

**ACTIVE SOLIDARITY:**  
**STRATEGIES FOR TRANSNATIONAL POLITICAL COOPERATION IN**  
**CONTEXTS OF DIFFERENCE, DOMINATION AND DISTRUST**

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## **Solidarity and Identity: Introduction**

What role do values, interests and identities (gender identities, ethnic identities, etc.) play in enabling coordinated political action, such as social movements? Political scientists who study mobilization seem to take political identities (for example, ethnic identities) as given bases for action. Sociologists studying social movements see these identities as constructed in the process of mobilization. Many social theorists posit that identities are prior to interests as they define the interest-bearing group to some degree, while others argue that identities are completely subordinate to interests, being deployed like resources to advance strategic ends. Last, some scholars point to the ways that values and ideas (though these can never be fully separated from identity) infuse social movement mobilization.

This paper is part of a broader project that seeks to elucidate the relationship between interests, identities and values in enabling social movements to emerge and sustain themselves over time. Here, we focus on the problem of solidarity. Despite the prominence of this word in the songs, slogans, and speeches of a variety of social movements, we see solidarity as something to be explained and explored rather than taken for granted. Given that most social movements – both national and transnational – are quite diverse, characterized not only by difference within the activist ranks but also by power asymmetries that can lead to domination and distrust, how is solidarity achieved? Further, what are the outcomes of such an achievement – what can movements that achieve solidarity across power-infused lines of difference achieve that other movements cannot?

The key to building a powerful and lasting movement, we argue, is a process of building what we refer to as *active solidarity*. Solidarity, or coordinated political action, can range from the passive (refusing to take action that would run counter to others' stated positions - for example, honoring a picket line) to active (engaging with others to jointly define political projects and purposes, through a deliberative process). Below, we develop the concept of active solidarity and distinguish it from extant notions of solidarity, both practical and theoretical. We then use this concept to ground our discussion of the causes and consequences of various forms of political cooperation (focusing, in particular, on what it takes to achieve active solidarity, and on the likely consequences of doing so). Although we intend this as a conceptual piece, the empirical component of our paper uses a series of examples to illuminate and clarify this theoretical discussion, examining the approach to building solidarity in a series of six transnational social movements ranging from the anti-sweatshop movement and Occupy to the transnational movement for water rights to Anonymous. We use our illustrative cases to explore 1) the challenges of building active solidarity, and how to overcome those challenges, focusing in particular on organizational structure and opportunities for deliberation, and 2) the likely consequences of building active solidarity for organizational persistence and impact. On the basis of these examples, we develop the hypotheses that inclusive deliberation makes active solidarity more likely, and that active solidarity produces movements with more persistence through time and more policy impact. We end by outlining some directions for future research.

### **PART I: WHAT IS ACTIVE SOLIDARITY?**

The UN General assembly has affirmed the universal value of solidarity<sup>1</sup>, and solidarity is one of the principles articulated in the Charter of the European Union.<sup>2</sup> A rallying cry associated with political action as diverse as trade unionism, the Polish movement for democracy in the 1980s and traditional Catholic values, “solidarity” is often invoked and affirmed by political actors and groups but more rarely is it clearly defined. From the rich philosophical and political history of this concept,<sup>3</sup> we seek to pull a working definition of solidarity suited to our purposes, namely the study of contemporary social movements.

Solidarity, as it has been traditionally defined, refers to the ties between social groups. Some see solidarity as a product of shared identities (Dean 1996; Taylor and Whittier 1992). Others find that particular political opportunities and threats enable the creation and sustainment of solidarity (Kay 2005). Stjernø (2004, 2) defines solidarity as ‘the preparedness to share resources with others by personal contribution to those in struggle’

Some definitions of solidarity presume a common interest or kinship that undergirds coordinated action, but we wish to define political solidarity in a way that is more agnostic about causes and bases of cooperation. At its most basic level, solidarity is a form of coordinated action, when some groups or individuals coordinate their behavior with others. Solidarity becomes **political** solidarity when it pertains to “the activity through which relatively large and permanent groups of people determine what they will collectively do, settle how they will live together, and decide their future, to whatever extent this is within their power” (Pitkin 1981, 343). When groups seek to coordinate their political behavior, we see this as evidence of political solidarity. This can mean sharing resources, symbolic action, or designing programs to mutual benefit (in other words, it need not involve sacrifice).

Note that there are many forms and degrees of political solidarity, and we do not seek to provide an exhaustive typology here. Rather, we wish to focus on two dimensions along which solidarity can vary: the degree of passivity or agency involved in defining coordinating action, and the degree to which the process of developing coordinated action takes account of cross-cutting cleavages, or intersectional marginalization. We use these dimensions as a backdrop for our presentation of active solidarity, which rests on the active interrogation of power imbalances and the creation of opportunities for cooperation across difference through norms of deliberation.

### *Passivity versus Active Engagement*

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, this backgrounder on UN Solidarity Day (Dec 20).

<http://www.un.org/en/events/humansolidarityday/background.shtml>

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter IV “Solidarity” which mainly defines solidarity in terms of economic and social solidarity focused on worker’s rights, social protections and consumer protections. See Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, (2000/C 364/01)

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf)

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[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> See The Idea of Solidarity: Philosophical and Social Contexts Polish Philosophical Studies, X

<http://www.crvp.org/book/Series04/master-solidarity%2024%20febr%20.pdf>

Solidarity, or standing in solidarity, can be quite passive. The archetypical example of solidarity is standing on the picket line, or honoring the picket line. Honoring the picket line often consists of non-action, where solidarity is accomplished by doing nothing (or by failing to do something). This can be an important political act, certainly, and sometimes costly (failing to show up for work or classes, for example). However, as a form of engagement and expression it is limited, even isolating, as the solidaristic behavior does not involve crafting a message, defining a new form of action, or anything of the sort.

Even standing on the picket line can be seen as relatively passive, as it is possible to participate without knowing anything about what is involved, without having any role in crafting a message or strategy. In some ways, this sort of political behavior involves an “on-off” decision, in or out, with us or against us. One group lends its support to another by physically joining them on the picket line, supporting their chosen action. This support is important, and can be powerful. It leverages the power of small groups by using their combined numbers, which are greater. But it is not active in the sense of engaging the other in the process of defining the political strategy and message, it does not involve an interlocutor. It is voluntary action, to be sure, but it is not coordinated through discussion, but rather through group identity and command. It is very close to command and control in its sublimation of discussion and prioritizing of dualistic expressions of loyalty.

Though it can be powerful, this type of solidarity is very minimal and difficult to sustain, particularly in contexts of a lack of trust or lack of a shared identity, such as in contexts of historical domination of one group over another (Williams 1998; Mansbridge 1999). In contrast, we suggest that the kind of solidarity that is more likely to persist and sustain political action in such challenging contexts is one that is more active, requiring more engagement from those seeking to coordinate their action across divisions charged with political meaning.

To try and distinguish this more active form of solidarity from its cousins, we turn to work in political philosophy, political science, and sociology that sees solidarity as an *active process* of deliberation, negotiation, and engagement between different social groups that collectively determine a movement’s goals and mechanisms of political influence (Honneth 1996; Smith 2008; Waterman 2001; Weldon 2006). For instance, Fantasia (1989) argues that solidarity emerges out of a process of mutual association. This process of negotiation may lead to the creation of a collective identity, but does not necessarily require shared identities a priori. Smith (2008) and Waterman (2001, 235) also recognize that the complexity of our contemporary world compels different social groups to engage in a process of negotiating their differences. A large literature from the field of sociology on the creation of collective identity in social movements points to the role of boundaries (i.e., a sense of “us” versus “them”) as well as consciousness and negotiation (see Taylor and Whittier 1992, 1995). All of these treatments point to the action required in the creation of a collective identity, what some refer to as “identity work” (Reger, Myers, and Einwohner 2008). While an individual member of a movement can claim a movement identity somewhat passively, perhaps simply by stating his or her membership in the movement, the identity for which s/he feels an affinity is itself the product of collective and cultural action. That is not to say that collective identities are static; on the contrary, movements are constantly renegotiating their sense of what it means to be a member, and disagreements over who “belongs” as well as over “how we do things” – which can fall along lines of difference

such as those based on nation, race, class, and gender identity – often lead to fragmentation, broken coalitions, and spin-off movements (Beamish and Luebbbers 2009; J. Gamson 1997). The challenge, then, is to create a meaningful collective identity that truly captures the “we” of the movement, along with movement practices that promote that sense of “we” by being inclusive for all who lay claim to the identity.

