

# The Self, the I, and the We

## Solidarity from the Perspective of Rational Action

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- Resurgence of Solidarity
  - Scepticism towards the compatibility of solidarity and rational choice theory
    - Understanding the *We* as an association of self-interested utility maximizers
  - RC Theorists claim their model has been *socialized*
    - There is more to the rational *Self* than the *I*

How can we approach solidarity from the perspective of rational choice?

- Resurgence of Solidarity
  - Scepticism towards the compatibility of solidarity and rational choice theory
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    - There is more to the rational *Self* than the *I*

How can we approach solidarity from the perspective of rational choice?

1. The Outdated Critique of Self-Interested Solidarity
2. A Typology of Solidarity Norms
3. Solidarity and 'Homo Oeconomicus' / Solidarity and 'Homo Rationalis'

# 1. The Critique of Self-Interested Solidarity

- Solidarity is regarded as a set of social norms that prescribe transfers of private resources to others even if this comes at private costs

(Durkheim 1893, Lindenberg 2014, Prainsack & Buyx 2017, Tranow 2013)

**Self-Interested Solidarity:** A rational agent complies with a solidarity norm if

- the benefits to the agent exceed the private costs of solidarity (opportunistic)
- social control prevents free-riding (particularistic)

(Hechter 1987, Kapeller & Wolkenstein 2013, Mau 2007)

# 1. The Critique of Self-Interested Solidarity

## Homo Oeconomicus:

- *Realist Turn*: From a formalized and analytical model to a realistic and psychologized description of action
- *Social Turn*: From material self-interest to bounded self-interest and 'homo socialis'

(Alger & Weibull 2013, Dhami 2016, Fehr & Gintis 2007, Gintis & Helbing 2015, Weber & Dawes 2005)

## Homo Rationalis:

- General tendency towards thick versions (instead of thin versions)
- Sociality results from the integration of social norms and rational choice

(Elster 1989, Hechter & Kanazawa 1997, Hedström & Stern 2008, Kroneberg & Kalter 2012, Lovett 2006)

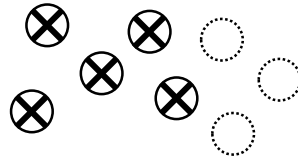
## 2. A Typology of Solidarity Norms

✕ **Norm Target**  
○ **Norm Beneficiary**  
(actual/ potential)

Particularistic

Opportunistic

Self-Interested  
Solidarity



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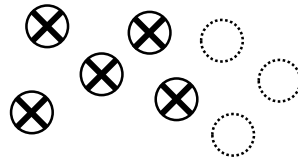
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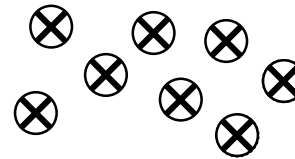
Universalistic

Opportunistic

Self-Interested  
Solidarity



Enlightened  
Solidarity



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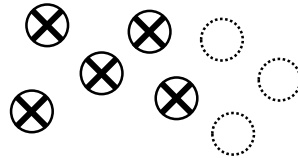
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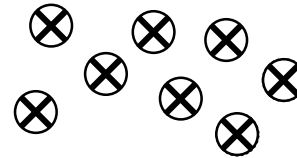
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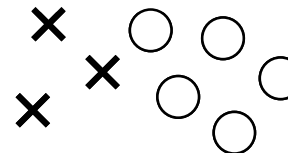


Enlightened  
Solidarity



Uncompensated

Charitable  
Solidarity





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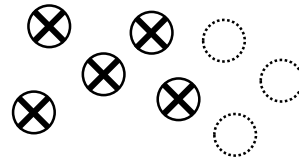
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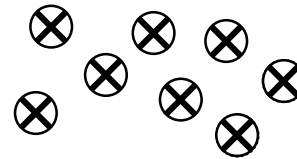
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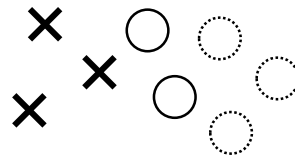


