

Transnational Solidarities

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Introduction

This article attempts to revise solidarity from its primary historical meaning as a relationship binding all the members of a single cohesive group or society toward a conception more suitable for the new forms of transnational interrelationships that mark contemporary globalization. It considers the supportive relations we can come to develop with people at a distance, given the interconnections that are being established through work or other economic ties, through participation in Internet forums and other new media, or indirectly through environmental impacts. Solidarity relations will be reconceptualized here as potentially contributing to the emergence of more democratic forms of transnational interaction within regional or more fully global frameworks of human rights, for which I have argued previously.¹ Beyond this, I will also argue that affective relations of solidarity are in fact an essential complement to the recognition of these human rights themselves. This new notion of solidarity is understood here as one of *overlapping solidarity networks*. It will be seen that this conception also engages the idea of justice, and indeed perhaps of global justice, in an important way.

This analysis builds on previous attempts by feminist theorists to articulate a notion of care suitable for politics, such as the work of Fiona Robinson, who develops a conception of global care; Joan Tronto, who theorizes public care in a national context; and Virginia Held, who has recently investigated the impact of care ethics for the consideration of moral relations among nations.² I propose that solidarity is in fact a more helpful notion than care for these contexts because it is more suitable for describing the relations of social and political groups and associations to each other, whereas care is most fully applicable to interpersonal relationships. Further, while care has sometimes been seen as a replacement for rights talk, I see both care and solidarity as supplementing and motivating a commitment to equal rights (especially as human rights).

Feminist theorists have also articulated a role for *empathy* in order to illuminate certain features of moral reflection in international affairs, where this signifies an imaginative understanding of the perspective, situation, and needs of others, as a basis for moral action in response to them, and I have also given an argument along these lines.³ Such accounts have sought in different ways to introduce elements of sentiment or emotional understanding in order to explain the ties that bind people to distant others in this period of greater global integration and that

can provide a basis for conceptualizing moral responsibilities toward them, or that can at least provide an account of our motivations for taking these seriously. In this essay, I will suggest that solidarity, as a form of *social empathy*, is an even more useful concept than simple care or empathy for these new transnational contexts.

Yet, any effort to theorize global care, empathy, or solidarity immediately comes up against what seems to be an impossibility theorem, namely, that it necessarily violates the stricture that “ought implies can.” How can people possibly feel care, empathy, or solidarity with *everyone* else? To the degree that these normative notions are in fact based in sentiment, which is inevitably particularistic and limited, they would seem inapplicable to our relations to distant others in any universalistic sense. Even applying them to a subset of strangers seems exhausting and hopeless. Indeed, the specific concept that concerns us here, solidarity, has in fact had its proper home, sociologically speaking, in *intragroup* relations, as the solidarity among the members of a particular group, which has at most been extended to understanding the relations among individuals within a particular nation. Nonetheless, in this article, I will highlight another, rather different, use of the concept of solidarity, in which it can reasonably apply to relations to others at a distance. This move will only be possible, however, if we take solidarity to denote a relationship to individuals or groups smaller than the universe of human beings generally. Thus, it will become clear that my concept does not fall prey to Richard Rorty’s criticism of any purely abstract concept of human solidarity.⁴ But I will later go on to demarcate a certain sense of it that is nonetheless universalistic.

I will not, however, simply be proposing a revision of solidarity that takes it in a wholly new direction, diverging from any of its existing meanings. We can see how the historic dialectic of the concept itself (so to speak) requires, or better, enables the move to transnational networked solidarities that I will be developing here. This will become evident if we analyze the treatment of solidarity by its great theoretician in sociology, Durkheim. So, in what follows, I will begin by laying out and evaluating some of the existing analyses and categorizations of solidarity. I will then consider certain of its constructive features, taking off from the accounts of mutual feeling and mutual aid offered by Sandra Bartky, Andrew Mason, Tommie Shelby, and Klaus Rippe, and will go on to sketch the way that I envision norms of solidarity applying to cross-border or transnational relationships.

A methodological point is worth making here: in both the review and positive account, solidarity will be treated both descriptively and normatively. The analysis will not, I think, confuse these uses, although it will see the norm as in part emerging from practical social and historical solidaristic activities and movements, and as capable of being formulated on the basis of these actual phenomena. The discussion seeks to foreground key features of solidarity relations that are normatively desirable by reflecting on facets of certain actually existing relationships. The suggestion is that it would be good to see them become more widely

adopted, and the philosophical conceptualization here is intended to make a contribution, however small, to that process.

After laying out a conception of transnational solidarity in the third part, the article will conclude with a consideration of some of the philosophical issues that remain problematic in this account. These difficulties arise with the new conception of solidarity proposed here, insofar as it functions as a moral notion within global ethics and as an important social aspect of transnational democratic interrelationships between people.

