Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity and the Ethics of Participatory Ownership

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UiA University of Agder

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Summary

A lack of trust in governments and larger NGOs has increased the appeal of folk engagement in which “ordinary citizens” address global poverty and humanitarian crises by starting their own initiatives and volunteering abroad. This dissertation explores the tensions between the extraordinary motivations of ordinary people and the potential for the personal and direct nature of folk engagement to disrupt affective economies and the overall coordination of development and aid. To this end, philosophical perspectives on interrelated aspects of global solidarity are brought into conversation with the concerns of an international research community that engages Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity (CIGS).

While this dissertation refers to this field of study as CIGS research, there is not agreement that CIGS offers an appropriate label for the forms of citizen aid that this research community studies. This project takes the ambiguity and definitional variety in this field as an opportunity to analyze empirical data, and engage several of the primary ethical concerns that have emerged within CIGS research over the past ten years. Through operationalizing global solidarity in a CIGS context, problematizing that operationalization, and developing a CIGS-oriented ethics of participatory ownership, this dissertation offers conceptual clarity and develops new, empirically informed concepts.

This ethics of participatory ownership has been developed in two theoretically oriented articles that critically engage influential theories of solidarity from the fields of moral and political philosophy, and three co-authored texts that offer examples of qualitative secondary analysis (QSA). Through interdisciplinary, collaborative re-analysis of the empirical data gathered by my co-authors, this dissertation offers rich and creative accounts of CIGS’ motivations and practices that challenge central assumptions in previous CIGS research and solidarity scholarship. Engaging the contexts of Lesvos, Norway, and Uganda, this analysis details the opportunities offered by global solidarity for projects of self-construction, the development of reflexivity, and the creation of collective, translocal senses of identity. These opportunities are considered alongside the risks of reproducing neocolonial and neoliberal patterns of affect that emphasize the agencies of outsiders with good intentions at the expense of those most affected by crisis and inequity.

Sammendrag

Manglende tillit til statlige løsninger og store bistandsorganisasjoner har ført til at flere “vanlige mennesker” forsøker å bidra til globalt utviklingsarbeid og humanitært arbeid ved å etablere sine egne initiativer. Denne avhandlingen utforsker spenningen mellom den uvanlige motivasjonen til de vanlige menneskene som satser på denne tilnærmingen, og potensialet for at disse initiativene kan ha uønskede negative effekter til tross for gode intensjoner. Avhandlingen anvender filosofiske perspektiver som kobler sammen forskjellige elementer av global solidaritet og ser disse i sammenheng med utfordringer påpekt av en internasjonal forskningsgruppe som jobber med Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity (CIGS) eller citizen aid actors, som de også noen ganger omtales som.

Mens avhandlingen refererer til dette feltet som “CIGS-forskning”, er det stor uenighet om CIGS er et passende begrep for å beskrive den såkalte amatørbistanden og de mindre utviklingsorganisasjoner som disse forskerne er opptatt av å forstå. I dette forskningsprosjektet brukes denne uenigheten som utgangspunkt for å analysere empirisk data, og samtidig ta opp vesentlige etiske problemstillinger som CIGS forskere har vært opptatte av de siste ti årene. Det gjøres ved å anvende motstridende moralske teorier om global solidaritet som alternative konseptuelle ressurser. Ved å operasjonalisere global solidaritet i en CIGS-kontekst, problematisere denne operasjonaliseringen, og utvikle en CIGS-orientert “ethics of participatory ownership”, bidrar avhandlingen med både konseptuelle avklaringer og nye konsepter som er forankret i et empirisk datamateriale.

De etiske betraktningene har blitt utviklet i to teoretiske artikler som gir en kritisk evaluering av innflytelsesrike teorier om solidaritet fra moralsk og politisk filosofi, og tre samskrevede tekster som er et resultat av “qualitative secondary analysis” (QSA). Gjennom tverrfaglige, kollaborative gjenanalyseringer av empiriske data samlet av mine medforfattere, bidrar avhandlingen til innholdsrike og kreative tilnærminger til CIGS, som utfordrer sentrale antakelser i tidligere CIGS forskning. Ved å forske på CIGS i Lesvos, Norge, og Uganda bidrar analysen til en beskrivelse av mulighetene for transformasjon, utvikling av refleksivitet, og en identitetsforståelse basert på kollektivitet og translokalitet gjennom global solidaritet. Analysen tar også for seg risikoen for å reprodusere neokoloniale og neoliberale strukturer som prioriterer behovene og agensen til

frivillige aktører med gode intensjoner fremfor de som er hardest rammet av krise og ulikhet.

Contents

Acknowledgements v

Summary...vii

Sammendrag …………………………………………………………….... ix

1 Introduction 1

- 1.1 Situating the Research Project………………………………………... 1
- 1.2 The Aim of the Research Project…………………………………….. 3
  - 1.2.1 Article I…………………………………………………... 4
  - 1.2.2 Article II………………………………………………… 5
  - 1.2.3 Book Chapter I………………………………………… 6
  - 1.2.4 Book Chapter II…………………………………………... 7
  - 1.2.5 Article III………………………………………………… 8
- 1.3 The Methodological Elephant in the Room………………………….. 9
- 1.4 Motivation for the Research Project…………………………………. 11
- 1.5 Outline of the Dissertation…………………………………………... 12

2 Conceptualizing CIGS……………………………………………………...13

- 2.1 Global and Personal? ………………………………………………..13
- 2.2 Cost-efficiency, Direct Participation, and Ownership……………… 15
- 2.3 Affective Economies and Ownership……………………………… 17
- 2.4 Political Resistance or Depoliticizing Aid? ………………………... 21
- 2.5 Summarizing Key Tensions………………………………………… 24

3 Operationalizing Global Solidarity…………………………………….. 25

- 3.1 Social, Civic, and Political Solidarities…………………………….. 25
  - 3.1.1 Social Solidarity…………………………………………... 27
  - 3.1.2 Civic Solidarity…………………………………………… 27
  - 3.1.3 Political Solidarity……………………………………….... 29
  - 3.1.4 Parasitical Solidarity……………………………………... 32
- 3.2 What's Global about Global Solidarity? …………………………… 34
  - 3.2.1 Human Solidarity and More-than-human Solidarity……… 35
  - 3.2.2 Transnational Solidarities………………………………… 36
  - 3.2.3 Justice-based and Sentiment-based Approaches to Global Solidarity…………………………………………………….. 39
  - 3.2.4 Global Solidarity as Siding Unnaturally………………….. 42

4 Competing Theories of Global Solidarity…………………………………… 47

- 4.1 Rorty, Ethnocentric Inclusivity, and Siding Unnaturally…………... 47
- 4.2 Kolers, Reason-based Deference, and Siding Unnaturally………… 51

4.3 Taylor and Problematizing Global Solidarity as Siding Unnaturally..54
4.4 Hemmings and Affective Solidarity………………………………... 59
5 Methodological Considerations…………………………………………… 63
5.1 Ontological and Epistemological Positioning……………………… 63
5.2 Qualitative Secondary Analysis and Feminist Methodologies…….. 68
5.3 “So what?”—The Usefulness of Partial Perspectives……………… 72
6 Summarizing the Contributions of the Dissertation…………………………. 75
6.1 The Desirability of Moral Character Change as a Motivator of Global Solidarity……………………………………………………………… 75
6.2 Siding Unnaturally as Expressional Solidarity…………………….. 77
6.3 Robust Participatory Ownership and Expressional Participatory Ownership………………………………………………………. 78
6.4 Including Southern Actors as CIGS Founders…………………….. 79
6.5 Feminist Reflexivity and the Risks of “Liberal” Projects of Self-Construction………………………………………………….. 81
6.6 Conclusion…………………………………………………………. 82
List of References ………………………………………………………. 85
Appendices……………………………………………………………… 91

List of Abbreviations

CAAs: Citizen Aid Actors

CIs: Citizen Initiatives

CIGS: Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity

GINGOs: Grassroots International Non-Governmental Organizations

NGDOs: Non-Governmental Development Organizations

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organizations

PDIs: Private Development Initiatives

QSA: Qualitative Secondary Analysis

1. Introduction

This dissertation contributes an interdisciplinary and empirically informed treatment of several key tensions identified by an international community of researchers looking into citizen aid actors across different contexts. In particular, this research project considers the normative implications of referring to such actors as Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity (CIGS). This project draws on multiple philosophical theories of solidarity as situated perspectives from which to reflect on CIGS. These conflicting perspectives are used to engage empirical data generated by CIGS research and develop an ethics of participatory ownership that is grounded in the unique affective environments that CIGS founders and other aid actors describe. This extended abstract presents and connects the five texts written as parts of this dissertation. Taken together, these texts argue for (1) a reconceptualization of the motivation of global solidarity, (2) an attentiveness to different forms of ownership that can be generated through participation in CIGS, (3) a more inclusive definition of CIGS that de-essentializes the distinction between the global North and global South, and (4) an emphasis of decolonial, feminist reflexivity in projects of self-construction.

1.1 Situating the Research Project

The need for this project surfaced through collaborations between members of an international community of researchers, primarily based in the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada (Kinsbergen et. al. 2023, 5), all of whom were looking at the emergence of new forms of citizen aid. Many of these researchers were present at the First European Conference on Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity in Brussels in 2014, where the term CIGS was first coined (Haaland and Wallevik 2019, 1870). "Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity" was also used in the title of a 2017 special section in *Forum for Development Studies* (volume 44, 163-248) that brought some of these researchers together. However, the terminology used by the contributors to describe citizen aid actors was far from uniform. This diversity was also evident in a 2019 special issue in *Third World Quarterly* (volume 40, 1769-1938) that featured many of the same authors and offered "Citizen Aid" as a blanket term for this research field. Alternatively, a recent book—which includes two texts co-authored as parts of this dissertation—

suggests that CIGS might be understood under the broader category of "Citizen Aid Actors" (CAAs) (Haaland et al., eds. 2023).

In an initial literature review at the outset of this PhD project, in January of 2020, the 2017 and 2019 special issues offered a natural starting point. It became immediately clear that there was a general agreement among the contributors that they were all engaging the same category of citizen aid, and equally clear that there was no consensus regarding what this form of aid should be called (Fechter & Schwittay 2019, 1770; Schulpen and Huyse 2017, 163). My first contextual considerations of the potential value of using CIGS as a label compounded this definitional problem substantially. A review of connections between development, aid, and solidarity in existing studies—with an eye towards humanitarian aid in Lesvos, Greece—quickly uncovered that,

> …in the migration and refugee literature, 'solidarity' has various meanings that follow different philosophical traditions. A major finding is thus that there is no consistent application of the concept of solidarity across the field, leading to a considerable degree of fragmentation in the way this concept is treated in this literature. (Bauder & Juffs 2020, 15)

I thereby located an interesting overlap in the definitional variation found in applied philosophies of solidarity and the lack of consensus among researchers interested in citizen aid.

The eventual choice to use global solidarity as an ambiguous, interdisciplinary entry point for studying CIGS was based on three factors. First, the use of the term CIGS had been prominent in a Norwegian research context—in particular, in the work of my supervisors, Hege Wallevik and Hanne Haaland (Haaland & Wallevik 2019; Frydenlund et al., 2020). This offered me consistent access to experts in the field who had already produced work that was sensitive to the role of solidarity. Second, solidarity is a phrase that had been used liberally to describe a wide range of humanitarian activities connected to the refugee situation in Lesvos (Rozakou 2017; Serntedakis 2017). As this was the context that I planned to engage first, solidarity became relevant at multiple levels. Third, the inclusion of global solidarity in the term 'CIGS' offered an opportunity to combine development and aid research with moral and political philosophy. It is at the intersection of these fields that it felt most promising to explore the choice of CIGS over alternative labels such as amateur aid (Haaland & Wallevik 2017;

Schnable 2021; Kennedy & Venne 2022), Citizen Aid Actors (CAAs) (Haaland et al. 2023), Private Development Initiatives (PDIs) (Kinsbergen 2014), Grassroots International Non-governmental organizations (GINGOs) (Appe & Schnable 2019; Davis & Swiss 2020), or simply Citizen Initiatives (CIs) (Schulpen & Huyse 2017).

The use of the term CIGS throughout this dissertation is not meant as an argument that global solidarity is relevant to all research on citizen aid. I have chosen the label CIGS over the other available options to explore the implications of the assumption that global solidarity is central to the motivations and practices of these organizations. In addition, references to CIGS research throughout this extended abstract are meant to encompass studies in which other labels were applied. Importantly, the choice to include a morally and politically charged concept such as global solidarity in a label that can quickly be assumed to be descriptive, must be taken seriously in light of the normative force that such a label has in terms of guiding future research and positioning CIGS within a broader aid architecture. Thus, while in no way aiming to generate an essentialized or static definition, this project draws on the intersection of empirically informed ethics (Leer-Salvesen 2019) and development studies to offer reflections on operationalizations of global solidarity in diverse contexts. Using a situated and interdisciplinary approach to global solidarity as a conceptual orientation for analyzing the central tensions raised by the international community of CIGS researchers, this dissertation offers unique insights into the motivation and practice of global solidarity.

1.2 The Aim of the Research Project

In considering the appropriateness of the term CIGS, each phase of this research project has been conducted against the background of the following two research questions:

RQ1: Is a sense of global solidarity central to the motivations or practices of CIGS?

RQ2: If so, how should the ethical practice of global solidarity be operationalized to accommodate the specific challenges encountered by, or potentially caused by, CIGS?

Two qualifiers are important here. First, both of these research questions are too ambitious to be answered fully and, going even further, I argue that the desirability of fully answering these questions is suspect at best. Regardless of the terminology used to describe these organizations, they are flexible and often temporary responses to shifting and highly contextual issues. As negotiating multifaceted socio-political contexts is a crucial aspect of morally evaluating both global solidarity as a concept and CIGS as aid actors, the research questions above must be understood as generating evolving, case-based operationalizations that contribute to an ongoing conversation—not as puzzles that can be solved with any sense of finality.

Second, I want to specify that my goal in this project has been to explore whether or not the term CIGS offers one legitimate description among others. This is a sentiment that I see mirrored in the continued commitments of CIGS researchers to acknowledge that, while there are key features and tensions observed across contexts, "CAAs are not birds of a feather" and their study remains a relatively new field characterized by diversity (Kinsbergen et al. 2023, 9). Thus, throughout this project, I have attempted to embody the ethos of what Francis Nyamnjoh refers to as "conviviality", offering my own use of the term CIGS as an attempt at conversation rather than conversion (2017, 262). This focus on conviviality and conversation has served as a reminder of the inevitable incompleteness of all theories and research efforts, and has inspired me to deconstruct my own approach throughout the evolution of this project. With these two qualifiers in mind, I will briefly present the three articles and two book chapters that were produced over the course of this research project. I will return to each in more detail in chapter six, but an initial summary can begin to establish the narrative arch of the project and show which specific questions were considered against the background of the two overarching concerns listed above.

1.2.1 Article I

Reason-based Deference or Ethnocentric Inclusivity? Avery Kolers, Richard Rorty, and the Motivational Force of Global Solidarity
Journal of Global Ethics (published Jan. 15th, 2023)
https://doi.org/10.1080/17449626.2022.2138945

RQ1: Can a philosophical account of global solidarity be developed that plausibly explains the motivations of CIGS founders?

RQ2: If so, how would such an account conceptualize the tensions between justice and emotion and between local loyalties and global commitments?

This theoretically oriented article treats two tensions that are central in understanding the motivation of global solidarity. The first tension is between local and global commitments, both in terms of how these two categories should be conceptualized and how conflicts between such commitments might be contextually resolved. The second tension is between the motivational strategies of invoking obligations to an ideal of global justice and encouraging emotional connections to specific narratives. Both tensions are framed against what Patti Tamara Lenard refers to as “the cosmopolitan problem of motivation” along with her arguments about the shortcomings of both justice-based and sentiment-based attempts to solve this motivational problem (Lenard et al. 2010). Article I examines, and combines elements from, the philosophies of Richard Rorty and Avery Kolers as examples of sentiment-based and justice-based approaches to global solidarity. The topic of this article was influenced by a review of CIGS literature in which the emotional, personal, and relational sides of the motivation of CIGS work quickly emerged as a common theme (Kinsbergen & Schulpen 2013; Haaland & Wallevik 2017; Appe & Schnable 2019; Fylkesnes 2019). While Article I was published second due to a longer review process, I list it first both because I began working on it first and because I used the theoretical framework developed in the earlier drafts of Article I in the analysis of the empirical data that was presented in Article II. In turn, the insights generated through the collaborative data analysis involved in co-authoring Article II influenced the later drafts of Article I.

1.2.2 Article II

Localizing Global Solidarity: Humanitarian Aid in Lesvos
Frontiers of Political Science (published July 20th, 2021)
Co-authored with Hanne Haaland and Hege Wallevik
https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2021.690907

RQ1: What ethical challenges emerge when the involvement of CIGS in Lesvos, Greece is understood as an attempt at global solidarity?

RQ2: Is an emphasis on the global solidarity of CIGS compatible with a localization of crisis management?

This article pairs theoretical contributions from the fields of moral and political philosophy with a qualitative secondary analysis (QSA) of interview material gathered in Lesvos, Greece between 2015 and 2019. The interviews were conducted by two of my supervisors, Hanne Haaland and Hege Wallevik, who were contacted about contributing to a special issue titled *Localization and the Politics of Humanitarian Action*. As they were aware that I was developing a theoretical framework for analyzing the motivation of global solidarity for Article I, I was invited to connect that framework to their data. A collaborative analysis brought the rich narratives of conflicting interests in Lesvos into conversation with the justice-sentiment spectrum discussed in Article I, as well as providing an opportunity for an application of the distinction between robust and expressional solidarity to the role of CIGS in Lesvos (Taylor 2015). We concluded that while the challenging and transformative process of volunteers making the crisis “their own” through solidary engagement must be acknowledged, this process can quickly lead to the misrepresentation and disempowerment of those most affected by crisis and often counteracts efforts towards the localization of crisis management. This interest in conflicting senses of participatory ownership was further developed in Book Chapter I.

1.2.3 Book Chapter I

Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity (CIGS) as New Development Actors in Norway—An Exploration of How and Why They Emerge
Published March 2nd, 2023, in: *The Rise of Small-Scale Development Organizations: The Emergence, Positioning and Role of Citizen Aid Actors*
(Edited by Hanne Haaland, Sara Kinsbergen, Lau Schulpen & Hege Wallevik)
Co-authored with Hanne Haaland and Hege Wallevik
https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003228257

RQ: How can the history, positioning, and experiences of CIGS based in Norway contribute towards conceptualizing an ethics of participatory ownership?

This chapter analyzes qualitative interviews with Norwegian aid actors and a self-composed database of CIGS based in Norway, which were gathered and generated by my co-authors. They were interested in presenting this material in a book that they were both editing, and invited me to contribute to a new round of collaborative data analysis that included adding a theoretical discussion. We decided to further develop Article II's discussion of the unique combination of proximity and participatory ownership that seems central to the identities and motivations of CIGS founders, this time focusing on the Norwegian context. The analysis led to the development of a conceptual distinction between the *robust participatory ownership* generated between members of communities directly affected by injustice or crisis and the *expressional participatory ownership* of empathic outsiders providing aid. We argued that certain aspects of Norwegian socialization and efforts towards national and international "branding" of Norwegian overseas development assistance can explain the colonialism and paternalism sometimes attributed to CIGS founders. In turn, these dynamics can inform a more nuanced understanding of the tension between CIGS and the formal Norwegian aid architecture.

1.2.4 Book Chapter II

Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity (CIGS), Frontier Africans, and Experiences of Translocal Networking
Published March 2nd, 2023, in: *The Rise of Small-Scale Development Organizations: The Emergence, Positioning and Role of Citizen Aid Actors*
(Edited by Hanne Haaland, Sara Kinsbergen, Lau Schulpen & Hege Wallevik)
Co-authored with Valerie-Peggy Immy Korsvik, Hanne Haaland, and Hege Wallevik
https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003228257

RQ: How can the experiences and translocal networking practices of initiatives based in Uganda inform a broader conceptualization of CIGS that includes development organizations that originate in the global South?

This chapter examines three case studies of translocal development projects that originated in Uganda, and argues for a more inclusive definition of CIGS that challenges the North-South dichotomy. The empirical data was generated by Valerie-Peggy Immy Korsvik while working on her master's thesis, with Hege Wallevik as her supervisor. The parallel work being done by Haaland, Wallevik, and myself on Book Chapter I, in which we reflected on the potential for Norwegian CIGS to reproduce colonial hierarchies, informed our contributions to Book Chapter II. Previous descriptions of CIGS (Pollet et al., 2014; Schulpen & Huyse 2017) emphasize the perspectives of Northern actors starting projects in the Global South. Building on the three Ugandan examples, we argue for widening the definition of CIGS to include initiatives that were started by actors in the South and were able to "go global" by expanding their networks. By emphasizing the perspectives of Ugandans who have experienced the evolution of local citizen aid projects into global solidarity networks, we argue that there is no reason for the unique brand of global solidarity offered by CIGS to be conceptualized unidirectionally—from North to South. In addition, we invite Northern funders and future researchers to reflect on the uneven power dynamics that are inherent in translocal networks, such as CIGS. Through connections between the empirical data, literature on translocality, and Francis Nyamnjoh's concept of frontier Africans, we discuss the benefits of a non-essentialized and relational approach to place and autonomy in attempts to conceptualize CIGS.

1.2.5 Article III

Whose Solidarity? Liberal Irony and Feminist Activism
Norsk Filosofisk Tidskrift (Under review)

RQ1: What are the benefits and shortcomings of liberal irony as a strategy for feminist activists and scholars hoping to incorporate affect and reflexivity into the theory and practice of solidarity?

RQ2: How can the politicization or depoliticization of emotional encounters with poverty, oppression, and difference inform the conceptualization of reflexivity required for global solidarity?

This article began as a conference paper that I presented at the 2023 meeting of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy in Denver, Colorado. This article expresses the interest in decolonial feminist thought that I developed over the course of my research, while also building on my earlier engagements with Richard Rorty to conceptualize the specific version of reflexivity that is required in an ethics of global solidarity. In this sense, Articles I and III serve to bookend the three co-authored, more empirically oriented texts in this dissertation—offering a sort of "before and after", if you will. Article III engages Richard Rorty's liberal ironist, a controversial character used to illustrate the interrelated nature of hope and reflexive doubt in efforts towards moral and political progress. The strategy of liberal irony is critically evaluated through connections to voluntourism and pleasure activism, before discussing its potential compatibility with the accounts of feminist reflexivity offered by Clare Hemmings, María Lugones, and Elspeth Probyn. While CIGS are not explicitly mentioned in this paper, the discussion of global solidarity, activism, and voluntourism are highly relevant to the themes of this dissertation. The arguments made regarding feminist reflexivity are a product of my engagements with feminist theories of solidarity, affect, and decoloniality over the course of the research project. This is also the direction in which I plan to expand my research in future publications.

1.3 The Methodological Elephant in the Room

The previous section's brief overview of the five texts produced during my time as a PhD candidate reveals the feature of this project that I consider most obviously open to criticism. I would like to acknowledge this concern and address it head on. Over the course of three and a half years at the Faculty of Social Sciences, I have not generated any of my own empirical data[1]. My initial, pre-pandemic plan for the project included field research in Lesvos, Greece. Even after the possibility of international fieldwork became problematized by the pandemic, I went through the first two years of my project assuming that qualitative interviews with Norwegian CIGS founders and volunteers would be an eventual step towards a completed dissertation. It was in the Fall of 2022 that my supervisors and I began to realize that this was not the best use of my time and energy.

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[1] In chapter five I reconsider the distinction between data collection and data analysis in a way that partially challenges this claim.

This decision was largely based on the success of our collaboration on Article II, combined with a realization that philosophical contributions to *The Rise of Small-Scale Development Organizations: The Emergence, Positioning and Role of Citizen Aid Actors* were desirable. It became clear that there was no lack of empirical data on the topics I was interested in engaging. In fact, I was already connected to researchers who had more data than they had time to publish on their own. The collaborative data analysis involved in the three texts that I co-authored for this dissertation offered exciting opportunities to combine philosophy and social science in developing empirically informed ethical concepts.

A major part of my decision to do philosophy outside of a philosophy department was the value that I see in getting outside of one's comfort zone. While I acknowledge the potential concern from the social-scientific research community that conducting fieldwork is a crucial part of understanding global development studies, there is also a danger in distinguishing too rigidly between the field "out there" and the supposedly sanitized environment of the university. I want to align myself with development ethicists such as Lori Keleher in arguing that,

> …we cannot practice *authentic development* without thinking critically about the ethical dimensions of the ends and means of development and trying to act in accordance with the conclusions of our arguments. Thus, philosophy is pragmatically necessary for development. (2019, 36 emphases in original)

An entirely legitimate response to this argument might be that the necessity of philosophy for authentic development does not render philosophy a form of development studies in its own right—nor does it necessitate the involvement of professional philosophers. This is precisely the reason that interdisciplinary, collaborative data analysis is at the heart of this research project. When collaborations can draw on the situated strengths and unique positionalities of the researchers involved, there is a potential to combine critical distance and critical intimacy into productive interdisciplinary conversations.

I will further develop the reflections offered here in chapter five. There I discuss the three co-authored texts as products of qualitative secondary analysis (QSA) (Bishop 2019; Irwin 2013) and offer an interpretation of interdisciplinary, collaborative data analysis as part of a feminist methodology. At this point, I simply wish to acknowledge the somewhat unorthodox nature of this research project as emerging from a confluence of the pandemic, the project's situation at the intersection of philosophy and development studies, and the unique opportunities that access to preexisting data afforded me.

1.4 Motivation for the Research Project

Although personal, an experience of displacement is worth mentioning here as an influence on my situated attempts to engage the motivation and practice of global solidarity. I am originally from the US and currently live in Norway with my Norwegian wife and our two wonderful children. In August of 2016 I was deported for having allegedly worked illegally in Norway, despite having registered my employment and despite having paid taxes on all of my income. I was not allowed to return to Norway for two years and, because of complications during my wife's second pregnancy, my family could not come with me or visit for the first nine months. Although forced to return to the US, I returned as an educated, native English speaker with family contacts, a strong resume, and citizenship. Therefore, as traumatic as this separation was, equating my situation with the experiences of refugees would obviously be ridiculous and insensitive. After my deportation, I found myself trying to imagine how the trauma of having to leave my home, my job, and my family would have been compounded had I not found myself in such a privileged position. As I began research on the refugee situation in Lesvos less than a year after returning to Norway and being reunited with my family, I cannot pretend as though a precarious residency status and my personal experience of displacement did not motivate my interest in global solidarity or shape my relation to it. While I argue that this connection was not problematic in terms of the quality of the research produced, my transparency represents an attempt to be accountable to the reader for my own positionality and personal motivation.

1.5 Outline of the Dissertation

This extended abstract is comprised of six chapters. Chapter one has introduced the research topic and research questions, offering an initial indication of the situation of both the research project and the author within the research field. Chapter two lays out a background for conceptualizing CIGS by introducing some of the key features and concerns that have emerged within CIGS research over the past ten years. Chapter three introduces key terms and tensions that inform the operationalizations of both solidarity in general, and global solidarity in particular, in relation to the motivations and practices of CIGS. Chapter four critically engages the theories of global solidarity that have been most influential on this research project in order to clearly articulate the conflicts between them and the relevance of these conflicts to the interdisciplinary discussions in this dissertation. Chapter five discusses the epistemological and ontological assumptions behind this research project and addresses its methodological strengths and weaknesses in more depth. Chapter six presents the contributions of each stage of the project to the relevant research fields and offers a brief summary. In addition, the dissertation includes five appendices—the five texts produced during the project, in the order that they have been presented in this chapter.

2. Conceptualizing CIGS

This dissertation's focus on global solidarity emerged from an interest in the appropriateness of the term CIGS as a label for citizen aid. Thus, before attempting to understand global solidarity in relation to CIGS, it is imperative to have a clear view of how CIGS research has positioned these actors. As mentioned in the previous chapter, part of what makes CIGS unique is their flexible, transitory, ad hoc approach to development and aid (Haaland & Wallevik 2019, 1877; Fylkesnes 2019, 1800). For this reason, I argue that it is undesirable to generate a static definition of CIGS. Instead, this chapter situates, rather than defines, a series of concerns that have been central in CIGS research and against which later arguments about CIGS can be contextualized. When definitions or operationalizations are offered, these should be understood as steps in an ongoing conversation. This chapter does not represent an exhaustive list of all the major tensions and debates in CIGS research. The tensions that I have observed and prioritized are a function of this research project's aim of exploring the field in relation to global solidarity. Due to this entry point, this research project has primarily focused on contributions to this research field that came after 2014, when the term CIGS was first coined.

2.1 Global and Personal?

Before developing a more robust, operationalized account of global solidarity, it is important to understand the sense in which CIGS might be considered "global". One influential, early interpretation leans on the distinction between the global North and the global South and considers CIGS to be:

> …small-scale initiatives or projects, set up by private persons in the North, aimed at the improvement of the living standards of people in the global South, and not sorting under the official development cooperation or cooperation through established NGDOs, corporations, or societal institutions. (Pollet et al. 2014, 3)

While the unidirectionality of this understanding of CIGS has been challenged, for example in Book Chapter II, a charitable interpretation of the relevance of the North-South dichotomy might view CIGS founders as privileged citizens of the global North who recognize their privilege and are interested in contributing to a form of distributive justice that is global in the sense that it extends beyond national boundaries.

This understanding of global concerns as a form of post-national commitment can also help to explain the meaning of citizenship in this research context. Fechter and Schwittay argue that, in discussions of citizen aid, "the term 'citizen' does not denote formal national belonging… but rather a 'global citizenship', in reference to citizens of different nations acting for others, often across borders" (2019, 1770). A desire to extend commitments beyond and across borders might explain the focus that citizen aid has placed on the mobility of migrants and refugees, as well as the strong association between citizen aid and pro-migrant activism (ibid., 1772). However, there is a potential disconnect between this apparent, expansive, global commitment and a form of individualism that can be observed in CIGS research. While the term 'citizen' can be connected to membership in a global community, the agency of the individual citizen, most often referring to the founder of the initiative, is also emphasized. This is perhaps even more obvious in descriptions of small-scale development and humanitarian aid organizations as *Private* Development Initiatives (PDIs), *My Own* Non-governmental organization (MONGOs), or as part of a "*Do-it-Yourself* Foreign Aid Revolution" (Fechter & Schwittay 2019, 1770 emphases added).

A tension thereby emerges between the needs of a global community and conceptions of agency that are not only individualistic, but emphasize the roles of particular individuals—these "private persons in the North" picking "their own" specific causes and projects abroad. Addressing this balance between the global and the personal, Haaland and Wallevik point out that "for many their involvement [abroad] must also be understood as a project of self-construction and identity. The helping of others contributes to the construction of self" (2017, 206). As distinctions between the local and the global often hinge upon various forms of group membership, the ways in which the self is constructed and situated through development and aid work are of critical importance. Additionally, the construction of the self through helping others always entails the concomitant positioning of those others (Malkki 2015). Such projects must remain attentive to power dynamics and the relative mobilities and immobilities of the actors involved—especially when attempts at global solidarity situate others as recipients of aid or development.

The remainder of this chapter will discuss trends that have emerged regarding the specific ways in which CIGS founders and volunteers attempt to balance the personal and the global. These dynamics are at the core of developing what I refer to as an *ethics of participatory ownership*. The details of such an ethics only fully emerge when brought into conversation with the approaches to solidarity that will be discussed in chapters three and four. However, I can offer an initial expression of the primary concern: How might outsiders with good intentions balance a deep commitment that "this is *my* cause" with a reflexive acknowledgment that "this cause is not *about* me"?

2.2 Cost-efficiency, Direct Participation, and Ownership

> "I'm not sure about the UNHCR as an organization. But they are a big money-making machine. They spend a lot on advertising. That grieves me."—Patty, CIGS volunteer in Lesvos (Shults et al. 2021, 9)

> "The way we work we can operate a project for 100,000 NOK (about 10,500 euros), but if you were to do it in an NGO you would have to multiply the cost by ten."—Nils, Norwegian CIGS founder (Haaland et al. 2023, 31)

Individualism and ownership are both implied in the language of founding one's own private initiative (Fechter 2019, 1816; Appe & Schnable, 1834). As Fechter and Schwittay observe, "citizen aid initiatives tend to display features of small business start-ups, including *an entrepreneurial sense of ownership*, agency and the ability to choose their issues" (2019, 1773 emphases added). One key source of this entrepreneurial sense of ownership is the supposed efficiency generated by the direct nature of the aid provided through CIGS, due to their low administrative costs (Kennedy & Venne 2022, 284). This sentiment is expressed in the interview excerpts above, where CIGS are presented as cost-efficient and contrasted with larger, professionalized organizations that are supposedly motivated by making money. While skeptical towards their claims of efficiency, Fylkesnes acknowledges that for Norwegian CIGS founders in The Gambia "the particular organizational feature of no or low administration costs became intertwined with the founders' sense of ownership and control of the project, which was a motivation for them to start and run the initiatives" (2019, 1808).

At first glance, this sense of entrepreneurial ownership contrasts with a more personal sense of ownership that one might imagine would be generated through specific relationships and direct participation in development and aid. However, although justified by financial concerns, the allure of direct aid should not be strictly separated from the personal. In the absence of trust in larger development and humanitarian organizations, CIGS founders are able to point to personal stories and concrete results that give aid a human face. For example, the head of a Norwegian NGO who was interviewed for Book Chapter I, offered a comparison between giving a donation to a larger organization and donating money to buy a sewing machine for a specific African village (Haaland et al. 2023, 32). A focus on the concrete and specific allows CIGS founders to both cement their own distinct roles and offer compelling narratives about direct aid to potential donors. One example of this marketing strategy that Kennedy and Venne found during a study of the websites of US-based CIGS reads, "Want your money to help people that really need it and not pay for administrative overhead and salaries? We are all volunteer!" (2022, 284).

The financial and the relational thereby become interwoven aspects of a sense of ownership over a specific project. The business model employed by CIGS can be interpreted as offering an alternative to the faceless bureaucracies of NGOs and larger organizations—championing global solidarity through "folk engagement" (Haaland et al. 2023, 32), "people helping people" (Shults et al. 2021, 12), and "direct folk-to-folk aid" (Fylkesnes 2019, 1802). However, there is evidence in CIGS research that the sense of ownership generated through perceived cost efficiency can be a double-edged sword. For example, Appe and Schnable observed that founders often "prefer to carry out service tasks firsthand (e.g., working in medical clinics, building houses) when local staff might more cheaply or knowledgeably do the work" (2019, 1834). In this way, an insistence on maintaining a personal form of ownership and control over an initiative can be a cause of *inefficiency* and avoidable mistakes. At times CIGS even seem to celebrate their own amateurism, as evidenced by one founder's comment "We may have been reinventing the wheel—but man, it was OUR wheel" (Schnable 2016, 9).

This quote offers a clear example of the prioritization of the claim "this is *my* cause" over the claim "this is not *about* me". The same pattern was concerning in the context of Lesvos, leading to the conclusion in Article II that "the intensity and transformative potential of the process of 'making the crisis one's own' through solidary engagement can overshadow the importance of local ownership of crisis management" (Shults et al. 2021, 1). This exemplifies one of the key tensions that must be addressed by a CIGS-oriented ethics of participatory ownership—the tension between the intense motivation to participate in aid work that can be generated through a sense of ownership and the blind spots that the need for direct, personal attachment and control can produce.

2.3 Affective Economies and Ownership

> "You want to help children, but what do you know about child development? Cultural sensitivity? Or are you just a person who thinks 'I want to help'?"—Themis, Aid professional, on the dangers of amateur aid in Lesvos (Shults et al. 2021, 10)

The quote above nicely captures the concerns among aid professionals, locals, and government officials about the lack of reflexive awareness among amateurs with good intentions. The challenge of balancing commitment and reflexivity can manifest itself in unique ways due to the personal and emotional nature of CIGS' engagements. One of the appeals of CIGS lies in their potential to create space for emotion and to acknowledge the role that emotion plays in motivating and sustaining the commitments and relationships that are central to establishing solidarity across boundaries. This is one of the reasons that a rhetoric of folk engagement carries the moral weight that it does. However, while CIGS can critique larger organizations for reducing human beings to data points or numbers on spreadsheets, emotional and relational approaches can lead to their own problems.

For example, Fylkesnes describes the initial motivation for CIGS as often "built on emotional, personal encounters with poverty and not, for example, on formal needs assessments and evaluations" (2019, 1802). In addition to the founders' need for connection, the increasing popularity of donor visits signals the "growing importance of personalized relations within the aid industry which the CIs cater for" (Haaland & Wallevik 2017, 205). While emotion and relationality are crucial elements in motivating and sustaining solidarity, there is a danger that the terms of these relationships are being set by privileged outsiders. Appe and Schnable warn that although “GINGO volunteers cherish the ideal of personal relationships with individuals in the Global South… volunteers’ emotional attachment to those they aim to help is not necessarily equivalent to solidarity” (2019, 1834).

Solidarity would certainly seem to be the wrong term to describe a unidirectional flow of resources, inattentive to structured accounts of the actual needs of those most affected by poverty or crisis. At times it is the needs of the CIGS founders and donors that seem to be prioritized. For example, research in Cambodia suggests that citizen aid represents a search for connection that “can be understood as a desire which is sought to be fulfilled through acts of assisting others” (Fechter 2019, 1820). This should not suggest that altruism and self-interest are incapable of coexisting. However, it does show the importance of considering whether CIGS offer a much-needed emphasis of the emotional aspects of development and crisis that can take the relational needs of all participants into account, or if the emotional and personal investments of privileged participants ultimately have an exploitative effect. For example, in the interviews analyzed in Article II, some residents of Lesvos went so far as to say that CIGS volunteers “only care about what they feel” and that “refugees are not the problem, but volunteers are” (Shults et al. 2021, 10).

While such considerations will always be contextual, I find Sara Ahmed’s work on affective economies to be helpful in acknowledging the colonial history of this tension. An explicit link between the economic and the affective serves as a reminder that the emotional dynamics that may motivate CIGS are not separate from the neoliberal and imperialist tones of many of the phenomena discussed thus far, such as: an entrepreneurial sense of ownership, the business-model of CIGS, catering to the needs of the aid-industry, or privileged citizens of the global North engaging in exploitative practices in the global South. According to Ahmed, thinking in terms of affective economies shifts the understanding of emotion from something that people *have* to something that they *do* (2004, 119). In other words, she suggests that “emotions should not be regarded as psychological states, but as social and cultural practices” (2015, 8). The relational and structural concept of an affective economy can combat individualistic ideas about the ways CIGS insert themselves into new contexts. The continued use of certain emotional categories can motivate founders and donors while simultaneously limiting the agency of locals—potentially by reproducing colonial hierarchies. From this perspective, a number of findings from CIGS research can be problematized as tensions along which an eventual operationalization of CIGS and global solidarity might be considered.

For example, consider Kinsbergen's observation that the "fun-factor" or the conviction that "work should stay fun" was an important motivator of Dutch CIGS (2014, 144). Similarly, Fylkesnes found that Norwegian CIGS volunteers were "excited about the adventure, the 'otherness' and the different culture they would encounter" (2019, 1806). This fun-factor is directly connected to low administrative costs in Book Chapter I, where one of the Norwegian CIGS founders expressed that "When we can complete a project quickly and cost-effectively and see the impacts on the ground, it is so much fun" (Haaland et al. 2023, 30). On the one hand, one might argue that projects of global solidarity should have room for fun. Article III, for example, engages the importance of facilitating healing and joy through what adrienne maree brown refers to as "pleasure activism" (2019), as a potential connection between global solidarity and decolonial feminism. In addition, it seems intuitively plausible that excitement about cultural difference is valuable, if not necessary, for building solidary relationships across borders. On the other hand, one might consider the affective economy that adventurous outsiders, eager for access to commodified experiences of cultural difference, might produce within a host community.

If CIGS orient themselves towards development and aid with an expectation that "work should stay fun", this can steer them towards roles that accommodate that expectation and force others to take on roles within which work cannot stay fun. Locals can become actively positioned by these practices, with an eventual separation of labor being potentially attributed to, and justified by, an understanding of otherness that assumes poverty and disadvantage to be the "natural state" of certain cultural(ized) groups (Mostafanezhad 2013, 159). An application of the concept of affective economies to a study of volunteering in Ecuador described volunteers as, perhaps somewhat unconsciously, "positioned as neoliberal foot soldiers governed by, and complicit in the (re)production an everyday affectivity of neoliberal order" (Everingham & Motta 2020, 227). These are obviously serious accusations that seem to directly work against any chance of global solidarity.

A similar tension can be seen in regard to the psychological reward that Fylkesnes describes as "the feeling of being relieved of guilt by being a giver"

(2019, 1803). Again, one could make an argument that any attempt to generate global solidarity will require an awareness of the extent to which we are all complicit in global poverty and injustice. Why would it be problematic to either feel guilt or relieve that guilt by volunteering one's time and resources to improve the living standards of people in the global South? However, one could also argue that the personal and emotional motivations of CIGS do not presuppose an awareness of structural inequity. Instead, there seems to be a risk that CIGS might fall into a circular justification of their avoidance of structural evaluations precisely by emphasizing the personal and emotional.

This justification can be contested by considering Ahmed's call to view emotion as a social or cultural practice rather than an individual's psychological state. If the guilt belongs to an individual, then an act of giving might seem to be a reasonable solution. However, if the guilt is part of an active, globalized, socio-cultural practice, the solution will have to be more attentive to structural factors and the everyday affectivity of the neoliberal world order. Ahmed argues,

> The transformation of generosity into a character trait involves fetishism… the West gives to others only insofar as it is forgotten what the West has already taken in its very *capacity* to give in the first place… [T]he West takes, then gives, and in the moment of giving repeats as well as conceals the taking. (2015, 22 emphases in original)

Individualizing guilt and then fetishizing "being a giver" as a solution, isolates the affective components of aid practices from their colonial and political histories. In the absence of reflexive awareness and structural evaluations, this allows CIGS founders and donors to pretend that aid practices, and their specific roles within those practices, are not embedded within affective economies.