Enlightened  
Solidarity

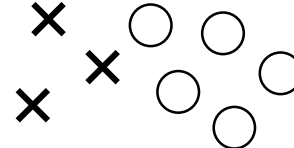


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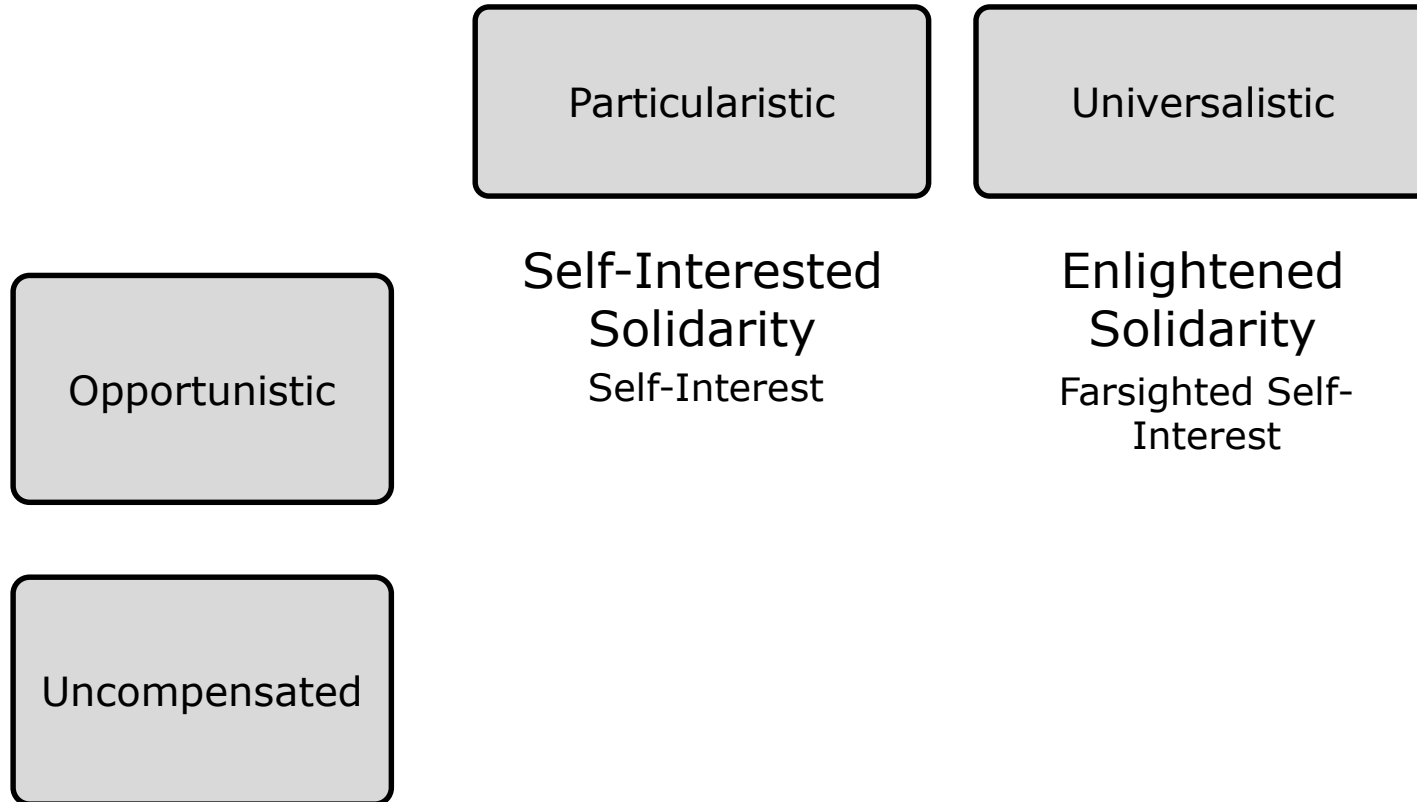
Bonding  
Solidarity



