

EMBRACING SOLIDARITY AS A WAY OF LIFE

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Abstract: The mystique of solidarity retains its allure. The power of solidarity defies imagination. Yet harnessing this power has proven to be a challenge. There is much about solidarity to be learned. This study seeks a deeper understanding of solidarity that is necessary to find a way of using the enormous creative potential of solidarity more effectively for human progress and liberation. The article shows that the dominant theory and practice of solidarity are incapable to realize this objective. The article argues that attraction to differences is the main source of solidarity's power. Affirmation and empowerment of differences is the key to creating strong and enduring social bonds that can sustain solidarity. Yet the dominant conception of solidarity requires subjugation of differences to the central point of identification and their suppression. The article proposes a new approach toward solidarity. The distinct feature of this approach is its view of differences. In contrast to the traditional view that sees differences primarily as opposed to each other, the article outlines a new conception of solidarity that views differences as the most important resource for human advancement and liberation. The article examines the theoretical and practical implications of the new conception.

Key words: solidarity, the problem of difference, the universal process of creation, liberation, hierarchical and non-hierarchical interactions.

DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.21361.80483

Introduction

Solidarity has a long history. It has been and continues to be a source of inspiration for millions of people. The appeal of solidarity has been particularly strong in times of crises. There has been a major surge of solidarity campaigns precipitated by the dramatic developments during the current turmoil that grips the world: the worldwide economic decline, the demise of the welfare state, the collapse of liberalism and its global order, wars, mass migrations, the climate change and the steady deterioration of the environment, the Covid-19 pandemic, and much, much else.¹ The growing appeal of solidarity has produced massive protest campaigns: the events on Tiananmen Square in China, the Arab Spring, the Maidan revolution in Ukraine, the Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter movements,

¹ Jelena Vasiljević, "Reflecting on the Principles and Problems of Solidarity," in Arto Laitinen and Anne Birgitta Pessi, eds., *Solidarity: Theory and Practice* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015); Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka, eds., *The Strains of Commitment: The Political Sources of Solidarity in Diverse Societies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Jarosław Jagiełło, "Solidarity as a Challenge and a Task," *Religions*, 2023, https://www.academia.edu/109866156/Solidarity_as_a_Challenge_and_a_Task.

campaigns in support of the people of Palestine, women's and reproductive rights, global campaigns for action against climate change and for protection of the environment among many others.²

Although these campaigns pursued specific goals, they had one theme that was common to all of them. They all drew their inspiration from the promise of liberation. The participants in these campaigns hoped that their protests could bring changes for the better. The results, however, have been disappointing.³ Instead of greater social equality and reaffirmation of civic membership, the follow-up to these campaigns have been social malaise and a crisis of civic identity on the social and personal level.⁴ The disappointments have led to a growing realization that the approach to solidarity used in these campaigns is inadequate and that the dominant conception of solidarity must undergo a fundamental rethinking. Calls for revising the theory and practice of solidarity has inspired new contributions on the subject, including this study. In pursuing this goal, the article will examine the dominant conception of solidarity to identify the problems that have led to the recent disappointing results. It will explain the source of the inadequacies of this conception that have contributed to recent failures.

Many social scientists and activists have had irresistible attraction to solidarity. The reason for this attraction is the immense power of solidarity. Emile Durkheim who pioneered solidarity studies saw in solidarity the force that gave rise to societies and civilizations. Yet the source of this power has not been well understood. One of the main goals of this contribution is fill this gap.

Solidarity is a product of the evolution. There is a fundamental link that connects solidarity and the evolution. Yet this link remains unclear, which makes difficult to understand the source of solidarity's power. The evolution represents a sequence of increasingly more powerful levels of organization. As has been explained elsewhere, the emergence of these levels of organization involves the process of creation.⁵ The article will discuss this process

² Nathalie Aghoro, Katharina Gerund, and Sylvia Mayer, "Rethinking Solidarity: An Introduction," *Amerikastudien/American Studies*, vol. 68, no. 4 (2023), pp. 431–40, p. 431, <https://doi.org/10.33675/AMST/2023/4/4>.

³ Parul Sehgal, "Solidarity Among Progressives Could Give New Life to Their Cause," *The New York Times*, March 15, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/15/magazine/trump-progressive-politics-solidarity.html>.

⁴ Aghoro, "Rethinking Solidarity: An Introduction," p. 432.

⁵ Gennady Shkliarevsky, "Conservation, Creation, and Evolution: Revising the Darwinian Project," *Journal of Evolutionary Science*, vol. 1, no. 2 (September 25, 2019), pp. 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.14302/issn.2689-4602.jes-19-2990>.

and the way it propels the evolution to help understand the source of solidarity and its power.

The capacity to create strong social bonds is one of the manifestations of the power of solidarity. In contrast to other social organizations, solidarity attracts people with widely different, rather than similar, backgrounds and views. This distinct feature suggests that the power of solidarity has a lot to do with differences. Yet the dominant approach toward solidarity pays little attention to differences and their role. In fact, this conception requires subordination of differences to the main cause pursued by solidarity alliance. This requirement seems rather odd. If differences indeed play an important role in attracting individuals, one expects that affirming differences should be a priority. There is obviously a problem in the dominant conception of solidarity that prevents it from taking this clue. This problem of difference appears to be one of the main weaknesses of the dominant conception of solidarity.

The problem of difference is too important and must be addressed. The emergence of differences has not been an accident. Differences are a product of the evolution that has favored them and selected them for fitness. Yet despite the importance of this subject, the view of differences and their role in the evolution remains limited and subjective. An objective approach toward differences will contribute to a better understanding of solidarity and its power.

There is another major problem related to the dominant conception of solidarity. This conception views solidarity relations as universal, that is, it sees these relations as extendable to all humans. Indeed, without universality, solidarity would not be able to give rise to societies and civilizations.⁶ However, the universalization of solidarity has proven to be problematic. The dominant practice of solidarity usually focuses on particular groups, interests, and issues, and not on universal goals. Researchers raise questions about the relationship between “particularistic” and “universalistic” meaning of solidarity.⁷

There are also other reasons why the contradiction between universalism and particularism is important. For one thing, it reveals a conflict between theory and practice in the dominant approach toward solidarity. Also, the appeal of solidarity is in no small degree is due to the avowed connection between solidarity and liberation. The relationship between solidarity and liberation is an important theme in public discourse on solidarity and in this study. The association of solidarity with the promise of liberation is largely intuitive. There is no rational justification for this association. The conflict between universalism and particularism in the dominant conception of solidarity creates confusion

⁶ Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1960).

⁷ See, for example, the panel discussion “Contested Solidarity - Between Particularism and Universalism,” ECPR General Conference, Hamburg, August 22-25, 2018, <https://ecpr.eu/Events/Event/PanelDetails/8044>.

as to the existence of the connection between the two. The resolution of the contradiction between universalism and particularism in solidarity will clarify the issue.

Finally, the dominant conception of solidarity has shaped the current practice of solidarity. The problems in the conception have certainly affected the current solidarity practice. One important point that revisionist contributions make is that solidarity is, first and foremost, about action; solidarity is not something you have, but something you do.⁸ The new conception of solidarity certainly involve changes in solidarity practice. The last section of this study will outline the new features that the new conception of solidarity requires.

The Dominant Conception of Solidarity

Human capacity to forge strong social bonds is a riddle that still awaits its resolution. Émile Durkheim saw this capacity embodied in solidarity relations. In his view, solidarity plays a critical role in creating co-dependency among humans that leads to the emergence of society. He traced the roots of solidarity relations to the shared apprehension of the ultimate source of existence, or what he called the “sacred,” that was characteristic for traditional culture. Durkheim used the term “sacred” to emphasize the instinctive and irrational, or what Durkheim called “pre-contractual,” source of solidarity. As traditional culture declined and morphed in modernity, Durkheim pointed out, relations of social production replaced the role that the “sacred” and provided a new foundation for solidarity.⁹ Social scientists differed in their views as to what constituted this foundation. Georg Simmer, for example, emphasized the role of charisma. For Max Weber, it was vocation; it was “habits of the heart” for Tocqueville, and social norms for Talcott Parsons.¹⁰ However, despite these differences, they all largely viewed the foundation of solidarity as rooted in the irrational.

The idea of solidarity originated in Roman law that used the term “solidum” in reference to people who held a debt in common, or “in solidum.”¹¹ In modern times the word “solidarity” appeared in French as “solidarité” during the French revolution when it was

⁸ Leah Hunt-Hendrix and Astra Taylor, *Solidarity: The Past, Present, and Future of a World-Changing Idea* (New York: Pantheon, 2024); Astra Taylor and Leah Hunt-Hendrix, “One for All,” *New Republic*, vol. 250, no. 9 (2019), pp. 24–29; Jeremy Gilbert, “Notes Towards a Theory of Solidarity,” *Jeremygilbertwriting* (blog), May 1, 2018, <https://jeremygilbertwriting.wordpress.com/notes-towards-a-theory-of-solidarity/>.

⁹ Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*.

¹⁰ Massimo Rosati, “Solidarity and the Sacred: Habermas’s Idea of Solidarity in a Durkheimian Horizon,” *Durkheimian Studies / Études Durkheimiennes*, vol. 6 (2000), pp. 93–103, p. 93.

¹¹ Taylor, “One for All.”

used as a battle cry, along with other popular rallying calls such as "liberté" (liberty), "égalité" (equality), and "fraternité" (fraternity).¹² The use of solidarity in the modern sense appeared during the 19th century industrial expansion and urbanization when many people moved from countryside to cities. The migration involved massive changes that disrupted migrants' traditional way of life. Conditions of capitalism transformed their life beyond recognition. Solidarity became one of the main tools that lower class city dwellers to improve their economic conditions and emancipate themselves politically.

Solidarity is a notoriously difficult concept to define.¹³ Definitions variously described solidarity as a "recognition" of the community or fellowship, an "awareness" of shared interests, common objectives, standards, sympathies, and a commitment to abide by the outcome of some process of collective decision making.¹⁴ The description of solidarity by the Sandinistas is perhaps the most evocative: "Solidarity is the tenderness of the people/"¹⁵ Solidarity has been applied in relation to aggregation of individuals, a group of people or community bonded by common goals and sympathies, a form of acting together, a cooperating entity, a process of collective decision making, and in other ways.¹⁶

The abundance and diversity of these definitions and uses reveal the challenges in understanding solidarity. Each attempt to define solidarity usually reflects some specific aspects of solidarity, but a comprehensive conceptual grasp of solidarity as a phenomenon remains elusive. Despite their differences and diversity, all attempts to define solidarity point toward one common and distinct function of solidarity: the capacity to forge social bonds. This capacity has long been an object of intense interest and fascination. It has attracted generations of researchers and activists who have tried to understand the source of the enormous power that motivates people to come and stay together. The search for an answer to this question has not produced definitive results. All it did was to focus attention on the spontaneous attraction of humans toward each other that is revealed in the phenomenon of solidarity.

¹² Gilbert, "Notes Towards a Theory of Solidarity."

¹³ Margaret Power and Julie A. Charlip, "Introduction: On Solidarity," *Latin American Perspectives*, vol. 36, no. 6 (2009), pp. 3–9.

¹⁴ "Solidarity," *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solidarity>; Andrew Mason, "Solidarity," *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780415249126-L097-1>).

¹⁵ Power, Margaret, and Julie A. Charlip. "Introduction: On Solidarity."

¹⁶ Mason, "Solidarity"; Dariusz Dobrzański, ed., *The Idea of Solidarity: Philosophical and Social* (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2011), pp. 11-12; Andrea Sangiovanni, "Solidarity as a Social Kind," *Political Philosophy*, vol. 2, no. 1 (January 10, 2025), pp. 33-62, p. 35, <https://doi.org/10.16995/pp.16976>.

The fact that the attraction that brings people into solidarity relations is spontaneous indicates that solidarity support is a totally voluntary act. It is not a result of cause-effect relations; it does not involve an underlying necessity. Goals, interests, identities are not what motivates supporters of solidarity. The motivation is largely irrational. The ego is not involved in the decision to join. The support is totally selfless. If it were not, the support would not be voluntary, but coerced. A totally disinterested attraction to differences appears to be the most likely motivation. There may be other attendant factors (cognitive, emotional, aesthetic, moral, etc.). However, these other factors do not appear to be decisive in generating attraction. Also, attraction to differences must originate from some fundamental cause. Otherwise, this attraction could not produce relations that would be strong and enduring enough to give rise to society or civilization. To be lasting, the two must rest on a solid foundation.