By claiming to be in a position to alleviate one's guilt by "being a giver" colonial and paternalistic dynamics are reproduced. However, by using the concept of affective economies to frame the emotional components of CIGS motivations and practices, it becomes easier to see the ways in which taking on certain roles is a form of claiming a position that one is not entitled to. This can lead to the conclusion that accountability and a reflexive acknowledgment by outsiders that "this cause is not *about* me" should be prioritized over a personal commitment that "this is *my* cause". The question then becomes whether or not calls for global solidarity that decenter the individual "giver" carry enough force to motivate privileged, private citizens that are not acutely affected by global injustices. The primary issue that emerges in regard to this aspect of CIGS research is whether or not the emotional and personal approaches of CIGS are meeting important needs that are insufficiently addressed by larger organizations, or if the emotional and personal nature of CIGS engagement is an excuse to ignore structural considerations and focus on an individualized project of self-construction.

2.4 Political Resistance or Depoliticizing Aid?

> “I’ve been kind of monitoring the situation with the crisis and I’m quite passionate about it. I’m not an activist at all, because I’m a bit more calmer and just want everybody to be full of love and life to be honest. (Laughter) And I don’t get caught up in politics…”—Crystal, CIGS volunteer in Lesvos (Shults et al. 2021, 4)

> “NORAD, the ministry of foreign affairs, currently only supports good governance, democracy and they are not interested in health work that requires a long-term perspective beyond five to ten years. What we do is more sustainable…”—Trygve, Norwegian CIGS founder (Haaland et al. 2023, 31)

The two quotes above offer conflicting accounts of whether or not the involvements of CIGS represent efforts towards depoliticizing development and aid or a politicized critique of common aid and development practices. This tension relates to how CIGS are positioned in respect to broader, national and international, aid architectures. The previous section discussed the potential for personal and emotional motivations to render CIGS founders insufficiently sensitive to local needs, local knowledge, and structural concerns. A desire to “reinvent the wheel” on one’s own terms has also led many CIGS to resist coordinating their efforts with more professionalized organizations (Appe & Telch 2019, 39; Shults et al. 2021, 9). CIGS research has also drawn a clear line between amateurism and a paternalistic attitude that can result from limited reflexivity (Appe & Schnable 2019, 1835; Haaland & Wallevik 2019, 1872; Schnable 2021).

Thus, on the one hand, the value of CIGS can be called into question by concerns that "well-intentioned amateurs can bring harm to local communities for reasons which include a lack of accountability and ignorance of local context, culture, and custom" (Kennedy & Venne 2022, 267). This portrayal of amateur aid seems to suggest a prioritization of the personal over the political among CIGS founders, which can be supported by the argument that volunteers work through CIGS because they offer "an opportunity to be hands-on, active aid agents *without having to worry about aid impact, outcome analysis and power relations*, and without having the expertise required by most of the established development organizations" (Fylkesnes 2019, 1801 emphases added). In this sense, it might be argued that CIGS are depoliticizing the aid process by avoiding the bureaucratic and professionalized features of larger aid organizations. The downsides of a professionalized aid industry are lamented by larger organizations as well, as seen in Book Chapter I when the director of an established Norwegian NGO commented, "It is quite tragic how the big organizations have become too bureaucratic… they become rigid, they grow too big—which means that they don't have room for folk engagement anymore" (Haaland et al. 2023, 32).

On the other hand, CIGS' aversion towards the rigidity of more established aid actors can also be interpreted as a form of political resistance through which CIGS "ultimately aim to reshape power relations within the humanitarian aid sector" (Haaland & Wallevik 2019, 1880). Whether or not CIGS are experienced as prioritizing the personal over thorough evaluations of power-relations or, alternatively, keenly aware of existing power-relations and actively invested in orienting established aid actors towards the personal, can only be answered by contextual analyses and further empirical research. It is important to remember both that CIGS are not birds of a feather and that attributions of political or personal motives can be colored by researchers' presuppositions about the role of CIGS in a given context.

For example, in the context of Lesvos, Haaland and Wallevik observed that,

> …the work of CIGS is guided by a great deal of flexibility and pragmatism, often paying little attention to overall aid policies or national policies in the country they operate in. CIGS emerge as an immediate response to help to alleviate needs, often starting at a very personal level. (2019, 1877)

This passage offers an example of the ways in which CIGS' relationships to the broader aid architecture, as well as to local communities, are highly susceptible to alternative interpretations. While "flexibility and pragmatism" may sound desirable, this flexibility is immediately connected to a lack of attention to the bigger picture. A quick response time has also been suggested as a benefit of CIGS, particularly in the case of Lesvos (Shults et al. 2021, 2). However, the "very personal level" of this quick response has the potential to do harm as well as good, especially before more formal safeguards are in place. In addition, CIGS have been described as having a watchdog function, making the global public aware of the failings of governments and large NGOs (Haaland & Wallevik 2019, 1880). However, one can question the desirability of spreading personal evaluations of complex, political situations on social media—especially when the stories shared by CIGS are partially aimed at presenting the need for more donations and are inevitably influenced by the founders' own projects of self-construction. Recalling the ways in which such presentations can fix the positions of vulnerable people within affective economies problematizes outside involvement.

Importantly, even an explicit argument that CIGS do aim to depoliticize aid would still be an argument about the political effects of their interactions with the broader aid architecture. While the political is inescapable, this tension between conflicting narratives of CIGS is important in the next chapter for making conceptual distinctions between, for example, social solidarity and political solidarity (Scholz 2008, Bayertz 1999). Consider the observation that, for grassroots efforts at solidarity in Greece, "the 'social' has become an all-encompassing notion that conflicts with the disdained 'political' (Rozakou 2016, 82); or the claim that Greek solidarity is "more about transforming social relations than trying to transform political systems" (Serntedakis 2017, 95).

It would be careless to read such accounts and assume that social solidarity is more relevant in Lesvos than political solidarity, because the meanings of 'social' or 'political' are constantly being negotiated. Philosophical contributions to the analysis of CIGS research include, but are certainly not limited to, developing conceptual clarity. However, conceptual clarity, while often characterized by attempts to combine or choose between competing uses of nebulous terms such as 'solidarity' or 'the political', can also result from acceptance that certain categories should remain permanently problematized (Haraway 1988, 594). Thus, rather than making any definitive claim about the political or personal motivations of CIGS, I simply hope to draw attention to the ways in which labelling the same CIGS practices as a form of political resistance or a depoliticization of aid can have a dramatic effect on moral evaluations of these practices.

2.5 Summarizing Key Tensions

This chapter has engaged several relevant tensions that are drawn from CIGS research as a background against which to discuss the suitability of the term ‘global solidarity’ to the work conducted by CIGS. One tension is between CIGS’ promise of a direct form of folk engagement that cuts out administrative costs, and the concern that amateur evaluations and personal senses of ownership over a cause can be used to justify inefficiency and outdated methods. A second tension is between a characterization of CIGS as tapping into the human and emotional aspects of poverty and crisis rather than getting bogged down in bureaucratic red tape, and a concern that an emotional basis for aid, that fails to acknowledge the privileged position and mobility of CIGS founders and volunteers, can be exploitative. Finally, there is a tension between accounts of CIGS’ aversion to coordinating their efforts with more professionalized aid actors as an attempt to depoliticize aid, and accounts that suggest that this alternative approach is itself a form of political resistance. These tensions represent some of the key concerns against which this project’s engagements with global solidarity were developed. In the next chapter, I turn to an overview of comparable tensions that emerge between conflicting operationalizations in the philosophical literature on solidarity.

3. Operationalizing Global Solidarity

> "More often than not, the understanding of solidarity is blurred as scholars use it to discuss external identity, shared experience, shared consciousness, and political resistance separately and simultaneously."—Sally J. Scholz, *Political Solidarity* (2008, 3)

As argued in the passage above, solidarity can be understood through a variety of lenses, not all of which are mutually compatible. Before discussing whether or not global solidarity is a suitable descriptor of the activities of CIGS, solidarity and global solidarity must both be operationalized. As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are a wide range of traditions in philosophy that have approached the concept of solidarity in different ways. Rather than attempting the impossible task of giving each influential scholar of solidarity their due, this chapter focuses on the handful of concepts that made the greatest impact on this project's attempts to operationalize global solidarity in relation to CIGS. Chapter four spends more time delving into theories of global solidarity, while this chapter primarily aims at engaging a series of distinctions between forms of solidarity—particularly those that are relevant to CIGS research.

3.1 Social, Civic, and Political Solidarities

I begin with the work of Sally J. Scholz, whose book, *Political Solidarity*, draws inspiration from Kurt Bayertz' influential text "Four Uses of Solidarity" (1999) to distinguish between social solidarity, civic solidarity, and political solidarity. The category that Scholz does not carry over from Bayertz' typology is universal solidarity, understood as a solidarity shared among all of humankind. In terms of potentially connecting solidarity to CIGS, Scholz' move away from universal solidarity seems appropriate. As established in the previous chapter, the appeal of CIGS is often connected to direct engagement and the specificity of the projects.

Scholz' work offers a helpful baseline for understanding the moral logics at play in various forms of solidarity, after which operationalizing global solidarity becomes more manageable. Importantly, Scholz is aware that social, political, and civic varieties of solidarity can overlap as easily as they can contradict each other. These should not be understood as parallel subcategories that collectively offer a full picture of solidarity. As Scholz states, “these categories may aid in distinguishing forms of solidarity for ease of theoretical discussion, but there is not always an easy alignment of actually existing solidarities solely along these theoretical lines” (2008, 4). In other words, solidarity is an inherently fuzzy concept that must be carefully and contextually applied.

Additionally, Scholz suggests that all forms of solidarity are political in the sense that, whether primarily descriptive or primarily normative, they are regularly invoked as reasons to maintain or alter socio-political practices and communities. Rather than seeing the political nature of solidarity as problematically introducing bias into an otherwise objective or apolitical philosophical inquiry, Scholz leans into her feminist commitments in claiming that “Solidarity is context dependent… understanding its moral and political import means acknowledging its social and historical circumstances” (2008, 17). This situated approach to solidarity resonates with the openness to contextual and definitional variation evident in the CIGS research discussed in chapters one and two of this extended abstract.

Before addressing the ways in which social, civic, and political solidarities can be distinguished at a theoretical level, it is important to highlight some shared characteristics. According to Scholz, all forms of solidarity mediate between the individual and the community. This boils down to an emphasis on interdependence—finding a space between individualism, which Scholz argues is contrary to solidarity, and an essentialized understanding of the community as a “super-entity” in which the autonomy of the individual is dramatically minimized (2008, 19). Additionally, Scholz contends that all forms of solidarity involve a form of unity, whether prescriptive or descriptive, and all forms entail positive moral obligations. Thus, if we follow Scholz, any form of solidarity—including global solidarity—will entail positive duties to create or maintain a unified group that allows individuals to preserve a form of autonomy, but avoids sliding into individualism. What varies between social, civic, and political versions of solidarity are the moral logics and the directionalities at play between the unities and the obligations involved.

3.1.1 Social Solidarity

This particular form of solidarity measures interdependence between members of fairly established communities and is thus more descriptive than prescriptive. This does not mean that certain responses and obligations are not prescribed through membership, but instead presumes that members already have a rough idea of what those obligations entail and whom they should be directed towards. This can be compared to Pensky's concept of thick lifeworld solidarity, the ability to collectively engage specific ethical worlds (2009, 100). In other words, social solidarity measures a kind of group cohesion and shared experience that allows for a form of unity that is based on the expectation that those around you know the rules and plan to abide by them. Scholz suggests that, in groups bound by social solidarity, “the moral ties pertain to day-to-day responsibilities to others in the community and are not explicitly aimed at alleviating injustice or oppression” (2008, 21).

I argue that social solidarity is the least promising candidate in terms of understanding the global commitments of CIGS. The focus on reciprocity and day-to-day responsibilities would rule out initiatives that target acute humanitarian crises. While this focus might pair better with long-term development work, social solidarity appears to tap into distinctly local commitments. Social solidarity might contribute to the formation of local initiatives which could eventually develop into CIGS, such as the Ugandan initiatives discussed in Book Chapter II. However, it seems likely that such cases would be outliers as the impetus of social solidarity lends itself more to conservative commitments than to expansive commitments. For the purposes of this project, the relevance of social solidarity lies in describing the unity and obligations shared between members of established in-groups—what I refer to as local solidarities in Article I. These are relevant to CIGS to the extent that familiarity with the relevant social solidarities at play in a given context can counteract the potential dangers of unreflexively attempting to engage in global solidarity. This is one aspect of what my co-authors and I referred to as the localization of global solidarity in Article II.

3.1.2 Civic Solidarity

Civic solidarity, which is sometimes referred to as welfare solidarity (Koos 2019, 632; van Oorschot et al. 2005, 38), is also a set of obligations that is directed towards members of established groups. Civic solidarity mediates between the individual and the communal through the assumption “that when individuals lack the basic necessities, society as a whole suffers” (Scholz 2008, 27). Civic solidarity does not measure the cohesion of a group in the way that social solidarity does, but rather measures the willingness of a group to accept the vulnerabilities of individual members as communal responsibilities. A civic focus thereby increases the relevance of alleviating injustice and oppression within a community in a way that social solidarity does not.

Reemphasizing the importance of finding a balance between interdependence and autonomy, Scholz specifies that the communal responsibility to take care of vulnerable members that is embodied by civic solidarity should not slide into what she calls administrative solidarity (ibid. 30). Similarly, Schuyt calls for a localization of civic solidarity to combat the potential anonymization of responsibility in which the commitments of individuals lose so much force that they can no longer be reasonably thought of as positive duties or obligations (1998, 309). If responsibility is anonymized, then the commitment represented would arguably not qualify as solidarity on Scholz’s terms because it insufficiently mediates between the community and the individual. Schuyt’s resistance towards an anonymization of responsibility also pairs nicely with Scholz commitment to not treat the community as a super-entity.

The potential relevance to CIGS and global solidarity is more obvious here than in the case of social solidarity. However, this relevance ultimately depends on where one draws the lines between in-groups and out-groups. As these lines are constantly redrawn and contested through social practices and projects of self-construction, the study of CIGS offers an opportunity to explore the moral implications of claiming membership through an ethics of participatory ownership. In addition, Scholz points out that one “version of civic solidarity is the use of ‘solidarity’ to indicate an obligation to aid distant peoples” (2008, 31). A potential connection to global development and humanitarian aid is readily apparent. However, Scholz argues that the moral composition of civic solidarity primarily emphasizes the obligations between citizens and the state. It is difficult to imagine a welfare system with a global reach that does not rely on the more administrative solidarity that Scholz, Schuyt, and many CIGS resist.

One could argue that CIGS offer a non-administrative form of civic solidarity by aiming to improve the living standards of vulnerable people through folk engagement. However, it is unclear whether or not the motivations and practices of CIGS tap into established forms of unity or entail positive duties to help. The extent to which a commitment to global citizenship might entail positive duties seems highly open to individual interpretation. For this reason, I argue that the tensions in civic solidarity can be instructively compared to those observed between CIGS and the more formalized, international aid architecture—for example, regarding the desirability of a more administrative solidarity. These tensions are discussed in the context of Lesvos in Article II and in a Norwegian context in Book Chapter I. However, in most cases of civic solidarity, these tensions play out at the local level through formal institutions. Thus, while civic solidarity can be interpreted as compatible with some interpretations of global solidarity, it seems ill-suited to describe the activities of CIGS. In particular, Book Chapter I discusses the dangers of applying local standards of civic engagement to international aid and development efforts.

3.1.3 Political Solidarity

This form of solidarity distinguishes itself from the other two as it does not rest on an understanding of unity that is generated by antecedent group membership. In other words, while the moral obligations that can be invoked by calls to social and civic solidarities rest on the positive duties one has as a member of an established community, political solidarity calls for the formation of new groups as a response to oppression or injustice. As Scholz writes, political solidarity "reverses the ordering between social bonds and moral obligations found in social solidarity and civic solidarity" (Scholz 2008, 36). Put simply, social and civic solidarities draw on membership in a group to generate moral responses. In political solidarity, however, individuals draw on their moral responses to a perceived injustice to generate a group. Importantly, Scholz' situated approach leads her to emphasize that the ethics of political solidarity do not originate from impartial moral evaluations. Instead, she argues that "context, situation, and experience provide the source and content of morality within political solidarity. Political solidarity must have 'real people and real problems' as the starting point and concrete 'human relationships' as the content" (ibid., 35).

Both the emphasis on situated experience and the shift in the directional relation between unity and positive moral duties can lead to unique challenges in terms of avoiding the individualism that Scholz argues is contrary to all forms of solidarity. While the initial choice to join a movement in political solidarity may lie with the individual, this commitment is always relational and often transformative. Scholz writes,

> The individual commitment to a cause in political solidarity shapes relationships with other members in the movement as well as beyond it and, depending on the nature of the political cause and the extent of the commitment, has the power to transform the individual's life and lifestyle as well… [T]aking a stance of political solidarity may require an individual to scrutinize his or her personal life for its political impact… In evaluating these personal choices, the individual lives out a commitment to solidarity and unites his or her actions with similar actions by others. (2008, 52)

This passage illustrates the unique ways in which political solidarity meets Scholz' three criteria—mediating between the individual and the community, creating or maintaining a form of unity, and entailing positive duties. While the commitment may be motivated by a personal experience or evaluation, the commitment is to a group and includes a *reevaluation* of the personal from the perspective of the goals of the collective.

Of these three forms of solidarity, I argue that political solidarity is the strongest candidate in terms of operationalizing the motivations and practices of CIGS. By emphasizing a personal choice to commit to a new group over commitments based on antecedent group membership, Scholz offers a form of solidarity that does not require a direct experience of oppression as a criterion for participation. She argues that those "who are not oppressed or do not suffer from injustice can and do join in political solidarity" (ibid. 57). The commitment to the cause becomes the condition of membership in a way that distinguishes between a shared experience of oppression or injustice and the political resistance of that oppression or injustice. In order to articulate an account of solidarity in which CIGS volunteers are perceived as engaging in global solidarity rather than simply aid, this distinction is crucial.

Scholz specifically suggests the possibility that political solidarity can have an international orientation and involve individuals from one region or country providing support to distant others (ibid. 64). Several other aspects of Scholz' account of political solidarity also resonate with the potential benefits of CIGS engagement. For example, Scholz emphasizes the legitimacy of emotion and personal experiences in motivating and sustaining solidarity movements (ibid., 72). Scholz also argues that a fluid approach to political activism and resistance, in which the composition and the goals of the movement change, should not disqualify these groups from being considered consistently unified in solidarity (ibid., 59). This could be interpreted as a defense of the shifting, ad hoc nature of CIGS' aid strategies. In addition, the importance of understanding CIGS as enabling a process of transformative self-construction is captured by political solidarity's emphasis of a personal commitment that "grants the individual responsibility in defining her or his identity" (Scholz 2008, 133) by engaging the goals and perspectives of collectives formed around moral responses to injustice.

Political solidarity also highlights some of the potential pitfalls of CIGS engagement. For example, Scholz claims that mutuality is a key component of political solidarity. Mutuality requires that members "ask others in solidarity how they might help, how the collective action ought to proceed, what values are most important in informing the solidarity activity, and what about this particular form of injustice or oppression is most troubling" (ibid. 93). By this standard, a need for ownership and control combined with a paternalistic attitude towards locals would quickly disqualify attempts at aid from the category of political solidarity. In addition, Scholz specifically highlights the necessity of the structural evaluations that some CIGS seem to avoid, writing:

> We have to be careful not to fall into the trap of failing to see the structure. Saying oppression is structural means it affects and constrains all the various aspects of one's existence and is embedded in the structures of social life. It is easier to just see the elements of oppression without seeing the structure as a whole. The key is to identify the ways in which oppressed peoples' lives are reduced and shaped and their mobility restricted. (2008, 210)

This passage connects the dangers of individualism to the restriction of others' mobilities within political solidarity movements, much in the same way that Ahmed connects the understanding of emotions as individual, psychological states to the restriction of others' mobilities within affective economies.

Due to these concerns, it is not clear that political solidarity is a feature of any or all CIGS. However, as a concept, political solidarity offers this project a useful way of narrowing the moral logics that an attempt at connecting a global form of solidarity to CIGS should be attentive to. In moving towards an operationalization of global solidarity, four arguments can be borrowed from Scholz' discussion of political solidarity. Firstly, that reactionary commitments that are not based on antecedent group membership can be legitimately seen as forms of solidarity rather than simply aid. Secondly, that emotion and personal experiences are often valuable sources of motivation for such forms of solidarity. Thirdly, that individualism is contrary to solidarity and that attention to structural factors is necessary. And finally, that solidarity requires a commitment to mutuality that should lead those who have not experienced the oppression being resisted to ask about the nature of the relevant forms of injustice, how this injustice is experienced as problematic, and what the best means are for resisting that injustice.

3.1.4 Parasitical Solidarity

Before moving on to the various axes along which one might distinguish between local and global solidarities, it can be valuable to add Scholz' term 'parasitical solidarity' as another conceptual resource. Scholz uses parasitical solidarity to describe the ways in which,

> …the term "solidarity" is used to connote a variety of feelings or relations that do not themselves count as full-fledged forms of solidarity because they often lack one or more of the key elements or because they are meant to appear as a form of solidarity only for rhetorical purposes. But these invocations of the term… feed off of more developed conceptions of solidarity as a way to imply more content than is in fact present. Solidarity becomes drained of its moral content when parasitical uses predominate. (2008, 47-48)

This concept is relevant to the project at hand for two reasons. First, one of the core interests of this research project is whether or not the use of global solidarity in the term CIGS implies more, or perhaps different, moral content than is actually present in CIGS' practices. Scholz' concept allows us to ask: Is the use of the label CIGS an instance of parasitical solidarity?

Second, before there can be a meaningful consideration of this question, it is important to ask whether or not Scholz' own concept of political solidarity is an instance of parasitical solidarity. As I have expressed an interest in borrowing some of Scholz' criteria, this must be addressed. The primary reason that political solidarity offers a promising candidate for conceptualizing the activities of CIGS lies in the fact that Scholz distinguishes between the oppressed group and the solidary movement to "allow and encourage the participation of former oppressors, privileged, and other non-oppressed individuals within the movement of political solidarity" (2008, 181). While the participation of privileged individuals in alleviating oppression and injustice is often desirable, and sometimes necessary, an ethics of participation must consider whether or not the participation of the privileged qualifies as solidarity.

I argue that a *distinction* between those who have directly experienced a form of oppression and those who unify to resist that oppression is unproblematic. This distinction mirrors arguments by feminist standpoint theorists such as Catherine Hundleby to the effect that the experience of oppression is not enough to generate a standpoint—only through resisting the forces of oppression can standpoint be achieved (1998, 37). However, while Hundleby is arguing for resistance as a step beyond experience, one can reasonably question the extent to which Scholz' distinction *separates* resistance and the experience of oppression. This is best understood through a hypothetical example Scholz offers of a middle-class woman in the United States who consumes only fair-trade products as a way of making sure that her resources contribute to the fight for reasonable wages for farmers in Central America. Scholz argues that, although this represents a weak commitment, the woman has never met any of the farmers she aims to support, and the farmers are unaware of her support at an individual level—her support contributes to the collective actions of the farmers and others who resist a specific set of unjust wages practices. Therefore, Scholz suggests that the woman and the others who choose to commit to this cause form a unity, and that this commitment qualifies as political solidarity (2008, 116).

Scholz does not offer a clear delineation between weak solidarity and parasitical solidarity. Given her context-sensitive approach, this is perhaps unsurprising. However, the concept of parasitical solidarity is still valuable in combination with contextual observations and empirical data. This can serve as a reminder that one measure of the suitability of solidarity as a descriptor of a certain set of practices can be seen in the effects that the use of that term has upon the surrounding environment. In other words, while moral theories offer valuable analytical resources, it is important to remember that the appropriateness of a concept like political solidarity does not rest solely in its moral logic—but on the way that it is received. I believe that the important question to ask is not if the hypothetical, middle-class woman in Scholz' example embodies political solidarity or not, but how others might be empowered or restricted within an affective economy that describes her as engaging in political solidarity.

3.2 What's Global about Global Solidarity?

Drawing on some of the conceptual resources offered by Scholz' typology helps to focus the task of distinguishing between local and global solidarity. I have used Scholz' work to suggest that, if CIGS are to be described as participating in a form of global solidarity, the moral logic of that commitment will resemble that of political solidarity by not relying on antecedent group membership to generate unity or positive duties. The use of global solidarity to describe CIGS must also remain attentive to the possibility of becoming parasitical, ascribing more moral content than is actually present in order to generate donations, legitimize the presence of CIGS, or justify exploitative projects of self-construction that prioritize the needs of privileged outsiders.

Various stages of this research project have drawn the distinction between global and local solidarity differently. While 'global' suggests the mediation of distance, the relevant forms of distance vary. For example, Article I deemphasizes geographical distance and focuses on the perspectival distance that can be created by structural inequity. In contrast, Book Chapter II discusses the geographical distances that characterize translocal initiatives and mobile diasporas of Ugandans—showing how the boundary between North and South can be weakened by being traversed. How the distinction between local and global solidarities should be drawn, and whether or not it should be drawn at all[2], cannot be answered without contextual considerations. The different approaches in this project reflect the dynamics that have appeared relevant in different case studies. In the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss some of the ways in which a distinction between local solidarity and global solidarity can be made. Building on this discussion, chapter four more thoroughly details the theories of global solidarity that were most influential upon this project.

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[2] See Anderl 2022 for a discussion of the ways in which this distinction fails to capture the political solidarities generated by certain forms of transnational feminist activism.

3.2.1 Human Solidarity and More-than-human Solidarity

As perhaps implied by my earlier support for Scholz' choice to direct her focus away from Bayertz' category of universal solidarity, I can begin by clarifying that I did not find universal or human solidarity to be uniquely relevant to conceptualizing global solidarity in relation to CIGS. Various thinkers have been interpreted as using terms such as universal solidarity (Bayertz 1999), human solidarity (Rorty 1989), or global solidarity (Ibana 1989) to refer to a solidarity that extends to each member of the human species[3]. These forms of solidarity are often discussed alongside commitments to moral cosmopolitanism (Brock & Brighouse 2005, 4; Wilde 2007, 178). I am skeptical about the feasibility of generating a human solidarity that is powerful enough to overcome local commitments. I find it probable that the rhetoric of human solidarity is most often an expression of local commitments and fails to capture the immeasurable variety of human experience. For this reason, I argue that it is best to avoid connecting attempts at global solidarity to some sort of essentialized human status. As Scholz eloquently expresses,

> The risk with human solidarity is that in the very attempt to include and foster the moral dignity of all humans, some will be excluded—whether it be women or some other minority or oppressed group whose socially constructed identity marks them as somehow failing to meet the criteria for human status. (2008, 240)

While acknowledging that a commitment to the value of humanity as such may be a component of the rhetoric that informs the motivations and self-presentations of some CIGS, I interpret CIGS' attempts at global solidarity as directed towards specific, distant others in a way that makes the concept of human solidarity both superfluous and unwieldy. The importance that CIGS founders place on making direct personal connections and choosing their own issues lends credence to Rorty's claim that "our sense of solidarity is strongest when those with whom solidarity is expressed are thought of as 'one of us,' where ‘us’ means something smaller and more local than the human race” (1989, 191). Being “more local” than human solidarity still leaves room for specific efforts towards global solidarity. Therefore, in this particular research context, I find concerns with human solidarity to be too broad.

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[3] I argue in Article I that Rorty has been misinterpreted on this front.

It is also important to acknowledge that there are scholars of solidarity and cosmopolitanism who argue that the category of human solidarity is not inclusive enough. Calls for more-than-human solidarity that direct attention towards climate justice (Smieszek, 2022; Kolers 2018), multispecies justice (Tschakert, 2022; Wichert & Nussbaum 2019), and the need for solidarity to expand to include AI and robots (Jordan, 2020) offer interesting opportunities for future research. These concerns could certainly overlap with CIGS—particularly in relation to the precarious situations of climate refugees and forced migration (Lysaker 2022), resource extraction in the global South (Doan & Sherwin, 2016), and the use of agent-based modelling and social simulation to influence policy change (Shults & Wildman, 2020). However, I have chosen to orient this project’s evaluations of global solidarity towards the recurrent themes of people helping people and folk engagement that consistently emerge within CIGS research. A similar choice is made by Carol Gould in her influential work on transnational solidarities.

3.2.2 Transnational Solidarities

> “We can first of all put aside the idea that a norm of transnational solidarity would require that one feel and act supportively toward all individual human beings worldwide, or even toward all those who need help in fulfilling their human rights. A norm that required people to feel, express, or stand in solidarity with every other human being would be impossible to apply, if not also utterly vague.”—Carol C. Gould, *Transnational Solidarities* (2007, 166)

As evidenced by the passage above, Gould joins Scholz in suggesting that attempts to widen the concept of solidarity to include the entire species miss out on important and specific relational features. I read Gould as suggesting that human solidarity can function as a form of parasitical solidarity by watering down the intense affectivities that motivate and sustain the practice of solidarity across borders. At the same time, Gould leaves room for an understanding of human solidarity as a “limit notion”—an ideal that, even if unachievable, can motivate a more promising alternative that she refers to as transnational solidarities.

Gould casts the affective components of solidarity, that consistently emerge in CIGS research, as central to transnational solidarities (2007, 156). The plural form of ‘solidarities’ indicates Gould’s awareness that these affective commitments can be contradictory, overlapping, and networked. The multiple levels at which solidarity can operate are acknowledged, alongside solidarity’s emotional components, when Gould recommends “that we understand solidarity as in part the social counterpart to empathy, and see it as applying also to relations of an individual to the members of a different group, and to the relations among groups” (2007, 153). Solidarity as social empathy serves to mediate distance between the individual and those that are recognized as situated differently, but importantly also acknowledges the situatedness of social groups.

In addition to an emphasis on difference, Gould also places a premium on deference. This is an integral part of her account of solidarity, and boils down to an assumption that victims of injustice or oppression are generally those best equipped to determine what solidary aid should look like and who should be involved (2007, 157). There are clear parallels between deference and the criteria of mutuality in Scholz’ description of political solidarity. Both emphasize the uneven power dynamics at play in solidarity—warning outsiders not to impose foreign expectations and standards onto the aid process. The value of deference as a central feature of global solidarity is explored in depth in Article I.

Gould’s emphasis on deference can mitigate the concerns regarding her reliance on empathy, which other theorists have argued can become a form of violence if those offering empathy are inattentive to the ways in which their empathy can fix the positions of others within affective economies (Ahmed 2015, 39; Hemmings 2012, 153-154). One form of deferential, social empathy might be directed locally towards those that become unfortunately situated, in a manner reminiscent of Scholz’ civic solidarity. However, another form of deferential social empathy, more relevant to the analysis of CIGS, might motivate transnational, political solidarities that generate new unified groups and positive duties in response to global injustice. Therefore, while Gould’s interest in networked solidarities might minimize the need for a sharp distinction between the local and global, there is room within Gould’s account of transnational solidarities for affectively motivated forms of political solidarity with distant others.

Whether or not transnational solidarities offer a strong candidate for analyzing global solidarity in CIGS depends on how one interprets Gould's discussion of international aid. On the one hand, Gould claims that solidarity differs greatly from humanitarian aid. She connects the latter to charity and suggests that humanitarian aid lacks the reciprocity that solidarity demands (2007 157; 2014, 125). On the other hand, Gould applauds the horizontality of grassroots organizations and individuals that engage in "mutual aid" directed at global justice (2007, 158). The question then becomes whether CIGS exemplify the lack of mutuality and reciprocity that Gould attributes to traditional humanitarian aid or if instead CIGS are part of an emerging, horizontal, grassroots form of alternative aid. Due to this ambiguity, contextual evaluations are necessary to determine the relevance of transnational solidarities to CIGS practices.

Gould's later development of her concept to include *critical transnational solidarity*, more explicitly deals with the link between global justice and global solidarity. Gould specifies that critical transnational solidarity "involves a disposition to act in support of others at a distance who are oppressed or impoverished, where this action is undertaken in the interests of justice" (2014, 126). While still relying on social empathy with others who are differently situated as a motivator, Gould suggests that—as long as an interest in global justice remains central—critical transnational solidarity can go beyond simply maintaining social cohesion and can lead to the construction of new networks of mutual aid. Gould argues that,

> While it must be granted that many contemporary cases involve better-off people helping those less well off, there is an implicit reciprocity in the normative application of solidarity such that if the well off were to need similar help in the future, they would have grounds for expecting it. So, in this sense of networked transnational solidarities, we can say that global justice presupposes this sort of transnational, if not fully global, solidarity. (2014, 125-126)

In the case of privileged CIGS founders and volunteers offering solidary aid to distant others, efforts towards a form of reciprocity would likely be a matter of what Gould refers to as deference and what Scholz refers to as mutuality rather than an expectation of similar help in the future. Still, the arguments for describing Ugandan CIGS as translocal solidarity networks in Book Chapter II can indicate potential parallels between Gould's networked transnational solidarities and the global orientations of some CIGS. I interpret Gould's hesitance to commit to a "fully global" sense of solidarity in the passage above as connected to her concerns about the feasibility of human solidarity.

Despite this reluctance, Gould offers several resources for operationalizing global solidarity in relation to CIGS. Most obviously, she suggests that there are important forms of solidarity that involve creating networks of aid that span national borders and group differences. Additionally, her support for empathy with distant, oppressed others resonates with the expressed motivations of CIGS founders, while her emphasis on deference serves as an important reminder of the need for sensitivity to local knowledge. Finally, in her nuanced attempts to balance global solidarity's call for both social empathy and global justice, Gould asks the important question: "is it reasonable to expect people to establish solidaristic relationships of this sort? Isn't it in any case too demanding a notion from the moral point of view?" (2007, 161). Gould offers a valuable reminder here that no matter how much conceptual work one might do outlining an ideal ethics of global or transnational solidarity, the question of how to practically motivate global solidarity looms large. This concern most certainly applies to attempts at finding a sense of participatory ownership within a cause that balances the strong motivations among privileged outsiders that "this is *my* cause" with the reflexive awareness that "this cause is not *about* me". Gould's comments about the apparently unreasonable demands of global solidarity, as well as her concerns regarding the tension between empathy and justice, can be developed by engaging what Lenard refers to as the cosmopolitan problem of motivation.

3.2.3 Justice-based and Sentiment-based Approaches to Global Solidarity

In *What is Solidaristic about Global Solidarity?* Patti Tamara Lenard offers a compelling critique of moral theories of global solidarity that is reminiscent of the questions posed by Gould in the previous section. Article I offers a response to this critique using a combination of two theories that will be presented in the next chapter. Posing what she refers to as the cosmopolitan problem of motivation, Lenard essentially asks: Can theories of global solidarity offer an efficacious motivation to prioritize the needs of distant others over the needs of our local communities and if so, what are the precise steps from that source of motivation to the actual practice of global solidarity? In terms of attempts to answer such questions, Lenard describes two main strategies within global solidarity scholarship—a roughly Kantian, justice-based approach and a roughly Humean, sentiment-based approach.

Lenard ultimately argues that both approaches fall short of accounting for the motivation of global solidarity (2010, 108-109). However, in doing so, Lenard offers a distinction between two types of global solidarity that can be useful in operationalizing the motivations of CIGS founders. While Lenard's work is explored in more depth in Article I, and to a lesser extent in Article II, it is important to offer a brief outline of her distinction between sentiment-based and justice-based approaches here, as this distinction influenced the working account of global solidarity that was applied in the early phases of the research project. This account will be outlined here and then problematized in chapters four and six.

Beginning with sentiment-based approaches to global solidarity, Lenard describes these as "deeply concerned with the empirical facts of normal human psychology" (ibid., 104). In this sense, Scholz' commitment to specific human relationships as the content of political solidarity can place her on the sentiment-based side of Lenard's distinction. Due to Gould's emphasis on the affective components of transnational solidarities, Lenard explicitly offers her work as an example of a sentiment-based approach. Lenard elaborates on the role of emotion in such approaches, writing:

> Sentimental accounts of global solidarity emphasize that all humans are feeling, emotive creatures and, especially, that we have a tremendous capacity for empathy. This latter capacity allows us to 'feel into' the experiences of others, by imagining or remembering what it is like to be in their situation. On this view, empathy allows us to 'participate' in the feelings of others… (ibid., 104).

The idea that empathy allows outsiders to "feel into" and "participate" in the experiences and emotions of others immediately raises red flags in regard to an ethics of participatory ownership. Lenard admits that empathy of this sort may be enough to generate an interest in global affairs. However, largely because global solidarity has to compete with local loyalties, or what she at times refers to as domestic solidarity, Lenard argues that empathy and other emotions are too weak to generate lasting unity and positive duties. In other words, there are no clear steps from empathy to actually engaging in meaningful global solidarity.

Alternatively, Lenard describes justice-based approaches to global solidarity as emphasizing the individual’s causal implication in global poverty and injustice. Rather than making a vague appeal to human solidarity, this strategy casts motivation as a response to the recognition of one’s own responsibility for the state of the world. This focus on accountability for participating in systems that directly contribute towards climate change, poverty, unjust working conditions, and other problems can shift understandings of global solidarity away from charity and towards reparation. This shift can be connected to Ahmed’s critique of the fetishization of generosity—pointing out that the aid that some might consider a gift is better understood as an attempt at accountability for the global effects of participation in the reproduction of an unjust world order.

Again, the concept of affective economies becomes relevant, as justice-based approaches engage emotions such as shame and guilt, but emphasize the structural and causal impacts of social behavior rather than personal attachments to narratives of suffering. Both sentiment-based and justice-based approaches have important affective components. However, sentiment-based approaches look to the motivational force of empathy with suffering others while justice-based approaches look to the motivational force of moral duties. A justice-based approach to global solidarity can be reminiscent of the moral logics of social and civic solidarities to the extent that they assume “that cosmopolitan duties of justice exist (rather than suggesting that global solidarity is the source of the duties in the first place), and argue for a global solidarity that will motivate us to carry these duties out” (Lenard 2010, 105). However, neither the social cohesion that is represented by a strong sense of social solidarity nor the shared trust in institutions that is represented in a strong sense of civic solidarity can be taken for granted at a global level. The problem once again lies in a lack of clear steps from acknowledging responsibility to engaging in global solidarity. Lenard argues that, in the absence of shared values, mutual trust, and loyalty, global solidarity becomes too morally demanding—especially when at cross purposes with the clear expectations of local commitments.

While I argue in Article I that an additional motivator can be considered that creates a productive common ground for combining elements of sentiment-based and justice-based approaches, Lenard’s critiques are poignant reminders of the demanding nature of engaging in global solidarity. Lenard’s distinction between sentiment-based and justice-based strategies for motivating global solidarity, as well as the distinction between domestic solidarity and global solidarity, are helpful in attempts to articulate what, if any, forms of global solidarity can contribute to the analysis of CIGS. While maintaining my commitment to avoiding an essentialized definition of global solidarity, it is valuable to discuss the concepts that were drawn from the authors presented in this chapter during this project’s attempts to operationalize global solidarity in CIGS contexts.

3.2.4 Global Solidarity as Siding Unnaturally

Having summarized a range of factors that can be used to categorize various forms of solidarity, I can present the operationalization of global solidarity that emerged from my initial reviews of both CIGS scholarship and relevant philosophical literature. This operationalization was particularly influential in Articles I and II, and presents an attempt at answering the question: If CIGS are engaging in global solidarity, what is global about this solidarity? I have established that I consider the concept of human solidarity too broad for the task at hand, as this project looks at the specific relational and affective components that emerge from the practices of CIGS. Similarly, while relevant to future research, I also find considerations of more-than-human solidarity to be outside the scope of this particular project.

Although not directed towards every member of the species, it seems clear that global solidarity must include some form of post-nationalist commitment. As mentioned in chapter two, CIGS rely on a sense of global citizenship that must include motivating obligations that can be extended beyond national and regional borders. However, whether the global commitments of these solidarity networks are conceived of as transnational, post-national, or cosmopolitan, I argue that geographic distance in not a necessary component of all relevant instances of global solidarity. While I agree with Gould that solidarity is generated through an attentiveness to those who are situated differently, the axes along which the groups in question are being situated will vary contextually and the distance is not always spatial.

With that being said, efforts to research specific forms of solidarity have to draw lines somewhere. National or regional borders can be helpful if researchers remain accountable for their choices. Book Chapter I, for example, involved an analysis of a database, generated by my co-authors, that mapped the emergence of Norwegian-based CIGS. One of the criteria for inclusion in the database was that the focus of these organizations was not on providing aid to people in Norway. At the same time, some Norwegian CIGS operating elsewhere in Europe were included, for example, when these initiatives were providing aid to refugees from the global South (Haaland et al. 2023, 27). Using inclusion criteria that are functions of certain national or regional borders will clearly influence data collection and analysis. While these choices can be criticized or defended, I bring up this example primarily to show that the various forms of mobility and immobility, central to issues of aid, development, displacement, and migration, require conscious attention. My argument that specific forms of geographic distance are not *always* features of global solidarity is meant to suggest that if, for example, the database generated for Book Chapter I had included CIGS providing aid to refugees in Norway, this could still have been legitimately cast as mapping *global* solidarity.

In addition, although the socio-economic and political aspects of this distinction are often emphasized, the geographic connotations of the North-South divide must be addressed. As mentioned in chapter two, early definitions of CIGS described them as initiatives set up by private persons in the global North aimed at improving the living conditions of people in the global South (Pollet et al. 2014; Schulpen & Huyse 2017). While Book Chapter II aims to expand the definition of CIGS to include translocal initiatives set up by people in the global South, I want to be clear that I do not see a need for these initiatives to span a North-South divide to be considered global. The assumption that all CIGS are oriented towards improving conditions in the global South can also be contested. For example, if a grassroots network based in the global South were to provide aid to those displaced by the war in Ukraine, could this not represent a citizen initiative for global solidarity? Even if such cases might be outliers, it is important to avoid assumptions about what CIGS networks can or should look like. As with my argument about national and regional borders, I maintain that limiting CIGS research to specific directionalities such as North-South or South-South can be defended in certain contexts, but researchers are accountable for these choices as their impacts can be substantial. Especially in light of concerns that paternalistic CIGS practices can lead to discounting local knowledge, reflexive awareness among volunteers, activists, and researchers is crucial.

