SOLIDARITY

As a Transformative Practice

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Solidarity as a Transformative Practice

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Abstract

In this thesis, I investigate the meaning, importance, and potential of political solidarity. By studying existing theories and reflecting on real-world cases, I present a normative account of solidarity suited to confront the globalized, overlapping injustices we face in our world today. I argue in Chapter 1 that we should conceptualize solidarity as a political bond, realized through action, that unites members of social groups on the basis of a shared understanding of reality and a shared commitment to justice; and as a socially, interpersonally, and personally transformative practice. In Chapter 2, I consider a question familiar from feminist debates: whether and how a cohesive political unity can make sense of the divergent experiences, interests, and needs of the social groups it brings together. I argue that acknowledging and mitigating the relations of asymmetric power that exist between solidary agents is a precondition for unity. I then consider the numerous challenges solidary individuals face when attempting to relate to each other prefiguratively, as equals, within entrenched structures of domination in Chapter 3. I propose a series of diachronic norms to guide solidary agents in navigating power and knowledge asymmetries. In Chapter 4, I turn to the process of personal transformation undergone by solidary agents. I examine what sort of knowledge individuals gain through solidarity, how new knowledge translates into changed motivations, and the nature of these transformed motivations. I conclude by suggesting that solidarity discloses possibilities for freedom.

Acknowledgments

Contained in this thesis are some of my reflections from participating in movements for justice over the past eight or so years. In a sense, the piece has been years in the making—though there is still much left to think through and say. This thesis represents just one small step towards working out the challenges and opportunities solidarity presents, one initial contribution to a larger conversation.

Of course, when it comes to justice and liberation, we all have so much left to think, say, and do. The task of building the world anew, of ushering in a "new day," stretches yet before us. And to paraphrase the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, every single one of us has a grain of sand to contribute to this unfolding effort. The hope I have for my own theoretical work, and that of others in the theoretical community, is that by carefully articulating the tools we have at our disposal for social transformation, including solidarity, we may help fulfill what Marx believed critical philosophy's promise to be: the self-clarification of the struggles and wishes of our age. I believe philosophy can help us gain a firmer grasp on what needs to be done and how.

Even as we each contribute our respective grains of sand, we must dispel impressions that we work alone.

My thanks, first and foremost, go to my teachers in struggle, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers most of all. As will be obvious throughout the thesis, no other group has been so influential on my thinking about justice, dignity, social transformation, worker leadership, and solidarity. Allies in the CIW's movement, especially my former co-co-coordinators in the Alliance for Fair Food, have also been (and continue to be) tremendous partners in thought and action. I continue to learn from and with workers and allies in the Fair Food Movement. I am grateful to compañerxs in related movements, too, including other worker groups like Vermont's Migrant Justice, human rights defenders in Venezuela, student organizations such as Oxford Worker Justice and Georgetown Solidarity Committee, campaigns for fossil fuel divestment especially Georgetown University Fossil Free, and the Occupy movement.

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Y finalmente, gracias a mi familia. Your unconditional love is my window into what our world, transformed, can be.

Introduction

"*Yo te decía que la solidaridad es la ternura de los pueblos*." The opening line of a well-known poem by the Nicaraguan writer Gioconda Belli translates roughly into English as, "I used to tell you that solidarity is the tenderness of peoples." The poem continues with Belli recalling her experience in the popular struggle to topple the U.S.-backed right-wing dictatorship of the Somoza family in Nicaragua in the late 1970s, both as a participant in the country and later in exile in Costa Rica. Belli's phrase refers specifically to the solidarity among Nicaraguans, and between Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans, upon which the revolution and its hard-won success in 1979 relied.[1] Belli's evocative idea that solidarity is tender, gentle, caring, and thoroughly *felt*, not just proclaimed, resonates with readers unfamiliar with this history. So does her idea that such strong and lasting political ties can exist even among people who do not know each other personally—indeed, among whole peoples. Why so? I think both ideas underscore one of the features that sets solidarity apart from many other forms of political action: solidarity is distinctively *prefigurative*. When we engage in solidarity, we are not just after a just end. In solidarity, we seek to realize justice in the means to that end; that is, in the very relationships we build, here and now, to create lasting social change. I read in Belli's poem that the tenderness we can display to each other in struggle is a tenderness that goes against both the violence of domination and the divisions off of which hierarchies of power thrive. By building

[1] See Belli 2014 for the full poem and Belli's reflections.

strong relationships based on care and trust, we try out new, more just, and freer ways of relating to each other. Put otherwise: through solidarity, we demonstrate to each other that the transformation we seek is already underway.

This thesis is a meditation on the meaning, importance, and potential of political solidarity. My overarching argument is that we should conceive of solidarity as a transformative practice. Transformative, because solidarity aims at the transformation of society and, prefiguratively, at the transformation of interpersonal relations. Practice, because solidarity is something individuals do reflectively, with a critical analysis of power relations and a commitment to justice informing their actions. Thinking about solidarity in this way leads us to understand that it is transformative in a third sense: at an individual level, it is epistemically and personally transformative for those who engage reflectively in solidary social movements.

My first task is to present a normative account of solidarity that is suited to confront the globalized, overlapping injustices we face in our world today. In Chapter 1, I study existing philosophical and sociological theories of solidarity and reflect on real-world cases to formulate such an account. I propose that solidarity is a political bond, realized through action, that unites members of social groups on the basis of both a commonly held critical understanding of reality and a shared commitment to justice. While I argue that solidarity is a bond that individuals and groups actively build to pursue justice, I demonstrate that these constructed ties rest upon extant material and political interconnections. Workers, for example, build solidarity because they understand themselves to be similarly exploited by one selfsame economic arrangement. It is these extant interconnections, fraught as they are by hierarchy and domination, that solidary individuals attempt to transform into ones based instead on equality and justice. I then explain how the collective project of societal transformation is realized, over time, through individual political practice.

This account of solidarity generates a series of interrelated questions about difference, power, and knowledge, and motivations that I explore, in turn, throughout the thesis.

In Chapter 2, I approach a conceptual puzzle: if solidarity creates a cohesive unity capable of acting together towards one goal, how does it make sense of the divergent experiences, interests, and needs of the different social groups it brings together—without assuming a false homogeneity, on the one hand, or creating the conditions for counterproductive divisions to take hold, on the other? The question is familiar from debates in feminist philosophy. I argue that solidarity creates unity by acknowledging and mitigating the relations of asymmetric power that exist between solidary agents. I outline various mechanisms for the mitigation of power asymmetry, including the establishment of exclusive group-based bonds among members of particular marginalized social groups within larger, diverse alliances. I contend that such "caucus-bonds"—for example, among Black women within feminist solidarity—help strengthen rather than fracture movements for justice.

In Chapter 3, I return to the idea of prefiguration. I question whether agents who are differentially positioned and asymmetrically empowered in structures of domination can build trusting, equalizing relationships of solidarity. I show that the complication of asymmetric knowledge compounds upon the problem of asymmetric power; those who call for solidarity, namely, those who suffer injustice are better positioned to know what justice requires. I evaluate the viability of two approaches to dealing with power and knowledge asymmetries. First, I consider the model of deference, that is, the prescription that allies should defer to the judgments and decisions of the oppressed. I argue that deference is justified on moral, practical, and epistemic grounds. Yet, I argue that deference is not enough; because deference conceives of solidarity as a state rather than a temporally extended process, its norms are insufficiently diachronic. I then situate deference within a broader framework of collective resistance, which I term mutuality. I argue that the model of

mutuality better captures the various components of a prefigurative politics. While deference should guide agents in incipient relations of solidarity, and in situations of stark asymmetries, I propose that, over time, from their respective social positions, solidary agents should gradually coalesce towards a mutually shared understanding of reality, a mutually shared vision and goal of justice, and mutual engagement with the actions that realize justice and produce a joint experience of struggle.

Having examined transformations at the level of society and interpersonal relations, in Chapter 4 I pivot to the personal transformations experienced by solidary agents. I investigate what sort of knowledge agents gain through solidarity; how new knowledge translates into changed motivations; and the nature of transformed motivations. One of the shifts that most interests me is how solidary agents come to see themselves as intimately wrapped up in the fight of others and motivated by others' struggle despite lacking immediate, first-person access to the subordination others experience. I evaluate the applicability of three theories to solidarity: the "transformative experience" approach advanced by L.A. Paul; the literature on "perspectives" and perspectival shifts theorized by Elisabeth Camp; and Bernard Williams's classic theory of internal reasons. Each offers a distinct mechanism, or set of mechanisms, by which knowledge, affect, evaluative outlooks, and practical motivations shift and interact. I draw mostly from the accounts of Camp and Williams to propose a hybrid perspective-motivational view as a working theory to analyze the personal transformations individuals undergo in solidarity.

I conclude by gesturing towards the ways in which solidarity, conceived as a politically, interpersonally, and personally transformative practice, discloses new possibilities for freedom in our multifariously unfree world.

1 Conceptualizing solidarity

When workers get together to form a labor union and collectively bargain for better working conditions, they describe their association in terms of solidarity. When students in the Global North launch campaigns to cut their university's contracts with brands that source their apparel from abusive Bangladeshi factories, they characterize their actions as solidary with garment workers. When cis-gendered women support transgendered women in their struggles against disproportionate violence, they, too, appeal to feminist solidarity to make their case. What exactly do these groups mean by "solidarity," and what are they imploring fellow workers, students, and women to do in order to realize this kind of connection? Is there a meaningful distinction between solidarity's different uses?

My goal in this chapter is to offer a conceptual analysis of solidarity that begins to answer these questions. Though the idea is ubiquitous in social movements for justice and liberation of nearly all stripes, philosophers and political theorists disagree on what, exactly, solidarity involves. In turn, or all at once, solidarity can refer to a kind of social bond,[2] a political coalition,[3] a sense of

[2] Durkheim 2013 (1893)

[3] Scholz 2008; Mohanty 2003; hooks 2015 (1984); Shelby 2005

responsibility or concern toward others,[4] a disposition to act on behalf of a group,[5] or a feeling of mutual empathy.[6] From there, solidarity's scope varies. It may be limited to the members of a given group (say, the working class); or unite variously subjugated groups of people (say, cis and trans women); or bridge the gap between people subject to oppression and their privileged allies (say, women and men). Some argue that *bona fide* solidarity exists only within the confines of geographic or national boundaries,[7] while others think it can be deployed transnationally.[8] Amid this plurality of views, I orient my own theoretical inquiry around a number of real-life cases held together by the pursuit of social justice. For, by and large, justice is what people seek when they appeal for solidarity. By centering the perspective of those who struggle to realize justice here and now, I, too, prioritize this practical end in my theoretical inquiry. Simply put: I aim to theorize relations of solidarity that seek to create better, more just, and freer ways of relating to each other. So when I ask what solidarity is, I am asking, more precisely, what do we need solidarity *to be* to effectively pursue justice?

I am after an "ameliorative" account of solidarity, in Sally Haslanger's sense. Rather than offer a definition that seeks merely to capture the term's ordinary language use, I first identify the legitimate purpose we have for the idea—that is, ending injustice—and then, keeping in mind solidarity's existing meanings, associations, and resonances, I develop an account that helps us pursue the end in view.[9] The ameliorative definition I develop here forms the basis of subsequent

[4] Straehle 2010; Ypi 2010; Hooker 2009

[5] Thalos 2012

[6] Gould 2007

[7] Krishnamurthy 2013

[8] Gould 2007; Straehle 2010; Ypi 2010

[9] Haslanger 2012, p. 366

chapters, in which I discuss the personally and politically transformative possibilities afforded by solidarity, so construed.

The theoretically ameliorative process I advance in this thesis is, in many ways, albeit partially, already underway in social movements. Take feminists who argue that their solidarity is, and should be, capable of embracing women who do not share the same experience of sexist oppression: working-class women, Black women, white women, indigenous women, trans women, and so forth. Or consider migrant rights organizations that call for solidarity with strangers from other countries—a transnational connection that knows no borders. Both groups claim their improved notion of solidarity is better suited than previous conceptions to further their respective aims of social and economic justice. In this chapter and the rest of the thesis I attempt to articulate and clarify the argumentative moves such actors make to reconstruct solidarities capable of tackling the distinctly overlapping and increasingly globalized injustices we face today. In this sense, the ameliorative account emerges dialectically from this unfolding process. My philosophical inquiry is thus dually practical: not only because I orient my theorizing around the perspective of extant political movements, but also because I ultimately aspire to present a theory of solidarity capable of dialoguing with and potentially guiding agents "on the ground" in such struggles.

I begin by drawing on influential sociological understandings that have seeped into popular discourse to sketch something like the ordinary language meaning of solidarity. Then I take the result, the simple core idea that solidarity is, empirically, a type of bond between members of a group, and compare it to the more normative and political uses evident in the opening examples of labor unions, students and workers, and women. I produce a rough definition of the term that I go on to refine, in ameliorative fashion, through further reflection. I argue that effective relations of political solidarity require from agents, first, a shared understanding of reality; and second, a

common commitment to ending injustice. Though, as I also show, solidarity amounts to more than a sharp analysis and good intentions; solidarity must be realized concretely and collectively, through action. I conclude by considering what it means to think of solidarity both as a normative political union and as a transformative practice.

1.1. From social to political solidarity

As Rahel Jaeggi and others observe, in social theory the idea of solidarity has a *descriptive* meaning: it describes an objectively given state of affairs within a group of people or a society.[10] Specifically, the state of affairs is connection or cohesion. Let's take the following descriptive definition as our starting point for analysis:

S1: solidarity is a social bond that holds a group of individuals together.

The notion of solidarity, generally speaking, tends toward unity among parts. This echoes the term's etymological roots in the Latin *solidus,* which in adjectival form means solid, dense, lasting, or unbroken and whole. The verbal form, *solido*, means to consolidate or render solid. We can think of solidarity as consolidating disparate actors into a cohesive social whole capable of effectively exercising collective action; for instance, workers into a labor union. Note that unity need not imply homogeneity among the those who unite.[11]

Sociological theories of solidarity seek to explain what, exactly, constitutes the "glue" that bonds individuals together in society. In the work that prefaces many contemporary discussions, *The*

[10] Jaeggi 2001, p. 288

[11] Resolving this point has been paramount in developing a viable feminist political solidarity that does not ignore salient differences among women, particularly regarding race and class. I examine the possibility of building political unity without assuming or encouraging homogeneity in Chapter 2.

Division of Labor in Society (1893), Emile Durkheim distinguishes between two kinds of social bond. He argues that, in premodern societies, common cultural beliefs and values bind together relatively self-sufficient individuals; this is "mechanical" solidarity.[12] Durkheim observes that this is not the glue binding modern societies, characterized with an increasingly specialized division of productive and socially reproductive labor. Despite individuals' plural cultural identifications in modern societies, Durkheim claims, they are bound together by the interdependency generated by the division of labor. This is "organic" solidarity. Durkheim initially presents the mechanical/organic distinction in evolutionary terms but eventually casts it in analytic terms; both kinds may co-exist to hold together a society.[13]

Two components of Durkheim's view persist in popular understandings of solidarity. First, social solidarity comes in degrees. Indeed, we commonly speak in terms of "building" and "strengthening" solidarities in social movements and, relatedly, how solidarity is subject to "weakening" by threats and fractures. European solidarity, for example, is often judged to be "in crisis" due to various nationalist and economic forces threatening to "pull apart" the European Union.[14] Second, Durkheim considers social solidarity to be a general relation in that nothing specific about the individuals engaged in solidarity is relevant to the existence of the social bond. Though solidarity is often expressed in dyadic relations between one specific individual and another, it does not refer, in the first instance, to any particular dyadic relationship. Consider one aspect of solidarity's contrast with friendship, a paradigmatically specific relation. I am friends with you as *you,*

[12] Durkheim's idea of mechanical solidarity among "self-sufficient individuals" obviously fails to account for crucial forms of interdependence, such as that within the household, that sustain "independent" units.

[13] Durkheim 2013 (1893), p. 101

[14] Solidarity is a core value established in foundational EU documents, notably the Single European Act (1986), the Maastricht Treaty (1992) and the Treaty of Lisbon (2006). These documents evoke both "mechanical" and "organic" ties—pan-European cohesion based upon shared values and economic, social, and political interdependence. For a discussion of European solidarity in crisis, see Grimmel and Giang 2017.

in all your glorious particularity. Yet I am in solidarity with you not really as *you* but as a fellow member of society. This resonates with contemporary uses; as an anti-racist, I am in solidarity with people of color as members of racialized social groups, not as individuals. The analytic distinction translates to the duties we think attend friendship versus solidarity. While I can consistently withhold my friendship from others—they aren't you!—we typically think that I cannot justifiably withhold my solidarity from particular people within my society.

Yet Durkheim's conception diverges in several ways from the opening cases of solidarity. For one, Durkheim's "organic" solidarity is passive and unintentional. He thinks the division of labor generates cohesion insofar as each participating individual depends on others, each fulfilling a different function, to advance her own aims.[15] Durkheimian ties occur "almost behind [agents'] backs."[16] Put otherwise: even though individuals act consciously within their social roles as workers, mothers, etc., they do not intend "prevent the breakdown of society" when they go to work every day.[17]

The kind of solidarity we witness in social movements does not exist as a fact of the matter—it gets "built" by those involved. Movement solidarity is intentional and active. By this I mean, first, that agents choose to be in such relations; and second, their choice is realized through action or at the very least a disposition to act when needed. Durkheim is right to observe extant structural links of interdependence, but these seem to be a necessary precondition of movement solidarity rather than constitutive of it. Movement solidarity additionally requires agents to forge cognitive and relational links. Take the economic interdependence between U.S. students *qua*

[15] Durkheim 2013 (1893), pp. 88-104

[16] Gould 2007, p.150

[17] Durkheim 2013 (1893), cited in Jaeggi 2001, p. 288

consumers and Bangladeshi garment workers. Economic ties between students and workers do exist, but they are often obscured for both parties—if not for the workers who ask themselves, "who wears this stuff?" then for consumers who ignore where and how their goods are made. Even once students and workers become conscious of their interdependence, they must commit to some shared end and work together towards its realization in order for us to properly consider them to be "in solidarity." The glue binding students and workers is not primarily material interdependence (though it is necessarily in the background), it is *action* to transform the character of their extant interconnection. Actions unify a group of individuals by virtue of the specific, shared aim towards which they are taken. The aim can be narrowly construed, as when workers and students campaign for an agreement that will raise workers' wages; or broadly so, as when they work towards ending exploitation in the garment supply chain. In our ameliorative account the end will be some articulation of justice. Momentarily bracketing the end of justice, we can incorporate action in an initial ameliorative definition:

> **S2**: solidarity is a social bond that holds a group of individuals together and is realized through action.

In sociological studies like Durkheim's, the object of analysis is "society" as bounded by the nation-state. Yet the terms of Durkheim's own theory push the analysis beyond the confines of the nation. Insofar as the division of labor creates the interdependencies constitutive of organic solidarity, then it follows from the globalized division of labor in his day and ours that solidarity, too, exists across national borders. This extension is a step towards ensuring our account embraces transnational solidarities appropriate to the material interdependencies created by globalized capitalism.

We must also push Durkheim's analysis from another direction by reconsidering our understanding of "interdependence." In our examples of movement solidarity, the prior interconnections solidary agents seek to transform are not just material or economic, but more broadly *political*. That is, solidary agents contend with the structures that configure power relations among human beings (and potentially, non-human beings).[18] Structures of domination like patriarchy, white supremacy, and capitalism distribute power asymmetrically to agents depending on their position within an entrenched hierarchy of value. Hence, as Jennifer Einspahr writes, structures of domination accord differentially positioned social groups "the ability to systematically interfere in the lives of other groups, whether or not such power is exercised by individuals so capable."[19] Such distributions generate political interdependencies between social groups. In patriarchy, for example, individuals categorized as feminine are marked for sexist oppression and systemic disempowerment while individuals categorized as masculine reap the material, cognitive, and psychological benefits of occupying a privileged position.[20] These structures intermittently co-exist, overlap, intertwine, and fuse together in a localized historical arrangement we can call a *matrix of domination*.[21] Structures of domination are the common context in which those who live in the same social order find themselves—it is the water in which we swim. And these systems are the target of our solidary efforts. The scope of our analysis should therefore shift onto general political terrain. In addition to expanding beyond the nation, we must reframe interdependency in terms of power to ensure our

[18] Unless noted otherwise, I use this broad sense of "political" throughout the thesis.

[19] Einspahr 2010, p. 4

[20] I use the idea of "patriarchy" expansively to include the norms and practices that accord privileged positions to heterosexuality and cisgendered identities, given that these overlap and intersect with the norms and practices that constitute the system of masculine domination. On how heterosexuality grounds gender difference, see MacKinnon 1990; on transmisogyny, see Serano 2007.

[21] I adapt this idea from Patricia Hill Collins 2009 (2000), pp. 245-6.

account can make sense of the overlapping and cross-cutting realities of injustice, and possibilities for political action, that connect us locally, nationally, regionally, and globally.