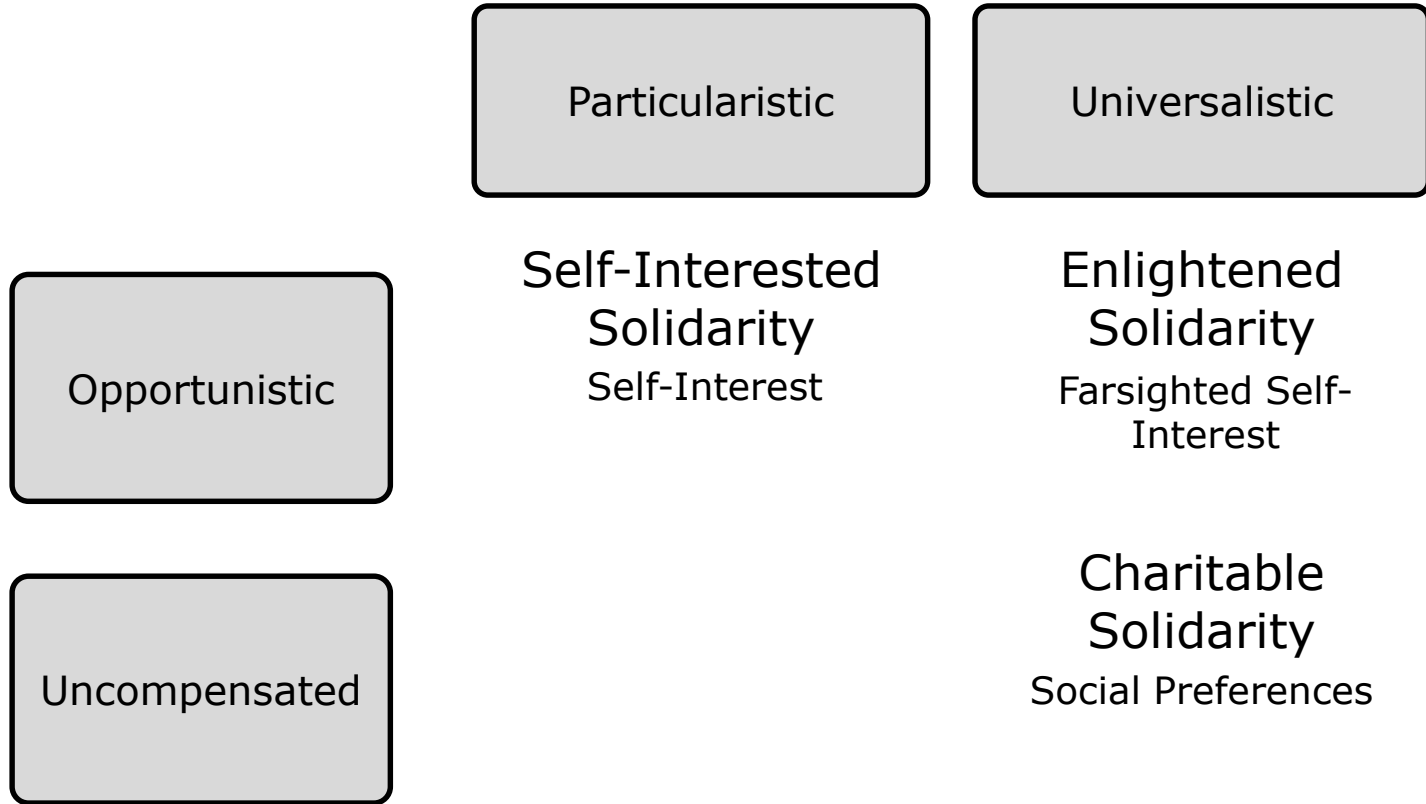
Charitable  
Solidarity



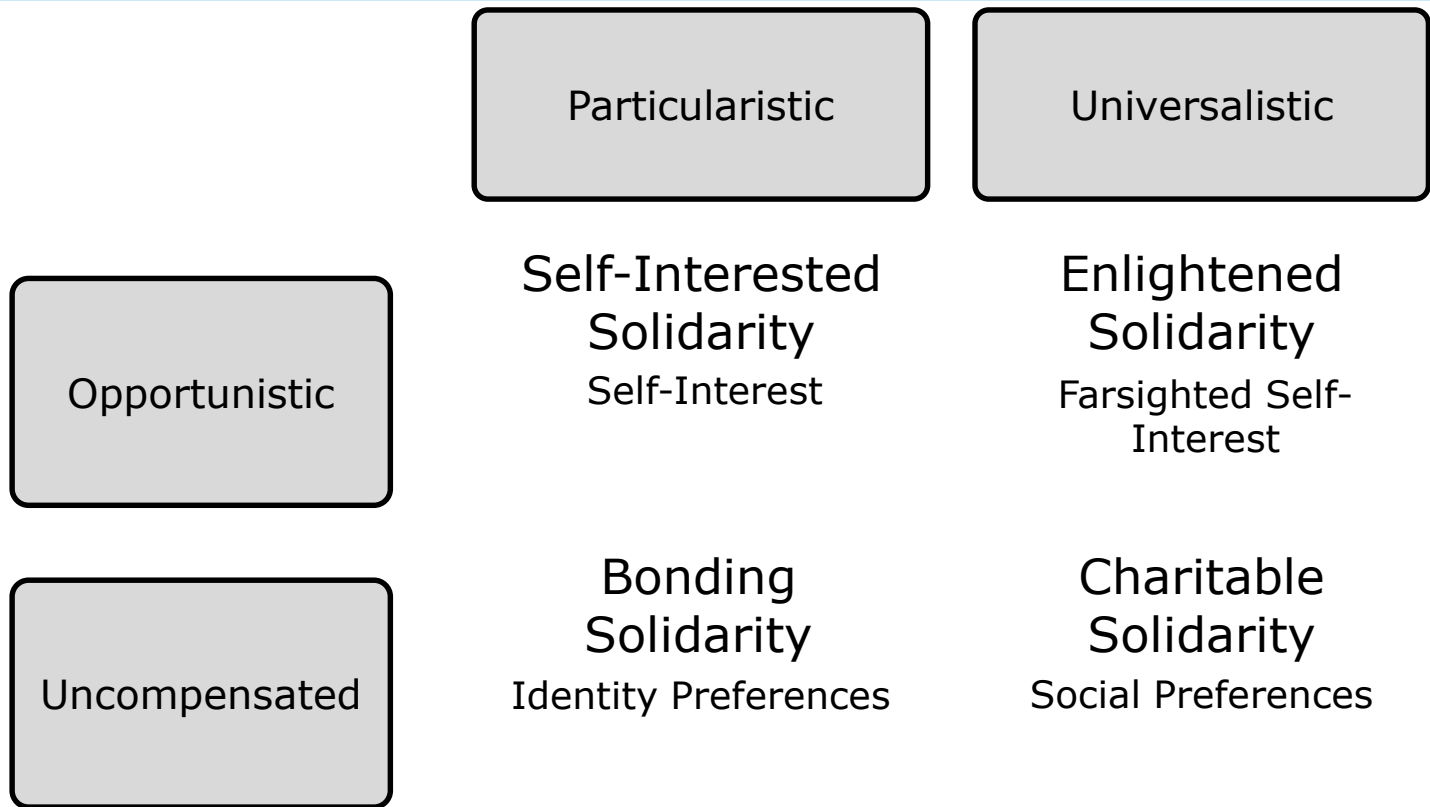