While leaving room for a conception of global solidarity that does not span either great or specific geographical distances, I do want to operationalize global solidarity as requiring activity that is not based upon antecedent group membership. I chose to narrow the concept of global solidarity in a way that excludes the commitments captured by standard cases of social solidarity and civic solidarity. The global solidarity that is relevant to this project is political in the sense that it generates new groups and new positive duties. These unities are generated by moral responses to injustice and oppression, and must be characterized by attentiveness to structure and a form of deference or mutuality that resists the reproduction of preexisting privilege and power dynamics.

Not only does global solidarity, thus conceived, require a moral response that leads to the formation of new groups, but the interests of these new groups must also be prioritized over longstanding loyalties in a way that provides steps towards concrete solidary engagement. This tension can be seen in the way that local and global solidarity were operationalized in Article I— "local solidarity will refer to commitments to promote the interests of one's existing in-groups, while global solidarity will refer to commitments to deemphasize existing loyalties and promote the interests of distant out-groups" (Shults 2023, 7). Here it is important to reemphasize that the relevant forms of distance are not always geographic. One easily neglected form of distance that makes global solidarity morally demanding is the distance that commitments can create between an individual and what they have previously accepted as common sense or business as usual.

Part of what is unique about global solidarity in relation to CIGS founders and volunteers lies in the choice to radically distance oneself from the familiar and prioritize a group of people one has previously had little or no connection to. One can easily explain the choice to side with one's family, friends, labor union, nation, etc., because siding with groups one is already a part of and whose interests are already interwoven into one's own sense of well-being often comes naturally. It is for this reason that I have operationalized global solidarity as *siding unnaturally*. This captures an important aspect of what is morally unique about CIGS, and highlights the central tension in Lenard's cosmopolitan problem of motivation. In addition, the contrast between what comes naturally and what feels unnatural highlights the role of socialization in shaping identifications with various groups. What appears natural is constructed in the same way that distinctions between in-groups and out-groups are constructed. Again, socio-cultural practices and projects of self-construction become central, demonstrating the sense in which agency is both personal and collective. What is global about this kind of global solidarity is that it requires a thoroughgoing evaluation of whether or not one is on the right side of an issue—and that evaluation requires engaging the perspectives of distant others.

Operationalizing global solidarity as siding unnaturally led to a focus on the relationship between loyalty and global solidarity in Articles I and II. The next chapter will begin by outlining two theories of global solidarity that were critically engaged in those articles. Both theories can be understood as arguing for the motivation of global solidarity as siding unnaturally, although one theory offers a sentiment-based strategy and the other offers a justice-based strategy. The second half of chapter four discusses two other theories, engaged in Articles II and III, that are interpreted as problematizing the operationalization of global solidarity as siding unnaturally. The reflections on these four theories are important to understanding my contributions to the three cases of QSA discussed in chapter five.

The conceptual work that is outlined in chapters three and four is also important in contextualizing the contributions of this dissertation, which are discussed in more depth in chapter six. At this point I simply want to emphasize that this theoretical and conceptual work represents a core contribution of this research project. The four theories that are presented in the next chapter were chosen from a wide range of philosophical accounts of solidarity that were all brought into conversation with CIGS research in various ways throughout this project. I do not present my engagements with these four accounts as forming a theoretical framework that was later applied to empirical data. Instead, this dissertation represents an interdisciplinary approach in which empirical data and CIGS research informed repeated readings and reevaluations of these competing theories of global solidarity, just as these theories in turn informed the analysis of CIGS research.

4. Competing Theories of Global Solidarity

This chapter outlines the four theories of global solidarity that were most influential throughout this research project. Importantly, not all of these theories explicitly or consistently use the phrase “global solidarity”. As mentioned earlier, this lack of uniformity in the categorization of various forms of solidarity is common to both moral theories with different philosophical backgrounds and the refugee and migration literature relevant to CIGS research. The four theories discussed here all deal with global solidarity in the sense outlined at the end of chapter three. They all propose or problematize an understanding of global solidarity as siding unnaturally, thereby exploring the ways in which moral responses to oppression or injustice generate new unities and positive obligations through which the actors involved can be transformed by revaluating their position from the perspective of a new collective.

The first two philosophers, Rorty and Kolers, are interpreted as offering accounts of global solidarity as siding unnaturally. In Articles I and II, I use Lenard’s cosmopolitan problem of motivation to frame an interpretation of Rorty as offering a sentiment-based account and Kolers as offering a justice-based account. The third and fourth approaches to solidarity presented in this chapter, those of Taylor and Hemmings, are presented as problematizing the operationalization of global solidarity as siding unnaturally. This use of Taylor is explicitly explored in Article II, while Article III engages Hemmings to show the blind spots of Rortyan solidarity and the value of feminist accounts of politicized reflexivity. I will attempt to avoid unnecessary repetition of the themes that are dealt with in these articles. The primary purpose of this chapter is to outline the relevant elements of these four theories as a background against which the contributions of the texts produced during this research project can be presented and connected in chapter six.

4.1 Rorty, Ethnocentric Inclusivity, and Siding Unnaturally

> “When, for example, the families confederate into tribes, or the tribes into nations, *you may feel obliged to do what does not come naturally*: to leave your parents in the lurch by going off to fight in the wars, or to rule against your own village in your capacity as a federal administrator or

> judge. What Kant would describe as the resulting conflict between moral obligation and sentiment, is, on a non-Kantian account of the matter, a conflict between one set of loyalties and another set of loyalties."—Richard Rorty, *Justice as Larger Loyalty,* in *Philosophy as Cultural Politics* (2007, 45 emphases added)

This passage nicely illustrates the sense in which conflicting loyalties can lead an individual to disengage a moral autopilot function that the rhythms of daily life afford some of us, and lead to a conviction that the right thing to do involves siding unnaturally. A sudden commitment to something that feels bigger than one's family, one's country, or even one's safety emerges in case studies of CIGS founders and donors. Narratives of crisis in the media, such as those portraying the situation of refugees in Lesvos, or trips that involve emotional encounters with poverty, such as the visit to Uganda that led to the first channel of international funding for one of the CIGS discussed in Book Chapter II, can offer examples of moral responses to oppression or injustice that can motivate CIGS founders and volunteers to reevaluate their priorities and deemphasize their previous loyalties.

It is important to notice that Rorty conceptualizes the motivation to side unnaturally as a result of conflicting loyalties and not as a result of conflicts between sentiment and obligation. Rorty offers what Lenard would describe as a sentiment-based account of the motivation of global solidarity, arguing that justice is not morally distinct from loyalty, but instead refers to larger or more inclusive loyalties. The solidarity Rorty describes is global in the sense developed in chapter three, if and when it involves actively prioritizing the needs of distant out-groups over loyalties towards one's established in-groups. Rorty suggests that the appeal of siding unnaturally in this way can be increased through sentimental education, which involves exposure to alternative worldviews and narratives of suffering in the hopes of making our loyalties more flexible and inclusive. Rorty wrote,

> My position entails that feelings of solidarity are necessarily a matter of which similarities and dissimilarities strike us as salient, and that such salience is a function of a historically contingent final vocabulary… [T]here is such a thing as moral progress… in the direction of greater human solidarity. But that solidarity is not thought of as recognition of a

> core self, the human essence, in all human beings. Rather, it is thought of as the ability to see more and more traditional differences (*of tribe, religion, race, customs, and the like*) as unimportant when compared with similarities with respect to pain and humiliation—the ability to think of people wildly different from ourselves as included in the range of "us". (1989, 192 emphases in original)

Here Rorty describes progress towards global solidarity as an effort to minimize the differences that often delineate which side it might feel natural to side with. His emphasis on *feelings* of solidarity offers another reason to consider his account sentiment-based, in Lenard's terms. In addition, although the term 'human solidarity' is used, I argue that Rorty is not referring to solidarity with the entire species. Instead, I interpret Rortyan solidarity as a function of the similarities and dissimilarities that we use to construct the range of "us", where greater human solidarity simply means a more inclusive range of potential candidates for siding unnaturally.

Rorty's term 'final vocabulary', referred to in the passage above, is central to Article III and to a Rortyan account of progress towards global solidarity. Put simply, a final vocabulary is a fluid and actively constructed worldview—a network of descriptions, identifications, and justifications that one might use to give meaning to "our deepest self-doubts and our highest hopes" (Rorty 1989, 73). Final vocabularies are not final in the sense that they are unchangeable, but rather in the sense that they cannot be changed without a wholesale reevaluation of one's moral commitments. Rorty suggests that the cultivation of a more inclusive global solidarity can be generated by relating to final vocabularies through a combination of doubt and hope that he refers to as liberal irony.

Ironic doubt is a matter of reflexive awareness that can lead groups to be more willing to revise or abandon their current final vocabularies. Irony involves a sustained awareness that dominant descriptions of the current world order—what might seem like common sense by the standards of some established group—will inevitably marginalize certain other groups and hide, naturalize, or depoliticize the harm being done by that marginalization. Rorty hoped that awareness of the contingency of our moral commitments, in combination with access to narratives about others that are suffering due to the "common sense" commitments of those in power, might increase the willingness of those in privilege to side unnaturally. Combining ironic doubt about one's own "common-sense" commitments with liberal hope, yields the strategy of liberal irony in which skepticism about the status quo and inherited final vocabularies is made central to a collective understanding of moral and political progress.

Liberal irony thus represents a commitment to engage alternative final vocabularies, while not holding on too tightly to one's own—an attitude that I argue, in Article III, bears a resemblance to María Lugones' concept of "World"-travelling (Lugones 1987). Rorty argued that a form of ethnocentrism is inevitable throughout this process of engaging alternative perspectives, where ethnocentrism simply means that "beliefs suggested by another culture must be tested by trying to weave them together with beliefs we already have" (1991, 26). On a Rortyan view, inclusivity cannot be achieved by stepping outside of one's own situated position and achieving some form of objectivity or neutrality. Instead, inclusivity is generated by engaging alternative positions in the hopes that one's own ethnocentric position will be destabilized.

Rorty's version of global solidarity can thus be understood as an attempt to foster ethnocentric inclusivity—a group level commitment to engage difference with as much tolerance and openness as possible. Rorty offered "liberal culture"[4] as a label for these efforts to make tolerance and openness central to a shared, political identity (1991, 2). In summary, the strategy of liberal irony offers a path to global solidarity as siding unnaturally by encouraging doubt about how natural the construction of the relevant sides is, and by casting engagements with those one has not previously identified with as promising opportunities for moral and political progress.

A Rortyan perspective can thereby cast CIGS founders and volunteers as moved by emotional encounters with suffering, and motivated by opportunities for encounters with alternative final vocabularies. This perspective makes room for the emotional motivation and interest in self-construction that were discussed in chapter two. In addition, a Rortyan approach to global solidarity that emphasizes the importance of destabilizing one's own position by learning from others, offers a potential resource to an ethics of participatory ownership interested in balancing intense personal motivation with reflexivity and epistemic humility.

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[4] This choice of term is problematized in Article III as potentially offering a fantasy of inclusion that ultimately functions to subsume critical alternatives and exclude actors that are unwilling to reproduce a neoliberal world order (Ahmed 2017, 112; Everingham & Motta 2020, 227).

4.2 Kolers, Reason-based Deference, and Siding Unnaturally

> "To be sure, loyalty and identification are psychologically close to solidarity; the former attitudes can make the latter habitual and easy. But the three attitudes diverge *when contexts change or one's "natural" side (by ethnicity or family, say) is in the wrong; then, solidarity is demanding precisely because it contrasts with loyalty and identification*… Given that solidarity is structural, its choice of object will be based on the object's location in a particular social structure. Progressive solidarity—the only form of solidarity that I defend—chooses the group that is least well-off in that social structure."—Avery Kolers, *Justice and the Politics of Deference* (2005, 157 emphases added)

This passage touches on one of the key differences between Kolers and Rorty in terms of conceptualizing global solidarity in relation to loyalty. While Rorty casts global solidarity as generated by competing loyalties, Kolers argues that the unique normative composition of global solidarity emerges through its opposition to loyalty towards "one's natural side". Kolers' account of solidarity is global, in the sense detailed in chapter three, in that it involves siding unnaturally, prioritizing the interests of distant out-groups over the interests of one's previously established in-groups. Kolers' moral theory of solidarity focuses on privileged liberals, which he refers to as "joiners", and argues that they have a non-voluntary duty to side with oppressed groups that request global solidarity, which he refers to as "callers" (2016, 5).

Kolers' strategy for motivating joiners to side unnaturally is reason-based, where the *reason* for siding in solidarity with a certain group is a duty to combat structural inequity. This is evidenced by the passage above in which Kolers argues that the only defensible form of solidarity involves "progressively" siding with those that are "least well-off" within a given social structure. This account of global solidarity can be described as reason-based *deference* because Kolers argues that solidarity requires deferring to the callers' moral judgments and strategies for rectifying structural inequity, even if the joiners experience these strategies as misguided or morally problematic. Kolers succinctly summarizes this position when he argues that, in global solidarity, "the question *which side* *are you on* is prior to the question *what is the right thing to do*" (2016, 73 emphases in original).

In this way, Kolers' theory of global solidarity encourages siding unnaturally by arguing that being on the right side of the fight for structural equity is more important than following one's current moral intuitions. Kolers thereby describes solidarity as political action on others' terms and claims that "a key element of solidarity is deference on questions of prudential judgment and conscience. A proper mistrust of our own conscience—particularly if we are among the privileged—is a particularly valuable habit of a just person" (2016, 4). While Kolers' emphasis of duties and agent-neutral, structural evaluations places his theory on the justice-based side of global solidarity scholarship, the particular version of justice he advocates hinges upon this mistrust of one's own conscience. In particular, Kolers makes an important distinction between *treating others justly*, and *aiming at justice*.

Kolers argues that conceptualizing global solidarity as a matter of aiming at justice relies on an overly individualistic conception of moral autonomy that overestimates the abilities of potential joiners to make unbiased judgments about which goals are just and which strategies will promote those goals. Kolers ultimately sees attempts at aiming at justice as falling short of solidarity, because he maintains that "solidarity does not allow us to set the terms of our participation" (2012, 381). This position has interesting implications for an ethics of participatory ownership connected to CIGS research. Assuming that one agrees with Kolers that deferring to the moral judgments and strategies of those most disenfranchised by the existing status quo is key to global solidarity, the moral requirements of global solidarity are not met if joiners only side with movements that share their preexisting commitments. As argued in Article I, Kolers' structural focus serves as a reminder that individual evaluations are "heavily influenced by social systems and that if those empowered by these systems continue to default to their moral intuitions, the current status quo will likely remain intact" (Shults 2023, 14). If CIGS are allowed to choose their own terms of participation, siding only with movements that align with their preexisting interests and values, it is hard to imagine how this participation will avoid reproducing the status quo.

In a matter reminiscent of Gould's emphasis on deference and Scholz' emphasis on mutuality, the version of justice that Kolers imagines as central to global solidarity—treating others justly—involves siding with those suffering inequity by engaging in political action on their terms rather than one's own. By engaging in a deferential form of global solidarity that prioritizes siding unnaturally over aiming at a preconceived notion of justice, Kolers argues that "we constitutively embody a non-oppressive alternative world—even if, as is likely, our joint efforts ultimately fail, in part or in whole" (2016, 124). This becomes even more important in what Kolers refers to as "non-identity cases" where, despite being in solidarity, one is not among those directly affected by the inequity being resisted. Especially in such cases, Kolers argues that "judgments ought always, it seems, to be offered in the recognition that the decision is ultimately others' to make" (2016, 84).

Kolers' commitment to justice as active, reason-based deference taps into the core tension between a commitment that might motivate joiners to get involved with distant out-groups, a feeling that "this is *my* cause", and the importance of participating in a way that decenters the roles and moral intuitions of joiners, recognizing that "this cause is not *about* me". Kolers' approach is valuable in a CIGS context, as it offers an account of moral autonomy that includes deference to a collective and involves being skeptical of one's own conscience. While Kolers repeatedly emphasizes the need for structural evaluations and an agent-neutral, reason-based approach to global solidarity, there is also room for projects of self-construction. Encouraging a healthy mistrust of one's current moral intuitions, Kolers offers treating others justly through global solidarity as an active recalibration of one's moral compass. He writes,

> It is impossible antecedently to determine which tactics are permissible, for what aims, and which are not. And for the same reason it is impossible to determine in advance when one ought to defer to others' judgments about tactics. For these are themselves moral judgments on which it might be right to defer. (2005, 168)

Rather than trusting that one's moral compass is properly calibrated, siding unnaturally can be seen as a moral leap in the interest of a disorienting and active project of self-construction. Although, as I argue in Article I, the formal assessments of structural inequity that Kolers insists on may require too much emotional distance to be considered a form of solidarity, there are parts of Kolers' work that acknowledge the fuzzy nature of global solidarity as a concept and the ambiguity of attempts to fulfill duties of equity. By encouraging joiners to engage complex structural issues by actively engaging in deference, rather than trying to figure out how to aim at justice from the sidelines, Kolers' emphasis of just treatment can be read as combining the motivation to get involved and the need for accepting that some decisions are best left to those most directly affected.

While there are similarities between Kolersian solidarity and Rortyan solidarity, which are outlined and expanded upon in Articles I and II, one key difference emerges here. While both theories can be framed as encouraging siding unnaturally by cultivating a healthy skepticism towards one's conscience or common sense and simultaneously offering opportunities for transformation, Rorty hopes that privileged liberals will be moved by narratives of suffering and a collective commitment to fluid norms of inclusivity, while Kolers grounds solidarity in a Kantian, deontological commitment to moral obligations. Kolers claims that siding "with those who suffer inequity constitutes equitable treatment of them… If you don't respond to the call you have wronged the caller" (2016, 8). In this way, the moral response that leads to the formation of a new unity is focused on duty rather than affect.

A Kolersian perspective can cast CIGS founders and volunteers as moved by the acknowledgment of a moral obligation to respond to structural inequity that entails engaging in political action on others' terms, and motivated by projects of self-construction aimed at recalibrating their moral intuitions through this political action. The emphasis on deference, especially in non-identity cases, offers a potential resource to an ethics of participatory ownership that aims to decenter the role of CIGS founders and volunteers—balancing their motivation and commitment with a recognition that they are not among the "least well-off" in the context they look to address through their work. In addition, Kolers' conviction that solidarity is not appropriately applied to work in which joiners set the terms of their own participation, can be useful in problematizing descriptions of CIGS' work as global solidarity.

4.3 Taylor and Problematizing Global Solidarity as Siding Unnaturally

> "Expressional solidarity involves individuals committed and motivated to act, but not obligated to act. Because of its motivational aspect,

> expressional solidarity is weakly normative… Robust solidarity is strongly normative and entails positive obligations… [B]oth of these forms of solidarity can be explained by the same conditions. The nature of these conditions—whether they are unidirectional or multidirectional—will in turn explain the normative differences between these two forms of solidarity."—Ashley Taylor, *Solidarity: Obligations and Expressions* (2015, 128)

This passage highlights Taylor's attention to the normative differences between obligation and motivation, which, as argued in Article II, can problematize the underlying assumptions of an approach to global solidarity as siding unnaturally. Taylor offers four conditions that she argues are present, to varying degrees, in both expressional and robust solidarities: shared interests, identification with the group, empathy, and trust (2015, 131). However, the unidirectional or multidirectional nature of these conditions can be used to distinguish between robust and expressional forms of solidarity. In several ways, Taylor's distinction between robust and expressional solidarities mirrors the operationalizations in Article I of local solidarity as oriented towards established in-groups and global solidarity as prioritizing the needs of distant out-groups over preexisting loyalties.

For example, while there are shared interests in both forms of solidarity, Taylor separates the joint interests, present in robust solidarity, from the parallel interests present in expressional solidarity. Joint interests are shared by all members of a group that is directly affected by a given situation, where a collective effort is required by all members to achieve those interests. In contrast, when those same interests are supported by those that are not directly affected, the efforts of those outside the robust solidarity group are described as parallel interests and constitute expressional solidarity. Taylor uses the example of a group of passengers on a train that are suddenly held hostage by an armed robber. She suggests that a robust solidarity might form around the passengers' joint interest in cooperating to survive the hostage situation (ibid., 132). In contrast, if a group of university students heard about the hostage situation on the news and decided to engage in a public fast until the government intervened, this would be an example of expressional solidarity that demonstrates parallel interests rather than joint interests.

In both instances, those in solidarity are acting to achieve their shared interest in the hostages surviving. However, assuming that the students' demonstration qualifies as solidarity with the hostages, this solidarity is expressional or unidirectional in that the hypothetical hostages are not also in solidarity with the students. While the robust bond that emerges between the hostages generates a strong sense of obligation between the members of that group, the normative force and expectations generated by the students' demonstration is comparatively weak. According to Taylor, those outside the hostage group might feel *motivated* to act in solidarity, but they are not *obligated* to do so[5]. One can use the qualities of unidirectionality or multi-directionality to distinguish between robust and expressional versions of Taylor's other three conditions: identification, empathy, and trust. Those outside the most affected group might develop a meaningful sense of identification with the group, a deep sense of empathy with those most affected, and a sense of trust in how that group may act in the future or in how outside support will be received. However, robust solidarity is only achieved when all four conditions are multidirectional.

Robust solidarity relies on obligations to act towards joint interests, where the participants mutually acknowledge each other as members of the solidary group, and share both mutual trust and reciprocal empathy. The obligations engendered by robust solidarity are non-voluntary to the extent that a failure to act towards joint interests or to warrant the trust of the other members, for example, will eventually disqualify one from membership in the group. Such obligations are strongly normative, whereas the commitments of those motivated to engage in expressional solidarity are not. This difference can also be observed in the flexible and temporary nature of CIGS involvement, in which founders and volunteers are relatively free to withdraw funding or shift the focus of their initiatives. As argued in Book Chapters I and II, the mobility of privileged outsiders profoundly affects the power dynamics of CIGS' activities and thereby informs an ethics of both development and aid.

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[5] I anticipate the potential concern that lacking an obligation to act might disqualify expressional solidarity based on the "positive duties" criterion borrowed from Scholz. I would respond that expressional solidarity does involve positive duties once a new unity is formed (as does political solidarity). The difference between expressional and robust commitments on this front has to do with whether the obligations to act are antecedently acknowledged as a component of group membership or generated by the formation of a new group.

Similar to the operationalization of global solidarity as siding unnaturally, Taylor's distinction between robust and expressional solidarity relies heavily on the construction of in-groups and out-groups. However, Taylor's distinction casts robust solidarity as the more demanding of the two forms. While careful to point out that expressional solidarity is a full-fledged form of solidarity in which those involved connect the interests of those most affected to their own well-being, Taylor repeatedly draws attention to the voluntary and temporary nature of expressional commitments (2015, 138). The logic of this differentiation appears to be in tension with aspects of the conceptualization of global solidarity as siding unnaturally. By directing their theories of global solidarity towards privileged members of so-called liberal cultures, Rorty and Kolers join Gould and Lenard in assuming that most standard cases of global solidarity will involve better-off people helping less well-off people. The consequent focus on the barriers to solidary action that are posed, for example, by Lenard's cosmopolitan problem of motivation, can present siding unnaturally as more morally demanding than siding naturally.

The very term 'siding unnaturally' can imply that a commitment is somehow morally exceptional or unique, while 'siding naturally' sounds almost automatic, like something generated by the reliance on individual conscience or common sense that Kolers and Rorty aim to weaken amongst potential joiners. On the one hand, distinguishing between forms of solidarity in this way seems appropriate when focusing on the act of choosing sides. On the other hand, isolating the act of choosing sides can ignore those who are clearly a part of global solidarity movements, but who do not experience the side they are on something chosen. In other words, the language of siding unnaturally is appropriate when considering the moral situation of joiners engaging in expressional solidarity, but potentially misleading when considering the position of callers engaging in robust solidarity.

I argue that due to this research project's focus on the emergence of CIGS, the reasons they are founded, their structure and motivations, and their prioritization of global over local solidarity; the emphasis of an ethics of participatory ownership that addresses the tension between "this is *my* cause" and "this cause is not *about* me" among founders and volunteers is appropriate. However, Taylor's work can help to make a critical observation that this tension often does not emerge in the same way, if at all, for those most affected by oppression and injustice. It is often, but not always, easier for a person to become convinced that a cause is “theirs” when they are among the group or groups most directly affected by a crisis or inequity. The fact that the cosmopolitan problem of motivation does not arise in the same way for those whose involvement is better understood as obligatory rather than voluntary, should not be interpreted as a claim that only those who side unnaturally are engaged in global solidarity.

It is for this reason that Article II concludes with an argument that if CIGS are to be understood as engaged in global solidarity, this solidarity must be recognized as expressional and that this solidarity should not aim at becoming robust. Returning to Scholz’ typology, this argument might be expressed by saying that participation in political solidarity that generates a unified collective through a shared moral response to oppression does not warrant participation in the social or civic forms of solidarity that hold within the group that experienced that oppression directly. For this reason, a key caveat to the operationalization of global solidarity as siding unnaturally must be that siding unnaturally is meant to capture unique dimensions of self-construction through identification and participation that CIGS founders and volunteers exhibit, and that siding unnaturally is not a precondition for being in global solidarity as such.

An emphasis of the agency demonstrated by joiners in siding unnaturally could imply that joining is equivalent to “doing solidarity”—thereby ignoring the often more important roles of callers that deference and mutuality aim to highlight as indispensable elements of global solidarity movements. Having established that siding unnaturally addresses only one element in the creation of global solidarity across boundaries, an understanding of this particular form of global solidarity as expressional can help to balance the core tension between a sense of ownership over a cause and an awareness of one’s structural position as outside the robust solidary group. The identification, commitment to parallel interests, and empathy that Taylor argues are all characteristic of expressional solidarity can provide intense motivation to get involved in CIGS. At the same time, awareness of the unidirectionality of these intense and morally demanding commitments can serve as a reminder of the importance of deferring to the robust solidary groups in non-identity cases.

Taylor’s distinction can be used to cast CIGS founders and volunteers as engaged in an expressional form of global solidarity in which a crisis or injustice experienced by distant out-groups becomes central to their identity and sense of well-being. While the experience of participating in CIGS can be powerful, transformative, and generate a sense of ownership, the voluntary nature of these expressional commitments does not warrant the sense of *robust participatory ownership* outlined in Book Chapter I. Taylor's theory can contribute to a CIGS-oriented ethics of participatory ownership by offering a more nuanced account of the mutuality required by expressional solidarity as a form of political solidarity that is not built on antecedent group membership. This criterion of mutuality requires CIGS founders and volunteers to acknowledge the stronger normative bonds that exist between groups that share robust solidarity and to defer regarding the nature of the relevant forms of injustice and the strategies for combatting it.

4.4 Hemmings and Affective Solidarity

> "I want to propose here the beginnings of an approach through the concept of affective solidarity that draws on a broader range of affects—rage, frustration and the desire for connection—as necessary for a sustainable feminist politics of transformation, but that does not root these in identity or other group characteristics. Instead, affective solidarity is proposed as a way of focusing on modes of engagement that start from the affective dissonance that feminist politics necessarily begins from."—Clare Hemmings, *Affective Solidarity: Feminist Reflexivity and Political Transformation* (2012, 148)

I have interpreted the theories of global solidarity developed by Rorty and Kolers as suggesting that global solidarity offers an opportunity to destabilize our moral intuitions. As seen in the passage above, Hemmings reverses the direction of this relationship by suggesting that affective solidarity might be generated by the inevitable experience of instability—what she refers to as affective dissonance. Hemmings describes affective dissonance as an experience of discomfort or anger that emerges from the clash between self-narration and social reality (ibid. 154). In other words, reflexivity and motivation to engage in solidarity are generated by negotiating the tension between the narratives that inform one's sense of self, and the embodied experiences of judgments and boundaries that resist those narratives. Drawing on Ahmed's characterization of emotions as collective practices rather than psychological states, affective dissonance is best understood as an ongoing, intersubjective process that can be mobilizing or immobilizing for the different actors involved.

Hemmings' hope is that the experience of affective dissonance can lead to a politicized feminist reflexivity, which can in turn mobilize an affective solidarity. Importantly, while Hemmings refers to feminist reflexivity and feminist politics as central to her account of affective solidarity, she is clear that affective solidarity should be extended to non-feminist subjects (2018, 974) and that 'feminist' is neither co-extensive with nor limited to the category of 'women' (2012, 156). Her use of feminism is largely connected to the value she sees in feminist epistemologies, and in particular the versions of feminist standpoint theory offered by influential thinkers such as Sandra Harding, Nancy Hartsock, Patricia Hill Collins, and Donna Haraway. Hemmings points to a challenge that has emerged within these feminist epistemologies, namely accounting for the transformation of feminist experience into feminist knowledge. In addition, she suggests that the embodied experience of having knowledge while simultaneously not having that knowledge valued, offers a potential source of affective dissonance that can lead to feminist reflexivity.

While in no way guaranteeing this progression, Hemming describes the potential development from dissonance to politicization to solidarity, writing:

> When the kind of reflexivity activity I have been describing does lead to reflexive politicization, this may be a productive basis from which to seek solidarity with others, not based in a shared identity or on a presumption about how the other feels, but on also feeling the desire for transformation out of the experience of discomfort. (2015, 80)

In other words, the sustained experience of affective dissonance can lead those marginalized by dominant forms of knowledge to become politically active. Affective solidarity offers a strategy for connecting to others' experiences of affective dissonance in an effort to collectively establish alternative standpoints in both epistemology and politics. However, the collectives that might be generated by affective solidarity are not necessarily held together by a shared identity, feminist or otherwise, or even a specific form of shared affect. I interpret Hemmings' argument in the passage above as suggesting that, although we all struggle differently, affective solidarity can offer temporary, situated connections between our unique forms of frustration and rage.

Hemmings' emphasis of affective dissonance as emerging from the gap between "whom one feels oneself to be and the conditions of possibility for a livable life" (2012, 149) can problematize an assumption that siding naturally with established in-groups is something that happens in an unproblematic manner. In other words, many of us do not slot effortlessly into in-groups that have our best interests at heart and are willing to value our experiences and knowledge. Projects of self-construction within groups that constitute what Kolers referred to as "one's natural side (by ethnicity or family, say)" (2005, 157) can be morally demanding in a way that a valorization of siding unnaturally might conceal. In addition, conceptualizing global solidarity as linking differently situated, partial perspectives and experiences of affective dissonance can reduce the likelihood of reproducing categories such as, for example, joiners and callers. While attentiveness to privilege and power dynamics is crucial, there can be an advantage to a global solidarity that is predicated upon each member's experiences of affective dissonance rather than a differential relation between the better-off and the less well-off—even when that distinction is made in order to promote deference.

Affective solidarity can also question the desirability of global solidarity as siding unnaturally through a reminder that the presence of CIGS volunteers may actually increase the dissonance experienced by the people those CIGS aim to help. A positive reception of efforts towards global solidarity should not be assumed, and even efforts towards empowering victims of inequity can be legitimately resisted by those who do not resonate with a status of victimhood. Hemmings' thereby offers an intriguing alternative to the conception of global solidarity as motivated by a desire to destabilize one's moral intuitions. In addition, her "postcolonial concern about 'empowerment' as a new form of subordination" (2018, 966) can serve as a reminder of the potential fetishization of generosity discussed in section 2.3. While making room for a wide range of emotions, Hemmings joins Ahmed in her skepticism about global solidarity that is grounded in empathy. Hemmings argues that being "empathized with could be a horrific prospect… if the empathetic subject is associated with violence, or if the terms of recognition (being 'in need', say) are resisted" (2012, 153).

This position pairs nicely with Francis Nyamnjoh's claim, discussed in Book Chapter II, that the efforts of Northern aid actors to bring "civilization" to the global South can represent a form of violence. Those who experience being fixed within narratives and affective economies that attempt to cast them as uncivilized “have every reason to disabuse themselves of civilization” (Nyamnjoh 2017, 259). This offers an important reminder to those engaging in expressional, global solidarity, that the groups they may empathize or identify with might not want to be “joined” in reason-based deference or to be included in the ethnocentric range of “one of us” constructed by a liberal community of CIGS volunteers.

Hemmings is the scholar most skeptical about the possibility of achieving global solidarity among the four presented in this chapter, due to the hard work that being moved by an affective shift to an alternative standpoint requires. Her concerns regarding aid and development might lead Hemmings to describe some CIGS founders and volunteers as engaging in “a cannibalization of the other masquerading as care” (2012, 152). However, I find that Hemmings’ critical perspective helps add nuance to the other theories presented and keeps them accountable for isolating certain factors, such as the act of siding unnaturally, that can prioritize the agencies of more privileged CIGS participants. A more charitable account of CIGS, from Hemmings’ perspective, could describe CIGS founders and volunteers as moved to political action by experiences of affective dissonance, and motivated by a desire for transformative connection to the rage and frustration of others.

Hemmings’ explicitly feminist approach to solidarity scholarship offers a critical perspective that is of enormous value in regard to analyzing unstable categories such as CIGS. I argue that embracing contradiction and partiality as productive, rather than divisive, is vital in efforts to engage competing accounts of global solidarity and in efforts to use these accounts in the analysis of empirical data. Engaging feminist theories of solidarity and feminist epistemologies over the course of this research project made a substantial impact on my development as a researcher. In the next chapter, I turn to methodological considerations and argue for QSA as part of a feminist methodology—an opportunity to develop the feminist reflexivity Hemmings refers to.

5. Methodological Considerations

The first four chapters of this extended abstract have connected empirical studies and competing philosophical approaches in an effort to operationalize global solidarity in relation to CIGS research and an ethics of participatory ownership. In this chapter, I will outline the ontological and epistemological position adopted during the research project and discuss the assumptions that accompany that position. In addition, I offer reflections on the benefits and drawbacks of working with other researchers to re-analyze data, as opposed to conducting field work of my own. I place these collaborations within the growing trend of qualitative secondary analysis (QSA), and defend this approach as appropriate to this particular project. In addition, I briefly outline the positive effects that being challenged by collaborative, interdisciplinary work has had on my development as a researcher, looking at some of the productive tensions that I experienced between empirically informed ethics and social science methodologies.

5.1 Ontological and Epistemological Positioning

The overarching research concerns informing this project suggest an ontological position that is more nominalist than realist. This project assumes that concepts and categories such as 'CIGS' and 'global solidarity' are constantly being produced, reproduced, negotiated, and deconstructed. When I have described global solidarity as a fuzzy concept, this is not intended as a claim that the ontological status of global solidarity is ambiguous, but rather as a claim that there is a lack of shared norms regarding the use of the term 'global solidarity'—for example, in the refugee and migration literature. This research project is not interested in determining whether or not CIGS participate in some sort of category, moral or otherwise, that exists independently of social practice. This is not to question the existence of CIGS themselves or to suggest that moral categories are completely arbitrary. Instead, this project engages differently situated actors that intersubjectively construct and negotiate collective identities by participating in, or resisting, CIGS.

This position has an important consequence in regard to questioning whether or not the use of the term 'global solidarity' implies more moral content than is actually present in CIGS. Considering this question, which is central to this research project, becomes less about definitively establishing whether or not participating in CIGS embodies global solidarity and more about the ways in which different actors become empowered or restricted within affective economies that describe CIGS as engaging in global solidarity. While only dealing with one small piece of an enormously complex social reality, this is ultimately a question of developing a moral language that has a better chance of facilitating a morally defensible ethics of aid and development.

I take a pragmatic approach to the epistemic authority that informs the development of such a moral language, which Robert Brandom argues leads to an acceptance of the ontological primacy of the social, writing:

> The pragmatist about authority will take the criterial distinctions between ontological categories to be social in nature, for those categories are distinguished precisely by the locus of criterial authority over them. The category of the social must then be seen as self-adjudicating, and hence as ontologically basic, so the broader claim of the ontological priority of social categories follows from the narrower doctrine concerning the social nature of authority. (1983, 390)

What Brandom eloquently captures here is the manner in which the categories that establish what can be meaningfully said and identified are created socially. This is incredibly important to both solidarity scholarship and CIGS research that applies categories such as ‘global North’ and ‘global South’ among other distinctions along which in-groups and out-groups are constructed. Brandom’s argument for the ontological primacy of the social boils down to the claim that normative, social structures must be in place before ontological categories can be created and given meaning. On this view, pretending that the ontological categories came first is an attempt to mask these normative, social structures.

Both Rorty and Ahmed describe efforts to challenge these normative, social structures as forms of cultural politics. Rorty offers a linguistically oriented definition of cultural politics as, “arguments about what words to use” (2007, 3) where the usefulness of certain categories such as caste, race, gender, or religion might be defended or resisted, depending on the directions in which a moral community hopes to evolve. Ahmed, in turn, takes a more affectively oriented approach to cultural politics that aims to redefine “emotion as a form of cultural politics or world making” (2015, 1), focusing on how normative, social structures can neglect certain emotional intensities, while naturalizing others.

These thinkers can be brought together to generate a feminist pragmatism within which the ontological primacy of the social is acknowledged. From this perspective, this dissertation can be cast as a contribution to cultural politics that critically engages both the words being used—by, for example, describing amateur aid as global solidarity—and the emotional intensities being naturalized or neglected—by, for example, presenting empathy rather than frustration or rage as the appropriate response to global poverty or humanitarian crises.

Brandom suggests that a pragmatic approach to authority regarding the ontological primacy of the social will emphasize *epistemic* authority in particular (1983, 389). Agreeing that epistemic authority is key to evaluating the construction and negotiation of social categories places this project's epistemological position within the constructivist camp. This project is constructivist in the sense that it assumes that "classifications are not determined by how the world is but by convenient ways to represent it", and that all empirical and theoretical descriptions of both CIGS and global solidarity offer "partial ways of understanding the world, which should be compared with each other for their explanatory power" (Della Porta & Keating 2008, 24).

However, while broadly constructivist, this project has been guided by a curiosity not only about what words, emotions, or classifications are convenient ways of representing social practices, but whom specifically these classifications are convenient for. For this reason, I agree with Anna Malavisi's assessment that "critical theories of epistemology… are most relevant for development and development ethics" (2019, 45), and this dissertation has drawn inspiration from feminist epistemologies in particular. Donna Haraway offers an astute summary of the contradictions that emerge from the emphasis of situated knowledge in feminist epistemologies. These contradictions parallel the methodological considerations that inevitably arise in a research project that combines the very real crises and global injustices that CIGS look to address with an epistemological position that suggests that relevant, socio-political classifications are a matter of "convenience". Haraway writes,

> … "our" problem, is how to have *simultaneously* an account of radical historical contingency for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects, a critical practice for recognizing our own "semiotic technologies" for making meanings, *and* a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of the "real" world… *All* components of the desire are paradoxical and

> dangerous, and their combination is both contradictory and necessary. (1988, 579 emphases in original)

Within feminist epistemologies and feminist activism, it is crucial to establish the value of contingent, situated knowledges developed through the lived experiences of women and other systematically marginalized groups. In doing so, it is important to be critical of—and accountable for—the use of semiotic technologies that can represent marginalized groups in ways that “rob them of their historical and political agency” (Mohanty 2003, 39). At the same time, Haraway is clear that unreflexively valorizing unique social meanings and alternative discursive practices can slide into a form of relativism or hyper-pluralism that is ill-equipped to deal with real-world problems. Her assessment that finding a balance between meaning and reality is “both contradictory and necessary” is a hard pill to swallow for many, especially those in precarious situations.

Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson, writing about the relativistic tendencies in such ‘contradictory’ accounts of situated feminist critique, ask “can we conceive a version of criticism without philosophy that is robust enough to handle the tough job of analyzing sexism in all its ‘endless variety and monotonous similarity’?” (1989, 100-101). A similar question can certainly be directed towards a nominalist approach to the study of CIGS. Can partial perspectives and conflicting accounts of global solidarity offer an ethics that is robust enough to handle the tough job of analyzing engagements with acute humanitarian crises and global poverty? I side with Haraway in arguing that acknowledging the partiality and situated nature of all forms of analysis, while maintaining both conviction and humility, is the most promising path for both research and activism. Haraway expresses confidence that efforts to bring situated and contradictory perspectives together can avoid sliding into relativism, writing:

> The alternative to relativism is partial, locatable, critical knowledges sustaining the possibility of *webs of connections called solidarity in politics and shared conversations in epistemology*… [I]t is precisely in the politics and epistemology of partial perspectives that the possibility of sustained, rational, objective inquiry rests. (1988, 584 emphases added)

I find Haraway's comparison of political solidarity and conversational epistemology effective, describing both as aimed at opening possibilities for critical, fallible, networked connections. She acknowledges the importance of orienting these efforts away from relativism and towards rationality and objectivity. This description of partial perspectives suggests a means for conceptually aligning the epistemological position of this research project with the project's subject matter, in a way that is paradoxically straightforward and ambiguous. This ambiguity arises in large part due to the challenging nature of establishing criteria for rational inquiry and discussion, especially in regard to global solidarity networks that attempt to mediate significant differences regarding moral intuitions, political strategies, and epistemic authority.

Haraway suggests that the shared conversations that offer an epistemological counterpart to political solidarity achieve rationality and objectivity by remaining sensitive to power (ibid., 589). One important form of power lies in the epistemic authority mentioned by Brandom, and suggests that the practice of global solidarity and an awareness of epistemic injustice are two sides of the same coin. As Malavisi argues, "the injustices and inequalities that persist in global development are not only attributable to social, political, and economic factors, but also epistemological" (2019, 45). Drawing attention to the epistemic factors of an ethics of participatory ownership in CIGS research, is one area in which a collaborative, interdisciplinary form of data analysis that includes an empirically informed ethics can offer a valuable perspective on global development and humanitarian aid.