We also draw inspiration and insight from U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer’s idea of “active liberty” outlined in his book of that same title. At its most basic, Breyer’s notion of active liberty is that constitutional interpretation should enable citizens to participate in self-governance. The concept therefore connotes citizen participation: the active part is refusing to separate liberty from the overarching goal of citizen participation. Thus, active liberty differs from liberty in the intentionality of its focus on ensuring that citizens have opportunity to better engage in their own representation. For Breyer, this means greater deference to elected legislatures in policymaking and interpretation of the First Amendment with an eye toward protecting and enhancing citizen engagement rather than on decontextualized notions of free speech.

Importantly, active liberty is not neutral, but rather imposes a duty on the courts to defer to elected bodies, and a duty on citizens to engage in collective power. Breyer acknowledges that there are tradeoffs with this approach, particularly between the individual rights of some versus the objective of broader engagement. For him, campaign spending rules should favor collective speech over individual speech, possibly even disadvantaging a corporation or wealthy individual relative to the enhanced ability of everyday citizens to engage in democratic practices. Active liberty involves participatory self-government, a constant involvement in a collective conversation.

We combine and adapt some of these ideas to form our conceptualization of active solidarity. First, following from Breyer, active solidarity is an obligation to both create and be a part of a community. It is a form of solidarity in which adherents/constituents/members share in the authority and responsibility of agenda setting and decision-making. Members have voice, and are treated as equally worthy of respect and concern. Reciprocity and inclusion are governing values of interactions between members. Active solidarity imposes duties upon participants to act, requiring diligent attention to collective goods and goals (such as inclusion).

Second, individual rights, and the rights of specific groups, are important, but this should not devolve into organizing only around micro-identities—to the point where no collective work can be achieved. Thus, some element of “we-ness” or common ground is to be expected and valued. Min (2010) makes this point, in a way, in arguing that group consciousness is a multidimensional cognitive construct consisting of a sense of belonging, a sense of hostility against other groups or a sense of common fate with in-group members, a set of perceptions about the group’s status, and a set of shared beliefs about the means to improve their status (See also Miller et al. 1980). While separate organizing may be important for enabling the articulation of particular ideas and for creating safe spaces, such separateness may also lead to argument, divisiveness, longer timelines for decision-making, and vulnerability to poaching (as smaller groups and dissenters may be ripe for oppositional picking). Inclusive norms of deliberation may help to minimize this (Weldon 2006). Such norms are key to active solidarity.

Third, although we conceive of active solidarity as a process, it is not purely procedural: Active solidarity is value-laden and not neutral to ends. Its chief value is inclusion. Relations of domination may not be eradicated altogether in deliberative contexts, but they can be recognized and actively challenged through intentional processes of respectful engagement. There may not be a singular method for achieving active solidarity, but active solidarity rests on norms of diversity and of inclusion.

### *Solidarity, Intersectionality, and Diversity*

Some universalistic approaches to solidarity emphasize the importance of sublimating particularity and making sacrifices for the “greater good.” We wish to define a different approach to solidarity, one that is active in addressing the power differentials that run through every social group and context. Specifically, most contemporary political action requires coordination along and across multiple axes such as race, gender, sexuality, and class. These differences involve asymmetrical power relationships that must be intentionally identified, recognized, and engaged lest the silent societal norms undermine the work of building a shared identity and collective action (see Gawerc 2012). Such power differentials, for example, as manifested in an unequal distribution of resources and status, may be a threat to building and maintaining active solidarity.<sup>4</sup> Our approach to solidarity therefore recognizes power and intersectionality.

In the study of social movements, “intersectionality” sometimes refers to a form of activist organization that recognizes and addresses multiple and interactive systems of oppression. Greenwood (2008) suggests that activists may inform and transform their agency and collective action by being sensitive to intragroup differences arising from intersections of social identities. Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall (2013) refer to this form of organizing as “political intersectionality.” Political intersectionality refers to a “dual concern for resisting the systemic forces that significantly shape the differential life chances of intersectionality’s subjects and for reshaping modes of resistance beyond allegedly universal, single-axis approaches” (Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall 2013, 800). This “intersectional approach to coalition building” (Collins and Chepp (2013, 80) or “intersectional praxis” (Townsend-Bell 2011) is seen as critical for building solidarity (Hancock 2011).

Active solidarity, as we define it, is a process by which participants reveal and engage difference – or domination – in ways that counter the silencing or submersion of marginalized groups that often results from efforts to develop shared identities (Mansbridge and Morris 2001). Indeed, without attention to the specific claims of such marginalized groups, participants are likely unwittingly to adopt the norms of dominant groups (e.g., white women versus women of color in

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<sup>4</sup> In the case of transnational forums and networks, the very *location* of organizations and activists may reflect (or provide) power. In the TSM literature, ‘location’ sometimes refers to the ‘transnational field.’ Some scholars argue that the transnational field reflects the power differences that organizations wield in resources as well as power inequity in geo-politics can influence mobilizing and building solidarity. Space prohibits further elaboration, but we did want to note, as we theorize this transnational “space” that *place* matters, and that not all transnational meetings are interchangeable or have the same character. It matters *where* these things happen.

the women's movement), inadvertently reinforcing power dynamics within marginalized groups (e.g, the privileging of middle class preferences in groups such as the NAACP) (cf. Young 1990, 2002; Simien ). Domination is often invisible to those who dominate. Those who espouse equality may be unaware of their own privilege, and resistant to relinquishing it. As Brian Sims, the first openly LGBT person to be elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, famously said, "when you are accustomed to privilege, equality feels like oppression" (2012). Without willfully acknowledging and addressing hegemonic power relations of the larger society, these inequalities can become reified within movement organizations. Yet by constructing active solidarity, participants seek to uncover and thoughtfully engage difference that might otherwise be silenced for the "greater good." In this sense, active solidarity is reflexive (cf. Dean 1996).

We see active solidarity as an approach that recognizes difference, but stresses diversity. By diversity we go beyond mere difference to mean *critical diversity* (Herring and Henderson 2011, 636): "What makes diversity a critical concept and not just an elusive one is the idea that it has to be tethered to other concepts such as equity, parity, and opportunity." Critical diversity links the celebration of diversity to the analysis of power and the way it represents dominant groups as the norm. Critical diversity seeks to advance justice by focusing on those whose experiences and interests would otherwise be obscured by these relations of power. Attending to diversity, defined in this way, is part of active solidarity.

Processes of active solidarity are not about celebrating diversity for its own sake (see Ward 2008 on the limitations of attempts to "celebrate" diversity). Rather, the process is one of interrogating differences that may be the basis for power differentials in order to reveal the perspectives of dominated or excluded groups on the political issues in question. Further, the process is aimed at devising concepts and forms of political action that are reflective of these previously repressed and sublimated points of view, interests and identities. These movements invite multiple identities around a shared goal or value such as justice or fairness, or around an issue such as equal pay or livable wages or safe working conditions. In other words, these forms of action and expression will be more inclusive. As such, we claim, they will command broader and deeper support from participants. Thus, we expect a process of active solidarity will build greater support for the movement (both internally and externally), and will do more to sustaining a movement, than suppressing differences and divisions. An awareness of diversities of identity and organizational or group ties is both acknowledged and sought, not for diversity's sake in and of itself, but rather for the sake of the organization itself.