Attraction to differences is the source of solidarity relations. To be strong and enduring, these relations must affirm differences. Affirmation is a form of conservation. Thus, conservation is at the heart of solidarity.

Conservation is a universal function. As has been explained elsewhere, conservation originates in the nature of the universe.¹⁷ Conservation is ubiquitous. It is relevant to everything that exists in the universe, including the universe itself. The connection between solidarity and conservation explains the universalism of solidarity. The dominant conception solidarity recognizes universality as an important property of solidarity. It views solidarity as inclusive and extendable to all humans. The universal nature of solidarity explains the fact that solidarity gives rise to societies and civilizations. If solidarity were not universal, it could only give rise to isolated groups pursuing particular goals.

However, while the theory of solidarity endorses universalism, there is much confusion about the practical meaning of this endorsement. Simon Derpmann makes a cogent point. In his view, the idea of universal solidarity faces the same difficulties as “references to universal friendship, universal comradeship, or universal allegiance.”¹⁸ Derpmann explains:

What significance can my fellowship with you have, if I understand myself to be everyone’s companion alike? The unlimited extension of the scope of these forms of moral relatedness eventually renders their original meaning and significance empty.

¹⁷ Gennady Shkliarevsky, “Revising the Cosmic Story,” *arXiv:2012.12749 [Physics]*, December 23, 2020. <http://arxiv.org/abs/2012.12749>; Shkliarevsky, “Conservation, Creation, and Evolution.”

¹⁸ Simon Derpmann, “The Solidum in Solidarity,” *On_education* (blog), April 9, 2021, <https://www.oneducation.net/no-10-april-2021/the-solidum-in-solidarity/>.

In Derpmann's view, the main difficulty arises from the particular quality of the "solidum," or "the commonality that is essential for understanding the normative meaning of solidarity."¹⁹ "Solidum" comes in different forms. Research shows that solidarity activism focuses on particular issues or constituencies.²⁰ Solidarity groups often use normative principles that are distinct for each group; they are not universal. Attainment of universal goals requires convergence of all differences. Yet the dominant conception of solidarity precludes such convergence since it requires the subordination of differences to the main point of identification.

The dominant conception of solidarity reveals an obvious contradiction between its two fundamental properties: its universal agenda and the particularist orientation of solidarity activism. This conception obviously cannot resolve the contradiction between these two differences. The failure to eliminate the discrepancy between theory and practice makes the dominant approach to solidarity ineffective.

A similar problem also affects the practice of solidarity on a micro scale, i.e., in individual solidarity groups. As has been mentioned, attraction to differences makes expressions of solidarity possible. When individuals commit to solidarity relations, they bring into these relations their own differences — desires, identities, ideals, values, etc. The choice is entirely voluntary and, therefore, is independent of the cause that unifies the group. Theorists of solidarity argue that the voluntary nature of commitment to solidarity calls for subjugation of individual differences to the main point of identification of solidarity alliance.²¹ Avery Kolers maintains that the voluntary nature of commitment to solidarity calls for suppression of differences. In Kolers' view, those who act in solidarity have no choice but put aside their own "judgments about aims, methods, facts, or values" and restrict themselves to acting on the terms of the group they support.²² In his critique of the dominant conception of solidarity, Jeremy Gilbert also poignantly observes that every call for solidarity is in effect a call for individuals "to accept the subordination of their desire, identities and interests to those of some greater unifying cause, in the name of some imagined future that will never arrive."²³

¹⁹ Simon Derpmann, "The Solidum in Solidarity."

²⁰ "Contested Solidarity - Between Particularism and Universalism," ECPR General Conference, Hamburg, August 22-25, 2018, <https://ecpr.eu/Events/Event/PanelDetails/8044>.

²¹ Jeremy Gilbert, "Notes Towards a Theory of Solidarity."

²² Avery Kolers, *A Moral Theory of Solidarity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 39; Andreas Busen "Review of *A Moral Theory of Solidarity* by Avery Kolers," *Constellations*, p. 661.

²³ Gilbert, "Notes Towards a Theory of Solidarity."

Voluntary or not, submission of differences to the main cause of solidarity alliance is a form of suppression. It rules out affirmation of differences, thus stifling their creative potential. Some researchers have even concluded that modern solidarity alliances accommodate disguised forms of oppression.²⁴ Thus, the dominant conception of solidarity suppresses differences. Since affirmation of differences plays an essential role in making solidarity relations effective, suppression of differences cannot create strong and enduring social bonds, which explains the disappointing results of recent solidarity campaigns

The Problem of Difference and Its Solution

The problem of difference is not unique to the dominant approach toward solidarity. This problem is intrinsic to liberalism. Since liberalism has been the single most important influence in shaping the dominant conception of solidarity, this approach incorporates many aspects of liberal theory, its norms and values. It has also inherited from liberalism the problem of difference.

Liberalism embraces individualism as its main organizing principle. As a result, liberals have affinity for differences. They recognize that differences have a fundamental and intrinsic value. Liberals view differences and their unique properties as the source of vitality and vibrancy in biological and social life. Without differences and diversity life would be a monotonous humdrum. Liberals have always been ardent advocates on behalf of differences and diversity. They see the importance of differences and diversity in developing human capacity to think, improving the human mind, and advancing the evolution of human civilization.²⁵ Glenn Reynolds's passionate plea on behalf of differences and diversity is exemplary. Allowing space for differences, he writes, "for ideas we hate . . . trains our minds" and "frees us from the compulsion of lashing out reflexively at unwelcome arguments." Freedom from this compulsion "is good for the soul."²⁶ Sean Stevens writes with reverence for "the magic of viewpoint diversity" that "cancels out" our confirmation biases and allows us, over time, to "converge on the truth" or at least "get nearer to it."²⁷

²⁴ Joe Curnow and Anjali Helferty, "Contradictions of Solidarity: Whiteness, Settler Coloniality, and the Mainstream Environmental Movement," *Environment and Society*, vol. 9 (2018), pp. 145–63.

²⁵ Lee C. Bollinger, *The Tolerant Society* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

²⁶ Glenn Harlan Reynolds, "Intolerant Society," *New Criterion*, vol. 41, no. 10 (June 2023), pp. 41–44.

²⁷ Sean Stevens, "The Skeptics Are Wrong Pt 3: Political Intolerance on Campus." Heterodox Academy, May 18, 2018. <https://heterodoxacademy.org/blog/theskeptics-are-wrong-part-3-intolerance-levels-are-high>.

These and similar praises for differences are colorful and even poetic, but they are for the most part general, not specific. They offer very little by way of explaining how differences produce their magic credited to them. The hard truth of the real world is that differences clash and generate tensions and conflicts. The current turmoil is a sobering reminder of the discrepancy between liberal rhetoric on behalf of differences and a very real calamities that differences can produce.

Liberals are not naïve about differences. They have long been painfully aware of the fact that differences bring tensions, calamities, and wars. After all, academic discussions were not the only source of liberalism. Its cradle was the crucible of the French revolution. In the course of its long history, liberalism has witnessed many social and political upheavals. This experienced shaped liberal theory and practice.

For liberals, the problem of difference is fundamentally unsolvable. This view originates in the fundamental recognition of the individual as ontologically primary. The claim is intuitive. It has no rational justification, and there are no empirical facts that verify it. In other words, there is no proof of objectivity of this important claim that underlies the entire edifice of liberalism. In the absence of proof, one has no choice but to consider this claim as subjective and, therefore, arbitrary and unreliable. And yet, liberals accept it uncritically as self-evident truth.

The view that proclaims the individual as ontologically primary is human-centered. This human-centeredness is characteristic for liberalism. Liberalism originates in the anthropocentric tradition that views reality exclusively from perspectives that are human-centered. It excludes non-anthropocentric approaches.²⁸

Objectivity requires viewing the object from all possible perspectives. Due to its anthropocentric roots, liberalism does not observe this condition. Also, objectivity has another important criterion. This criterion is about invariability, that is, the property of being invariable under transformations, or in different conditions or under different operations. The claim of ontological primacy of the individual does not have this property. Liberalism, for example, recognizes the importance of collectivism and uses it as operational category in its theory and practice.

Since the foundational “truth” that defines the liberal approach to differences is subjective and arbitrary, the conclusions that liberalism draws from this “truth” are also subjective and arbitrary. The view that clashes of differences are inevitable cannot be accepted as an objective representation of reality. The belief that the problem of difference is unsolvable stands on a very shaky foundation. Liberals cannot solve this problem because their belief in the ontological primacy of the individual precludes them from even searching for such solution. Based on this belief, autonomous differences are bound to clash in competition, which makes, in their view, the problem of difference unsolvable.

²⁸ Gennady Shkliarevsky, “Living a Non-Anthropocentric Future,” *SSRN Electronic Journal*, September 29, 2021, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3933108>.

The problem of difference creates a conundrum for liberals. On one hand, liberals have philosophical affinity for differences and diversity. However, they also recognize that differences present a problem. While liberals admit that the problem of difference is in principle irresolvable, they also recognize that this problem cannot be left unaddressed. The liberal response to the problem of difference is a palliative approach. While this approach cannot and does not solve the problem, liberals believe that palliatives can mediate and ameliorate the most destructive effects produced by clashes of differences. The palliatives that liberalism offers are normative. They rely on time-honored liberal values, norms, and principles such as, for example, compromises, pluralism, tolerance, and civility.

The palliatives do not represent a positive solution. A close examination shows that they involve, in one degree or another, the suppression of differences. Compromises, for example, emphasize commonalities and de-emphasize differences. In other words, compromises suppress that which is most valuable and productive about differences: the unique and distinct possibilities they offer. Compromises do not conserve these unique properties. Pluralism, tolerance, and civility only call for co-existence of differences. Coexistence does not lead to positive engagement of differences and their properties and does not eliminate the possibility of clashes. Most importantly, the palliative approach does not address the source of this problem that originates in the liberal view of reality, rather in an objective understanding of reality.

Liberals understand that their palliative approach is not a panacea. By resorting to palliatives, liberals in effect recognize that they cannot solve the problem. However, rather than question their foundational subjective assumptions and beliefs, they insist that clashes of differences are intrinsic to reality. Instead of searching for a solution, they insist on palliatives as the only possible way of addressing this problem. Liberals obfuscate the fact that their palliatives are ineffective and invariably fail; they do not control clashes of differences and their destructive effects. The current global crisis of liberal rules-based order is a convincing proof of this failure. It shows that the liberal formula simply does not work. It leaves society vulnerable to social and political cataclysms that bring violence and destruction. Yet, despite these failures and contrary to common sense, liberals continue to insist on their approach that is merely a tool liberals use to keep themselves in power.

As has been pointed out, liberalism has been the most important influence in formulating the dominant conception of solidarity. This conception inherited the liberal approach to differences and, consequently, also the problem of difference. In their contributions to the theory and practice of solidarity liberal thinkers speak about two ways of addressing this problem. One of them emphasizes the need to use mediating legal principles enforced by law. Jürgen Habermas, for example, is one prominent advocate of this approach. In his view, law is the only instrument capable of guaranteeing mutual recognition and “inclusion” of the other that helps avoid assimilation. Without this instrument, Habermas argues, social solidarity may become synonymous with assimilation and violence against

diversity of life forms.²⁹ However, using law as a guarantee for mutual recognition and inclusion is perilously close to violating the principle of voluntarism. Also, legal enforcement makes suppressing differences and limiting free expression inevitable.

John Rawls argues that the approach toward the classical sociological problem of solidarity must be normative. Solidarity must satisfy the requirement of pluralism that Rawls sees as one of the main conditions of modern democratic society. Pluralism, in his view, is what makes possible “a just and stable society of free and equal citizens, who remain profoundly divided by reasonable religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines.”³⁰ However, as has been pointed out earlier, pluralism is hardly a solution since it cannot prevent the inevitable competition for limited resources and, consequently, to eliminate the potential for clashes. Coexistence protects the autonomy of differences, but it offers no incentives for convergence of differences in pursuit of a common agenda. Also, coexistence offers no provisions for productive use of the creative potential that differences represent.