Miranda Fricker's work on epistemic injustice, and particularly her discussion of the systemic prejudices that influence what she refers to as a "credibility economy" (2007, 30), usefully inform the analysis of CIGS' effects on the affective economies that their practices contribute towards reproducing or resisting. In the same way that the option for CIGS volunteers to decide that "work should remain fun" is a choice that fixes the positions of others within an affective economy, being in a position to volunteer one's time and resources is often accompanied by credibility markers such as education, mobility, and access to funding that can alter the dynamics of a credibility economy. These credibility markers can garner outsiders that are offering expressional solidarity a credibility excess, which Fricker argues constitutes an epistemic injustice (ibid., 17). The other side of this collective practice of epistemic injustice lies in the credibility deficit suffered by those who may not share those same credibility markers. One of the critiques of CIGS offered earlier addresses the potential for the need for ownership and control to lead CIGS volunteers to discount the knowledge of locals (Appe & Telch 2019). This offers a prime example of a way in which an unjust epistemic practice, in the form of a systematic credibility deficit, might directly affect the landscape of participation.

At a broader level, Malavisi suggests that promoting the narrative that development offers a solution to global poverty represents another structural form of epistemic injustice, and a way for those in power to maintain the current, global economic order (2019, 46). Such examples demonstrate the ways in which critical, feminist approaches to epistemology and cultural politics can increase a rational sensitivity to power. This can also serve as a reminder to researchers and activists to remain attentive to whom the narratives, credibility economies, and affective economies prescribed by normative, social structures are convenient for. This attentiveness must also be applied reflexively as, even in efforts to produce research or philosophy that serves emancipatory ends, both CIGS research and feminist epistemologies can fall into the trap of "romanticizing and/or appropriating the vision of the less powerful while claiming to see from their positions" (Haraway 1988, 584).

Article III goes into more detail outlining the potential for inclusive sounding social movements to mask and subsume the particular forms of reflexivity and solidarity that can be generated from unique, marginalized positions. Here I simply wish to acknowledge the epistemological and ontological position of this research project as broadly nominalist and constructivist, and more narrowly pragmatist and feminist in the ways outlined above. This positioning is important as a background against which to understand this dissertation's interest in the use of the term CIGS as simultaneously an affective, epistemic, and political practice.

5.2 Qualitative Secondary Analysis and Feminist Methodologies

> "…tacit knowledge is rich… [and] no matter how good the notes and records, secondary researchers will never reproduce it. But deriving insights from data does not rely solely on closeness to the data. Researchers' analytical capabilities, what they make of the data, is equally

> important."—Libby Bishop, *Secondary Analysis of Qualitative Data* in *Qualitative Research* (2019, 405)

Returning to what I referred to earlier as the methodological elephant in the room, I anticipate the potential criticism that I did not generate any empirical data during my research project. Instead, I have produced two single-author texts that are primarily theoretical, and co-authored three other texts that analyze empirical data gathered by my co-authors—to whom I am immensely grateful for both granting me access to their data and for stimulating dialogues throughout our collaborations. The passage above appropriately emphasizes both the value of 'being there' for qualitative data collection and the importance of tacit knowledge. At the same time, I resonate with Bishop's argument that what researchers make of the data is equally valuable in generating quality analysis.

It is hardly controversial to suggest that social science is not in the business of presenting raw, unfiltered data. Especially in regard to qualitative interviews, the active role of the researcher is crucial to the construction of the environments and conversations through which narrative data are co-created (Holstein & Gubrium 2019, 67). Without dismissing the value of tacit knowledge, I argue that the line between the intersubjective production of narrative data during data collection and the intersubjective production of narrative data during data analysis and writing can benefit from being blurred in some cases. By this I do not mean to suggest that there is not a significant difference between the work done in conducting qualitative interviews and the work done in analyzing, transcribing, and writing publications based on those interviews. Instead, I simply mean to suggest, as Polanyi did himself, that there is no sharp divide between tacit and explicit knowledge (1969, 144). By deemphasizing the distinction between *gathering data,* on the one hand, and *what is made of the data*, on the other hand, the entire research process can be understood as *collaboratively constructing empirically informed analysis*—where participants, institutions, gatekeepers, and researchers are all seen as contributors.

In other words, an argument that interpreting interview material and bringing it into interdisciplinary conversations with new theoretical perspectives does not in some important sense produce *new empirical data* rests on an overly rigid dichotomy between theory and data that neglects the interpretive nature of all descriptions and concepts[6]. With this said, there is still an important part of the traditional, social-scientific research process that I did not experience directly. However, the use of qualitative secondary analysis (QSA), the method of analysis chosen for this project, has been increasing since 1995 and offers its own unique advantages (Bishop 2019, 407). I interpret the three co-authored texts produced for this dissertation as examples of QSA, which Bishop defines as "reusing data created from previous research projects for new purposes… [where] at least some of the people re-analyzing the data were not involved in collecting it" (ibid., 395). In each of the three cases of QSA that I was involved in, the empirical data was collected for another research purpose before I became involved in the process of re-analysis. None of my co-authors had planned a collaborative re-analysis at the time of their initial data-collections.

While there are clearly advantages to 'being there' during the original data collection, there can also be advantages to conducting QSA with an outside perspective. There are three reasons, other than those already mentioned in section 1.3, for the use of QSA to be considered advantageous in regard to this particular research project. First, QSA is recommended in situations where repetitive research might burden vulnerable populations (Bishop 2019, 396). This arguably applies to Lesvos, where I had initially planned to do my field work. The interview material analyzed in Article II showed multiple instances of local frustration with outside involvement and the international representation of the refugee situation as a crisis (Shults et al. 2021, 10). In this sense, re-analyzing data rather than engaging in a new round of field work can be retrospectively defended from the perspective of research ethics.

Second, the opportunities offered by QSA resonate with the epistemological and ontological commitments that inform this project. As Sarah Irwin suggests,

> Secondary analysts need to be reflexive and critical, to challenge taken-for-granted categories and assumptions, to generate new questions, and they need to have a fine sensibility to the risks of being at a remove from the lived experiences represented in the data. (2013, 303)

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[6] Sara Ahmed offers the term "sweaty concepts" (2017, 13) as a way of suggesting that descriptive work *is* conceptual work and that both are often born out of the affective dissonance discussed in section 4.4.

Participating in QSA as an outsider can heighten one's awareness of the partiality of one's perspective. This was certainly my experience in working through various connections and assumptions with my co-authors. At the same time, collaborating with those who collected the data can draw a critical awareness to categories that they assumed were relevant. In this way, QSA is conducive to the epistemology of partial perspectives that Haraway recommends as a path to rational, critical, feminist inquiry. Understanding objectivity as generated by conversations between partial perspectives can deemphasize the importance of each researcher involved in a project 'being there' for each phase. Especially when there is a chance to engage in a continued dialogue with those who were present during the data collection, QSA "often enables richer and more creative comparative work than is otherwise possible" (Bishop 2019, 406).

Third, although it is admittedly hard to determine exactly how and where this was advantageous, I am grateful to have been given access to audio recordings and transcripts of interviews that were conducted by female researchers who had no idea that we would work together in the future. Although this is speculative, I imagine that if I had developed interview questions, found informants, and conducted interviews myself, that I might have projected my own philosophical background and language onto the field. While bias is inevitable, one advantage of QSA is that *my* bias was not present in the collection of data. In addition, analyzing interviews that were conducted without a male researcher present increased my sensitivity to the active role of the researcher in the creation of gendered space during field work. As Marlene Spanger claims in regard to conversations with those buying and selling sex in Denmark; her white, male research assistant "had access to rather different narratives within the space of commercial sex" than she did (Spanger 2012, 155). Although gender was not a major focus of the three co-authored texts, my interest in the intersection of solidarity research and feminist theory led me to reflect on the role of different subject positions in CIGS research[7]. Again, without being able to pinpoint the exact effects on the research produced, working with information that was not colored by my own interests or presence during data collection did offer a unique opportunity.

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[7] I do not mean to conflate 'research done by women' and 'feminist research' in these reflections. The connection between the gendered space of interviews, the gender of my co-authors, and feminist theory stems largely from specific conversations with my co-authors/supervisors, Hege Wallevik and Hanne Haaland.

Taken together, reasons two and three lead me to interpret the interdisciplinary, collaborative data analysis undertaken during this research project as part of a feminist methodology. While of course not suggesting that all instances of QSA are feminist, there are aspects of this method of analysis that support partiality, situated knowledges, reflexivity, and conversation. Fleshing out what is seen and what is not seen by researchers with different backgrounds, strengths, and interests, provides the opportunity for a feminist, reflexive approach to all phases of research. Differently situated interpretations of interview material can serve as a reminder that part of objectivity in social science research lies in becoming “answerable for what we learn how to see” (Haraway 1988, 583).

I hope that my attempts to re-read and deconstruct myself as I learned how to see differently, which I conceptualize as the development of a feminist reflexivity, are evident in this dissertation. In particular, I find that a comparison of Article I and Article III illustrates the extent to which this reflexivity was facilitated by QSA. Looking back, Article I reads like the work of a philosopher getting ready to start engaging in global development studies. The discussion of the motivation and ethics of global solidarity in this article is not so much an empirically informed ethics as ethical reflections that I knew were eventually going to be connected to empirical data. That first article was a way of tightening the focus of the project, and this funneling process of narrowing and operationalizing continued through Article II and Book Chapters I and II. Article III, in my opinion, reads like the work of someone who has come out the other end of that funneling process and returned to more theoretical work with a new set of priorities. The logical flow of operationalizing and then re-opening is one that was facilitated by QSA, a method that I argue can offer a helpful resource to feminist methodologies.

5.3 “So what?”—The Usefulness of Partial Perspectives

I would like to conclude this chapter with an anecdotal, but illustrative, example of one of the productive tensions that can emerge from interdisciplinary discussions. One of the questions that I have been asked most often by my PhD supervisors and other social scientists during conversations that involve more abstract or technical philosophical reflections is, “So what?”. The first few times I was met with this response, I assumed that I had failed in some way to communicate my arguments. However, over the course of this research project I have come to see the activity of asking each other “So what?” as a core part of constructing the interdisciplinary webs of connections that embody an epistemology of partial perspectives. This “So what?” can be an invitation to conversation and a signal to differently situated others that their perspectives are both interesting and incomplete. As argued in Book Chapter II, drawing on the work of Francis Nyamnjoh, accepting incomplete conversations of this kind as the norm can lead to relationships that are neither grounded on expectations of completeness nor aimed at converting the other to one’s own way of thinking (Korsvik et al. 2023, 150).

One such “So what?” came in the form of feedback from one of the editors of *The Rise of Small-Scale Development Organizations: The Emergence, Positioning, and Role of Citizen Aid Actors,* on an early draft of Book Chapter I. The “Discussion and Concluding Reflections” section of that chapter represents my primary analytical contribution, and centers around developing the conceptual distinction between robust participatory ownership and expressional participatory ownership, while connecting this distinction to Norwegian aid practices. One of the comments invited my co-authors and me “to come down from this rather long and abstract discussion at the end” as it was interesting, but did not connect to the empirical data in a way that was obvious.

This offers an example of a “So what?” and a helpful reminder of the incompleteness of my own perspective, challenging my assumptions about the value of lengthy ethical discussions to social science research. At the same time, having managed to mature slightly over the first two and a half years of my PhD, I felt confident enough to respectfully disagree. I argued that, in terms of making the empirical data both accessible and meaningful, the ethical reflections were just as important as describing the interview material or the database of Norwegian CIGS presented in that chapter. While the conceptual work at the end of the chapter may seem “long and abstract” to some, others, who look at the empirical data and ask their own “So what?” in response, will find their answer in the ethical reflections in the summary discussion.

The value of such a conversation does not lie in determining who is right and who is wrong. Instead, it offers a concrete example of the ways in which partial perspectives lead people to see different aspects of research as questions, answers, neither, or both. Conversations in which “So what?” is asked across different disciplines and subject positions can help us to collectively recognize our own incompleteness. My supervisors and other coworkers at the department often refer to me as the “house philosopher”. I see the role of “house philosopher” as one more in a jumbled series of positions from which one can productively ask others, “So what?”. While the value of that role can be debated, I argue that the possibility of rational and objective inquiry through an epistemology of partial perspectives provides an ample defense against concerns that QSA—or other methods that are not reliant upon ‘being there’ for every stage of the research process—insufficiently embodies social science research. I look forward to learning from many more conversations with researchers who disagree.

6. Summarizing the Contributions of the Dissertation

Having established the overall aims of this dissertation, central tensions within CIGS research and solidarity scholarship, operationalizations of key terms, and the methodological positioning and considerations that informed the project—I will conclude this extended abstract with a summary of the main contributions of each of the dissertation's five publications. This summary can expand upon the brief overview offered in section 1.2, drawing on the data, theories, and terms that have been engaged and unpacked in the preceding chapters. The primary goal of this final chapter is to demonstrate the most central ways in which the five texts build upon and challenge each other. This summary offers an incomplete account, in Nyamnjoh's sense, of an ethics of participatory ownership that draws on resources from solidarity scholarship and CIGS research.

6.1 The Desirability of Moral Character Change as a Motivator of Global Solidarity

> Contextually balancing an attention to equity and an acknowledgement of ethnocentrism, can produce a middle ground for future discussions between sentiment-based and reason-based strategies for motivating global solidarity. Versions of both strategies suggest that combining existential security or systemic privilege with awareness of global inequity and suffering can create a reflexive doubt about one's common-sense moral convictions, which can in turn motivate solidarity with distant out-groups on their own terms. (Shults 2023, 20)

In order to operationalize global solidarity in a CIGS context, Article I takes on the tasks of differentiating between local and global solidarity and evaluating conflicting accounts of the relationship between them. Lenard's distinction between justice-based and sentiment-based approaches to global solidarity struck me as applicable to the more emotional and relational approaches of CIGS and their critiques of larger organizations as participating in a bureaucratic aid industry. I was impressed by Lenard's critiques of both sentiment- and justice-based strategies as ultimately failing to lay out concrete steps from an initial motivation to the sustained practice of global solidarity. However, her argument that global solidarity scholarship pays insufficient attention to the role of loyalty did not match the impression I had formed after a review of the literature, particularly in the cases of Rorty and Kolers. In addition, Rorty's emphasis of sentimental education and Kolers' concern with the difference between aiming at justice and treating others justly, offered an interesting and fairly straightforward connection between these two philosophers and Lenard's treatment of sentiment and justice as motivations of global solidarity.

Article I thereby offers an initial attempt to operationalize the distinction between local and global solidarities, as well as addressing Lenard's concerns about loyalty and motivation. By wrestling with the interrelated features of these normatively charged concepts, I developed my understanding of the nuances of different motivations of global solidarity. Article I contributes to solidarity scholarship in two ways. First, the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of both Kolers and Rorty, offers a relatively accessible summary of the work of both philosophers that can offer an entry point for those not familiar with their theories of solidarity.

Second, Article I demonstrates how Lenard's concerns about the motivation of global solidarity are both warranted and unwarranted. I argue that she convincingly critiques sentiment and justice as incapable of generating a sustained global solidarity that can overcome the force of competing local solidarities. However, by introducing a third motivating factor—the desirability of moral character change—global solidarity can be made to look feasible within the limited range of cases that Lenard, Rorty, and Kolers focus on. As mentioned in chapters three and four, each of these philosophers assumes that standard cases of global solidarity will involve privileged individuals offering solidarity to those that are less well-off. Thus, the main contribution of Article I is the suggestion that existentially secure individuals can be motivated by what Kolers refers to as the recalibration of one's moral compass through deferential solidarity, and what Rorty refers to as the doubt about the adequacy of one's current final vocabulary generated through encounters with alternative final vocabularies. This amounts to an argument that *the desirability of moral character change* should be considered as a potential motivator of global solidarity. This is an argument that combines nicely with the projects of self-construction emphasized in CIGS research.

6.2 Siding Unnaturally as Expressional Solidarity

> Regardless of the intensity of one's commitment, the global solidarity of those engaged in foreign aid should generally be conceptualized as expressional. Categorizing solidarity as "expressional" should not invoke images of social media activism or simply paying lip service to a cause. We argue that expressional global solidarity is by no means detached caring from a distance, but it does imply not taking unnecessary *ownership* of the aid process. (Shults et al. 2021, 12 emphases in original)

Article II engages the tension between the call for global solidarity and the call for a localization of aid in the context of the refugee 'crisis' in Lesvos, Greece. This is accomplished by connecting the ethical reflections on global solidarity that were developed in Article I to interview data and participant observations collected by my co-authors between 2015 and 2019. The localization of aid is understood here as an effort to facilitate "more *ownership* for state and non-state actors in close proximity to the emergencies" (Spandler 2020, 2 emphases added). While clearly relevant to an ethics of participatory ownership and CIGS research, Article II begins with the ambiguous meanings of both 'ownership' and 'proximity' in this definition and applies the operationalizations of local and global solidarities developed in Article I. Both Rorty and Kolers are interpreted as advocating an understanding of global solidarity as siding unnaturally. Reflections on the transformative potential of siding unnaturally are then applied to the motivations and commitments expressed in interviews with CIGS volunteers and other aid actors in Lesvos.

As argued in section 4.3 of this extended abstract, Taylor's distinction between expressional and robust solidarities can be used to problematize the conceptualization of global solidarity as siding unnaturally. An emphasis on siding unnaturally can both cast global solidarity as something that outsiders do and obscure the fact that those most affected by crisis may legitimately resist CIGS' attempts to side with them. Our analysis of the empirical data interpreted local resistance towards CIGS as stemming from two primary concerns, inefficiency resulting in part from a failure to coordinate with other aid actors and the problematic representation of the refugee situation on social media. Article II contributes to CIGS research and solidarity scholarship by bringing philosophical approaches to global solidarity into conversation with ethnographic data from Lesvos—while also increasing conceptual clarity by comparing and connecting the distinction between the global and the local, on the one hand, and the expressional and the robust, on the other. Most importantly, Article II contributes to an empirically informed ethics of participatory ownership, arguing that—to the extent that the aid offered by CIGS volunteers qualifies as global solidarity—this should be conceptualized as expressional solidarity.

6.3 Robust Participatory Ownership and Expressional Participatory Ownership

> The proximity of which CIGS are capable involves privileged outsiders voluntarily "moving closer" to the worlds of distant others. As these "distant worlds" are already populated, the potential for inadvertent colonization must be recognized. We have argued that this can be poignantly illustrated using a distinction between the *robust participatory ownership* generated by shared responsibilities within a local community and the *expressional participatory ownership* generated through the active contributions of empathic outsiders. (Haaland et al. 2023, 37 emphases added)

Book Chapter I continues the project of applying the distinction between robust and expressional solidarity to a CIGS-oriented ethics of participatory ownership—this time drawing on empirical data from a Norwegian context. This article offers a brief historical background of both local volunteering and overseas development aid in Norway. This includes a discussion of the roles of the Norwegian government, media, and academia in producing and reproducing the narrative that Terje Tvedt refers to as the Norwegian "regime of goodness" (2007, 621). Through Norwegian socialization and international branding, we argue that there has traditionally been a distinction made between local, civic responsibilities, where the expectation is that Norwegians volunteer their labor, and global aid, where Norwegians primarily contribute through donations or taxes.

Central to the Norwegian socialization process is the celebration of the Norwegian "dugnadsånd" which roughly translates to "spirit of volunteering".

Drawing on interviews with both Norwegian CIGS founders and directors of large, Norwegian NGOs, we consider the “dugnadsånd” alongside an emphasis of “folk engagement” as factors that position CIGS outside the formal Norwegian aid architecture. We interpret Norwegian CIGS as contesting the traditional split between volunteering labor locally and sending aid overseas—embodying an alternative approach in which the person-to-person engagement characteristic of the “dugnadsånd” can be extended outside of local communities and beyond national borders. With this narrative as a background, Book Chapter I develops the concepts of *robust participatory ownership* and *expressional participatory ownership,* mentioned in the passage at the beginning of this section.

The practice and motivation of expressional global solidarity will inevitably involve senses of ownership. Getting directly involved in a specific CIGS requires a sense that “this is *my* cause” and participating in a cause over time will understandably intensify that sense of ownership. An argument that CIGS involvement only warrants an expressional sense of participatory ownership—regardless of the extent of participation or the intensity of the emotions associated with the cause—contributes towards orienting CIGS research towards power imbalances. The desire for proximity through folk engagement, expressed by Norwegian CIGS founders, can only be fulfilled due to their own mobilities. These mobilities carry with them the inherent risk of immobilizing others. As such, while an interest in extending their “dugnadsånd” internationally offers a potential motivational resource for Norwegian CIGS, the force of that commitment must be tempered when it is expressional instead of robust. When taking ownership of a cause by participating in expressional global solidarity is not accompanied by an awareness that “this cause is not *about* me”, it quickly becomes an act of *taking* ownership away from a robust solidary group. The more nuanced discussion of these considerations in Book Chapter I contributes conceptual resources to future CIGS research and to other fields that require sensitivity to an ethics of participatory ownership.

6.4 Including Southern Actors as CIGS Founders

By engaging Ugandan perspectives, we aim to emphasize the experiences of Southern actors. As such this work is relevant to both ongoing debates regarding the localization of aid and efforts towards a decolonization of

> the discourse of development… [W]e aim to present a differently situated account of CIGS that resists the tendency to study citizen aid through the unit of the individual and the perspective of the Global North. (Korsvik et al. 2023, 141-142)

As mentioned in the passage above, Book Chapter II contributes to ongoing discussions about the localization of aid and the decolonization of development theory and practice by addressing the uneven power dynamics that emerge within a CIGS-oriented ethics of participatory ownership. In particular, this chapter resists definitions of CIGS as founded by private persons in the global North and aimed at improving conditions in the global South. We argue for a wider definition of CIGS that includes local initiatives that are founded by Southern actors and which eventually "go global" through translocal networking or communities of funders living in diaspora. By analyzing the narrative data from interviews conducted by Korsvik, we argue that the three Ugandan-based initiatives presented in this chapter offer examples of CIGS.

Additionally, Book Chapter II draws on the Ugandan case studies to offer examples of the fuzzy distinction between "funders" and "founders", particularly when Northern development actors become involved. The evolution of these Ugandan CIGS shows how Northern funding can be assumed to warrant, or can even be explicitly contingent upon, a role as owner or founder of an initiative. Book Chapter II also contributes reflections on the economic, geographic, and psychological mobilities and immobilities of the actors involved—drawing on the work of Nyamnjoh and others to offer an account of translocal solidarity networks as embodying a version of global solidarity that emphasizes the importance of collective autonomy, "situatedness during mobility" (Brickell & Datta 2011, 3), incompleteness, and the resistance of development practices that assume a unidirectional flow of civilization from North to South. Such an account can serve to disrupt the assumptions about "standard cases" of global solidarity that are found in both CIGS research and solidarity scholarship.

6.5 Feminist Reflexivity and the Risks of "Liberal" Projects of Self-Construction

> The specific forms of affective dissonance, schizophrenia, and ontological confusion experienced by marginalized women can become appropriated and neutralized into a part of "our" collective efforts towards ambiguous, but progressive sounding, liberal ends. Too much hope in "our" ability to be inclusive can lead to the cooptation of the experience of feminist, affective dissonance by a final vocabulary that is not explicitly feminist. This disguised cultural-political move might then be defended by appealing to the importance of inclusivity. (Shults 2024, *Norsk Filosofisk Tidskrift*, Under Review)

Article III returns, with a series of decolonial, feminist perspectives, to several of the concerns that were discussed in connection with the conceptualization of global solidarity as siding unnaturally. The strengths and weaknesses of a global solidarity that emerges from the desirability of moral character change are explored by critically evaluating the Rortyan strategy of liberal irony in connection to voluntourism, pleasure activism, and affective solidarity. Liberal irony combines a skepticism towards hegemonic discourses and practices with a hope that a collective interest in projects of self-construction that engage alternative worldviews will lead to moral and political progress towards more inclusive solidarities. The idea of participating in CIGS as a means of self-construction is one that remained relevant throughout the entire dissertation. Article III uses liberal irony as an example to show how these efforts towards self-construction always entail a degree of risk, as they can be both exploitative and emancipatory.

By comparing the strategy of liberal irony to the self-constructions of voluntourists, as they appear in some feminist critiques and empirical studies, Article III explores how attempts at engaging alternative worldviews risk commodifying difference, appropriating the emotions of others, naturalizing global poverty, and reproducing neocolonial and neoliberal norms of affectivity. Relating liberal irony to pleasure activism, in comparison, explores the potential for projects of self-construction to challenge those same norms and generate imaginative resources for decolonizing a wide range of social practices. Finally, in comparing liberal irony to Hemmings' affective solidarity, Article III argues that there is a danger that liberal irony and other inclusive sounding "liberal" strategies can also have an exploitative effect at the level of theory. This can occur to the extent that feminist reflexivity can be subsumed and neutralized within a broader "liberal" rhetoric. Critical evaluations of liberal irony show that positive outcomes of active efforts to recalibrate one's moral intuitions cannot be guaranteed. There is a risk involved in the choice to engage in global solidarity that CIGS volunteers and others engaging in similar projects of self-construction are morally accountable for.

6.6 Conclusion

This final chapter aims to outline the progress made over the course of the research project and demonstrate how the texts that comprise this dissertation build on and problematize each other. In retrospect, it is of course possible to portray a project as a fairly linear progression from start to finish. While I do believe that the narrative arch provided by this extended abstract can aid the reader in understanding the dissertation as a coherent whole, I will not pretend that the research project was not also at times characterized by messiness, frustration, and luck. 'CIGS' is in many ways an incomplete category, as indicated by the definitional variation among the international community of CIGS researchers. However, by operationalizing global solidarity in a CIGS context and developing conceptual clarity and nuance by engaging empirical data from multiple contexts—this project offers an incomplete attempt at weaving together partial perspectives in a way that highlights central features of a CIGS-informed ethics of participatory ownership.

As argued in the introduction, the five publications contextualized by this extended abstract come together to make important and interconnected arguments. This dissertation reconceptualizes the motivation of global solidarity in order to factor in the desirability of moral character change. This dissertation argues for the importance of structural evaluations that include attentiveness to the difference between robust participatory ownership and the expressional sense of participatory ownership experienced by CIGS founders and volunteers. This dissertation generates a more inclusive definition of CIGS that de-essentializes the distinction between the global North and global South, in addition to emphasizing the role of decolonial, feminist reflexivity in projects of self-construction.

I look forward to continuing the conversation.

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Appendices:

Article I

Reason-based Deference or Ethnocentric Inclusivity? Avery Kolers, Richard Rorty, and the Motivational Force of Global Solidarity
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Article II

Localizing Global Solidarity: Humanitarian Aid in Lesvos
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Book Chapter I

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Article III

Whose Solidarity? Liberal Irony and Feminist Activism
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Reason-based deference or ethnocentric inclusivity? Avery Kolers, Richard Rorty, and the motivational force of global solidarity

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Reason-based deference or ethnocentric inclusivity? Avery Kolers, Richard Rorty, and the motivational force of global solidarity

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ABSTRACT

This article uses what Patti Tamara Lenard refers to as the cosmopolitan problem of motivation to discuss the roles of loyalty in two philosophical accounts of global solidarity. Avery Kolers' Kantian, deontological approach to solidarity as reason-based deference is contrasted with Richard Rorty's controversial, anti-Kantian description of solidarity as ethnocentric inclusivity generated through sentimental education. This article offers critical reflections on the work of these two influential thinkers and combines elements of their theories to contribute a limited but useful response to Lenard's concerns regarding loyalty and the motivation of global solidarity.

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Global solidarity; loyalty; justice; sentimental education; motivation

1. Global solidarity: what's my motivation?

In 'What is solidaristic about global solidarity?' Patti Tamara Lenard argues that, while local solidarity can be convincingly described as motivated by loyalty, 'scholars of global solidarity must offer an account of what replaces the motivational force of loyalty at the global level' (2010, 107). This is no easy task, as any global-level alternative must be able to compete with loyalty when global justice is at cross purposes with local interests. Lenard argues that both sentiment-based strategies that offer empathy and interconnection as sources of motivation for global solidarity, and justice-based strategies that appeal to duties invoked by causal responsibility for global injustices, (1) pay insufficient attention to loyalty and (2) invoke commitments that are too thin to compete with local solidarity (2010, 106).

Lenard's critiques of sentiment-based and justice-based approaches are useful in framing Richard Rorty's arguments that the most efficient strategy for increasing global solidarity lies in sentimental education (1998, 3:180) and Avery Kolers' arguments for a deontological link between solidarity and justice that contributes to the fulfillment of duties owed to the victims of structural inequity (2016, 119). Both their positions at opposing extremes of the sentiment-justice spectrum and their shared focus on the role of

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loyalty offer compelling reasons to bring these specific thinkers together in responding to Lenard's concerns.

While acknowledging that a full-fledged solution to the cosmopolitan problem of motivation is beyond the scope of this paper, comparing two theories of global solidarity that are hardly silent on questions of loyalty will offer additional nuance to the ongoing discussions connecting motivation, loyalty, solidarity, and cosmopolitanism (Gould 2020; Beckstein 2020; Hobbs 2020). To this end, I argue that there are surprising and informative parallels that can be drawn between Rorty and Kolers' respective strategies for motivating global solidarity. The primary contribution of this paper lies in evaluating and combining elements from the work of both thinkers in order to suggest a limited response to Lenard's cosmopolitan problem of motivation.

As definitional variation has characterized solidarity scholarship (Bauder & Juffs 2020, 15; Scholz 2015, 725), the core terms involved in Lenard's challenge must be operationalized. In the context of this paper, *local solidarity* will refer to commitments to promote the interests of one's existing in-groups, while *global solidarity* will refer to commitments to deemphasize existing loyalties and promote the interests of distant out-groups. Such definitions must be reconsidered in different contexts, and the very choice to distinguish between local and global solidarity or between in-groups and out-groups has been problematized (Anderl 2022, 13; Scholz 2015, 731). The specific definitions offered here are partly inspired by empirical research on the localization of humanitarian aid in the context of the so-called 'refugee crisis' in Greece (Shults, Haaland, and Wallevik 2021). While acknowledging that these operationalizations are limited and contestable, I argue that the proposed definitions allow for a productive application of moral and political philosophy to Lenard's concerns.

Conceptualizing the difference between local solidarity and global solidarity in terms of loyalty, identification, and group-membership requires that the relevant senses of *distance* be determined contextually and not necessarily geographically. Durante argues that the thoroughgoing, transformative effects of globalization mean that 'we can no longer continue to think of ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic groups as being localized to particular regions of the world' (2014, 315). For this reason, efforts to account for both local and global solidarity must make room for loyalties and identifications built on a 'de-localized perspectival proximity', understood through 'commonalities and dissimilarities amongst ways of life and the beliefs, values and practices they entail' (Durante 2014, 316). An emphasis on perspectival proximity suggests that group membership is partially based on 'thick lifeworld solidarity' (Pensky 2009, 100), the ability to collectively engage specific ethical worlds. Perspectival differences regarding moral intuitions, values, and strategies for addressing global injustice are a core part of what makes committing to global solidarity demanding. Therefore, one goal of this article is to critically evaluate the abilities of two competing theories of solidarity to address Lenard's challenge of formulating a global-level, motivational replacement for loyalty that might plausibly lead to the prioritization of global solidarity over local solidarity, despite these perspectival differences.

Importantly, global solidarity is understood here as motivating context-based prioritizations of the interests of distant others, and should not be understood as synonymous with human solidarity—a distinction that has a profound impact on what it means to find a motivation that can *replace* loyalty at the global level. I argue that neither Kolers nor

Rorty should be interpreted as championing a human solidarity that can simultaneously encompass every member of the species. However, if replacing loyalty at a global level means identifying conditions under which the needs of distant out-groups can be prioritized over the needs of established in-groups, both accounts of global solidarity have conceptual resources to contribute.

2. Avery Kolers and reason-based deference

This section will analyze Kolers' treatment of solidarity, understood here as an example of what Lenard refers to as a justice-based approach to global solidarity. Lenard describes justice-based accounts as occupying a roughly Kantian position and emphasizing duties generated by our causal implication in the systems that lead to global injustices. According to Lenard, justice-based strategies often begin with the assumptions that certain cosmopolitan duties of justice exist, that these duties are widely accepted as rational, and that being implicated in injustice can provide a strong enough motivation to engage in global solidarity. Central influences on such accounts include Thomas Pogge's arguments that the global poor are being actively impoverished by our participation in institutions that lead to the conditions for such poverty (2008, 201), as well as Andrew Dobson's suggestion that emphasizing direct causal responsibility can shift the motivation of global solidarity away from charity and towards concrete responsibilities (2006, 172). Despite the skepticism of justice-based accounts towards a sentimental emphasis of specific affective bonds, there remains room for important emotions such as shame and guilt (Linklater 2007, 44), and potentially anger (Hobbs 2020, 59). However, in justice-based accounts these emotional dispositions are not the sources of motivation for global solidarity, but rather tools that can accentuate the moral duties that accompany a privileged position within an unjust global order.

Kolers' treatment of solidarity shares this structural emphasis on the duties of those at the top of existing social hierarchies to act in solidarity with those at the bottom. Solidarity is explored through the lens of 'joiners', those who choose to side with oppressed out-groups, or 'callers', rather than prioritizing loyalty or self-interest. Kolers is particularly concerned with privileged liberals who fail to join in global solidarity, comparing them to the white moderates that Martin Luther King Jr. rebuked for sympathizing with their black compatriots, but nevertheless maintaining the status quo (2016, 1). This comparison is used to portray potential joiners as understandably, but inexcusably, overwhelmed to the point of inaction. With access to substantial amounts of apparently reliable information on both sides of most politically charged issues, Kolers argues that 'it seems to be a condition of sanity in the modern world to be able to ignore a huge amount of everyday suffering' (2014, 423).

The role of Kolersian solidarity is to provide 'a centripetal duty not to sit on the sidelines' (2012, 1), a compelling reason for privileged liberals to relinquish their privilege and shift the status quo. While Kolers does not conceptualize solidarity using a distinction between the local and the global, the goal of his moral theory of solidarity is distinctively global, as defined in this paper— counteracting existing loyalties and motivating political action on others' terms. This characterization of Kolersian solidarity as 'global' is not an attempt to discount the fact that Kolers addresses 'local' examples, such as the dynamics of solidarity in environmental justice activism in Louisville, Kentucky (2018). However, the role he lays out for solidarity remains global by continuously emphasizing the need for privileged joiners to overcome the perspectival distance between themselves and those that have been rendered out-groups through marginalization and structural inequity. As such, Kolers' theory offers a clear attempt to answer Lenard's challenge by accounting for a version of global solidarity that can compete with loyalty and local solidarity.

Kolers' aims to adjust the dominant moral intuitions of privileged, liberal, potential joiners. He argues that 'liberals tend to be reluctant to amplify our duties much beyond what social conventions expect of us. Still less do they hold us accountable in any way for failing to be motivated to act on amplified duties' (2016, 37). Kolers suggests that the difficulty in expanding accountability beyond the realm of local conventions stems from an overreliance on conscience in liberal culture. He presents conscience as a form of moral reasoning that aims at rationality and consistency but relies heavily on individual judgment. When global and local concerns are at odds, conscience defaults to interpreting one's moral circumstances in ways that support one's own interests and intuitions.

While conscience can produce criticisms of one's own in-groups and lead to internal reforms under stable conditions, Kolers claims that when one's in-groups are threatened by the conflicting interests of out-groups, 'conscience is likely to be too bound by conventional norms and limitations on our ability to appreciate the perspective and plight of others. And more dangerous still, conscience is likely to depoliticize all these issues' (2016, 37). Appealing to conscience leads to such depoliticization by legitimizing deliberation that is based on subjective opinions for which individuals are not held accountable. As the evaluations provided by conscience are based on private criteria, relying on such evaluations in politically charged situations risks parochialism, partisanship, and prejudice. Kolers therefore criticizes liberal confidence in individual conscience, suggesting that this leads to what he describes as a teleological link between justice and solidarity—where the joiner is tasked with the responsibility of *aiming at justice*.

Kolers interprets this teleological link as problematic for two reasons. First, Kolers denies that individual agents are capable of consistently making unbiased judgments as to which ends are just, or which causes will lead to those ends. Even if individual moral deliberations involve appealing to outside sources or expert knowledge, this does not remove the depoliticizing influence of conscience. Potential joiners have access to multiple sources and experts whose opinions can suggest radically different forms of political action. Second, conceptualizing solidarity as teleologically *aiming at justice* allows privileged individuals to choose their own terms of participation— to independently determine which causes aim at justice and then join with groups they agree with.

Although he uses the term 'teleological solidarity' at times, this type of support does not truly qualify as solidarity for Kolers. Teleological solidarity is entirely compatible with what I have called local solidarity that works to solidify or improve the current standing of one's in-groups and it does not necessarily contribute to the motivation of global solidarity. Put in terms of Lenard's challenge, Kolers argues that any cosmopolitan duty that tasks individual joiners with teleologically aiming at justice will fail to generate sustainable motivation for global solidarity because individual conceptions of just ends include defaults towards existing, local solidarities. In the absence of a strong sense of individual-level accountability that would motivate those privileged by existing social hierarchies to deprioritize their own moral sensibilities, efforts towards global justice can too easily become aligned with individual interests and local loyalties. While teleological solidarity can still be understood as an instance of what Lenard refers to as justice-based solidarity, it is unsuccessful when attempting to connect to *global* justice. Kolers concludes that 'teleological solidarity travels with conscience, and it is conscience that drives the bus' (2016, 37).

As an alternative, Kolers offers a deontological link between justice and solidarity that attempts to mitigate the appeal of defaulting to local commitments when the path to global solidarity seems daunting or unclear. This deontological link promotes *treating others justly,* rather than teleologically *aiming at justice,* and offers a less individualistic conception of autonomy based on deference and agonism. Kolers describes solidarity as deferential when it requires joiners to act on the moral judgment of callers and he describes solidarity as agonistic when the obligations that joiners accept when answering the call to solidarity are such that 'the question *which side are you on* is prior to the question *what is the right thing to do*' (2016, 73). Kolers thereby emphasizes the political act of choosing sides over individualistic and consequentialist evaluations of which groups are properly aiming at justice. Deference to the moral judgments and strategies of callers demonstrates that joiners take seriously the agency and thick lifeworld solidarities of those disadvantaged by the status quo, rather than holding callers to the standards that are implicit in the social systems that disadvantaged them to begin with.

Kolers formalizes the motivation for choosing sides in deferential solidarity as subject *S* supporting the group *G* that is selected by reason *r*. He claims, 'Individualism, including that involved in acting in unison, is siding with what *S* believes; loyalty is siding with what *G* believes; and solidarity is siding with what *r* requires' (2012, 379). Importantly, Kolers connects siding with *S* or *G* to *belief* and casts siding with *r* as meeting a *requirement*. On this model, if *S* sides with *G* based on *S*'s own beliefs and interests, then *S* is acting on conscience and the support does not qualify as solidarity. If *S* sides with *G* because of a pre-existing loyalty to *G*, then *S*'s individual biases continue to play a role. As neither *S*'s moral intuitions nor *S*'s established loyalties can form an impartial background, Kolers advocates *reason-based*, deferential solidarity in which reason *r* determines which side to choose.

The requirement that deference be reason-based is where Kolers most clearly uses loyalty to outline a distinct role for global solidarity. Loyalty can involve deference to a group's interests, but 'in contrast with loyalty, solidarity is agent neutral in the sense that we take sides based on general reason *r* that applies to everyone, rather than a particular relationship between agent and object' (2016, 50). Kolers argues that agent neutral, reason-based deference should act on a 'progressive' *r*—one that commits *S* to side with whichever *G* is least well-off within a given social structure (2005, 157). His interpretation of 'least well-off' stems from his deontological link between justice and solidarity that focuses on *treating others justly*. Kolers portrays this just treatment as partially addressing a duty of equity, writing:

> Inequity occurs when an institution fails to give persons their due regard as equal citizens, or denies them a fair hearing … [and] the principal means of acting on a duty of equity is by hearing, and listening to, others who have suffered inequity, and taking their side. (2014, 130–31)

To summarize, Kolers argues that due to the near constant exposure of potential joiners to conflicting accounts of complex, morally and politically charged situations, teleological approaches to solidarity will be ineffective as motivators and will encourage appeals to conscience that often work to maintain the status quo. In terms of Lenard's challenge to address the cosmopolitan problem of motivation, Kolers suggests that teleologically motivated attempts to replace loyalty with global solidarity will collapse into self-interest or local solidarity under pressure. Kolers' solution is a progressive, reason-based solidarity that aims to override individual conscience by committing those privileged by a given social structure to both join the side of the callers most victimized by structural inequity and to defer to the callers' strategy for correcting the imbalance. Kolers classifies equity as an ultimate value and casts deferential solidarity as a perfect Kantian duty, whereby joining in solidarity represents an important facet of the equitable treatment of callers and is nonvoluntary (2016, 119).

3. The dilemma of deference and the moral compass objection

Having mapped the broad strokes of Kolers' theory of solidarity, I will offer an initial set of critiques that centers around the use of subject *S*, group *G*, and reason *r* to formalize solidarity relations and emphasize the act of choosing sides. While Kolers acknowledges that *S* uses *r* to determine which side to join, the language he uses to describe the role of *r* is potentially problematic. In claiming that *r selects* the appropriate object of solidarity (2016, 63) or that *r requires S* to make a specific commitment to the least well-off (2014, 428), Kolers distances *r* from *S* and then shifts the burden of agency over to *r*. While using *r* to alleviate the pressure of teleologically *aiming at justice* may make global solidarity appear less overwhelming to potential joiners, this does not diminish the fact that *S* is active in determining the application of *r*. Kolers accurately diagnoses reason-based deference as 'least promising from a moral standpoint [when] the referent of the term "worst-off" is unclear' (2005, 167–68). It follows that *r* does not do any independent work *selecting* which *G* is worst-off or *requiring S* to commit to a specific group. As Scholz argues, 'perceptions of injustice and oppression cannot help but be affected by long-standing communal norms' (2008, 35).

The formal separation of *S* and *r* risks ignoring the local standards that influence *S*'s evaluation of structural inequities. In addition, by pulling *r* out of *S* in an attempt to create a non-conscientious reason to side with *G*, Kolers leaves us with an anemic and hypostatized version of *S*. He presumably presents *S* in this way to capture and argue against the problematic and overly individualistic nature of choosing sides based solely on conscience. However, equating 'what *S* believes' with the ostensibly unified voice of conscientious self-interest fails to capture both the inevitably contradictory nature of the beliefs that accompany *S*'s various commitments and *S*'s potential to overcome conscience by means other than reason-based deference.