### 3. Solidarity and Homo Oeconomicus



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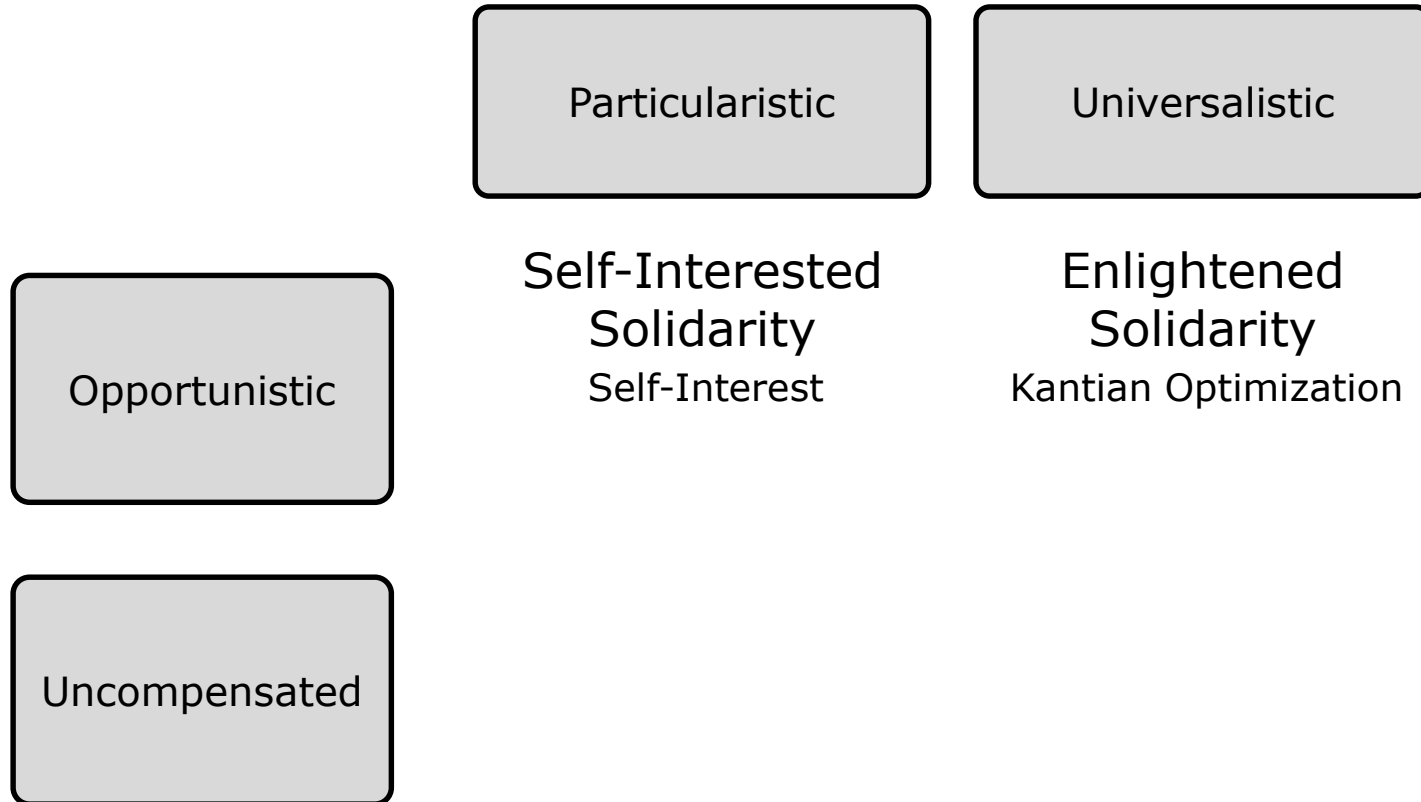
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#### **Homo Oeconomicus:**