The dominant conception of solidarity recognizes its failure to solve the problem of difference. According to this conception, the only way to forge modern solidarity alliances is by suppressing differences. Such alliances rely on hierarchies. They require loyalty to the central point of identification (a leader, an identity, a political ideal), rather than on members of the group having “actual relations with each other.”³¹

Differences are not abstractions. They are real properties of individuals. Despite their differences, all individuals share one common feature. Conserving their properties is a vital existential necessity that is important to all of them. According to the logic of the liberal perspective, conservation of differences pulls individuals away from each other; and the only way to overcome this “inherent” centrifugal pressure is a voluntary subordination of individuals. In other words, they must voluntarily suppress their differences.

The preceding discussion makes clear that the dominant theory and practice of solidarity are inadequate and ineffective. Their most important shortcoming is their failure to use the enormous creative potential of solidarity. This failure is due to the unsolved problem of difference. The new and productive approach to solidarity requires solving this problem. It must offer a positive approach that will make possible to use the creative potential of

²⁹ Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984); Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Towards a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, Cambridge: Polity, 1982). Rosati, Massimo. “Solidarity and the Sacred: Habermas’s Idea of Solidarity in a Durkheimian Horizon.” *Durkheimian Studies / Études Durkheimiennes* 6 (2000), pp. 93–103.

³⁰ John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 4; Massimo Rosati, “Solidarity and the Sacred: Habermas’s Idea of Solidarity in a Durkheimian Horizon,” *Durkheimian Studies / Études Durkheimiennes* 6 (2000), pp. 93–103, p. 94.

³¹ Gilbert, “Notes Towards a Theory of Solidarity.”

differences, which is the only way to create strong and enduring social bonds that sustain solidarity.

To solve a problem, one must understand its source. Only an objective view of differences and their role can solve the problem of difference. As has been pointed out, objectivity requires observing the object from all possible points of view. Therefore, the approach toward the solution of the problem of difference must be inclusive. It should include all possible perspectives; it should be universally inclusive.

Some general observations about difference are in order. First, the essence of differences is in their unique properties, i.e., properties that distinguish differences from each other. Second, properties are products of functional operations. Finally, despite their distinct characteristics, conservation of their properties is common to all differences.

As has already been mentioned, conservation is universal. Its manifestations are ubiquitous. Conservation applies to everything that exists in the universe, including the universe. It originates from the very nature of the universe. The universe is unique. It is all there is. Nothing can come into it from outside, because there is no outside; nothing can disappear from the universe, because there is nowhere to disappear. Consequently, everything must be conserved. Conservation is a truly universal function.³²

Conservation requires resources, and resources are always finite. There are no new resources that can come into the universe from outside. Consequently, conservation is impossible without creating new possibilities that offer new resources. Due to the unique nature of the universe, there is no other way to acquire new possibilities but to create them from the possibilities that already exist. New possibilities emerge as a result of combining existing possibilities. Combinations of existing possibilities give rise to new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization that have not existed prior to their emergence. New and more powerful levels of organization offer new and more powerful possibilities that provide access to new resources. Such new levels of organization represent evolutionary advances. For what is the evolution if not a succession of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization? Thus, conservation requires creation, and creation leads to the evolution. Conservation, creation, and evolution are all part of the same process. They are closely interrelated and interdependent. They cannot exist without each other.³³

³² Gennady Shkliarevsky, "Revising the Cosmic Story," *arXiv*, Dec. 23, 2020, [arXiv:2012.12749v1](https://arxiv.org/abs/2012.12749v1) [physics.hist-ph].

³³ Gennady Shkliarevsky, "Understanding the Process of Creation: A New Approach," *Management: Journal of Sustainable Business and Management Solutions in Emerging Economies*, vol. 22, no. 3 (October 31, 2017), pp. 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.7595/management.fon.2017.0021>.

Differences play a vital role in this process. There is nothing fortuitous or accidental about differences. Differences are products of the evolution that favored them and selected them for fitness. The evolution depends on the process that propels it. There can be only one reason for the evolution to prefer differences—their role in the process that sustains the evolution.³⁴

Properties originate in functions that define differences. Functions are a form of action; and action can only be conserved through action. The more often a function is activated, the longer it stays active, the better it is conserved. By interacting with each other, differences activate their functions and keep them active longer. Such interactions give rise to combinations of properties. The emerging combinations provide differences with new sources that stimulates their functional operations and keep them active longer, which conserves their properties. In other words, by interacting with each other, differences expand their range of possibilities that offer access to new resources; and access to new resources makes conservation of differences possible.

The operation involved in creating combination equilibrates differences and their operational functions embodied in properties. Equilibration is a multiplicative operation that combines functional operations on a one-to-one basis. As operation on operations, equilibration involves multiplication, not addition. By multiplying functions, equilibration creates a new level of organization that is more powerful than the one from which it has emerged. The more powerful level of organization naturally offers more possibilities than each individual function or their sum total. If a total number of all possibilities that differences offer is equal to n , after equilibration this number will be equal to n^2 . The new level of organization is capable of regulating all interactions of differences that have been involved in the equilibration. When fully equilibrated, this level of organization sustains all individual functions and even their negations. The capacity for negation is particularly important since it enables the regulatory function to recognize exogenous properties of entities in the environment. In other words, negation enables systems to establish exogenous connections with other systems in their environment.

The above explanation gives an idea about the role of differences in the universal process of creation. As this explanation also shows, differences that are involved in this process do not clash with each other. Their interactions do not produce tensions and conflicts. Rather, differences serve as a resource—the most important resource—for each other, which makes their conservation, enrichment, and evolution possible.³⁵ In a word, the view that clashes and conflicts are intrinsic to differences is not an objective view. Differences can and do play an important and constructive role in the universal process of creation. Without differences, this process would be impossible.

The process of creation offers a new perspective on differences. All objects or phenomena that exist in the universe are products of this process. Therefore, it includes all

³⁴ Shkliarevsky, “Conservation, Creation, and Evolution.”

³⁵ Shkliarevsky, “Understanding the Process of Creation.”

possibilities—those that existed, that are existing, or that will exist. This process is inclusive and, therefore, objective. Consequently, observing an object from the perspective of this universal process offers a possibility of observing it from all possible points of view. Unlike the liberal perspective on differences that is exclusionary, subjective, and arbitrary, the perspective on differences that uses this universal process as its main organizing principle, is inclusive and objective. It offers a universal view of differences.

Differences play a vital role in the process of creation. They bring into it their unique possibilities and become the building blocks of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization that represent evolutionary advances. New levels of organization provide access to new resources that make conservation and evolution possible. Thus, differences play a very constructive role in the cosmic order. This constructive role is the main reason why the evolution selected differences.

There is another conclusion that one can draw from the above explanation. The constructive role of differences becomes visible only when viewed from the perspective of the process of creation. This process is what connects differences with each other. When abstracted from the process, differences appear to be opposed to each other. Therefore, the approach that makes possible to see differences in their constructive role must use the process of creation as its organizing principle. This approach and the view of reality it offers transcend the limitations of the anthropocentric tradition that blinds us toward the process of creation and its central role in human existence and the existence of the universe. In perspectives that originate in the anthropocentric tradition, differences appear to be rivals locked in a competition for limited resources, not partners in creating new resources for each other. The problem of difference has its roots in the anthropocentric tradition. One can say that this tradition creates the problem of difference; and, obviously, it cannot provide a solution of this problem. The solution requires transcending the anthropocentric tradition.

To summarize, the discussion in this section shows why the dominant conception of solidarity is inadequate. Many researchers and activists increasingly recognize this fact and call for a new theory.³⁶ This section also shows that the inadequacy of the dominant conception of solidarity largely revolves around the problem of difference. Therefore, any new theory and practice of solidarity must start with the solution of the problem of difference. Such solution requires an objective and inclusive approach. The basis for such approach can only be a perspective that is universally inclusive. The conclusion that emerges from this section is that this objective perspective must use the universal process of creation as its main organizing principle that ensures universal inclusion.

³⁶ Gilbert “Notes Towards a Theory of Solidarity; Tatiana Bonatti Perez, “SOLIDARITY: THE URGENT NEED TO REINSTITUTE AND RENEW MORAL VALUES IN OUR SOCIETY,” [https://www.academia.edu/36276915/SOLIDARITY THE URGENT NEED TO REINSTITUTE AND RENEW MORAL VALUES IN OUR SOCIETY](https://www.academia.edu/36276915/SOLIDARITY_THE_URGENT_NEED_TO_REINSTITUTE_AND_RENEW_MORAL_VALUES_IN_OUR_SOCIETY), (accessed May 28, 2025).

The New Conception of Solidarity

The Insights of the Emerging Vision of Solidarity

Disappointing results of the massive solidarity campaigns that took place in early part of the 21st century have triggered the search for a new theory and practice of solidarity. The demise of liberalism has made this search particularly important since solidarity is widely regarded today as the only remaining hope to offer a new agenda for progress and liberation. Jeremy Gilbert underscores the urgency of the need to chart a new course. “If we need a theory of anything today,” Gilbert writes, “it’s a theory of solidarity.” The new theory should provide a “clear sense of what might make possible effective forms of collective action and shared freedom.”³⁷

Although the process of rethinking solidarity is still in its initial stages, results are encouraging. Recent contributions on solidarity offer new ideas and insights that reveal the contours of the emerging vision of solidarity. This vision differs from the dominant conception of solidarity in several key aspects. For one thing, it views solidarity primarily as a process, not an aggregation of individuals. The emphasis is on action. Astra Taylor and Leah Hunt-Hendrix, two well-known authors and solidarity activists, write “. . . solidarity is not something you have, it is something you do . . . it is not a given but must be generated; it must be made, not found.”³⁸ Waxing poetic, Taylor adds: “Real organizing [of solidarity] is a kind of alchemy. It’s a process that turns alienation into connection, oppression into strength, despair into dedication, darkness into light.”³⁹

Another important difference concerns the relationship among members of solidarity alliances. The dominant conception emphasizes the need for a direct and personal connection of individual members with the central point of identification. The emerging vision emphasizes the need for individuals to establish direct connections with each other, rather than the cause or the leader. The connections are “horizontal” or “non-hierarchical.”⁴⁰ Barbara Prainsack emphasizes solidaristic practices emerge “from the interpersonal level” and “are thus not typically the result of a group identity but give rise to it.”⁴¹ The relations are

³⁷ Gilbert “Notes Towards a Theory of Solidarity

³⁸ Taylor and Hunt-Hendrix, “One for All,” p 27.

³⁹ Astra Taylor, “Expanding Citizen Power Beyond the Ballot Box,” *New Republic*, vol. 253, no. 12 (December 1, 2022), pp. 15–16.

⁴⁰ Taylor and Hunt-Hendrix. “One for All,” p. 26; Arto Laitinen and Anne Birgitta Pessi, eds., *Solidarity: Theory and Practice* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), p. 2.

⁴¹ Barbara Prainsack and Alena Buyx, “Understanding Solidarity (With a little help from your friends. A response to Dawson and Verweij, *Public Health Ethics*, vol. 5, no. 2 (2012), pp. 206-210.

also reciprocal. Veronica Federico writes that the reciprocal nature of new relations “makes every member of the community, i.e. every citizen, contribute to and at the same time benefit from being a member of that same community.”⁴² Those who are involved in these relations are equal and autonomous vis-à-vis each other.

In the new vision, communities of solidarity are not about uniformity or unidirectionality. Its unity cannot be imposed from above, and it does not depend on loyalty to a leader or a cause. The unanimous conclusion is that solidarity should not suppress differences. As Gilbert writes, “solidarity emerges from horizontal social relations . . . they [relations] work across differences and make differences productive in order to maximise the opportunities for all those engaged in the struggle to realise their creative potential and their collective freedom.”⁴³

The emphasis on the creative nature of solidarity interactions is quite common in revisionist contributions. They argue that interactions that sustain solidarity are primarily about creation, and, most importantly, the creation of strong and enduring social bonds that give rise to solidarity.⁴⁴ In their essay “One for All,” Taylor and Hunt-Hendrix, make a distinction that they borrowed from Christopher Hayes⁴⁵ between two forms of solidarity: “mundane” and “sublime.” Mundane forms of solidarity unite like to like; they affirm sameness. By contrast, sublime forms of solidarity presuppose “outward gaze, reaching past similarity toward something more capacious.”⁴⁶ In this view, “reaching across differences without erasing them” is far more important for solidarity than commitment to “carrying somebody else’s burden” or “sympathy with the plight of others.” Reaching across differences, Taylor and Hunt-Hendrix explain, “shatters the boundaries of identity, connecting us to others when we are not the same.”⁴⁷

To work across differences and be creative, interactions among members of solidarity communities must operate on the principle of universal inclusion and equality. Gilbert

⁴² Veronica Federico, “Conclusion: Solidarity as a Public Virtue?” in *Solidarity as a Public Virtue?*, edited by Veronica Federico and Christian Lahusen, 1st ed., 495–542 (Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 2018), p. 496, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv941sdc.21>.