A similar problem arises with the hypostatization and homogenization of *G*. As Marin argues, 'In an oppressed group, there are always different voices raising different issues and having different interests. Treating the group's interests as unified marginalizes the group's most vulnerable' (2018, 803). If Kolersian solidarity is predicated on *S*'s ability to defer to *G*'s moral judgment, the potential for a reductionistic interpretation of *G*'s agenda must be taken seriously. While Kolers acknowledges this, his Kantian commitment to circumnavigating individual bias still leads him to, at times, reduce the process of choosing sides to interactions between three variables. This invites interpretations of *S* and *G* as having stable, unified voices and oversimplifies the complex processes of identity formation and intra-group politics. I agree with Jenkins' assessment that this simplification of the moral situation of joiners offers 'a somewhat unrealistic view of how loyalty and identification usually motivate solidarity' (2021, 579).

The separation of *S* and *r* is made to seem inevitable through Kolers' equation of the variables *S*, *G*, and *r* with alternative motivations for choosing sides—individualism, loyalty, and solidarity, respectively. Siding in solidarity is represented as '*r* binds *S* to *G*' (2016, 45), where a progressive *r* determines which *G* merits deference from *S*. If one formalizes the other two motivations in this way, one arrives at '*S* binds *S* to *G*' in the case of individualism. In the case of loyalty, one arrives at either '*G* binds *S* to *G*' or, more probably, a second instance of '*S* binds *S* to *G*' as the normative force at work when *S* chooses to side with *G* due to loyalty is *S*'s own valuation of the preexisting relationship between *S* and *G*. I argue that Kolers' '*r* binds *S* to *G*' should be recast as a third instance of '*S* binds *S* to *G*' as *S* is actively determining how and when *r* can be appropriately applied.

To be clear, I am arguing for a greater emphasis on the role of subject *S* in conceptualizing the act of choosing sides, where Kolers focuses his attention, and not throughout processes such as building trust or engaging in collective political action. By emphasizing the act of choosing sides and equating siding with *S*, siding with *G*, and siding with *r* at the level of strategy, Kolers tempts the reader to also equate *S*, *G*, and *r* as sources of agency. At times, *r* is presented as acting upon a moral situation, in order to yield a structural, agent neutral reason for siding with *G*. However, recognizing that *r* has no agency apart from *S* means that conscience is still present in every actual case of reason-based, deferential solidarity. Lenard's challenge appears unanswered, as it remains unclear under what conditions subjects might prioritize the motivational force of a duty of equity over the motivational force of, for example, loyalty.

Kolers acknowledges the pervasive threat of conscience to his conceptualization of solidarity, writing:

> If we defer only after making a substantive moral judgment to the effect that the cause is *just*, then deference is merely a shallow sheen over autonomous moral judgment, and conscience has come in through the back door. Yet if conscience does not play this role, we seem to need a nonmoral reason to defer, which makes it hard to see how there could be a moral theory of solidarity at all. This is the dilemma of deference. (2016, 92)

In addition, Kolers admits that 'some amount of individual initiative in identifying who is affected by a given phenomenon is inevitable' (2016, 110) and accepts that 'within the parameters set by equity … our own best conscientious judgment may be our guide' (2016, 132). How then are we to make sense of Kolers' claim that the limits of conscience can be overcome by reason-based deference?

One interpretation is that, although individual conscience and loyalty cannot be neutralized by reason-based deference, Kolers holds onto his model of choosing sides as a motivational tool for making joining appear less overwhelming to privileged liberals and as a conceptual tool for expanding political agency to include deference. On this reading, even if Kolers fails to establish a completely nonmoral reason to defer, his Kantian goals might still represent and appropriate ideal that could inform attempts at moral and political progress—what Gould refers to as a 'limit notion' (2014, 109). This interpretation echoes van den Anker's argument that there is an 'important role for holding out what justice requires even if there is currently not the motivation to put it into practice' (2016, 51). However, in the context of the task at hand, this interpretation seems to reinforce Lenard's concern that theories of global solidarity are more interested in conceptually detailing the requirements of ideal justice than in offering functional replacements for the motivational force of loyalty.

A second interpretation is that Kolers believes that the dilemma of deference arises exclusively in response to justice-oriented substantive moral judgments that are *teleologically* aimed at bringing about justice. If this is the case, one can interpret his argument that 'equity goes beyond justice and has a resolution that is more precise than that of justice' (2016, 133)—this resolution being reason-based, deferential solidarity—in combination with his acceptance of a version of conscience that exists *within the parameters set by equity,* as breaking the teleological link between solidarity and justice in a way that resolves the dilemma of deference. In other words, Kolers could be arguing that a deontological link between justice and solidarity can motivate the equitable *treatment* of callers despite the inevitable influence of conscience on individual interpretations of what constitutes *aiming* at justice.

This second interpretation fares better than the first in offering a practical, global-level replacement for the motivational force of local loyalties. To an extent, this reading of Kolers mirrors Lenard's concerns about the motivational gaps in existing theories of global solidarity by describing one benefit of deontological solidarity as providing 'a normative foundation to a wide range of arguments that have tried to articulate solidarity without showing whether or why calls for solidarity are morally compelling' (Kolers 2016, 119). On this interpretation, Kolers attempts to create conceptual room for ideals of equity, while presenting reason-based deference as 'equity for everyday life' (2016, 119). Still, it is unclear whether the motivation to commit to equity in everyday life can stand up to the everyday commitments represented by loyalty.

Kolers' most convincing argument for a motivational replacement for loyalty comes in a rebuttal of what he calls 'the moral compass objection', the potential protest that deferential solidarity destroys an agent's understanding of right and wrong by committing her to supporting actions she finds immoral. Kolers argues that this concern:

> … rests on the groundless assumption that the compass is calibrated correctly before the agent undertakes solidary action … . Why privilege the way we are prior to engagement, rather than the way engagement will make us? Whether this change—this recalibration—is good or bad depends not on the mere fact of recalibration, but on an *independent moral argument*. Such an argument would offer compelling moral meta-principles, the content of which obviously cannot be given by our commonsense moral convictions prior to solidary action. To the contrary, one valuable meta-principle of moral character change is solidarity itself. (2005, 169–70)

If rejecting the moral compass objection is read as an attempt to convince those privileged by the status quo to be skeptical of their own conscience and to consider the potential value of recalibrating their moral intuitions by engaging in reason-based deference, *the appeal of moral character change* offers motivation for global solidarity. While Kolers' emphasis on supporting the least well-off clearly demonstrates that he connects the motivation of global solidarity to achieving structural equity as well, I agree with

Lenard that the abstract nature of this latter motivation is too thin to compete with loyalty in everyday life.

If one accepts that potential joiners are implicated in conditions of global inequity, that at an abstract level many accept that this commits them to certain cosmopolitan duties, and one also agrees with Kolers that there is a collective failure to hold individual agents accountable for these duties, then Kolers' skepticism about the moral intuitions of liberal culture appears justified. If one concludes that one's moral compass is not properly calibrated, this can offer the motivation to defer to the interests of distant out-groups. Global solidarity can be motivated through a recognition that 'self-reliant agency is not the only, or often even the best, way to be an autonomous person' (Kolers 2005, 160). Scholz has argued along similar lines that 'solidarity need not be contrary to autonomy, but it is contrary to individualism' (2008, 19).

The value of Kolers' theory lies in his attention to the structural nature of global inequities, the pitfalls of an overly individualistic approach to autonomous moral action, and the need for global solidarity projects to avoid reproducing colonialism and paternalism. A focus on the structural nature of inequity reminds potential joiners that they are heavily influenced by social systems and that if those empowered by these systems continue to default to their moral intuitions, the current status quo will likely remain intact. Kolers' arguments against individualistic conceptions of autonomy, and his connected rejection of a teleological link between solidarity and justice, present global solidarity as more manageable for overwhelmed potential joiners— minimizing the likelihood of defaults to conscience and the status quo. Finally, to guard against the potential for attempts at global solidarity to reproduce the hierarchies that lead to the inequitable treatment of callers, Kolers encourages systemically privileged joiners to defer to the moral judgment of the least well-off.

The convincing version of Kolers' argument is that joining in global solidarity, as a political remedy for structural inequities, should not be guided by individual moral judgment, existing loyalties, or a grand ideal of teleological justice— but should instead approach the existing goals and moral standards of disenfranchised groups as viable strategies for social change. The unconvincing version of Kolers' argument is the all too familiar Kantian attempt to keep concepts such as solidarity pure and reason-based, free from the bias of sentiment. I interpret the potentially reductionistic nature of Kolers' model of choosing sides as stemming from this Kantian need to isolate reason *r* and keep self-interest and loyalty from 'sneaking in the back door'. Kolers' earlier work suggests that this Kantian position solidified partly as an attempt to counter Rorty's distinctly anti-Kantian account of solidarity, to which I now turn.

4. Richard Rorty, ethnocentrism, and sentimental education

This section will analyze Rorty's treatment of global solidarity, understood here as an example of what Lenard refers to as a sentiment-based strategy. The acceptance of a central role for sentiment in theories of global solidarity leads to an emphasis on relationships characterized by empathy, cooperation, and horizontality (Gould 2007, 158; 2014, 112). Sentiment-based accounts also emphasize emotional responses to suffering as sources of motivation. For example, both Lu and Rorty argue that an instinctive, averse response to cruelty is central in explaining the affective ties that motivate global solidarity

(Lu 2000, 254; Rorty 1989, 74). Lenard objects that disapproving of cruelty may be enough to generate empathic interest in the affairs of distant out-groups, but that empathy in the absence of shared values is insufficient to motivate duties of justice. She argues that sentimental strategies fail to clearly lay out 'the steps that must be taken from empathy through to motivationally efficacious solidarity' (2010, 107). Again, the challenge lies in accounting for a global-level motivational force on par with loyalty to in-groups with whom one shares perspectival proximity.

While Kolers attempts to deprioritize the importance of shared values by promoting the agent neutral, just treatment of the least well-off, Rortyan solidarity breaks this connection between justice and neutrality. Rorty argues that, 'our sense of solidarity is strongest when those with whom solidarity is expressed are thought of as "one of us," where "us" means something smaller and more local than the human race' (1989, 191). Despite the more local focus, Rortyan solidarity can be global in the sense I have described, by working towards extending the reference of 'one of us' to distant out-groups. Importantly, however, these efforts for greater inclusivity need neither originate from nor aim at neutrality. In contrasting Rorty and Kolers, the central difference is whether global solidarity is motivated by *vertically* rising above existing loyalties through reason-based adherence to the higher-order duty of equity, or *horizontally* widening a range of networked loyalties to make the variety of out-groups that might offer potential candidates for 'one of us' as flexible and inclusive as possible.

Rorty describes this latter, horizontal version of moral progress towards greater solidarity as an increase in the 'ability to see more and more traditional differences (*of tribe, religion, race, customs, and the like*) as unimportant … the ability to think of people wildly different from ourselves as included in the range of "us"' (1989, 192). This connection between solidarity and a sense of 'us' shows the central role that loyalty and identification play for Rorty. The centrality of these attitudes makes solidarity relevant to both evolving local commitments to those one already identifies with and global efforts to extend one's loyalty to distant others. Rorty, argues that the prioritization of thinner commitments over thicker commitments can be accounted for as a product of intersecting and competing loyalties, writing:

> When, for example, the families confederate into tribes, or the tribes into nations, you may feel obliged to do what does not come naturally: to leave your parents in the lurch by going off to fight in the wars, or to rule against your own village in your capacity as a federal administrator or judge. What Kant would describe as the resulting conflict between moral obligation and sentiment, is, on a non-Kantian account of the matter, a conflict between one set of loyalties and another set of loyalties. (2007, 45)

A Kolersian analysis might explain the judge in this passage as choosing to side against the interests of her village using agent neutral reasoning that allows her to rise above loyalty and fulfill a higher-order obligation to equity or justice. However, by rejecting the notion that justice has its origins in reason while loyalty has its origins in sentiment, a Rortyan approach can contrast the judge's commitments to her village, to her country, to the integrity of her profession, or to the law, while keeping all of these commitments at the level of loyalties. On this horizontal model of choosing sides, appealing to the judge's sense of justice or to a duty of equity would equate to arguing that a more inclusive, and in this sense 'larger', loyalty should take precedence over a less inclusive loyalty. The idea of a *global* orientation for solidarity thus becomes a function of context-based inclusivity rather than neutrality.

At first glance, a Rortyan response to Lenard's call for a global-level motivational replacement for loyalty, appears to offer productive disharmonies between expanding, networked loyalties. However, this does little to address Lenard's concern that more inclusive commitments are too thin to overcome the motivational force of less inclusive loyalties. Even if one joins Rorty in seeing appeals to duties of justice as appeals to larger loyalties, whether or not such appeals offer sufficient motivational force will depend on evaluations of contextual factors that seem to be subject to defaults towards smaller or less inclusive loyalties.

Rorty accounts for these defaults in his claim that all evaluations of contextual factors are necessarily produced from ethnocentric positions— where 'to be ethnocentric is to divide the human race into the people to whom one must justify one's beliefs and the others' (1991, 30). This ethnocentrism is a product of subjects being situated in specific socio-historical contexts and developing moral identities by engaging the belief systems that are prevalent in those contexts. Ongoing deliberations that attempt to establish moral accountability necessarily interact with the moral systems that have already come to seem intuitively right to an individual. For Rorty, these moral systems are largely inherited from—and negotiated through—the communities one identifies with, meaning 'the group or groups to which one cannot be disloyal and still like oneself' (2007, 45). While perhaps overly individualistic, acknowledging a degree of ethnocentrism can be appropriate if moral deliberation is seen as a matter of measuring novel or emerging interpretations of the extent of one's moral obligations against previously established standards, rather than measuring both against nonvoluntary duties.

If moral obligations are context-specific and ethnocentric, then Rorty is right that the desire to 'substitute "method" for deliberation between alternative results is just wishful thinking' (1982, 164). I read Kolers' attempted substitution of *r* for individual deliberative judgment about choosing sides as an example of this wishful thinking. While Kolers is right to argue that self-reliant agency is not always the ideal form of autonomy, his reason-based alternative encounters a version of the same problem that he points to in his own critique of individualistic autonomy— namely that '[t]he neutral background does not exist which would make this sort of autonomy attainable in real life' (2012, 374). In other words, while relying on the ability of individual joiners to determine whether or not the strategies of suffering callers are teleologically aimed at justice is a problematic basis for global solidarity, neutrality is not the appropriate measure of a successful alternative. It is not clear how tasking potential joiners with a responsibility to side with the least well-off creates a more neutral background than tasking them with a responsibility to side with those aiming at justice. While expanding autonomy to include deference has merit, grounding deference in non-conscientious agent-neutrality is untenable as the reference of *r* is always determined by a specific, situated *S*.

If *r* is not agent neutral, but rather one of many commitments that a subject could use to justify choosing a side; one is left without what Rorty called 'a skyhook which lifts us out of mere coherence', the search for which he characterized as 'an unfortunate attempt to carry a religious view of the world into an increasingly secular culture' (1991, 38–39). Rorty's horizontal, or skyhook-free, alternative is best summarized by his claim that:

> We cannot resolve conflicting loyalties by turning away from them all toward something categorically distinct from loyalty—the universal moral obligation to act justly. So we have to drop the Kantian idea that the moral law starts off pure but is always in danger of being contaminated by irrational feelings that introduce arbitrary discriminations among persons … [T]he so-called moral law is, at best, a handy abbreviation for a concrete web of social practices. (2007, 47)

The Kantian project rejected here bears an obvious resemblance to Kolers' moral theory of solidarity. Presumably, Kolers' primary objection to an acceptance of ethnocentrism and morality as social practice would echo van den Anker's claim that 'the strongest versions of cultural relativism lead to political inaction and therefore run the risk of perpetuating the status quo instead of challenging power relations' (2016, 43). If our highest moral recourse is to the coherence of a certain web of social practices, what motivational resources could possibly be available to encourage solidarity with those whose political goals threaten the social order upon which those practices are based?

Rorty argues that 'the liberal culture of recent times has found a strategy for avoiding the disadvantage of ethnocentrism. This is to be open to encounters with other actual and possible cultures, and to make this openness central to its self-image' (1991, 1:2). In other words, if ethnocentrism is unavoidable, then the remedy for political inaction and disinterest in the standards and values of distant out-groups is a reflexive skepticism towards one's own ethnocentric position. Rorty finds hope in the 'ethnocentrism of a "we" ("we liberals") which is dedicated to enlarging itself … It is the "we" of the people who have been brought up to distrust ethnocentrism' (1989, 198).

Rorty contends that the commitment of liberal culture to global solidarity as ethnocentric inclusivity is produced through sentimental education. Rather than emphasizing universal moral obligation, sentimental education fosters:

> … the self-doubt which has gradually, over the last few centuries, been inculcated into the inhabitants of the democratic states—doubt about their own sensitivity to the pain and humiliation of others, doubt that present institutional arrangements are adequate to deal with this pain and humiliation, [and] curiosity about possible alternatives (1989, 198).

This doubt increases the likelihood that individuals question their own 'common sense', understood by Rorty as a confidence that all relevant aspects of moral and political contexts can be captured by applying the language and standards of one's existing in-groups. Rorty suggests that sentimental education can promote openness towards out-groups over defaults to common sense in certain contexts, but specifies that the possibility and efficacy of this strategy is unique to groups that enjoy a high degree of existential security, writing 'sentimental education works only on people who can relax long enough to listen' (1998, 3:180).

This interpretation of Rorty offers steps from empathy to solidarity, if only for a limited set of cases. The cultivation of empathy and sensitivity to suffering among existentially secure liberals within a community that valorizes 'the continual refreshment and re-creation of the self, through interaction with selves as unlike oneself as possible' (1998, 3:183) can lead to motivationally efficacious global solidarity, even if the motivation for this solidarity is produced through a shared, local distrust of ethnocentrism. Thus, while I agree with Lenard that empathy in the absence of shared values is not a sustainable source of motivation, the groups that empathy is directed towards and the source of the shared, motivating values need not be coextensive. The logic of this distinction parallels Lenard's own claim that 'cosmopolitanism relies on the motivational resources generated by nationalism' (2010, 347). The next section addresses the resemblance between this Rortyan response to Lenard and the interpretation of Kolers' project developed in section three.

5. Between equity and ethnocentrism

Despite their substantial differences, I argue that two similarities between the two theories discussed thus far can suggest a productive middle ground between justice-based and sentiment-based strategies and provide a response to Lenard's challenge. The first similarity is the use of existentially secure liberals as a principal case for exploring the motivation of global solidarity. On the one hand, Kolers and Rorty are anything but similar in terms of their evaluations of liberal values. Kolers connects the liberal tradition to an excessive commitment to self-reliant agency and aims to weaken that commitment, while Rorty praises liberal culture's sensitivity to suffering and aims to expand that sensitivity through sentimental education. On the other hand, their mutual emphasis of the moral situation of privileged liberals implies a shared presupposition—the context in which one can most reasonably expect an individual to prioritize the interests of distant out-groups is one in which that individuals' basic needs are already largely met. European research on the positive correlation between the presence of welfare systems that provide social safety-nets and attitudes of solidarity towards refugees and forced migrants can offer one context in which this assumption seems warranted (Koos and Seibel 2019, 723).

This first similarity is relevant in explaining the second—a shared skepticism towards inherited moral intuitions and a suggestion that altering these intuitions by engaging the perspectives of distant others is key to the potential for moral progress offered by global solidarity. There is a clear resemblance between Kolers' attempt to motivate deference in the hopes of recalibrating liberal conscience and Rorty's attempt to motivate sentimental education in the hopes of challenging and contextualizing liberal common sense. I interpret both theories as offering *the desirability of moral character change* as a motivator of global solidarity, and I interpret this overlap as a consequence of a shared focus on the perspective of privileged liberals.

If moral theories are to have practical relevance, then answering broad challenges using specific contexts is an entirely acceptable, if not inevitable, strategy. While the perspective of existentially secure liberals should not be overemphasized on the global scene, Lenard's own connection of belief in cosmopolitan duties to 'a certain subset of the educated elite' (2010, 346) suggests that this perspective offers a fruitful starting point. If the cosmopolitan problem of motivation can be answered within this more limited context, Lenard's challenge to account for what replaces the motivational force of loyalty at the global level becomes significantly more manageable. If 'account for what replaces loyalty at a global level' means 'offer clear steps to a cosmopolitan world order in which global solidarity does the work currently done by local solidarity', then Lenard is right that both justice-based and sentiment-based strategies fall short. However, if 'account for what replaces loyalty at a global level' means 'offer conditions under which individuals might plausibly be motivated to prioritize the interests of distant out-groups', then the desirability of moral character change should not be discounted as a motivator.

Considerations of the appeal of moral character change as a motivator will benefit from Kolers' reminder that, in the absence of a structural focus and a politically oriented commitment to defer to the moral judgment of callers, attempts at moral character change will fail to shift the status quo. In other words, sentimental education, on its own, will not lead to global equity. However, I agree with Scholz that "we must be careful not to ascribe undue weight to rational decision-making within political solidarity" (2008, 72). I have argued that overemphasizing the act of siding gives *r* an inappropriately large role and pushes joiners to constantly reevaluate the structural position of *G*. The emotional distance required to make continuous, agent neutral reevaluations of complex situations leaves the notion of *joining* in solidarity superficial at best, and impossible at worst.

An appreciation of Rortyan ethnocentrism can provide balance to considerations of a motivating desire for moral character change by allowing for an inclusive global solidarity —and even a form of progressive deference—that might be based on values exclusively shared by smaller groups. This understanding of ethnocentrism is based on an interpretation of Rorty as aiming at inclusive global solidarity without basing this inclusivity on standards that might someday be held by humanity as a whole. Importantly, this interpretation is controversial among influential scholars of global solidarity. For example, Gould reads Rorty as rejecting the possibility of human solidarity (2014, 109), while Scholz interprets Rorty as working towards a non-essentialist human solidarity by addressing 'one difference at a time' (2015, 730). I side with Gould on this issue, although Scholz' interpretation is understandable considering that Rorty does at times use the phrase 'human solidarity' (1989, XIV & 192). However, I argue that when Rorty invokes 'human solidarity' he is invoking a specific piece of motivational rhetoric that he wants to disconnect from its philosophical presuppositions and instead connect to 'the moral and political vocabularies typical of the secularized democratic societies of the West' (1989, 192).

To the extent that human solidarity is a useful term from a Rortyan perspective, it is a culturally specific rhetorical device employed from an ethnocentric position in the hopes of inspiring existentially secure liberals to contextually prioritize the needs of wildly different others. Once ethnocentrism is acknowledged, it is easier to see global solidarity as a normative force that aims to contextually recalibrate conscience rather than overcoming it with any finality. Kolers' rejection of the moral compass objection is his most convincing response to the dilemma of deference precisely because the metaphor of continuously recalibrating moral intuitions best acknowledges the inevitability of conscience that he seems to resist elsewhere. While I have argued against the suggestion that progressive deference might provide a skyhook that could lift individual moral deliberation out of the mires of conflicting loyalties, a non-Kantian focus on deference offers a more reliable tool than Rorty's ethnocentric inclusivity in terms of balancing self-transformation and social justice. If de-coupled from Kant, Kolers' theory can inform non-idealized instances of contextual risk analysis and moral deliberation. Non-Kantian progressive deference can be offered as a counterweight to the imbalances of ethnocentrism— recalibrating liberal intuitions about political agency and increasing the sensitivity of potential joiners to structural inequities. Once motivation is in place, Kolers offers a clearer, more practical account of how to take callers seriously and on their own terms.

Contextually balancing an attention to equity and an acknowledgement of ethnocentrism, can produce a middle ground for future discussions between sentiment-based and reason-based strategies for motivating global solidarity. Versions of both strategies suggest that combining existential security or systemic privilege with awareness of global inequity and suffering can create a reflexive doubt about one's common-sense moral convictions, which can in turn motivate solidarity with distant out-groups on their own terms. Kolers adds the duty of equity as a motivator and Rorty adds sensitivity to narratives of suffering. Lenard's critiques convincingly call the sustainability of these added motivators into doubt, at least when they are set in direct competition with local loyalty. However, if global solidarity can originate unidirectionally from a secure structural position, aspirations of self-transformation and moral development offer compelling motivational resources to potential joiners.

While emphasizing that the motivation of joiners is problematic in certain contexts (Shults, Haaland, and Wallevik 2021), research into the motivation of volunteering and humanitarian aid provides one example of an arena in which self-transformation through the prioritization of the needs of out-groups is prevalent and can be effective (Theodossopoulos 2016, 176; Haaland and Wallevik 2017, 206; Malkki 2015, 3). One can of course ask whether or not such humanitarian projects exemplify global solidarity, which demonstrates the need for new connections between competing concepts of solidarity that engage practical, moral, and political challenges. I argue that such efforts will benefit from engaging the desirability of moral character change as a motivator of global solidarity.

Notes on contributor

Lee Michael Shults is a Ph.D. research fellow in the Department of Global Development Studies and Social Planning at the University of Agder. Current research interests include ethics of solidarity, politics of humanitarian aid, modelling and social simulation, feminist epistemology, and citizen initiatives for global solidarity (CIGS).

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Localizing Global Solidarity: Humanitarian Aid in Lesvos

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The so-called "refugee crisis" in Lesvos, Greece provides a poignant example of situated, local suffering that has called for the coordination of global resources to provide relief. Some of the first to respond were local and international Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity (CIGS). While a growing role for CIGS has been interpreted as a call for more global involvement, arguments for the increased localization of relief efforts suggest the need for aid agents to maintain a reflexive awareness of the potential for an influx of outside assistance to disempower those most affected. We argue that barriers to implementing the localization of humanitarian aid can be better understood by positioning this localization alongside theories of global solidarity. This paper pairs theoretical contributions from the fields of moral and political philosophy with an analysis of interview material gathered in Lesvos between 2015 and 2019. Our goal is to use narratives of conflicting interests in Lesvos to explore conceptual distinctions concerning solidarity and emphasize the importance of the localization of global solidarity in humanitarian aid. We conclude that while global solidarity represents a demanding effort to identify with distant others and provide aid, the intensity and transformative potential of the process of "making the crisis one's own" through solidary engagement can overshadow the importance of local ownership of crisis management.

Keywords: ethics of solidarity, politics of aid, CIGS, refugee "crisis" humanitarianism, Lesvos, local empowerment

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity (CIGS) play a unique role in humanitarian aid, which has been previously explored in the context of Lesvos (Haaland and Wallevik, 2019). These small, unofficial, and unstructured personalized aid projects "pop-up" to meet emergent needs and acute crises (Schulpen and Huyse, 2017, 163). While CIGS are not new, they are becoming increasingly recognized as influential aid actors (Fechter and Schwittay, 2019). Due to their flexible character, CIGS can address unmet needs as service providers or as watchdogs for traditional aid organizations. While some CIGS are short-lived, others maintain a strong presence over time, occasionally evolving into larger NGOs in order to gain access to the resources offered by established humanitarian networks (Oikonomakis, 2018, 72). The abilities of CIGS to adapt and mobilize rapidly have challenged established conceptions of aid governance, project sustainability, and efficiency of resource allocation.

In 2015, CIGS were among the earliest responders to the unexpected arrival of thousands of refugees travelling across the Aegean Sea from Turkey to Lesvos. The geographical position of the island quickly transformed Lesvos into the "epicenter of what is known as the 'European refugee crisis'" (Rozakou, 2017, 102). The island was not prepared to handle a refugee crisis of this scale, especially while simultaneously struggling with the lasting effects of the 2008 financial crisis, high levels of unemployment, and capital controls that had been recently imposed on the Greek banking system. However, despite these challenges, the island community of Lesvos attracted positive international attention for welcoming the refugees with open arms at the start of the crisis (Cantat 2018, 8).

Particularly in the first months of the crisis, local initiatives and international CIGS bore a great deal of responsibility for crisis management, as the mobilization of the more established humanitarian aid "machinery" took time. The absence of established national and international actors at the beginning of the crisis led to a "mistrust of government and institutionalized charity" (Witcher, 2020, 5) among CIGS and other community-based organizations. The anti-hierarchical resistance that many CIGS displayed towards traditional, coordinated crisis management has been interpreted as a critique of holes in the international response to the humanitarian crisis, and as a demand for an increase in "global acts of responsibility and solidarity" that might "enable us to think beyond the management of crisis locally" (Haaland and Wallevik, 2019, 1880). This paper builds on that analysis by connecting aspects of competing theories of global solidarity to efforts towards the localization of humanitarian aid, drawing on empirical data gathered in Lesvos between 2015 and 2019. As such, this article represents an attempt to bridge philosophical approaches to the concept of solidarity and social scientific research on the localization of humanitarian aid and the evolving role of CIGS.

While there may appear to be a prima facie tension between increased *global* solidarity and increased *localization* of aid; existing research on solidarity in Greece has already connected empowerment through locally run, redistributive efforts to the potential of these "bottom-up" initiatives to critique and alter national and international politics (Rakopoulos, 2014; Arampatzi, 2017). While the desirability of local empowerment remains uncontroversial, the type of networked solidarity required to provide aid in times of crisis has an unavoidable global or international element as well. By addressing conceptual distinctions and empirically informed connections between global solidarity and the localization of humanitarian aid, this paper aims to point to informative tensions and productive similarities between these efforts.

The phrases "global solidarity" and "localization of humanitarian aid" share two important traits. First, they have progressive and inclusive connotations, sharing near unanimous support at an abstract level. Second, attempts to implement these broad concepts in practical situations often prove controversial and complicated. We argue that these difficulties stem partially from the fact that the meanings of these terms must be determined case by case and contextually redefined as existing needs are met or reinterpreted, and new needs emerge.

Killian Spandler describes the localization of humanitarian aid as a matter of facilitating "more ownership for state and non-state actors in close proximity to the emergencies" (2020, 2). The challenge of applying this definition at a practical level involves negotiating competing understandings of proximity. Using the influx of refugees in Lesvos as an example: the local government, the citizens of Lesvos, local initiatives, and the refugees themselves all have radically different ideas about who needs aid and how it should be provided. Each could make legitimate claims to *proximity* to the emergency. Further complicating the situation, none of these groups are homogenous in terms of perspectives or goals. If it were decided that, in the interests of local empowerment, the citizens of Lesvos should have more ownership over the coordination of humanitarian aid efforts—the process of providing a representative system with a sufficiently unified agenda for achieving this goal would be daunting, if not impossible.

There are clear parallels between the challenge of determining which groups have a relevant sense of proximity to a humanitarian crisis and the challenge of coordinating overlapping efforts towards global solidarity in response to a crisis. Before confronting several existing treatments of global solidarity, it is important to offer a clear distinction between what we refer to in this paper as local solidarity and global solidarity. Local solidarity is understood here as representing a willingness to act in the interests of one's established in-groups, while global solidarity represents a willingness to act in the interests of distant out-groups. The relevant factors that constitute distance between groups vary contextually—much like relevant senses of proximity in the example above. Acknowledging group membership when distinguishing between types of solidarity is critical in avoiding the pitfalls of colonialism and paternalism that too often plague international humanitarian aid (Spandler, 2020, 6).

Locals in Lesvos are distinctly aware of the potential dangers of these power dynamics, with one of our interview participants explicitly referring to NGOs as "colonizers" (Ilhias, man 40 years., 2016)[1]. A skepticism towards "the neocolonial attitude of international humanitarian actors" (Rozakou, 2017, 102) is confirmed by other ethnographic studies of Lesvos. While there is a rich literature connecting this skepticism to group identity and the development of the refugee crisis in Greece, existing research primarily treats solidarity as a characteristic of local initiatives and traces the historical and linguistic significance of solidarity in Greek culture to its current humanitarian expressions (Rozakou, 2016b; Arampatzi, 2017; Serntedakis, 2017). In distinguishing between local and global solidarity, this paper represents an important step towards addressing the "conceptual imprecision . . . reproduced by the coexistence of the concepts 'solidarity' and 'humanitarianism' in the same conversations" (Theodossopoulos, 2016, 170).

The emphasis on incorporating global solidarity into the ongoing discussion of humanitarian aid and crisis management in Lesvos, is connected to our choice of the term CIGS. While other treatments of solidarity with refugees have used terms such as citizens' initiatives (Rozakou, 2016b, 81), solidarity initiatives (Daskalaki and Kokkinidis, 2017, 1305), and refugee solidarity movements (Oikonomakis, 2018, 66) to describe various egalitarian, ad hoc, efforts to offer material or relational support—a designation that includes global solidarity highlights a crucial, relational orientation towards the mediation of distance between one's established in-groups and marginalized out-groups. We argue that if the concept of global solidarity is to provide insights into the dynamics of localization and empowerment, the social and structural relations of the agents involved must be recognized. Differentiating between the local and the global in terms of group membership serves as a reminder that, even when working together in solidarity, the motivations and obligations of outsiders providing aid both stem from and generate different normative commitments than those of locals.

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[1] All names of interview participants used in this paper are fictive.

Expanding on this distinction, section two begins by outlining and contrasting the accounts of the motivation of global solidarity offered by Richard Rorty and Avery Kolers. While an exhaustive review of the relevant philosophical literature on global solidarity is beyond the scope of this paper, these two theories provide clear examples of positions at opposing sides of the sentimentalist-rationalist spectrum of motivation. The emphasis of motivation in accounting for global solidarity is then problematized by an interpretation of the work of Amanda Taylor. Using the theoretical framework developed in section two, sections three and four explore the contextual tensions and intergroup dynamics observed during field work in Lesvos. Section five synthesizes critical reflections from the previous sections and suggests a productive interplay between global solidarity and the localization of humanitarian aid, that we argue renders the two compatible.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

If the role of CIGS is to be meaningfully discussed in terms of calling for—or practically representing—a novel sense of global solidarity, conceptual clarity will be crucial. Existing conceptualizations of global solidarity generally fall into one of two camps, which have been referred to as sentimentalist and rationalist (Sandelind and Ulaş, 2020, 564; Lenard et al., 2010, 101). The distinction between a relational ethics of care on the one hand, and rational political engagement on the other, is common to analyses of solidarity and humanitarianism alike (Bauder and Juffs, 2020, 10). While the terminology varies from theory to theory, we argue that both sentimentalist and rationalist approaches are compatible with the distinction we have offered between local and global solidarities. A perennial problem for both sentimentalists and rationalists, which is especially relevant to humanitarian crises, concerns the difficulties of motivating global solidarity with distant others (Lenard, 2010; Chouliaraki, 2013; Gould, 2020). Upon hearing that a neighbor is suddenly without a place to stay, it may feel natural to provide support even at the expense of one's own comfort and lifestyle. However, upon hearing that there are refugees without shelter in another country, involvement may not come as naturally and one's role may not be as immediately clear. We turn now to examples of sentimentalist and rationalist treatments of motivating global solidarity, before considering whether or not the very emphasis of motivation is problematic when balancing global solidarity and the localization of humanitarian aid.

Richard Rorty, Ethnocentrism, and Sentimental Education

Sentimentalist approaches to the challenge of motivating global solidarity emphasize the potential for particular individuals or communities to be inspired to offer support to particular distant others in specific contexts. Affective elements are often underlined, describing the global component of global solidarity as a matter of increasing inclusivity (Rorty, 1989), extending social empathy (Gould, 2007), or broadening the redistribution of relational goods (Straehle, 2020). Particular local commitments based on fellow feeling and sentimentality are seen as potentially unproblematic, or even as the best available tools to facilitate moral progress towards a global solidarity that is grounded in care and trust (Baier, 1991).

The work of Richard Rorty offers one of the most influential contributions to a sentimentalist conceptualization of global solidarity. Rorty argues that moral progress towards greater global solidarity is a matter of increasing ethnocentric inclusivity (Rorty, 1991, 1:30). Rorty's unconventional use of the term ethnocentrism is an expression of his conviction that one cannot climb outside of one's own situated position to make an agent-neutral or theory-neutral evaluation of any context. Being ethnocentric in a Rortyan sense, means acknowledging that new interpretations of one's moral obligations must be weighed against existing interpretations, rather than against whatever might be assumed to provide a neutral background for an impartial choice. Efforts towards ethnocentric inclusivity aim to extend or shift existing local solidarities to distant, suffering out-groups. On this view, an acute humanitarian crisis can be interpreted as a moral reason to engage and support distant others as one would if the crisis were causing harm to one's local in-groups.

Effectively motivating global solidarity, on a Rortyan account, hinges upon the development of "the ability to see more and more traditional differences (*of tribe, religion, race, customs, and the like*) as unimportant … the ability to think of people wildly different from ourselves as included in the range of 'us'" (1989, 192). Increasing this ability to dismiss the distance between "us" and these "wildly different others," relies on an understanding of self-creation as redescription rather than transcendence. Rorty's proposal to develop attitudes of global solidarity through ethnocentric, inclusive redescriptions suggests that motivating actions in support of a distant refugee crisis is a matter of describing the situations of those with proximity to the crisis in ways that allow one to identify this distant problem as one's own. An ethnocentric approach to redescription favors an openness to empathic "world-travelling" over static commitments to all members of the species (Lugones, 1987). Sandra Lee Bartky refers to this openness as a rejection of attempts to achieve "a view from nowhere", in favor of attempts to gain "a view from somewhere different" (Bartky, 1998, 387).

Rorty refers to self-creation through attempts to sensitize oneself to distant problems, and identify with distant others, as a process of *sentimental education* (Rorty, 1998, 3:176). Motivating global solidarity through sentimental education is a matter of increasing global sensitivity to narratives of suffering. For Rorty, this sensitivity is most easily achieved through "the continual refreshment and re-creation of the self, through interaction with selves as unlike itself as possible" (1998, 3: 183). Thus, while the situated perspectives of the individuals involved in global solidarity relations are unavoidable, and while complete agent-neutrality or impartiality is unobtainable, there remains an opportunity to "gain more critical leverage the more we experience and expose ourselves to others' standpoints" (Thayer-Bacon, 2010, 10). This strategy parallels a conclusion drawn from previous research into the motivations of CIGS, namely that "for many their involvement must also be understood as a project of self-construction and identity. The helping of others contributes to the construction of self" (Haaland and Wallevik, 2017, 206). A similar conclusion was reached regarding Finnish citizens' involvement in international development projects (Malkki, 2015).

An interpretation of global solidarity as sentimental education and self-creation is supported by the affective and personal components of motivation shared in the following narrative from a CIGS member in Lesvos:

> "I've been kind of monitoring the situation with the crisis and I'm quite passionate about it. I'm not an activist at all, because I'm a bit more calmer and just want everybody to be full of love and life to be honest. (Laughter) And I don't get caught up in politics . . . And then I just realized . . . This is my opportunity to take a bit of a career break." (Crystal, woman 30 years., 2016)

Here we see identification with the refugee crisis described in affective terms of passion and a desire to spread love and life, rather than in terms of political activism. This narrative offers an example of global solidarity inspired by sentiment, which offers both transformative interactions with distant others and a deviation from an established career path. Interestingly, this woman's previous career experience was connected to humanitarian aid. When asked about the professionalizing influence that she described her involvement having on the initiative, she described this influence as unfortunate, saying:

> "I didn't want to tap into too many of my previous skills. Because it made me feel like I was doing something from before." (ibid.)

The transformative power of acting in global solidarity and the appeal of self-creation through active and empathic identification with others should not be underestimated as a motivator of humanitarian aid.

In some instances, those motivated by a more "ethnocentric" and sentimental approach are considered too individualistic, engaged in something very different from solidarity (Serntedakis, 2017, 91). Importantly, this potential criticism should not be limited to international volunteers, as Theodossopoulos connects "the empowering dimension of solidarity" and "the emancipatory euphoria of their participatory experience" to opportunities for local Greeks "to escape temporarily from the paralyzing, disempowering effects of austerity" by engaging refugees (2016, 176). This serves as a reminder of the importance of conceptual clarity regarding global solidarity and local empowerment. If global and local solidarities are differentiated using group membership, the global solidarity demonstrated by the citizens of Lesvos can be an integral part of local empowerment. On the other hand, ethnocentric and sentimentally motivated solidarity runs the risk of prioritizing self-creation or personal transformation over the needs of the supposed recipients of solidarity support and can depoliticize the structural causes of humanitarian crises (Ticktin, 2014, 283).

From a Rortyan perspective, those who find personal and emotional motivations problematic would do well to discard the "opposition between self-interest and morality, an opposition which makes it hard to realize that my pride in being a part of the human rights culture is no more external to myself than my desire for financial or sexual success" (1998, 3:176). Here Rorty presents moral obligation as made, rather than found. This would suggest, unsatisfactorily for rationalists, that agents involved in global solidarity projects such as CIGS are simply motivated by a desire to be better people—and that both motivations and interpretations of "better" stem from particular identities and communities, rather than from a transcendental understanding of rationality and obligation. Rejecting the opposition between morality and self-interest means that fostering global solidarity, or any other moral project, is not a matter of bypassing one's own desires and identity. Instead, global solidarity becomes a matter of sentimental education—a process which cannot pretend to exclude the self, and which aims for flexibility and sensitivity rather than impartiality or finality.

Avery Kolers and Reason-Driven Solidarity

Rationalist approaches to motivating global solidarity are skeptical of personal and particular motivations, which are seen as a source of potential bias, instead emphasizing the importance of impartial justice. Global solidarity is portrayed as the duty of all human beings to provide aid to those suffering injustices, and to address the structural problems that lead to these injustices (Kolers, 2005; Scholz, 2008). Spandler observes that, within the context of humanitarian aid, "rationalist perspectives usually take for granted that there exists a consensus on the fundamental purposes and principles of humanitarian action" (2020, 6). In discussions of the ethics of global solidarity this translates to an assumption that, at least under ideal circumstances, there would be general agreement that global solidarity represents a universal duty. The normative force of this duty to engage in global solidarity is assumed to be a compelling motivator in and of itself (Kolers, 2012, 1). Therefore, from a rationalist perspective, motivating global solidarity is a matter of overcoming individual bias and attaining clarity as to what actions our universal duties entail.