Naming power as our core theoretical and practical concern reveals another distinction between movement solidarities and social solidarities of the kind theorized by Durkheim. In movement solidarities, which I will now call *political solidarities*, individuals actively unite *qua* members of a specific social group rather than *qua* fellow members of society. This is because, as per Einspahr's definition, systemic distributions of power segment society into social groups; and it is among social groups that the dynamics of domination and subordination play out. In the case of workers who pursue their political ends by forming a union, for instance, individuals unite *as workers*, not as compatriots, neighbors, or human beings. Workers' position under capitalism is established in virtue of their relation to the means of production; on a classic Marxian analysis, workers apply their labor to means of production they do not own in order to generate value that is unjustly extracted by those who, by contrast, do own the means. Let's amend the ameliorative definition to incorporate the political shift:

> **S3**: solidarity is a political bond between members of social groups that is realized through action.

1.2. The structure of solidary normativity

Social solidarity, understood as a state of affairs, is usually considered a good thing, overall, for societies. Political solidarity's normativity is more complex. Because it is something people do, together, political solidarity is action-guiding on both personal and collective levels. In this section I

outline the general structure of solidarity's normativity; I fill out the structure's substance throughout the thesis.

Consider political solidarity's personal normativity. Solidarity is an active relation in which agents are consciously and willingly engaged. Solidarity requires action, which entails acting *for a reason*. The reasons for which agents act in solidarity—that is, the reasons that motivate them subjectively, or first-personally—must be reasons that are, objectively, of the right kind. Reasons of the right kind are agent-neutral: they are justified independently of the particular identity of the individuals or the groups involved. In other words, the cause solidary agents advance is independently worthy. Consider the relevant contrast with loyalty. As opposed to friendship, which straightforwardly supplies agent-relative reasons, loyalty and solidarity are often confused because both connect agents who need not know each other personally. However, loyal agents justify their actions by reference to the specific group to which they have pledged support. A soldier's loyalty is to the army she serves; if the war waged by the army ceases to be legitimate, the soldier remains loyal insofar as she continues to act in concert with others in the army (usually, to do as she is asked). The independent justifiability of the cause is irrelevant to loyalty. Conversely, solidarity is justified by reference to a political end, not a particular group. While switching groups necessarily constitutes disloyalty, it does not *necessarily* contravene solidarity. Sometimes, solidarity's end is better advanced by one group than another (though as I will show, solidary agents have good reasons to establish long-term relationships and refrain from group-switching).

Of course, not all agent-neutral reasons are valid for the kinds of political solidarity we should include in the ameliorative account. Solidary reasons should be political, and more precisely, justice-seeking. We need this parameter to exclude affinities that may feel first-personally like solidarity, but are, in my view, instances of mere political cohesion. White supremacists often appeal

to a greater good in justifying their actions—an agent-neutral "good" that is for its own sake and lies beyond the judgment of the particular group with which they associate. By yoking solidarity and justice together, as this thesis's ameliorative project does, we conceptually exclude such "negative" associations and reserve the term solidarity for political unities that are both subjectively *and* objectively justified.

Structures of domination are unjust. As long as such structures exist, agents owe it to each other to dismantle them and build new, more just, more equal, and freer systems in their wake. Though this idea applies to all implicated agents no matter where they stand on the hierarchy of domination, those who benefit from others' subordination—even just by being relatively more privileged—additionally seem to owe it to subordinated groups to eradicate domination. Solidarity represents a distinct approach to injustice, whereby justice is sought not only in the *ends* of individual and collective action but also the *means* i.e. the relations people build with each other. Solidarity rejects the re-entrenchment of extant asymmetric power structures amongst members of the solidary collective and seeks emancipation locally, within the very bonds agents build to remake the world around them. What does this mean? For one, solidarity must be appealed for by a certain group, and responded to by others. And only subordinated groups may originally extend the call, though anyone, subordinated or privileged, may amplify the appeal and respond. Consider the relevant contrast with charity: charity is initiated and directed by the relatively well-resourced, who pay little mind to how those they "help" prioritize their needs—not to mention the systemic origins of those needs. Solidary agents unite in respectful, mutual, egalitarian relations with those who disempowered by an existing hierarchy; they struggle for justice alongside those who face injustice, "shoulder to shoulder." We may summarize solidarity's personal normativity in terms of *norms of initiation* and *attendant norms*. The former, invoked by the existence of structures of domination, provide

individuals agent-neutral reasons to enter into relations of solidarity. Based on the goal of achieving justice in ends and means, the latter prescribe how agents should act within solidary relations.

Solidarity is also collectively normative. The *solidum* of solidarity is a coordinated whole that is, and acts, *for a reason*. Solidarity's collective and personal normativity align; the end of the collective is ultimately the same agent-neutral aim of justice that solidary individuals pursue. The collective end is often articulated as a vision of the way the world should be. The vision is, of course, political: it outlines a desired societal configuration of power and a blueprint for how agents should relate to each other. The vision may be negatively rendered, as when students work to end poverty wages for the garment workers who produce university apparel—or positively so, as when they work towards a just supply chain. The vision may narrowly specify what agents want, as when workers fight for $15 an hour—or it may paint a broad picture, as when feminists fight to abolish patriarchy as such.

Solidarity's normativity corresponds to a non-ideal notion of justice. By "non-ideal" I mean, first, that solidarity's understanding of justice departs from a rejection of concrete, actually experienced forms of oppression. Hence the oppositional, resistant character that political actors and theorists alike associate with solidarity. Chandra Talpade Mohanty makes explicit both the determinacy and oppositionality of feminist solidarity among "Third World" women: "it is the common context of struggles *against specific* exploitative structures and systems that determines our potential political alliances."[22] In both respects, solidarity's non-ideal approach contrasts with "ideal" arguments that theorize abstract or procedural conceptions of justice independently of determinate forms of injustice, and corresponding attempts to institute such visions of justice through policy.

[22] Mohanty 2003, p. 49 (emphasis mine)

For the non-ideal theorist, concrete injustices are analytically inseparable from any workable positive notion of justice, and they are always the starting points for reflection.[23]

By "non-ideal" I also mean that solidarity's understanding of justice is transitional; the immediate goals of solidary action are almost never (if ever) the fully just "end state" agents ultimately envision but rather transitional steps on the way to a relatively more just state of affairs.[24] Even if feminists understand themselves to be abolishing patriarchy in the long run, insofar as their solidarity is realized through quotidian action they focus day to day on uprooting piecemeal forms of sexist oppression. To adapt a metaphor from the recent manifesto, *Feminism for the 99%*, solidarity focuses on the journey rather than the destination; we write and organize "not to sketch an imagined utopia, but to mark out the road that must be travelled to reach a just society."[25] The transitional character of justice is partially explained by the idea that a just alternative to the status quo, in the manifesto's words, "emerge[s] in the course of the struggle to create it."[26] The alternative emerges precisely in opposition to injustice. Recall that solidarity requires agents not just to pursue justice as an end, but also implement it in their means to that end i.e. in their interpersonal and collective relations. Solidarity's understanding of justice is therefore not only determinate, oppositional, and transitional, but also prefigurative. To prefigure justice means to enact just ways of relating to each other within structures of domination—"to build the new society in the shell of the old."[27] Prefigurative enactments of justice are admittedly local, fluid, experimental, and fragmentary. For instance, even as feminists create non-hierarchical organizations to combat sexist oppression,

[23] Mills 1997, 2005 discuss this and related aspects of the ideal/non-ideal justice distinction.

[24] Valentini 2012. Valentini identifies two additional ways to construe the ideal/non-ideal justice distinction: first, whether theories premise full or partial compliance among agents; and second, whether the idea of justice is feasibly achievable under current conditions. These are less relevant for my purposes.

[25] Arruzza et al. 2019, p. 5

[26] Arruzza et al. 2019, p. 80

[27] A classic anarchist slogan.

because they do so within the matrix of domination, racial, gendered, cisheteronormative, and ableist microagressions, internalized biases, etc. persist. Prefigurative justice does not pretend agents can remain immune to surrounding oppressive forces. Instead, it confronts forces headfirst with the aim of instituting more just alternatives. This characterization underscores the urgency of working out solidarity's attendant norms; how exactly are we to combat domination and subordination prefiguratively, when power so thoroughly saturates our reality? I take up this task in Chapter 3.

I have specified that justice entails non-domination in addition to the listed non-ideal contours. Moreover, a fundamental premise of the equal moral worth of all persons presumably undergirds solidary agents' commitment to respect each other and to equalize power relations in society.[28] Altogether, these considerations comprise the relatively thin characterization of justice I deploy in the rest of the thesis. Given solidarity's exploratory and open-ended nature, and the diversity of visions political actors bring to bear on solidarity in practice, it would be artificial for a philosophical account to impose anything more strict or specific.

For now, consider what solidarity's normativity implies for participants. Solidary agents must share an understanding of political reality, that is, the current distribution of power in society. They should be able to situate themselves and others in the matrix of domination to grasp the ties that already bind them together. Their understanding must be critical, that is, they must agree upon the features of the arrangement that are unjust and should *not* be. Consider the case of worker-student solidarity. Both workers and students appeal to the fact that their lives are economically intertwined, whether they like it or not, through globalized production chains. It is from this concrete starting point, and their critical assessment of it, that both parties get together to envision and demand change—accountability for the brands that source apparel, human rights for the workers who

[28] Straehle 2010, p. 112

produce the garments, and so on. And because injustice is analytically linked to justice—the "should not" with the "should be"—solidary agents' critical assessment of reality comes accompanied by a positive goal. It matters little which comes first, phenomenologically. Just as the collective vision can be negatively or positively, narrowly or broadly construed, solidarity lends itself to a generative practical feedback loop in which agents move from recognizing and critiquing extant connections to projecting how we want to relate to each other, and back again.

1.3. The ameliorative foundations of political solidarity

Having sketched solidarity's normativity, let's return to the project of definition. I have argued that solidarity's foundations are principally cognitive. One basis is epistemic-evaluative: a *shared critical grasp of reality* among solidary agents. This "shared grasp" includes beliefs about social groups and how current institutional arrangements differentially empower, benefit, and harm these groups. It also involves a shared understanding of thick concepts like domination, subordination, and justice, which inform shared judgments about why certain groups merit one's solidarity. The second basis is purposive: a *shared goal of justice*, narrowly or broadly construed, and explicitly articulated, towards which the agents in solidarity aim. Solidarity's dual bases coincide: reality is grasped by agents through a normative, justice-seeking lens, and, in turn, non-ideal justice is understood in terms of concretely experienced and perceived forms of injustice. We now have a robust ameliorative account of solidarity in view:

> **S4:** Solidarity is a normative political bond between members of social groups that is based in a shared critical understanding of reality and a shared goal of justice; and is realized through action.

One could object that this conception of solidarity is too intellectual. Surely, a worker can be in solidarity with other workers without commanding a full Marxist analysis of how owners of the means of production appropriate worker-generated surplus value. And I can certainly condemn the sexist comments of my colleague without an articulated analysis of patriarchy. To require developed analyses of structures of domination from agents as a precondition for their solidarity is elitist, as it excludes those who may lack the resources to identify or study the source of certain phenomena. Yet appeals to solidarity are ubiquitous, especially in struggles against exclusion and hierarchy. Either broad swathes of the world's population are unable to properly be "in solidarity," or the ameliorative account is wrong.

The inclusionary spirit of this objection is spot on. However, the shared understanding of reality necessary for solidarity need not be articulated in academic language. Neither need it imply a full theory of systematic, interlocking oppressions—something theorists continue to debate. Solidary agents' understanding can be partial, or even initial. What matters for solidarity, and that which distinguishes it from actions motivated by sympathy, benevolence, or charity, is that solidary agents move past merely wanting to alleviate suffering or advance well-being. Again, actions that realize solidarity are explicitly *political*. Solidary agents act upon their diagnosis of a situation as oppressive, exploitative, or unjust—as the product of problematically asymmetrical power relations—rather than as simply, neutrally harmful and in need of alleviation. In order for me to be in solidarity with garment workers, I need to see their poverty as an injustice generated by the economic system—not as a sad reality towards which I can throw charitable donations, or worse, as a situation for which workers themselves are responsible.

I do not think requiring agents to grasp the injustice produced by the systems that connect them sets too high a bar for solidarity. To think otherwise borders on paternalism. People's

movements all over the world, including those led by people who have received little to no formal schooling, rely on mechanisms of popular education to establish a common analysis of what is wrong and who is responsible. A common analysis is essential to mobilizing people in solidarity with each other. Take, for example, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), a farmworker organization based in the U.S. state of Florida whose multilingual, multicultural base is constituted primarily by migrants from Guatemala, Mexico and Haiti. The CIW describes its organizing philosophy in a simple equation: *Consciousness* + *Commitment* = *Change*. The CIW believes that workers' consciousness of the roots of the poverty and workplace abuse they face is an indispensable precondition of effective political action. Through weekly discussions, popular theater, and community radio, the CIW continually overcomes linguistic and educational barriers to develop a cohesive community analysis and successfully mobilize members in labor rights campaigns. "Consciousness-raising groups" in the women's liberation movement functioned similarly to articulate the covert operations of sexist oppression in women's day-to-day lives. About such groups Miranda Fricker writes, "the process of sharing…half-formed understandings awakened hitherto dormant resources for social meaning that brought clarity, cognitive confidence, and increased communicative facility."[29] Fricker's discussion highlights that subordinated subjects usually do know of their condition, albeit fuzzily; what they lack is adequate interpretive resources to articulate their experiences to themselves and to others. In social movements, educational spaces often serve more to surface and hone inchoate understandings than to transmit brand-new views.[30] Along these lines, Patricia Hill Collins challenges the term "consciousness-raising" by arguing that Black feminist thought "affirms, rearticulates, and provides a vehicle for expressing in public a consciousness that

[29] Fricker 2007, p. 148

[30] Freire 2005 (1970)

quite often already exists…this rearticulated consciousness aims to empower African-American women and stimulate resistance."[31]

Most examples in this chapter illustrate solidarity around a singular pattern of subordination. Yet singular patterns fit into a broader, multichannel matrix of domination; I contend that bonds of solidarity are strongest when agents understand that and how systems of domination and subordination interact. Grasping interconnections between systems enables agents to identify the cause of a particular harm more easily and thus issue more suitable prescriptions for change. This is, of course, a central insight of intersectional feminism. Some of Black women's experiences can be explained single-handedly as the result of sexist oppression (e.g. bearing a disproportionate share of caring responsibilities) or racial oppression (e.g. being subject to racial profiling by police), but, as Kimberle Crenshaw argues, there are experiences that Black women experience not just simultaneously as Black and as women (e.g. being put at the bottom of the list for a workplace promotion) but also distinctly *as Black women* (e.g. being socially stereotyped not as passive and meek in their femininity but as aggressive and angry).[32] Crenshaw's examples demonstrate that failing to capture the multiplicity and interaction of systems of domination threatens to marginalize those most in need of solidarity, giving us further reason to aspire toward holistic analyses. Importantly, intersectional analyses enhance agents' ability to discern similarities and differences between forms of marginalization experienced by variously positioned individuals within a selfsame social group. As I argue in subsequent chapters, recognizing and responding to such differences is crucial for establishing connections of trust and cooperation towards common goals.

[31] Hill Collins 2009 (2000), p. 36

[32] Crenshaw 1989, p. 149 and *passim*

The exact shape of the matrix of domination is by no means settled. Pathways of interaction between structures have local variants. Moreover, our social order is a constantly evolving historic entity, and so the object of any comprehensive theoretical analysis of power is a moving target. The analysis undergirding solidarity should therefore always be an ongoing project subject to critique, reflection, and improvement. This should not motivate us to disregard the intellectual component of solidarity but to engage in it thoughtfully and humbly in the spirit of open-ended growth. Perhaps we should think about specific forms of solidarity as tending normatively towards a commitment to a broader solidarity with people to whom we are connected in these interwoven systems. Indeed, even when we consider a specific form like feminist solidarity, we think it need not be fully expressed to still qualify as proper solidarity. My feminist solidarity may start with an understanding of my colleague's comment as oppressive, not just interpersonally offensive, and action to eliminate such microaggressions in the workplace. My solidarity, initially engaged for a narrow, temporary project, may then build into a broader, longer-term feminist vision—to end sexist oppression, period. Analyses and goals develop; hence it is appropriate to say that solidarities are indeed *built* over time.

Now, the intellectualist objection may take another form. Solidarity may require a shared grasp of reality and shared goals, but solidarity is not just in the head; it also has a widely recognized affective dimension. What of the widespread idea that solidarity unites people through empathy, care, or feelings of identification and attachment? Let's now examine how solidarity is realized through action and begin to clarify the role of affect.

1.4. Realizing solidarity through action

People in movements often say that solidarity is a verb. This is linguistically the case in Spanish: *uno se solidariza con la lucha*—one "solidarizes oneself" with the struggle. To be in solidarity, it is not enough to proclaim a "woke" radical analysis, name violence as oppression, and announce one's support for an oppressed group. You have to actually get into the thick of things with others and partake in the project of justice. Solidarity is realized through concrete political action.

Solidarity's agents may be individual or collective, and collective solidary actions may be taken by formally or informally organized groups of people. Solidary actions include events as well as omissions and commitments.[33] Consider how the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) appeals to allies to engage all three modes of action to improve agricultural labor conditions. Events are specific, time- and space-bound acts that agents carry out; these include protests outside fast-food restaurants whose parent company sources produce from abusive farms. Agents may also be called to refrain from acting; for example, when agents boycott target fast-food companies. Finally, allies of the CIW make commitments—future-oriented pledges to attend recurring protests, boycott target companies, etc. In addition to action, agents realize solidarity by being disposed to act in the face of injustice. Agents' ongoing practice of solidarity with the CIW, for example, involves an attitude of action-readiness, that is, allies' attentiveness to evolving needs and continual willingness to show up. Solidarity is not a one-off. It is a bond that agents consistently renew, or consistently reproduce, action after action.

Now, when we act alongside others, we usually develop affective connections with them. Protesting side by side, canvassing a sidewalk together, learning of each other's struggles—all of this

[33] Kolers (2016, pp. 53-4) has a similar list of solidary types of action.

helps us not only understand, intellectually, that we are interconnected, but also feel, on a more visceral level, closer to one another. We should distinguish between two overlapping genres of feeling associated with solidarity. First, there are the positively valenced sentiments of care, concern, trust, loyalty, and even love that we may come to experience for those alongside whom we struggle. Second, perhaps in addition to care and so on, solidary agents may feel empathy towards those they support. Focusing primarily on ties between victims of injustice and supportive outsiders, Carol Gould explains that empathy enables us to "feel with" others—to "understand the specifics of others' concrete situation, and imaginatively construct for oneself their feelings and needs."[34] This is to say, when we empathize we feel a second-person variant of the political emotions—anger, upset, frustration, and so on—experienced by those suffering subordination first-personally. Tommie Shelby also cites empathy as a central component in the solidarity that internally connects members of a subordinated group to each other in struggles for justice.[35] Both positively valenced feelings and social empathy are, in the first instance, necessarily directed at particular, concrete agents or groups. The relevant difference between the two is that most of the positive sentiments I listed typically emerge from a direct personal connection, while social empathy may just as easily emerge at a distance through news, literature, and other media. Insofar as these feelings provide motivating reasons for action, such reasons are agent- or group-relative.

To an extent, the particularistic sentiments that often accompany solidarity are analytically, if not experientially, separable from the epistemic-evaluative and purposive foundations of political unity.[36] Recall the difference between solidarity and loyalty; objectively justified agent-neutral

[34] Gould 2007, p. 156; see also Bartky 2002

[35] Shelby 2005, p. 245

[36] Only to an extent, since solidary agents' understandings of reality are themselves "thick"—they are simultaneously descriptive and evaluatively and affectively laden. I examine this facet of affect in Chapter 4.

reasons, rather than agent- or group-relative reasons, chart the course for people engaged in solidarity. Agents' shared understanding of injustice and shared goal of realizing justice provide them with the appropriate agent-neutral, justice-oriented reasons for acting in solidarity, while associated ethical and political feelings provide only secondary and complementary agent- or group-relative reasons. This is not to deny affect's prominent and ubiquitous place in solidary practice.

Solidary links are necessarily directed against determinate as opposed to abstract situations of injustice. Likewise, solidarity is realized through determinate action. Therefore, although solidary actions are motivated by agent-neutral reasons, they are always mediated through concrete relations with specific others. To be in solidarity with the Black community's fight for racial justice, for example, it does not suffice that I understand how racism functions as a social system and that I commit to dismantling white supremacy. I must act concretely—and such concrete actions put me in a direct, dyadic relation with a specific organization, association, collectivity, or individual that in a given moment relevantly represents the Black community.[37] My anti-racist solidarity is thus mediated through my relation with a particular party; I am in solidarity with the Black community generally *via* the specific subgroups with which I affiliate and organize. Globalized communications help initiate and sustain direct relations across distance; the determinacy of solidary relations is no obstacle to building transnational bonds. Solidarity is built between particular people and groups who co-exist interdependently in cross-cutting webs of power. Particular relationships are therefore indispensable in establishing, maintaining, and enhancing relations of solidarity. Indeed, as in consciousness-raising groups, it is through relationships that we process our own (and others') experiences to gain insight into what injustice is, what justice entails, and thus which agent-neutral reasons we have to act in solidarity. Given the centrality of particular relationships to solidarity, quotidian solidary practice

[37] This raises the thorny problem of who, exactly, speaks for a subordinated group. I explore aspects of this question in Chapters 2 and 3.

understandably coincides with particularistic sentiments directed towards those with whom we struggle.