⁴³ Gilbert, “Notes Towards a Theory of Solidarity.”

⁴⁴ Taylor and Hunt-Hendrix, “One for All,” p. 27.

⁴⁵ Christopher Hayes, “In Search of Solidarity,” *These Times*, February 3, 2006, <https://inthesetimes.com/article/in-search-of-solidarity>.

⁴⁶ Taylor and Hunt-Hendrix. “One for All,” p. 26.

⁴⁷ Taylor and Hunt-Hendrix. “One for All,” p. 26.

uses the term “molarity” that he borrows from Gille Deleuze and Felix Guattari.⁴⁸ One can think of molarity as a common space occupied by interacting individuals in which subjects emerge as “coherent and individuated entities” whose autonomy is not obliterated. As Gilbert puts it, “It’s where things hang together.” Molarity is incompatible with suppression of differences. “The trick,” Gilbert writes, “is not to impose molarity in such a way as to suppress differences and [their] creative potential.”⁴⁹ Any kind of exclusion or selective inclusion are incompatible with the new vision. Andrei Angelovski sees selective application of solidarity as “ethically questionable” and even “unlawful.”⁵⁰

The emerging vision specifically rejects the notion that a call to solidarity should be associated with the subordination of one’s desires, identities and interests to some greater unifying cause.⁵¹ This vision is not about self-sacrifice and suffering. It is about affirmation, enrichment, and empowerment of individuals in creative acts that are a source of gratification, enjoyment, and pleasure. Gilbert explains:

It [solidarity] shouldn’t be thought of according to a logic of self-sacrifice. Acting in solidarity or expressing solidarity is often difficult, but difficult things can enhance our capacities and our creative and relational potential. And that’s what joy means, technically speaking.⁵²

As has already been mentioned, the process of rethinking solidarity is still in its initial stages. The ideas and insights that have already emerged are productive. But they need streamlining and systematizing. The vision needs a clearly stated organizing principle. The rethinking of solidarity revolves around two important problems that the dominant conception of solidarity has not solved: the problem of difference and the contradiction between universalism and particularity.⁵³ So far, revisionist contributions have not come up with solutions to these problems.

⁴⁸ G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia* (London: Continuum, 2003).

⁴⁹ Gilbert, “Notes Towards a Theory of Solidarity,”

⁵⁰ Andrej Angelovski, “Excluding the Wealthy From Compulsory Solidarity: A Lab Experiment,” Max Planck Institute for Research on Collective Goods, 2017, https://ho4out7of9.execute-api.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/prod/sites/default/files/2023-12/1704_0.pdf.

⁵¹ Gilbert, “Notes Towards a Theory of Solidarity.”

⁵² Gilbert, “Notes Towards a Theory of Solidarity.”

⁵³ Shahrzad Sabet, “Universal Solidarity and the Particular | Shahrzad Sabet,” *Great Transition Initiative*, July 27, 2021. <https://greattransition.org/gti-forum/global-solidarity-sabet>.

The Main Aspects of the New Conception of Solidarity

As this study has stressed, the dominant conception of solidarity has its roots in the anthropocentric tradition. This tradition is human-centered and, therefore, has a human bias that makes it subjective and arbitrary. This property affects all perspectives that originate in the anthropocentric tradition. The dominant conception of solidarity is human-centered. The recognition of the ontological primacy of the individual is the main organizing principle of this conception. It makes this conception subjective, arbitrary, and ultimately inadequate. The new conception of solidarity needs an objective approach; it requires the transcendence of the anthropocentric tradition.

The article proposes to base the new conception of solidarity on the recognition of the universal process of creation as its main organizing principle. The process of creation is not a human invention. It had existed long before the rise of humanity. This process propels the evolution that led to the emergence of humans. The process of creation is universal. Since it is universal, this process is the source of all perspectives—past, present, and future. An approach that uses the process of creation as its main organizing principle, makes possible to observe reality from all possible points of view. Therefore, it meets the main requirement of objectivity.

Since the new conception of solidarity is based on the process of creation, it will have the same properties as this process. The new conception meets the requirements of objectivity and universality. As a result, the new conception is adequate for solving the main problems that the dominant conception cannot solve. It is also capable of accommodating the insights of the emerging vision of solidarity and provide the principle that systematize these insights, which is indispensable in formulating the new and comprehensive theory and practice of solidarity. This section will discuss the most important aspects of the new conception of solidarity.

1. The Balance Between Equilibration and the Production of Disequilibrium

Critical observation is an important criterion of objectivity. In addition to observing the object, critical observation requires the capacity to observe the process of observing. Observing requires a point from which one can observe an object. To offer an inclusive and comprehensive view of an object, the point of observation must be located outside the object. Consequently, a critical observation of observing is possible only from a position located outside the process of observing, which creates the problem of self-referentiality for all current epistemological approaches.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Gennady Shkliarevsky, "The Paradox of Observing, Autopoiesis, and the Future of Social Sciences," *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, vol. 24, no. 3 (2007), pp. 323 – 32.

Observing involves the process of creation. This process generates mental constructs that make observation possible. Therefore, to observe the observing, one must observe the process of creation. This process is universal. It includes all possible perspectives and all possible points of view. An objective observation requires a point of view that is located outside the object of observation. However, as has been already pointed out, the process of creation includes all possible points of view, which means that none of them is outside the process. So, an objective observation of the process of creation appears to be an impossible task: how does one observe this process from an exogenous point of view when the process includes all points of view?

In the anthropocentric tradition, all points of observation are human constructs and a result of human choices. The anthropocentric tradition makes objective observation impossible. All approaches that originate in this tradition inevitably create the problem of self-referentiality, or what Niklas Luhmann has called “infinite regress,”⁵⁵ since all of them are human-centered. All approaches in anthropocentric tradition are self-referential.

The approach based on the process of creation makes possible to solve the problem of self-referentiality. One can legitimately think of the process of creation as a system. As any other system, it requires regulation. Regulation is a reflective function that makes possible to reflect on, or observe, the system it regulates. As has been mentioned earlier, the balance between equilibration and the production of disequilibrium, or the balance between equilibrium and disequilibrium, is an intrinsic aspect of the process of creation. This balance makes the process of creation dynamic. Equilibration gives rise to a new and more powerful level of organization, thus producing disequilibrium, which requires re-equilibration. Equilibration and the production of disequilibrium are dynamically related: as equilibration progresses, so does the production of disequilibrium. The balance between the two regulates the process of creation. As has been pointed out above, regulation is a reflective function that makes reflecting on the entire process of creation possible. The point of balance is part of the process of creation. Thus, it is located inside the process, yet it offers a possibility of observing the entire process. This balance is not a human construct or a result of human choice. It is intrinsic to the process of creation. Therefore, using this balance for observing reality, including the process of creation, transcends the anthropocentric predicament. The balance offers a point that makes critical observation possible. Using this balance as a point of observation resolves the predicament of “infinite regress.”

Viewing reality through the prism of the process of creation makes possible to observe reality from a perspective that is universal and objective. Representations of reality that result from such approach are inclusive, objective, and universal. The new conception of solidarity uses the process of creation as its main organizing principle. For this reason, this conception is objective. It satisfies the two most important criteria of objectivity: universal inclusion and the capacity for critical observation.

2. The Balance Between Hierarchical and Non-Hierarchical Interactions

⁵⁵ Shkliarevsky, “The Paradox of Observing”; Niklas Luhmann, *Social Systems* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 479.

The process of creation has another intrinsic property that is vital to it. This property is the balance between hierarchical and non-hierarchical interactions. Perspectives that originate in the anthropocentric tradition view hierarchical and non-hierarchical interactions, or hierarchies and networks, to be incommensurable and diametrically opposed to each other. A common belief is that tensions and conflicts between these two types of interactions are inevitable and irresolvable.⁵⁶ One can think about some of the most dramatic conflicts of our time in which this belief has played a critical role: the events of Tiananmen Square, the Arab Spring, the Maidan movement in Ukraine, the protest movement in Hong Kong, the Occupy movement, and the current global turmoil.

The discussion of the process of creation shows that non-hierarchical interactions (equilibration) create new and more powerful levels of organization. The emergence of such levels of organization gives rise to hierarchies. Thus, the process of creation reveals a symbiotic relationship between hierarchical and nonhierarchical interactions. Non-hierarchical interactions create new levels of organization that are more powerful than the ones from which they have emerged. Hierarchical interactions conserve and optimize what non-hierarchical interactions have created. Hierarchical interactions cannot create; and non-hierarchical interactions cannot conserve and optimize what they have created. The process of creation shows that the two types of interactions are not at all opposed to each other and, in fact, operate in harmony. They have equally important and complementary roles. The process of creation maintains the balance between these two types of interactions, which precludes the domination of one type over the other. The brain, for example, represents the most powerful level of organization in an organism. Yet, the brain does not dictate cells what to do. The two levels are mutually supportive and sustain each other.

The domination of one type of interactions over the other disrupts the process of creation and makes conservation and evolution impossible. Only a perspective that uses the process of creation as its main organizing principle makes visible the symbiotic relationship between the two types of interactions and the need for their balance. Only when abstracted from the process of creation, the two types of interactions will inevitably appear irreconcilable and opposed to each other. The new conception of solidarity that uses the process of creation as its organizing principle also includes this important balance as one of its aspects.

3. The Cognitive Aspect of the New Conception of Solidarity

Knowledge production does not usually come up in discussions of solidarity. As has been mentioned, the dominant conception views solidarity primarily in terms of aggregations of individuals. In this conception, the direct connection between individuals and the central point of identification is the only way to maintain the unity of solidarity community.⁵⁷ The

⁵⁶ Gennady Shkliarevsky, "Rethinking Democracy: A Systems Perspective on the Global Unrest," *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, vol. 33, issue 3 (2016), pp. 452-470.

⁵⁷ Gilbert, "Notes Towards a Theory of Solidarity."

inevitable price of such unity is subjugation and suppression of differences. The dominant conception makes impossible productive interactions of differences with each other. The interactions that this conception allows do not give rise to new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization that are the only source of new knowledge. Thus, the dominant conception cannot sustain a creative cognitive function. This conception can only result in suppressing the capacity to produce new knowledge. It does not make knowledge production possible. This is the main reason why the dominant conception turns solidarity into a political tool that serves partisan interests, rather than use it as a venue for acquiring knowledge.

A function that makes acquisition of knowledge possible is intrinsic to the process of creation. This process gives rise to new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization, including mental levels of organization. It has led to the emergence of mental operations and the human mind. Production of knowledge is not the main function of the process of creation. It is merely its byproduct. As has been mentioned, this process operates on the principle of inclusion of all differences as autonomous entities. The main function of the process of creation is conservation. Conservation of differences requires creation that involves combining their properties. The creation of combinations leads to the emergence of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization that give rise to new ideas, theories, approaches, and other forms of knowledge.

The conception of solidarity that uses the process of creation as its organizing principle requires universal inclusion of all differences and the preservation of their autonomy. This requirement leads to the emergence of new levels of organization and the rise of new knowledge. The acquisition of new knowledge is not the main function of solidarity; it is merely its byproduct. Yet, it is an important byproduct. It makes productive interactions attractive to individuals and, thus, provides additional motivations for establishing strong and enduring ties in solidarity alliances.

4. Universalism and Particularity

According to the dominant conception, relations of solidarity must be extendable to all humans. In other words, solidarity must be universal. This universalist claim of the dominant conception reflects a conviction that only universally inclusive solidarity relations can give rise to societies and civilizations, rather than to interest groups that pursue specific goals. This universalist claim also connects solidarity with liberation.