Avery Kolers offers a rationalist account of global solidarity that clearly distances itself from the sentimentalist acceptance of the role of individualistic self-creation in motivation. He writes, "...in solidarity one chooses sides for a reason that applies to people in general, not just to those who are in a certain relationship. I join in solidarity not because I think *I* ought to, but because I think *one* ought to" (Kolers, 2016, 73). Kolers presents his version of global solidarity as "reason-driven political action on others' terms" (Kolers, 2016, 57). Reason-driven solidarity is presented as an alternative to both individualism, which motivates one to join in solidarity with those that share one's own interests and values, and loyalty solidarity, which motivates action based on existing commitments to a certain group. In short, Kolers argues that solidarity should be reason-driven in order to counteract the tendency to side with those one agrees with and those one has already formed relationships with.

When Kolers describes the political action motivated by global solidarity as "on others' terms", he has specific others in mind—those picked out by agent-neutral reasons. He claims that the only defensible form of solidarity is progressive solidarity, which is defined as reason-driven solidarity that commits one to join the side of the group that is "least-well off in a given social structure" (2005, 157). On this rationalist account, global solidarity is an obligation to use agent-neutral criteria that provide the motivational resources to join forces with distant out-groups in need of aid, thereby overcoming biases that stem from personal interests, moral intuitions, and existing loyalties. The value of global solidarity thereby lies in motivating support for the least well-off, regardless of whether or not one agrees with their goals or strategies.

On this structural view, conclusions made by outsiders motivated by global solidarity—whom Kolers refers to as "joiners"—that the tactics of the least well-off are unwise or even morally problematic, are based on moral intuitions that are products of the current status quo. In other words, efforts towards bottom-up empowerment cannot be productively evaluated using the moral intuitions of those at the top of existing social hierarchies. Here Kolers offers an interesting distinction between "acting *in* behalf of another and acting *on* their behalf. Whereas the former is the attempt to benefit them, the latter is the attempt to *do what they would do* in the situation" (2016, 22). Acting *in* behalf of others, attempting to improve the standing of suffering groups *by outside standards,* may address the outcomes of structural inequities but fails to meaningfully shift the status quo. Kolers argues that only acting *on* behalf of others qualifies as joining in global solidarity—as this involves acknowledging and deferring to the views of those disempowered by the existing social order.

Applied to the field of humanitarian aid, Kolers' rationalist approach to global solidarity presents some advantages. The structural focus and insistence on acting on others' terms serve as a reminder of the power dynamics between the groups involved in humanitarian crises. Connecting specifically to the localization of aid, if more ownership over crisis management is to be transferred to those with proximity to a crisis, this will inevitably require agents with less proximity to give up certain aspects of ownership. This will call for a willingness on the parts of outsiders to provide aid on others' terms—to recognize the strategies of those who think "wildly differently" as viable solutions to humanitarian problems. This interpretation of Kolers' rationalist approach to global solidarity connects to the localization of humanitarian aid insofar as it suggests that coordination efforts should grant a form of epistemic privilege to locals in recognition of the lack of collective hermeneutical resources that might make their tactics feel intuitive to outsiders. In other words, to the extent that those with proximity to a crisis and the "least well-off" can be assumed to overlap, reason-driven solidarity suggests that the viability of aid strategies should be increasingly evaluated *on the grounds of proximity to the crisis* and less on the grounds of compatibility with dominant global values and moral intuitions.

However, the idea of using reason-driven solidarity to avoid either widespread hegemony or individual bias encounters practical problems. The most obvious is that suggesting the use of agent-neutral criteria that determine who is "least well-off" in a given humanitarian crisis, assumes that there will be a general consensus as to who is "least well-off". Rather than moving past the particularities of Rortyan ethnocentrism with any finality, the proposed use of reason-driven solidarity simply raises the practical challenge of contextually defining proximity by one level of abstraction. In other words, returning to the example of Lesvos, a theoretical rationalization of motivation offers no objective criteria for determining how to defer to the multiple groups with legitimate claims to proximity to the crisis.

This can be connected to Spandler's comment about rationalist perspectives on humanitarian aid assuming the existence of consensus. Even in the unlikely case that there was a consensus among all aid agents that, for example, the Syrian refugees constituted the least well-off group, *and* there was a consensus among all Syrian refugees as to how to coordinate crisis relief—both the attempted empowerment of that group and any interpretation of their strategies would be colored by individual and group bias. An assumption of underlying consensus also increases the risk of treating diverse groups as homogenous. This is not to suggest that rationalist arguments about appropriate motivations of global solidarity cannot inspire praiseworthy attempts to avoid the potentially colonizing impacts of outside aid. It is instead an argument that rationalist approaches to global solidarity do not remove individual or group bias from the interpretations, applications, or motivations of global solidarity by including "reason-driven" or "on other's terms" in their theoretical formulations.

The contrast offered between Rorty and Kolers suggests that one set of tensions between sentimentalist and rationalist accounts rests upon the possibility and desirability of motivating global solidarity using neutral and impartial criteria. The differences between these accounts also parallel Rozakou's distinction between traditional, professionalized volunteerism and an emerging Greek alternative approach to volunteerism, which she describes as "a field of fluid and open sociality" (2016a, 95). Several studies of the Greek context describe this alternative volunteerism as a rejection of the political in favor of the social (Rozakou, 2016a, 82; Serntedakis, 2017, 84–85). This leads Serntedakis to conclude that egalitarian, anti-hierarchical attitudes and an aversion to top-down charity and philanthropy among volunteers in Greece, have led to an understanding of solidarity as "more about transforming social relations than trying to transform political systems" (2017, 95).

It would therefore appear that CIGS and other informal volunteer groups in Lesvos are more aligned with a sentimental, affective, and relational view of the goals of solidarity. Remembering that Kolers defines global solidarity as *political* action on others' terms and highlights the need to attend to structural factors with impartiality, his rationalist view appears to be more in line with traditional volunteerism and established humanitarianism. With this tension in mind, we move now to Taylor's treatment of global solidarity, which offers additional conceptual resources for understanding when solidarity should aim to transform social relationships and when it should aim to support political resistance.

Amanda Taylor and the Unidirectionality of Global Solidarity

While rationalists such as Kolers conceptualize the global element in global solidarity as a matter of subordinating one's local loyalties to agent-neutral evaluations of structural inequities, sentimentalists such as Rorty see this global element of solidarity as a matter of expanding or adjusting one's attitudes about what constitutes group membership—so as to make one's loyalties as inclusive and flexible as possible. While Kolers hopes to cultivate an agent-neutral obligation towards those it might not come naturally to join forces with, Rorty hopes to motivate the empathic inclusion of as many groups as possible in an ethnocentric understanding of "one of us". Both theories, despite their numerous and significant differences, can be read as advocating concepts of global solidarity that focus on motivating what we will refer to here as "siding unnaturally".

A sense that one is on the same side as a suffering neighbor that one has developed a sense of local solidarity with, will come naturally for many. Actively siding with distant refugees, seems not to come as naturally, suggesting that global solidarity and siding unnaturally represent more demanding forms of motivation. Versions of global solidarity that focus on siding unnaturally present moral progress towards greater solidarity as an increased ability to move from, or past, local commitments to global commitments. Understanding the value of global solidarity through its ability to facilitate siding unnaturally, whether out of a sense of moral duty or due to a particular and personal commitment, is highly relevant in connecting global solidarity to the localization of humanitarian aid. The goal of siding unnaturally portrays the primary value of global solidarity as a means of motivating the involvement of those who are not in close proximity to humanitarian emergencies. While global attention and contributions are key in addressing humanitarian crises, there is a potential conflict between efforts to mobilize global involvement and efforts to localize ownership of crisis management.

Conceptions of global solidarity as siding unnaturally can be problematized by the work of Amanda Taylor, who distinguishes between robust solidarity and expressional solidarity (2015, 129). As with the local/global distinction offered in this paper, one key feature differentiating Taylor's two types of solidarity is group membership. Robust solidarity exists between members of an established group acting together in pursuit of joint interests that they cannot realize individually. The robust form of solidarity requires reciprocal empathy, mutual recognition among group members, and a shared sense of trust. Taylor describes expressional solidarity as support that comes from those outside the robust solidary group. When solidarity is expressional, elements such as identification, trust, and empathy are unidirectional and sometimes primarily "motivated to ensure recent events get attention in the West" (Taylor, 2015, 132).

Although demonstrations of expressional solidarity might potentially set one on a path towards membership in a group that shares robust solidarity, Taylor argues convincingly that the robust solidarity between insiders is a matter of acting on mutual obligations and positive duties, while the expressional solidarity engaged in by outsiders is a matter of acting on motivation. In other words, when a group is affected by a crisis, the robust solidarity that exists within the affected group generates *obligations* or responsibilities to protect the group's interests and well-being. Non-members may experience expressional solidarity with the out-group in crisis, and this may *motivate* these non-members to work to protect that out-group's interests and well-being. However, the two forms of solidarity do not have the same normative composition (2015, 28).

While interests may be shared between those displaying expressional solidarity and those engaged in robust solidarity, these are characterized as parallel interests rather than joint interests. Taylor argues that solidarity is unique in that it "involves adopting the group's interest as one's own and linking the achievement of such interests with one's own well-being" (2015, 133). Importantly, this process of making a group's interests integral to one's sense of self is compatible with both expressional and robust solidarity—with having either parallel or joint interests. The difference between the two hinges on the unidirectional or multi-directional nature of the investment. Through global solidarity one can come to identify the struggle of a distant out-group as one's own. When this identification with the group in crisis is unidirectional, meaning one comes to identify an out-group's interests as deeply connected to one's own well-being, solidarity is expressional. Only when there is multidirectional identification, meaning one is also identified by the group as included in the obligations generated by group-membership, does solidarity qualify as robust[2].

There is an important sense in which both the rationalist and sentimentalist versions of global solidarity as siding unnaturally espoused by Kolers and Rorty suggest that global commitments to distant out-groups embody the more demanding version of solidarity. From the perspective of generating motivation, they may be right. However, we read Taylor's distinction as suggesting that the obligations incurred upon existing members of a solidary in-group are in fact more demanding and carry a stronger normative force than the efforts of out-groups to express, what we refer to as, global solidarity. This claim is not intended to minimize the demanding nature of engaging in global solidarity. It is instead intended as a warning against assumptions that the challenging task of motivating involvement with distant out-groups and the intensity of encounters that make the crises of others one's own, warrant a sense of what we might call reciprocal or *robust ownership* of the crisis on par with that of the groups most directly affected.

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[2] Our use of Taylor's distinction between robust solidarity and expressional solidarity emphasizes her treatment of identification and joint interests in order to highlight parallels to our own distinction between local solidarity and global solidarity. Taylor's original article places a greater emphasis on mutual trust and a disposition to empathy than is expressed here.

The reciprocity and multi-directional identification that Taylor describes in robust solidarity are arguably not present, or at least not necessary, in international humanitarian aid (Gould, 2007, 157). It is incumbent upon those motivated by global solidarity to consider that, as "expressional solidarity is largely unidirectional, then there is a danger that when I express solidarity with you, I project my own vision of you into the solidaristic relationship, and thus my solidarity is not with you as you, but with you as my idea of you" (Woods, 2019, 151). This potential for projection can be combined with Taylor's distinction between joint interests and parallel interests to problematize conceptions of global solidarity that emphasize the motivation of siding unnaturally. Kolers' arguments for "joining" in global solidarity and Rorty's call to think of the members of suffering out-groups as included in our sense of "one of us", carry with them a serious colonizing potential if not accompanied by a thorough consideration of whether or not the groups with which global solidarity is being expressed are interested in outsiders "joining" or becoming "one of them" in a robust sense.

Taylor's distinction can be equally useful when applied to international efforts to take the strategies of those with various forms of proximity to a humanitarian crisis seriously. While global solidarity is highly demanding, it is often unidirectional and may represent parallel interests rather than multidirectional or robust obligations towards joint interests. Specifically, in the context of Lesvos, Rozakou has observed that the dominant understanding of solidarity among volunteers "seeks to overcome the limitations and the perils deriving from one-way offers" (2016b, 189). We argue that overzealous efforts on the parts of international actors to turn their global solidarity into robust solidarity may in fact have a disempowering effect on those groups most affected by crises. This underlines the importance of consciously keeping the global solidarity of international aid efforts at the level of expressional solidarity. Distinguishing between the local and global forms of solidarity, and between robust and expressional commitments, can offer insights into the potential coordination of groups with different senses of proximity to humanitarian crises. As suggested earlier, this represents a major challenge in contextualizing and practically implementing the localization of humanitarian aid. Later discussion of this conceptualization will draw on illustrative examples from our own fieldwork in Lesvos, to which we now turn.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This paper is based on data collected on and in Lesvos between 2015 and 2019. Our empirical data consist of qualitative interviews, observations, and participant observations and are thus grounded in ethnography. Prior to our first round of fieldwork in 2016, we followed the unfolding crisis in Lesvos through mainstream news and social media. Here we focused on how CIGS emerged as a response to the influx of refugees to the island. It was our previous research on CIGS in a development context (Haaland and Wallevik, 2017) that spurred an interest in the initiatives that popped up in Lesvos. These initiatives—that quickly organized to respond to various aspects of the crisis in Lesvos—were followed online with a particular emphasis on their activities, especially their efforts to help during the peak of the crisis. The material collected online provided us with an initial overview of the types of engagement that emerged in Lesvos during 2015. At the same time, an initial mapping of CIGS in Norway showed that out of 350 initiatives that were portrayed in local newspaper articles from 2000 to 2016, 83 were refugee related, with ties to Greece and Lesvos. Since 2015, the number of Norwegian aid initiatives that targets refugees, including those in Lesvos, has continued to grow (Fylkesnes et al. forthcoming). This data formed a backdrop for our further data collection in the field, as some of the initiatives were followed up and further interviewed during our various field stays.

Our on-site fieldwork in Lesvos started in 2016. During five shorter field stays over the years 2016–2019 we conducted interviews with founders and members of initiatives that worked with the refugee crisis. To capture the rapid changes and the ways initiatives responded to change over time, several informants have been interviewed multiple times. We have also engaged in numerous discussions with representatives of the local government who had established a local response team. Additionally, we have interviewed representatives from both UNHCR and larger NGOs to contextualize the role of CIGS within the broader network of crisis response in Lesvos. Both informal and formal interviews were also conducted with residents in Lesvos, especially those involved in tourism, an industry which has been impacted by the refugee situation. This provided insight into everyday practices, local discourses, and perceptions of the situation amongst local people. As such, it contributed to further contextualizing the understanding and handling of crisis. We also visited the three refugee camps on the Island: *Lesvos Solidarity, Kara Tepe,* and *Moria*. The latter refers to the camp located near the village of Moria prior to the fire in 2020. These visits provided opportunities to observe the roles CIGS assume within the camps, and to speak with camp managers, volunteers, and refugees.

During our first stay we travelled around the island and observed responses to the large numbers of refugees arriving at the shores of Northern Lesvos, walking across the island to get to Mytilini, and attempting further travel to mainland Greece. Moving across the island as part of our field work has enabled continuous informal conversations with people who had been involved in voluntary work. Our travels facilitated participant observations which were recorded in field notebooks. Several residents became gatekeepers who further facilitated access to the local communities we encountered. We quickly discovered that almost every one of our Greek informants had been involved in early efforts to prepare food, provide transport, or contribute in some way to CIGS. However, both the positive sentiments towards refugees and the local optimism about the viability of humanitarian aid deteriorated amongst many of our informants as the crisis continued. Our numerous field trips allowed us to observe the evolutions of various narratives of crisis, which reflected developments in the local, political, and economic context.

In May 2017, we participated in the "Mini Lesvos dialogues"–meetings set up to enable a variety of actors involved in the crisis to discuss their experiences and strategies. The meetings allowed for further recruitment of informants for our research. We returned for a second dialogue session in 2019. These two dialogue meetings enabled us to explore both cooperation and tensions between the actors involved, all of whom experienced and engaged with the crisis from different perspectives. Several shorter field visits to the island enabled us to, over time, follow CIGS and other actors, observing both changes and continuities in their work. In total, we have interviewed 15 CIGS owners who have been working in Lesvos both prior to and during the crisis. In addition, we conducted interviews with members of local government, NGO representatives, and employees from each of the three refugee camps mentioned above. Snowball sampling guided our selection of interviewees. The interview data has been transcribed and anonymized. All names used in the article are thus fictive names.

During the collection and analysis of data, the type of work that various CIGS engaged in and the ways they coordinated with, resisted, or otherwise related to the other actors involved was emphasized. This approach is inspired by Institutional Ethnography (Smith, 2005) and explores how the ruling relations, efforts, and discourses of other actors govern CIGS in their activities. Our research on CIGS therefore included investigating the local communities they engage, whether Greek citizens or refugee populations, as well as other actors such as NGOs, the local and central governments, and UNHCR. As such, we have been concerned with how CIGS and other actors present and perceive themselves vis-à-vis other actors, as well as how they perceive and talk about other aid actors and the refugee situation on the island and beyond. Consequently, attention is paid to the overarching context and the ruling relations, such as local and national policies and humanitarian discourse.

As CIGS are not universally considered to be legitimate actors within development and humanitarian assistance, much of what they do remains invisible to the other actors. A standpoint within CIGS and their everyday work illuminates how and to what extent they are guided by the social relations they take part in, both locally and trans-locally, i.e., what relations and ruling relations are guiding their work (Smith, 2005). Emphasis on their activities enables us to understand their work as socially coordinated in response to crisis. Insights into CIGS' perceptions of themselves and others contributes to research on CIGS and other actors involved in networked crisis management.

LOCAL COORDINATION AND GLOBAL ATTENTION

It is important to differentiate between the CIGS operating in a crisis context, such as Lesvos, and those operating in a development context. Development-oriented CIGS generally work informally and "under the radar" of local authorities, often enjoying a degree of freedom from local bureaucracies, policies, and guidelines (Haaland and Wallevik, 2017). Rather than acting as part of a coordinated development aid response, these CIGS focus on the individual needs of particular communities. In contrast, CIGS that respond to acute humanitarian crises are often monitored and integrated into overarching crisis management strategies. In Lesvos, for example, international CIGS are registered as soon as they arrive (Haaland and Wallevik, 2019). This registration has been necessary to monitor the multitude of actors that have been involved over the course of the crisis.

The initial response fell to the locals who were, fortunately, accustomed to the arrival of refugees. They were, however, unequipped to handle the thousands of refugees that arrived unexpectedly in 2015, the majority of whom were fleeing the conflict in Syria. As part of the initial response, members of the tourism industry made their premises available as refugee shelters while other islanders arranged transport and gathered food and clothes. Locals also helped boats ashore, provided blankets, and constructed temporary shelters (Guribye and Mydland, 2018). Numerous international volunteers and CIGS, responding to the crisis depicted in both mainstream and social media, worked alongside the locals. Many of these CIGS established working relationships with local organizations and the local government, functioning as organized parts of a local response that laid the foundation for the coordinated crisis management that developed when UNHCR and larger international NGOs arrived in 2016.

Since the arrival of the larger international actors, a coordinated effort, led by UNHCR and the local government, has incorporated several of the smaller CIGS. The CIGS operating outside this coordinated effort run their activities parallel to the crisis management team, often advocating alternative strategies (Haaland and Wallevik, 2019). Adding to the complexity of the situation, the refugee camps in Lesvos are not run by a single centralized body. Moria, the largest refugee camp on the island, is run by the central Greek authorities, while the smaller camp of Kara Tepe is run by local authorities. While the local government points to Kara Tepe as a showcase of Greek hospitality, they argue strongly against the establishment of more permanent refugee accommodations in Lesvos.

Rather than accommodating refugees on the island, the local government argues that the demands of the crisis should be increasingly shared by mainland Greece and the EU. This argument represents the islanders' eagerness to restore normality and tourism, which is a major source of local income. While some tourist businesses, particularly those located near the Island capital, are able to generate revenue from NGO workers, CIGS, and volunteers, others have seen their incomes radically reduced. Many locals explicitly blame the refugees for the lack of tourism and increasingly refer to refugees as migrants, an expression of their frustration with the longevity of the situation.

Many of the large NGOs eventually left, leaving a growing role for the CIGS that have remained on the island. These initiatives are taking care of everyday needs both inside and outside formal and informal camps, while also making efforts to direct global attention to the continued humanitarian crisis. A solution to the crisis seems distant and refugees and islanders alike are tired. Tensions regarding how to live with, engage in, and possibly solve the situation are omnipresent. The tensions observed during our fieldwork can be categorized into two sets of contested interests, which we describe as "coordination of local crisis management" and "global attention".

Turning first to the coordination of local crisis management, one continued attempt can be seen in the weekly coordination meetings run by UNHCR, in dialogue with the local government. At these meetings, actors involved in various forms of crisis response offer updates on their activities and discuss future strategies. Over the years we have seen parallel efforts towards coordination develop amongst CIGS, but we have also heard reports of competition between aid actors. Many CIGS are critical towards the local government and the UNHCR, and therefore purposefully work outside of the larger coordination efforts. Some experience the coordination mechanisms imposed by more established humanitarian aid agents as inflexible and lacking sensitivity to the local community:

> "I mean, the UNHCR, they came at the beginning. It was like 'We know everything. We speak English, only English, in all coordination meetings.' This is not acceptable. And they are wondering why, why the authorities are not here, why hospital is not here. You are in Greece! Speak the language! Or make the translation—I know it takes time. But this is also a symbol. I mean, you give the signal that you don't respect" (Claire, woman 50 years, 2017).

Included in the sharp criticism of the perceived colonizing presence of UNHCR, were frustrations with the way UNHCR took control over projects that were being carried out by local organizations and CIGS in the early months of the crisis. This structural transition created lasting tensions between the larger organizations, on the one side, and the smaller initiatives and local population on the other. The disappointment with being unceremoniously pushed aside upon the arrival of established organizations was bolstered by a skepticism towards the resource flows of these larger actors:

> "I'm not sure about the UNHCR as an organization. But they are a big money-making machine. They spend a lot on advertising. That grieves me" (Patty, woman 50 years, 2017)

The concern with the use of funds voiced by CIGS members was also widespread among citizens of Lesvos. However, this local skepticism was also directed towards NGOs, CIGS, and international volunteers who were perceived as driven by self-interest or as more invested in the refugees than in finding permanent solutions that would benefit local communities. The fact that both formal and informal international aid agents will eventually move on can lead to a sense of solidarity that exists in transition (Oikonomakis, 2018, 68). The temporary presence of outsiders is all the more reason to emphasize local ownership of crisis management and to keep global solidarity at an expressional level.

Local interview participants suggested that the government should manage the refugee situation despite the necessity of foreign contributions. They argue that NGOs and other international actors serve an inappropriate function, as substitutes for the government:

> "That should not happen. NGOs should be something complementary and not a substitute. We always see NGOs drawing money from the natives, from the government, from the EU, and doing its jobs. But we believe it is a government's job, it is the citizens' job, to be there . . . This way, we believe that the very fact of democracy is being undermined. Right now, the money from the EU was given to NGOs. The ministry asked Save the Children for funds, to use for education. That is a degradation. Governments asking NGOs. Who controls the NGOs? Of course, who controls the government? And who trusts the government?" (Ilhias, man 40 years, 2016).

In this example, frustrations point to the complicated and overlapping roles played by a wide range of organizations in the current attempts to coordinate crisis management. Some of these frustrations are directed at the established crisis management team, which is comprised of local government, UNHCR, NGOs, and selected CIGS. However, despite the call for a larger role for government, there is also an unmistakable suggestion that the government is not trustworthy. This seems to suggest that, ideally, the government should be working more with local citizens and less with the international NGO establishment. From this perspective, the localization of humanitarian aid might offer coordination solutions and restore local faith in the government.

However, from the perspective of the local government, the main impediments to efficient coordination are the uncooperative CIGS and international volunteers that resist the coordination efforts of the established crisis management team:

> "But these are doing more harm than good. Because they are not coordinated. It's no use to have people distributing food when you need people welcoming boats, for example" (Marcus, man 30 years, 2016)
>
> "People lacking experience come in and set up a tent and do their thing; this is not contributing to the overall management of the crisis." (ibid)

Specifically, parallel projects that aim to achieve the same ends as local government projects, but refuse to join in coordinated efforts, are seen as individualistic troublemakers rather than competent contributors:

> "Why not helping the overall situation? Why? Because they want to do something of their own. Because they do not believe in the coordination mechanism. Because they do not trust UNHCR." (ibid)

These misgivings are echoed by UNHCR and other larger organizations, who express concerns about a lack of professionalism in the CIGS involved in crisis relief. Larger, specialized organizations bring professionals to cater to specific needs that they have a degree of familiarity with. They question the ability of well-intentioned amateurs to, for example, provide care for traumatized, refugee children:

> "You want to help children, but what do you know about child development? Cultural sensitivity? Or are you just a person who thinks 'I want to help'?" (Themis, Man 35 years, 2016)

Within the UNHCR's skepticism towards CIGS' lack of experience is an implicit critique of the instability generated by cooperation between local government and CIGS. In the management of Kara Tepe, for instance, the local government relies heavily on services from smaller, recently founded initiatives. When CIGS uncritically accept assignments, failing to reflect on the sustainability of the privately generated funds they depend on to continue their work, this can introduce instability into the core operations of the camps.

Interestingly, criticisms regarding the abilities of certain types of aid agents to relieve the crisis in Lesvos appear to cut both ways. On the one hand, UNHCR criticizes CIGS for lacking the professionalism and experience to deal with a humanitarian crisis. At least some CIGS are described as doing more harm than good due to their resistance towards an overarching "coordination mechanism". On the other hand, the CIGS criticize the UNHCR for relying on professionalism and outside experience too such an extent that they become dispassionate and insufficiently attuned to cooperative relations that were developed before the arrival of the larger organizations. We interpret the resistance of CIGS as a critique of existing coordination mechanisms, rather than a resistance of coordination as such. The resistance stems from both concerns that funds are not being spent appropriately and a perceived lack of respect for locals and small-scale aid operations. These tensions demonstrate a clear absence of a shared understanding of joint interests among the actors attempting to provide aid to refugees and the citizens of Lesvos.

Turning to the second contested interest, "global attention," we have observed that many locals feel at cross-purposes with humanitarian aid agents. The residents of Lesvos struggle with the economic impacts of the refugee situation while simultaneously seeing large amounts of resources being mobilized in attempts to provide aid. Despite global attention and contributions, the challenges of the locals remain. Over the course of our fieldwork, we witnessed a growing perception of outsiders as motivated by financial self-interest or a desire to feel good about themselves, rather than a desire to provide meaningful aid:

> "...they only care about what they feel. They want to feel pleased that they helped someone." (Alexandros, man 40 years, 2016)

With active members of the local community going so far as to say, for example:

> "Refugees are not the problem, but volunteers are." (Ilhas, man, 40 years, 2017)

Long term volunteers are familiar with such attitudes and find them burdensome. As one volunteer expressed:

> "In my town ... (i.e. where the interview participant volunteers) I was told to go home ... That I was making too much money. That's why I have come" (Margareth, woman, 25 yrs, 2017).

If international support is perceived as corrupt or inefficient, this naturally affects the desirability of directing further global attention towards the situation in Lesvos. An additional tension can be seen between outsiders who are interested in portraying a crisis to generate awareness or donations, and locals who are interested in portraying a sense of normality. CIGS, volunteers, and representatives of international NGOs have scaled up their presentations of the Lesvos crisis, in the absence of mainstream media attention. These presentations are interpreted by some locals as maintaining the crisis and as preventing a revival of the tourist industry, as seen in the following comments from a local businessperson:

> "At the moment there is a big lack of marketing that Lesvos is not suffering, in a way, with any bad conditions of refugee crisis. So, people (tourists) do not know to arrive back." (Stavros, man, 50 years, 2016)

Later adding:

> "I need to be persuaded that the NGOs are going to solve my problem and not maintain it. The NGOs they were maintaining the problem ... competing themselves, who is going to save more people so they can get approved more grants. The Facebook pages and everything were full of photos: 'We saved these guys. We saved these guys. Please help us. Send us money'. Whatever. It happened. It happened on Facebook and everybody can see it." (ibid)

These comments illustrate a clear sense in which generating global attention on outsiders' terms may be preventing groups with proximity to the crisis from reestablishing themselves. Media representation of the refugee situation offers a striking example of Taylor's point that unidirectional, expressional attempts at global solidarity can prioritize the attention of the West over the need to rebuild local communities.

Competing interests concerning the international representation of Lesvos have complicated the coordinating role of the local government, which is positioned between an upward accountability to the national government and the EU and a downward accountability to local citizens (Williams, 2010). CIGS have also experienced the impacts of these tensions between those arguing for a revival of the tourism sector and those attending to the needs of refugees. While some CIGS have simply given up due to negative feedback, others have distanced themselves from the established aid machinery and carefully communicated to the locals that they are not NGOs. One organization hung a sign over their office announcing this, which speaks to the intensity of local frustration with aspects of the international response. This can be interpreted as part of the resistance towards the professionalization of volunteerism and aid that Rozakou describes as emerging in Greece (2016a, 95), and as a need to distinguish solidarity from charity and established humanitarianism.

Alongside the closure of some initiatives, new initiatives have emerged. Some have been started by refugees working within the camps, while others have been started by former refugees hoping to meet the needs of both current refugees and islanders living with the impacts of the crisis. Some of these refugee-run initiatives receive international funding and attention, which may offer a compromise between representations of crisis and representations of cooperation and progress towards normalcy. However, reestablishing positive perceptions of refugees among the locals is no easy task. Conservative political groups have thrived on anti-refugee attitudes in the local population. The prospect of refugees being offered local jobs, being enrolled in local schools, or finding permanent housing is often met with resistance.

In summary, we observed increasing suspicion from locals towards refugees and outside aid, as well as tensions between aid agents regarding each other's respective competencies in navigating the situation in Lesvos. These issues center around coordination, motivation, the use of funds, and representations of the situation in Lesvos. Having looked at empirical examples of competing interests that arise in both coordinating local crisis management and representing the need for global involvement, we can return to the attempt to balance the appeal of increased localization of aid and the appeal of increased global solidarity.

A SUPPORTING ROLE: PROXIMITY WITHOUT OWNERSHIP

The increase in global solidarity that CIGS appear to be calling for by resisting established coordination mechanisms has two components, which mirror the tensions mentioned in the previous section. First, there is a call for more global attention and action, which we have interpreted as potentially problematic if not connected to the competing interests of those with proximity to the crisis. Second, the act of engaging a humanitarian crisis at a more horizontal, empathic, and relational level—rather than joining with larger, more established aid agencies—suggests that the perceived gaps in the international response include a failure to offer personal encounters that meet refugees and locals as individuals, rather than cogs in a machine.

Turning first to the idea of an increase in global solidarity as a call for more international responsibility, representation must play a key role. We have presented the tension in Lesvos between an interest in representing a crisis to motivate or finance outside involvement and an interest in representing normality to revive the local economy. Taylor's claim that some cases of expressional solidarity focus on getting the attention of the West, could be interpreted as suggesting that the dissemination of narratives of suffering to motivate global solidarity fails to account for the conflicting interests of affected, local communities. Kolers would describe these attempts to motivate global attention as acting *in* behalf of the locals, and thus as not qualifying as global solidarity at all.

In one sense, this tension could be addressed through a localization of aid, in which local communities were given more ownership over the process of globally representing humanitarian crises and crisis management. This acknowledges the unavoidable global element of humanitarian aid, namely the recruitment of outside resources, and localizes the ownership of this process in a way that recognizes the interests of those affected by the crisis. This would amount to a *localization of the call for global solidarity*. Of course, at the level of practice, there are conflicting interests between and within groups with legitimate claims of proximity to the crisis, and there would be no way to control the totality of representations—especially on social media. Despite these challenges, any degree of local ownership in the process of directing global attention to the situation in Lesvos would contribute to a sense of local empowerment and demonstrate recognition of the local impacts of foreign aid. While the specifics of such a project are beyond the scope of this paper, this suggestion offers an example of productive interplay between efforts towards increased global solidarity and increased localization of aid.

Turning to CIGS' second critique of established aid, the lack of empathic relationality, these frustrations are aligned with Rorty's sentimentalist conceptualization of global solidarity to the extent that the CIGS are criticizing a lack of sensitivity, flexibility, and inclusion. CIGS' resistance towards aid strategies that do not prioritize an empathic form of global solidarity are supported by Arampatzi's argument that solidarity distinguishes itself from charity through its opposition towards "disembodied caring from a distance" (2017, 2,161). Distance seems to represent the primary obstacle to the motivation of global solidarity. Certainly, the difficulty of motivating personal and empathic action that addresses a crisis to which one has no obvious sense of proximity, should not be underestimated.

Members of CIGS were open about the traumas of encountering dead bodies, observing inhumane conditions, and hearing the harrowing stories of refugees. For example, one volunteer recounted the intensity of another woman's experience:

> "She was doing an English lesson with a young man, that starts telling her his journey, everything. And she was in bits for the rest of the day. She couldn't handle it. But she cared and she heard him. She just needed help to get through the day afterwards. And there's a bit of me say 'Oh oh oh, shouldn't have let that happen'—professionally, but then there is also the bit of me that says, 'She's people helping people'". (Patty, woman 50 years, 2018)

The personal connection between the volunteer and the young man offers a clear example of the ability of solidarity to motivate one to go beyond "disembodied caring from a distance". Patty's reflections also demonstrate the potential for tension between professionalization and horizontal empathy at the level of the individual. This narrative demonstrates the potential that personal interactions have for offering important forms of care, but also the intensity of such experiences.

As argued earlier, the transformative nature of engaging distant others in global solidarity can make a formerly distant crisis one's own in an important sense. Recall that Taylor argued that all forms of solidarity involve making the interests of a group central to one's own sense of well-being. However, in the interests of promoting the localization of humanitarian aid and in the interests of avoiding the reproduction of colonialist hierarchies, it must be acknowledged that this process of "making the crisis one's own" is often unidirectional. In this context, this means that the benefits of CIGS members' transformative, solidary acts, that cause them to become personally invested in a crisis, should not be measured in terms of the eventual inclusion of these individuals in robust solidarities. Regardless of the intensity of one's commitment, the global solidarity of those engaged in foreign aid should generally be conceptualized as expressional.

Categorizing solidarity as "expressional" should not invoke images of social media activism or simply paying lip service to a cause. We argue that expressional global solidarity is by no means detached caring from a distance, but it does imply not taking unnecessary *ownership* of the aid process. Arguing that global solidarity in humanitarian crises should remain expressional prioritizes motivating unidirectional and personal identifications with a cause and warns against either aspiring towards or assuming multidirectional recognition of oneself as a member of the robust solidary group. Through awareness of their structural position within a crisis situation, outsiders can express global solidarity without expressing a sense of ownership. A version of this approach is present in the following reflections from a CIGS member on her work with refugees in Lesvos:

> "It's not been a caring profession; it's been a supporting profession. It sounds like … I do care. I care passionately, but I'm not a caretaker. I'm not there to take over, to do everything. I'm there to send people on their way, and I think that's what people need here. To send people on their way in the best possible way." (Patty, woman 50 years, 2018)

The idea of caring without assuming the role of a caretaker, neatly captures the idea of making a crisis one's own without identifying with something larger than a supporting role—working in proximity to a crisis without assuming that one's proximity must warrant robust membership of some kind. Especially if global solidarity and the localization of aid are to be compatible, expressional global solidarity appears to be what is called for in international responses to humanitarian crises. Returning to Spandler's description of the localization of humanitarian aid as demanding "more ownership for state and non-state actors in close proximity to the emergencies," we argue that the type of proximity that warrants this type of ownership is membership in one of the robust solidary groups directly affected by the crisis.

There are certainly other legitimate interpretations of proximity. The speed with which many international CIGS organized and became functioning parts of the local response in the early months of the crisis, offers one example. Their frustrations with being dismissed by larger organizations were likely connected to the degree of proximity to the crisis that these CIGS had worked to develop. However, despite having built relationships with locals during the initial crisis response, we argue that this proximity is still unidirectional. By this we mean that the proximity that was developed, the distance that was navigated in global solidarity, was a matter of outsiders motivated to work towards the interests of groups they were not members of.

We argue that the localization of humanitarian aid represents, in part, spreading a reflexive awareness among outside actors that the goal of global solidarity should be to motivate parallel efforts that support the joint interests of those most affected, and wherever possible, do so on their terms. Expressional global solidarity, when localized, does not imply any decrease in commitment. Just as an important part of offering relational support to a friend in crisis would be to avoid making the exchange about oneself, the unidirectional nature of support offered to distant others in expressional global solidarity does not entail a lack of wholehearted empathy. We argue that if empathic responses to humanitarian crises are to accommodate both global solidarity and local empowerment, the primary challenge for outsiders lies in balancing the personal and transformative experience of engaging in global solidarity with a commitment to a supportive role that prioritizes the joint interests of those with greater and more long-lasting proximity to these crises.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article are not publicly available due to restrictions concerning information that could compromise the privacy of research participants.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The fieldwork conducted is in line with NSD guidelines. All research participants have provided their consent for participation in the research project.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

LMS contributed to the overall coordination of the paper, the analysis of existing theories of solidarity and the summary theoretical discussion. HH and HW conducted the fieldwork upon which this paper was based, contributed large portions of the section on methods, and contributed to the discussion and analysis of the fieldwork and interview data, in light of the theoretical framework.

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Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity (CIGS) as new development actors in Norway – an exploration of how and why they emerge

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Abstract

In this chapter we use qualitative interviews and a self-composed database to explore the emergence and operations of CIGS in Norway. In the Norwegian context, as in others (Ishkanian & Shutes, 2021:5), CIGS remain largely autonomous and operate at the outskirts of the formal aid architecture. We argue that certain aspects of Norwegian socialization and efforts towards national and international "branding" are integral to understanding the tension between CIGS and the formal Norwegian aid architecture. We also highlight **the unique combination of proximity and participatory ownership** that seems central to the identity of Norwegian CIGS founders.

Introduction

This chapter explores the emergence of small, informal, aid initiatives based in Norway. We refer to these initiatives as CIGS – citizen initiatives for global solidarity – which are characterized by their flexible, self-organized, and personal approach to providing aid (Shults et al:1). We first encountered a Norwegian-based CIGS during field work for a research project in Tanzania in 2011. Our discussions with the founder led to a journey of discovery during which we became aware of numerous Norwegian-based CIGS working in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Through snowball recruitment, we began interviewing the founders of these CIGS about their motivation and the nature of their operations.

In the Norwegian context, as in others (Ishkanian & Shutes, 2021:5), CIGS remain largely autonomous and operate at the outskirts of the formal aid architecture. To present a multifaceted understanding of their positioning, this chapter will be based on in-depth interviews with five CIGS founders and four directors of Norwegian NGOs. In addition, we present a self-composed database of 307 Norwegian CIGS to offer a broader mapping of where these initiatives operate, what they do, and why they emerged in the first place. We provide a brief introduction to Norwegian civic engagement and foreign development efforts to contextualize our empirical data and the summary discussion.

The importance of context in our analysis of Norwegian CIGS supports Chouliaraki's understanding of global solidarity projects as developed and nurtured through specific combinations of culture and institutions (2021:1). We argue that certain aspects of Norwegian socialization and efforts towards national and international "branding" are integral to understanding the tension between CIGS and the formal Norwegian aid architecture. The Norwegian context is used to highlight the colonizing potential of applying local or national values to trans-local solidarity networks such as CIGS.

Norwegian civic engagement and overseas development aid

Norway is a country of 5,3 million people (SSB, 2022), with a relatively short history as an independent nation state, having been subject to the rule of Denmark for nearly 400 years and part of a union with Sweden from 1814 to 1905. Since gaining independence, the Norwegian non-profit sector has experienced a shift away from religious and tradition-based civic engagement, due in part to the rise of the welfare state (Sivesind et al. 2002).

The first systematic research on voluntary work in Norway was conducted in 1997, as part of the John Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Project (Wollebæk and Sivesind, 2010). The findings showed a willingness among Norwegian citizens to volunteer their time, while direct monetary donations were more limited (Wollebæk and Sivesind 2010:15). This prioritisation of volunteering over donating reflects the centrality of the "dugnadsånd" – the spirit of volunteering – in Norwegian understandings of healthy participation in civil society. While primarily expressed in local contexts, this Norwegian expectation that accepting responsibility for the needs of a community should be cashed out in terms of direct participation can easily be transferred to international or trans-local contexts as well.

Norwegian voluntary activity was observed to be lower in the welfare sector, which could be explained by the strong welfare state, and higher in the fields of culture and leisure – with citizens donating their time to specific, local sports or leisure clubs (Wollebæk and

Sivesind, 2010). In addition to local volunteering, there is general support among the Norwegian population for State-driven development aid on the global scene. In 2020, Norwegian overseas development assistance (ODA) reached the general goal of 1 % of the GDP[1], a level of commitment that has been sustained over the years. The role of the Norwegian state in providing foreign development aid has been vital, and a strong state-NGO relationship has also materialized. Reflecting international trends, Norway saw increases in the growth, number, and influence of NGOs in the 1980s. This wave of NGOs championed less bureaucracy and more flexibility (Tvedt, 1998, 2003, 2007, Borchgrevink, 2004), while providing the Norwegian state with more actors to draw upon.

Coordination and cooperation gradually increased as these NGOs began receiving more financial support from the state. Tvedt (2003:19) has argued that financing the active participation of NGOs in foreign development aid has served the Norwegian state's interests by generating positive, international perceptions of Norway. Development aid has become a substantial part of national identity production and international branding (Østerud 2006, Tvedt, 2007, Witoszek 2011). This branding is also employed at the national level, through what Tvedt refers to as the Norwegian "regime of goodness" (2007: 621). This Norwegian aid regime, a virtual state within a state, includes aid workers, research institutions, and universities that all contribute to studying and legitimizing Norwegian aid politics—while counting on the supportive role of national media in constructing the appropriate imagery (Tvedt, 2007: 621, Witoszek 2011).