### *Deliberation and Power*

Deliberation is an important element of active solidarity, because it describes an essential intra-group process and is a key element of what makes solidarity "active" as opposed to passive. In the U.S., accounts of the civil rights movement note the key role played by group meetings and consensus as a decision-making tactic in student groups such as SNCC (McAdam 1988; Polletta 2004). Deliberation- discussion- as a method of developing solidarity is perhaps the ideal for most activists as the way to voluntarily coordinate their actions with others. Indeed, Habermas (year) distinguishes such deliberation from coordination of action through system imperatives, through, for example, the medium of money, or the market, or through rule-following in the

bureaucratic sense. Deliberation is distinct from these other types of coordination because it is free from domination, at least as an ideal.

How to achieve this discussion free from domination, or whether this is even possible, is a matter of continuing debate. Those who hold up face-to-face discussion as the ideal often inadvertently suppress difference and dissent (Young 1990). On the other hand, when parties assume adversarial positions, areas of commonality may be obscured, and opportunities for cooperation overlooked.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, emphasizing a superordinate identity has sometime been shown to inspire great willingness to affirm generosity towards “others.”

Some suggest that the way to counter disadvantage is through affirmative representation (Strolovitch 2005); a figurative finger-on-the-scale that tilts the calculation in favor of intersectionally disadvantaged groups. This approach assumes a collective decision-making model that can be tweaked to produce better outcomes. It is less clear how to get everyone in the room in the first place.

Others focus more on individual actions that can be taken to make intersectional coalitions more likely. For instance, Hancock (2011) argues that an intersectional political approach helps to dissolve the seeming contradictions of progressive politics and points the way to a more constructive mode of political action and interaction that can facilitate progress towards progressive political goals. In particular, she emphasizes the following actions or demonstrated characteristics as key to overcoming barriers: altruism, consideration, cooperation, cultural empathy, and trustworthiness, among others.

Avoiding essentialist, monistic assumptions is a critical part of building appropriate coalitions, to be sure. And the “credible commitment” of putting oneself out there may well inspire reciprocity that can lead to cooperation. But this is more individualized than a systematic way of countering privilege. It is less clear what movements, as collectives, should do to embody these principles in practice. While Hancock (2011)’s approach starts from a promising place, then, the specific orientations and actions articulated are (appropriately, for her project) oriented towards the individual and depend on individual characteristics. It is not clear how to arrive at cooperation jointly, or collectively: What rules should collectives adopt to ensure inclusion and solidarity?

Deliberation may be able to minimize the suppression of difference when it includes mechanisms to encourage the recognition of difference and opportunities for marginalized groups to speak for themselves. Norms of deliberation are reciprocal, that is, not only is there an expectation or allowance for relatively disadvantaged groups to speak and be heard, but there is also an expectation that the relatively advantaged group engages on a somewhat equal footing. For example, relatively disadvantaged groups are routinely invited to speak in front of more powerful groups, but power dynamics between groups continue to structure the situation, implicit and unchallenged, whatever the intentions of the more powerful group. Thus, less advantaged groups/individuals testify and more advantaged groups listen—without notions of equality, reciprocity, or exchange. Consider also when a youth group speaks before the city council. The

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<sup>5</sup> On the advantages of adversarial and face-to-face democracy see Jane Mansbridge 1980 *Beyond Adversary Democracy*.

two groups are unequal actors. There is little expectation of mutual respect or exchange. Although this is not an example of a social movement interaction, it is a good example of what is involved in trying to avoid the suppression of difference. In contrast, active solidarity requires a sensitivity to extant power dynamics such that extant power dynamics are recognized and when necessary, challenged. The intention is always toward greater inclusiveness. This notion goes beyond diversity or the presence of different groups or identities.

Active solidarity is both an empirical and a normative concept, in that in addition to being a normative goal, it can be measured as a set of observable practices that value diversity and intentions of inclusion. The “active” in active solidarity is about its features: dynamic, intentional, fluid, flexible, engaged, reciprocal. In this sense, active solidarity is much more than a counterpoint to passive solidarity. *Active solidarity is about an orientation toward active engagement across traditional lines of difference.* This active engagement requires awareness and reflexivity, norms of inclusion and deliberation, and mutual respect and reciprocity.

The focus on diversity is for reach, growth, and sustainability of groups and issues; the focus on inclusion is for maintenance and survival. A diverse group will find it difficult to survive in the absence of inclusion and inclusive practices. Diversity helps groups to grow and sustain because it is by finding new allies that groups grow the base. Diversity requires negotiation, exchange, mutual respect, and reciprocity.

#### *Active Solidarity and Representation of Marginalized Groups*

We recognize that many scholars argue that contemporary social movements are weakened by a focus on “identity politics” and a failure to address the deep challenges presented by racial or class inequality (Gitlin 1996; Fraser 2013). In contrast, we see the failure in many cases as being due to the inequalities themselves, rather than an inappropriate or inordinate focus on difference among activists (Davis 1989; Weldon 2006a, 2006b). Dismissing claims that “black lives matter,” for example, as identity politics, fails to appreciate the specificity and materiality of the claims being made, claims that cannot be effectively claimed in universal terms. Failure to recognize and engage individuals in their multiple and relevant identities leaves participants subject to cross pressures. For example, the challenges of “double militancy” arise when one’s commitments as a member of one group, say, “women,” appears to conflict with one’s commitments as a member of another group, say “indigenous people” (Beckwith 2000; Zachery-Jordan 2005). As these individuals are forced to question their group and/or organizational alliances, they may also feel alienated from the larger coalition and internally conflicted about whether to stay or to separate.

Yet, tenets of active solidarity cannot, on their own, resolve social inequalities, and we do not claim that they do. However, for participants who are feeling dominated within movements, a process of active solidarity can provide an alternative to complete withdrawal or fomenting internal strife. Active solidarity recognizes relevant difference and encourages organization along those lines of difference, providing avenues within a movement for the articulation of dissent and diverse perspectives and concerns. For instance, in a group organized across class, a process of active solidarity recognizes and values different class perspectives. This process provides tools of deliberation that allow relevant groups to self-define, speaking for themselves

and drawing attention to the way that the broader group may be silencing or ignoring them. The larger coalition must then recognize that those relatively privileged by class, who may appear to be better equipped to articulate and champion their own positions, may not be as effective in speaking for the entire group—no matter how willing they may be. Working class and poorer coalition members will be supported and encouraged to self-organize and speak for themselves.

This does not mean that the more privileged will never speak on behalf of the poorer or vice versa. In fact, it allows for the potential that one group may need to speak for the other or to translate ideas from one way of speaking to another in order to enable smooth communication (which can be a challenge in groups organized across difference). Processes of active solidarity require that marginalized groups are invited to self-represent, and such discussion/deliberation about internal group differences, about secondary marginalization (Cohen 1999), is encouraged and institutionalized.

### *Inclusion*

Active solidarity, then, is an effort to achieve both diversity and inclusion in social movements. On inclusion, here, we follow Young's definition (2000). Inclusion is the opposite of exclusion. Exclusion can be internal or external. "External exclusion names the ways people are kept outside of discussion and decision-making" (Young 2000, 55). Internal exclusion refers to the ways that people "lack effective opportunity to influence the thinking of others even when they have access to fora and procedures of decision-making" (ibid 55). Experimental research shows that even when they are formally included, the contributions of women, people of color, and so on are given less weight, treated with less respect, or even ignored or viewed as illegitimate interventions (e.g. Biernat and Kobrowkowski 1997; Moss-Racusin et al 2012; Kaatz et al 2014; Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004; Sesko and Beirnat 2010; Mendez and Osborn 2009).

In sum, if solidarity refers to the ongoing process of creating and maintaining ties between social groups that engage in contentious politics, *active solidarity* entails the active engagement of movement adherents in shaping a movement, its goals, and its strategy and tactics. Active solidarity requires *intentionally* confronting power within our own ranks; seeking to dismantle privilege and reducing (if not eliminating!) its role in corrupting our discussions. Active solidarity is creative, aimed at building safe spaces for the marginalized, the silenced, the oppressed to speak, after a fashion; to bring them from margin to center so they can command more attention and influence. As an active process, active solidarity does not happen by accident, or without conscious attention. It rests on norms of deliberation, and represents an effort to achieve both diversity (i.e., critical diversity) and inclusion in social movements. As Young (2000) writes,

The normative legitimacy of a democratic decision depends on the degree to which those affected by it have been included in the decision making processes and have the opportunity to influence the outcomes. Calls for inclusion arise from experiences of exclusion- from basic political rights, from opportunities to participate, from the hegemonic terms of debate. Some of the most powerful and successful social movements of this century have mobilized around demands for oppressed and marginalized people to be included as full and equal citizens in their polities (p. 5-6).