Conceptions of Solidarity—Social, Political, Human

The concept of solidarity came to prominence in sociology in the analysis of Emile Durkheim, who distinguished between mechanical and organic solidarity. Surprisingly, perhaps, “mechanical” does not apply to post-industrial revolution societies, but on the contrary, pertains to the relation among members of traditional communities where each member is similarly characterized in terms of identities and perspectives, and stands in the same relation as others to the community as a whole. This holistic interpretation is contrasted with the more modern “organic” solidarity, where people are linked in interdependent relations with others through an extended division of labor. Here their ties to each other occur almost behind their backs, especially proceeding via their economic interrelations, in which they function as differentiated parts of a large organism.⁵

Even this brief account of organic solidarity—in which relations are mediated by the division of labor—already sharply suggests the need for an expanded understanding of solidarity with globalization. For it is evident that economic integration has in fact extended the division of labor beyond the borders of a given society. And the interdependencies that contribute to this sort of solidarity are thus increasingly transnational rather than simply local or national. This lends support to the move I am proposing here, namely, envisioning a conception of solidarity beyond the two that Durkheim describes, one that takes the concept past the idea of a certain unity within a group or within a society, although it retains the notion of differentiation characteristic of Durkheim’s second sense. We can name this new significance *network solidarity*, or better, the plural *solidarities*, and I will characterize it later in the article. For now, we can briefly take note of some contemporary attempts to offer typologies of solidarity that go beyond the initial Durkheimian conception in various ways.

Kurt Bayertz begins his important account by distinguishing between the factual and normative uses of the term solidarity, where both of these denote a mutual attachment between individuals, and where the normative use requires mutual obligations to aid each other when necessary. He sees solidarity in these general terms as designating positive obligations to act, which are particularistic, and pertain to other members of the community to which one belongs.⁶ He distinguishes four uses of the term:

1. The first refers to a relation among humans, conceived as “one big moral community,” or as universal solidarity, in other words, as a fraternity among human beings generally. Yet, the conflict and competition between people counts against the viability of this interpretation, in his view, as does the inevitably particularistic nature of solidaristic feelings.
2. This recognition is reflected in the second usage, where solidarity designates the “inner cement” holding a society together. A further distinction here is between the sort of friendship possible within a community, such as Bayertz finds in Aristotle’s idea of civic friendship,⁷ and the more anonymous forms of interconnection characteristic of modern societies. In this connection, he holds that Durkheim’s distinction between the ideal types of mechanical and organic solidarity is helpful.
3. Another sense of solidarity occurs when people form a group to stand up for common interests. Descriptively, for Bayertz, this can include negative manifestations like a band of criminals or more positive ones like social movements, whether of labor, women, ecology, and so on. Normatively, this use involves a reference to justice and the achievement of rights, and “involves a commitment against an opponent, from whom positive goals must be wrung.”⁸ Labor movement solidarity falls within this type.
4. Finally, there is the use of the concept prevalent especially in Europe, as the solidarity of the welfare state. Here it designates the responsibility of compatriots to help the needy among them, not out of charity but in virtue of the ties that bind fellow citizens to each other, and in recognition of the role of luck and other extrinsic factors in contributing to such neediness. These requirements are often transferred to a bureaucratic apparatus, which leads to a dilution of the solidarity involved.

In some contrast with Bayertz’s account, Jodi Dean has advanced a tripartite division among types of solidarity. She distinguishes between affectional solidarity, conventional solidarity, which “grows out of common interests and concerns,” and finally, the type she advocates “reflective solidarity,” which emerges from discourse in situations of dissent and difference.⁹

This cursory review of typologies of solidarity already suggests how difficult it is to find within them a space for the new sorts of transnational solidarity that I am attempting to conceptualize here. Most existing usages pertain to the relations among individuals within a single group, usually thought of as a community. Where theorists discuss transnational applications at all, it involves conceiving solidarity as involving a (rather haphazard) relationship of an individual to others at a distance or to dialogical relations with others. I believe that we need to develop the norm of solidarity beyond these characterizations and will suggest that it can characterize relations both among individuals and among associations. In this way, it takes on a more dispersed but also more social aspect.

Of course, Bayertz and others do take brief note of labor movement solidarity, where this idea has been developed in its international import by Karl Marx and some subsequent writers in the Marxist tradition, as well as by more recent labor movement theorists.¹⁰ But we can say that the labor movement represents only one rather limited model for transnational solidarity, though it is an especially important one. A more general and potentially transnational account is suggested by Chandra Mohanty, who focuses on something like Bayertz's third sense, but highlights its conflictual aspects, and certainly departs from Bayertz's interest-based account. Thus, Mohanty interprets solidarity as involving an "inherently oppositional nature and a mutually shared vision."¹¹ In her terms, "it is the common context of struggles against specific exploitative structures and systems that determines our potential political alliances."¹²

Before moving to a fuller positive account of transnational solidarity as a contemporary phenomenon and norm, we should make mention of Craig Calhoun's interesting discussion of the social solidarity that is constructed through a public sphere of discourse and cultural interpretation, especially through the participation of civil society associations.¹³ Although this can be potentially transnational, as in the European Union, Calhoun sees solidarity as a matter of the construction of a people, or a single democratic polity. Moreover, with Dean, solidarity in this reading shares the restriction to talk and not action, though it is helpfully understood as constructed.