The feelings I identified do not merely coincide with solidarity. They strengthen and are strengthened by solidary struggle. For one, particularistic sentiments provide additional motivations to act. When we deliberate practically, we often decide on the basis of multiple distinct, sometimes overlapping reasons. Subjective agent-relative feelings often compound upon the agent-neutral, justice-oriented reasons agents have to act in solidarity. The effect is not merely additive; for particularistic sentiments tend to deepen over the course of iterated interactions, in turn reinforcing an agent's commitment to justice. Affective ties may also offer agents an initial entryway into relations of solidarity. As a cis woman, for instance, it may be my friendship with and care for a trans woman that puts me on the path to learning about the indignities suffered by trans people and committing to support her community. Empathy can also play an introductory role, as when witnessing the pain, anger, and frustration of victims of racialized police brutality leads me to ask questions that precipitate political intervention: why did this happen? And how can this be changed? The feelings that initially propel one into solidarity frequently persist and deepen as one develops a solidary practice.

We should note, finally, that acting repeatedly with others on the basis of shared beliefs, values, and goals almost inevitably produces a feeling of attachment with the solidary collective. "Fellow-feeling," or collective identification on the basis of similarity, is a third genre of sentiment associated with solidarity.[38] Unlike the other affect types, fellow-feeling just follows, and does not precede, solidary action; but in similar fashion, fellow-feeling provides additional motivation and may deepen individuals' commitment to the struggle. We must distinguish the fellow-feeling

[38] Shelby 2005; Hooker 2009; Rorty 1989

produced by collective action from any prior sense of belonging felt by those who share a social identity or a set of common experiences. As I explain the next chapter, prior group-belonging and its related feelings are, on their own, an unsound and deceptive basis for solidarity.

1.5. Practicing solidarity

Empathy, care, friendship, and loyalty are all different than solidarity, but they still frequently serve as pathways into solidary action. There are multiple ways in; first-hand experience with subordination or theoretical understanding of others' oppression may also move people to enter into relations of solidarity. Beyond the entry point, solidarity is not an easily discernible "all or nothing" relation with clearly delineated necessary and sufficient conditions. Instead, solidarity is partially realized by individual commitments and an attitude of action-readiness, and such forward-looking dispositions are constantly put to the test as opportunities to act arise. Solidarity is not a state but a *process* that is produced and continually reproduced through actual struggle. Furthermore, though solidarity has straightforward components, most come in degrees. A solidary agent's commitment to justice may be firm and well-worn or shaky and tentative; her understanding may be clear or hazy; and even her accompanying feelings may be strong or weak. Within a solidary collective at any given time, too, there are individuals anywhere on these spectra. Since both individual and collective analyses develop over time it would be contrived to articulate a threshold of understanding or commitment individuals must meet to be "in solidarity." It is even possible that the analysis grounding solidary action is partially wrong; histories of liberation movements the world over are rife with disagreements, contention, misconceptions, and mistakes, even as participating individuals and organizations broadly aimed towards justice.

Instead of proposing definite theoretical baselines, we should conclude that fostering recognition, exchange, and understanding among points of view is an essential feature of solidarity. We do not act in solidarity by ourselves. Even our individual actions are taken alongside and in concert with particular others who, in turn, hold us accountable to our empirical and normative perspectives on reality. With them, we confront concrete situations of injustice, not abstract or merely imagined ones. Thus, we discern alongside others—especially in cases when we fight a form of subordination we, ourselves, do not experience—the meaning of the concepts of oppression, exploitation, and injustice we use to understand our world as well as the exact shape of our shared aim. Alone and even together we may make many wrong turns. But as long as we sincerely commit to learning from our errors and continuing to act, our commitment to an ever-expanding horizon of justice unites rather than fractures us. How, exactly, we cultivate the conditions for mutual exchange under extant conditions of vertiginous inequality is the subject of the next couple chapters.

By now it is clear that we should think of solidarity not only as a unifying relation people build over time, but also, from both an individual and a collective point of view, as a *practice*. A practice is not merely something we do; it is also something we think through. Social practices like solidarity involve a rich, dynamic feedback between reflection and action. Within relations of solidarity, individual and collective critical reflection on unjust realities guides concrete action; what we do, how we do it, and whether we succeed in turn refines our reflections. In the spirit of prefigurative justice, in solidarity we learn to remake the world and our own subjectivities by experimenting with new, non-dominating ways of relating to each other. The result is an ongoing, open-ended pursuit of justice that is never "done" or "accomplished" but is, to borrow once more from the *Feminism for the 99%* manifesto, "always in formation, always open to transformation and contestation, and always establishing itself anew." What follows in the rest of the thesis is my

attempt to further articulate the politically, relationally, and personally transformative dimensions of solidarity.

2 Unity without homogeneity? Difference without separatism?

Solidarity is a political bond we realize to bring about justice—an aim we cannot achieve by ourselves, alone. We consciously build and strengthen solidarity through our actions, and we are moved to unite in solidarity precisely because we understand ourselves as *already* interconnected: we all occupy nodes in one and the same matrix of domination, or historical arrangement of social power. Solidarity constitutes our attempt to reconfigure power relations and render them more just.

The ameliorative account of interconnectedness is subject to scrutiny from two different camps, both of which are prevalent in popular discourse as well as the philosophical literature. The first of these maintains that the extant ties that bind people together are much less contingent, historically specific, or dynamic than systems of oppression. The *common humanity* view suggests that we all owe each other solidary support in times of need in virtue of the simple fact that we are human beings. Accordingly, there is nothing necessarily political about solidarity. This idea often comes up in the wake of natural disasters, as when a tornado strikes down homes in a nearby neighborhood or an earthquake devastates a community on the other side of the globe, and people provide aid to each other "in solidarity." The second view, on the other hand, contends that the connectedness on which solidarity is built is a lot more concrete and immediate than structures of domination, as such. The *common group* view holds that we must belong to the same group, either by sharing the same (or similar enough) experiences, or by consciously identifying with a given social

category, to be able to craft the bonds that merit the term, solidarity. Solidarity would therefore describe the political bonds of "sisterhood" among women, who are similarly oppressed by patriarchy, while the ties linking women and men in the struggle against patriarchy would be more aptly characterized as feminist alliance.

Although the common humanity and common group views each pick out an important kind of bond, I argue that neither properly theorizes solidarity. The common humanity view deceptively excludes power dynamics from a moral imperative to support others. The common group view relies on a limited and also misleading account of what it takes to fight domination. Both alternatives wind up articulating a notion of homogenous unity that fails to account for the plurality of perspectives and experiences of individuals who make up the solidary collective. In its own way, each view obscures difference. More insidiously, each masks the dynamics of asymmetric power that persist between agents even once they have united around a common aim. More often than not, this concealment perpetuates domination and subordination. Real-life coalitions based on either view are treacherous and ineffective at realizing justice. The ameliorative account I defend in this thesis, by contrast, requires agents to contend directly with the matrix of domination that differently empowers groups, including complexities of intersectional oppression and privilege. Because it foregrounds these extant power dynamics rather than sweeping them under the rug, the ameliorative account is better equipped to meet the charge of homogeneity. Reciprocally acknowledging not just difference, but also asymmetric power, is necessary to craft political unities capable of sustaining long-term struggles for justice.

While a viable account of solidarity must avoid stipulating homogenous unities, when applied to practice the account must also prevent the entrenchment of counterproductive divisions and the splintering of the *solidum*. Separatism is a potential threat on this other end. If people from

different backgrounds cannot sustainably collaborate, groups may choose to organize themselves separately, permanently. It is certainly healing, nourishing, and sometimes necessary for groups to break off temporarily; for this reason, the ameliorative account must ensure a place for groups to caucus within movements. However, long-term separatist strategies may endanger the pursuit of justice. As I will argue, both oppressed and oppressor must transform, together, to eradicate oppression; masculine, feminine, and gender nonconforming people all have a role to play in the struggle against patriarchy. Solidarity is best conceived of as a practice that unites people who are differently socially positioned.

How do we build unity from difference? How do we construct lasting solidarities among people with divergent experiences, interests, and needs? These are the questions I take up in this chapter. I begin by evaluating the merits and drawbacks of the two alternative views: unity based on common humanity, and unity based on group-belonging. I explain how each view assumes homogeneity and undermines solidarity's aim of justice in ways that the ameliorative account does not. I then reflect on the specific, positive ways in which difference strengthens rather than compromises political bonds. I propose we theorize solidarity as a "heterogenous collectivity" and show how this idea equips us to strike a balance: to advance unity without homogeneity, and to affirm difference without separatism.

2.1. Considering common humanity

The ameliorative account presents solidarity's normativity in terms of political morality. That is, the *reasons for which* we should enter into bonds of solidarity derive from an objective reality of domination and subordination that calls for a more just configuration of power relations. But there is a widespread normative use of the idea that deals more straightforwardly with interpersonal

morality. The imperative to *human solidarity* comprises the support we owe each other simply as fellow human beings, prior to any consideration of power.

There are at least two distinct elaborations of human solidarity. According to the first, solidarity is a fundamental and universal feature of our moral life. David Wiggins, who follows Philippa Foot as a primary proponent of this view, traces the "totally general solidarity of the party of humankind" to human beings' pre-reflective recognition of each other as a subject of our kind of consciousness—as subjects that, notably, can consent or refuse.[39] From this recognition of another being as "one of us" springs a categorical prohibition on invading the "moral space" around each individual. For Wiggins, this prohibition constitutes solidarity. Solidarity is the deontological "root of the ethical" that curbs or directs any ensuing moral theory and, simultaneously, creates space for positive relations of trust, mutual dependence, and so on. Wiggins's negativistic conception of solidarity presumably kicks in when abhorrent trade-offs between groups are considered in times of crisis—as when, for instance, Lieutenant Governor of Texas Dan Patrick suggested that the elderly should "take a chance on [their] survival" in exchange for keeping the U.S. economy running during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic.[40] We may agree with Wiggins that the basis of our moral outlook lies in a primordial recognition between beings (in this case, human beings). But we do not need the idea of solidarity *per se* to capture the deontological obligations that follow from recognition; other universally normative and negatively prescriptive notions suffice for this purpose, such as respect. Moreover, we know that fighting real-world injustice takes much more than refusal to invade others' moral space. Wiggins's variant constrains what would otherwise be a rich and positively prescriptive notion from doing more than prohibitive work.

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[39] Wiggins 2008

[40] Beckett 2020. And among the most egregious slogans of right-wing protest groups during the pandemic: "Sacrifice the weak / Re-open Tennessee."

The more promising route incorporates solidarity's positive associations. We find the second variant of human solidarity in attempts to mobilize cooperation in the face of devastating natural events. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, political leaders repeatedly leveraged the idea of a universally normative human solidarity to urge governments worldwide to support the most vulnerable—individuals in their own countries as well as less resourced nations—by taking coordinated actions to abate the virus's spread. The Secretary-General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres designated the pandemic as "above all, a human crisis that calls for solidarity."[41] Similar rhetoric prevailed in local discourses encouraging individuals to practice social distancing "in solidarity" with elderly and immunocompromised neighbors. Human solidarity is anchored in our common humanity; but where Wiggins derived a negative obligation to respect each individual's moral space from our pre-reflective recognition of each other, the second variant derives positive obligations from vulnerabilities affecting all who inhabit the human condition. We can divide universal human vulnerabilities in at least two classes. First, those associated with our embodiment and the basic biological facts of infancy, sickness, and old age. Second, those that additionally stem from our material dependence on, and spatio-temporal existence in, a world subject to unpredictable and uncontrollable forces of nature. Note, not everyone's vulnerabilities are the same in any given moment or location; and not everyone's vulnerabilities translate to deprivation when diseases or natural disasters strike. The pandemic-related use of human solidarity is sensitive to the fact that elderly people are more likely to die from contracting COVID-19 than younger populations; just as appeals for human solidarity after Hurricane Irma in 2017 acknowledged that Florida was more badly hit than U.S. states further north.

[41] Guterres 2020; see also Adhanom Ghebreyesus 2020.

The second variant of human solidarity superficially meets several of the conditions for ameliorative political solidarity: a shared understanding of reality (e.g. that a contagious and deadly virus is spreading around the globe), common goals (e.g. containing the virus), and realization through action (e.g. for individuals to stay home; for countries to share resources). The key difference between the two accounts is power. Human solidarity avoids any political, group-based analysis of the incidence of vulnerabilities and deprivation, nor do its prescriptions address power distributions. Consider human solidarity's approach to inequalities. The only relevant inequalities are differences in populations' needs following a natural event. According to this view, such differences boil down to luck: how old you happen to be, where you happen to live, and so on. If social inequalities beset your community before the event happens, what matters for human solidarity is not the original cause of such inequalities but simply that, following the event, your community consequently experiences greater need. In the case of the pandemic, the virus's trajectory is under no one's control; there is no identifiable agent who either benefits from or is responsible for the harms caused by the virus; therefore, the resulting harms are not injustices. All of us, in turn, are called upon to respond in solidarity with those most in need during the pandemic—simply in virtue of their need, not their degree of social power. This moral reasoning applies to individuals as well as nations, which here represent differentially impacted and differentially resourced groupings of individuals. To act in solidarity is thus to acknowledge common human vulnerabilities, recognize a natural event's disparate effects, and share resources to support those whose vulnerabilities have translated into deprivation. Though such solidarity applies to all human beings, and is justified on the basis of common humanity, its attendant norms often (though not always) instruct the better off to support the worse off.

While the vulnerabilities that ground the second variant are universal in theory, closer inspection reveals their undeniably political character. Under non-ideal conditions, bodily and

geographic vulnerabilities are unevenly distributed. This distribution is not "natural"; it owes largely to the ways in which bodily and geographic vulnerabilities compound not just with each other, but also with social vulnerabilities produced by the matrix of domination. Once a seemingly neutral crisis hits, existing distributions of universal and social vulnerabilities translate into disproportionate impacts on marginalized social groups. An overwhelming proportion of the harms produced by such events are, therefore, injustices. Consider the pandemic. Underlying health conditions, particularly those that weaken the lungs and compromise the immune system, exacerbate the deadliness of infection with COVID-19. Such conditions concentrate in politically, economically, and socially marginalized communities; disproportionately higher rates of asthma, for example, are routinely found among populations exposed to heavy air pollution by incinerators or dirty industries built near their homes. One early case study in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where the life expectancy of Black residents is already 14 years shorter than white residents, showed that Black people made up almost half the coronavirus cases and 4 out of 5 deaths in a county whose population is 26 percent Black.[42] Economic precarity that manifests in a need to keep working to pay rent and put food on the table, or in low-wage jobs that cannot be done from home, also means that, once someone gets sick, they are less able to self-isolate to prevent infection.[43] (In Milwaukee County, Black households earned about half as much as white ones in 2018.[44]) Though data for the recent COVID-19 pandemic is scarce, these overall trends are well-known in a context of systemic economic, housing, health, and educational discrimination against communities of color, especially Black communities, in the U.S.

[42] Johnson and Buford 2020

[43] According to the Economic Policy Institute (Gould and Shierholz 2020), less than 1 in 5 Black workers and about 1 in 6 Latinx workers in the US were able to work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that less than 10% of workers in the lowest quartile of the national wage distribution can telework (ibid.).

[44] Johnson and Buford 2020

Natural disasters also expose unjust patterns of compounding universal and social vulnerabilities. Consider Hurricane Katrina's notoriously disproportionate impact on the Black residents of New Orleans. Due to historically discriminatory housing policies, for example, Black residents tended overwhelmingly to live on low-lying lands, and therefore suffered disproportionate flood damage.[45] Power distributions influenced not only which communities were worse hit by the storm, but also how effectively they could recover in the aftermath. Post-Katrina rebuilding efforts exacerbated existing inequalities because they replicated existing asymmetries of power instead of mitigating or eliminating them. The federally funded housing recovery program, for example, granted funds to New Orleans homeowners based on either the pre-storm appraisal value of a home or the cost of damage, whichever was lower. Because discrimination meant that homes in Black communities were generally appraised at a much lower value than their counterparts in white communities—even if they cost the same to repair—Black homeowners wound up with larger shortfalls between the grant received and the actual cost of rebuilding than white homeowners. Overall, low-income homeowners received nearly $50,000 less than rebuilding costs.[46] (Five years later, long after 98% of funds had been spent, a federal judge found "Road Home" policies to be discriminatory against Black homeowners.[47]) Again: this recovery took place against a backdrop of extant asymmetries that created the conditions for Black homes to flood at a rate three times higher than white homes during Katrina. It is no wonder that, a decade later, while white communities gleamed in celebration of "America's greatest comeback story," Black neighborhoods in New Orleans remained poorer than before the storm and, in some cases, only 50 percent rebuilt.[48] We

[45] Seicschnaydre et al. 2018, p. 5

[46] Finger 2008, p. 70

[47] Rivlin 2016

[48] Rivlin 2016

should conclude from this case that even the selection of criteria for disaster response policies is political; solidarity with those affected by the storm would require close attention to how extant power structures shape the response effort.

My objection to the positive variant of human solidarity is precisely that it obscures the power dynamics that, under non-ideal conditions, saturate reality. Communities' needs do not differ "merely" because of their physical condition or because they unlucky enough to live where a particular earthquake or storm hits. Overwhelmingly, colliding structures of domination shape communities' pre-existing vulnerabilities; their needs in times of crisis; and their capacities to respond to crisis. We are all human beings—but our "human condition" is differentially molded by our respective positions within the current arrangement of power structures. "We're all in this together"—but that which we are in, together, is not just the human condition, it is also the contemporary matrix of domination. This goes for nations and individuals alike; historic and ongoing imperialism are largely responsible for the unequal global distribution of resources that hinder certain countries' response to hurricanes, earthquakes, and pandemics. A power analysis is indispensable for configuring just responses to humanitarian emergencies. A response that is inattentive to power assumes that, apart from varying universal vulnerabilities like age and illness,[49] everyone is equally subject to the forces of nature and requires the same support to recover. In other words, it is a falsely homogenizing response that replicates and even intensifies existing asymmetries, further entrenching injustice. The second variant of human solidarity is too stripped of political content to be useful; and were it to acquire thorough sensitivity to power, it would collapse into the ameliorative account.

[49] As I have suggested, so-called "universal" vulnerability to illness is frequently socially shaped.

2.2. Considering group commonality

The next challenge to the ameliorative account comes from the other direction. The *common group* set of views suggest that solidarity builds upon extant links that are a lot more concrete and immediate than humanity, or than simply living within the same historical arrangements of power. Common group views maintain that individuals must belong to the same group—either by sharing a set of experiences, consciously identifying with the same social category, or both—to have enough in common to establish political solidarity. Think of racial solidarity among people who share experiences of anti-Black oppression, or of feminist solidarity among women, an identity forged within the crucible of patriarchy. Certainly, being subject to the same kinds of fears, discriminations, and violence lays solid ground for people to empathize with each other and understand, viscerally, that "we're in this together." And articulating these experiences as group-based oppression rather than as isolated, individual incidents represents an important step in developing a critical understanding of reality. However, I will now argue that unless common experiences or shared identity are properly situated within the matrix of domination, they tend to produce a false and ultimately counterproductive sense of unity.

Consider the idea that shared experiences ground political solidarity. Extensive debates within feminism illuminate the stakes involved in this claim, though the lessons apply more broadly. The relevant dialectic begins with the classic second-wave position that the politics of being a woman can be deduced from the experience of being one. This position premises social constructionism about gender: "woman" is a social identity constituted on the basis of similar individual experiences within a universally shared condition. There is, in Simone de Beauvoir's words, a "common ground from which all singular feminine existence stems."[50] The feminine

[50] Beauvoir 2011 (1949), p. 289

common ground assigns women an inferior position to their male counterparts via externally imposed social norms and practices, which are in turn internalized by women psychologically and somatically.[51] According to this view, all women suffer the same oppression as a result of being treated, socially, as women. Thus a woman's first-personal experiences are proto-feminist; "what binds women together is an ahistorical notion of the sameness of their oppression and, consequently, the sameness of their struggles."[52] Once women politicize their experiences, that is, they understand such experiences as sexist oppression, they can unite in feminist solidarity with other women. Chandra Talpade Mohanty designates the result, the "feminist osmosis thesis": "being female and being feminist are one and the same, we are *all* oppressed and hence we *all* resist."[53]

Postcolonial, decolonial, and intersectional feminists of the third wave, including Mohanty, reject the feminist osmosis thesis. They demonstrate how the traditional argument falsely assumes that women constitute one selfsame, homogenous group.[54] Plainly, there is no "core" set of experiences with sexist oppression that all women share; so, to be at all viable, experience cannot constitute the "core" of the identity, woman. These feminists are right. Women from different backgrounds move through the world in distinctly heterogenous ways. Sure, we may aptly characterize some of our experiences along a singular continuum of sexist violence; workplace sexual harassment affects migrant farmworker women and Hollywood actresses alike. Yet the ways such oppressions play out, and the tools we command to respond, differ depending on the power we wield along other axes of domination. Moreover, many of our experiences with patriarchy simply do not overlap. Recall from Chapter 1 Kimberle Crenshaw's contention that Black women

[51] See Bartky 1990 and Young 1980, respectively, for treatments of how women internalize sexist oppression in their minds and in their bodies.