## PART II: EXPLORATORY EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

In the previous section we have put forth the theoretical concept of active solidarity. We believe that active solidarity is not just a theoretical ideal, but is something that movements can and do achieve. We therefore believe it is important to inquire into the ways in which movements achieve active solidarity, and whether or not they succeed in doing so. But how will we know active solidarity when we see it? In this section, we develop five indicators of active solidarity. We then canvas several movements to examine their approach to solidarity, arraying these movements on a continuum from passive to active solidarity.

Our preliminary sample or set of cases is not meant to be representative of all social movements. Instead, we choose our cases in order to illustrate a wide variety of movements, some in the U.S. and others operating internationally. With this breadth, we hope to capture movements that have achieved active solidarity to different extents, thereby providing a deeper understanding of both the challenges and benefits associated with solidarity-building. Because this is a theory-building project rather than a theory testing project, we think this diverse set of groups will best help us to devise a version of our theoretical ideas that is helpful in the analysis of actual movements and movement organizations. A more diverse group might help us discern the boundary conditions of our approach. In addition to our effort to demonstrate the utility and applicability of this theoretical approach, we also hope to develop indicators of active solidarity that could be used in future research. As we outline further in our conclusion, we have a number of expectations and hypotheses about active solidarity and its outcomes, and we believe that the approach modeled here can be useful for further empirical tests.

Below we examine six movements or movement organizations, including the transnational movements for the rights of sexual minorities/LGBTQ rights, the anti-sweatshop movement, Occupy Wall Street, the transnational water rights movement, the movement against gender violence, and the digital rights movement. In each case, we look for the following five indicators to model the degree of passive to active solidarity:

Table 1: Indicators of Passive and Active Solidarity

Observables	Passive	Active
Key Movement Decisions: Executive Decisions or Public, Transparent Deliberation?	Key Movement Decisions are Made through Executive Decisions by leaders in closed meetings and disseminated through a command model	Key Movement Decisions are Made through Discussion or Deliberation; Deliberation and Discussion is relatively accessible
Attention to Critical Diversity in Organizational Structure	No specific organizations through which marginalized groups are socially connected	Specific caucuses or independent organizations of marginalized subgroups within movement
Attention to Critical Diversity in Discourse, especially about identity	Identities emphasize homogeneity and compliance with extant norms	Movement identities emphasize difference and internal diversity; Movement <b>discourse</b> draws attention to

		particular subgroups and their marginalized experiences and perspectives
Descriptive representation in Leadership	Leadership is more homogenous	Leadership is diverse, with presence of marginalized subgroups highly visible in leadership
Opportunities for Dissent	Participants either participate in movement events according to preordained rules, or they are ejected from events; Participants do not participate in defining rules	There are regular opportunities for criticism and dissent of movement decisions by marginalized groups (and others?)

**International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA)**

Movements for LBGQT rights have been a prominent feature of the political landscape in the U.S., Canada, and Western Europe for decades, and are increasingly active and influential around the world (Adam, Duyvendak, and Kruwel 1999). Such movements often make diversity and inclusion key components of their message. To take just one example, the movement’s well-known rainbow flag stands as a symbol of the movement’s recognition of and pride in its diversity (Ghaziani 2008). While no single organization can speak for these movements as a whole, we examine one such transnational movement organization, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA), for insight into ways in which the international movement recognizes and attempts to achieve diversity and inclusion.

Founded in 1978, The ILGA is a large international organization that works to achieve equality for LBGQT people. Its goal “is to work for the equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people and their liberation from all forms of discrimination. We seek to achieve this aim through the world-wide cooperation and mutual support of our members” (<http://ilga.org/>; accessed 12/29/15). This umbrella organization truly has a world-wide focus, with over a thousand member organizations from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Carribean, North America, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia, and the Pacific Islands. It receives funding from a number of governments (including Sweden, Finland, Norway and the Netherlands) as well as private organizations and has consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council.

Like most organizations, the ILGA’s mission statement, constitution, and strategic plan are instructive in providing useful illustrations of the organizations’ values and approaches. These documents show clearly that diversity and inclusion are central to the organization’s goals. For instance, the ILGA notes prominently on its website that diversity is one of its strengths, with the following statement in boldface: “ILGA’s success lies in the achievements and progress of 1044 member organisations from 117 countries, working together.” Similarly, the Preamble to the ILGA Constitution reads:

C1.1 Recognising the fundamental pride that lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, trans people, and intersex (LGBTI) people have in their gender identity and expression, sexual

orientation, and bodily diversity;

C1.2 Conscious that social and legal discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and intersex, is pervasive and that effective work against oppression calls for international solidarity;

C1.3 Seeking in ILGA as an international organization within which lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people of different political and personal choices (for example, separatism, feminism, orientation and identity) can work together;

C1.4 Concerned with the vulnerability of youth in a world that continues to practice so many forms of discrimination, the need for their protection from abuse and the goal of ensuring that young people experience both freedom and support as they develop their own sexualities and identities;

C1.5 Mindful of the impact of discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, bodily diversity, race, age, disability, economic status, national origin and ethnicity on lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, trans people and intersex people, and the way in which such discrimination can end in violence and violation of human rights

C1.6 Building on the work of previous generations who have struggled for equality and liberation;

C1.7 We approve this document as the Constitution of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association.

Such statements provide evidence of the ILGA’s commitment to diversity and inclusion in its approach, and are an element of active solidarity. Organizational practices reaffirm this approach. For instance, membership in the ILGA requires that member organizations pay a membership fee, yet that fee is based on whether the organization is located in a high-income economy, as defined by the World Bank. With such a huge organization it is understandable that members cannot engage in small, face-to-face deliberations; however, there is a world conference held every 1-2 years (the last was held in Mexico City in October 2014). Constitutional mandates also exist to achieve representation and diversity in leadership; for example, at each World Conference the organization elects a separate women’s secretariat, trans secretariat, bisexual secretariat, and intersex secretariat from among its full members. Yet while there is recognition of difference, adherence to the organization’s principles are a formal requirement of membership. According to the constitution, members who do not support the constitution may be expelled.

**Table 2: Indicators of Passive and Active Solidarity in ILGA**

Observables	Passive	Active
Key Movement Decisions: Executive Decisions or Public, Transparent Deliberation?	Holds world conference every 1-2 years, but it is unclear what forms of deliberation take place at the conferences	
Attention to Critical Diversity in Organizational Structure		Strategic plan includes explicit strategies for promoting diversity
Attention to Critical Diversity in Discourse, especially about identity		Mission statement, constitution, and strategic plan all emphasize diversity and inclusion

Descriptive representation in Leadership		Constitutional mandate to achieve representation from various segments of membership via secretariats
Opportunities for Dissent	Membership is formal and must be approved by board; organizations can be expelled for not adhering to constitution	

**Transnational Movement Against Sweatshops**

The transnational anti-sweatshop movement is a network of factory worker unions, international labor unions, student activist and other movement organizations that has sustained mobilization for more than two decades. An examination of two of the most prominent social movement organizations in the anti-sweatshop movement, United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) and IndustriALL, illustrates the extent to which activists in this movement employ a sort of active solidarity in order to sustain the movement.