A conception of solidarities as constituted in this way is useful for transnational contexts in one important sense: it suggests how new cross-border communities and associations, whether as internet forums, or worldwide professional associations, or local cross-border ecological or economic groupings, can develop social solidarity (in its traditional senses) among themselves. This older idea of solidarity within groups accordingly does have a place in globalization as well, not only in its application to the still robust political communities that make up nation-states on an ongoing basis, but also in application to emerging cross-border communities or associations, whether local or regional.

Feeling-with, Mutual Concern, and Mutual Aid

In order to lay the ground for analyzing a newer sense of solidarity as an ethical and social norm suitable for the emerging transnational situation, we can examine a little more closely some central notions that have been regarded as constitutive of the idea by philosophers—first, fellow feeling or mutual concern, and second, mutual aid, or at least a disposition to mutual aid. An obvious question to keep in mind here is to what degree mutuality in either sense can be regarded as a plausible dimension of cross-border interactions with people one most often does not know personally.

Sandra Bartky has given a useful analysis of the idea of solidarity by way of a return to Scheler's original notion of "Mitgefühl," or feeling-with.¹⁴ Drawing on his account of what she reluctantly translates as "fellow-feeling," Bartky empha-

sizes the affective aspects of solidarity. She rightly stresses the role of imagination as a basis for the intuition of the feelings and situation of the other, while also showing how one need not presuppose that one has already experienced those feelings oneself. Bartky also helpfully calls attention to the importance of having a certain cognitive understanding of the concrete specifics of the other's context. However, Bartky's characterization of solidarity would seem to apply just as well to empathy, and although she recognizes the importance of socializing the notion of solidarity, it remains for her primarily a relation of one individual to another. By contrast, I propose that we understand solidarity as in part the social counterpart to empathy, and see it as applying also to relations of an individual to the members of a different group, and to the relations among groups.

Andrew Mason identifies "mutual concern" as a key feature of solidarity, used in a normative sense to characterize the relation among members of what he terms a moral community.¹⁵ He writes that "minimally, this means that members must give each other's interests some non-instrumental weight in their practical reasoning."¹⁶ He adds an additional requirement—that there be no exploitation or systematic injustice. This latter condition importantly ties normative solidarity to justice. And although Mason considers mutual concern among the members of a single—presumably given—community, this is certainly a feature that can be extended more widely. The problem, however, is whether or not we can speak of mutual concern among strangers, and particularly when others may not even be aware of the people standing in solidarity with them.

Beyond mutual concern, several authors have identified mutual aid as a feature of descriptive solidarity among members of a given community or political state, and duties of mutual aid as the normative counterpart. Of course, as we have seen, solidarity owes much to Durkheim's account of its modern form, in which there is not simply common feeling but a cooperative relation between individuals established through the division of labor. In this way, solidarity diverges from the earlier emphasis on *fraternity*. Solidarity in principle makes room for the diversity of individuals who are concerned for each other and either do aid each other or recognize obligations to do so when necessary. It is this latter use that I find especially interesting for theorizing transnational solidarity.¹⁷

As requiring such positive duties of aid, solidarity may be thought to go beyond justice, though it is its partner. Thus, Habermas treats solidarity as the other side of justice.¹⁸ Some theorists, for example, Andreas Wildt, in his helpful historical account of the term, hold that solidarity requires that "[t]he agent does not believe that the recipient has a legal or moral right to his help,"¹⁹ and that it is thus supererogatory. In this sense, solidaristic action cannot be demanded, but only appealed for. Nonetheless, a reading that separates solidarity from justice would seem to make it difficult to see feelings of human solidarity as a ground for the universal respect for human rights, so important as a unifying framework for contemporary globalization. Further, such a division would diminish the role of solidarity in situations of perceived exploitation, where it is called on to help rectify injustice. These interconnections between solidarity, rights, and justice will

be considered further at various points in what follows. We may note here, however, that in some uses, solidarity may apply more broadly, even to cases where people are impacted by natural disasters, in addition to these socially caused situations.

If mutual aid is in fact an important aspect of the concept of solidarity, then this implies that it is connected to the concept of reciprocity. In this sense, the people involved in solidaristic relations are not only reciprocally concerned about each other, but are also mutually disposed to aid each other when required. Even if one of them is better off than the other, there is an expectation of a reciprocal readiness to aid the first if the need were to develop. However, the category of mutual aid is presumably larger than that of solidarity, since the former includes various sorts of aid offered as “tit for tat,” by way of exchanges or instrumental relations between people. Solidarity specifies the more general category of mutual aid to cases where there is some degree of fellow feeling and a positive moral obligation to act, presumably along with an altruistic motivation to provide such aid. There is normally the desire to help the recipient and, furthermore, a desire to help in rectifying a perceived injustice that the recipient suffers. If this is so, then while solidarity goes beyond respect for rights, it can be concerned with action to help to realize rights, including the range of human rights, both positive and negative. However, it is not yet clear that reciprocity can be operative in most cases of solidarity with distant others, since these others may not be aware of one’s actions in solidarity with them. So this poses yet another difficulty for the transnational application to be addressed in the next part.