However, as has been pointed out earlier, the focus of the dominant practice of solidarity is always on interests and goals of specific groups, not on humanity. The dominant conception does not make clear how the pursuit of specific objectives can lead to their conversion required for attaining universal goals. The lack of such explanation makes the connection between solidarity and liberation unclear and undermines the avowed promise of liberation that is central to the dominant conception.

The contradiction between universalism and particularity is closely related to the problem of difference. The dominant conception requires suppression of differences. Individuals

who join solidarity alliances are supposed to voluntarily submit to the goals these alliances pursue. They have no role in formulating these goals that are imposed on them in the form of a central point of identification. The suppression of differences cannot lead to their convergence, that is essential for achieving universal goals.

The discussion of the process of creation shows that there is no contradiction between individual differences and the universal goals of this process. The process of creation operates on the basis of universal inclusion of differences as autonomous entities. Interactions between differences are productive. Conservation of differences leads to their convergence into new and more powerful totalities. These totalities conserve differences and do not violate their autonomy. The relationship between totalities and differences is one of supervenience, not suppression and domination. Any exclusion disrupts this process and makes the emergence of new and more powerful totalities impossible.

The new conception of solidarity resolves the contradiction between the particular and the universal. Universalism is intrinsic to the process of creation. Since the new conception of solidarity uses the process of creation as its central organizing principle, universalism is also its core property. This conception emphasizes the important role of interactions of differences as autonomous entities in creating enduring social bonds. Conservation is the main factor that brings differences, or particulars, into these interactions. Conservation, enrichment, and evolution of differences sustains solidarity. By fostering interactions between differences, solidarity achieves convergence of differences and, thus, attains goals that are universal in nature.

5. The Moral Dimension

Morality is an important dimension in human relations. The moral dimension is also an important part of the discourse on solidarity. The dominant conception of solidarity emphasizes morality.⁵⁸ Solidarity alliances often appeal to moral sentiments as a way of attracting individuals. This use of morality is purely instrumental. It exploits morality to support the cause. Such instrumental use of morality is fundamentally immoral.

The source of morality and moral sentiment is the recognition of autonomy. According to the dominant conception, solidarity is about carrying somebody else's burden.⁵⁹ Kolers defines solidarity as "political action on other's terms." Deference to the judgement of the oppressed--a critical aspect of the dominant conception--requires suppression of

⁵⁸ Kolers, *A Moral Theory of Solidarity*; Angus Dawson and Marcel Verweij, "Solidarity: A Moral Concept in Need of Clarification," *Public Health Ethics*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2012), pp. 1–5.

⁵⁹ Jarosław Jagiełło, "Solidarity as a Challenge and a Task."

differences (one's own goals or identities). Suppression of differences, as Larry Ray argues, cannot provide the basis for a moral theory of solidarity.⁶⁰

As has been explained earlier, the process of creation works on universal inclusion and equality. Unique properties of every difference play an essential role in the creation of new and more powerful levels of organization. The process of creation conserves and enriches differences; it makes their evolution possible. Creation empowers individuals. The process of creation is not only about individual differences. It also involves the integration of differences as interrelated and interdependent entities into new totalities. The process of creation is neither about individualism, nor about collectivism. The part does not stand in opposition to the whole. The conservation and evolution of the part is inseparable from the conservation and evolution of the whole.

The new conception of solidarity that uses the process of creation as its main organizing principle requires universal inclusion and equality. Preserving and respecting the autonomy of all individuals is the essential condition for universal inclusion and equality. The recognition of autonomy is a very important feature of the new conception of solidarity. This recognition originates in the understanding that conservation of individual autonomy forges strong social bonds and, thus, sustains solidarity. The new conception sees attraction to differences as the most important motivation for solidarity expressions. That is the main reason why the new conception considers affirmation and empowerment of individuals as utterly important. Attraction to differences does not originate in morality. But the practice that emphasizes affirmation of differences and empowerment of individuals gives rise to morality and moral sentiment. Affirmation of differences and empowerment of individuals make solidarity a moral activity. Suppression of differences and disempowerment of individuals make solidarity relations essentially immoral, despite appeals to morality.

True morality can only exist as universal morality. Individualistic or communitarian orientation are only aspects of such morality; they are not separate from each other. On the contrary, they attain their full potential only in their close interrelationship. Only the process of creation with its requirement of universal inclusion and equality makes this interrelationship possible. Thus, moral dimension is intrinsic to the new conception of solidarity.

All important aspects of morality are traceable to the process of creation.⁶¹ All properties of morality have equivalents in the properties of this process. Since the new conception of

⁶⁰ Larry Ray, "Review of A Moral Theory of Solidarity by Avery Kolers," *Contemporary Political Theory*, vol. 17 (November 15, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41296-017-0174-3>.

⁶¹ Gennady Shkliarevsky, "The Origin of Morality and the Making of the Moral Predicament," *SSRN* (October 31, 2021), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3953715> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3953715>.

solidarity uses the process of creation as its central organizing principle, the moral dimension and the capacity to distinguish between good and evil are integral to this conception.

6. Solidarity as Gratification

As has already been mentioned, one of the insights of the emerging vision of solidarity concerns the connection between solidarity and gratification. The theme is not entirely new. It comes up in the dominant conception of solidarity. However, the interpretation of this theme in the emerging vision is very different.

Just like the conception of solidarity in the religious tradition, the dominant secular conception also views solidarity in terms of sacrifice. In the religious tradition, the need for sacrifice originates in the emphasis on self-renunciation as an important condition for embracing God's universal truth. The social teaching of the Catholic Church began to shift its focus toward solidarity at the end of the 19th century. Solidarity acquired the central role in the social teaching of the church during the pontificate of John Paul II who called solidarity "a true and authentic human act in which the self-creation of the human person, his fundamental mode of expression, and his dynamic development are affected to a very high degree."⁶² The religious tradition interprets the principle of solidarity in terms of "friendship" or "social charity" as a direct demand of human and Christian brotherhood.⁶³

In the definition formulated by Józef Tischner, the chaplain of the Solidarity movement in Poland, "solidarity means to carry one another's burden."⁶⁴

The connection between solidarity and sacrifice in the dominant secular conception of solidarity has a different source than it has in the religious tradition. The connection is a necessary and inevitable result of the failure to solve the problem of difference. The dominant conception views sacrifice as the only way to unify and hold together community of solidarity.

⁶² Jagiełło, "Solidarity as a Challenge and a Task," p. 2.

⁶³ "Human Solidarity - Article 3 Social Justice," The Holy See, https://www.vatican.va/content/catechism/en/part_three/section_one/chapter_two/article_3/iii_human_solidarity.html; "Solidarity | USCCB." Accessed May 10, 2025. <https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/solidarity>; Christopher Vogt, "Solidarity: A Task for the Church and the Nation," *Catholic Moral Theology*, January 25, 2021. <https://catholicmoraltheology.com/solidarity-a-task-for-the-church-and-the-nation/>; Fred Kammer and Thomas Massaro, "Catholic Social Thought and Solidarity," *A Faith That Does Justice*, December 10, 2019, <https://faith-justice.org/catholic-social-thought-and-solidarity/>. Julian Assele, "Solidarity and Sacrifice," *Commonweal Magazine*, June 5, 2024. <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/solidarity-and-sacrifice>; Jagiełło, "Solidarity as a Challenge and a Task."

⁶⁴ Jagiełło, "Solidarity as a Challenge and a Task," p. 2; Taylor and Hunt-Hendrix, "One for All, p. 28.

Unifying causes may differ. They may be about justice,⁶⁵ environment,⁶⁶ ethical and moral principles,⁶⁷ support of a particular people,⁶⁸ public good,⁶⁹ support for refugees,⁷⁰ among many others. However, no matter what the cause is, the emphasis on submission and sacrifice on the part of individuals is a must.⁷¹ And the sacrifice is always personal.⁷² Proponents of the dominant conception see in sacrifice the value of solidarity.

Submission, sacrifice, denial of affirmation and empowerment are not pleasurable experiences. That is the main reason why the dominant conception rarely evokes gratification as a motivation for solidarity. The requirement of submission and suppression makes solidarity look ambiguous,

⁶⁵ Ruud ter Meulen, "Solidarity, Justice, and Recognition of the Other," *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics*, vol. 37, no. 6 (2016), pp. 517–29, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11017-016-9387-3>

⁶⁶ Evan Lieberman, "Solidarity and Sacrifice for Planetary Wellbeing," Substack newsletter. *Global Nation* (blog), November 17, 2023. <https://globalnation.substack.com/p/solidarity-and-sacrifice-for-planetary>.

⁶⁷ Tamar Sharon, "A Moral Theory of Solidarity," *Ethics*, vol. 129, no. 4 (July 1, 2019), pp. 715–20, <https://doi.org/10.1086/702979>.

⁶⁸ Kateryna Mishchenko, "Sacrifice Is Just Another Word for Solidarity in Ukraine Today « balticworlds.Com." *Balticworlds.Com* (blog), May 19, 2015, <https://balticworlds.com/sacrifice-is-just-another-word-for-solidarity-in-ukraine-today/>.

⁶⁹ "An Ethical Foundation for Social Good: Virtue Theory and Solidarity." *Research on Social Work Practice*, vol. 30, no. 2 (February 1, 2020), pp. 196–204, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731519863487>. Ray, "A Moral Theory of Solidarity: Avery Kolers," <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41296-017-0174-3>.

⁷⁰ Saverio and Jessika Jamal Khazrik, "Solidarity Is Sacrifice," *Refuge Worldwide*, November 26, 2024, <https://refugeworldwide.com/radio/solidarity-is-sacrifice-saverio-and-jessika-jamal-khazrik-26>.

⁷¹ Julius Buzzard, "Illuminating Solidarity Through Sacrifice," *Chasing Justice*, April 7, 2022, <https://chasingjustice.com/illuminating-solidarity-through-sacrifice/>. A. E. Komter, "Solidarity and Sacrifice; An Analysis of Contemporary Solidarity," in L.M. Stoneham, ed., *Advances in Sociology* (New York: Novascience, 2005), pp. 205–31; Tereza Kuldova, "Solidarity and Sacrifice," *How Outlaws Win Friends and Influence People* (Cham, SWIT: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 171–200; Lianna Mueller, "Sacrifice and Solidarity," *Ignitum Today*, February 21, 2016. <https://ignitumtoday.com/2016/02/21/sacrifice-and-solidarity/>.

⁷² Juri Viehoff, "Personal Sacrifice and the Value of Solidarity," in Andrea Sangiovanni and Juri Viehoff, eds., *The Virtue of Solidarity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024).

ambivalent, and even pernicious, particularly in its relationship to justice.⁷³ Affke Komter, for example, argues that solidarity is not necessarily a positive phenomenon. Some of the dangers that she sees in solidarity include “pressure toward conformity, the sacrifice of individual autonomy to group ideals, or the exclusion or oppression of out-group members.”⁷⁴ Tereza Kuldova brings attention to unsavory uses of sacrifice that manufacture solidarity by imposing a unifying ethics on individual members. Obligations that involve permanent readiness to sacrifice on behalf of the group exact a high price by depriving individual members of their autonomy.⁷⁵

Some supporters of the dominant conception of solidarity refuse to recognize the pernicious effects of their approach. Solidarity, in their view, is a political tool; using it as a political tool does not involve sacrifice. The purpose of solidarity is affirmation and empowerment of community, against individual interests.⁷⁶

Other supporters of the dominant conception view sacrifice in a positive light as a source of joy and gratification.⁷⁷ They represent euphoria and exaltation that often accompany solidarity campaigns and marches as genuine displays of gratification and joy. In his article “Politics of Joy,” David Gutterman portrays a collective exaltation and state of ecstasy as a genuine experience of joy by individuals.⁷⁸ The association of sacrifice and submission with happiness and joy is truly a perversion. It is ersatz of gratification and a surrogate of happiness. Denial of subjectivity and individual interests is sacrifice, no matter how one looks at it, and it cannot be a source of happiness.

The emerging vision of solidarity is unambiguous about sacrifice. According to this vision, a call to solidarity should never require the subordination of one’s desires, identities and

⁷³ Sangiovanni and Viehoff, *The Virtue of Solidarity*; Heather Battaly, “Solidarity: Virtue or Vice?” in M. Alfano, J. de Ridder, and C. Klein, eds., *Social Virtue Epistemology* (New York: Routledge, 2022).