United Students Against Sweatshops is a network of student-activist organizations with chapters in over 150 colleges and universities in the United States. In their mission statement, USAS states: “We believe that a pluralist approach to ideological positions and practices strengthens our movement. We encourage a rigorous internal political dialogue, which strengthens our strategic analysis and effectiveness” (USAS 2009). Moreover, their mission statement also reflects a commitment to inclusive communication, diversity of tactics, developing social movement leadership within oppressed groups, and struggles against oppression “within our society, within our organizations, and within ourselves” (Tormos and Weldon 2015; USAS 2009).<sup>6</sup> The following excerpt of the USAS mission statement articulates their vision of democratic organizing and inclusive communication:

“We strive to act democratically. We see participatory political education and horizontal communication as necessary for an effective democratic organization. We encourage a culture of constructive critique and strive to empower one another through trust, patience, and an open spirit” (USAS 2009).

Our observations of USAS conferences confirm that USAS practices the norms of inclusive communication that they articulate in their mission statement. USAS organizers begin their national and regional conferences by facilitating a session that reviews their internal norms of deliberation. These norms include: “take space make space” and “claps for clarity.” “Take space make space” is a norm that expects movement participants to be mindful of the amount of time

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<sup>6</sup> The full mission statement is available online at: <<http://usas.org/about/mission-vision-organizing/>>

and space that they take up as they speak and to limit future interventions accordingly so as to allow other participants to speak. “Claps for clarity” is a norm that celebrates when a movement participant asks a question about something that they do not understand with a round of applause and/or snaps.

IndustriALL’s “Action Plan,” an organizing document that articulates how the international union’s plans to fulfill its mission by building stronger unions, overcoming divisions in the union movement, supporting the formation of autonomous labor unions throughout the world, organizing solidarity campaigns, organizing workers throughout the global supply chain, building relationships with NGOs and other global unions, promoting the unionization of precarious workers, working on agreements with MNCs that enable negotiations with workers, challenging the mobility of global capital, moving towards environmentally sustainable manufacturing practices, collaborating with broader global justice efforts, among many other steps (IndustriALL n.d.; Tormos and Weldon 2015). IndustriALL hosts conferences for women union leaders and rank-and-file members from 6 regions: Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East & North Africa, North America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Europe. IndustriALL also demonstrates a commitment to critical diversity and active solidarity by descriptively representing women, who have 18 out of 60 seats reserved in the organization’s Executive Committee. The organization’s founding document also stipulates that 30 percent of the delegates of the IndustriALL Congress, the organization’s governing body, shall be women.

Several shifts are evident in the movement’s discourse, structure, and organizing practices over the past twenty years: 1) dropping Northern calls for consumer boycotts of goods manufactured in sweatshops, 2) the autonomous organizing of marginalized groups within the movement, 3) the emergence of open spaces for deliberation and voicing dissenting views, and 4) the representation of marginalized groups (such as women) in the leadership of movement organizations. Thus, it would seem that the movement maintains links between different people and social groups by shifting from a passive to a more active form of solidarity.

Northern organizations participating in the anti-sweatshop movement, such as the AFL-CIO, dropped calls for consumer boycotts in the late 1990s after these calls led to widespread criticism in the Global South.<sup>7</sup> Southern groups began to organize autonomously as they led successful union drives in the mid and late 1990s. Moreover, marginalized groups in the Global North participating in the anti-sweatshop movement also sought and created spaces for autonomous organizations, as evidenced in the creation of caucuses for marginalized groups within USAS.

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<sup>7</sup> Multiple Southern state and non-state actors, including governments, intellectuals, civil society organizations, and unions in developing countries opposed linking trade and labor in bilateral and multilateral international trade agreements as they considered these measures to be protectionist (Kolben 2005, 212; Tormos 2014). See Kolben (2005) for a review of joint statements issued by various sectors in developing countries in opposition to linking labor side agreements to trade agreements.

These caucuses are safe spaces for women, people of color, and non-hetero activists to meet and articulate proposals to be presented during USAS assemblies.

The movement’s shift towards an active form of solidarity is an ongoing effort. The form of solidarity that movement adherents developed is the product of recurrent democratic deliberations. These deliberations take place regularly in widely attended social movement organization assemblies. Their organizing structures, practices, and discourses reflect attention to critical diversity and recognition of power differentials between social movement adherents. We would expect that as the movement moves towards more active forms of solidarity, that global solidarity and attendant political influence would increase, and make organizational and movement persistence more likely.

**Table 3: Indicators of Passive and Active Solidarity in the Anti-Sweatshop Movement**

Observables	Passive	Active
Key Movement Decisions: Executive Decisions or Public, Transparent Deliberation?		Movement organizations deliberate internally and coordinate between organizations. Deliberations are open to members of organizations.
Attention to Critical Diversity in Organizational Structure		Marginalized groups organized in caucuses. Caucuses articulate proposals approved in assemblies.
Attention to Critical Diversity in Discourse, especially about identity		Mission statement articulates notion of collective liberation and intersectionality. These notions are emphasized in activist training sessions.
Descriptive representation in Leadership		Leadership mostly made up of working class women. Various activist leaders from Global South.
Opportunities for Dissent		Multiple venues and mechanisms, formal and informal, for expressing dissent in place.

**Occupy Wall Street**

The Occupy Wall Street Movement was a diverse group of student and other activists who created an encampment in Zuccotti Park in New York City in 2011 to protest income inequality and the excesses and disproportionate influence of the top 1% in terms of income. The Occupy protesters sought to rejuvenate democracy and to empower ordinary citizens (“the 99%” and those who stood for them). In under a month the movement originating with roughly 1,000 protesters who started the action in Zuccotti Park had spread to nearly 1,000 cities in 80 countries. Occupy did not limit its substantive concerns to issues of economic inequality or political reform, but embraced a wide array of social justice issues, and perhaps most distinctively, adopted (or aimed to adopt) a radically participatory organizational structure (Flank 2011; Gitlin 2012; Gelder 2011). This included, among other things, an opposition to a hierarchical organizational structures with leaders and a preference for horizontal organization and seeming leaderlessness (the protestors at one point elected a dog as their leader to make the point that they rejected the idea of leadership) (Gelder 2011; Gitlin 2012).

Occupy’s “Principles of Solidarity” begin with the vision of a collective that operates democratically and that transparently engages in direct, participatory democracy. Unlike some other movements (see, for example, the discussion of Anonymous below), Occupy explicitly enunciates a solidarity based on recognizing privilege and working against it in all interactions. While the value and privacy of each individual is affirmed, the approach is collective in recognizing a collective responsibility to work together to overcome oppression. Making knowledge and technology accessible and available to all is important not only as an affirmation of an individual right, but also for empowerment, to enable members of the collective to create, modify and distribute materials. The collective is engaged in a cooperative project of political imagination, conjuring “a new socio-political and economic alternative that offers greater possibility of equality”.<sup>8</sup>

Occupy Wall Street, almost from the very beginning of the encampment, operated by forming several working groups. In 2011, there were about 97 working groups, at least 15 of which had 200 or more members. These working groups met regularly- at least weekly. They included caucuses focused on specific issues as well as more-identity based groups. For example, one group called itself Women of Wall Street (WOWS) and another an organization of people of color (Gitlin 2012).

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<sup>8</sup> This quote is from an official document crafted by the Working Group on Principles of Consolidation. “The New York City General Assembly came to consensus on Sept 23 2011 to accept this working draft and post it online for public consumption.” Reproduced in Gelder (2011)

Deliberations in the Occupy Wall Street were governed by consensus decisionmaking. This commitment to consensus was explicitly made right from the beginning of the movement,<sup>9</sup> and reflects the degree to which the movement was as much about participatory democracy as the specific issues of economic inequality that inspired the movement (Gitlin) This means that every member of discussion gets a veto. A consensus decision rule can be very important for empowering minorities, but it can also mean that very little gets done.

It should also be noted that the OWS deliberations used their own rules for expressing consent and dissent that do not depend on the ability to construct arguments or otherwise adopt a particular language or rhetoric. Merely making the “blocking” sign was adequate to block a proposal. Consent could be indicated by waving the hands in an upright position (“twinkling”); Waving with the fingers pointing down was seen as expressing disapproval (a sort of hissing). (Gitlin 2012)

The Occupy movement also officially eschewed any official leaders, even mockingly appointing a dog as their spokesperson at one point (Gitlin 2013). This official move, however, did not preclude the emergence of unofficial leaders or “facilitators” (see Gitlin 2012 especially Chapter 8). In order to ensure the appearance, at least, of a diverse leadership, the movement made efforts to ensure that women and people of color were well represented among those trained as facilitators (Gitlin 104). Other moves aimed at encouraging diversity included a “progressive stack,” a sort of affirmative action on the discussion list that ensured that women and people of color got an opportunity to speak (Gitlin 2012, 93).