Before proceeding to that application, some further insight into the construction of an adequate theory of solidarity can be gleaned from the work of Tommie Shelby on black solidarity. Abstracting from his complex and nuanced account, I wish to emphasize the connection that he insists on between solidarity and resistance to oppression, as well as his disjoining of a solidarity group from the idea of collective identity. Rejecting the view that such a group is constituted by blackness as an identity or as a culturally self-determining community or group, Shelby instead places the emphasis on shared oppression and action to eliminate it as the key factors in the constitution of such a group.²⁰

A final additional contribution to our understanding of solidarity can be found in the work of Klaus Peter Rippe. This contribution can be found in his interesting articulation of what he calls “project-related solidarity.” Although he regards this phenomenon as relatively trivial from a moral point of view, I think it is of some importance, and partly captures what is involved in transnational solidarity. Rippe cites Bayertz in understanding solidarity “as a term used to describe acts carried out in order to support others, or at the very least to describe a disposition to help and assist.”²¹ In its positive sense for Rippe, it is characterized not by interpersonal relationships among people who know each other, but by such phenomena as solidarity movements or appeals to solidarity. He gives as examples “the solidarity with the leftists in Chile, with the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, with transport workers on strike in Paris, with children afflicted by cancer . . . , with Salman Rushdie, or

with the hunger strikers in Bischoferode in Thuringia.”²² In these cases, he says, solidarity is a matter of special problems, where “individuals, groups or nations requiring special assistance arouse real acts of solidarity.”²³ He asserts—unhelpfully—that the assisted and those giving assistance are not fundamentally equal, but argues correctly that “one person makes the concerns of another person or group, which faces a special plight, her own.”²⁴ He limits this concern to a very temporary effort to assist with a particular problem or to find a remedy for the plight, narrowly construed. He therefore sees solidarity as “target-oriented.” Unlike charity, solidarity for Rippe must fit in with one’s own concerns and meet one’s own interests or goals. Since the addressee of solidarity in this sense does not even have to know about it, it can be directed to fictitious beings or animals (he gives the example of solidarity with whales).

Transnational Solidarity²⁵

We can first of all put aside the idea that a norm of transnational solidarity would require that one feel and act supportively toward all individual human beings worldwide, or even toward all those who need help in fulfilling their human rights. A norm that required people to feel, express, or stand in solidarity with every other human being would be impossible to apply, if not also utterly vague. This would be especially the case if the norm were understood to include positive duties or responsibilities, rather than simply negative duties to refrain from interfering with people or respecting their rights. Such an overbroad interpretation has struck some theorists as revealing an inevitable limitation of the concept in transnational applications. Yet, the objection lodged by Richard Rorty to such a notion of general human solidarity goes beyond such considerations of its impracticability. Rather, his concern is whether the objects of such a disposition make sense at all, at least philosophically. Oversimplifying, we could say that Rorty denies the possibilities of universal human solidarity because he thinks there are no humans.²⁶

In contrast, I would suggest that it is useful to retain a concept of general human solidarity as a limit notion, or what might be called a horizon of possibility, where it refers to a disposition that each can have to act in solidarity with some others. Additionally, it could plausibly designate a willingness to acknowledge need in everyone else and to act in general ways to support their human rights, especially by working toward the construction of transnational institutions that can allow for their fulfillment worldwide, or by participating in social movements that take such egalitarian rights fulfillment as a goal.

Yet, in the account I am proposing here, the norm of solidarity is in the first instance understood as one that holds among particulars. But it necessarily demarcates a distinctive subset of the relations among these particulars. Thus, we can wonder about some recent uses of the term in politics. For example, in the summer of 2005, following the terrorist attacks on the London underground trains and the bus, President Bush expressed solidarity on behalf of the American people with

the people of Great Britain. And from a different perspective, progressives in the United States have expressed their solidarity with the Iraqi people. Clearly, the first is no more than an expression of sympathy with the Brits, particularly since it involved few or no actual measures of support for them. The second, too, seems mostly expressive in a political and emotional sense, though of course the options for solidaristic actions on behalf of the Iraqi people remain unfortunately quite limited.

So what can we say about the particulars that are understood as the object of acts of transnational solidarity or of solidaristic dispositions? In the first place, there is no good reason to limit our conception of these particulars to individuals, as most theoretical accounts have proposed. Solidarity can extend also to relations among groups or associations, where these are increasingly cross-border or transnational. The entities standing in this sort of solidarity with each other are thus conceived of as relatively autonomous individuals or associations, who link up through networks of interrelations with other individuals or associations. We can say further that when people or associations stand in solidarity with others at a distance, they identify with these others in their efforts to overcome oppression or to eliminate suffering, and they take action to aid these others or stand ready to do so if called upon. Clearly such identification with the others does not commit us to an account of solidarity as a matter of identity. We are here focusing on identification with the lived situation of others and with an appreciation of the injustices to which they may be subject.