[52] Mohanty 1998 (1992), p. 260

[53] Mohanty 1998 (1992), p. 260

[54] For example: Combahee River Collective 1977, Lorde 1984, hooks 2015 (1984), Mohanty 1998 (1992)

experience certain oppressions *as Black women*; used alone, the conceptual category of "woman" (or of "Black") falls short. Intersectional analyses like Crenshaw's underscore that the heterogeneity of women's experience does not merely amount to difference. Often, difference is thoroughly shaped by co-occurrent structures of domination, including white supremacy. We should conclude that individual women's struggles against sexist oppression are not the same.

Grounding practical feminist solidarity in the homogenizing falsehood that all women share the same experiences with sexism generates pernicious epistemic and political effects. First, the assumption obscures important elements of political reality, namely "the many varied tools of patriarchy…[and] how those tools are used by women without awareness against each other."[55] Consider how class crosscuts gender to asymmetrically empower different groups of women; the woman professional who shifts her gendered housework burden to low-paid migrant cleaners and nannies deploys an intersectional tool of patriarchy to perpetuate less privileged women's oppression. Second, because intersecting value hierarchies structure reality, the supposedly universal category "woman" effectively treats the experiences of relatively empowered members of the group as paradigmatic and suppresses those of marginalized members.[56] Western feminist thought has historically re-inscribed an abstract model of "woman" that is middle or upper-middle class, white, abled, cis-gendered, and otherwise dominant. Women whose experiences diverge from the privileged norm have been pushed to the margins, seen as exceptions or, as with trans women, as "hard" cases.[57] Third, variations of sexist oppression generate specific needs and distinct emancipatory interests. When movements ignore this fact, they tend to issue political prescriptions that are insufficient, even wrongheaded, to fight sexist oppression. The liberal feminist contention

[55] Lorde 2017 (1979), p. 40

[56] Lorde 1984; Mohanty 1998 (1992)

[57] For example, Stoljar 1995

that women will be better off in the workforce than at home, for example, does not sound like an improvement to working-class women who spend most of their time away from home and their loved ones.[58] Historically, the radical feminist call to lesbian separatism was rejected by women of color and working-class women who relied upon, and were relied upon by, male allies in parallel struggles against racial domination and capitalist exploitation.[59] Feminism that homogenizes also centers intersecting privilege and ultimately re-inscribes sexism in many flavors plus other forms of domination. Feminism that homogenizes does the opposite of advancing justice.

When marginalized women challenge assumptions of homogeneity and attempt to reclaim their place in womanhood, they are often accused of splintering feminist solidarity and hindering feminist progress. "People of color caucuses" within feminist gatherings where women of color can discuss their distinct experiences and raise intersectional issues, for example, are often critiqued as divisive. However, these arguments ignore the deleterious consequences of *failing* to bring anti-racism into feminism. When a purportedly feminist movement marginalizes certain women's perspectives and as a result adopts skewed political priorities, it erodes the trust and cooperation conducive to unity. Women whose experiences diverge from the normative scheme may, on a subjective level, begin to doubt their own experiences and feel forced to choose between identities. Maria Lugones so illustrates "Hispana" women's confrontation with white feminist thought:

> "We do not recognize ourselves in these theories. They create in us a schizophrenic split between our concern for ourselves as women and ourselves as Hispanas, one that we do not feel otherwise…[These theories] seem to ask that we leave our communities or that we

[58] Lugones and Spelman 1983 p. 578-9

[59] Lugones and Spelman 1983; Lorde 1984 and Combahee River Collective 1977

become alienated so completely in them that we feel hollow…we are paralyzed into a state of displacement with no place to go."[60]

Eventually, women left at the margins reject the homogenizing category of woman, at least as it is given to them, because of its inability to describe their own lives. By contrast, the privileged group closest to the norm grows confident to speak for all women. Hubris breeds complacency, inhibiting women in the dominant group from questioning, much less grasping, how sexist oppression manifests in realities other than theirs—and how they sometimes oppress fellow women. This epistemic block compounds upon the original false assumption that all women suffer the same oppression under patriarchy. Feeling disrespected and devalued, marginalized women may understandably respond (and often have) by separating themselves from the dominant group or by fighting against them. (Worse still: marginalized groups that do not identify with the model of feminism provided by privileged women get accused of false consciousness or adaptive preferences.[61]) What of the remaining "solidarity"? Any sense of unity built upon homogenizing categories is exclusive and shallow, bell hooks writes, "[resembling] the type of personal bonding among women that has always occurred under patriarchy – the one difference being the interest in feminism."[62] hooks's assessment easily applies to contemporary groups of cis women who deny trans women a place in feminist struggle. Perhaps unexpectedly, the overall effect of failing to

[60] Lugones and Spelman 1983, p. 576. Though apt, Lugones's portrayal is subject to her own critique. There is no one model of an "Hispana woman," a highly contested category given the tremendous racial, national, and class diversity it attempts to cover. Even once we drop the problematic "Hispana" (which includes and, worse, centers Spain) for "Latina" to focus on the Americas, the category remains fraught. It purports to embrace, on one end, white Latinas whose experience diverges only slightly from the U.S. "Anglo" white feminist norm; indigenous, Black, and/or working-class Latinas with very different needs and demands on the other; and everything in between.

[61] See Khader 2012 for a discussion of these issues. Thanks to my supervisor for raising this point.

[62] hooks 2015 (1984), p. 47

recognize heterogeneity is division, which undermines struggles against sexist oppression. "Una sola voz nos mata a las dos" – one voice kills us both.[63]

To build honest, sustainable, justice-seeking relationships, solidary agents must understand when and how they reproduce domination amongst each other. We must therefore reject the homogenizing idea of "shared experience" as a necessary criterion for solidarity. This is not to deny the role of experience, especially with subordination, in the political process of building interpersonal and collective bonds. On a basic, epistemic level, our experiences serve as our window into reality. Of course, solidarity requires agents to acquire conceptual tools to make sense of their experiences within systems of power, for example, *as oppression.* I argued in the previous chapter that solidarity tends toward increasingly multidimensional and intersectional analyses. We may now conclude that this is necessary in the medium- and long-term. Women, for one, must understand their experiences with sexism in terms of a shared analysis of the systemic distributions of power *within* as well as outside of the group in order build sustainable political bonds. Generally, agents must situate their experiences not just in one structure—say, patriarchy—but simultaneously within the complex, multichannel matrix of forces at work.

It is possible to theorize group identity without assuming a "core" set of common experiences. We may think the category "woman" is, instead, continually constructed out of many disparate and not necessarily overlapping elements, historically situated, and consciously adopted. Such accounts of identity are capacious enough to embrace both external social stipulations (e.g. what and how women are perceived to be by others) as well as disparate first-personal experiences of those who bear the identity. Such accounts can embrace normative analyses of difference, power, and intersectionality to make sense of external and internal components, rather than resort to

[63] Lugones and Spelman 1983, p. 573

homogenizing explanations. And in line with solidarity's open-ended nature, such accounts may propose that identities are "unstable," shifting over time to accommodate new understandings of reality and oppose emergent asymmetries.[64]

Even if we read our experience through multidimensional and intersectional analyses of power, and even if we adopt a nuanced conception of identity and group-belonging, we should still reject the claim that solidarity requires us all to belong to the same group. Common group views, whether spelled out in terms of experience, identity, or group-belonging, effectively exclude large swathes of agents responsible for upholding structures of domination from the project of transformation. Insofar as solidarity seeks to transform entire systems of power, it cannot be reserved solely to members of a single social group. Sisterhood, that is feminist solidarity among women-identified people, is incapable of undermining sexist oppression alone, even if sisters acknowledge differences and asymmetries among them and work internally towards equalizing relations. Patriarchy structures our social order, constructing the experiences not just of women but also of men and people who do not identify within the gender binary. The norms, practices, and institutions that constitute patriarchy, both objectively and subjectively, are upheld by people all along its hierarchy of value, from bottom to top. Men are poised to reap its benefits and have an outsized role in perpetuating patriarchy; they are also responsible for ending it. Men's commitment to feminist solidarity is therefore urgent and necessary in the struggle against sexism. Feminism, as hooks proclaims, is for everybody.[65] Of course, many men are subject to the racism that affects many women; the arguments regarding patriarchy flow easily into other systems of domination. Indeed, though I have focused on feminist solidarity, these conclusions apply more broadly. Just as

[64] Allison Weir (2008) and Cathy Cohen (1997) advance such accounts of identity.

[65] hooks 2000

feminist solidarity cannot stop at sisterhood, anti-racist solidarity cannot stop at bonds among the Black community, and so on. As long as it involves a shared critical analysis of reality, and a common goal to eliminate subordination, we should conclude that group-based solidarity constitutes a subspecies of broader political solidarity.

The *reason for which* agents act in solidarity is not that they belong to the same group; this would bring solidarity rather close to loyalty. We are already connected through interwoven structures of domination. What unites us is our coming to grasp these structures from our distinct social positions and our goal to realize justice. The agent-neutral reasons for solidary action remain that, structures of domination exist, and justice is imperative. Our experiences, identities, and group-belongings provide the conditions by which agents recognize these reasons.

2.3. The role of difference in unity

Solidarity does not bind people together by encouraging assumptions of sameness. Solidarity's union is better conceptualized as a *heterogenous collectivity*, in which self-consciously different people coalesce to pursue justice. In coalescing, the distinct sufferings, needs, desires, and demands of differently positioned people are honored, not erased or artificially "blended" together. I borrow the phrase "heterogenous collectivity" from Patricia Hill Collins, who uses it to describe how Black people in the U.S. resist, together, even as they occupy different spaces in society, experience clashes between dominant and subjugated subpopulations (e.g. between Black men and women), and embark on alternative strategies to pursue a common political agenda.[66] I think the term appropriately characterizes healthy, sustainable forms of narrow group-based solidarities, such as feminist sisterhood among differently situated women. It is also apt for broader solidarities; we

[66] Hill Collins 2009 (2000), p. 112

can think of an anti-racist union in which people struggle, together, even as they find themselves variously placed in on the racial hierarchy, contend with histories of domination between each other as racialized peoples, and play their part to fight racism against and within their own communities. Although we have seen that belonging to a social group does not in itself constitute a reason to join in solidarity, groups are indispensable building blocks of heterogenous collectivities. As I argued earlier, political solidarity binds individuals *qua* members of social groups, which are produced by structures of domination. The rest of this chapter aims to shed light on how difference, mediated through group identifications, strengthens political bonds.

I have insisted that solidarity requires that agents acknowledge group differences and power asymmetries. This acknowledgment must be self-referential and other-referential. An agent engages solidaristically with others from an articulated awareness of where she, herself, stands in the complex web of power. To be in solidarity I cannot just look outwards to see where others fit in and pretend to join as a neutral party, or as abstractly removed, myself, from societal distributions of power. On the contrary, I join self-consciously as someone with distinct and particular hardships, privileges, and interests sculpted, at least in part, by my position in social hierarchies. My own position cannot go unarticulated and unspecified, lest I dangerously assume that my experience as a woman, for instance, serves as model for the womanhood of those I meet. Or, lest I try to make sense of my own experiences through ill-fitting categories molded to another's shape. Even when I straddle lines of power in complex, hard-to-define ways—actually, especially when this is the case—I cannot eschew the hard work of unpacking the ways I reproduce the power structures I am trying to dismantle. Of course, this is an ongoing task for everyone. The practice of solidarity itself helps us clarify our position as we learn by doing; by making mistakes and accidentally hurting others, by getting hurt ourselves, and by getting things right.

Once agents embrace their own positionality, they are better able to realize the intellectual, dialogical, and practical dimensions of solidarity. For starters, once I realize that I fit in somewhere particular, I am better positioned to understand that my own grasp on reality is limited—and that I require others' insight to get a fuller picture. The implication, of course, is that they need me, too. Instead of breeding complacency, acknowledging that one's position only gives one direct access to a slender part of the story nurtures epistemic humility and a motivation to continue relating with and learning from others. This, in turn, helps one enter into deeper relations of solidarity and, in dialogue with each other, "create possibilities for new versions of truth."[67] That said, we are not neutrally situated in our interactions or dialogues with one another. We must be interpersonally conscious of our positionality, since there are ways in which domination is reproduced in the ways we speak to each other, take up physical and discursive space in a room, and so forth.

Embracing one's positionality also has implications for action. First, actions in support of the struggles of others have differential effects depending on where an agent fits. In the wake of the recent killing of Ahmaud Arbery, an unarmed Black man in Georgia, the Black-led "Run with Maud" campaign called for supporters to run 2.23 miles on what would have been Ahmaud's 26th birthday both to honor his passing, and to raise public awareness as a means to pressure decision-makers to serve justice. Now, the U.S. Black community disagreed about how others, especially white people, should participate in this particular intent at visibility. Many agreed that, while white allies should run and use the opportunity to lift up the campaign—for example, by pinning a "Justice for Maud" sign on their shirts as they ran through white neighborhoods or, more importantly, by calling offices of government officials—they should not simply run and post on social media. Black commentators' arguments varied, but a common thread was that widespread social media

[67] Hill Collins 2009 (2000), p. 42

participation by white people, especially when detached from direct interventions, tends to elevate their experiences, and their anger, condemnation, etc. in the public eye while shifting away attention from the structural vulnerability to lethal, state-sanctioned violence experienced by Black people in the day-to-day. The worry is well-founded; as the literature on epistemic injustice suggests, implicit biases in audiences lend less credibility and authority to members of subordinated groups and more to those of dominant groups.[68] In this case, white people's participation in the run rang more sourly than that of other people of color, whose own communities are also subject to such unwarranted violence at admittedly lesser, but still disproportionate, rates. Of course, what individuals should do to stand in solidarity in specific instances varies widely by context, depends on how broad or how narrow the call to action is, and even so, is hardly ever clear cut. It was still incumbent upon other people of color who posted about their own experiences with white supremacy to explicitly parallel their experiences to those of Black people, whose racist oppression is distinctly shaped by the ways Blackness is and has been vilified and devalued in U.S. society. Securing justice for Ahmaud, a Black man, and dismantling anti-Black racism requires grappling with this specificity. The upshot is that agents attempting to be in solidarity must consider when and how certain actions advance justice or further entrench power. I take a closer look at how agents should navigate power asymmetries in Chapter 3.

Through comparison, we leverage our own experiences to comprehend those of others. Thus one's understanding of others' lives is heavily shaped by one's positionality. Our own experiences of marginalization are especially useful in grasping that others are marginalized by the same system, just differently, and motivating us to unite and fight with them, too. Cathy Cohen describes the political solidarity that emerged between wealthy gay men and incarcerated men and

[68] For example, Saul 2017

women through the needle exchange and prison projects of ACT UP New York in the 1990s.[69] Though privileged in many ways, the gay community's own struggles with the government's lack of response to the AIDS epidemic made them sensitive to the injustice faced by prisoners regularly denied access to basic healthcare, including the drugs needed to combat HIV/AIDS—and vice versa. This solidarity manifested in protests of the conditions of incarcerated people, as well as against the homophobia evident in the government's and biomedical industries' response to the crisis. This case underscores, however, that experiences and identities alone are not enough; to produce solidarity they must be understood through the lens of power. Cohen agrees: "While a marginal identity undoubtedly increases the prospects of shared consciousness, only an articulation and commitment to mutual support can truly be the test of unity when pursuing transformational politics." This is where caucus-bonding enters the scene.

For subordinated people, exclusive group-based solidarities are incredibly important for a number of related reasons. I call such solidarities "caucus-bonds" to underscore that the individuals therein form a distinct subgroup who meet, talk, and sometimes act independently, but ultimately, seek a goal that can only be realized with the participation of the rest of the group. Unlike electoral or legislative caucuses, caucus-bonds are indispensable to broader solidarities.

Caucus-bonding creates the conditions for oppressed individuals to develop and refine a critical understanding of reality. When we gather in community with others whose experiences are similar to ours, we realize we are not alone. In community, we encounter interlocutors to process our experiences, not as isolated incidents, but as interlinked, and produced by a structure of social forces that jointly "conspire to the immobilization, reduction, and molding" of oppressed subjects

[69] Cohen 1997, pp. 480-1

and our lives.[70] This applies to oppression as to exploitation: amongst themselves, workers can discuss and identify who profits, and who bears the cost, of their labor. Caucus groups give us the opportunity to discuss why things happen to us, connect the dots, and name our condition *as injustice,* or *as exploitation,* or *as oppression.* Our consciousness is "raised"; suddenly, or gradually, other experiences in our lives make sense. The Combahee River Collective describes how "black feminists often talk about their feelings of craziness before becoming conscious of the concepts of sexual politics, patriarchal rule, and most importantly, feminism," and, at the same time, how consciousness-raising sessions among Black women allowed them to name how race and class bears on gender.[71] Experiences of oppression are themselves, as Tommie Shelby argues, a valuable source of motivation in struggles for justice. [72] Learning about the experiences of others like us, and sharing our own stories, fosters mutual empathy, which in turn further intensifies each's motivation to struggle.

By fostering segregation, existing social exclusions inadvertently produce opportunities for discussion. Importantly, though, caucus-bonds are intentionally carved by subordinated agents to fight for their own liberation. Here, they may reject the degrading, objectifying categories externally imposed upon them and take back what Hill Collins designates "the power of self-definition"— to construct and articulate a subjective group identity on their own terms. Hill Collins richly illustrates how Black women-only spaces, established face-to-face in organizations and familial and friend relationships, as well as remotely through Black women's writing and blues music, have historically offered Black women the relative safety and freedom to craft alternative self-images. This is so for

[70] Chapter 1, "Oppression," in Frye 1983 offers an exceptionally clear discussion of the concept.

[71] Combahee River Collective 1977

[72] Shelby 2005, p. 245

Black women as individuals and as a group.[73] Together, we imagine what the world could be like, taking into our own hands the positive vision of justice that continually guides our resistance. Obviously, caucus bonds are internally heterogenous; among Black women there are working- and middle class women, abled and disabled women, trans and cis women, etc. While social forces conspire to weaponize differences and break down these unities, exclusive forums enable subordinated agents to work out, internally and on their own terms, through dialogue, disagreements and apparent conflicts of interest that stem from agents' differential positions on intersecting axes of power. As illustrated by ever sharper "waves" of feminist politics, this process enhances the group's collective understanding of the matrix of domination.

Caucus-bonds enable individuals to acquire the oppressed person's "most potent weapons," as Black feminist Pearl Cleage puts it, "information, analysis, and positive group identity."[74] And that is not all. Especially when nurtured in person, caucus bonds build upon, and help build, meaningful personal relationships, affective ties, and associations with particular people. Developed in the context of struggles for liberation, friendships and group loyalty typically contribute to, rather than detract from, the project of justice sought by solidarity. The trust agents feel in these relationships furnish fertile dialogical conditions for the development of a collective political analysis (including inevitable disagreements) as well as individual commitments to struggle. These spaces also turn into ones of refuge, of healing, where agents immersed both in toxic conditions of subordination and the difficult labor of social change can take refuge, retreat, and refuel. In so many ways, caucus-bonds strengthen us so that we may stake our place of leadership in the fight against the injustices we,

[73] Hill Collins 2009 (2000), "The Power of Self-Definition" (pp. 107-132)

[74] Cited in Hill Collins 2009 (2000), p. 239

ourselves, face. From a position of self-respect, self-love, and clarity, we may then enter into mutually respectful relations of solidarity with allies who support our struggle.

In conclusion, we must heed cautions against forms of separatism that ignore our interconnectedness in the matrix of domination. Likewise, we must refrain from confusing exclusive spaces with the heterogenous cross-group political collaboration necessary to achieve justice, for as Bernice Johnson Reagon urges, "Coalition work is not done in your home. Coalition work has to be done in the streets."[75] Solidarity is built with people who aren't like you, and who don't make you feel comfortable. Yet, in the ways I outlined, caucus-bonds make broader solidarities possible. Our work has to be clear-eyed. We cannot mistake false homogeneity for unity and we cannot deny each group's distinct stake in emancipatory movements. Solidarity must proceed by acknowledging and bringing to bear difference, including power asymmetries, in our political practice, and by affirming the positive contribution each group, and each individual, brings to struggle. Only then can we come together and work out our differences, honestly and respectfully, in the service of unity for the common goal: justice.

[75] Reagon 1981 (1998), p. 245

3 Asymmetric power, asymmetric knowledge, and solidarity

The task of justice is enormous. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that there exist a multitude of modes of political action to confront structures of domination. Solidarity is one of these; its contrast with three other modes is instructive.