⁷⁴ Komter, “Solidarity and Sacrifice.”

⁷⁵ Kuldova, “Solidarity and Sacrifice.”

⁷⁶ Jennie Kermode, “Solidarity, Not Sacrifice,” *Bylines*, November 18, 2024. <https://bylines.scot/politics/solidarity-not-sacrifice/>.

⁷⁷ Aryeh Cohen, “The Sacred Joy of Solidarity: A Meditation on an Act of Civil Disobedience,” *Jewschool*, June 26, 2023, <https://jewschool.com/the-sacred-joy-of-solidarity-a-meditation-on-an-act-of-civil-disobedience-173954>; Barbara Holmes, “Joy in Solidarity,” *Center for Action and Contemplation*, October 6, 2024, <https://cac.org/daily-meditations/joy-in-solidarity/>.

⁷⁸ D. D. Guttenplan, “The Politics of Joy,” *The Nation*, November 14, 2020. <https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/biden-victory-joy-solidarity/>.

interests to some greater unifying cause, no matter how noble or edifying.⁷⁹ Genuine solidarity is not about self-sacrifice and suffering. The source of gratification in solidarity relations is in acts of creation that affirm, enrich, and empower of individuals. Solidarity must bring happiness and joy, not exaltation and euphoria that result from self-humiliation. Jeremy Gilbert explains:

It [solidarity] shouldn't be thought of according to a logic of self-sacrifice. Acting in solidarity or expressing solidarity is often difficult, but difficult things can enhance our capacities and our creative and relational potential. And that's what joy means, technically speaking.⁸⁰

For Aleksandar Fatic, solidarity must involve emotional connections among individuals who create a moral community. Solidarity in his view is not a political transaction. Turning solidarity into a political tool inevitably leads to sacrifices that cannot possibly generate emotional ties.⁸¹

Solidarity is about human relations. It involves the full range of factors relevant to such relations. The emerging vision of solidarity recognizes joy, happiness, and gratification as integral to solidarity relations. However, this recognition is largely intuitive and impressionistic. The emerging vision does not provide a rational justification for such recognition. The new conception of solidarity offers a theoretical grounding for such recognition.

Human emotions, including joy and happiness, are products of the evolution. Since the evolution is propelled by the process of creation, these emotions must have equivalents in the process of creation. Therefore, the theoretical grounding that explains the reason why gratification is an essential aspect of solidarity must start with the process of creation.

As has already been pointed out, the process of creation is primarily about conservation and, first and foremost, the conservation of the process of creation. Conservation of differences is an important aspect of the process of creation. The source of differences is operational functions. Conservation of differences is about conserving functions that give rise to differences. Function is a form of action; and action can only be conserved by enacting it. Stimulation of functions triggers them into action. Action conserves and sustains functions. One can think of activation as a way of nourishing, or gratifying functions. Positive and productive interactions between individuals affirm and empower them. Affirmation gratifies the functions that give rise to differences. Gratification and conservation of functions creates in the individual a sense of satisfaction and pleasure

⁷⁹ Gilbert, "Notes Towards a Theory of Solidarity."

⁸⁰ Gilbert, "Notes Towards a Theory of Solidarity."

⁸¹ Aleksandar Fatic, "Solidarity in a Participatory Democracy," Accessed May 11, 2025. https://www.academia.edu/11264245/SOLIDARITY_IN_A_PARTICIPATORY_DEMOCRACY.

This positive experience is an important factor that motivates individuals to support solidarity bonds. It gives individuals a positive and personal stake in supporting solidarity.

The process of creation works on universal inclusion and equality. It conserves differences and leads to their enrichment and evolution. The new conception of solidarity that uses the process of creation as its main organizing principle also requires universal inclusion. Inclusion of all individuals and conservation of their autonomy affirms, empowers, and enriches individuals. As a result, individuals feel gratified, and gratification is the source of happiness and joy.

The new conception of solidarity is about creation and, first and foremost, about the creation of human bonds. Since creation brings happiness and joy, relations of solidarity inevitably result in emotional gratification. Happiness and joy are intrinsic to the new conception of solidarity. The experience of pleasure and joy is not momentary. This experience has deep roots in the very practice of solidarity. The gratification that solidarity practice brings to every individual affirms, empowers, and enriches them; it makes possible their individual and collective evolution. Subjugation and suppression can only bring a perverse and masochistic kind of pleasure. There is no real pleasure in self-abnegation and denial of one's existence. Such pleasure can only be destructive. The new approach toward solidarity is life affirming. It nourishes and gratifies the most fundamental human function inherited from the evolution—the capacity to create new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization.

This section certainly does not exhaust the list of properties relevant to the new conception of solidarity. Human life is rich in experiences. The more our civilization evolves, the more experiences we gain in the ever-growing richness of human life.⁸² Solidarity is an evolving phenomenon, a work-in-progress. As we continue to learn more about solidarity and the process that makes it possible, we will undoubtedly learn about new aspects of solidarity.

The New Practice of Solidarity.

General Observations

Revisions of the dominant approach toward solidarity are not only about theory. They are also about practice. As has been pointed out, the dominant perspective on solidarity views solidarity as a kind of mechanistic aggregation of individuals who have a direct connection to and must uphold the central point of identification. In this perspective, solidarity is primarily a means for affirming this central point. The domination of hierarchies is an essential feature of the dominant practice of solidarity. The subordination of individuals to the central point prevents them from making their creative contributions. This practice cannot produce anything; it is not productive. It cannot produce strong social bonds and it cannot sustain solidarity.

⁸² Shkliarevsky, Gennady. "The Evolution of Civilization as a Process of Creation," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, January 28, 2020, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3526961>.

The primary focus of the new practice is precisely on creating social ties between individuals. The main emphasis of the new practice is on direct and non-hierarchical interactions among individuals. Such interactions create new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization, which affirms and empowers individuals. The dynamics of this practice is totally different from the one that is characteristic for the dominant practice. The most important change that the new practice involves is the attitude toward differences. Individuals no longer see each other as competitors. They view their differences as a resource, perhaps the most important resource that is available to them that ensures their survival and evolution.

This article has repeatedly stressed that inclusion of all differences as autonomous entities is what makes the process of creation so effective. The social practice that uses this process as its main organizing principle also involves universal inclusion and equality. It will be effective in producing enduring social bonds. By contrast, the dominant practice of solidarity uses selective inclusion that is merely a form of exclusion. As a result, this practice suppresses and disempowers individuals. As a result, solidarity it creates will be very fragile.⁸³

The new practice solves the problem of difference. The solution does not need to emphasize tolerance or pluralism. The new practice solves the problem of difference by using differences as a resource in productive and creative interactions that conserve them and make their evolution possible. The solution of the problem of difference also resolves the contradiction between universalism and particularism.

Hierarchical and Non-Hierarchical Interactions

Due to the necessity of suppressing differences, the dominant practice of solidarity relies primarily on hierarchical interactions. By contrast, the new practice relies on non-hierarchical interactions for creating new levels of organization. Although the new practice emphasizes the importance of non-hierarchical interactions, it does not in any way reject the importance of hierarchies. In contrast to the dominant practice, the new practice is not one-sided. This practice recognizes the importance of both types of interactions. While non-hierarchical interactions generate new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization, hierarchical interactions conserve and optimize these new levels. The process of creation depends on the balance between the two types of interactions.

There is a common and widespread view that hierarchical and non-hierarchical interactions are mutually exclusive and incompatible. Some of the most powerful upheavals in recent decades were directed against the domination of hierarchies: the Tiananmen Square protest movement, the Arab Spring, the colored revolutions in former Soviet republics, the Maidan movement in Ukraine, student-led protests in Hong Kong, the Occupy Wall Street, and the current global turmoil. These dramatic events have revealed profound hostility and distrust toward ruling hierarchies that are widely regarded as a threat to freedom and democracy. Ruling hierarchies

⁸³ Gennady Shkliarevsky, "In Quest for Justice: Solving the Problem of Inclusion and Equality." *SSRN Electronic Journal*, June 6, 2021, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3862630>.

respond to such protests in kind. They display intense fear of and deep suspicion toward critics of hierarchical rule.

Researchers largely share the view about the incompatibility of hierarchical and non-hierarchical interactions. They view conflicts between hierarchies and networks inevitable. Niall Ferguson observes: “Clashes between hierarchies and networks are not new in history; on the contrary, there is a sense in which they are history.”⁸⁴ Tensions and conflicts between the two types of interactions have led researchers to conclude that they reflect something fundamental about human society. For Max Weber, for example, authority and status that are intrinsic to hierarchies are totally absent in egalitarian, non-hierarchical approaches.⁸⁵ Lawrence Tshuma observes in his study of the relationship between government hierarchies and networks: “. . . bureaucracies and networks stand in stark contrast [to each other] as polar opposites.”⁸⁶

The conclusion that follows from the belief in the incompatibility of the two types of relations is that the only way to control tensions between them is subordination of one type of interactions to another.⁸⁷ Usually, hierarchies have prevailed as the only way to control the spontaneous expressions of egalitarianism, which is the main reason why revolutionary upheavals in the past that were inspired by appeals to egalitarianism ended up establishing elite rule and the domination of hierarchies.

The belief that hierarchical and non-hierarchical interactions are incompatible and their relationship, if left unregulated, inevitably leads to conflict is largely intuitive. There is no theory that explains the reason why this must inevitably be so. The belief has no rational justification. It also contradicts what we know about the relationship between these two types of interactions in systems that exist in nature. Hierarchies and networks are ubiquitous; and there is a great deal of evidence that, by and large, they do not conflict with, but rather complement each other.⁸⁸ Biological organisms, for example, have many levels of organization (cellular, somatic, neural, or mental). Although these levels differ in power, their relationship is not based on

⁸⁴ N. Ferguson, “Networks and Hierarchies,” *The American Interest* (2014, June 9) <http://www.the-american-interest.com/articles/2014/06/09/networks-and-hierarchies/>.

⁸⁵ M. Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of an Interpretive Sociology*, vol. 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

⁸⁶ L. Tshuma, “Hierarchies and Government Versus Networks and Governance: Competing Regulatory Paradigms in Global Economic Regulation,” *Social & Legal Studies*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2000), pp. 115–42, p. 131.

⁸⁷ Shkliarevsky, “Rethinking Democracy.”

⁸⁸ A. Danchin, “The tree and the ring. Hierarchical and acentered structures in biology,” *The Cancer Journal*, vol. 2, no. 9 (1989), pp. 285–87

domination. On the contrary, hierarchical interactions supervene on non-hierarchical ones. The relationship between the two types is balanced and complementary.

As has been argued elsewhere,⁸⁹ the balance between hierarchical and non-hierarchical interactions plays a very important role in the process of creation. Non-hierarchical interactions combine differences and create new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization. The rise of a more powerful level certainly signals the emergence of hierarchy. In other words, hierarchies are products of non-hierarchical interactions. Yet, their function is different, even though they are a product of the latter. Non-hierarchical relations have the capacity to create. Hierarchical interactions conserve and optimize what non-hierarchical interactions create. The two types of interactions complement each other. This complementary relationship conserves systems and makes their evolution possible.

Only when abstracted from the process of creation, the two types of interactions appear to be opposed to each other. Liberal theory does not recognize the importance of the process of creation. In the liberal perspective, hierarchical and non-hierarchical interactions appear as irreconcilable opposites. Since this perspective has shaped the dominant practice of solidarity, subordination of individuals to the permanent central point of identification is regarded as necessary in this practice.

By contrast, the new practice relies on the process of creation as its main organizing principle. As a result, it accepts the need for a balance between hierarchical and non-hierarchical interactions. Maintaining this balance is an important feature of the new practice that distinguishes it from the dominant approach. Non-hierarchical interactions in solidarity relations give rise to new and more powerful levels of organization; they affirm and empower individuals, which results in strong and enduring social bonds. Hierarchical interactions make possible conservation and evolution of what non-hierarchical interactions created, including the maintaining of strong and enduring solidarity bonds.

The New Practice and Leadership

The balance between hierarchical and non-hierarchical interactions does not abolish the role of leadership, but it significantly transforms and enriches this role. The main role of leaders in the dominant practice of solidarity is to suppress differences. Their actions violate the principle of individual autonomy and squander the creative potential of individuals. The role of leaders in the dominant practice is totally unproductive.