The Occupy Wall Street movement eventually appointed a “spokes” committee (as in hub and spoke) to represent the working groups. The member representing each group was rotating. In spite of the expectation that the Spokes committee would better enable decisionmaking for the movement, movement deliberations and actions were largely blocked by this group, with as few as three people standing in the way of actions that were supported by the vast majority of movement participants. This was seen as a frustrating and ineffective model by some participants (Gitlin 2012).

**Table 5: Indicators of Passive and Active Solidarity in Occupy**

Observables	Passive	Active
Key Movement Decisions: Executive Decisions or Public, Transparent Deliberation?		Occupy became particularly well known for its public deliberations.
Attention to Critical Diversity in Organizational Structure		Specific caucuses and independent organizations of

<sup>9</sup> See for example, “First Communique:We Occupy Wall Street” Posted Sept 19 2011 8:48 EST by Occupy Wall Street, reproduced in Flank, 2011.

		marginalized subgroups were formed within movement. A “progressive stack” was also employed for deliberations.
Attention to Critical Diversity in Discourse, especially about identity		The principles of solidarity and other movement statements repeatedly affirm the importance of working against oppression and privilege. The also specifically name gender and racial inequalities as problems, though there was significant contestation around this latter language.
Descriptive representation in Leadership		Opposition to leadership in principle made it unlikely that quotas or other specific measures to diversify leadership would be taken. However, efforts to train women and people of color as “facilitators” were intended to ensure that those with most influence and visibility included women and people of color.
Opportunities for Dissent		There are regular opportunities for criticism and dissent of movement decisions; Formal mechanisms for expressing dissent include rules for consensus and blocking mechanisms.

Occupy seems to fall more towards the “active” end of the spectrum of passive to active solidarity we have devised. Interestingly, it also seems to be among the least persistent, in terms of the continuation of specific encampment, of the movements we have considered. The impact of the OWS is also debateable. While some see the OWS movement as a flash in the pan with no lasting impact, others see it as having permanently changed the way the American public talks about economic inequality, with the concepts of the 99% and the 1% achieving wide currency in political culture that had previously had little room for discussion of economic inequality. Before occupy wall street the main economic policy issue taking up agenda space in the election was

government debt. Today, joblessness, low wages, economic inequality, under and unemployment and other issues raised by OWS are far higher on the public agenda and are more prominent in the current electoral debates. Nevertheless, the OWS example suggests that the relation between Active Solidarity and organizational or movement persistence, impact or success more generally may be complex.

### **Alternative World Water Forum (AWWF)**

As an alternative to the World Water Forum (WWF), activists and scholars representing the rural poor, environment, and organized labor organized the “People’s Water Forum” (PWF, also known as the “Alternative World Water Forum,” or AWWF) to run concurrently with the WWF. The first PWF was held in Florence in 2003, including more than 1,400 participants (70% Italian). There have also been Alternative Fora in 2005 in Geneva, 2006 in Mexico City, 2009 in Istanbul, and most recently 2012 in Marseille. (However, there did not appear to be a Forum in Korea for the 2015 WWF.) Each of these Fora is organized by loose coalitions within countries or regionally based (such as East Asia, South America, Europe and so on) groups, involving a wide range of organizations, including transnational unions (for example, Public Services International – global union of 20 million public workers in 150 countries, based in France), international environmental organizations and networks,<sup>10</sup> national and regionally-based organizations,<sup>11</sup> and identity-based groups.<sup>12</sup>

The 2012 Declaration of the AWWF states that their objective is “to create a concrete alternative to the sixth World Water Forum (WWF) which is organized by the World Water Council. This Council is a mouthpiece for transnational companies and the World Bank and they falsely claim to head the global governance of water.” Over 150 organizations (trade unions, water-users’, environmental, humanitarian and altermondialist associations, NGOs from thirty different countries and international networks), in addition to hundreds of people, have already signed the declaration of the participants issued at the conclusion of the Alternative World Water Forum.

The organization committee of the AWWF consists of 24 “international” organizations (see Appendix A for a list). In addition, 32 French organizations and 41 local organizations in Marseille for a total of 97 organizations that put together the 2012 AWWF. Over 150 organizations and 384 individuals also signed the “declaration of participants”. Many of these groups are formal organizations but several are also loose informal networks or groups (cf. Aiyer 2007)..

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<sup>10</sup> For example, the 2012 meeting included Blue Planet, an international network of 100+ organizations and thousands of individuals, based in California.

<sup>11</sup> For example, the Council of Canadians, Forum italiano dei movimenti per l’acqua ,Eau Secours! la Coalition québécoise pour une gestion responsable de l’eau, or the Comité Malien pour la défense de l’Eau.

<sup>12</sup> For example, ACME Maroc – a group for Arabic people in France

The 2012 AWWF is a European-heavy movement. Nearly half (11) of the 24 “international” organizations present were European-based with European-oriented goals. Many other organizations are based in the US and Canada, meaning that most organizations at the 2012 Forum were based in the Global North. There are few organizations here from the global south, Asia, Middle East, or even eastern Europe/Soviet countries, although there are organizations that aim to represent these groups.<sup>13</sup> According to one organization’s website, “The results of FAME [AWWF] opens up new perspectives. The desire to continue working together will be developed in campaigns and in the long term through common structures, particularly at the European level. For instance, the European Citizens’ Initiative, ‘Water is a human right’ has been carried out by public services trade unions since September 2012. This initiative will be continued as ‘Water belongs to the citizens’ by a platform of associations in 2013.” However, while the organizations are primarily European, the participants appear to have a wider ethnic diversity. The speakers and organized sessions at the 2012 AWWF included people from diverse backgrounds and groups across the globe. For instance, the AWWF produced a “Marseilles Declaration for Palestinian Water Rights” from a session organized primarily by Palestinian participants. (<http://www.fame2012.org/en/2012/04/10/declaration-palestine/>)

The world water movement, in its many forms, has given birth to national water rights networks (such as in Italy), continental networks (in Africa), and has led to the decline of water privatization in Latin America, Africa, Europe, and notably, in France. Although France is home to the main multinational water companies, in Paris itself, water resources are publicly managed. The water movement has participated in the fight to have the access to water recognized as a fundamental human right. The 2010 UN resolution about the Human Right to Water (HRW) has opened new discussions about what this may imply for people around the world. While some see promise in the UN resolution as it can hold states accountable, others note that it may not attend to the needs of the marginalized (such as across class and race and even the indigenous). Activists call for ongoing conversations about the meaning and implementation of the HRW as ‘rights’ talk are viewed as biased towards individuated rights and the possibility of leaving marginalized communities with substandard access. The AWWF has declared that it will continue research to find solutions to the worldwide water crisis and make the “water movement structure sustainable.” The AWWF has online space for sharing information and details about water related protests called ‘water voices.’

In efforts to organize the transnational water fora, key movement decisions are made through discussion or deliberation which are relatively accessible and represent the active end of the solidarity continuum. However, because most of the Forums are in major cities across regions of the world, access to resources becomes key to being able to attend them. Representatives from various countries are therefore more likely to attend forums in their own geographical regions.

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<sup>13</sup> One organization based in the global south is IBON – international org, based in Philippines. Another group, Focus on the Global South, appears to aim to represent Southern concerns. There are also organizations representing Maleans.

Leaders of NGOs attend the fora and often claim to represent marginalized and rural communities (cf. Subramaniam 2014). Fora typically involve selected speakers sharing their concerns about water rights using experiences from rural communities and other locations they are engaged in. Each Forum is a discussion but it can be a scripted discussion, aimed at presenting a variety of view or raising a set of issues, rather than a genuine deliberation. A variety of participants are represented at the Fora, including activists and organizations from countries in the region at which the Forum is being organized drawing attention to interests of various subgroups and bringing in experiences and perspectives from around the world (Table 6 below).