The successful efforts of an enterprising Welsh Member of Parliament (MP), Leo Abse, to partially decriminalize homosexuality in the UK in 1967 exemplify one mode: the *elite negotiator* model. In this model, a well-positioned agent—sometimes an elected representative, other times an independent actor—leverages their influence to advance the end of justice "behind closed doors." Kwame Anthony Appiah recounts how Abse successfully cajoled and traded favors with fellow MPs to pass the "private member's bill" he submitted to reform existing laws on sexual offences; and how the bill passed even though it lacked party and mass public support.[76] Generally, the elite negotiator model is a variant of the individualist *hero model*, whereby a lone visionary agent or organization who sets out to make change exerts a decisive impact on political outcomes. Thirdly, the *instrumental coalition* model brings different groups together to pursue a common interest. Their union typically goes no further than the common interest and dissolves once the desired end is achieved. Instrumental coalitions may unite strange bedfellows, as when feminists joined

[76] Appiah 2019. Thanks to my supervisor for bringing this example to my attention.

conservatives to seek passage of anti-pornography legislation in the U.S. in the 1980s despite their very divergent values and motivations.[77]

The elite negotiator and hero models foreground decisive individual action; by contrast, solidarity and instrumental coalitions effect change through the coordinated efforts of a collective. This is the first relevant contrast.[78] The second is that solidarity's approach to justice is distinctively *prefigurative.* As I have argued, solidary agents attempt to "build the new society in the shell of the old"—that is, to work out what justice requires and make it manifest as they go along. Solidary agents strive to pursue justice both as their end goal and in the very means by which they pursue it. The means, of course, are the concrete interpersonal relations solidary agents establish to act collectively. *Contra* bonds of solidarity, which are built for long-haul partnership in the project of justice, instrumental coalitions exist exclusively to satisfy a common interest; they are built to be dissolved. In an instrumental coalition, neither group expends extra effort to engage other groups' values, ideologies, or commitments. While solidarity's end may be narrowly expressed, say, to partially decriminalize homosexuality, solidary agents bond with each other as long-term partners for liberation and continue organizing once the narrow end is achieved. Solidary agents build trust across difference and invest deeply in the relationships they build for justice because they understand, prefiguratively, that the relationships are themselves part and parcel of the envisioned end. The elite negotiator model is also insufficiently prefigurative. Elite negotiators exert outsized influence on decisions. If the negotiator does not belong to the social group experiencing the

[77] West 1987 analyzes this alliance and the various conceptual, ethical, and political worries it raised.

[78] Despite the assertions of revisionist histories of social movements, however, we must note that the individualist elite negotiator and hero models usually depend upon collective political action to get underway. Collective action helps generate the specific demands heroes and elite actors then reformulate; elect into office supportive decision-makers; sway public opinion and generating sufficient external pressure to create the conditions for change; and more. Appiah's account of Abse's actions, for example, barely mentions the educational, advocacy, and lobbying role of the Homosexual Law Reform Society (HLRS) set up nearly a decade prior to the passage of the Sexual Offences Act, much less the leadership of gay community members in this effort (Grey 1992).

injustice at issue, lack of familiarity with injustice and even conflicting interests threaten to counterproductively shape her compromises "behind closed doors." Perhaps more importantly, the elite negotiator model fails to challenge the existing institutional, social, and economic power structures that undergird the negotiator's privileged access in the first place. As a prefigurative form of political action, solidarity holds that we cannot dismantle what we simultaneously prop up. We cannot sustainably, or without pain of contradiction, abolish structures of domination, oppression, or exploitation in ways that perpetuate the very value hierarchies and asymmetries of power that constitute them. We may characterize solidarity, then, as seeking a "radical" equalization of social power. Among the four modes of political action, only solidarity self-consciously aims to transform how power operates at an interpersonal as well as social scale, and to do so in real time.

Prefiguration is an inspirational ideal, no doubt. But interpersonal relations that equalize power are notoriously difficult to realize against a non-ideal backdrop of systematic injustice. Asymmetric power has a way of reasserting itself, re-entrenching domination and undermining the project of justice altogether. Consider two all-too-common scenarios. First, there is the case of relatively privileged actors who, thinking they know best, leverage their dominance to foist their falsely universal vision of "justice" upon those with whom they pretend to "stand in solidarity." "Missionary feminist" interventions endorsed by Western feminists in the name of gender justice for non-Western women are a case in point.[79] Serene Khader coins this term to describe policies aimed at superimposing Western feminist ideas onto non-Western contexts—for example, policies designed to increase women's income through work. In theory, income-generating interventions should mitigate gendered power imbalances by enhancing women's economic independence. But in practice, without a concurrent change in received gender roles, the policies generate harms. As

[79] Khader 2019. I follow Khader's use of "Western" to refer to "Euro-American positions of cultural, economic, and military dominance" (p. 19).

women's workload increases, their household negotiating power often decreases respectively; Khader points to dynamics in which men withdraw from economic responsibilities, such as paying for children's school fees, while maintaining disproportionate household authority.[80] Such interventions generate adverse effects and, on a broader scale, uphold imperialist domination between Western and non-Western countries. On a number of counts, including prefiguration, missionary feminism fails as a form of transnational feminist solidarity. Asymmetric power may raise its head more covertly. In the second scenario, relatively privileged actors, again thinking they know best, retrieve their support in the name of justice for those they "support." Where the missionary feminist is overbearing, Martin Luther King Jr.'s infamous "white moderate" follows anti-racist calls to action until he ceases to agree with Black people's strategies. King described the well-meaning white moderate who "constantly says: 'I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action'" as "the Negro's greatest stumbling block in his stride toward freedom."[81] Instead of striving to understand the injustices suffered by the Black community, listening to their reasons for civil disobedience, and following their lead, the white moderate paternalistically recuses himself from the fight—supposedly, to avoid "hurting" the cause of justice. White moderates may sincerely believe this justification. But withdrawal, too, is an abuse of power. In stepping back, the white moderate evades his responsibility as a beneficiary and participant in the structure of racial domination, fails to mobilize his power towards anti-racist struggle, and by leaving intact a racist system helps sustain it. In the name of "justice," the missionary feminist and the white moderate reproduce hierarchy. Both get solidarity badly wrong as a result.

[80] Khader 2019, p.54. See one of Khader's cited studies, Chant 2008, for specific examples and testimonies from women in The Gambia, Philippines, and Costa Rica.

[81] From King's "Letter from Birmingham City Jail," quoted in Kolers 2016 (p. 1).

Is prefiguration even possible in real-world contexts among agents immersed in stark and entrenched power asymmetries? I think so. To show this we require an account of how agents who are differentially positioned in hierarchies of domination can avoid abuses of power and build trusting, equalizing relationships with each other. What practical approach to interpersonal relations best captures the commitment to prefigurative justice shared by those building relations of solidarity? This is the question I investigate in this chapter.

The most promising approaches to relating solidaristically across difference are *deference* and *mutuality*. The model of deference, popular among contemporary social movements and recently theorized by Avery Kolers, answers the problem of asymmetric power by instructing those who enter relations of solidarity to defer to the judgments and decisions of the subordinated group. I demonstrate that deference is justified on moral, practical, and epistemic grounds. Yet, for all its virtues, I argue that deference model is incomplete, specifically because it fails to capture the unfolding, temporally extended character of solidary practice. This motivates my turn to mutuality. Mutuality is a diachronic, process-oriented approach to power and knowledge asymmetries among solidary agents. Mutuality instructs agents, situated as they are in distinct social positions, to gradually coalesce towards a mutually shared understanding of reality, a mutually shared vision and goal of justice, and mutual engagement with the actions that realize justice and produce a joint experience of struggle. I end by specifying how deference fits into the broader practical framework of mutuality as a partial solution to the puzzle of prefiguration.

But before I take up the chapter's questions in earnest we should more firmly demarcate the scope of our inquiry. This will help shed light on how power asymmetries relate to knowledge asymmetries.

3.1. Introducing internal and external solidarities

In the previous chapter, I explained why shared experience, common identity, or group-belonging by any other name is not, on its own, an appropriate foundation for political solidarity. Still, we can distinguish between the internal and external solidarities that exist around specific struggles. *Internal solidarities* bind individuals who belong to the same group of directly affected people insofar as they share a critical grasp of reality and act towards justice for their own group. Those who unite in internal solidarities face similar forms of oppression or exploitation and more or less share the risks and rewards of organizing for change. The caucus bonds I discussed in the previous chapter exemplify internal solidarities. (Keep in mind the persistent caveat: internal solidarities are, in themselves, heterogenous collectivities binding people with different intersecting oppressions and privileges.) Solidarity among women fighting patriarchy, Muslims fighting Islamophobia, or more narrowly among workers fighting for better pay and conditions from their employer, exemplify internal solidarities.

External solidarities bind individuals and groups that are differentially positioned in the matrix of domination. It unites those subject to a certain kind of subordination with "outsiders" who, a) do not themselves experience that kind of subordination but b) are nevertheless committed to supporting the subordinated group in their struggle for justice.[82] External solidarities can be more or less *horizontal*, as when one group of subordinated people supports the struggle for justice of a differently subordinated group; these groups unite horizontally, as it were, across the lower levels of social hierarchies. Agents can move across one singular axis, as when workers campaigning for workplace changes receive the support of workers in other workplaces, trades, and industries.

[82] While many theorists use the term "solidarity" to describe internal bonds, for example Tommie Shelby (2005) regarding Black racial unity, Sandra Bartky reserves "solidarity" for external relations (Bartky 2002, p. 81).

Groups can also move more or less horizontally across different axes. When contingents of gay and lesbian people in urban centers across the UK organized sustained monetary and presential support for striking coal miners during 1984-5, they united horizontally across axes. Despite the divergent sources of their respective subordination as groups, both felt especially united by similar experiences with police violence—whether at urban gay pubs and clubs, or on rural village picket lines.[83] External solidarities can be more *vertical* when a relatively privileged group works alongside a relatively subordinated group towards justice for the latter. Again, external solidarities may span one or multiple hierarchies of power. In vertical external solidarities, someone who is positioned to benefit from the subordination of others (and, throughout her life, already has) begins to transition from oppressor to supporter. Men who support women in feminist struggle, or white people who support people of color in anti-racist struggle, participate in vertical external solidarities.

In this chapter I seek to work out the various challenges that arise in trying to relate equally within a context of structural inequalities. At first glance, we may think such a discussion should cover vertical situations first and foremost, for verticality signals an asymmetry in social status and in the concomitant power each person wields. Vertical situations are straightforwardly unequal. In real life, however, the internal/external and vertical/horizontal distinction is nowhere near as clean cut as I just expressed. At least a few factors muddy the waters. For one, borders between social groups are shifting and porous. These borders are themselves populated by individuals who straddle power in their day to day lives; the experiences of a light-skinned or white-passing person of color are shaped by both privilege and oppression in white supremacist society. In general, axes of oppression crosscut and intertwine dynamically in almost infinite ways, with verticality and horizontality on various different axes characterizing internal and external solidarities alike. Specific contexts render

[83] Kelliher 2014, p. 248-9

certain axes more or less salient. For instance: the gay and lesbian people who supported the miners came from working- and middle-class backgrounds, evincing both class verticality in internal gay and lesbian solidarity as well as class horizontality in the external solidarity between gay and lesbian supporters and miners.[84] When we consider the sexualities and gender expressions of miners, we encounter even more complexities. In sum: power asymmetries abound, even in so-called horizontal situations. Thus, the difficulties of addressing inequality concern solidarity in many, if not most, of its forms.

As I have described it so far, the challenge of inequality is primarily socio-political—of asymmetric power. But the challenge is also epistemic—of asymmetric knowledge. Here is a rough sketch of the connection, which I will soon describe in more detail. Subordinated groups that call for solidarity are most knowledgeable about the object of struggle: their reality. They understand intimately the conditions solidarity attempts to change, while outsiders who are not subject to the same kind of subordination do not. Outsiders who are marginalized, even along the same axis, may have a sense of what the injustices at issue are like and can reflect on how the system in question affects them, too, but they do not know the subordination at issue as well, or as personally, as the "insiders." Urban workers who did not work in the rural UK mines being threatened with closure in the 1980s may have known what exploitation felt like in their own workplace, but they lacked insight into the specific confluence of injustices facing striking miners—including the distinct danger and hostility of miners' working environment and their communities' overwhelming dependence on mining for employment.[85] Though subordinated groups are relatively privileged in their epistemic access to the object of struggle, they are systematically disempowered in communicating this

[84] Kelliher 2014, p. 251-2

[85] Richards (1996, pp. 16-38) cites these conditions, among others, as motivations for the miners' industrial action.

information to others. The literature on epistemic injustice examines the various ways in which systems of domination regularly suppress, obscure, and discredit subordinated knowledge.[86] According to Miranda Fricker, prejudicial beliefs and perceptions rampant in the collective social imagination lead hearers situated all along social hierarchies, not just the top, to accord lesser credibility to testimony from members of negatively stereotyped social groups.[87] Solidarity requires outsiders to overcome structural epistemic obstacles—to hear and believe those subject to subordination—at least to some degree and at least with respect to the relevant injustice. Gay and lesbian supporters, particularly those from middle-class backgrounds, had to reject the Thatcher government's propaganda discrediting the miners' efforts to deem the miners' struggle worthwhile. Mining communities had to put aside prejudices they may have had against gays and lesbians (presumably heightened by the AIDS epidemic) to build ongoing and mutual solidary relationships, that is, to collaborate—not just accept monetary support.[88] Interlocking systems of domination persist in part because marginalized groups participate in each other's subordination, even as they concurrently suffer marginalization. The issue of epistemic asymmetry in external solidarities, with subordinated individuals knowing more than outsiders, generally correlates with a power asymmetry that runs in the other direction, with outsiders participating in insiders' ongoing subordination; this is so even in horizontal situations.

We should draw two preliminary conclusions. First, our ameliorative account of solidarity must contend with knowledge as well as power asymmetries. Second, the question of how to engage

[86] Fricker 2007, Medina 2013

[87] Fricker 2007, "Prejudice in the Credibility Economy" (pp. 30-59). Fricker argues that to be so undermined in one's capacity as a giver of knowledge constitutes "testimonial injustice"; and that subjection to persistent and systematic testimonial injustice is a feature of oppression (pp. 58-9).

[88] Kelliher 2014, p. 249. Kelliher notes that, upon the foundation of solidarity built during the strike, mining communities reciprocated support; for example by passing first-ever lesbian and gay rights resolutions at the Labour and Trades Union Congress conferences in 1985 and campaigning against homophobic laws (Clause 28) in 1988 (pp. 255-6).

as equals within unequal contexts extends beyond the paradigmatic cases of solidarity between dominant and subordinate on a particular axis: white with Black, men with women, and so on. It arises more broadly in external solidarities. Let's now investigate the norms that should guide the prefigurative actions of outsiders once they enter into external solidarities with subordinated groups. (Given the heterogenous nature of internal solidarities and the blurriness of the internal/external distinction, the following will be useful to insiders, too.)

3.2. The case for deference

One of the most common approaches to realizing equality in contexts of solidarity is for outsiders to "follow the lead" of those most affected by injustice by deferring to their judgments and decisions. Call this the *deference* model of solidarity. According to the deference model, outsiders should effectively allocate or, better, pass off their power to the subordinated group they support. This pass off enables the subordinated group to mobilize a larger collective force according to their vision of justice.

One very successful example of the deference model of solidarity is the political bond between the US-based tomato picker organization, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), and its allies. Since 2001, the CIW has led a series of campaigns pressuring fast food, food service, and supermarket corporations to pay $0.01 more per pound of tomatoes (a move that costs companies next to nothing but nearly doubles farmworker wages) and commit to purchasing tomatoes from farms that abide by a farmworker-created code of conduct. The CIW's corporate campaigns have enlisted allies of all stripes—university students, people of faith, trade unions and workers in other industries, and more—to organize their own communities to advance farmworkers' aims. So far, farmworkers and allies have succeeded in pressuring 14 major companies to meet the CIW's

demands, including McDonald's and Subway. The CIW establishes very clear mechanisms for others to support them, whether it is by responding to regular calls to action (for example: nationwide call-ins to a corporate holdout's headquarters, or major regional mobilizations outside the offices of a key investor) or by becoming involved with the Alliance for Fair Food (AFF), an organization that exists to mobilize consumers for the CIW's campaigns. The CIW and AFF work together on the basis of an explicitly deferential principle of farmworker leadership. The rationale for deference is twofold: first, farmworkers best understand the exploitation they face in the fields and are best positioned to craft demands for improving conditions; and second, farmworkers stand to benefit most from potential changes and to contend with any repercussions of organizing—alienating employers, risking their jobs and livelihoods, and so forth. Therefore, farmworkers both design the code of conduct and the workplace interventions for which they fight and craft and direct the strategy for the ally-powered corporate campaigns. Allies—who, as consumers, benefit from cheap produce and simultaneously, as consumers and workers, experience myriad harms in a widely exploitative economic system—defer to the CIW's decisions about how to fight for farmworker justice.

As a model for allies, deference complements anti-imperialist agendas for the self-determination of oppressed peoples. The idea of self-determination prioritizes the creation of exclusive internal solidarities among subordinated people wherein the group establishes a direction for their struggle. On a deference model, the clear place of allies is not to intervene or participate in these discussions but to follow the decisions of the oppressed. The Black Power tradition, for example, held that Black people should create and establish control over their own communal institutions to partially realize self-governance within an institutionally racist structure. Non-Black (and especially white) people were prevented from exercising power over or within communal

institutions, and instead encouraged to participate exclusively in a supporting role, following Black leadership.[89]

To a significant extent, the popular conception of deference exemplified by the CIW and its allies as well as movements for self-determination is apprehended by Avery Kolers's theory of solidarity.[90] When supporting subordinated groups in their struggle against injustice, Kolers argues, outsiders should set aside how they think the collective should proceed. Even if outsiders are not convinced by the subordinated group's analysis or their plan—say, a group of CIW allies thinks it is ineffective to continue focusing efforts on a particular investor of the target corporation—they should defer to the subordinated group's epistemic judgments about how injustice works and practical judgments about how best to fight it. Kolers thinks solidarity is essentially agonistic; it requires "picking a side" and then acting on that side's terms. Yet, unlike in loyalty, which also requires acting on another's terms, in solidarity one initially picks a side based on an agent-neutral reason. Kolers argues that the appropriate criterion for choosing a side is structural: we must side with whichever group is least well-off in a given context. (The criterion could be articulated otherwise, for instance, whichever group is least powerful or is facing injustice.[91]) As long as what the subordinated group wants is "not unreasonable," and as long as the criterion for choosing a group continues to apply, solidary actions taken by outsiders must be directed or authorized by the chosen subordinated group. Importantly, outsiders cannot just step in to act unannounced and unwanted, like charitable agents often do. Outsiders' actions must instead be "consummated" by those facing injustice, that is, those facing injustice must accept and approve of outsiders' support.[92]

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[89] Shelby 2005, "Black Power Nationalism" (pp. 101-135)

[90] Kolers 2016

[91] Kolers 2016, "The Dilemma of Deference" (pp. 92-117)

[92] Kolers 2016, pp. 60-1

On its own, the model of deference challenges the ameliorative account's requirement that solidary agents share a critical understanding of reality. As Kolers's exposition shows, agents' understanding can significantly diverge—they may disagree about what injustice looks like and what is to be done—yet so long as outsiders are broadly on board with justice requiring that they defer to subordinated, solidarity can exist.

Kolers's central point is that deferring to the group that is least well off in itself constitutes equal treatment in the face of inequality. Therefore, Kolers argues, deferential solidarity is not just instrumental in achieving the end social equality and thereby justice, but in itself realizes this end. In this sense, the model of deference is prefigurative.

There are moral, practical, and epistemic motivations to adopt the deference model. Let's examine each in turn.

Kolers's own rationale for deference is primarily moral. Kolers notes that deferring to another's judgment about what is best for them expresses respect for the other as a moral person and social equal. This is because, by deferring instead of acting paternalistically on one's own conception of what is best, one upholds the other's capability of understanding her own predicament and responding appropriately.[93] Deference realizes equality in a second, related sense. Deference repudiates the imputation of lower status upon the subordinated group—this "raises up the victims, affirming their equal status."[94] Though Kolers does not articulate this second idea in terms of power, I understand it to amount to a restoration of sorts, a local rebalancing of the scales amid a larger asymmetric power arrangement. On my reading, by following the lead of a subordinated group, outsiders locally and temporarily allocate power "back" to the socially

[93] Kolers 2016, p. 125

[94] Kolers 2016, p. 124

disempowered. Instead of discrediting or overriding the subordinated group's judgments, as the oppressive or exploitative status quo would otherwise dictate, outsiders "raise up" the subordinated group in agreeing to value, through action, their epistemic and practical judgments. By making this commitment, outsiders—especially the privileged—limit the ways in which their asymmetric power can be wielded in a given situation. They excise themselves proactively from any position to dominate discussions with their perspectives or co-opt a struggle by imposing their decision. Thus, deference renders outsiders accountable to the subordinated. The elevation effected by deference is not merely expressive or psychological; given the justice-seeking nature of subordinated peoples' demands, deference often entails a *bona fide* reallocation of power. Considering that farmworkers, for example, wield the least economic power in the agricultural supply chain, when consumers to effectively pass on their power to them farmworkers acquire a stronger position to challenge the more powerful decision-makers: corporate buyers of produce, and the farms from which they source. On both counts, the local equilibration matters independently of whether the particular course of action effectively advances justice external to the relation. If the relation is internally deferential, then the relation itself advances justice. The chosen course of action might set back the movement; it might even make things worse. According to the deference model, outsiders have strong *pro tanto* reasons, grounded in justice, to follow the lead of the subordinated regardless.