The shared values that characterize these solidarity relationships consist then in a shared commitment to justice, or perhaps also, in more consequentialist terms, to the elimination of suffering. Note that this formulation posits a shared commitment and not necessarily a shared conception of justice. The latter seems too demanding in requiring a high standard of theoretical agreement at the level of the meanings of terms. Nonetheless, some reasonably egalitarian or nondominating significances of justice would seem to be necessary in order to rule out solidarity in support of inhumane, dominating, or pernicious projects. Where some theorists, particularly those who emphasize the descriptive use of solidarity, would accept a wholly uncritical interpretation of all manifestations of it, this explicitly normative account seeks to relate it to norms of equal freedom and human rights, and thus delimits its meaning in certain ways. Nonetheless, as will be clear, the account here also acknowledges a broad range of potentially solidaristic stances and actions, in order to avoid imposing an overly demanding normative requirement.

The solidarity conceptualized here centrally involves an *affective* element, combined with an effort to understand the specifics of others' concrete situation, and to imaginatively construct for oneself their feelings and needs. If possible, listening to people's own accounts of these is important. Solidarity in this reading centrally makes reference to what has been called the social standpoint and social context of the others, all of which may in fact not be similar to one's own. Thus, solidarity in this sense is a disposition to act toward others who are recognized as

different from oneself, by way of being differently situated. It is evident from this how transnational solidarity is not properly subject to Rorty's restriction to recognizing others who are "one of us."²⁷

However, solidarity cannot be limited to either cognitive understanding or empathy, but moves beyond this to a readiness to *take action* in support of the others.²⁸ And crucial here is a requirement to allow the others to determine the forms of aid or support most beneficial to them. This requirement, which I have called *deference*, is thus a way to avoid the imposition on the others of the customary expectations and practices of those offering aid. It recognizes that it is the people in the oppressive or needy situation who are usually best able to say what support they wish and expect to benefit from.

It is evident, then, that in contrast to previous interpretations, solidarity not only presupposes some degree of empathy but also goes beyond it in various ways. For while it is possible to empathize with people with whom one is acquainted only at a distance, such empathizing is certainly easier to accomplish in face-to-face contexts, as a felt understanding with another. Solidarity, especially in its transnational variants, crucially adds to empathy an emphasis on understanding the social perspective of others, and on constructing ties in action among multiple individuals or associations. Accordingly, solidarity may exist among civil society associations, as well as among individuals operating within them and the people the organizations serve; yet it applies as well to social movements, where these are understood as involving (loosely) shared goals and overlapping networks of people and groups.

As for the difficult category of reciprocity here, as noted above we can say that solidarity entails a certain reciprocal expectation of aid from the others were this to turn out to be necessary, although this expectation is most often only implicit, especially where the solidarity relation is between a better-off person or group and less well-off ones. Solidarity thus differs from charity, in part because of its connection to eliminating an oppressive situation and its appeal to a shared struggle, in which the aim or project predominates. On the international scene, it can also be said to largely differ from humanitarian aid, though many of those who give such aid feel solidarity with those they serve. Humanitarian aid, at least as presently understood, entails no requirement or even expectation of reciprocity.

What, then, are the domains of the concrete manifestation of solidaristic relations in transnational contexts and the sources for their emergence? Such relationships can in the first place be motivated by *affective ties of care or concern*, perhaps enabled through media coverage of victimized or needy people situated elsewhere. Many of these cases give rise to charity or humanitarian aid, as is often appropriate, for example, in the Tsunami of 2004 or the Katrina hurricane in the fall of 2005. Nonetheless, associations of those who are suffering or oppressed, together with those who recognize the plight of these others, can also emerge in such contexts, as they did in the aftermath of Katrina. Another example of this on the international stage is the growing social movement regarding trafficking in women and girls.

Solidaristic interrelations can also occur through *common or cooperative projects*, for example, economic ones, as in the recovered factories movement in Argentina, which involves reciprocal forms of solidarity and a substantial degree of mutual aid among the workers in various factories and also with some workers' groups elsewhere. The concept of horizontality, advanced in connection with the democratic relations of grassroots associations and individuals, blends well with this notion of solidarity. Theorists attempting to articulate the rather new forms of interrelations involved in the global justice movement and the World Social Forum have also advanced conceptions along these lines, and I have discussed a related conception of *intersociative democracy* in my book *Globalizing Democracy and Human Rights*.²⁹

Transnational common projects can also be found among professional associations of people or groups working to achieve particular ends, for example, among scientists working on climate change or nuclear proliferation. These manifest a solidaristic readiness to provide mutual aid, and may in fact involve a struggle for justice, at least on a certain interpretation. But the condition of being oppressed or suffering is not apparently met except in a broad and prospective human sense of the term.

In addition to common projects, the basis for solidarity can be more purely *discursive*. An example might be found in the relations among feminist groups in North America and Africa to counter female genital cutting. Although this does not exemplify the reciprocity characteristic of more traditional forms of social solidarity, it can become more reciprocal to the degree that interlocutors are ready to learn from the others, for example, in regard to new modes of conflict resolution that have been effective in African cultures and can perhaps be applied elsewhere.

It is clear that solidarity as conceptualized here is not only a moral disposition but also requires social critique and attention to institutional structures, as well as to the opportunities that changes in such structures might afford for improving the lot of others. If people are to be helpful to others and act to support them, it is useful for those involved in the solidarity relationships to have some idea of the causes of the oppression or suffering. But the social critique involved here need not be understood as a highly theoretical one, which would again be overly demanding. Yet, it is clear that in its emphasis on social critique, this conception goes beyond identity theories of groups. However, the subjective and affective identification with the situation of the others emphasized in those theories and the establishing of commonalities across differences remains important in this analysis as well.