Many groups participating are mainly familiar with concerns in the location in which they organize. They can speak to the issues in these specific communities as they organize to demand rights to control access to and use of water by targeting the state and/or private entities (small private organizations or large transnational companies. But they may not have a wider perspective on these issues, and the members of the actual communities confronting the problems are not always present at these meetings. Rather, it may be the community organizers (who may or may not actually be from the communities in question) who attend the transnational meetings. Language – being able to articulate – in transnational forums can also be a key dimension to who represents and participates in transnational forums.

The factors leading to solidarity in the case of the AWWF include shared recognition of the need for community ownership of water as well as the ability to define common targets (such as national government, international institutions such as the World Bank, and transnational companies) who are identified as being responsible for the global governance of water. The recognition of the importance of access to a basic need such as water resonates in transnational forums. The rights frame provides a broad tent, enabling the many formal and informal organizations in the AWWF to join in the use of similar language (such as against privatization of water) making the loose network act as a coalition. Nevertheless, activists have to overcome differences in perceptions and cultural differences, even differences in understanding what constitutes a right.

AWWF represents the rural poor, environment, and organized labor and so the ability of activists and organizations to attend the AWWF is a challenge. However, the location of the AWWF often brings together organizations and activists in that particular region. So the case of water rights as represented by a transnational forum often results in regional (geographic) based action. And therefore regionally (geographic) based ‘solidarity’ is created which in turn is connected to the global forum in a sort of federated structure.

**Table 6: Indicators of Passive and Active Solidarity in AWWF**

Observables	Passive	Active
Key Movement Decisions:	The topics and rules of	

Executive Decisions or Public, Transparent Deliberation?	deloiberation are not necessarily set by participants; Discussion is relatively accessible but may not be entirely transparent to participants. For instance, some, not all, country representatives can speak in or comprehend discussions in English and nor would all forum participants be familiar with localized issues of water.	
Attention to Critical Diversity in Organizational Structure	There is no formal structure for these For a that has been agreed upon by participants. Different organizations and individuals engage in organizing the Forums depending on the region of the world they are occurring in.	
Attention to Critical Diversity in Discourse, especially about identity	More information needed	More information needed
Descriptive representation in Leadership		Leadership is diverse, with presence of marginalized subgroups highly visible in leadership
Opportunities for Dissent	Participants either participate in movement events according to preordained rules, or they are ejected from events; Participants do not participate in defining rules	

### **The Global Movement Against Gender Violence**

The Global Movement on Gender Violence dates to the early to mid-1970s, when activists organized the tribunal on crimes against women in Brussels as a lead-in (and alternative to) the first UN Conference on Women planned for Mexico City in 1975. The movement was initially quite divided along several social axes: divisions between women in the Global North and the Global South; divisions between women of color and white women, divisions between Israeli and Palestinian women and their supporters; women of the Eastern Bloc and women in the “West,” among others.

By the mid-1980s, activists in the global movement moved their key meetings in the South to make them more accessible to Southern women. Activists also took several steps to ensure that

Southern women were well represented among the leadership of the meetings. Autonomous organizations of Southern women emerged from regional meetings of NGOs as they prepared for intergovernmental conferences. In addition, the Center for Women's Global Leadership in the United States obtained Foundation support to nurture a cadre of Southern women leaders, holding workshops and networking meetings to enhance the networks, resources and skills of this group and facilitate their pathway to global leadership.

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the former Soviet Union eliminated much of the East-West axis. Activists also developed an approach to solidarity that moved away from essentialist claims of international sisterhood based on shared female identity and common experience to a commitment to working together in a practical mode to address issues of gender violence in their many and varied forms. By the mid-1990s, the movement had become particularly effective, setting the terms of debate at several international conferences and pushing for the development of declarations, changes to the CEDAW process, and even the adoption of the Optional Protocol, a mechanism by which individual women could hold governments accountable for violations of their human rights (Weldon 2006).

The NGO deliberations that paralleled the Beijing meeting in 1995 were wide ranging and in principle open to everyone. Public schedules of topics and locations made the discussion open to everyone. Topics were selected by participants. The NGO forum incorporated a wide range of styles of expression as well, with protest mixed with discussion mixed with socializing and celebration. Specific caucuses of various groups of women (e.g. Lesbians) and women concerned about specific topics (Environmentalists, Peace Activists) held protests, discussions and rallies. Formal debates between different ways of seeing issues of gender equality were part of the formal proceedings, and activists specifically sought to find areas of agreement in what was assumed to be a broader context of disagreement and contestation (Weldon 2006).

The key to developing solidarity here was a deliberative process. This deliberative process allowed activists to develop new concepts, new identities, that facilitated the process of cross-national organizing. In order to establish such a process, trust had to be established. As democratic theorists have emphasized, such trust can be furthered by descriptive representation (physical presence of marginalized groups) as well as institutional or procedural guarantees that ensure that marginalized, powerless or minority groups will have a chance to fully air their concerns and to voice their perspectives. It is also worth noting that having a perspective to voice requires autonomous, self-organization. Each of these elements (self organization, descriptive representation, guarantees of consensus decision-making and institutionalized dissent) were developed as the global movement struggled to overcome divisions of colonized and former colonizers as well as racial, ethnic and religious divisions among women (Weldon 2006). These measures to deepen deliberation, it should be noted, required resources and support from Foundations, governments and other agencies.

The broader coalitions enabled by these new concepts and identities made the movement more effective in its efforts to shape global governance. No longer could demands for action on gender violence be dismissed as the imperialist imposition of Northern women and their governments. Southern women themselves were clearly represented in the leadership and membership of the massive transnational activist coalitions demanding action. The language and examples used by

activists also reflected this broad solidarity, and is reflected in the specific measures to address “harmful cultural practices,” poverty and conflict in the activist and government documents that emerged from the Global Meetings on women that these activists sought to influence (Weldon 2006; Htun and Weldon 2012).

**Table 7: Indicators of Passive and Active Solidarity in Movement Against Gender Violence**

Observables	Passive	Active
Key Movement Decisions: Executive Decisions or Public, Transparent Deliberation?		International events had very public procedures.
Attention to Critical Diversity in Organizational Structure		Specific caucuses and independent organizations of marginalized subgroups were formed within movement.
Attention to Critical Diversity in Discourse, especially about identity		Initially universalistic and exclusionary, after two decades of organizing discourse had shifted to focus on the multiple specific issues of marginalized groups by the end; approach developed to unity of action rather than shared identity among women
Descriptive representation in Leadership	Initially, leadership was Northern and more homogenous	By end the leadership far more diverse as a result of intentional efforts
Opportunities for Dissent		There were regular opportunities for criticism and dissent of movement decisions; Formal mechanisms for expressing dissent (egs)

**The Anonymous hacktivist movement**

Anonymous is a leaderless, structureless transnational movement which does not possess any official mission statement, yet participants often express their views and motivations through video statements released publically online. “Anons,” as they are known, have shown themselves to be remarkably effective at engaging in disruptive online protests and contentious politics against those they perceive as threats to their digital rights and freedom, including such organizations as the Church of Scientology, Bank of America, the Vatican, and numerous governments of the world including the US Senate and CIA. In some cases, they have also been known to hack in and steal secret information only to release it publically online, such as in the case of federal cybersecurity contractor HB Gary in 2011, against whom Anonymous acted as a

kind of digital whistleblower (Coleman 2014). They are an electronic social movement, or e-movement, whose coordination and protests take place almost entirely online.

This movement brings up new issues about the Internet as a shared space for new types of solidarity through new deliberations. Solidarity is based on ideas and values rather than organizations, directives, or (offline) identities. These values generally are expressed as support for free speech and the free flow of information online, and are most often manifest in campaigns against government or corporate censorship and anti-piracy efforts, as well as support for whistleblowers and other forms of transparency/open democracy. As its popularity has grown, Anonymous seems to have taken on a more broadly activist slant, with more and more activists are joining, thus widening its scope. It is definitely not just limited to online issues anymore.