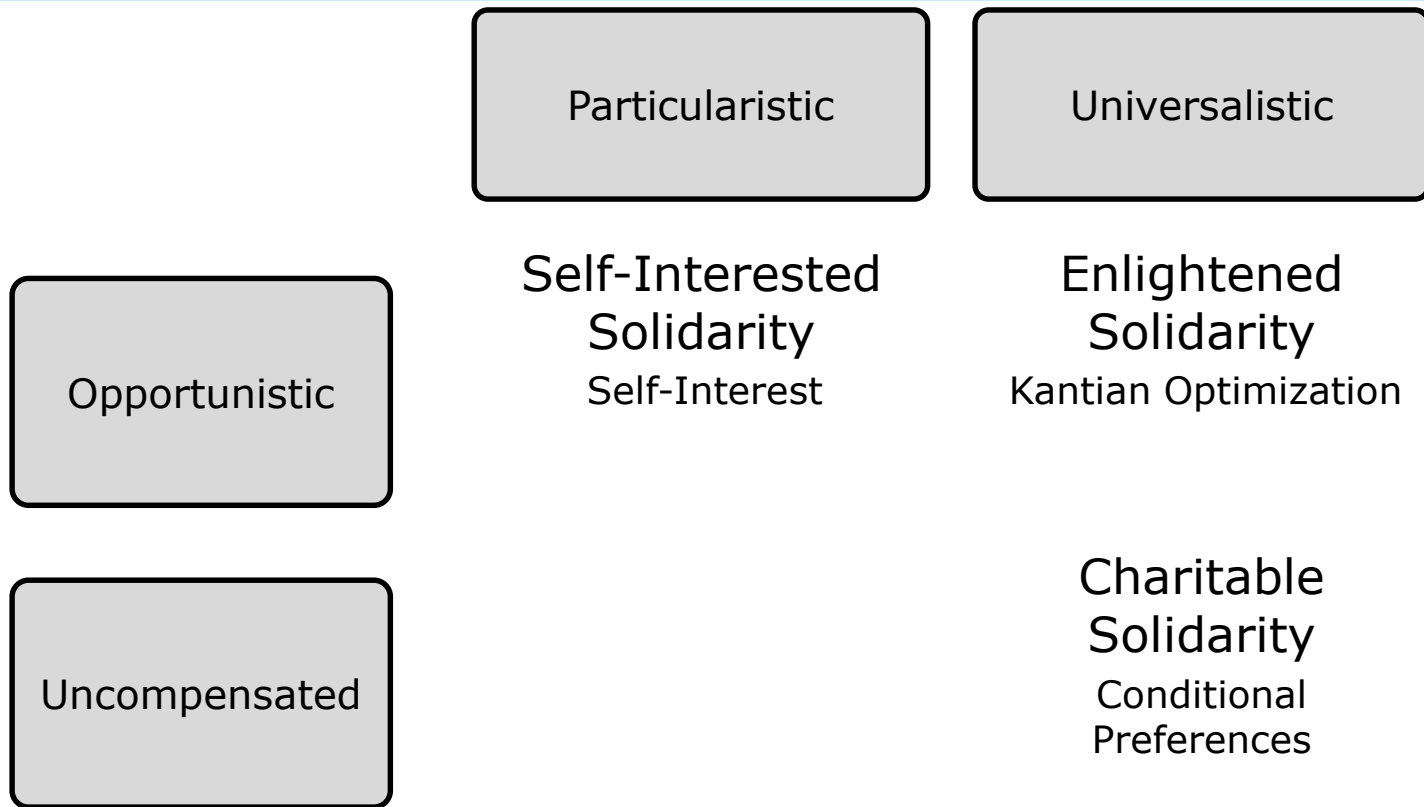
- *We* is reduced to an argument of the individual utility function
- *We* is embedded into the *I*, but the *I* is not embedded into the *We*