The new practice has a very different approach toward leadership. The balance between hierarchical and non-hierarchical interactions is central to this approach. It recognizes that the two types of interactions have different but complementary functions; and each plays an equally important role in consolidating solidarity relations. By affirming and empowering differences, non-hierarchical interactions create strong social bonds. The role of hierarchical interactions is to conserve and sustain these bonds. The new practice is not about coexistence or tolerance.

⁸⁹ Gennady Shkliarevsky, "Understanding the Process of Creation"; Shkliarevsky, "The Evolution of Civilization as a Process of Creation."

Neither it is about ameliorating tensions and conflicts between individuals. The practice is about productive engagement of the creative potential of each individual.

Hierarchical interactions regulate non-hierarchical interactions among individuals that take place at the local level of organization. Leaders who regulate these interactions operate at the global level of organization. There is an obvious asymmetry in the relationship between leaders and those whose activities they regulate due to the power differential between the two levels of organization. Leaders have access to local interactions, while individuals involved in local interactions do not have access to the global level of organization. The asymmetry is the obvious obstacle to the equilibration of the two levels. Therefore, overcoming the power differential is essential to make the relationship between the two levels symmetrical. When the relationship is symmetrical, individuals who operate at the local level of organization acquire access to the global level.⁹⁰

Individuals at the local level of organization can overcome the power differential between the two levels by adapting to operations that take place at the global level of organization. However, such adaptation is a long and arduous process. Leaders can facilitate this process and make it more efficient. Since they have access to both levels of organization, they are in the position to translate operations at the global level in terms of local level operations. Expressing global operations in terms of local one requires a common frame that is powerful enough to include both levels of organization and provides a common language that makes communication between the two levels possible. Leaders are the ones who can perform this task by using reflective coding—essentially a meta-operation designed to reflect properties of both levels of organization. An example of such reflective coding is the method used by Kurt Gödel, the famous Austrian logician and mathematician, in his famous solution of the problem of consistency and completeness in axiomatic systems.⁹¹

The equilibration enriches operations at the local level of organization. The enriched operations produce a disequilibrium. Conserving these changes requires re-equilibration that gives rise to a new and more powerful level of organization. The emergence of this new level of organization marks the beginning of a new cycle in the evolution of the entire system. This evolution conserves the system: what does not evolve inevitably disintegrates.⁹²

The above discussion shows that role of leaders in the new practice is not about subjugations, and domination, as is the case in the dominant practice. In the new practice, leaders operate on

⁹⁰ Gennady Shkliarevsky, *The Civilization at a Crossroads: Constructing the Paradigm Shift*. Raleigh, NC: Glasstree Publishing, 2017, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318431832_The_Civilization_at_a_Crossroads_Constructing_the_Paradigm_Shift.

⁹¹ Ernest Nagel and James Newman, *Godel's Proof* (New York: New York University Press, 1958).

⁹² Shkliarevsky, "Conservation, Creation, and Evolution."

the principle of universal inclusion and equality. Exclusion is totally incompatible with their role. Their leadership ensures complementary and cooperative interaction among all individuals as equal partners whose actions are tightly entangled. Leaders identify emerging new combinations in these interactions and the organizing principles of these combinations. Finally, leaders play a very important role in equilibrating the global and local level of organization.⁹³

The above discussion shows that enduring social bonds can only emerge if all individual members in a solidarity alliance act as equal partners. The most important objective of solidarity is to make relations of individuals in the alliance strong and enduring. Subordination and submission of individuals cannot be the source of strength and endurance of social bonds that give rise to solidarity. Only universal inclusion that affirms, enriches, and empowers all individuals as equals can create such bonds. Each individual participant in solidarity relations acquires an equal and personal stake in forging and maintain social bonds that sustain solidarity alliance. The new practice does not have and does not need a permanent central point of identification. New and increasingly more powerful levels of organization give rise to new ideas that provide new meanings and goals to constantly evolving communities of solidarity. Thus, solidarity ceases to be a means to an end; it becomes a way of life. Maintaining solidarity relations and strengthening solidarity bonds become solidarity's most important goal.

The New Practice and Liberation

Human liberation is an important part of public discourse. There is a growing realization that human liberation is an epochal challenge in today's world.⁹⁴ There are many different perspectives in the contemporary discussions of liberation: religious, liberal, socialist, and others.⁹⁵ Liberation has acquired a much broader meaning that transcends the traditional focus on emancipation from oppression. The emphasis has shifted away from a negative meaning of liberation (liberation from) toward a positive meaning (liberation for). The

⁹³ Shkliarevsky, *The Civilization at a Crossroads*, chap. 8.

⁹⁴ Ananta Kumar Giri, *Knowledge and Human Liberation* (London, New York: Anthem Press, 2014).

⁹⁵ Richard Shaull, "A Theological Perspective on Human Liberation," *New Blackfriars*, vol. 49, no. 578 (1968), pp. 509–17; Taiwo Afuape and Gillian Hughes, *Liberation Practices: Towards emotional wellbeing through dialogue* (New York: Routledge, 2016), <https://www.book2look.com/book/Aihl4tCThB>; Paul A. Crow and Linwood Fredericksen, "Human Liberation," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, May 17, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christianity/Human-liberation>; Chunjie Zhang, *The Quest for Liberation: Philosophy and the Making of World Culture in China and the West* (Fordham University Press, 2025); Aaron Edwards, "On Liberation Psychology, Hate, Hope, and Healing," *Journal of Hate Studies*, vol. 18, no. 1 (January 2023), pp. 31–44, <https://doi.org/10.33972/jhs.229>.

prevailing thinking about liberation today is focused on the realization of human nature.⁹⁶ In his book *Knowledge and Human Liberation*, Ananta Kumar Giri points to the fact that many philosophical and spiritual traditions of today's world tie liberation with a deeper understanding of humanity. In his view, liberation "involves recognizing and transcending limitations or attachments that prevent individuals from fully experiencing their true selves." The agenda of liberation is to help individuals "understand their fundamental nature or essence," including consciousness.⁹⁷

Although the interest in liberation remains strong, it does not translate into real advances toward this goal. Frequent and passionate calls for liberation make wonderful slogans that lead nowhere. The main reason for this futility is not the resistance of forces that oppose liberation; neither is it a result of insufficient will or efforts. The real reason is a lack of clarity and understanding of liberation. The current view of liberation remains very vague and confusing. Discussions and debates on liberation are largely speculative and rife with generalizations and platitudes. Confusion and lack of clarity breed doubts about the prospects for liberation.⁹⁸ In his recent book *A Theory of Liberation*, German philosopher Christoph Menke offers a pessimistic diagnosis. The history of the civilization, in his view, is the history of "failed liberations." Promises of liberation have resulted in "new forms of domination" and servitude; and the prospects for the future are not encouraging.⁹⁹

As has been pointed out earlier, liberation has always been part of solidarity's agenda. Calls to liberation are common in solidarity campaigns. They attract millions who feel that their participation is important precisely because it brings liberation closer. Yet the inspiration eventually subsides with little or no real results, except disillusionment and frustration. The connection between solidarity and liberation remains unclear. Solidarity campaigns are about specific and concrete objectives, while liberation is a universal goal. Liberation is about humanity, not a particular group. If solidarity campaigns are about specific rights and freedoms, liberation is about realization of human nature.

The association of solidarity and liberation is intuitive and impressionistic. The intuition may very well be correct and valid. However, it offers few specifics about how and where the two

⁹⁶ Ananta Kumar Giri, *Knowledge and Human Liberation* (London, New York: Anthem Press, 2014, <https://anthempres.com/knowledge-and-human-liberation-pb>).

⁹⁷ Giri, *Knowledge and Human Liberation*.

⁹⁸ Andrea Lorenzo Capussela, "The Liberal Conception of 'Freedom' Is Incapable of Addressing the Problems of Contemporary Capitalism," *EUROPP* (blog), October 29, 2018. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/euoppblog/2018/10/29/the-liberal-conception-of-freedom-is-incapable-of-addressing-the-problems-of-contemporary-capitalism/>.

⁹⁹ Christoph Menke, *A Theory of Liberation (Theorie Der Befreiung): On the Becoming of Freedom* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2022).

intersect. The new conception of solidarity offers a rational explanation of the nature of their association.

Solidarity is about strong social bonds. These bonds are one of the manifestations of the human capacity to create an infinite number of new and increasingly more powerful levels of symbolic organization. This capacity is uniquely human. It distinguishes humans from other species and, thus, represents human nature. Indeed, other species can also perform symbolic operations. The fact is not surprising. After all, humans are products of the evolution and their capacity to perform symbolic operations has evolutionary roots. However, no other species come even close to humans in the extent they use symbolic operations. The human ability is qualitatively different. No other species rely for their survival on symbolic operations to the same degree as do humans. No other species performs symbolic operations so consistently and so systematically. No other species can create an infinite number of new and increasingly more powerful symbolic levels of organization. No other species has acquired consciousness, created culture, or built a civilization. If liberation, as many argue, is about freeing human nature, then it must be, first and foremost, about the realization of the human capacity to create.

This article has explained that human creative capacity plays the key role in producing strong and enduring solidarity relations. Thus, by realizing their unique property humans make solidarity possible. This creative act expresses, or liberates, human nature; and the realization of human nature is an act of liberation. Most visions of liberation do not embrace the process of creation and do not see its liberating role. They do not explain what constitutes liberation. For this reason, their only choice is to relegate liberation to some distant future, which relieves them from the necessity to provide details as to what this liberation will look like.,

By contrast, the new approach to solidarity that uses the process of creation as its main organizing principle offers a very specific description of what constitutes an act of liberation. In accordance with this approach, liberation is not about the future; it is about here and now. In their creative interactions that give rise to strong social ties, individuals realize their unique human nature and, thus, attain liberation. Their stake in solidarity is individual and universal at the same time; and their personal liberation is an act of human liberation, i.e., it is universal. The new practice makes the connection between solidarity and liberation clear. It also shows what makes liberation possible.

* * *

This article is the first attempt to examine the social phenomenon of solidarity from the perspective based on the universal process of creation as its organizing principle. The new practice of solidarity is still a work-in-progress. Our understanding of the process of creation remains limited. As a result, the list of features relevant to the new practice is far from exhaustive. Theoretical and practical work on solidarity and liberation will undoubtedly continue. As the work progresses, more aspects of this complex subject will come to light and enrich the emerging new practice.

Conclusion

The demise of liberalism has opened a wide space for theorizing and experimenting in the field of social practice. The renewed interest in solidarity is a response to this development. The disappointing results of the solidarity campaigns in the early part of this century have not diminished the appeal of solidarity. On the contrary, it has become even more intense. Rethinking solidarity is now a major venue in the search for alternatives to liberalism. It seeks a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of solidarity and new and effective ways of harnessing its enormous power.

Calls for rethinking solidarity convey a sense of urgency that may appear as overstating the case.¹⁰⁰ However, on close examination, one must agree that the quest for a new theory of solidarity is important. Our civilization is in crisis with no apparent resolutions in sight. This situation is the source of malaise and frustration that currently grip our civilization. In this time of crisis, the impulse to reach to the ancient roots of human existence is natural and understandable. To many, solidarity seems to be the only hope. Its enormous power has made the rise of societies and civilizations possible. If anything can help humanity in this desperate situation, solidarity is certainly the best candidate to do the job.

To realize the enormous creative potential of solidarity, we need new approaches. The dominant theory and practice of solidarity are not up to the task; they have proved to be inadequate and ineffective. They have turned solidarity into a political tool in service of partisanship. This approach has spectacularly failed, which has prompted the search for a new one.

The results of the search are promising. Although they have not produced a new conception of solidarity, they reveal the outline of a vision of solidarity that is broader and more comprehensive than what the dominant conception of solidarity offers. This vision recognizes that the power of solidarity comes from direct interactions between individuals. It sees such interactions as the foundation of a new social practice that has relevance to all social spheres. By emphasizing direct interactions, the new vision transcends the narrow view of solidarity as a political tool. According to the new vision, the main objective of solidarity is to foster strong and enduring social bonds. Solidarity ceases to be a means to an end and becomes a way of life. The new vision has inspired the current study that offers an approach that streamlines the ideas and insights expressed in the new vision, which results in a new conception of solidarity.