In these various concrete cases, we can speak of *overlapping solidarities* or of a new *network notion of solidarity*. This is admittedly a weaker notion than the traditional accounts of intragroup social solidarity, for example, within a nation. As we have seen, although these new solidarities are implicitly reciprocal, this feature is not a salient aspect of its meaning when it pertains to better situated groups helping those worse off. In this context, we can suggest that perhaps

solidarity relations function socially in some ways as gifts do, that is, without the requirement of a return in kind, and with only a weak expectation of reciprocity.

There may be a suggestive analogy here to certain features of Marcel Mauss's treatment of the gift, although also important differences. On Mauss's view, exchanges of gifts through a society set the basis for the development of reciprocal practices and social trust, and likewise perhaps so do contemporary forms of solidarity. Although not extended in expectation of mutual aid, the interconnections and hence the further disposition to reciprocity are strengthened through these overlapping solidarities. Of course, there are also sharp differences from an account like Mauss's, primarily in virtue of the linkage of solidarity as conceptualized here to the achievement of justice, in place of the exchange of gifts functioning to perpetuate traditional statuses within a society. Further, although Mauss suggested that gift giving can establish trust throughout a society and this feature is shared in cross-border contexts by transnational solidarity, gifts have the sense of being gratuitous or at least supererogatory whereas the connection of solidarity relations to overcoming oppression makes them seem more fully necessary.

Although I have suggested that most current forms of solidarity remain particularistic in being connections with specific other individuals or groups, they can be normatively understood in a new way that takes them beyond *mere* particularity or partiality. I propose that the idea of *openness* ought to characterize these relations; and this importantly transforms particularity, without moving it completely to a universality of principles. Whereas the related concepts of care or empathy have been thought to be ineluctably limited to specific others, particularly to the degree that they apply to relations between individuals, solidarity as understood here entails a readiness to establish broader interrelations with a range of others who share in a situation of being oppressed or exploited or who, more generally, are suffering through no fault of their own. This is shown in the emergence of solidarity movements where associations or groups attempt to interact in mutually supportive ways to achieve greater degrees of justice or related goals. In this way, we can see a role for the norm of inclusiveness, heretofore primarily theorized as pertaining to a political community or to rights of participation in political discourses or deliberations. Although the transnational solidarity relations theorized here remain particularistic in scope, they can be normatively open and inclusive in regard to other individuals and associations within a justice project or movement. Such transnational solidarity relations thus differ from the older highly exclusionary forms that characterized identity-based solidarity groups.

Since solidarities as described here are seen as constructed through the interactions and understandings of groups or individuals over time, the sort of universality that is possible here is what I have previously called a *concrete* one, in contrast to the abstract universality of traditional moral principles.³⁰ Solidarities are established in practice among those who are actually oppressed or suffering or by those who support these others without having a current need for reciprocal aid.

It therefore is universalistic in certain additional senses—for one thing, as noted, the disposition to solidarity can be general, though the particular others to whom it is actually extended are a limited subset of humanity. In addition, to the extent that everyone can find themselves at some time or other in a situation of oppression or suffering, the need for support from others and expressions or actions of solidarity from them is a standing possibility for every individual and association (though in some cases a rather abstract one). Finally, as I suggested earlier, there is some utility to retaining the notion of general human solidarity, at least as a limit notion. The feelings that this evokes can undergird people's commitment to working to fulfill the human rights of others, and doing so in a way that is relatively equal for all people. I will return to the connection of transnational solidarity to a cosmopolitan conception of human rights in the final section.

A notion of solidarity of the sort theorized here, then, sees it as centrally requiring openness and receptivity to the situation of other individuals and groups. In this way, it is an ethical disposition that importantly supplements a theory giving a central role to democracy and human rights. In this more political context, solidarity suggests the importance of supporting others in their own efforts at democratization. It is obvious, too, that this concept stands in opposition to current efforts to impose democracy abroad, or even, in labor contexts, to projects of organizing workers in just the precise ways that have proven to work elsewhere. In the latter case, it is rather a matter of sharing resources and methods and engaging in joint projects or activities. In respecting the modalities of various associations and communities, this norm of solidarity can be regarded as one of *democratic solidarity*.

Hard Questions for Global Ethics

There remain some difficult philosophical issues for such a conceptualization in global ethics to address, and I shall touch on three of them in this final part. The first two questions are practical, one concerning the motivation for solidarity itself and the other the often idiosyncratic character of the choice of its objects. The third question concerns the difficult theoretical issue, already broached earlier, of clarifying the relation of this extensive but still particularistic conception of solidarity to the more fully universalistic norm of human rights, a question that also engages the idea of democratic solidarity introduced above. I will only be able here to point to some directions for the further consideration of these hard questions.