Malkki (2015: 202) has observed a similar imagery employed in Finland and describes how "international responsibilities are enacted from childhood in schools, but also in homes and [Finns] thus develop a strong sense of responsibility for and solidarity with disadvantaged others in faraway places". The Norwegian regime of goodness relies on and symbolically connects the local voluntary work of individual citizens and the financial contributions to state-based foreign development aid, primarily generated through taxes. The internalization of this regime of goodness forms part of the national context necessary to understand the emergence of CIGS in Norway.

Despite their increasing number, CIGS continue to be absent from official overviews of Norwegian development aid actors. Our interview data indicates that Norwegian CIGS founders understand their work as both an important contribution to development aid and as a counterweight to the Norwegian NGOs that have become increasingly professionalized and bureaucratized over the course of their continued cooperation with the Norwegian state. In this sense, the recent activity of Norwegian CIGS can be partly understood as an attempt to fill the flexible role that Norwegian NGOs initially took on in the 1980s. The absence of CIGS from official development reports could be explained by CIGS' resistance to the coordination and state-based support that contributed to the eventual bureaucratization of those NGOs.

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[1] 39, 5 billion kroner was given as part of ODA by NORAD in 2020 (www.norad.no)

Methodology and positioning

The discussion in this chapter builds on qualitative, semi-structured interviews conducted between 2013 and 2016, a focus group discussion, and a self-composed database of 307 Norwegian CIGS mentioned in Norwegian newspapers between 2000 and 2016. We conducted five in-depth interviews with Norwegian CIGS founders, four with directors of Norwegian NGOs, and a focus group session with four additional CIGS founders. The founders had all initiated projects in different countries, addressing perceived needs that were related to education and/or health.

The semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interviews with CIGS founders centred around the founders' initial and continued motivation, sources of funding, and the focus of the aid provided. We also established the time frame of the CIGS' activities and asked about local engagement. Given CIGS founders' justification of their work as supplementary or complementary to the work done by Norwegian NGOs, we conducted interviews with NGO directors who had previously acknowledged CIGS. The interviews with the NGO directors focused on their understandings of CIGS as actors in the field, and their perceptions of the relations and potential differences between CIGS and NGOs. All interviews were thematically analysed, and all informants are anonymized.

Our database of CIGS in Norway was composed using an electronic collection (*Retriever Atekst*) of Norwegian newspaper articles. The stories of CIGS found in local Norwegian newspapers call into question the absence of CIGS from official reports of development actors. Through primary searches including terms such as “travelling to help”, “personalized aid”, “development aid and travelling”, “helping, initiative, and personal involvement”, a list of CIGS emerged. This list was then supplemented with information from The Brønnøysund Register Centre (Brønnøysundregisteret), a register of non-profit organisations. In addition, we analysed LinkedIn, Facebook, blogs, and the webpages of the CIGS to map their function and scope. By identifying initiatives through media mentions and then exploring their self-presentation and purpose through various online platforms, we got an overview of how and when the initiatives were established. This process offered insight into the motivations and intentions of these CIGS.

The inclusion criteria for the 307 CIGS in our database are (1) having been established by citizens living in Norway, (2) collecting resources intended to benefit the Global South, and (3) not being a registered NGO. Importantly, while we have elsewhere used a contextual definition of "global solidarity" that was not based on geographic location (Shults et al, 2021: 2), this project's focus on Norwegian citizens involved in projects in the Global South led us to exclude initiatives that provide aid to people *in Norway*. However, we have included Norwegian-based CIGS operating elsewhere in Europe, for example providing aid to refugees arriving from the Global South. The list of initiatives in our database is not exhaustive. For example, the fact that some small newspapers have not digitalized all their content represents one limitation. However, the database is the most comprehensive list available and provides us with a general idea of how CIGS have evolved in Norway, why they emerged, where they operate, and what types of aid they provide.

The emergence of CIGS in Norway: When, where, who, what, and why?

In answering **when** CIGS began to emerge, we found that only a small percentage were established before 2010. The oldest CIGS we could find was founded in 1959, with a total of 21 Norwegian CIGS established between 1959 and 1999. Between 2000 and 2009, we were able to trace the establishment of 69 CIGS, followed by a boom of 217 CIGS emerging between 2010 and 2016.

In terms of **where** these initiatives provide aid, 44 % operate in Africa, 31 % in Europe, 19 % in Asia, and 6 % in Latin-America. Regarding **who** is founding Norwegian CIGS, we looked at gender, education, and age. The gender split was 59 % female and 41 % male. We were able to trace the educational background of nearly half of the founders and found that 85 % had received at least three years of university education. While this data is interesting, we argue that education should not be overemphasized as a factor. The absence of information about the educational background of the other half of the CIGS founders may be due to a lower level of higher education among this group. The founders whose ages were listed ranged between 19 and 82 years old, with an average age of 59. This is in line with research in the Netherlands, that found that most of the initatives we have called CIGS are founded by people over 55 years of age (Kinsbergen and Schulpen, 2015). Those who participated in our interviews and focus group were between 42 and 65 years old.

In terms of analysing **what** needs Norwegian CIGS are targeting, various forms of providing aid to children emerged as the clear frontrunner. Malkki argues that children hold a particular place in the humanitarian imaginary and are often seen both as “the exemplary human and as politically harmless” (2015: 78). A second category of aid focused on the needs of refugees and/or those in in need of immediate assistance after natural disasters. A third set of needs were those of vulnerable women, and a fourth set were directed towards people with special medical needs or disabilities. Of note, all these needs overlap in that they are connected to versions of what Malkki describes as the “suffering stranger” (2015: 7). This suggests that in addition to a sensitivity to the struggles of others, a desire to mediate various forms of distance may be a relevant motivator. Part of our interest in exploring the motivations of Norwegian CIGS founders is related to this choice to volunteer overseas instead of concentrating on the needs of children, vulnerable women, or those with acute medical needs in their local communities.

We discovered a variety of reasons **why** CIGS founders chose to do their work overseas. Over a third of the CIGS in our database referred to an encounter with poverty and suffering while on vacation as an initial trigger for founding their initiatives. Other founders mentioned pre-existing connections to foreign countries through friendships, marriage, work, education, or birthplace. Previous experience with development aid was another reason given, as were various forms of religious calling. Importantly, many CIGS founders mention a combination of these triggers, such as feeling a religious calling generated by an experience on vacation. The founders also repeatedly emphasize a need for small actors operating at the outskirts of what they consider to be an overly professional and bureaucratic aid establishment that does not allow for folk engagement.

Through our analysis of CIGS’ webpages, we encountered a variety of origin stories, as well as goals of creating a better future, developing friendships, and providing hope and opportunities to others. Most frequently voiced, was the desire to provide help to others in a difficult situation. We understand this as an expression of what Malkki has described as the need to be connected to “something greater than oneself” (2015: 10). While both the need to help and need to connect are prevalent, our interviews demonstrated that CIGS founders were also motivated by their convictions about the value of certain skills and knowledge, the proximity and effectiveness of CIGS, as well as the value of providing an alternative to large, bureaucratic NGOs.

The online analysis of the self-presentation of Norwegian CIGS and the interview data both support a typology of the starting points of aid workers developed in our previous research (Haaland and Wallevik 2017). There we distinguished between (1) accidental aid workers, (2) aid-entrepreneurs, (3) young travellers/solidarity workers and (4) trans-locals. **Accidental aid workers** include those inspired by a chance encounter overseas. **Aid entrepreneurs** are those that have previous experience with development work and start their own initiatives to continue projects previously run by other organizations, or due to a work-based awareness of unmet needs. The **young travellers/solidarity workers** are those that start initiatives due to formative experiences in their youth such as exchange programs, educational travel, or early hands-on exposure to foreign development aid. Finally, in this context, the **trans-locals** are Norwegian citizens who collaborate with other people living in Norway who are originally from, and still connected to, the location where the CIGS is providing aid.

The five founders

Nils, a man in his fifties, illustrates the accidental aid worker. Nils had no previous experience with development work but started his own initiative after an experience on vacation. Struck by the poverty he witnessed; he gave a loan to a poor family he met. Since then, Nils has founded an initiative that both builds schools and provides health services. Trygve, another man in his fifties, had previous experience with a project funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). When NORAD decided to cut funding after five years, Trygve founded his own initiative and thus represents the category of aid entrepreneur.

Rita, a woman in her thirties, became interested in development work through her friend Daniel, a former refugee. Daniel told Rita about the situation of those he had met in a refugee camp and about his own efforts to send money. Daniel was able to establish a microfinance group for some of the women in the camp as well as organizing health seminars. When Rita joined him, their activities expanded to other sites. Daniel and Rita thus exemplify the category of trans-locals. Due to issues of availability, our interview was with Rita and not Daniel.

Maria and Martin, a woman and a man who were both in their thirties, inherited responsibility for a CIGS that their father founded over twenty years ago. As this CIGS played a formative role during their adolescence, Maria and Martin fit the category of young solidarity workers. When their father died, they felt that they had an obligation to maintain the presence that their father's CIGS had in a local community. This presence and the activities funded, have been quite steady due to a stable, private funding base.

Despite their different entry points into development aid, all five of the CIGS founders interviews expressed being motivated by **the need to help**. As Nils put it, “we want to help the poorest of the poor with health services and education”. Where Nils first saw the needs in the field, Rita became aware of them through her friend. She explained, “When he told me about the work, I decided to support him. We cannot help everyone, but we can help people find hope and strength to survive the everyday struggle”. Trygve, Maria, and Martin also expressed their eagerness to maintain their involvement in CIGS, arguing that the people in the communities they help need their continued support.

The direct application of specific knowledge and skills is one factor the CIGS founders mentioned as a unique benefit of their personal approach to development aid. For example, Rita stressed the value of Daniel’s first-hand knowledge of the needs in the refugee camps.

> My friend can see the needs from the perspective on the ground. We can change quickly as an initiative, and we don’t have to spend money on sending out people to stay in for six months only to get to know the area

Trygve also emphasized the role that his professional knowledge and skills play in his initiative,

> I have tried to learn something from the experience of others. I have a type of skill which is not easily applied in an NGO, for instance like (name). In my initiative I can use my skills

Both Rita and Trygve’s comments are clearly directed towards the perceived inefficiencies of NGOs.

The effectiveness and proximity of their work was also mentioned by all five founders as a reason to prefer engagement via CIGS. In some cases, the possibility of bypassing bureaucratic red tape can help CIGS mobilize and adapt quickly to developing and intersecting needs. Rita commented on how Daniel’s connections allowed them to respond at a faster pace than the larger aid actors. At a more personal level, Nils added that “…proximity to the project is motivating. When we can complete a project quickly and cost-effectively and see the impacts on the ground, it is so much fun”. The enjoyment of this proximity is something Nils provides to his CIGS’ funders as well. Visiting the projects that they are contributing towards, at their own financial expense, is an opportunity offered yearly. Maria and Martin also offer annual trips to funders. The satisfaction of proximity is reflected in many of the CIGS' websites.

The **low administrative costs** made possible by the lack of administrative expenses is also celebrated by several of the founders. We interpret this as an additional element of the critique of established NGOs as overly bureaucratic and incapable of folk engagement. Maria said she was impressed by what a small community of donors could achieve through relatively small financial contributions. Nils made a similar argument saying, "The way we work we can operate a project for 100 000 NOKS (about 10 500 euros), but if you were to do it in an NGO, you would have to multiply the cost by ten". This statement is echoed by the other interview participants, who emphasize the rewards of seeing how projects evolve, even with limited funds. The argument that CIGS achieve high efficiency through low administrative costs, is repeated frequently on the webpages of Norwegian CIGS.

The benefits of CIGS presented here are simultaneously critiques of established NGOs. Maria and Martin connect arguments for cost-efficiency to arguments against working though what they call the "professional aid industry". As they see it, engaging with larger NGOs and NORAD goes against their sensation of ownership to their project. Nils has a similar understanding, repeatedly stating his need to keep things simple and ensure that money is spent in the most efficient way. Trygve expressed that the regulations governing NORAD funds and NGOs would place too many restrictions on his work:

> The kind of work we do requires a long-term perspective. NORAD, the ministry of foreign affairs currently only supports good governance, democracy and they are not interested in health work that requires a long-term perspective beyond five to ten years. What we do is more sustainable, we won't pull out that early. Building a health system is not done in one project period. A few years is only the beginning.

As with many of the other CIGS founders, Trygve is frustrated with established actors and the guidelines they adhere to. In his opinion, aid goes beyond the hegemonic discourse of good governance. In addition to desires to help, to provide proximity, and to keep spending efficient; we see here a desire to embody an alternative to the established aid actors.

The four NGO directors

Although CIGS are not formally acknowledged as actors in the Norwegian aid architecture, NGOs are keenly aware of their presence. In these interviews we were primarily concerned with how Norwegian NGO directors view CIGS – and to what extent the NGOs resonate with the CIGS' critique of increasing bureaucratization. We found that the NGO directors agreed to a certain extent with the discussion of costs, reflecting mostly a frustration with the cost of maintaining control of large organizations. Per, a man in his sixties, was quite critical of how his own organization and others are bound by regulations tied to public funding:

> NORAD has become very focused on Norwegian rules and Norwegian regulations. [Government funded] Development aid is increasingly critiqued by the media. It is a control regime, and keeping control is very expensive. You know the level of Norwegian salaries. NORAD is losing its focus on the Global South. There is no doubt that NGOs and small initiatives can do things better. I would like to see a reformation of NORAD. The large NGOs have too many people employed in Norway to meet the control needs. (…) We are forgetting the needs of the South.

His critique is echoed by Kenneth, a man in his forties, as the director of another well-established Norwegian NGO:

> It is quite tragic how the big organizations have become too bureaucratic; it is not good for NORAD or for the organizations. They develop big administrations, they become rigid, they grow too big—which means that they don't have room for folk engagement anymore.

Kenneth's comment on "folk engagement" seems to acknowledge the point made by the CIGS founders' about the value of proximity. Kenneth's critique also mirrors the CIGS founders' arguments about the benefits of low administrative costs and an efficient and non-bureaucratic structure.

Increasingly, the NGOs find themselves competing with CIGS over private funds. As Ingrid, a woman in her forties, stated:

> The number or actors out there in steadily increasing. You can, for instance, through new digital platforms choose to support a very concrete task—like buying a sewing machine in an African village. Then you give to a particular goal and not to an organization. The trust in the established organizations like ours is crumbling. One of our large private donors told me how he now increasingly searches online for a project to support that excites him, and then he moves on to the next one. It is increasingly challenging to find loyal donors.

The emergence of CIGS in the context of Norwegian aid has led to a struggle for funds. NGOs must now compete for the attention and loyalty of donors, against initiatives that promise relatable narratives, quick results, tangible outputs, and cost-efficiency. However, some NGOs argue that an overemphasis of cost-efficiency and maintaining low administration costs can make CIGS less trustworthy. Kenneth argued for a balance between folk engagement and the importance of administrative oversight:

> …if donors require proximity to the projects, the NGOs need to provide that… and if the donors want transparency and accountability, the NGOS must provide that. And it all costs money and requires administrative work... I don't believe those who argue that there are no administration costs. If that were the case, I would not spend money on them.

It is clear that the NGOS are influenced by the presence of CIGS. Still, these CIGS remain unacknowledged as official development actors. While CIGS insist on proximity and resist high administrative costs, the NGOs resist the lack of legitimacy that accompanies an overemphasis of folk engagement and a lack of professionalism.

We have interpreted the resistance expressed by CIGS founders towards the idea of being incorporated in the Norwegian State-NGO apparatus as both expressing an anti-establishment critique and an attempt to embody an alternative to these established aid actors. Based on the interviews, it appears that both efforts focus on *how development is being done* rather than contesting what needs to be accomplished. In other words, CIGS understand themselves as offering a more personal, direct, cost-efficient version of what might be considered typical NGO work. The summary discussion uses aspects of the Norwegian context to develop a concept that we argue captures the primary drawback of this alternative—a misguided sense of **robust participatory ownership**.

CIGS as new development actors in Norway: Discussion and concluding reflections

We suggest that the emergence of CIGS as a distinct type of aid actor in the Norwegian context, and the observed resistance to their integration into the formal Norwegian aid architecture, can be usefully connected to a unique sense of participatory ownership that resonates with the Norwegian "dugnadsånd" or "spirit of volunteering". This connection will be developed and explored to argue that the unique advantages and challenges of Norwegian CIGS are best understood through the compound intersections of the local "dugnad", the use of a national identity in the socialization of Norwegian citizens, and reactions to Norwegian efforts to establish and maintain an international "brand" through development efforts abroad.

Beginning with the resistance to integration, our interviews revealed a degree of mutual interest in maintaining a clear distinction between Norwegian CIGS and the state-NGO aid apparatus. The absence of CIGS from official accounts of Norwegian aid could be explained as an effort to maintain professional legitimacy, both internationally and in relation to the national moral identity that Tvedt refers to as the "regime of goodness" (2007). This suggests a potential role for Norwegian CIGS as a competing brand that challenges the symbolic monopoly of the regime of goodness and its coordinated reproduction in Norwegian research and media coverage. This interpretation is supported by connections between CIGS and the resistance of coordination in other contexts (Haaland & Wallevik 2019:1880; Shults et al. 2021:10). Understood in this way, CIGS embody an alternative approach to development projects by emphasizing the value of proximity, flexibility, and personal connection. This alternative approach challenges the distribution of responsibilities within the Norwegian regime of goodness. Traditionally, Norwegian citizens are expected to participate directly to maintaining and developing local communities through volunteering, and indirectly to development abroad through taxes. The Norwegian CIGS founders extend the direct involvement characteristic of domestic volunteering to overseas development, thereby challenging the assumption that foreign aid is exclusively the responsibility of established aid actors. Through resisting professionalization and bureaucratization, CIGS offer concrete reminders that the Norwegian "dugnadsånd" can be extended beyond Norwegian borders without the direct involvement of the state or NGOs.

Importantly, the "dugnadsånd" is simultaneously central to the national image and to a local sense of civic duty, with important, socio-culturally specific connotations for the volunteering entailed. Traditionally, the performance of a "dugnad" is connected to a sense of responsible, participatory, collective ownership of a local community. Common examples of performing a "dugnad" include volunteering time to clean shared public spaces or to maintain or repair local institutions such as schools or athletic facilities. Therefore, the expectation to perform a "dugnad" is usually limited to small groups such as the families of children that attend a certain school, the residents of a specific neighbourhood, or the members of a sports club.

However, despite the local or membership-based expectations of such collective volunteering, the celebration of the "dugnadsånd" as an element of the Norwegian national identity should not be underestimated. A poll taken in 2004 through the TV program "Typisk Norsk", meaning typically or characteristically Norwegian, crowned "dugnad" as Norway's national word. More recently, the first episode of a 2019 TV program "Sånn er Norge", meaning "What Norway is like", treated the performance of "dugnad" as particularly emblematic of Norwegian values. Both programs were produced through the state-owned, broadcasting corporation NRK—thus offering clear examples of the role of national media in reproducing the Norwegian regime of goodness.

The performance and idealization of "dugnad" as an important aspect of the socialization of Norwegian citizens, combined with the "strong sense of responsibility for and solidarity with disadvantaged others in faraway places" observed by Malkki (2015:202); can easily translate into the assumption that Norwegians motivated by a sense of global citizenship should geographically extend their willingness to volunteer through trans-local initiatives such as CIGS. The use of a national identity in generating motivational resources for projects of global solidarity is not inherently problematic (Lenard et. al., 2010; Rozakou 2017). Throughout this chapter we have presented potential, positive aspects of the direct, participatory approach of CIGS, such as proximity, effectiveness, and cost-efficiency. However, we argue that the relationship between proximity and participatory ownership must be reconsidered when shifting from a local or national context to a trans-local or global context.

Drawing on Ashley Taylor's distinction between robust solidarity and expressional solidarity (2015), we argue that it is imperative to develop a nuanced understanding of what we will call robust and expressional senses of participatory ownership. Taylor understands **robust solidarity** as generated through reciprocal obligations between members of established, local communities. These obligations are invoked in order to deal with shared interests that cannot be met individually. In contrast, **expressional solidarity** is generated when outsiders recognize the legitimacy and urgency of the shared interests of a robust solidary group and become motivated to make this out-group's challenges their own. Expressional solidarity is therefore invaluable in motivating and sustaining solidarity networks that extend beyond local, established in-groups.

We find that an appreciation of the differences in the normative compositions of these two types of solidarity grounds the appropriateness of the term CIGS in the Norwegian context—describing global solidarity projects undertaken by Norwegian citizens who accept a sense of ownership over the injustices and challenges facing a distant and disadvantaged out-group. Taylor specifies that both robust and expressional solidarity entail "adopting the group's interests as one's own interests and linking the achievement of such interests to one's own well-being" (Taylor, 2015:133). While we argue that the solidarity demonstrated by CIGS is expressional in Taylor's sense, this should not be understood as implying a weak or impersonal commitment. This distinction acknowledges the value of CIGS' contributions, but also suggests that the origins of those contributions matter.

We can thus conceptualize a sense of **expressional participatory ownership** over a project as the result of acting on the interests of out-groups in a way that makes their interests a part of one's own well-being and identity. In such contexts, taking ownership over these interests means something like taking responsibility or taking initiative. The parallels to the CIGS are not difficult to see. However, while clearly representing a level of motivation that is both demanding and morally praiseworthy, the expressional act of taking ownership should not be confused with the sense of **robust participatory ownership** generated by the non-voluntary commitments shared by the members of the affected in-group. The possibility for a confusion of these two types of ownership, in which the priorities of those participating voluntarily eclipse the priorities of those acting on robust obligations, carries with it a serious colonizing potential. This distinction is critical to the ethical dimensions of CIGS, as there is a greater chance for a confusion between these two types of ownership when connections between insiders and outsiders are direct and personal.

It is challenging to strike the appropriate balance between applauding the willingness of Norwegian CIGS founders to make the interests of distant others "their own", while simultaneously emphasizing the importance of maintaining a reflexive awareness of their position as outsiders. There is an intuitive unreasonableness to a call for global solidarity that makes the demand: "Actively make the challenges of distant others your own in a personal and transformative way, but don't make it about you". It may be easiest for existentially secure inhabitants of the Global North to conceptualize the nuanced tensions between expressional participatory ownership and robust participatory ownership using an example that deemphasizes the naturalized assumption that development involves the unidirectional flow of aid from the Global North to the Global South.

Imagine a Norwegian community where an important, shared need is not being met. There is a healthy "dugnadsånd" within this community such that the members are willing to put in the voluntary work necessary to meet that need. However, this community lacks the necessary tools or funding to complete the project due to an unjust distribution of resources for which they are not to blame. Now imagine that a group of empathic outsiders from another community became aware of this injustice and financed the "dugnad", even visiting and volunteering their own labour from time to time. While one can certainly imagine the recipient community appreciating the support, and even adopting a few outsiders as honorary members of their community in some regards, it is not difficult to imagine the tensions that might eventually emerge if the outsiders insisted on directing and controlling the project. One can also imagine how those tensions might be compounded if the outsiders' contributions were connected to a foreign religious tradition, foreign views on gender-roles, an alternative political ideology, etc.

The aim of this example is to highlight the uneven positions of power in translocal networks such as CIGS, and the potential disempowerment of recipients of aid that can result from the conflation of expressional and robust participatory ownership. At the same time, this example makes it clear that the critique outlined here is not directed towards the intentions of CIGS as empathic outsiders. Yet, despite good intentions, there is a sense in which the recipient community in the example above has lost their ownership over the process of their community's development. This highlights the importance of what we have elsewhere referred to as actively "caring without assuming the role of a caretaker" (Shults et al., 2021: 7).

We argue that the conflation of expressional and robust senses of participatory ownership is unsurprising when the equation of solidarity with the Norwegian "dugnadsånd" is presented alongside the importance of "responsibility for and solidarity with disadvantaged others in faraway places" (Malkki 2015:202). Avoiding this conflation, while maintaining the benefits the Norwegian CIGS founders expressed, is a matter of recognizing that the "responsibility for" disadvantaged others that Malkki refers to is not the paternalistic responsibility of a caretaker. Similarly, we argue that the "solidarity with" disadvantaged others, that Malkki describes as a characteristic goal of Scandinavian societies, should be aimed at the coproduction of development. This proposed shift away from paternalism and towards coproduction will be impossible if CIGS founders feel entitled to a sense of robust participatory ownership over projects that they are contributing towards voluntarily.

Importantly, in discussing the dangers of assumptions about ownership, uneven power relations, paternalism, and colonialism in relation to Norwegian CIGS, we do not mean to suggest that NGOs or state-driven development projects are inherently preferable. The work of Norwegian CIGS founders offers valuable and concrete challenges to the regime of goodness, and legitimate concerns regarding the connections between more professional, bureaucratic forms of aid and neo-colonialism are plentiful (Becker 2020; Langan 2018; Ashdown & Buck 2018). The potential for a highly professionalized, state-funded, aid monopoly that is preoccupied with international branding and optics is no less unsettling than the potential for informal, small-scale development projects to slip into a misguided sense of ownership. The goal of this discussion is simply to highlight **the unique combination of proximity and participatory ownership** that seems central to the identity of Norwegian CIGS founders.

Recall, for example, Maria and Martin's comment that working with NGOs would go against the sense of ownership they felt towards their project. It appears that the personal, proximity-based sense of ownership expressed by these CIGS founders makes them uncomfortable with the idea of being connected to the international brand of professionalized, Norwegian development aid. The value of the proximity provided by CIGS was acknowledged by Kenneth, the director of a well-established NGO, who lamented the size and administrative restrictions of larger organizations and their inability to promote "folk engagement". The sentiments expressed by Maria, Martin, and Kenneth point to the intuitive appeal of proximity and hands-on aid characterized by "people helping people"—the appeal of volunteers motivated to form personal connections and resist the procedural approach of a faceless bureaucracy.

However, our distinction between expressional and robust participatory ownership draws attention to the fact that the celebrated proximity of these Norwegian CIGS is valuable, but unidirectional. While perhaps less noticeable in the case of the CIGS founders themselves, this unidirectional component is glaringly obvious in the appeal of yearly funder visits. In either case, the proximity developed through "folk engagement" or "people helping people" is not built in a vacuum. Agency, mobility, control, and both the geographic and the symbolic "space" in which this proximity is developed matter. The proximity of which CIGS are capable involves privileged outsiders voluntarily "moving closer" to the worlds of distant others. As these "distant worlds" are already populated, the potential for inadvertent colonization must be recognized.

We have argued that this can be poignantly illustrated using a distinction between the robust participatory ownership generated by shared responsibilities within a local community and the expressional participatory ownership generated through the active contributions of empathic outsiders. In the Norwegian context, this is exemplified by the argument that the values and assumptions inherent in the local or national "dugnadsånd" must be reconceptualized when applied to global and trans-local solidarity networks. Tapping into the celebrated Norwegian "dugnadsånd" to motivate personal responsibility and direct involvement in foreign development can offer an attractive alternative to the state-NGO apparatus, as long as those participating recognize their position as outsiders. While CIGS offer unique benefits and have an important role to play in present and future development aid, we argue that the sense of participatory ownership to which CIGS founders are entitled **must be recognized as expressional**.

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Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity (CIGS), frontier Africans, and experiences of translocal networking

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Abstract:

In this chapter we use three case studies of citizen aid in Uganda to argue for an expanded understanding of CIGS that aims to accomodate the perspectives of CIGS partners in the global South. By emphasizing Southern experiences of expanding funding networks and the transition from local citizen aid to CIGS, we invite Northern funders and future researchers to reflect on the uneven power dynamics that are inherent in CIGS. Through connections between our empirical data and literature on translocality, African espitemology, and Nyamnjoh's concept of "frontier Africans" (2017), we discuss the benefits of a non-essentialized and relational approach to place and autonomy.

Introduction:

This chapter presents and discusses three cases in which local, citizen-driven, Ugandan projects developed into Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity (CIGS) after securing funding, primarily from donors in the global North. CIGS have been previously described as initiatives that are "set up by private persons in the global North and aimed at improving the living standards of people in the global South" (Schulpen & Huyse 2017: 163). While acknowledging that the funding for each of the three initiatives presented in this chapter can be meaningfully described as flowing from the global North to the global South, we widen our understanding of CIGS to cover initiatives that are not initially "set up" by a partner in the

North. This conceptualization of CIGS allows for the inclusion of projects started by Southern partners that “go global” when their funding networks expand.

Instead of rejecting the language of global North and global South altogether, we prefer to apply a non-essentialized understanding of these terms as concepts that are “created, imagined, invented, maintained, and recreated by the ever-changing and never fixed status positions of social actors and institutions” (Kloß 2017:1). Our use of North and South as designators that are constantly renegotiated through various forms of mobility connects to our understanding of CIGS as translocal networks in which translocality offers a “space in which new forms of (post)national identity are constituted” (Mandaville 2002: 204). This approach allows for an analysis of concrete connections between place, identity, and mobility while simultaneously acknowledging the fluidity and impermanence of these connections.

By engaging Ugandan perspectives, we aim to emphasize the experiences of Southern CIGS partners. As such, this work is relevant to both ongoing debates regarding the localization of aid and efforts towards a decolonialization of the discourse of development. We connect the empirical data presented in this chapter to translocality, African epistemology, and Francis Nyamnjoh’s concept of “frontier Africans” (2017). Using these concepts, the summary discussion explores and contextualizes the tensions inherent in CIGS through competing understandings of place and autonomy. In this way, we aim to present a differently situated account of CIGS that resists the tendency to study citizen aid through the unit of the individual and the perspective of the global North.

Methodology and positioning:

This chapter builds on empirical data gathered by Korsvik, one of this chapter’s authors, while she was working on her masters’ thesis (2021). Korsvik is Ugandan, but has lived in Norway for the past 15 years. Korsvik approached her data collection with the explicit goal of presenting a view from the global South. For this reason, this chapter distinguishes itself from studies that rely more heavily on the gaze of Northern researchers. In addition, Korsvik’s contacts and her previous experience with fundraising for Ugandan initiatives offered valuable entry points and helped in finding relevant informants. Part of the motivation for writing this chapter was generated through discussions of Korsvik’s experience with locally run initiatives in Uganda and the ways in which these initiatives changed after gaining funding through actors in the global North.

The interviews discussed in this chapter were the result of a purposeful sampling strategy, initially focused on connections between citizen initiatives in Uganda and Norwegian funders. An initial search through The Norwegian Control Committee for Fundraising (Innsamlingskontrollen) was used to find Norwegian funding networks that were contributing to CIGS in Uganda. All three of the cases discussed in this chapter therefore involve initiatives operating in Uganda, with funding networks that include Norway. While this limits opportunities for generalization, the goal of this chapter is to use the experiences of three Southern CIGS partners to argue for increased openness to context and perspectival differences. As such, we find the limited scope of the data presented here to be relevant, but ultimately unproblematic.

Due to COVID 19 related restrictions, the interviews had to be conducted on Zoom. As computer access and familiarity with Zoom presented obstacles, a local research assistant was hired and familiarized with the project. The assistant joined the informants in their homes and thus played an important role in the interview process. The study was approved by both the National Council for Science and Technology at Makerere University and by the Norwegian Centre for Research data. All interviews were thematically analyzed, and all informants are anonymized.

Three Case Studies:

The first case study follows the instrumental role that a woman named Grace has played in linking Northern funders to a local, family-based, aid initiative in the rural community in Uganda where Grace was born and raised. She recalls her childhood in a village that lacked a primary school, forcing her and the other children to walk for hours every day to receive a basic education. She still remembers the pain in her legs, the heat, and the exhaustion from this daily ordeal. As a teenager, Grace was able to attend a boarding school where she was trained as a teacher. As an adult she moved to France and has been living there since.

Over a decade ago, Grace brought two of her French friends on a trip back to Uganda that would prove important for all three. Her friends, a married couple in their sixties, were overwhelmed by the hardships the people in Grace's hometown faced. Upon returning to France, Grace was surprised by the urgency with which the couple told their friends and family about the levels of poverty and need they had witnessed. When Grace's friends expressed a desire to contribute something concrete, a natural choice was to support the local work that Grace's mother had been engaged in for years. This work was primarily aimed at providing educational opportunities for children, but Grace's family also had a history of offering food and other forms of assistance to the neediest members of their local community.

Grace's friends began fundraising in France and used the money collected to help build a school on a plot of land that was donated by Grace's family. As is common in such projects, the school bears the name of the French couple. This powerful experience of effective, translocal networking made Grace aware of the willingness among French people to contribute to projects that are able to circumnavigate the bureaucracy of established organizations. Not only have the French contributions remained steady, but the network of funding also continues to expand through new connections. Grace's sister lives in the UK and has been able to mobilize a local network of funders there. Another relative lives in Norway and has been able to gather financial resources as well as clothing and equipment for the Ugandan schoolchildren. Grace has also developed a partnership with a Ugandan teacher living in the US. The resources generated through this partnership have funded the construction of a second school in a neighboring Ugandan community. Contributions from the local Ugandans remain important, but consist primarily of food and labor rather than financial resources.

Grace's experience of translocal networking can point us towards one of the central questions surrounding the more inclusive conceptualization of CIGS offered in this chapter. While it is clear that the project in this case study relies on informal citizen aid and a translocal flow of resources that collectively supports local projects in the global South, the use of the term CIGS should not be applied carelessly. On the one hand, the expansion of the funding network could be interpreted as Grace's mother's local work "going global" and thus marking the shift to a CIGS. On the other hand, the French couple could also be interpreted as founding and organizing their own CIGS. This latter interpretation would suggest that Grace's mother's work remains a form of local citizen aid and the network organized by the French couple represents a CIGS that functions as a back donor.

Such an interpretation would resonate with the definition of CIGS as set up by private persons in the global North in an attempt to improve conditions in the global South. The consequences of this distinction can be pivotal regarding control and ownership of the schools and their funding. Does the support generated by the French couple, or any of the other local funding networks outside of Uganda, represent an expansion or an evolution of a pre-existing local initiative or are they instead new actors that have entered the global aid scene on their own terms and with their own, independent agendas? Emphasizing Grace's experience can suggest the former understanding. Especially as the connections made outside of Uganda were facilitated by relatives and former members of Grace's home village, the influx of resources can be meaningfully understood as recruited through a mobile diaspora in this particular case.

The second case study focuses on the journey of Benoni, a man who works to address the post-war trauma that is prevalent in his home village in one of the northern provinces of Uganda. This province has struggled to recover from war and the destabilization of the region caused by Joseph Kony and The Lord's Resistance Army (Dunn 2004; Vinci 2006), while simultaneously accommodating refugees from South Sudan. Benoni has a degree in banking and finance that was secured through a scholarship to a university in the capital, Kampala. Benoni attempted to work in the capital after finishing his education, but trauma from the war made it difficult to concentrate on his job. Returning to his home village after several years in Kampala, he discovered that many people were living with similar struggles. Benoni reflected:

> My village is not very big, and these kinds of stories are not unique… It was good for me to understand that there were others who had such experiences…even though it was very painful. It felt good to be surrounded with the same bitter people inside just like me… I knew I wanted to forgive. But I was not sure how.

Benoni contacted an NGO working on trauma and learned about treatment from a foreign doctor. Benoni worked for the NGO before eventually founding a local initiative in his own village. Benoni's project, which started in 2008, aims to provide healing, hope, and restored identity after the war. Benoni's initiative offers trauma counselling, faith-based support, and helps those who were forced to flee during the war to resettle in their home community. Benoni is convinced that the people in his village need to learn how to forgive, but that this cannot happen without support and training in the healthy processing of difficult emotions. Benoni said that he has never before felt as useful to those around him as he does now.

Benoni's contacts in Kampala were crucial to the initial success of his efforts. During his studies, Benoni became acquainted with the children of several wealthy, urban families, and he has been able to draw on those connections. For example, he was introduced to the owner of a recreation center in Kampala who volunteered the center to Benoni for monthly fundraiser meetings. The owner of the center has roots near the rural area in which Benoni's initiative works. This bond allowed for a shared sense of identity, as Benoni expressed:

> I am humbled by the contributions of my brothers when I reach out to them. For me all people originating from this village are my brothers. They all understand the word…Kony Rebels ...this binds us together.

Benoni's initiative also extends outside of Uganda, through a network of Ugandan architects and engineers living in diaspora. This network has contributed expert knowledge regarding the building of resettlement houses as well as providing a major source of fundraising. The diaspora has created enough financial stability for Benoni to hire two staff members.

Two of the Ugandan fundraisers working in Norway were interviewed about their engagement in the initiative. Ocha, a man in his forties, comes from the same village as Benoni but has worked as an oil engineer in Norway for the past twenty years. Eddy, a man in his fifties, has a background as a social worker. Eddy left Uganda to escape the war and first settled in Great Britain, but later married a Norwegian woman and moved to Norway. Eddy remembers hearing about Benoni's work for the first time:

> I met Benoni through an old friend of mine now living in the UK. He told me it was possible to go back to the village and that people were more civilized, but I needed to get in touch with one he referred to as a 'saint'. (Laughs) Then he put me in contact with Benoni. It is a long story… but I went home for the first time after twenty years and I feel humbled and at peace.

Both Ocha and Eddy raise funds through their contacts in Norway. However, Eddy mentions that it seems easier when his Norwegian wife asks for donations:

> I suspect it is easier for my wife to reach out to potential donors than myself. Hmm… I think maybe they trust her more than me… but I am the one who is from that place.

Despite the possible advantage Eddy's wife may have in reaching potential Norwegian donors, he is confident that his background as a social worker also represents an important resource in developing strategies for the work being done by the initiative and for the fundraising efforts.

While contributions from an extended network of funders has allowed Benoni to expand his work, his experiences with interest from the global North have not all been positive. Benoni tried to work directly with someone who promised him additional support through a Northern NGO. This individual travelled to Uganda to visit Benoni's initiative and offered funding, but Benoni explains:

> Unfortunately, the conditions I was given made me decline the grant. I was asked to let the person be the owner and founder of the organization. This was the only way of getting the funding. To me that would be like selling my soul and I said it was not possible.

This was not the only instance in which potential donors asked Benoni to leave his initiative in the hands of others. He expressed concern regarding bureaucratic organizations collecting money that never reaches its potential beneficiaries, and concluded:

> We do not want to end in such troubles. We have actually seen many organizations who fall apart by accepting such traps.

Benoni's experience offers a second case that invites reflections on the translocal expansion of funding networks and issues of Northern control. Again, the role of a diaspora of mobile Ugandans fundraising internationally can lend credence to an interpretation of Benoni's initiative as expanding or "going global" in a way that might legitimate it as a CIGS under our wider definition. However, Benoni's resistance of outside control raises an important question—in the absence of globally shared control, is it appropriate to categorize funding networks as CIGS? While Benoni retaining control could be described as appropriate to those who support the localization of aid, if the only contributions from abroad are financial then one might argue that the 'global solidarity' being shown more closely resembles charity. While acknowledging the contextual value of alternative interpretations, we argue that the CIGS label is appropriate in this case as well. As exemplified by Eddy's use of his background in social work to contribute to the CIGS's strategy, the diaspora of Ugandan architects and engineers are actively involved and represents a sense of shared global control. Their mobility is key to understanding the dynamics of translocal networks, and dismissing their global situatedness because of their connections to their home village would be an oversimplification of the situation.

The third case study looks at the work of Adroa, a man who founded a CIGS that funds a primary school in his hometown in central Uganda. Adroa expressed how lucky he felt to have a stable income, and a job that allowed him to work abroad. After inheriting land from his father, he decided to do something to benefit the local community and began the process of building a school in 2004. In its initial phase, this project was financed exclusively through Adroa's savings. Adroa was working in Japan at the time, but regularly returned to help with the construction of the school. He expressed the powerful sense of meaning that this project gave to his life, a meaning that he believed could only be found by giving "ekibegabega", or "a shoulder to lean on" to others.

Members of Adroa's church community in Japan learned about his initiative and asked for a presentation of his project. This turned out to be vital to the evolution of the initiative. As Adroa put it:

> This presentation opened up a light in the tunnel. I honestly don't know how long it could have taken us to build our community school… if not for the support from my friends in Japan.

The funding mobilized through the church enabled the quick and efficient construction of a school which currently has 200 students ranging from ages seven to fifteen. Importantly, the school is still dependent on external funding both for supplies and for the salaries of the teachers and maintenance staff.

Adroa married a Ugandan woman living in Norway and has now been there for the past eight years. He was welcomed into his wife's Norwegian church, which now forms an additional part of the translocal funding network for his CIGS. Due to the increase in funding, Adroa's initiative has been able to expand its activities to include providing clean drinking water to the those living close to the school. Despite living in Norway, Adroa expressed that his connection to the Japanese community remains strong:

> I am in close touch with my Japanese friends. They mean a lot to me. In fact, our wedding in 2015 had to be Japan because my friends wanted to be a part of it… because my project still gets support from my friends.

In Norway, contributions also come from outside of the church community, with local businesses donating funds, clothes, sports equipment and first-aid kits.

Adroa's experience is perhaps least problematic in terms of shifting from local citizen aid to a CIGS, as the two primary organizations supporting his work are church communities that he is a part of. Adroa's case exemplifies the importance of mobility in expanding funding networks, as he explicitly acknowledges his stable income and ability to travel as factors that allow him to invest in his village. The economic and geographic mobility of the Southern partners is an important factor in the other two cases as well. Grace's education and relocation to France were key in making connections between the French funders and her Ugandan community. Similarly, Benoni's connections in Kampala provided the initial impetus for the expansion of his project. We will further explore the experiences of the expanding, translocal, funding networks in the summary discussion. Here we further contextualize the work of Grace, Benoni, and Adroa, as well as their mobility across the boundary of North and South.

Funders, founders, and frontier Africans

We have presented three Ugandan CIGS as translocal networks that have the potential to offer flexible and efficient aid in response to specific, local needs—while simultaneously acknowledging that flexibility, efficiency, and even aid are not inherently emancipatory. The origins and evolutions of the three CIGS described in this chapter invite critical reflections on an understanding of citizen aid that relies too heavily on individualistic and essentialistic concepts of autonomy and place. Central to both the concept of translocality and the narratives of the Ugandans, lies an attempt to find meaning in the experience of "situatedness during mobility" (Brickell & Datta, 2011: 3). In the following discussion we aim to make room for a non-Eurocentric understanding of the multiple and conflicting perspectives of the actors involved in translocal networks.