A better understanding of the source of solidarity's power plays a critical role in the new conception. Such understanding is essential for harnessing the immense creative power of solidarity. As the article explains, attraction to differences is the force that brings people into solidarity relations; it is the main source of solidarity's power. Attraction to

¹⁰⁰ Gilbert, "Notes Towards a Theory of Solidarity."

differences is an evolutionary phenomenon. It originates in the universal process of creation that propels the evolution and sustains the universe. The source of this process is conservation that is the most important property of the universe. Conservation requires creation, and creation leads to the evolution.

As this study explains, differences play a very important role in the evolution, which is the main reason why the evolution favored them and selected them for fitness. Conservation of differences requires their interactions with each other. By interacting, they create new combinations that give rise new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization, thus gaining access to new possibilities and new resources that make conservation possible. This process conserves differences and makes their evolution possible.

Social bonds that give rise to solidarity are also products of the process of creation. These bonds emerge in productive and creative interactions among individuals in which differences play a very important role. These interactions affirm and empower individuals; they make their individual and collective evolution possible. Thus, individual acquire a direct and personal stake in solidarity relations. This personal stake of each individual makes social bonds strong and enduring.

As the article explains, the dominant conception of solidarity does not affirm and empower individuals. It views solidarity in terms of aggregations in which isolated individuals are bound together by their direct connection to some central point of identification—an idea, identity, value, or goal.¹⁰¹ Domination of hierarchies and hierarchical interactions are the inevitable result of such approach. Hierarchical relations are based on subordination; they cannot empower individuals. In the dominant approach to solidarity, differences are a source of disruption. The suppression of differences becomes a necessity. For this reason, the dominant conception of solidarity calls for submission of desires, identities, and interests of individuals to a greater unifying cause.¹⁰² Suppression and submission cannot create strong and enduring social bonds. Individuals have no stake in relations that suppress them.

The new conception of solidarity embraces a new view of differences. Differences play a very important role in the process of creation. They represent a very important resource without which the process of creation would be impossible.

Differences are not abstractions. They are real properties of individuals that embody them. When equal and autonomous individuals engage in non-hierarchical interactions they combine their differences. Combinations give rise to new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization that enrich and empower individuals. As a result, individuals can

¹⁰¹ Gilbert, "Notes Towards a Theory of Solidarity."

¹⁰² Gilbert, "Notes Towards a Theory of Solidarity"; Kolers, *A Moral Theory of Solidarity*, p. 39; Andreas Busen, "Review of A Moral Theory of Solidarity by Avery Kolers," *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical & Democratic Theory*, vol. 26, no. 4, p. 661.

evolve both on the personal and collective level. These productive and mutually advantageous interactions realize human nature. The realization of human nature makes social bonds it creates very strong and enduring. The entanglements and interdependence of individuals that emerges in the process makes these bonds unbreakable. Since interactions among individuals empower them, individuals do not see each other as competitors for limited resources. They view each other as their most important resource that makes their survival and evolution possible. Individuals have a direct and personal stake in sustaining their relations.

In the new conception, solidarity is not a tool for achieving some objective. Indeed, the emergence of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization is important. However, the creation of new levels of organization is not the main purpose of solidarity. It is merely a byproduct of solidarity relations. The main goal of solidarity is to maintain solidarity relations. Solidarity is not a means to an end. It is a way of life, and maintaining this way of life is solidarity's main goal.

By embracing the process of creation as the main organizing principle, the new theory and practice of solidarity appropriate the main features of this process. The article outlines several of them. Since the process of creation requires inclusion of all differences as autonomous entities, the new practice of solidarity can only operate on the basis of universal inclusion and equality. According to the new conception, solidarity can exist only as universal solidarity. Any deviation from the principle of universal inclusion and equality makes solidarity ineffective in creating and sustaining strong social bonds.

The emphasis that the article makes on non-hierarchical interactions is not an argument against hierarchical relations. As this article explains, interactions of differences create new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization; in other words, they create hierarchies. The emergence of hierarchical interactions from non-hierarchical ones indicates that hierarchies are necessary and important. Both types of interactions play a vital role. While non-hierarchical interactions create new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization, hierarchies conserve and optimize these creations. As has been explained elsewhere, the balance between the two types of interactions is essential for productive relations and evolution.¹⁰³ Such balance is integral to the new theory and practice of solidarity. As the article makes clear, only the process of creation has the capacity for sustaining this balance.

The article has also discussed several other dimensions of the new conceptions of solidarity. One of them is the cognitive dimension. Each new and more powerful level of organization gives rise to new ideas, theories, approaches that expand horizons of knowledge. Prospects of acquiring new knowledge is a powerful incentive for sustaining social bonds and relations of solidarity. Another important feature of the new conception

¹⁰³ Gennady Shkliarevsky, "The Paradox of Observing, Autopoiesis, and the Future of Social Sciences," *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, vol. 24, no. 3 (2007), pp. 323 – 332.

of solidarity is its moral dimension. The recognition of autonomy is the source of moral sentiment and the foundation of morality. The recognition of autonomy is central to the new conception of solidarity. By contrast, although the dominant practice of solidarity often appeals to moral sentiments, it is essentially immoral since it requires subordination of individuals to the unifying cause, thus using morality to sustain solidarity. Suppression and submission can never be the basis for true moral relations.

As the article shows, solidarity relations conserve and gratify the most important human function—the capacity to create an infinite number of new and increasingly more powerful levels of mental organization. Gratification makes relations of solidarity a source of happiness, pleasure, and joy. This dimension is totally absent in the dominant practice of solidarity since this practice requires suppression and disempowerment. Self-abnegation, sacrifice, and suffering are characteristic features of the dominant practice. Consequently, this practice cannot affirm and empower individuals. It can only degrade and weaken social bonds.

In contrast to the dominant conception that approaches solidarity as a static aggregation of individuals who support a particular cause, the new conception approaches solidarity, first and foremost, as a dynamic process that constantly evolves. As this study has pointed out, a balance between equilibration and the production of disequilibrium plays an important role in the process of creation. By creating new and more powerful levels of organization, equilibration produces disequilibrium. As equilibrium grows, so does disequilibrium. The dynamic nature of the process of creation requires a balance between the two. The new practice relies on creative and productive interactions among individuals. It does not require a specific unifying cause. Consolidation of solidarity is a result of strong social bonds created by productive interactions among individuals. As solidarity relations evolve, they give produce knowledge that may lead to the formulation of specific goals. However, the main source of consolidation is not these goals, but the process that sustains solidarity and maintains its capacity for change, thus strengthening the bonds of solidarity.

Finally, the article has also discussed the contradiction between universalism and particularity that the dominant conception of solidarity has failed to resolve. The universalist claims of liberation are an essential aspect of the dominant conception of solidarity. However, its practice cannot deliver on its promise of liberation because it pursues goals that are not universalist in their orientation but rather represent partisan interests. The discrepancy between the theoretical commitment to universalism and the practical orientation toward particularism undermines the universalist claims of the dominant conception, which put into question its avowed promise of liberation.

This discrepancy does not exist in the new conception of solidarity. As the article makes clear, there is no contradiction between universal and particular—or part and whole—in the process of creation. Interactions of differences conserve and enrich differences and, at the same time, advance the process of creation. The relationship between part and whole is in harmony. Without this harmony the process would be impossible. The new practice of solidarity harmonizes universalism and particularism. Interactions among individuals sustain the process of creation. They affirm and empower individuals. The new approach

resolves the contradiction that undermines the dominant conception and its promise of liberation.

In her article “The Exceptionality of Solidarity,” Amalia Amaya looks at expressions of solidarity at times of crisis.¹⁰⁴ Although the article focuses on the Covid-19 pandemic as a case study, it raises also some fundamental issues. In part, she asks a question that goes to the heart of solidarity: Why is solidarity, an exception rather than a norm?

Her answer to this question points to institutional factors. She sees institutions, both government and non-government, as having a critical role in forging and sustaining solidarity relations and making them permanent. She sees in institutionalization as the way to turn expressions of solidarity into a norm, thus, in a way, suggesting that solidarity can be more than an occasional expression. It can be a way of life.

The emphasis on institutions is a popular subject in the discourse on solidarity. Rahel Jaeggi, for example, proposes to institutionalize solidarity through welfare systems. She considers the combination of social rights and welfare institutions to be essential for fostering solidarity and making it permanent.¹⁰⁵ For Carlo Burelli and Francesco Camboni, fostering solidarity relations requires a combination of “a set of feelings of mutual kinship” and a set of redistributive institutions.¹⁰⁶

One can agree with the emphasis on institutions. Indeed, institutions are important. They regulate human practices, thus conserving them and making their evolution possible. Institutions certainly can play a positive role in normalizing solidarity and turning it into a way of life. However, the emphasis on institutions loses sight of the irrational, or “pre-contractual,” source of solidarity that has been pointed out, among others, by Durkheim. Institutions certainly cannot replace this fundamental source of solidarity.

This article has argued that attraction to differences plays a key role in the emergence of solidarity. It has also explained the close connection between attraction to differences, the evolution, and the process of creation that propels the evolution. Differences play a critical role in the process of creation. Therefore, attraction to differences has its roots in the process of creation.

¹⁰⁴ Amalia Amaya, “The Exceptionality of Solidarity,” *Netherlands Journal of Legal Philosophy*, January 1, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.5553/NJLP/221307132021050002011>.

¹⁰⁵ Rahel Jaeggi, “Solidarity and Indifference,” *Solidarity in Health and Social Care in Europe*, 2001, 287. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-015-9743-2_12.

¹⁰⁶ Carlo Burelli and Francesco Camboni, “The Function of Solidarity and Its Normative Implications,” *Ethics & Global Politics* 16, no. 3 (January 1, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/16544951.2023.2241678>.

The fact that expressions of solidarity are occasional and sporadic indicates that the dominant theory and practice of solidarity are flawed. The knowledge they provide is not adequate for making solidarity relations permanent. Attaining this goal is possible only through understanding the roots of solidarity that originate in the process of creation. Solidarity bonds are not given; they are created. Therefore, there is a process involved in their emergence. As this article shows, solidarity bonds are a product of the process of creation. This process is universal. It originates in the nature of the universe and the evolution, not in institutions based in human rationality. While institutions are important, only the process of creation that gives rise to solidarity bonds can sustain solidarity bonds by constantly invigorating them. Without such invigoration, metabolic activities of solidarity relations decline and fall into dormancy, which explains why expressions of solidarity are occasional and sporadic. Existential threats that humans face at the time of crises make us intuitively reach to the roots of our existence. The conditions that put our very survival in question force us to turn instinctively to the source of our existence and revive relations that have given rise to our civilization.

The question that Amaya asks is pertinent. Indeed, if solidarity can give rise to societies and civilizations, there is no reason why it cannot become a way of life. Expressions of solidarity do not have to be an exception. On the contrary, lapses in solidarity are exceptions. They indicate that there is a fundamental flaw in our view of and approach toward solidarity. They reveal our failure in harnessing the power of solidarity. The failure can only be a result of limitations in our understanding of solidarity. The only way to overcome these limitations is by understanding the roots of solidarity. The new theory and practice of solidarity outlined in this study use the process of creation as their main organizing principle. They offer a possibility to make solidarity relations permanent and turn solidarity into a way of life.

The dominant theory and practice of solidarity cannot lead to liberation because they do not recognize the importance of the process of creation. The failure to embrace this process is not an accident; it is not a result of flawed thinking. Its roots go back to the very emergence of humanity. In that time humans did not have the capacity to recognize the importance of the process of creation—the fact that it was this process that enabled them to create mental constructs that are vital for their relationship with reality. By not recognizing the importance of this process, by not appropriating its enormous power, humans denied themselves a possibility of establishing control over this vital resource. They in fact disempowered themselves. As a result, we still do not effectively use the power of creation. We cannot maintain strong and enduring social bonds that are essential for our survival.

This human predicament has only one solution: we must appropriate the process of creation. The only path to such appropriation is the transcendence of the anthropocentric tradition that limits our approaches to reality only to human-centered perspectives. The anthropocentric tradition is the source of our disempowerment. It prevents humans from realizing our enormous creative potential. Solidarity relations express the unique human capacity to create. An act of creation is an act of liberation. Thus, solidarity liberates human nature. This liberation is here and now, not in some distant and putative future.

Only the realization of the creative potential of human relations makes possible to turn solidarity into a way of life, thus attaining liberation.

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