Kolers's argument that deference realizes equality does not tell the full moral story. I think there is an additional moral reason to prioritize the judgments of the subordinated. When deciding to act, we have a plausible *prima facie* norm to allocate special moral consideration to those most at risk of harm from our actions.[95] The subordinated group is by definition most harmed by the injustice at issue; they will bear the brunt—costs, and also benefits—of whatever collective action

[95] An influential version of this argument is formulated in Goodin 1985.

the solidary group takes. Applying this norm, we should conclude that the subordinated group's outcomes should be weighed more heavily than others' in collective decision-making. This rationale is routinely put to use in popular contexts of solidarity and calls to "follow the lead of the most (negatively) affected." Recall the rationale undergirding the CIW's principle of farmworker leadership: farmworkers most stand to gain, and lose, from their corporate campaigns.

The practical justification for deference is straightforward. As a collective, we are more effective when we concentrate our power in the same direction than when we dissipate it. We are better off acting together than acting as individuals, each of our own accord.

Kolers maintains that, ultimately, we should side with the least well off "not because they are right but because they are the ones to side with"—that is, we should defer to them for moral reasons.[96] However, I think in most cases we should go further than Kolers. We should defer in part *because* those who are least well off are, indeed, in the right. The final justification for deference is epistemic. The central claim is that members of the subordinated group know their situation best: what constitutes the injustice they face, which demands will bring about justice, and which demands will put them at further risk. The subordinated group is therefore best positioned to deliberate and decide on what the solidary collective should do in the here and now, all things considered—rather than what they should do "in theory"—and should therefore lead solidary efforts to secure justice for their community. Outsiders should defer to their judgments.

The subordinated group's epistemic advantage is twofold. First, subordinated groups are keenly aware of the precise features of their situation, and thereby possess insight into the very specific mechanisms of injustice. This *granular understanding of subordination* sets apart insiders from

[96] Kolers 2016, p. 52

outsiders—even horizontal outsiders who have their own first-personal grasp of exploitation or marginalization. Dairy workers supporting the CIW's demands may better understand the distinct nature of exploitation in U.S. agriculture than university students—but dairy workers, too, lack the insight necessary to design workplace interventions appropriate to tomato fields. For example: farmworkers receive piece rate pay for every bucket of tomatoes they fill. When filled to the brim, buckets weigh 32 pounds. One of the CIW's demands is to prohibit crew leaders on farms from pocketing a bonus by demanding that workers overfill buckets to receive the piece rate.[97] (A crest or "copete" of tomatoes adds up to 5 pounds to the bucket.) This practice, which constitutes wage theft, is ubiquitous, yet would be very difficult for outsiders, even other workers, to perceive. Highly granular knowledge of this sort is of paramount relevance to the success of collective demands—indeed, of policy interventions more generally.[98] Recall how badly wrong development interventions that aim at gender justice can go when they lack insight into the micro-dynamics of household negotiations—and what simply increasing women's incomes without complementary measures is likely to cause male partners to do.[99]

As Kolers himself notes, we do not have to embrace a standpoint epistemology to acknowledge that those who suffer injustice are, in this granular sense, better positioned than outsiders to know how the ins and outs of the specific injustice.[100] If we do adopt standpoint theory, as I think political philosophers should do, we can additionally argue that subordinated groups also have a better *theoretical understanding of subordination* than outsiders. According to standpoint theory,

[97] Fair Food Standards Council 2018, p. 22

[98] The CIW points out that independent auditors hired by food companies to inspect producers often miss crucial rights violations in part because, though they may have a general understanding of workplace standards, they lack insight into how risks manifest in each particular environment (Asbed and Hitov 2017).

[99] Khader 2019, pp. 51-4.

[100] Kolers 2016, p. 90

people subject to oppression or exploitation are structurally better positioned to register the structure and dynamics of social power, itself. Here is a brief sketch of the argument.[101] The powerful see the structure of domination as necessary, as the natural order of things; because they benefit from it, they have no incentive to question the *status quo*. The dynamics of social power are therefore obscured from those in power.[102] However, because subordinated groups do not benefit from domination, they are incentivized to question their position, grasp the structure of power as a whole, and eventually cognize it as contingent social fact rather than natural necessity. A crucial component of the subordinated standpoint is the perception that reality is changeable. Of course, just because an individual occupies a subordinated position does not mean she automatically adopts this emancipatory standpoint; she must wade through the dominant perspective that has been imposed upon her group and achieve the emancipatory standpoint through struggle. Patricia Hill Collins quotes Black domestic worker Rosa Wakefield's vivid articulation of her standpoint theoretical grasp as a Black person, *contra* the non-Black, especially white, standpoint:

> "If you eats these dinners and don't cook 'em, if you wears these clothes and don't buy or iron them, then you might start thinking that the good fairy or some spirit did all that…Black folks don't have no time to be thinking like that…But when you don't have anything else to do, you can think like that. It's bad for your mind, though."[103]

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[101] Classically articulated by Marx in *Capital* Vol. I (1867). Feminist and critical theorists have adapted Marx's framework to various structures of domination; some following Marx's contention that standpoints are determined by material conditions (e.g. Hartsock 1983) and others arguing that standpoints are shaped by discursive conditions (e.g. Fraser 1986).

[102] Dominant groups are not just badly positioned to know subordination—they are also not positioned to share interests with the oppressed. This is a reason to mistrust their deliberations on matters of justice. I partially address this worry below with the idea of collaborative deliberation (solidary members of dominant groups do not deliberate for members of subordinated groups, but *with* them); and the idea of personal transformation in Chapter 4.

[103] Hill Collins 2009 (2000), p. 44

Wakefield's description easily translates to gendered and class dichotomies of knowledge, too. These of course intersect and overlap in a multi-channeled matrix of domination.

We find ourselves with strong moral, practical, and epistemic reasons to prefigure justice by deferring to the judgments of the subordinated. It is certainly better than the liberal prescription for outsiders to follow their own moral assessments in the face of injustice, which Kolers presents as the alternative. But the model of deference is incomplete. I will now assess the limits of deference to establish how, exactly, it falls short.

3.3. The limits of deference

Deference assumes that there is a person or group establishing a clear direction for allies to follow. Kolers uses the example of a hypothetical white bus rider who, witnessing Rosa Parks be removed from the bus after refusing to yield her seat to a white passenger, follows suit and also dismounts the bus. Parks did not ask for help (which could pose a problem; Kolers acknowledges that the solidary agent must stand down if requested by Parks), but she is obviously the socially disempowered party from whom to seek direction in this instance. In the farmworker case, the CIW is a democratic organization made up of farmworker members with robust internal mechanisms for dialogue and accountability. Its calls for allies are straightforward and internally vetted, and allies trust that these calls are representative of how the farmworker community wants to proceed. Sally Scholz rightly observes that, the more localized the solidarity movement, the more likely there will be a formal or informal decision-making structure.[104] Such structures allow following to be a straightforward affair. However, in more diffuse and broad-based movements—particularly when

[104] Scholz 2008, p. 123

these contain groups with divergent and even conflicting ideas—deference becomes more difficult. Which faction among the many represents the epistemic and practical judgments of the oppressed? In the classic U.S. civil rights movement example: is it organizations advocating for nonviolence or those urging armed self-defense? And what of those at the intersection of oppressions, such as Black women; are their voices heard? These questions expose the artificiality of seeking one "representative" group in complex a movement as that for civil rights. The oppressed, in this case the Black community, obviously do not share one uniform perspective. Agents seeking to act in solidarity must be wary of oversimplifying the dynamics of a shifting matrix of domination and homogenizing the differences and power asymmetries within a subordinated group. As I argued in the last chapter, such moves reproduce injustice, especially because they tend to lift up the relatively more powerful voices within an oppressed group and may be insensitive to co-option. Clear structures of accountability within organizations and coalitions mitigate oversimplification, homogenization, and a default to the relatively powerful, but it is always a worry. Therefore: the first trouble with deference is that it lacks the nuance to serve as a blanket practical approach especially when there is no clear and cohesive lead to follow. Deference is a good start, but solidary agents need more practical tools to figure out how to navigate power and knowledge asymmetries.

Because the deference model instructs those who answer calls for solidarity to follow, and only to follow, it risks missing how the distinct positionality of outsiders may be leveraged for the sake of justice. This is the second limitation. For example, outsider allies may offer additional resources about which the subordinated group may not be aware. One of the benefits of the Alliance for Fair Food, the organization the CIW set up to support its campaigns, is that it provides a venue for allies to dynamically feed into campaign strategy. Whether they are students organizing to cut their university's contract with a target company, or members of religious communities with ties to the corporation, allies offer invaluable insights farmworkers would not otherwise have to

factor into their decision-making. And this extends beyond how to appeal to and convince a particular constituency to enlarge the ally supporter base. Take, for example, the CIW's close partnership with members of the mainline Presbyterian Church (USA) during their very first campaign: a national boycott of Taco Bell. The headquarters of the PC(USA) is just a few miles away from those of Taco Bell's parent company YUM! Brands (the principal decision-maker) in Louisville, Kentucky. In addition to facilitating the passage of a denomination-wide endorsement of the Taco Bell boycott, Presbyterian supporters helped the CIW identify and organize within churches where YUM! executives worshipped; action so close to home significantly augmented pressure on the company.[105] It was important for the CIW and allies to strategize, together, in order to pull this off. In this case, ally deference with respect to ends was warranted (i.e. the boycott campaign); but with respect to means (i.e. how to execute the boycott), the cause of farmworker justice was better advanced when both parties could share their perspectives and deliberate together.

Perhaps the deference model should always require deference with respect to ends but allow back-and-forth with respect to means. Even with this amendment, I think the model remains too constrained for certain cases. Horizontal solidarities, in particular, present invaluable opportunities for strategic and even conceptual collaboration that may be hampered by strict adherence to the deference model. This includes the possibility to co-envision the end of solidarity itself—justice. In their history of lesbian and gay solidarity with the miners' strike in 1984-5, Diarmaid Kelliher recounts how interactions with gay and lesbian people, who communicated their experiences during visits to their mining town, helped the miners gain better insight both into what sexual oppression is like and how it overlapped with miners' own treatment at the hands of the state. Kelliher quotes one

[105] From CIW farmworker staff member Joaquín Zavala, cited in Laughlin 2007: "The churches have been very influential in the [Taco Bell] campaign. I am not going to say it is the main reason for the executives to settle, but it was certainly one of the most important ingredients."

(presumably straight) miner's testimony, "We've suffered in the last year with the police and, you know, at different things, what [lesbians and gay men have] been suffering all their lives."[106] And another, who felt that "we were next in line after lesbians and gays…it's a horrifying position to be in. You cannot sympathize with an oppressed group until you've actually been a member of one."[107] I suggest we understand the miners' shift in outlook as owing to an enrichment of their conception of justice. Better understanding sexual oppression, under what Nancy Fraser would call a recognition-based paradigm of justice, helped complement and potentially reshape miners' predominantly redistributive notion of justice.[108] (The influence presumably went both ways, especially for middle-class allies.) The model of deference, whereby gay and lesbian supporters responded directly to miners' appeal for funds, was suited to catalyze potentially transformative horizontal encounters. With deference, we lack an account for what emerges from such exchanges. Our final model of interpersonal transformation should demarcate when and where deference is appropriate; and also enable solidary agents to build on each other's insights to shape a collective vision of justice—one that over time becomes broader, sharper, and better suited to take on more of the matrix of domination.

Thirdly, as it stands, the model of deference fails to distinguish between what we might call authentic and inauthentic deference; but only authentically practiced deference should qualify as solidarity. Consider the following. When outsiders commit to follow the lead of a subordinated group, as deference requires, they rightly recuse themselves from deliberations about justice. Deliberations are carried out and decisions are made exclusively by those who suffer subordination. The problem of *inauthentic deference* arises when the solidarity collective's actions are challenged; an

[106] Kelliher 2014, p. 249

[107] Kelliher 2014, p. 249

[108] Fraser 2003. Thanks to my supervisor for suggesting this interpretation.

outsider who did not agree with the subordinated group's strategy in the first place may distance herself from her own action as a member of the collective by resorting to the reason, "because they asked me to do it." This answer effectively offloads the burden of explanation and justification of justice-seeking actions to the subordinated group. If it is accepted by the hearer, the answer *de facto* suspends the outsider's responsibility to justify her actions in terms of the agent-neutral reason that undergirds solidarity in the first place: justice. But such suspension of responsibility strikes us as inappropriate for solidarity—a unity in which agents supposedly *share* a critical understanding of reality and commitment to the goal of justice. Indeed, answering "because they asked me to do it" reveals the outsider's lack of commitment to justice; did she not decide to follow the subordinated group's decision, say to engage in civil disobedience, because, at the very least, she thought following their lead was the right thing to do? That following itself realized justice? It seems profoundly unsolidary to take a risk with the collective but then fall back on one's outsider—and frequently, privileged—position to avoid adverse consequences if plans fall through. It seems almost as bad as the complicity of the white moderate who acts on his disagreement. Inauthentic deference has no place in solidarity. Those who defer must, too, be held responsible for their actions such that, at the moment they go along with the subordinated group's decision, outsider allies take it on as their *own* choice.

How might we guard against inauthentic deference? The ameliorative conception requires commitment to the end of justice from outsiders and insiders alike. When practicing deference, outsiders must understand that their very decision to defer, and to withdraw from deliberation, realizes this end. This should be the case even if outsiders cannot articulate the vision of justice quite as clearly or precisely as those who suffer injustice. But this cannot be the full story. Deference works well at the beginning. But sooner or later, solidary agents must put in the hard work required to justify collective decisions to themselves—to deeply "own" their choices. This entails reflecting

and analyzing *why* it is that the subordinated group chooses to act in certain ways. When one disagrees with the subordinated group's decision, solidarity challenges one to ask: why do I disagree? In the case of the white moderate: why do I shun more confrontational methods in the fight for racial justice; and why do I not share Black peoples' sense of urgency? Solidarity challenges one to cultivate a disposition to learn from those one supports. Our practical model should guide outsider agents as they cultivate the capacities, first, to encounter and understand the subordinated group's reasons for acting; and second, to internalize these reasons as their own.

We should conclude that, so long as it is authentically practiced, the model of deference offers a great practical guide for those first entering into relations of solidarity. The impetus of an outsider who has first learned about an injustice, or perhaps felt the weight of her own responsibility to address the harm for the first time, should be to trust the judgments of the subordinated group she wishes to support and follow their lead. But, in the ways I just laid out, deference only takes us so far. Deference conceives of solidarity as a state; its norms are accordingly *synchronic*. As per the ameliorative account, solidarity is by contrast an ongoing, constantly evolving practice; we need norms that are accordingly *diachronic*. Specifically, solidarity is a *transformative* practice. In solidarity, we aspire to dismantle hierarchies and build egalitarian relationships that experimentally model, or prefigure, the ways we want to relate to each other in the new world we are making together. While deference is appropriate for the negative component of this project, that is for rejecting power asymmetries, deference alone falls short when it comes to positively transforming our social relations into something new. The deference model is insufficiently prefigurative insofar as it lacks the requisite diachronic and positive components. As I will now argue, deference is only one piece of the fuller picture: the model of mutuality.

3.4. Mutuality: A prefigurative alternative

The model of mutuality presents a general practical framework by which solidary agents can prefiguratively navigate power and knowledge asymmetries in relations of solidarity. Where deference is political action *on others' terms*, mutuality is political action *on shared terms*. Because mutuality understands both injustice and our solidary response to be a dynamic, unfolding process, its prescription to "act on shared terms" is something to be worked towards over time. That is, solidary agents grow in their capacities to understand and in their commitment to justice, as relations of solidarity deepen, and the world around them changes. The model of mutuality starts off just like the model of deference—indeed, it starts off by prescribing deference. Solidary agents should pick a side on the basis of the agent-neutral reason of justice and follow their lead for the moral, practical, and epistemic reasons I laid out above. But in addition to following the lead of those who suffer injustice, mutuality instructs agents to converge with them on a number of fronts: epistemic, purposive, practical, and experiential.

In external solidarities, outsiders and insiders should aspire to converge on what I identified as the foundations of solidarity: a shared critical grasp of reality and a shared goal of justice. Epistemically, solidary agents should work towards a mutually shared understanding of reality, and relatedly, the development of a shared practical sensibility when it comes to contending with this reality. Because outsiders often only begin with a shallow grasp of how oppression or exploitation works, and they aren't structurally placed to understand the dynamics of subordination like those who experience it first-hand are, they must do most of the work involved in deepening this shared understanding. As I will discuss in the final chapter, epistemic convergence does not amount to two parties "meeting halfway." Nevertheless, outsiders and insiders depend on each other to craft as full and as effective a picture of reality as possible. As I argued above, this is so with regards to the

means of solidarity; and in horizontal solidarities especially, with regards to the end of solidarity. Purposively, solidary agents should of course start out with an authentic commitment to justice. Over time, they should develop a mutually shared vision of what justice requires. This, of course, goes hand in hand with acquiring a shared grasp of the mechanisms of injustice. Thus: what begins as a subordinated group's call for support met by outsiders' deferential solidary action has the potential to become co-conspiration in the multidimensional struggle for intersectional justice.

On the practical dimension, solidary agents must mutually engage in the individual and collective actions that realize justice. Recall that solidarity is always mediated through particular, concrete entities; it is not an abstract relation. To mutually engage as interdependent equals, these parties must know of each other's support; they must "consummate" each other's actions; and they must be disposed to come to the other's aid if and when the need arises. Earlier, I used the CIW's Fair Food movement as an example of the deference model. Now, we have the conceptual tools to understand it, more broadly, to illustrate mutuality. The CIW prioritizes building long-term face-to-face relationships with the organizations that support their corporate campaigns. This involves participating in their allies' struggles time and time again. Some of CIW's allies, like wealthy predominantly white congregations, are very privileged and require no support from CIW; others, including worker and racial justice organizations fighting their own battles, know their allyship with the CIW is a two-way street.

Finally, convergence has an experiential dimension: the joint experience of struggle, that is, of shared resistance. To be in solidarity is to fight shoulder to shoulder with others. Outsiders who join with members of subordinated groups end up on the same picket lines, the same marches, the same gatherings, and so on (excluding the spaces dedicated to building internal solidarities among those who share a similar condition of subordination). Of course, outsiders do not experience the

same high level of risk nor do they stand to gain in the same ways that subordinated groups fighting for their lives and livelihoods experience. As I will argue in the final chapter, solidarity enables outsiders to gain an intimate, albeit second-personal, understanding of oppression and exploitation. Insiders, for their part, come to know what it feels like to not struggle alone. The joint experience of struggle brings outsiders and insiders closer together in part because it facilitates direct relationships. These, in turn, provide agents additional agent-relative motivations to continue to show up in solidarity. When 70 CIW members and allies—students, people of faith, cultural workers, and a constellation of supporters from around the country—decided to fast for five days on the sidewalk in front of the offices of a top Wendy's investor in early March 2018, they all experienced hunger, cold, laughter, frustration, curiosity and aggression from passersby on the busy New York City thoroughfare, and they experienced it together. Outsiders and insiders to the struggle for farmworker justice crafted a joint experience of struggle through this solidary action. This example demonstrates, too, how outsiders need not merely "pass off" their power to subordinated groups. They can share their power by being present, active, and consistently engaged with those whom they support.

Although it aims at convergence, the model of mutuality keeps in view the power and knowledge asymmetries that persist against a backdrop of entrenched inequality. This is especially evident when we consider mutuality's contrast with the idea of reciprocity. Reciprocity requires each individual to give and receive support in equal measure "tit for tat"; this makes reciprocity well-suited to guide agents in instrumental coalitions. Mutuality, on the other hand, is sensitive to what each agent needs and is able to give. One community's needs may be more urgent and/or more frequent, and this community might in turn be less resourced to aid others. While such a community may not be able to reciprocate the aid it receives from a more advantaged group, the former can still be in a mutual relationship with the latter insofar as both act upon the same understanding of reality

and towards the same goal of justice. When applied to contexts of domination, mutuality underscores that at any given moment, how mutual support manifests will depend on both the individual positionality of each agent or group and the surrounding context. Thus, mutuality is entirely consistent with according epistemic privilege to subordinated groups as per standpoint theory; giving them moral priority on the basis of equalizing power; giving them moral priority because they are most at risk of harm by changes incurred through the support outsiders offer; and establishing their leadership in liberation movements.

Mutuality is realized in degrees; it does not happen overnight but builds over time. As I have noted, one may start off by acting on other's terms for excellent and persistent moral, practical, and epistemic reasons. Deference is the appropriate response in situations of incipient outsider solidarity. I should add, for those very reasons, deference is also the appropriate response in situations of stark verticality. Deference's mitigation of power asymmetries is unambiguous: the powerful should follow the lead of the less powerful. In situations where these asymmetries are intractably steep, this straightforward instruction safeguards against the local reassertion of oppressive dynamics. Still, situating deference in both cases within the broader frame of mutuality, it is clear that deferential outsiders should seek not just to follow the lead of the subordinated group. They should also work to gradually embrace the subordinated group's perspective and work towards acting on shared terms. To return to my opening examples of failed solidarity: mutuality would instruct the missionary feminist and the white moderate alike to abandon their pretensions to epistemic authority, to learn from those they support, to follow their lead in the pursuit of justice, to reorient their social power, and to build up the trust necessary to converge with them in the ways I outlined above. In horizontal solidarities, especially, the frame of mutuality ensures there is space for creative collaboration that serves the end of justice for both marginalized groups—of collective liberation.