→ Homo Oeconomicus squeezes the *We* into the *I*

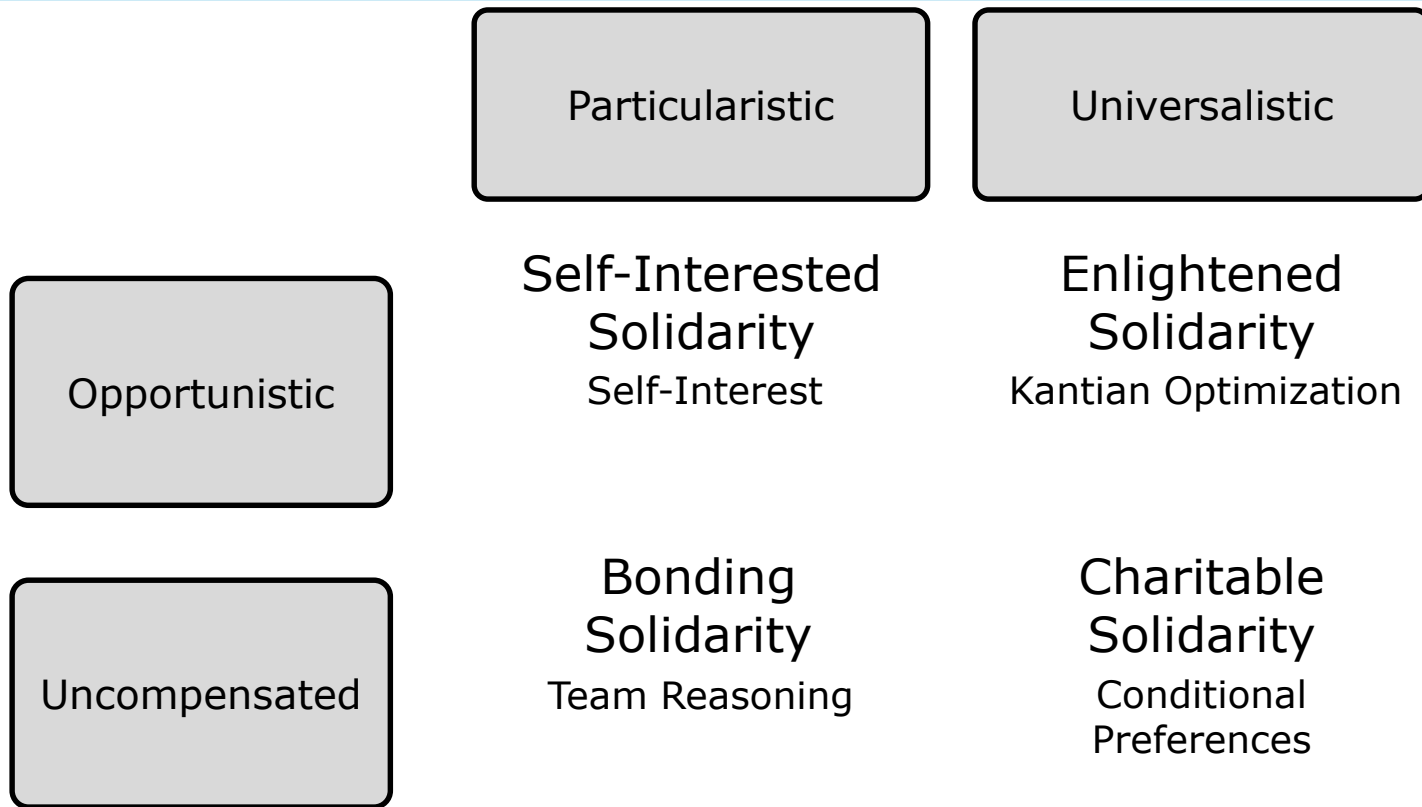
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#### Homo Rationalis:

- *We* as an independent mode of utility maximization
- *I* is embedded into the others' payoff structure, beliefs and expectations, social relations

→ Homo Rationalis treats the *We* and the *I* on equal footing

# Conclusion

- Rational choice offers a perspective on solidarity which transcends its understanding as an association of self-interested utility maximizers.
- Homo Rationalis is better equipped to explain solidarity than Homo Oeconomicus.

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