In particular, Southern experiences of translocality and development must be taken seriously if we are to do justice to "the diverse and contradictory effects of interconnectedness between places, institutions, and actors" (Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013: 375). In other words, we should not only expect intersecting forms of situatedness to lead to different perspectives on citizen aid—but contradictory perspectives. Rather than suggesting that these contradictions must be resolved, the following discussion looks to explore the value of connections that embrace incompleteness. The use of Ugandan examples to ground this discussion should be read as a presentation of underrepresented, collective, and relational approaches to citizen aid and not as attempts to offer a generalized Southern perspective.

Beginning with Grace's experience, the connection she was able to facilitate between her mothers' work and her French friends' "global support" could certainly be understood as marking the shift from a local initiative to a CIGS. The influx of resources from France clearly changed the efficiency, scope, and priorities of the project. Similarly, the continued expansion of the network of donors to Norway, the UK, and the US facilitated the construction of a second school. There is no question that this fluid, expanding, translocal development project could not exist in its current form without backing from outside Uganda. However, it is interesting to note how quickly the use of the term "funders" slides into the term "founders"—especially when aid is being sent from the Global North to the Global South. One can reasonably ask whether Grace's mother is better understood as the founder of a network that has built on her local initiative. One might also suggest that Grace herself founded the CIGS by bringing together the actors necessary for the expansion of her mother's work. In addition, despite the fact that Grace's family donated the land on which the first school was built, it is the French couple's name that marks the building. The connection between ownership and citizen driven aid is treated in depth in (chapter number) of this volume and in (Shults et al. 2021).

While it is easy to assume that aid is desirable and relatively unproblematic, Benoni described certain versions of support from Northern NGOs as a trap. Benoni's rejection of financial support was due to the fact that the funding was contingent upon the potential donor being named the owner and founder of the initiative. This provides another example of the fuzzy distinction between funder and founder. However, Benoni's resistance in this particular instance does not diminish the extent to which his project is influenced by traditional NGO operations, as he worked for an NGO that aimed to treat trauma before starting his own CIGS to meet similar needs in his village.

A translocal perspective can help to understand this CIGS' operations and origins by emphasizing the uneven power relations that exist between mobile and immobile actors (Kelly and Lusis, 2006). The apparent contradiction of "situatedness during mobility" aptly describes the diaspora of fundraisers, initially from Uganda, that allow Benoni's initiative to continue to serve the needs of his local community. Not only is the diaspora of fundraisers a concrete example of the intersection of mobility and immobility in translocal networks, Benoni only had the opportunity to secure the initial funding for his CIGS due to a scholarship that enabled him to study in Kampala and generate interest among potential funders. Benoni's initiative therefore demonstrates multiple ways in which differences in geographic mobility which can be useful in understanding power differences among actors in translocal networks.

It is also useful in understanding how aid networks connect fluid meanings and multiple perspectives to a specific place. It is imperative for both the actors involved in these collective projects and the researchers studying them to acknowledge that what we see in these networks is a function of who is looking. In addition, considering the specific work being done by Benoni's initiative, there is value in acknowledging the ways in which actors are made mobile or immobile by cognitive and affective "stuck-points" that result from trauma (Botsford et al. 2018). Importantly, while Benoni accurately describes the bitterness and trauma as an obstacle to be overcome, he also acknowledges the way in which the shared experience of Kony rebels binds people together. Their trauma can thus be understood as immobilizing at an individual level while simultaneously grounding a concrete possibility for new forms of collective mobility.

Economic and geographic mobility are also clear components of the third example of a CIGS discussed in this chapter. Adroa was only able to start his own initiative after inheriting land from his father. In addition, it was the connections he developed during his time living in Japan and Norway that generated steady funding to run the school his initiative built. Through his travels, Adroa was able to cross boundaries and connect distant people to a translocal project, and this connectivity is central to his understanding of autonomy. His claim that people can only produce meaningful identities by giving each other "ekibegabega", a shoulder to lean on, offers an understanding of collective personal development that is fundamentally relational.

Through their work, we argue that Grace, Benoni, and Adroa embody important features of what Francis Nyamnjoh has called "frontier Africans" who can both reify or subvert boundaries by crossing them and connecting them (2017: 260). By crossing and connecting the boundaries between rural and urban, local and global, and North and South; these CIGS founders draw attention to the uneven power dynamics inherent in translocal networks. Connecting the examples of "Southern" perspectives on CIGS' work to frontier Africans and the concept of translocality offers an opportunity to "challenge the regional limitations often implicit in area studies and emphasize that the world is constituted through processes that transgress boundaries on different scales" (Greiner & Sakdapolrak 2013: 375).

Nyamnjoh describes frontier Africans as “those who contest taken-for-granted and often institutionalized and bounded ideas and practices of being, becoming, belonging, places and spaces. They are interested in conversations not conversions” (2017: 258). As an ongoing conversation is the goal of making connections across and against overly essentialized boundaries, frontier Africans resist the attempts at completeness that Nyamnjoh sees as delusions of grandeur. Instead, incompleteness is accepted as the norm. Efforts are made to make the most out of relationships without expecting these relationships to eventually produce completeness. For example, we argue that giving someone a shoulder to lean on in Adroa’s spirit of “ekibegabega” is not an attempt to “complete” them, but instead offers a relational connection that normalizes and accepts incompleteness. Similarly, we argue that Benoni’s use of trauma therapy is not an attempt at restoring completeness as a norm that existed before the war. Instead, he and others find peace in a shared bitterness that can generate possibilities for a new collective mobility and forgiveness.

Importantly, accepting incompleteness as a norm, should not be understood as eliminating the possibility of progress or development. Instead, frontier Africans accept that progress and development lead to new forms of incompleteness that require flexible understandings of mobility and identity. This attitude resonates with Rorty’s suggestion that “the end of humanity is not rest, but rather richer and better human activity” (1990: 39). It would be a mistake to interpret frontier Africans’ flexible attitude towards what “richer and better” might mean in different contexts as an indication that their goals float free of any contextual standards.

By rejecting the assumption that the individual is a complete and universally appropriate unit of analysis, Nyamnjoh argues for a domestication of agency that “emphasizes negotiation, concession, and conviviality over maximization of pursuits by individuals or by particular groups in contexts of plurality and diversity” (Nyamnjoh & Werbner 2002: 115-116). Domesticated agency resonates with Adroa’s commitment to “ekibegabega” as the source of collective, relational identity. However, the importance of relationality in this understanding of agency does not ignore the needs of the individual. Instead, it “emphasizes collective interests at the same time that it allows for individual creativity and self-activation” (Nyamnjoh 2017: 260). Nyamnjoh’s description of self-activation within a collective can be usefully contrasted with the idea of self-actualization.

Some supporters of African epistemologies have argued that Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, especially the final stage of self-actualization, offers an overly individualistic understanding of development in which people are expected to be "self-aware, concerned with personal growth, less concerned with the opinions of others, and interested in fulfilling their potential" (Mawere et al. 2016: 60). As an alternative to this comparatively unconcerned or detached approach, the African philosophy of Ubuntu is offered as "a metaphor that embodies the significance of human solidarity and stands explicitly against inequality or isolating individualism" (63). The philosophy of Ubuntu resonates with Nyamnjoh's description of domesticated agency that allows for self-activation as individual and creative potential that is mobilized through situatedness in a fluid and mobile collective. In this sense, we argue that Ubuntu can be understood as offering domesticated self-activation as an alternative to individualistic self-actualization.

The value of incompleteness, domesticated agency, and Ubuntu can be invisible or incomprehensible to those who approach citizen aid with a Western gaze. Ambitions of self-actualization and completeness offer challenges to those like Adroa who aim to promote "ekibegabega" on the global scene. As demonstrated by Benoni's fear of the loss of Southern CIGS to the trap of Northern controlled funding, there is a danger that those who are fortunate enough to be in a position to act as funders can assume that their economic and geographic position warrant a role as founders. For this reason, it is important to avoid an essentialistic and individualistic approach to development as a flow of civilization from the Global North to the global South. As Nyamnjoh eloquently argues:

> If civilization means confinement to a narrow idea of reality characterized by dualisms and the primacy of the mind, the purportedly autonomous individuals and a world of sensory perceptions, then Africans (or any other race, class, gender, generation or social category) who feel unduly severed, dismembered, scarred, caricatured or savaged by such limited and limiting indicators, have every reason to disabuse themselves of civilization (2017: 259).

This discussion is intended to suggest to Northern partners in CIGS—especially those who would prefer a role as founders—that aid is not always received as an unproblematic contribution towards civilization and completeness. Northern funders will offer tragically limited possibilities for edifying conversation if they are unable to follow Nyamnjoh in understanding their Southern CIGS partners as capable of legitimately resisting civilization and completeness. Ignoring the Southern experience of translocal development pushes a linear idea of progress onto frontier Africans and continues the unfortunate Eurocentric trend of misrepresenting African epistemologies as inherently problematic (Nyamnjoh 2017: 255). At the same time, this discussion should not be interpreted as an argument against any and all Northern perspectives. One opportunity for de-essentializing the North-South dichotomy lies in recognizing all partners in translocal networks, such as CIGS, as embodying flexible combinations of various forms of situatedness and mobility—each of which can offer valuable contributions to a discourse of development. An openness to incompleteness is intended to make room for these inevitable perspectival differences and to argue that attempts at conversation are preferable to attempts at conversion. Our emphasis of the importance of Southern perspectives reflects the importance of acknowledging uneven power dynamics in such conversations.

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Whose Solidarity? Liberal Irony and Feminist Activism

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Abstract:

Richard Rorty's liberal ironist is a controversial character used to illustrate the interrelated nature of hope and reflexive doubt in efforts towards moral progress and solidarity. The hope Rorty had in mind was a "liberal" commitment to ameliorating suffering by sensitizing ourselves to oppression. The reflexive doubt Rorty had in mind was an "ironic" attitude—a desire to encounter difference that is generated by a sustained awareness of the harm caused by dominant descriptions of social phenomena. This article critically evaluates liberal irony in the contexts of voluntourism and pleasure activism, before discussing its potential compatibility with the accounts of feminist reflexivity described by authors such as Clare Hemmings, María Lugones and Elspeth Probyn. After demonstrating the value and the blind spots of liberal irony, I argue that Rortyan terminology can contribute to feminist reflexivity, activism, and solidarity—but not without risk.

Keywords: liberal irony, feminist reflexivity, voluntourism, pleasure activism, affective solidarity

1. Liberal Irony as Feminist Reflexivity?

The terms “liberal irony” and “final vocabulary” are central and highly interrelated in Richard Rorty’s work on solidarity and moral progress. Rorty described a final vocabulary as the language one would use to give meaning to “our deepest self-doubts and our highest hopes” (1989, 73). The aim of this paper is to evaluate liberal irony as a potential resource for balancing these hopes and doubts. In this first section, I offer an interpretation of Rorty as using sentimental education as a strategic, conceptual and affective link between liberal hope and ironic doubt. In subsequent sections, critical reflections are generated by engaging research on volunteer tourism and by considering liberal irony alongside feminist accounts of the relationship between reflexive doubt and solidarity.

The interplay between reflexive doubt and final vocabularies is central in the three criteria Rorty described an ironist as meeting:

> (1) She has radical and continuing doubts about the final vocabulary she currently uses, because she has been impressed by other vocabularies, vocabularies taken as final by people or books she has encountered; (2) she realizes that argument phrased in her present vocabulary can neither underwrite nor dissolve those doubts; (3) insofar as she philosophizes about her situation, she does not think that her vocabulary is closer to reality than others, that it is in touch with a power not herself. (1989, 73)

In other words, irony involves a sustained suspicion or awareness that the descriptions offered by dominant final vocabularies limit our understanding and may harm people—or hide the harm being done to people—who use alternative final vocabularies. Irony can thus be understood as a form of reflexivity, a commitment to subject naturalized systems of beliefs and desires to radical doubt by engaging the beliefs and desires of those who resist those systems.

However, there are clear limits to the progress that can be made by relying on irony alone. As Rorty laid out, “Irony is, if not intrinsically resentful, at least reactive. Ironists have to have something to have doubts about, something from which to be alienated." (1989, 88) The reactivity of irony is connected to the inevitability of ethnocentrism—Rorty's contention that "beliefs suggested by another culture must be tested by trying to weave them together with beliefs we already have." (1991, 26) If one accepts that ethnocentrism is unavoidable, then one will join Rorty in thinking that beliefs, vocabularies and cultures can only be critiqued through encounters with alternative beliefs, vocabularies and cultures. There is no transcendent standard of progress by which we might *neutrally* evaluate competing alternatives.

Fortunately, according to Rorty, sentimental education offers hope for progress despite ethnocentrism. He claimed that "…the liberal culture of recent times has found a strategy for avoiding the disadvantage of ethnocentrism. This is to be open to encounters with other actual and possible cultures, and to make this openness central to its self-image." (1991, 2) This passage hints at the interconnected roles of hope and doubt. The first component of the strategy proposed here, a motivating desire to encounter difference, is generated by the ironist's radical and continuing doubts about her current final vocabulary. The second component of the proposed strategy is to make that desire to encounter difference central to a collective political vision—a shared hope that critical engagement with alternative beliefs and desires will lead to moral progress. In other words, Rorty's affinity for liberal culture should be read as a strategy for contextualizing reflexive doubt within a politicized vision of hope that prioritizes sensitivity to difference.

While Rorty initially argued that irony belonged to the realm of private self-creation and liberal hope to the realm of collective political action, his later work on sentimental education offers a link between the two that acknowledges the socio-political dimensions of both. Through a collective process of sentimental education, the reactionary—or even the resentful—elements of irony can be understood as oriented towards the evolving "ethnocentrism of a 'we' ('we liberals') which is dedicated to enlarging itself … It is the 'we' of the people who have been brought up to distrust ethnocentrism." (1989, 198) Thus, if some form of ethnocentrism is inevitable, any realistic hope for tolerance and inclusivity is contingent upon reflexive doubt about the ability of the current status quo to accommodate conflicting beliefs and desires. A collective commitment to irony can keep efforts towards inclusivity from becoming integrated into stagnant, naturalized systems of belief in their own right. Doubt, ironically, keeps liberal hope moving.

Rorty connected the label "liberal" to communities that understand progress as an active sensitization to diverse forms of cruelty in the interests of ameliorating human suffering (1989, 74). While irony on its own might leave one content with private projects of self-fashioning (Dieleman 2021, 193), the *liberal* ironist desires "as much imaginative acquaintance with alternative final vocabularies as possible, not just for her own edification, but in order to understand the actual and possible humiliation of the people who use these alternative final vocabularies." (Rorty 1989, 92) In other words, irony becomes sustainable by being connected to projects of liberal hope, and sentimental education is the means by which Rorty envisaged this connection.

In regard to producing communities capable of balancing liberal hope and ironic doubt, Rorty argued that an education that focuses on the manipulation of sentiment is a more efficient tactic than appeals to transcendent reason. He encouraged those interested in political progress "to overcome our sense that sentiment is too weak a force and that something stronger is required." (1998, 181) In one of his most hopeful passages, Rorty wrote:

> Producing generations of nice, tolerant, well-off, secure, other-respecting students… in all parts of the world is just what is needed—indeed all that is needed—to achieve an Enlightenment utopia. The more youngsters like this we can raise, the stronger and more global our human rights culture will become. (1998, 179)

While the tone of this passage may appeal to many of the tolerant academics who might read a paper like this one, a Rortyan strategy becomes more controversial in passages where the ironic consequences of liberal irony are emphasized.

For example, Rorty argued that “my pride in being a part of the human rights culture is no more external to my self than my desire for financial or sexual success.” (1998, 176) This passage can be contextualized using the third criterion for qualifying as an ironist: she does not think that her final vocabulary is closer to reality than others, that it is in touch with a power not herself. This means that desires to ameliorate suffering or increase tolerance are no more essentially human than a desire to formulate differential equations. Of course, one is free to believe that increasing tolerance is more important than learning calculus, or vice versa, but differences in degrees of importance should not be confused with differences in types of desires. Rorty rejected any philosophically pregnant distinction between moral obligation and self-interest, and therefore saw the development of both human rights and differential equations as historically contingent reactions to desires that have become increasingly important to educated citizens of Europe and America over the past few centuries (1989, 93).

While this attitude may seem at odds with inclusive socio-political goals, it resonates with the apparent motivations of existentially secure liberals who travel to unfamiliar places to engage in edifying humanitarian projects. In sections two and three, I will explore the examples of voluntourism and pleasure activism, in which development work or social justice projects can provide opportunities for the transformation of final vocabularies. In section four I discuss potential connections between my interpretation of Rorty’s project and Clare Hemmings’ work on affective solidarity. The remainder of the paper will offer critical evaluations of liberal irony, understood as a strategy for balancing hope and doubt through sentimental education, by using concrete examples from these different contexts. In particular, I am interested in whether or not liberal irony is of use to feminists interested in conceptualizing and motivating reflexivity and solidarity.

2. Liberal Irony and Voluntourism

As the liberal ironist hopes to encounter as many alternative final vocabularies as possible to aid in her efforts towards moral and political progress, volunteer tourism or “voluntourism” provides an opportunity that would seem to have obvious appeal. Volunteer tourists have been described as “postmodern travelers”—a description that seems equally applicable to liberal ironists—with motivations that include contributing to important social causes, interacting with other cultures and building their resumes (Magrizos et al. 2021, 879). Research on voluntourism has indicated the potential for solidarity to develop between host communities and volunteers (Pompurová et al. 2018, 8; Lee & Zhang 2019, 1821). Therefore, the practice of travelling to engage in voluntourism seems to potentially offer the liberal ironist hope for a cooperative and inclusive future as well as concrete opportunities for critical reflection on previously accepted standards through “encounters with exotic others and societies ruled by unrecognizable social structures.” (Magrizos et al. 2021, 881) Such a description of voluntourism resonates with Rorty’s characterization of solidarity as “the ability to think of people wildly different from ourselves as included in the range of ‘us’.” (1989, 193)

Two primary criticisms have been directed towards voluntourism, the first being related to the motivations of volunteer tourists. For example, in an influential study on student voluntourism to South Africa, Harng Luh Sin concluded that,

> …the desire [of the volunteer tourists] to perform the self-identity of well-travelled individual who understands the world is reiterated, and it appears that within this group of respondents the objective of “travelling” and in turn “getting to know the world” supersedes objectives of volunteering or addressing social injustices through volunteer tourism. (2009, 494)

While Sin does acknowledge the potential for altruistic motivation to coexist with self-interest and even leisure, her findings offer a concrete example of a desire for encounters with difference being prioritized over a desire for social change. In Rortyan terms, this could be understood as a more ironic approach to liberal irony in which “the continual refreshment and re-creation of the self, through interaction with selves as unlike itself as possible” (1998, 183) takes precedence over the more liberal concern with the negative impacts of this ironic self-refreshment on the other participants in these interactions.

While it may appear obvious that a more individualistic or ironic approach to voluntourism does not qualify as solidarity, Sin's description could leave room for understanding voluntourism as a step in a sentimental education of sorts. While clearly not ideal, one could argue that young students getting to know the world, even when motivated by a desire to perform the identity of a well-travelled individual, could prepare them for future projects that are more oriented towards social justice. In other words, it may be unreasonable to expect voluntourists to already understand the dynamics of their privilege and to be able to encounter difference in a morally responsible way before getting to know the world. Without denying the accountability of voluntourists to their host communities, part of a sentimental education might lie in the hands-on experience of having their ethnocentric assumptions resisted.

This charitable view of voluntourism is reminiscent of María Lugones concept of "world"-travelling, which suggests that it is only through encountering others—learning to see how both the self and others are mutually constructed in unfamiliar "worlds"—that genuine meaning can be shared and created across difference (1987, 8). However, Lugones specifically championed a form of "world"-travelling that is both loving and open to surprise, and warned against the deadly, imperialistic "world"-travelling that is primarily interested in developing or demonstrating the competence of the traveler (ibid. 15). A less charitable description of voluntourism, such as the one offered in Sin's research, could easily position privileged, postmodern travelers as imperialistic role-players on a predetermined path that leaves insufficient room for surprise.

The possibility of appropriately balancing conflicting motivations is a common theme in studies of voluntourism. For example, in a study of voluntourism in Mongolia, Lee and Zhang argue that "it is possible for volunteers to have both altruistic and egoistic motives in volunteer tourism." (2019, 1823) However, they distinguish between "caring for" and "caring with", suggesting that "caring with"—which importantly involves decentering the role of the volunteer tourist—is the path to solidarity[1]. Alternatively, the possibility of understanding voluntourism as paternalistically "caring for" suffering others—rather than co-creating solidary relationships—leads to the second criticism of voluntourism: its potential reification and reproduction of colonialist attitudes and existing global hierarchies.

Voluntourism's potential to commodify both the suffering of others and the act of volunteering is not difficult to detect. Jacob Henry describes voluntourism as a continued, colonial, "white sense of entitled expansiveness" and argues that the practice of voluntourism rests on the "basic premise that a world out there exists and is available for certain people to 'improve'." (2018, 327) In more Rortyan terms, one might say that voluntourism assumes that exotic final vocabularies unproblematically await the ironist as resources for her self-fashioning. Recall the source of the radical doubt in Rorty's first criterion for qualifying as an ironist: she has been impressed by other vocabularies that are taken as final by *people or books* she has encountered. While Rorty acknowledged the tension between liberal values and an ironic approach to human beings as "incarnated vocabularies," (1989, 88) critiques of voluntourism can offer an opportunity to generate parallel criticisms of the liberal ironist's desire to encounter difference. Does a sentimental education inspired by liberal irony risk encouraging privileged students to approach othered bodies as simply incarnated versions of the inspirational, alternative final vocabularies they find readily available on the shelves of their university libraries? In other words, does Rorty's educational emphasis on the manipulation of feelings commodify exposure to difference as a depoliticized resource for vocabulary building in the same way that Solène Prince argues that voluntourism "pictures the host-community as a mere prop to be used as part of a learning experience"? (2017, 1621)

While there does seem to be potential value in educating privileged liberals by "manipulating their sentiments in such a way that they imagine themselves in the shoes of the despised and oppressed," (Rorty 1998, 179) it is important to consider the ways in which emotional encounters can depoliticize oppression and difference by making such experiences about personal transformation. As Sara Ahmed argues, "…emotions may involve 'being moved' for some precisely by fixing others as 'having' certain characteristics. The circulation of objects of emotion involves the transformation of others into objects of feeling." (2015, 11) Ahmed refers to emotion as a channel of cultural-political "world-making," a description that Rorty would have readily embraced. I interpret these two thinkers as agreeing that objectifying the difference of others through power-insensitive, emotional interactions offers an example of what Rorty called "disguised moves in a game of cultural politics," (2007, 8) which can have the effect of naturalizing difference and depoliticizing irony.

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[1] For discussion of a related distinction between "robust participatory ownership" and "expressional participatory ownership", based on research on Norwegian volunteering practices, see Haaland et. al. 2023.

One way in which this can happen is by casting politically relevant encounters as "emotional" or "personal," and therefore not within the realm of politics. The likelihood of such a move might be increased by the suggestion that moral education is primarily a matter of manipulating sentiment. The dynamics of colonialism are reproduced when postmodern travelers are taught that the appropriate emotional response to suffering and oppression is a form of empathy in which Ahmed argues that "the pain of others becomes 'ours', an appropriation that transforms and perhaps even neutralizes their pain into our sadness… What is promised is not so much the overcoming of the pain of others, but the empowerment of the reader." (2015, 21) Here Ahmed discusses the empowerment of the "reader" as part of her analysis of a letter to those making financial contributions to a Christian aid program. However, I argue that the language of "empowering the reader" resonates with the ironist's potential for *reading* othered bodies *as incarnated final vocabularies*. Seeing the ironist as a reader, regardless of whether or not she finds herself in a library or in less familiar environments—and regardless of whether or not the "texts" she is engaging are incarnated or not—nicely captures the colonizing potential of privileged, postmodern travelers who see voluntourism as the kind of activity to be "performed in one's spare time." (Pompurová et al. 2018, 2)

In addition to the potential for activities such as voluntourism to depoliticize irony as a private form of emotional self-development, Mary Mostafanezhad suggests that encounters with poverty or oppression in voluntourism often lead to experiences of difference being dismissed from the political sphere by being cast as aesthetic or cultural (2013, 159). Studying voluntourism in Thailand, Mostafanezhad observed that, “when volunteer tourists confront poverty, they often become uncomfortable and seek ways to negotiate personal anxieties regarding the inequality of the encounter by aestheticizing the host community members’ poverty as authentic and cultural.” (ibid. 156) In this way, encounters with difference are depoliticized though their transformation into aesthetic experiences of other cultures in their “natural state”. The colonial elements of the voluntourists’ very presence are rendered unproblematic by separating global poverty from its political history. According to Mostafanezhad, “…the commodification of the experience is discursively swept under the rug and volunteer tourists are able to maintain a seemingly unmediated relationship with the host community members.” (ibid. 159)

Whether through an appropriation of the emotions of others or an aestheticization of poverty, a Rortyan approach can describe the depoliticization of experiences of difference as disguised cultural-political moves. Any argument that a certain category of experiences is not politically relevant is clearly a political argument. This brings me back to my earlier suggestion that irony is only sustainable when connected to a collective vision that politicizes both hope and doubt through a sentimental education aimed at greater solidarity. The question then becomes whether or not a Rortyan strategy offers useful tools for maintaining a politicized irony that sufficiently decenters the role of the liberal ironist as she attempts to engage in solidarity.

The examples and criticisms of voluntourism offer parallels to the potential portrayal of the liberal ironist as a “reader” of othered bodies who appropriates, commodifies and naturalizes the emotions and circumstances of those with alternative final vocabularies in the interest of her own edification. A slide into this version of the liberal ironist can seem to be made inevitable by Rorty’s rejection of the distinction between moral obligation and self-interest. This move is what allowed him to describe efforts to expand the reach of human rights as no less personal than efforts towards financial or sexual success. If all such projects are equally personal, what happens to the weight of our indignation towards entitled tourists purchasing and enjoying an aestheticized experience of global poverty? I argue that Rorty's interest in keeping the personal and the political at the same level can be made to look more appealing by bringing liberal irony into dialogue with adrienne maree brown's concept of pleasure activism.

3. Liberal Irony and Pleasure Activism

It is important to begin with one of brown's descriptions of the kind of pleasure that she had in mind when gathering and writing the collection of texts and interviews that she titled *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good*. She writes, "Pleasure heals the places where our hearts and spirit get wounded. Pleasure reminds us that even in the dark, we are alive. Pleasure is a medicine for the suffering that is absolutely promised in life." (2019, 438) Thinking about pleasure as a cure for suffering, as something that can be co-created in encounters with others, makes it clear that brown is in no way saying that activism should be informed by hedonism. At the same time, brown is clear that her concept of pleasure should make room for its erotic, creative and idiosyncratic dimensions. One takeaway from brown's conversation with Sami Schalk, that "desires and politics can exist happily alongside one another," (ibid. 170) is one that Rorty would have certainly appreciated.

Particularly in political contexts where many might see pleasure as inappropriate or beside the point, brown encourages us to consider Ingrid LaFleur's argument that "For oppressed people to intentionally cultivate pleasure is an act of resistance." (ibid. 271) The point of pleasure activism becomes to counteract, through practice, the ways in which pleasure is often ignored, suppressed, stigmatized, or forgotten in relational contexts where it is needed most. In efforts to "practice resilience and recover access to pleasure once harm has happened," (ibid. 269) brown's holistic understanding of pleasure as part of a spectrum of transformative practices can become a useful tool in activists' encounters with various barriers to social progress. In this sense, pleasure activism can be conceptualized as an approach to healing suffering that avoids separating that suffering from its political history—what Mostafanezhad argued occurs in the aestheticization of poverty as cultural—

and also avoids reproducing the colonial pattern of responding to suffering with self-centered empathy—what Ahmed argued occurs through the appropriation of “their” pain as “our” sadness.

Pleasure activism, like Rorty’s sentimental education, acknowledges the important role of emotion in developing inclusivity and reducing harm. One example of this can be found in brown’s conversation with Dallas Goldtooth, who describes the value of, and risk involved in, combining humor and the organization of indigenous environmental activism:

> You’re using tactics to manipulate a situation or a response from people for the benefit of a movement or the benefit of your community.... Comedy is of the same sort… You’re using the gift of speech or an action of your body to elicit a sort of response and manipulating emotion… I think there are so many people that rarely use the transformative power of humor and lightheartedness of stories. But it’s very dicey. (ibid. 338)

Here Goldtooth describes an example of the kind of practice that could offer reasons to not separate our talents and emotions into “those appropriate when fulfilling moral obligations” and the others. As Goldtooth admits, this strategy is dicey and by no means absolves pleasure activists of their accountability if, for example, the use of comedy is experienced as offensive or inappropriate. However, I read Goldtooth’s reflections on comedy in environmental activism as a helpful suggestion for those looking to generate alternatives to the patterned emotional responses that Ahmed warns against.

In the same way that drawing parallels between the liberal ironist and the voluntourist can call the value of a Rortyan strategy into question, I argue that drawing parallels between the liberal ironist and the pleasure activist can offer reasons for optimism. Rorty’s suggestion that a desire to expand the reach of human rights and a desire for sexual success are not as separate as traditional moral philosophy might suggest, can be connected to an understanding of pleasure activism as an alternative approach to engaging injustice that makes room for more than just seriousness and empathy. Although pleasure activism moves away from a myopic focus on suffering, this can arguably have the effect of more sustainably ameliorating suffering. In a conversation with Cara Page, brown reflects,

> There's this concept of suffering central to so many of us… activists, organizers, anyone trying to change the world… so much of how we get pulled into community and kept in community is a solidarity built around our suffering… which is not liberatory. (ibid. 48-49)

This passage suggests that even in efforts to treat suffering, a focus on suffering is not the most compelling motivator of solidarity. This seems to apply to both "internal" solidary efforts to organize communal resources around resisting oppression and "external" solidary efforts by outsiders hoping to support this resistance[2].

Liberal irony can be interpreted as similar to pleasure activism to the extent that, while invested in reducing harm and suffering, both encourage a moral outlook that aims to contextualize suffering within movements that can include hope, pleasure and a desire for transformative, moral character change. I argue that Rorty's description of the liberal ironist as in need of imaginative engagements with as many alternative vocabularies as possible, as well as his connection of hope for a liberal utopia to inspirational texts, resonates with brown's conviction that "…all organizing is science fiction—that we are shaping the future we long for and have not yet experienced. I believe that we are in an imagination battle, and… Our radical imagination is a tool for decolonization." (ibid. 10)

It is not difficult to read Rorty's description of solidarity as "the ability to see more and more traditional differences (*of tribe, religion, race, customs, and the like*) as unimportant when compared with similarities with respect to pain and humiliation" (1989, 192) as an attempt to fashion a decolonizing tool for the radical imagination battle brown describes. It is also not difficult to read *Pleasure Activism* as a text through which liberal ironists might gain the kind of sentimental education Rorty hoped for. From combatting exclusionary stigma towards drug users to illuminating how ableism can force people to choose between autonomy and care, one of the most obvious goals of brown's book is to bring together perspectives that show how the descriptions offered by dominant final vocabularies limit our understanding and may harm people—or hide the harm being done to people—who resist those final vocabularies. Pleasure activism and sentimental education can be seen as complementary practices that sensitize social movements to the wide array of emotional resources available—including the medicine of pleasure—and diminish the risk of falling into paternalistic, colonial, patterned responses of "empathy" in encounters with suffering and oppression.

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[2] For a more detailed treatment of the relevance of Rortyan solidarity to the moral and political relations of in-groups and out-groups, see Shults 2023.

In terms of balancing liberal hope and ironic doubt, I interpret brown's claim that "pleasure activism is us learning to make justice and liberation the most pleasurable experiences we can have" (2019, 13) as a reminder that activist practices that generate hope for a better future and transformative practices that call one's current final vocabulary into doubt can both be sources of pleasure. In the same way that a depoliticized irony, not connected to liberal hope, is a poor tool for engaging in solidarity; a depoliticized pleasure, not connected to reflexive practices of activism, obviously falls short of solidarity as well. In both cases, the historical and political implications of the practices involved must be negotiated *and* these practices only become sustainable when made accountable to a collective vision of social progress. As Idelisse Malave eloquently clarified, when asked about her understanding of pleasure, "I don't mean free license to do whatever I want regardless of the consequences to me or others. Pleasure is deeper than that—it encompasses our values." (ibid. 389) This politicized connection to "our values," and to a collective project aimed at co-creating solidarity, is indispensable for both liberal ironists and pleasure activists.

Whether one finds the comparison to the voluntourist or the comparison to the pleasure activist more compelling will likely be a deciding factor in how one answers the question of whether or not Rorty's liberal ironist offers a useful path to feminist reflexivity and solidarity. Both comparisons are instructive as they highlight different potential risks and rewards as one shifts one's understanding of the balance of hope and doubt in liberal irony. The final section will offer additional nuance regarding this balance by bringing Rortyan solidarity into conversation with feminist accounts of reflexivity, with a particular emphasis on Clare Hemmings' work on affective solidarity.

4. Affective Solidarity, Feminist Reflexivity and the Blind Spots of Liberal Irony

Clare Hemmings' concept of affective solidarity is inspired by Elspeth Probyn's description of feminist reflexivity as generated by navigating and negotiating the experience of affective dissonance. As Hemmings explains,

> …Probyn foregrounds the dynamic nature of the relationship between ontology and epistemology, and the ways in which the category of 'experience' (so contested in feminist theory) is an important resource for understanding that relationship… Probyn insists that reflection on the lack of fit between our own sense of being and the world's judgment upon us constitutes a kind of feminist reflexivity, a *negotiation of the difference* between whom one feels oneself to be and the conditions of possibility for a livable life… it is in theorizing experience in this way (shuttling back and forth across these dimensions) that feminist theory finds its *raison d'être*. (Hemmings 2012, 149 emphases in original)

In other words, there is a tension between embodied experience, or the ontological level of the "felt facticity of material social being," (Probyn 2003, 18) and the challenge of formulating or legitimizing such experiences with the limited epistemological resources available. Similarly, Lugones described the feeling of schizophrenia or "ontological confusion" that women of color in the U.S. are forced to negotiate as outsiders navigating "worlds" constructed around the experiences and expectations of others (1987, 8). An important aspect of this ontological confusion or affective dissonance can be expressed as a sustained suspicion or awareness that the descriptions offered by dominant final vocabularies limit our understanding and may harm people—or hide the harm being done to people—who use alternative final vocabularies.

If this experience of doubt were to motivate a form of self-transformation that was oriented towards generating feminist solidarity, one might join Probyn in expressing, "I want to stretch my experience beyond the merely personal… I want to put forward a mode of theorizing that encourages lines of analysis that move from her experiences to mine, and mine to hers." (2003, 2) Importantly, this movement and stretching, does not rely on the unity, stability, or compatibility of women's experiences. Instead, it can be conceived as a form of "world"-travelling interested in the relational production of what Lugones referred to as "something that is true to experience even if it is ontologically problematic." (1987, 11) Affective dissonance, the experience of tension between ontology and epistemology, is central to Hemmings' account of feminist motivation and suggests that such experiences have value *by virtue of being ontologically problematic* within dominant descriptions of a given social reality.

While Probyn and Hemmings seem to share Rorty's commitment to developing a politicized account of transformation that connects epistemology and relational ethics, Hemmings and Probyn are clearly developing feminist tools. The role of feminism in Hemmings' work can be contextualized by her comment that "'affective solidarity' was intended to open up a feminism that contains feminist subjects and non-feminist subjects, starting from the appreciation of different locations within knowledge and politics." (2018, 974) This comment can, in turn, clarify the relationship Hemmings envisions between affective dissonance, feminist reflexivity and affective solidarity. Affective dissonance is not an experience that is unique to feminists, but rather what Hemmings sees as a precondition for feminist reflexivity and a necessary point of departure for a "sustainable feminist politics of transformation." (2012, 148) Feminist reflexivity can, but does not always, lead to the formation of politicized movements that can, but do not always, form a basis for affective solidarity.

Hemmings argues that affective solidarity offers a unique, conceptual resource that moves beyond an individualized politics of identity to a collective understanding of feminist politics as generated through varied experiences of affective dissonance. She writes,

> I want to argue that this affective dissonance is central to feminism and can be theorized as the basis of a connection to others and desire for transformation not rooted in identity, yet thoroughly cognizant of power and privilege. I start from the mechanisms of that impulse to change, from how it feels to experience the gaps between self-narration and social reality. (2012, 154)

There are certainly similarities between affective dissonance and ironic doubt as motivators of a desire to connect with others, and there are certainly similarities between a politicized, feminist reflexivity and a politicized, liberal irony that are both interested in power-sensitive transformation. Hemmings' solidarity begins with experiencing dissonance or gaps between self-narration and social reality, while Rorty's solidarity begins with doubt about inherited final vocabularies and their ability to adequately describe social relations. In addition, sentimental education's potential to address experiences of dissonance is captured by Hemmings' claim that "in order to know differently we have to feel differently… feelings can produce a politicized impetus to change that foregrounds the relationship between ontology and epistemology precisely because of the experience of their dissonance." (2012, 150)

On the one hand, Hemmings' feminist project can be understood as compatible with sentimental education and liberal irony—as the kind of alternative final vocabulary that can emerge within a sufficiently liberal culture that values the transformative power of resisting naturalized assumptions. It seems compatible with a Rortyan understanding of political progress to say that feminist theory should be part of sentimental education and affective solidarity might usefully inform a liberal, political vision. Feminist theory and feminist reflexivity offer tools that can sensitize people to harms being done to feminists and non-feminists alike. On the other hand, Ahmed warns against uncritically accepting systems that use a public rhetoric of pride in their ability to accommodate critical, feminist voices. She laments the tendency for the emergence of feminist critiques of institutional failure to be "appropriated as evidence of institutional success. The very labor of feminist critique ends up supporting what you critique. The work you do to expose what is not being done is used as evidence of what has been done." (2017, 111)

This is where I argue the largest problem with liberal irony emerges—Rorty's use of the term "liberal" is so broad that it can too easily subsume critical perspectives. I worry that a solidarity generated by the ethnocentric inclusivity of "we liberals", who pride ourselves on having been raised to distrust ethnocentrism—could be described as "a fantasy of inclusion" that can all too easily function as a technique of exclusion (ibid. 112)[3]. Put simply, there is an important difference between a society in which it is possible to raise feminist critiques of the status quo and a society that engages in thoroughgoing institutional change in response to such critiques. Similarly, there is a risk that the unique dimensions of a conceptual resource like Hemmings' affective solidarity, for example its queer, feminist orientation and its explicit rejection of individualism and identity politics, can be dismissed by casting this concept as compatible with the broader values of liberal inclusivity. The specific forms of affective dissonance, schizophrenia and ontological confusion experienced by marginalized feminists can become appropriated and neutralized into a part of "our" collective efforts towards ambiguous, but progressive sounding, liberal ends. Too much hope in "our" ability to be inclusive can lead to the cooptation of the experience of feminist, affective dissonance by a final vocabulary that is not explicitly feminist. This disguised cultural-political move might then be defended by appealing to the importance of inclusivity.

Here we begin to see that the ease with which liberal irony can be made to seem compatible with practices as diverse as politicized feminist reflexivity, pleasure activism and voluntourism can be a strength and a weakness. I see great value in the flexibility of Rortyan terminology, but I would simultaneously offer a reflexive analysis of his work in light of Rorty's own admission that "anything can be made to look good or bad by being redescribed." (1989, 73) I find that Rorty's liberal ironist can be made to look good by positioning her as part of a collective that is engaging in the imagination battle for decolonization and feminist reflexivity described by thinkers and activists like brown, Ahmed, Probyn, Lugones, Mostafanezhad, Hemmings and others. Such efforts are clearly compatible with important forms of feminist solidarity. I find that Rorty's liberal ironist can be made to look bad by positioning her as a misguided "reader" of othered bodies, equally complicit as some voluntourists are "in the (re)production [of] an everyday affectivity of neoliberal order, that co-opts cosmopolitan care and empathy for 'the other' in order to perpetuate the expansion and ever deeper consolidation into individual subjectivities and desires." (Everingham & Motta 2020, 227) Whether referring to a voyeuristic appropriation of poverty or suffering or a vaguely liberal appropriation of feminist, affective dissonance, it is inappropriate to use the term solidarity to describe such efforts to engage difference. If anything, such activity would demonstrate what Sally Scholz calls "parasitical solidarity" (2008, 47) with the colonial efforts of a privileged elite to perform the identity of the well-traveled—or perhaps, in this case, well-read—individual.

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[3] For a more positive evaluation of Rorty's liberal "we" in the context of feminist thought, see Dieleman 2021 (especially pages 179-181).

In addition, liberal irony can be made to look suspect as a path towards feminist solidarity by emphasizing the potential for inclusive-sounding commitments to exclude feminist experiences in practice. If liberal irony is to offer resources for conceptualizing, motivating, or analyzing efforts to reduce suffering and oppression by engaging in feminist reflexivity and solidarity, Rorty must be seen as a potential conversation partner to be considered alongside feminist thinkers and activists—not as someone who developed a political vision that can encompass their respective projects. In the same way that overemphasizing an ironic desire to encounter difference creates a blind spot to the colonial effects of voluntourism, overemphasizing a hope that liberal cultures can adapt to most politically relevant differences creates a blind spot which leaves room for subsuming, and thereby dismissing, legitimate feminist critiques.

The critical evaluations of liberal irony offered here are informed by Rorty's contention that a vocabulary can only be assessed by putting it into conversation with alternative vocabularies. By connecting Rortyan terminology to discussions of voluntourism, pleasure activism and affective solidarity, I hope to leave feminist activists and researchers better equipped to contextually evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of liberal irony. Rorty's work clearly highlights the value of emotion, reflexivity and solidarity, all of which are integral to feminism and other liberatory movements. However, due to the blind spots of liberal irony, those interested in developing feminist reflexivity should approach this strategy cautiously.

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