4 Solidarity and personal transformation

Solidarity is a transformative practice in more ways than one. Through solidarity we seek to transform the world. And guided by the norm of mutuality, we seek to prefiguratively transform our interpersonal relations. Though personal transformation should not be our primary goal when we enter into relations of solidarity (the end is justice, after all), previous chapters have established that reflecting on one's own positionality and reorienting one's own socially afforded power are integral components of solidarity. But these discussions only touched on the personal transformations undergone by solidary agents. Surely, we change in simply in the course of learning and acting alongside others in the context of struggle. And we change in various ways: as we gain new understandings and as we reconfigure our evaluative outlooks, sympathies, interests, priorities, and self-conception. One of solidarity's hallmark personal shifts is coming to see oneself as intimately wrapped up in the fight of others, such that others' struggle is not merely a general matter of justice, or a matter of altruistic concern for the subordinated group, but a personal matter in which one as an outsider is directly invested. We witness this shift when people genuinely express, "*tu lucha es mi lucha*," your struggle is my struggle.

How should we understand this complex process of personal transformation and its epistemic, affective, evaluative, and motivational dimensions? How do these changes arise through the practice of solidarity, and how do they feed into each other?

The philosophy of literature may help us take a rough first pass at these questions, at least when it comes to external solidarities between those who experience subordination and "outsiders" who do not. Martha Nussbaum has argued that a well-crafted realist narrative can provide readers with a rich, intricate, and personal understanding of what the lives of others are like. To engage imaginatively and empathetically with characters in such narratives who are subject to oppressive social conditions is to "see the world, for a time, through their eyes"; this "seeing" offers readers both insight into the descriptive facts of, say, sexual harassment and motivation to seek real-world social change.[109] Perhaps solidarity provides a similarly intimate understanding of subordination. Through establishing direct relationships and the experience of joint action, solidarity brings outsiders shoulder to shoulder not with fictional characters, but with actual individuals for whom oppression and exploitation is a lived reality. My ameliorative account of solidarity already premises some degree of shared political understanding among agents. From there, cultivating a solidary imagination would be like cultivating a narrative imagination: by deepening their descriptive, emotionally-laden understanding through solidarity, outsiders would bring their inclinations and priorities closer to those of subordinated groups until they "saw through their eyes"—until they felt, "your struggle is my struggle." I, as a student, may first enter into solidarity with farmworkers after learning that producers and big-brand buyers exploit workers; producers and buyers profit by keeping wages cheap, conditions precarious, and workers disempowered. By learning more about farmworkers' experiences through relationship and joint action, I as an outsider come to better understand the precise character of this injustice (for example, how crew leaders steal wages from

[109] Nussbaum 1995, pp. 90-99. Regarding this example Nussbaum writes, "if one cannot imagine what women suffer from sexual harassment on the job, one won't have a vivid sense of that offense as a serious social infringement that the law should remedy" (p. 91). Nussbaum later suggests that an outsider's "vivid sense" must include a sensitivity towards power asymmetries (p. 111).

farmworkers by demanding overfilled buckets), and to feel anger and indignity at farmworkers' treatment and thereby be motivated to prioritize farmworker justice among my ends.

This initial diagnosis rightly identifies a link between new knowledge and transformed affect and motivations. But we must tread carefully when discerning the sense in which outsiders "see" through the eyes of another through solidarity, that is, the sense in which new knowledge is "personal" and "intimate." The claim that solidary agents come to have something like first-personal knowledge is controversial. An influential strand in activism and popular theories of injustice involves the denial that those who have not experienced oppression or exploitation first-hand can ever expect to perceive and react to the world, and thus deliberate about it, in the same way as those who are. The motivations for this position are partially phenomenal: those who do not work in the fields cannot ever feel the force of "what it's like" to perform precarious outdoor piece-rate labor subject to the whims of various bosses; just as those who do not live every day as a Black person cannot ever know "what it's like" to walk through the world as a target for anti-Black racism. The position's motivations are also partially affective. Oppression, in particular, is a condition that one is marked for by a specific set of social norms, institutions, and practices, and that one cannot voluntarily step in and out of. Subordinated subjects' reactive dispositions are deeply shaped by their childhood and history as negatively racialized, negatively gendered, misgendered, and so on. The feelings of entrapment and the psychological toll oppression carries over the course of a life cannot be replicated for outsiders who learn about subordination second-hand. Alternatively, we may think solidarity's knowledge is second-personal but nevertheless intimate, phenomenal, and directly gained. Consider the rude but clarifying awakening someone from a privileged racialized group experiences when she participates in a multiracial demonstration and witnesses (or even experiences for herself) the kind of police brutality usually reserved for Black and brown people—things that would not happen to a predominantly white or white-passing group. Through such direct

experiences, and through indirect ones such as listening to members of negatively racialized group with whom one is in concrete relationship, outsiders may come to a lucid second-person understanding of racism. Outsider agents come to "see *with*" rather than "see *as*" those subject to subordination *from their specific outsider position* in the matrix of domination. Such engaged second-person understanding is well sufficient to motivate substantive anti-racist actions and commitments. History and the present (and this thesis) are replete with examples of people standing shoulder to shoulder with victims of injustice, of taking on others' struggle "as their own" despite not having immediate access to the kind of subordination at issue.

Once we dismiss the narrative model, we need an alternative. We must investigate, specifically, what sort of knowledge agents gain through solidarity; how new knowledge translates into changed motivations; and the nature of transformed motivations. For instance, are newly acquired reasons merely cognized, or fully felt as desires or inclinations? A survey of the philosophical literature on personal transformations yields three theories that promise to shed light on these questions. These are: the "transformative experience" approach advanced by L.A. Paul; the literature on "perspectives" and perspectival shifts theorized by Elisabeth Camp; and Bernard Williams's classic theory of internal reasons. Each offers a distinct mechanism, or set of mechanisms, by which knowledge, affect, evaluative outlooks, and practical motivations shift and interact. In this final chapter I apply the frameworks to the ameliorative account of solidarity and evaluate the explanatory merits of each, in turn. Paul's theory helps dialectically sharpen our inquiry, but I argue that Camp's and Williams's frameworks are most useful in unpacking the processes at work. I propose a hybrid perspective-motivational view as a working theory to explicate the personal transformations agents undergo in solidarity. My proposal is not comprehensive, and we should reject attempts to reduce solidarity to these shifts alone; nevertheless, I think it covers the process's most salient components and can serve as a general model for different modes of political solidarity.

A brief note on scope before beginning. I focus on the experience of outsiders in external solidarities, as in the example of students and farmworkers. Recall that, in vertical situations, an outsider is privileged relative to the group she supports; and in horizontal situations, an outsider is socially marginalized, but not in the same way as the group calling for solidarity. Solidarity between students and farmworkers is vertical in many ways (especially in their respective consumer/worker positioning in produce supply chains) but there are race, class, gender, and other factors that create undeniable horizontalities and overlaps. Such factors also complicate internal solidarities within the student and farmworker communities, respectively. Given the heterogeneity of internal solidarities and the consequent instability of the internal/external and vertical/horizontal distinctions, in many respects the following analysis applies to agents in internal solidarities and therefore to solidarities, generally speaking.

4.1. Solidarity as a "transformative experience"

Our first option is to treat solidarity as what L.A. Paul calls a "transformative experience.". According to Paul, transformative experiences are brand-new experiences that generate both epistemic and personal transformations. They are epistemically transformative insofar as they give agents new information and new abilities to understand certain contents.[110] Specifically, Paul argues that transformative experiences provide agents with phenomenal, "what it's like" knowledge impossible to obtain otherwise; secondary testimonies of becoming a parent, emigrating to a new country, or becoming a doctor are insufficient to know "what it's like" to do any of these things. Paul's idea is that such experiences create "a profound epistemic shift that scales up into or creates a

[110] Paul 2014, pp. 10-11

profound personal shift."[111] Namely, discovering new phenomenal information and, consequently, seeing things in a new light leads into a significant change in the agent's values and core preferences. A career-driven individual who becomes a parent and discovers how meaningful she finds raising a child, for instance, may come to prioritize time at home over extra hours in the office. Paul thinks agents can value transformative experiences on the basis of their "revelatory" capacity, that is, the way in which they provide one with information that help "reveal" oneself, one's interests, and one's desires to oneself.[112]

Paul's account is of limited use for our purposes because Paul's narrow focus on what transformative experiences reveal to agents *about themselves* rather than the world at-large. Sure, some of the phenomenal information agents gain through solidarity, and would be hard-pressed to develop elsewise, induce personal transformations of the sort Paul describes. Consider how agents come to know what it's like to feel empowered in community, rather than powerless as an individual, in the face of seemingly intractable systems of domination. Feeling empowered presumably translates into an agent's ongoing willingness to engage in struggle where, before, she would have felt the endeavor pointless—hence, a self-conscious change in priorities.

However, the knowledge agents gain through solidarity is valuable to them primarily because it is *externally* revelatory, and consequently helps individuals and groups better pursue justice. The practice of solidarity usefully illuminates how power is distributed in society, how the groups they support see the world, and thus what justice requires. I already mentioned how, in learning from workers how wage theft happens in the fields, students gain a richer account of exploitation. This kind of specific, granular knowledge of the power dynamics at work in systems of domination, as I

[111] Paul 2019, p. 314

[112] Paul 2014, pp. 113-115

explained in the previous chapter, is most accessible to those who experience it first-hand; and only they know phenomenally "what it's like." Outsiders must listen to first-hand narratives to gain exposure to this information, and solidarity establishes the relationships and discursive spaces where it can be shared. Since experiences of subordinated groups tend to be ignored or distorted by hegemonic cultural forms in the news, literature, and other media, it is difficult to come by this information (or know who or what to read) otherwise. Joint action alongside those who suffer injustice also contributes to outsiders' (un)learning insofar as it provides opportunities to gain second-hand, phenomenal knowledge about injustice, as in the opening example of the privileged protestor witnessing racialized police brutality. This gives outsiders a more intimate sense of injustice and may help them to see that injustice appears in more places, in more ways than they previously thought. Moreover, solidarity discloses useful practical information that would be difficult to discern in advance, like who one's opponents and allies should be. Consider how, after nearly a decade of futile campaigning against their direct employers, tomato producers, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers realized that their opponents should be the brands to whom producers supplied tomatoes, like Taco Bell. Only by trying the standard employer-targeted labor model, and failing, did the CIW learn that brand-name buyers are structurally better positioned than producers to raise wages and implement better conditions.[113]

While this externally facing knowledge is self-referential and thus, in a sense, internally "revealing," these internal revelations are of secondary, often instrumental, importance. Solidary agents learn about power distributions in the context of action, that is, in the context of practical deliberation. In order to successfully deliberate and determine how she should act in prefiguratively

[113] This is due to the quasi-monopsonistic structure of U.S. agricultural supply chains. Between fast food chains, supermarket chains, and institutional food service providers, a relatively small number of buyers controls enough of the tomato market to effectively set prices—and thereby keep down farmworkers' wages (Marquis 2017, pp. 46-51).

egalitarian struggle—in order to apply the norm of mutuality—a solidary agent is necessarily prompted to reflect upon the specific places she, herself, occupies in systems of domination. This is the non-neutral political position from which she acts. The subordinated group calling for solidarity sometimes explicitly articulates the place of allies (the CIW appeals to students to make demands of fast food companies *as consumers*), other times outsiders' role and tasks are worked out through relationship and reflection. Therefore, the "internal revelations" solidarity engenders do not matter primarily (if at all) because they disclose personal values and preferences, as Paul would have it. These revelations matter because they translate political realizations about the world to agents' immediate lived experience. Consequently, internal revelations matter because they guide deliberations, elucidating how, exactly, an individual should realize her agent-neutral reason to act for justice.

Even if we extend Paul's approach to embrace externally and internally valuable revelations, her idea of a "transformative experience" is not quite right for solidarity. For starters, Paul simplistically treats transformative engagements as one-time decisions after which, *voilà,* the decision-maker is suddenly engaged in a "momentous, irreversible, life-changing" experience.[114] Although we can identify specific events like first protests or first meetings that initiate one's practice of solidarity, solidarity's transformative character is diachronic. As a *practice*, solidarity is not realized in one watershed choice but in the ongoing, iterated feedback of action and reflection that advances an open-ended collective pursuit of justice. Accordingly, solidarity's personal transformations do not occur in a moment but over the course of experience upon experience. Granted, some solidary experiences are more transformative than others, and the extent to which an event is transformative

[114] Paul 2014, pp. 21, 46, and *passim*

depends on the profile of the agent in question.[115] Joining a hunger-strike is usually more transformative than signing a petition; while occupying dominant positions in social hierarchies, and thereby lacking direct experience with marginalization, may make it more difficult for outsiders to grasp the depth of feeling fueling a subordinated group's decision to go on hunger strike. In large part because it treats transformative engagements as singular momentary decisions, the transformative experience approach pays insufficient attention to the agency involved in transformation. It is true that solidary agents act first and foremost to change interpersonal relations and society, not themselves, so many specific personal transformations are neither anticipated nor intended as such. Still, personal transformations do not just "happen" to someone who decides to engage in solidarity. Transformations are either directly or indirectly worked on by agents themselves through action, action-readiness, self-reflection, and proactively building direct relationships with others in the solidary group. For the most part, growing in one's solidary practice is a self-conscious, intentional process, whereby one strives to be a more active, more committed ally to movements for justice and liberation. Thus, solidarity is best characterized not as a "transformative experience" *per se*, but rather as what Paul's interlocutor Agnes Callard calls a "large-scale transformative pursuit"—a "temporally extended, agentially-directed process."[116]

Callard argues these critiques apply broadly to the genre of long-term "transformative experiences" analyzed by Paul, including emigrating and becoming a parent.[117] Is Callard's framework any better for understanding solidarity? Only marginally so. Paul's and Callard's approaches can only take us as far as we have come because they build their theories around a puzzle that simply does not apply to solidarity. This is the question of whether transformative

[115] Barnes 2015 (pp. 171-5) makes both these points in response to Paul.

[116] Callard 2018, p. 74

[117] Callard 2018, pp. 53-67

choices are rational, which arises out of rational choice theory. If agents cannot assign a subjective value to transformative outcomes, given that they do not know in advance what the outcome will be like or whether they will like it, how are transformative decisions rational? Paul proposes agents should subjectively "value first-personal revelation and choose experiences in order to see how our preferences will evolve."[118] The idea that someone attempts to engage in solidarity because she wants a revelatory experience strikes us as wrong; she should be primarily motivated by justice, not self-knowledge for the sake of self-knowledge. Callard argues that such deliberations are proleptically rational i.e. rational "in advance" of an agent's full appreciation of the value she aspires to grasp.[119] By contrast, solidarity is *already* justified—objectively *and* subjectively—by agent-neutral reasons to pursue justice, combat domination, and change reality (and the self, insofar as it figures in the unjust reality). Given the open-ended nature of solidarity and the conception of justice upon which it is based, agents may still need to "fill out" the exact content of their end. Nevertheless, attempts to explicate solidary transformation are always already backgrounded by independently viable reasons. Moreover, solidarity is not just individually but collectively pursued; and justice is not just individually but collectively cognized. As I discussed at the beginning of this section, the individualistic, inward-gazing focus of Paul's and Callard's theories limits these theories' explanatory power regarding solidarity.

At least, engaging with the transformative experience approach helps elucidate the contours of solidarity as a diachronic, agentially-directed transformative pursuit. It also helps articulate some of the epistemic transformations agents undergo in this process and why they matter. Our next step

[118] Paul 2014 p. 128 and "The Shock of the New" (pp. 105-123)

[119] Callard 2018, "Proleptic Reasons" (pp. 68-107)

is to probe this epistemic finding and its relation to motivation by further examining the knowledge gained.

4.2. Epistemic transformations and perspectival shifts

By the time agents enter into relations of solidarity, their personal transformation is already underway. For one, they have already internalized the end of justice. Moreover, they "thickly" cognize the surrounding matrix of domination. I mentioned that one of the preconditions for solidarity is perceiving certain social arrangements *as unjust*; agents' perception here is thick insofar as it involves not just a descriptive analysis of these arrangements, but also a certain evaluative judgment and affective disposition towards them. Unjust situations are wrong and merit redress (i.e. justice); and they inspire feelings ranging from anger and condemnation to sympathy with those who suffer the injustice.

Presumably, the externally facing epistemic transformations agents undergo in solidarity do not merely provide them with new data points about reality. Agents' learning is thick, too. The phenomenal knowledge I described earlier—"what it's like" to experience collective resistance, to witness the injustice that befalls others, to listen to others recount their experience with exploitation, etc.—is undoubtedly saturated with evaluation and affect. In fact, one of the central ways phenomenal knowledge differs from strictly theoretical or descriptive knowledge is that it fuses cognition with feeling. Paul skates over this point, but it is arguably largely because epistemic transformations carry these evaluative and affective layers that transformative pursuits—parenthood and solidarity alike—often generate changes in an individual's preferences, priorities, and interests. In the case of solidarity, agents already possess an incipient thick cognition of injustice. We should add that the very medium of solidarity encourages outsiders to react evaluatively and affectively to

novel descriptions of political reality. This is because outsiders acquire knowledge through concrete relationships with, and direct actions alongside, subordinated groups, whose own deep-set affective and evaluative reactions to oppression and exploitation are undoubtedly palpable to those who support them.

One commonplace approach to capturing the idea of thickness is to resort to the notion of "thick concepts." Unlike merely descriptive notions (like "tall") or thinly evaluative ones (like "good"), thick concepts (like "chaste" or "cruel") combine precise descriptions with rich, context-specific evaluative and affective responses.[120] The idea would be that, through solidarity, agents come to master the descriptive, affective, and evaluative extensions of certain thick concepts relevant to their form of political solidarity (i.e. "injustice," "oppression," "exploitation," "domination," "dignity," etc.). For instance, students initially moved to action by farmworkers' unjust working conditions proceed to fine-tune their descriptive understanding and deepen their evaluative and affective response to "exploitation" through solidarity.

But the thick concepts approach is not quite right. On one hand, they are unnecessary for the project of social change. Though I use terms like "subordination," "oppression," and "exploitation," in this thesis for the sake of precision, we should not necessarily think solidary agents must also use these exact terms in order to grasp what is going on, be it descriptively, affectively, or evaluatively. We should not reduce the learning that happens in solidarity to mastering the correct use of certain terms; to think otherwise overintellectualizes solidarity. On the other hand, thick concepts are insufficient. Within the particular cultural worldview in which thick concepts have currency, thick responses are thought to be merited or not by some external object or property;

[120] There is no consensus on how, exactly, thick concepts combine descriptive and evaluative/affective elements and whether these components are "separable" i.e. can be understood apart from each other (see e.g. Dancy 2013).

thick concepts can thus be rightly or wrongly applied to reality.[121] Someone with a thorough theoretical grasp of the descriptive and evaluative understanding of thick concepts, who always applies them in the right way, may nevertheless lack the capacity to apply them diachronically as meanings shift. Solidary agents need to be able to deploy and adapt thick terms in an open-ended manner so that they can respond to a transforming terrain; for example, as the collective grasp of injustice shifts to involve new elements of recognition or redistribution. In other words, we require an account of the engaged use of thick terms.

Elisabeth Camp's idea of "perspectives" captures thickness while addressing both limitations. According to Camp, thick terms express something broader, namely, a certain perspective. A perspective is an integrated cognitive disposition to notice and attend to certain features, care about certain questions and issues, seek certain explanations, and respond affectively and evaluatively in certain ways.[122] When one takes up a perspective, one acquires an intuitive structure for one's thoughts and judgments that allows one to interpret new information "within distinct nexuses of further facts, possibilities, and values."[123] Unlike thick concepts, which integrate descriptive and evaluative information in a specific, relatively inflexible way (hence, they can be wrongly applied), perspectives need not entail the endorsement or rejection of specific propositions, nor the evocation of a particular emotion. A perspective encapsulates the way one sees the world, generally; the precise terms one uses to engage reality may vary. Thus, we may inclusively accommodate a broad range of related terms—both technical and popular characterizations of exploitation, for example—under one perspectival umbrella. As Camp puts it, perspectives are "better thought of as tools for thought than as thoughts per se." As open-ended modes of seeing,

[121] Dancy 2013, p. 46

[122] Camp 2017, pp. 13-14

[123] Camp 2013, p. 336

interpreting, and reacting, perspectives enable agents to process new information and to cognize new subjects and contexts.[124] And, since perspectives are deployed from a particular point of view, they usefully foreground the perceiver, her thoughts, and her reactions over the subject perceived.

I think agents' epistemic transformations in solidarity, that is their learning, are best characterized by, first, the acquisition of new knowledge about the world, others, and themselves; and second, by the acquisition of two distinct but complementary perspectives for organizing this information.

On one hand, agents come to see *reality as political*. Camp explains that perspectives structure one's thought on two dimensions: as one notices and remembers certain features as more prominent than others, and as one treats some classes of features as more explanatory than others.[125] For the political perspective, the key feature in both respects is power. The shift to the *political perspective* is already underway when an agent undertakes prefiguratively egalitarian action. Then, through solidarity, an agent gradually becomes sensitive to power asymmetries beyond those that affect the group she supports. Perceiving dynamics of exploitation in agriculture, for instance, helps students more easily recognize and object to exploitation in other industries, perhaps even their own universities and workplaces. Over time, solidary agents hone the ability and propensity to cognize seemingly apolitical events as symptomatic of a structure of norms and practices that uphold domination, and to connect the dots between different structures. They also develop an understanding of justice as requiring a fundamental rebalancing of power at various levels in society—an understanding far more ambitious than the hegemonic legal notion with which we are all familiar.

