons to serve the cause of solidarity and equal mobility rights" (p. 471), which remained an under-studied topic within solidarity studies, and by grasping the individual and collective effects of experiencing both repression and legal mobilization against it. The complexity of the effects which bans and judicialization had on defendants' legal consciousness helps shedding a light on the ongoing transformation of, especially youth, activism and engagement.

Importantly, authors also take stock of their/our own positionality as researchers in this field, since the typology of actors and of case studies brought together in this collection has been, as always in social science research, shaped by issues of accessibility, methodological tools, and positionality. In speaking about her own involvement in acts of solidarity in Trieste, Italy, Fortarezza borrows from Cantat's work on solidarity for whom "the complexities and contradictions that unfold 'on the ground' as solidarity is practiced" enables to interpret them "as theoretically, methodologically and epistemologically productive spaces" (Cantat et al. 2019: 15-16). Stemming from her own experience as a volunteer researcher engaged in what she terms "a relational ethnography" (Desmond 2014), she suggests to harness "solidarity as a method", that is "using solidarity (also) as a 'lense' through which to read not only solidarity intervention itself but also, by contrast, state negligence" (Fortarezza 2023).

Fortarezza's article also suggests that "migrant solidarity, whether with an assistentialist (civic) or a contentious (autonomous) approach, and public and private institutions committed to the support of PoM [People on the Move] (institutional solidarity) cohabit and cooperate in and across the space of the border" (2023: 492). Indeed, solidarity is not only made by trained activists or 'full time solidarians'. Increasingly, non-professional volunteers take part in solidarity practices (Magano, Sousa, Costa, Bäckström, and Albuquerque 2023, this issue; Bolzoni, Donatiello, and Giannetto 2023, this issue). These volunteers often have "no professional experience or resources in terms of refugees' reception and no former connection with established NGOs, social movements, or organizations dealing with the matter" (Bolzoni, Donatiello, and Giannetto 2023: 462).

Especially in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and with the ongoing war, there has been a shift of actors of solidarity that is moving in the direction of an increase in initiatives by private actors and citizens. The study of the development of ties between dissimilar people into groups or networks that are conducive to collective action (Lacomba 2020) becomes therefore, necessarily, also a reflection on the role of solidarity 'actors' in these processes.

Both in the case of Portugal and in Italy, volunteers have expressed their desire to connect and develop a relationship with the people hosted, and their disappointment when this did not happen, or when families chose to leave the country altogether. In Portugal, for instance, we learn that this disappointment translated into a staggering 52% of the host reception institutions declaring their intention to withdraw from reception support (Sousa et al. 2021). We see, in these contexts, another negotiation at play: that between the 'makers' of solidarity who have a well-meaning, yet at times developmentalist and narrow and/ or ill-informed concept of refugees, and the receivers of solidarity acts, who can "resist" against or refuse the "good refugee" ideal (Magano et al. 2023, this issue).

Peruzzi Castellani's piece on solidarity in Japan (2023, this issue) comes to reinforce the assumption that solidarity-makers find spaces and opportunities to develop new forms of responses in a relational dimension with the 'recipients' of solidarity. In the case of Japan and the Hanshin (Ōsaka-Kōbe) area, it is disaster prevention and mutual help after a natural disaster that provided a space for solidarity towards foreigners to emerge, shape and institutionalize. Borne out of the effective lack of institutional mechanisms and a void in timely solidarity response to a disaster on behalf of institutional actors, the (initially) invisibilized foreign community becomes key, through disaster solidarity 'in weak ties', to an institutionalization of solidarity that goes beyond the specific needs of migrants, to foster a more inclusive disaster response mechanism. In this sense, solidarity functions precisely as a vector to problematize and challenge the 'us-them' categorizations present into a shrunk legal space: "disaster solidarity has been leading to mainstreaming certain disaster-related policies and practices, thus contributing to overcoming the traditional narrative differentiating migrants from natives and providing opportunities for wider rethinking of migrant-related policies. In other words, disaster solidarity has been representing one of the main engines of Japanese multiculturalism" (p. 542).

5. Conclusive remarks and ways forward

In guise of a conclusion, we would like to reiterate the potential of solidarities as an epistemological and methodological lens in migration studies. First, solidarity "as a method" (Fortarezza 2023, this issue) enables us to identify and include a diversity of actors (individuals, communities, institutions, locals, spaces) beyond the State and the migrant peoples for whom we (may) act "in solidarity". This translates into a blurred divideline, a demigranticization of the field of solidarity, where the "us vs. them" dichotomy is challenged. This is especially acute when solidarity towards migrants is a political act or even an act of defiance against the state. But the provision of services too can serve as a political act, and lead to the transformation of solidarities - sometimes in antagonistic manners. For instance, the practices of non-professional volunteers have an impact on the legal and political framing of refugees' reception: it means moving away from rights' acknowledgement and fulfilments to a charitable humanitarian approach. In other words, it means reversing the work carried forward by advocacy groups, associations, but also institutional legal entities to establish asylum seekers and refugees as legal subjects with rights and agency rather than charitable objects (see Malkki 1995; Zetter 1991).

Second, the concept of solidarity as well as its multiple practices is tied to specific time-spaces. The local contexts are described at length in every article, and this for a reason: solidarities deploy in particular places. Several articles, the last two in particular (Fortarezza and Peruzzi Castellani), offer a historic perspective of the development and institutionalization of solidarity practices in specific territories. The broader geopolitical context is also highly relevant to understand how certain ma(r)kers of solidarity become more prominent. This means that there is a comparative difficulty yet necessity to explore the ways in which solidarities are made in various contexts across time.

Nevertheless, the collection of articles presented here allow us to see, thirdly, that a few commonalities emerge. One is the retraction of the state in face of the migration phenomenon, but also as a provider of welfare. States' failures open spaces for solidarities that are more or less institutionalized, and spread over time. This is not to claim that the withdrawal of the state has enabled a more suited, tailor-made response to the multiple obstacles met by people on the move. Rather, this retraction participates in the invisibility of migrant individuals, and feeds an imaginary of migration as transitory and disconnected from the places they cross, are

stopped, or settle in. A second common argument is the transnational character of practices, even when they are highly localized. In this sense, being local and being networked are not in opposition, but rather emphasize that "the widespread and compelling need to express empathy and support towards people on the move has generated new subjectivities and alliances among otherwise independent actors, in turn fostering the elaboration of innovative praxes along and across nation-state borders (Agustín and Jørgensen 2019; Lahusen, Zschache and Kousis 2021)" (Fortarezza 2023: 492).

Finally, what emerges from the diverse experiences and acts of solidarity is, inevitably if not always explicitly, a problematization of who is a migrant, who is a smuggler, who is a 'solidarian', as well as about who is 'deserving' of solidarity and integration (Scheel and Tazzioli 2022; Mügge and van der Haar 2016). The relational embeddedness of a broad variety of solidarity 'makers' with an equally diverse range of people on the move in different settings that this Social Issue explores leaves us with a complex, yet we believe more accurate, nuanced and needed insight into the shapes and forms that solidarity can take, and how we can research it while also being part of it.

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