The first of these problems begins from the observation that although solidarity helps to provide a motivation for taking the human rights of others seriously and for respecting their rights, it poses a motivational question of its own. Doesn't it require altruistic behavior? And how can this be expected of people? In fact, what is the motivation for engaging in solidarity behavior itself? Is this yet another moralistic expectation of unreasonable altruism, whether of individuals or pro-

jected onto the level of the group? And although rational choice theorists have shown the utility of solidarity for group integration and collective action within social groups,³¹ the conception of network solidarities in transnational contexts does not seem to function in that way, so is it reasonable to expect people to establish solidaristic relations of this sort? Isn't it in any case too demanding a notion from the moral point of view?

Without answering these difficult questions directly here, we can make a few points that frame their further consideration. First of all, we have to acknowledge that solidarity does call for a certain sort of altruism, but one that is evoked morally in two different, but related, ways. These hark back to the twofold approach proposed in the analysis in this article, in terms of human rights on the one hand and empathy on the other. In terms of human rights, we can recognize that their fulfillment is ultimately a claim of each of us on all others. This fulfillment is best organized through a particular set of economic and political institutions short of universal ones. Yet, when these institutions fail to provide for fulfillment of basic human rights, solidarity with others within the interdependent contexts of modern life requires that we step in and attempt to help the affected others gain the conditions they need for rights fulfillment. In addition, to the degree that we are participants in economic and political systems that may have contributed to rendering human rights fulfillment difficult for these people, or even blocked it, we ought to help to provide these conditions in the ways that we presently can.

Considered from the side of empathy, the desire to help is a matter of feeling for the other along with a shared understanding of the importance for all of us of meeting basic needs and alleviating suffering. Where this goes beyond requirements of aid or charity is partly in solidarity's counsel to work to overcome whatever systematic factors are contributing to the problem. In this way, the ethical requirement of empathy is blended with a requirement for social critique in order to make action effective. In addition, as I have noted, solidarity puts the affected other in the lead position for dealing with the situation and determining relevant forms of aid. I believe that the two factors cited here—the recognition of the equal claims to human rights fulfillment of others, and the role of empathy in social contexts—go at least part of the way to accounting for the motivation we have to stand in solidarity with others, keeping in mind that this norm does not require that a person act in solidarity with all individual others.

The second problem, which I can only mention here, is how to avoid the episodic and haphazard aspects of contemporary transnational solidarity. That is, at least where such solidarity stems from empathy for and caring about those in need, it is highly dependent on the selective attention of the media. There is not only an incompleteness to this process, but a serious unfairness as well, due to the chance element concerning which particular cases are singled out for such attention. We can say that if the disposition to solidarity were to become widespread, even this problem could be ameliorated to a degree, in that there would be greater readiness to notice and attend to the people needing assistance wherever they existed. Needless to say, too, greater openness of the media to uses by ordinary

people would help in promulgating requests for assistance and for sharing in these struggles. But these developments await substantial social changes, in addition to ethical and educational ones.

The third problem is the more fully theoretical one concerning the connection of the particularity of solidarity relationships to the universalist norms of human rights and global justice. Here, I want simply to add some further suggestions to those introduced in the previous section.

We can observe that in light of the preeminence of the universal norms, there may well be a temptation to regard dispositions toward solidarity as simply explaining the *feasibility* of the principles or theories of cosmopolitan justice or human rights, which are often regarded as arrived at independently through reasoning or discursive processes. On such an account, solidarity would be useful primarily in explaining why people might be inclined to follow these principles.³² However, while the contribution made by solidaristic dispositions to the feasibility of these norms is certainly an important function, I would suggest that this contribution does not encompass the full significance of solidarity relations in regard to justice and human rights. For these principles do not emerge from a pure rationality; rather, as discussed earlier, the proliferation of solidarity relations that establish commonalities across differences, along with the linkages that develop among individuals and groups within solidarity movements, help to *construct* more universalistic conceptions of our obligations to each other. To recognize this surely does not imply that there is no place for an idea of universal human rights, which rightly serves as a constraint on certain social and political practices that may violate it. Moreover, on my view, human rights also express universalistic claims that we can make on each other for the positive fulfillment of the basic conditions of human activity. In this conception, although human rights may well be most effectively realized within delimited political societies, they are in principle claims that each can make on all others, in view of our fundamental interdependence as social beings. In this context, the social empathy involved in solidarity relations also helps to explain why we come to take the rights of others seriously and beyond this, how these relations can contribute to making these rights more extensively realized.³³

Framed in terms of the norm of justice too, we have seen how the transnational solidarity relations that I have prioritized in this article are aimed at supporting people in overcoming oppression and in that sense involve a commitment to establishing justice. In this way, the features of empathy and imaginative reconstruction of the situation of others that characterize solidarity relations help to explain people's motivation to take norms of justice seriously, as well as why justice may come to be established in more cosmopolitan ways in practice as people engage more fully with others across borders and over time. Needless to say, a process of rational reflection on these universalizing phenomena is also essential in order that conceptions of human rights and justice can be adequately articulated as norms that can guide social and political practice. But such rational reflection does not operate in a theoretical vacuum nor is it wholly separated from

our affective attachments; rather, reasoning and affect can work symbiotically in the case of solidarity relations. In these ways, we can say that solidarity mediates between the more fully particular relations evident on an interpersonal level and the abstract universal principles incorporated in norms of human rights and justice. And solidarity does so, I have suggested, by contributing to more supportive and open, indeed democratic, relationships between people and groups in increasingly transnational contexts.