[124] Camp 2013, pp. 335-7

[125] Camp 2013, p. 336

We find this shift in the acquisition of feminist consciousness, for example. Writing about consciousness-raising (CR) groups in the UK in the 1970s, historian Sue Bruley suggests that "the most fundamental feature of the [women's liberation] movement was the idea of 'the personal is political.'"[126] By encouraging us to look for gendered power dynamics in our daily lives, to read the traces of power in arrangements we are socialized to see as both "private" and innocuous such as the gendered division of labor, uncompensated care work, and compulsory heterosexuality, this slogan crystallizes the political perspective as applied to feminist solidarity. One of the CR group participants Bruley cites, Rose Brennan, describes her own perspectival shift: "the women in my group…helped me to see that not only were my 'problems' legitimate but that they weren't even *my* problems, they were society's."[127] Brennan recounts how understanding the facts of her own life, combined with learnings from fellow (likely white and very likely cis-gendered) women, served to redirect her existing evaluative and affective responses to her 'problems' towards the social institutions she now saw as responsible for her oppression. Brennan continues, "At last I was able to name my discontent and to realise that it wasn't just my personal inadequacy. My anger's there for a reason, the personal is political."[128] Brennan talks about her learning as a process of "naming" much like Patricia Hill Collins describes the need for "rearticulating" the Black feminist consciousness that *already exists* among Black women.[129] A key component of "re-articulation" is reframing subordinated knowledge through the perspectival lens of power.

For the most part, for women, the feminist perspectival shift structures existing knowledge and redirects existing feelings; for outsiders, such as cisgendered men allies, the feminist perspectival

[126] Bruley 2013, p. 719

[127] Bruley 2013, p. 719

[128] Brennan 1988, p. 241

[129] Hill Collins 2009 (2000), p. 36

shift structures new "what it's like" information acquired from listening to and acting alongside those subject to sexist oppression. While some of this outsider learning can happen theoretically, direct relationships with those subject to sexist oppression, joint action, and self-reflection crucially help initiate, enrich, and corroborate theoretical insights. Indeed, deep perspectival shifts in an agent's outlook like this are difficult to embrace without access to first- and second-hand experiences of subordination that give outsiders a more detailed, evaluatively and affectively loaded understanding of political reality in the first place. Thus, active solidarity is pivotal in establishing the political perspective, especially in outsiders.

On the other hand, solidary agents come to see *reality as changeable*. This perspectival shift is captured in popular phrases like, "another world is possible" and the famous United Farm Workers line, "*¡Sí se puede!*" or "Yes we can!" It requires that agents see themselves as a member of the solidary collective and thereby conceive of their political effectivity in group-based as opposed to individual terms. In the case of striking workers, the *changeability perspective* involves thinking of the consequences of not going to work not exclusively in terms of lost income—but, because others are doing it, too, in terms of gaining collective negotiating power to improve terms and conditions. In the case of allies making phone calls to a decision-maker's office, the perspective involves thinking of their call's effectiveness as part of a flood of dozens, hundreds, even thousands of calls. The practice of solidarity, especially the fact of acting *together*, allows agents to experience, perhaps for the first time, the tangible effect on the world one exercises as a member of a solidary collective. Especially when movements win, but even when collective action fails to achieve established goals, the experience of acting together disrupts agents' commonplace impression that structures of power are unyielding, expands their sense of individual and collective possibility, and motivates them to continue participating in movements for political change. Over time, the changeability perspective structures solidary agents' thoughts to think strategically and creatively about political structures;

specifically, to perceive weaknesses in the institutions that facilitate domination and process them as points of potential collective intervention.

The establishment of a strong gay rights movement in 1960s San Francisco owed largely to this kind of strategic, possibility-oriented thinking. José Sarria, a prominent performer and organizer at the time, recalls his efforts to encourage gay people to cease hiding their homosexuality and leverage their collective power as a visibly "gay community," precisely, "to get them realizing that we had to work together, that we were responsible for our lives. We could change the laws if we weren't always hiding."[130] Sarria's well-known rallying cry "United we stand, divided they arrest us one by one," clearly casts collective action as the key to resisting the ubiquitous police harassment of gay establishments, owners, and clientele. James "Robbie" Robinson, a regular patron of the Black Cat bar where Sarria performed, recalls the importance of acting together to establishing a sense hope and individual and collective power:

> "At the end of José's performances he would ask the audience to stand and sing…"God Save the Nellie Queens" to the delight of the crowd—and, without a doubt, the singing…could be heard across the street at the Police Headquarters. It may be hard for some people to grasp how empowering that little exercise of sixty years ago was for me (and thousands of others), at that time; I was standing and singing out loud, together, with a group of other homosexuals, so God, others, and the cops could her. We were empowered and powerful - at least at that moment."[131]

[130] Boyd 2003, p. 59. Thanks to Mori Reithmayr for bringing Sarria's work to my attention.

[131] Robinson, p.45

With this mindset of visibility, collectivity, and possibility, Sarria and others set the stage for two decades of concerted political action against the laws, norms, and institutions that oppressed their community.

On its own, the political perspective may easily lead one to feel overwhelmed at the sheer magnitude and pervasiveness of the task of justice. However, when combined with the changeability perspective, that is with seeing justice as a real possibility, the political perspective becomes a powerful force for change. Taken together, both shifts disclose how the knowledge gained through solidarity can be profoundly personally transformative insofar as it recasts not just what solidary agents know, but more fundamentally what they pay attention to, how they react to the world, and how they see themselves in relation to reality. The changeability perspective is essential for mobilizing raised consciousness, but it does not suffice to account fully for the motivational transformation that solidarity produces. To get the remainder of the story in view, we now turn to the idea of internal rationality.

4.3. Motivational transformations and internal rationality

I have argued that, in order to enter into relations of solidarity, agents must be already practically moved by the agent-neutral notion of justice. In terms borrowed from Bernard Williams, justice is for solidary agents an "internal" rather than an "external" reason to act in solidarity. One way to read Williams is to take him to be saying that, from the point of view of a solidary agent, justice is not (merely) a consideration that a third-party observer would judge they have reason to do, but something they, themselves, feel compelled to act upon as a motive.[132, 133] Another way to

[132] Williams 1981, 1995. For alternative readings of Williams, see Finlay 2009 and Manne 2013.

[133] Note, I do not borrow Williams's reasons internalist framework in full. Williams questions the very intelligibility of "external" reasons and argues that there are only internal reasons for action. However, my argument is compatible with

express this point is that the element of justice sits alongside other ends, desires, and preferences in an agent's "subjective motivational set."[134] The motivational set is a broad tent; according to Williams, it includes anything that may move an agent to act, including "dispositions of evaluation, patterns of emotional reaction, personal loyalties, and various projects…embodying commitments of the agent."[135] By making room for many multifarious and even competing considerations in the notion of a motivational set, Williams's theory rightly underscores the complexity of the motivations for which an agent ultimately decides to act. It is plausible, for instance, that a solidary agent decides to attend a protest both out of a desire to pursue justice *and* a desire to please her more involved friend. Williams also argues that motivational sets are dynamic and subject to change through processes of deliberation. Once again, Williams casts a wide net to cover the various means by which motivations can appear, disappear, and morph, suggesting that practical deliberation is not limited to syllogistic reasoning: "Practical reasoning is a heuristic process, and an imaginative one, and there are no fixed boundaries on the continuum from rational thought to inspiration and conversion."[136]

My final argument is that, in addition to providing agents with new knowledge and two key perspectival shifts, solidarity reconfigures an agent's motivational profile such that justice comes to occupy a bigger proportion of an agent's motivational set. As a result, she becomes ever more inclined to prioritize justice among her ends. The reconfiguration consists in an expansion both in number and in kind of reasons agents have for responding to injustice, generally, and for responding to injustice with prefigurative political action, specifically. Since a solidary agent starts off caring

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reasons externalist views, whereby one might have an independently justified reason to act even if this reason does not subjectively motivate one to act (e.g. Parfit 2011). I believe agents who are not already moved by the agent-neutral notion of justice do have very good *pro tanto* considerations in favor of acting for justice.

[134] Williams 1981, p. 102

[135] Williams 1981, p. 105

[136] Williams 1981, p. 110

about justice to the extent that it moves her to dedicate time, money, and other limited resources to struggle, we should consider the practice of solidarity, itself, as a form of rational deliberation (widely construed) by which she derives additional, related practical reasons from her original commitment.

There are several straightforward deliberative pathways by which newly acquired beliefs about reality influence an agent's motivations to act in solidarity. I will highlight four. First, when an agent who is already moved to seek justice comes to perceive injustice in more places, and more often, she grasps a trove of novel reasons to act. A student involved in fighting sexual assault on campus may, through solidarity, learn about how women working in industries where gendered power asymmetries compound with racial, economic, and documentation-related vulnerabilities face outsized rates of sexual violence; from her initial reasons to fight gendered injustice, she derives reasons to fight for workers' rights in the labor movement. Generally, realizing that one's existing commitments intersect with other issues has this multiplying effect. Of course, these new reasons are affectively saturated. Perceiving more injustice amplifies agents' emotional responses and expands agents' sympathies to groups they now believe deserve solidary support. Augmented affective responses to injustice in turn strengthen agents' inclination to act for justice as something they *want* to do, as opposed to what they know they *must* do out of duty. Third, since solidarity is realized through concrete action alongside particular groups and people, it forces agents to reckon with domination at very personal, deeply felt levels. It is one thing to cognize power structures intellectually and declare a commitment to feminism using all the right words; it is another to understand that hierarchies function within communities of resistance and within oneself as an ally, and to engage in the difficult reflective and active work to realize justice personally and interpersonally as well as societally. Particular relationships heighten one's sense of responsibility to do right by a subordinated group—not just "at large" but also by group members one knows,

organizes alongside, and cares for through solidary movements. Feeling and not just thinking politics, in other words, strengthen one's considerations to act prefiguratively towards justice instead of in ways that further entrench existing power structures. Over time, this process helps transform justice, which may initially have been a lower-stakes political engagement, into an idea central to one's interpersonal relationships and self-conception; and therefore into a core personal project with deep existential meaning. Finally, the beliefs that spur one into the changeability perspective—especially, that one is not powerless when acting as part of a collective—are further reasons to act. They serve to weaken countervailing thoughts in deliberation, as in, "the world is unjust, but I have no power to change it."

Cumulatively, these motivational shifts augment justice's avowal-readiness in solidary agents' motivational sets, such that justice becomes something agents are more willing to pursue. This effect may translate into prioritizing this end over others—choosing to go to a protest instead of the cinema, choosing to donate income previously earmarked for leisure, and so on. It may also translate into being more firm or courageous in one's convictions, day to day—no longer allowing sexist comments to go unchallenged among friends, for example.

As agents become more immersed in the practice of solidarity, the way they think about justice changes in three significant ways. First, as agents develop direct, personal relationships with specific people and associations they support, and thereby sentiments of attachment and empathy, they begin to care about justice because it affects *them*. Agents develop vicarious interests in particular others' well-being. Second, agents begin to care about justice in self-relative terms. (I avoid the term "selfish" because of its negative connotation, though in many ways it is apt.) I have discussed throughout the thesis how injustice is a personal matter. Solidarity requires grasping one's own positionality, which in turn illuminates how one benefits from, suffers from, or otherwise

participates in others' subordination. Structures of domination deform everyone's subjectivity, whether through the inculcation of externally or internally oppressive beliefs, norms, and practices. Once an agent realizes this, and once she overcomes the discomfort this realization brings, she obtains reasons to join in solidarity that are very much fueled by a self-interest in one's own integrity and liberation. As a result, justice is no longer just an external, abstract matter worth fighting for as a self-standing normative principle; it is a project in which agents have substantive, felt personal stakes.

The third change in how agents think about justice derives from their shift to seeing themselves as members of the solidary collective—and insofar as an agent is a member of this constructed political community, she comes to see others' struggle as "our struggle" and, thereby, as her own. When we undergo this shift, we understand justice not just as a neutral good, a good for you, and a good for me, but a good that is irreducibly *for us*. One's self-interest in justice, in this case, derives from one's association with others.[137] (In deontic terms: we owe justice *to ourselves*.) The slogan popularized by the Industrial Workers of the World crystallizes the negative analogue of the collective premise: "an injury to one is an injury to all." The CIW's variant, "*golpear a uno es golpear a todos*," to hit one of us is to hit all of us, is even more explicit in designating the collective political subject, "we/us." Although these expressions originate from contexts of internal solidarity among workers, their claim can and should be adapted to external solidarities. "We" denotes the members of the solidary collective who think and act together; in external solidarities, the collective includes

[137] My argument here is somewhat aligned with "motivational conceptions" of solidarity like that of Mariam Thalos. Seeking a "discipline-neutral" definition capable of capturing political as well as sociological and biological conceptions, Thalos defines solidarity as "a condition of action-readiness…to perform actions favoring a certain group G that rests in a conception of oneself as a member of that group" (2012, p. 69). As a result, solidary individuals are "interested parties" in collective projects.

those who suffer injustice and outsiders who fight alongside them.[138] The idea is thus that, over time, these respective groups are compelled to act not just by the thoughts, "I care that we cease to be subordinated" and "I care that others cease to be subordinated"—but also by the thought, "I care that we cease dominating each other." In the spirit of mutuality, agents come to see themselves as fighting, broadly, for "all of us" *compañeros* in struggle and to believe, in this collective sense, that "none of us is free until all of us are free."

By this point, it should be a given that the collective subject "we" is heterogenous; seeing oneself as one among "us" is entirely consistent with keeping one's positionality in view. Thus, when we say justice is good *for us*, I do not mean that outsiders appropriate others' experience of injustice as their own, or as that of their outsider social group. Rather, I mean that she sees herself as a member of the constructed political community multifariously affected by this injustice. In this sense, the practice of solidarity is responsible for creating the entity for which justice is demanded.

How do agents come to consider themselves a part of the solidary collective? By feeling personally invested in the political pursuit of the collective. Agents must identify not just as a member of a given social group (e.g. as mestizo, Black, white, indigenous, South Asian) but, crucially, as a member of the resistant political collective (e.g. as an anti-racist). Getting to this point, and perceiving one's stake in the collective fate, is an ongoing work in progress. Still, we can identify two sets of interests whose avowal-readiness are pivotal to the process. The first are shared negative interests in upending structures of domination; agents acquire these by understanding—thickly—that and how their realities are interconnected by power relations, and by believing they all are affected negatively, albeit differently so, by current arrangements. The second are shared positive

[138] I acknowledge that the ontology of social groups is contested, but the distinctions between views dissolve at the level of abstraction and practicality at which I am dealing.

interests in proactively building connections; agents acquire these by grasping that the solution is not to abolish interconnection *per se,* but to transform extant relations of domination into mutual relations of trust and respect. Agents acquire these via the joint experience of struggle. This understanding is especially important for privileged agents to acquire because these positive, collective interests help to diminish (though not eliminate) worrisome conflicts between privileged agents' self-interest in preserving the *status quo* and the growing, mutually reinforcing self-, other-, and collective interests in political change they cultivate through solidarity.

In a deep and important sense, then, the "we" at the heart of solidarity includes not just those who are committed to justice, but *everyone*. All of us are in the matrix of domination together—many of us just have not grasped it yet. And all of us share an avowal-worthy interest in justice. This idea was forcefully captured by Audre Lorde when, addressing a roomful of predominantly white women academics, she expressed, "I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are different from my own. And I am not free as long as one person of color remains chained. Nor is any one of you."[139] For the purposes of solidarity, of action towards justice, the relevant "we" embraces those of us who have understood and internalized an overlapping analysis of reality and shared goal of justice; but taking Lorde's words to heart, we must acknowledge that our solidary task requires bringing more and more people into the struggle for universal collective liberation.

The mutually reinforcing series of motivational shifts I described in this section boost agents' overall commitment to prefigurative political action. Combined with the epistemic transformations and perspectival shifts I identified earlier, agents gain a clarified and continually reinforcing appreciation for why justice, and their participation in collective movements to pursue it, matter. Thus, it is fitting to conclude that, the more engaged we are on this journey to change the

[139] Lorde 2017 (1981), p. 117

world, each other and ourselves, the stronger and more unwavering our determination to carry out this vision become.

Conclusion

I began this thesis with the hope of presenting a theory of solidarity capable of dialoguing with and guiding agents "on the ground" in struggles for justice. Accordingly, the theoretical commitments of critical social theory have oriented my study. As per Nancy Fraser's characterization of critical theory, the ameliorative account of solidarity I have formulated is *normatively oriented* toward non-domination and non-ideal justice; *empirically informed* by the experience and insight of social movements, past and present; and *aims practically* at the transformation of society, interpersonal relations, and the very people engaged in the project of change.[140] Of course, fulfilling this practical aim will take more than reading or writing about solidarity—it requires that we actually get out into the world and engage in the labor and joy of prefigurative politics.

Still, I hope the analyses, illustrations, and prescriptions offered in these pages may help those of us who have been steeped in social movements for years as well as those of us just getting started approach social transformation with renewed clarity. I have sought to offer readers, first, a better sense of what is at stake in collective projects that refuse to recreate, among ourselves and within ourselves, the pernicious structures of domination we seek to dismantle in society. I have demonstrated some of the key ways power and knowledge asymmetries bear upon our efforts; I have also conveyed how an engaged analysis of power is indispensable to building sustainable, long-

[140] Fraser 2003, p. 47

term alliances. And, I have showed how our own epistemic and motivational profiles stand to be nourished from this process. From this basis, I have also sought to offer concrete prescriptions for agents navigating the treacherous contemporary matrix of domination. These have ranged from the collective prescription to prioritize the creation of exclusive "caucus bonds" among members of subordinated groups within broader solidarities; to the individual prescription to defer to the judgments of the oppressed, and, over time, establish trusting relationships whereby outsiders and insiders converge to act on mutually shared terms. Finally, I have underscored that solidarity can be neither an empty set of proclamations without actions, nor a static list of norms applied to injustice in broad strokes. Even among people who share a critical understanding of reality and a commitment to justice, solidarity is not a given—it is the goal of a dynamic and unfolding political process and must be worked at and renewed, constantly, in the face of a shifting injustices.

To close my reflections, I return to a concern that has been in the background of my inquiry: freedom. This thesis fits into a larger philosophical project that seeks to answer the question, how is freedom possible under the overwhelming, overlapping, and profound conditions of unfreedom we inhabit? I believe that the transformative practice of solidarity offers one answer. This direction may sound counterintuitive on an liberal model of individual autonomy whereby freedom entails being left alone to do as one pleases without the obstruction of others.[141] Solidarity requires collective action—and collective action involves negotiation and trade-off between individual interests and group concerns. However, if we take unfreedom to mean domination, alienation, and reification, we begin to get a sense of how solidarity may be thought to enable us to live more freely. I conclude by gesturing towards three directions for further research.

[141] Berlin 1969

As I argued earlier, following Jennifer Einspahr, structures of domination enable relatively empowered groups to systematically interfere in the lives and livelihoods of subordinated groups. As such, they shape the background relations through which individual choices and actions take place. Though subordinated individuals may be able to exercise agency in such asymmetric conditions, they cannot escape the multifarious ways in which disadvantaging social norms shape and limit their possibilities for action in the first place—nor can they eliminate their vulnerability to unwelcome interventions by members of dominant groups who decide to wield disproportionate power.[142] By attempting to reconfigure social structures such that they no longer facilitate the systematic interference of some groups in the lives of others, solidarity advances a vision of freedom from domination. Second, I suggest that solidarity counteracts the unfreedom of alienation. Insofar as alienation is a "relation of relationlessness" between individuals and a society from which they feel disconnected—from an unjust social order that departs from their values of justice and equality—solidarity offers agents an opportunity to reconnect with a collective vision.[143] In other words, solidarity counteracts an agent's general dissociation from society by establishing a narrower, more localized, politically constructed form of social identification with others who feel similarly distanced from their broader context. Solidarity builds community even as social forces splinter us apart. The final form of unfreedom solidarity helps us confront is reification. I take reification to mean, following Rahel Jaeggi's reading of Marx, "the tendency for things which are actually caused by our own activity to appear independent, natural, and beyond our control."[144] Social relations structured by capitalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy undoubtedly have this character prior to the acquisition of critical consciousness. Indeed, a vital component of the understanding needed for

[142] Einspahr 2010; see also Frye 1983 on oppression.

[143] Jaeggi 2016 (2014)

[144] Jaeggi 2001, p. 302

solidarity is the realization that these structures are contingent. The perspectival shift agents undergo in solidarity to see reality as changeable—to see these structures as within our control through concerted collective action—goes even further to disrupt our reified cognitions of society.

If the arguments to which I gesture succeed, solidarity would prove to be not only a transformative practice, but also a practice of freedom. In this and the senses explored throughout the thesis, we may conclude that solidarity is, at its core, a practice of collective liberation.

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