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Notes

- ¹Carol C. Gould, *Globalizing Democracy and Human Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
- ²Fiona Robinson, *Globalizing Care: Ethics, Feminist Theory and International Relations* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999); Joan Tronto, *Caring About Care: Public Values and Caring Practices* (New York: New York University Press, forthcoming); Virginia Held, "Care and Justice in the Global Context," *Ratio Juris* 17, no. 2 (2004): 141–55.
- ³See Gould, *Globalizing Democracy and Human Rights*, chap. 12.
- ⁴Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
- ⁵Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, trans. George Simpson (New York: Free Press, 1964), esp. 63–64 and 127–29. See also the discussion in David Heyd, "Justice and Solidarity: The Contractarian Case against Global Justice," in this issue, 112–30.
- ⁶Kurt Bayertz, "Four Uses of 'Solidarity'," in *Solidarity*, ed. Kurt Bayertz (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999), 3–28.
- ⁷On civic friendship, see also Sibyl Schwarzenbach, "Civic Friendship," *Ethics* 107 (1998): 97–128.
- ⁸Bayertz, "Four Uses of 'Solidarity,'" 17.
- ⁹Jodi Dean, *Solidarity of Strangers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), chap. 1.
- ¹⁰Henry J. Frundt, "Movement Theory and International Labor Solidarity," *Labor Studies Journal* 1, no. 2 (2005): 19–40.
- ¹¹*Ibid.*
- ¹²Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 49.
- ¹³Craig Calhoun, "Imagining Solidarity: Cosmopolitanism, Constitutional Patriotism, and the Public Sphere," *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (2002): 161–62.
- ¹⁴Sandra Lee Bartky, *Sympathy and Solidarity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), chap. 4.
- ¹⁵Andrew Mason, *Community, Solidarity and Belonging* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 27.
- ¹⁶*Ibid.*
- ¹⁷It is perhaps misleading to say that descriptive solidarity even within a given community involves mutual aid. It would be more precise to say that it is characterized by a disposition to provide mutual aid, since some members of a solidaristic community may not need this aid. Yet, perhaps the idea is that cooperative relations within a community necessarily entail mutual aid. But this would be a rather strange use of the idea of mutual aid to signify any sort of cooperation.

Normatively, the case seems clearer—it involves duties or obligations (without settling which of these terms is more apt at this point) to aid others in need.

¹⁸Jürgen Habermas, “Justice and Solidarity: On the Discussion Concerning Stage 6,” in *The Moral Domain: Essays in the Ongoing Discussion between Philosophy and the Social Sciences*, ed. Thomas E. Wren, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 224–51.

¹⁹Andreas Wildt, “Solidarity: Its History and Contemporary Definition,” in *Solidarity*, ed. Kurt Bayertz (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999), 217.

²⁰Tommie Shelby, “Foundations of Black Solidarity: Collective Identity or Common Oppression?” *Ethics* 112 (January 2002): 231–66.

²¹Klaus Peter Rippe, “Diminishing Solidarity,” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 1, no. 3 (1998): 355–73, citing Kurt Bayertz, “Staat und Solidarität,” in *Politik und Ethik*, ed. Kurt Bayertz (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1996), 308.

²²Rippe, “Diminishing Solidarity,” 357.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵This section develops a conception of solidarity that I initially presented in earlier work, including *Globalizing Democracy and Human Rights*, especially chaps 2, 9, and 12; “Self-Determination Beyond Sovereignty: Relating Transnational Democracy to Local Autonomy,” Special Issue on Democracy and Globalization, ed. Carol C. Gould and Alistair Macleod, *Journal of Social Philosophy* 37, no. 1 (2006): esp. 57–59; and “Recognition, Care, and Solidarity,” *Socialité et reconnaissance. Grammaires de l’humain*, eds. Georg W. Bertram, Robin Celikates, Christophe Laudou, and David Lauer (Paris: Editions L’Harmattan, 2006), 243–56.

²⁶Admittedly, this is something of a caricature of his view. For a statement of it, see Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, esp. 191–92.

²⁷Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 189–98.

²⁸See also the discussion in Steiner Stjerno, *Solidarity in Europe: The History of an Idea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), esp. 326.

²⁹Gould, *Globalizing Democracy and Human Rights*.

³⁰Ibid., esp. chap. 2. See also the discussion of the concept of concrete universality in Carol C. Gould, “The Woman Question,” in *Women and Philosophy*, eds. C. Gould and M. Wartofsky (New York: Putnam, 1976), 5–44.

³¹For a classic analysis, see Michael Hechter, *Principles of Group Solidarity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

³²This suggestion is made in an excellent critical discussion of my book *Globalizing Democracy and Human Rights* by Pablo Gilabert, “Global Justice, Democracy, and Solidarity,” *Res Publica* 12, no. 1 (2006): 435–43.

³³See the discussion on this point in Gilabert, “Global Justice, Democracy, and Solidarity.”

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