Anonymous is unique in that the idea of it as a collective identity originally emerged somewhat spontaneously and organically as a meme through an online network known as 4chan (Beyer 2014; Grigoriadis 2011). Over the years as the movement has grown it has largely migrated to different networks, mainly in IRC (Internet Relay Chat) but still maintains a very active and open community of discourse. The shared space (online) creates a sense of linked fate in individuals who otherwise (offline) may not share the same life experiences or identities. In fact, this new collective identity among these networks of Internet users, due to its disembodied nature, may not conflict as much with other existing offline identities. For example, according to one website, Anonymous is “a group where everyone is invisible and appears to speak from the center. Anonymous collectively contains every belief, creed, cultural status, sexuality, fetish, hobby, job, likes, dislikes, (insert any quality), etc. They have collectively experienced every act of violence and kindness” (OhInternet n.d.).

By taking on the Anonymous collective identity, each Anon sheds all personal characteristics and participates as an equal member of a larger whole. Anonymous is replete with informal cultural norms which are collectively enforced by its members. For instance, one of the most vibrant norms within Anonymous is its anti-leader, anti-celebrity ethic. According to Coleman (2011), “participants remind each other with remarkable frequency that one should not behave like a leader, nor seek personal attention in the media.” Acting like a leader or celebrity is one of the few things that can get an Anon expelled from the collective. For once one becomes publically known by name, they are no longer anonymous, and thus no longer Anonymous.<sup>14</sup>

Yet, there is inherent exclusion based on access to technology and knowledge (extending from what is known as the “digital divide”), which tends to select in favor of young, male, educated, upper-middle class Westerners (although this is gradually shifting as technology becomes less expensive and more widespread). In principle, Anonymous is open to anyone, but in order to be aware of and participate in the community one has to possess not only computer hardware but

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<sup>14</sup> Coleman’s ethnography suggests that Anons engage in a kind of collective shunning of individuals who violate the rules of the group. Essentially they will troll (harass, mock, dox, etc.) an individual the same way they troll targets of their protests. Calling attention to yourself risks calling the wrath of the collective. I heard a story about this happening once to an Anon called Coldblood back in 2010 after he started doing interviews with newspapers.

also at least a few digital literacies, such as coding, or at least using various social media such as IRC.

In many ways, Anonymous is such a non-traditional social movement that it puts our concept of active solidarity to the test. In terms of making decisions and having the ability to dissent, Anons are highly active. Online networks are the lifeblood of this movement, and the principle of the free and open exchange of ideas and information is core to its existence. However, in terms of organizational structure and leadership, it would appear that Anonymous would fall into the passive categories because it has none. On the other hand, it could be argued that eschewing traditional ideas of leadership and structure is itself a way of promoting active solidarity. After all, this approach to leadership is not something which exists passively, as if ignored or left out, but is a norm in which Anons actively engage. Therefore marginalized groups have absolutely the same access from within the movement as anyone else, assuming they can overcome the structural barriers involved with the technology (e.g., the digital divide).

It should be noted however that this anonymity precludes organizing as marginalized groups. Each member of a group has the ability to join as an anonymous individual. However, anonymity would appear to preclude the kind of discussion that has produced ant-racist and antisexist organizations. This makes Anonymous' campaigns against the KKK in 2014-2015 and efforts to highlight race bias in police violence even more intriguing. How did Anonymous come to develop these initiatives? This is a question which requires further research.

Last is the characteristic of homogenous identity and compliance with extant norms. This deserves special mention because Anonymous is in essence a collective identity which is completely homogenous, which would qualify as passive in our typology. But Anonymous is not a hegemonic identity. Rather it is the opposite; a complete lack of individual identity, or a *non-identity*. Again, it could be argued that this lack of identity and differentiating traits is actually a way of creating active solidarity by putting all participants inherently on an equal level. Deseriis (2013) conceptualizes this type of anonymous identity as an "improper name," which is a form of *political technology* that "provides a medium for obfuscation and mutual recognition to its users" and "allows those who do not have a voice of their own to acquire a symbolic power outside the boundaries of an institutional practice" (p. 41).

Since its inception circa 2006, Anonymous has grown from about a hundred hackers into a global network estimated to be *at least* in the hundreds of thousands (Gilbert 2014). Furthermore, it has transited from a group of online pranksters and trolls into a more serious activist movement. It has engaged in campaigns all over the world, from Australia to Indonesia, from Egypt to England, from China to Chile. As the movement continues to grow, it appears that many new members are coming from non-Western countries. Offline events such as the global Million Mask March, which in 2014 took place simultaneously in approximately 482 cities around the world, show an effort on behalf of the movement to provide new access points to overcome structural barriers of the technology and open the movement up to more diversity and inclusion of participants, such as those from the global South, and issues, including racial justice and water rights.

Table 4: Indicators of Passive and Active Solidarity in Anonymous/Digital Rights

Observables	Passive	Active
Key Movement Decisions: Executive Decisions or Public, Transparent Deliberation?		Decisions are made through participatory discourse in online networks, relatively accessible to those who know where to find them
Attention to Critical Diversity in Organizational Structure	All Anons are seen and treated the same; no formal or easily discernable hierarchy or organizational structure	
Attention to Critical Diversity in Discourse, especially about identity	As a collective identity Anonymous emphasizes homogeneity by shedding individual traits and characteristics, and compliance with new informal norms	
Descriptive representation in Leadership	No leadership in Anonymous, in fact there is an anti-leader ethic	
Opportunities for Dissent		Everyone has an equal voice and equal access to dissent through online networks

Our admittedly brief treatment of these five transnational movements has focused on illustrative evidence of these movements’ efforts at achieving solidarity. Notably, they vary in their missions, structures, and collective identities. More importantly for our inquiry, they vary in the extent to which those missions, structures, and identities are explicitly aimed at deliberative processes and norms that favor inclusion – or what we term “active solidarity.” But what are the consequences of this variation? In our concluding section we outline a few hypotheses about the likely outcomes of active solidarity, for movements that can achieve it.

**Summary and Concluding Observations**

If solidarity refers to the ongoing process of creating and maintaining ties between social groups that engage in contentious politics, *active solidarity* entails the active engagement of movement adherents in shaping a movement, its goals, and its strategy and tactics. Active solidarity requires *intentionally* confronting power within our own ranks; seeking to dismantle privilege and reduce its role in corrupting our discussions as much as possible. Active solidarity is creative, aimed at building safe spaces for the marginalized, the silenced, the oppressed to speak, after a fashion; to bring them from margin to center so they can command more attention and influence. Active solidarity does not happen by accident, or without conscious attention.

We expect that, for those activists who do achieve it, active solidarity has some positive consequences. Active solidarity likely increases the breadth and depth of social movement organizations. They are likely to persist over a longer period of time, and they are likely to be more successful in confronting power. They will better align the views, and expressed preferences, of members and leaders, and they will have more impact on laws, global norms, and other social outcomes. They may also be more vulnerable to repression and burnout, however, which can work against effectiveness in some cases. We summarize these hypotheses below:

### **Expectations/Hypotheses:**

- I. Those movements that are closer to the active end of the spectrum will produce more new meanings, new concepts, and new ideas on which to base the movement than those that are closer to the Passive end of the spectrum.
- II. Active solidarity will produce movement identities that manifest oppositional consciousness (Mansbridge and Morris 2001), challenging established identities. More passive movements will produce identities that more closely conform to dominant norms and extant categories.
- III. Movement agendas of those with active solidarity will include issues of importance to marginalized groups, while more passive movements will articulate issues in universal terms and deemphasize the particular importance of particular groups.
- IV. Coalitional strategies may be particularly powerful mechanisms for enabling solidarity and universalistic language while permitting the expression of identity-based concerns, interests and perspectives. (For example, the anti-identity of Anonymous may allow it to play a coalitional role with more identity-specific groups).

In conclusion, although there is not space in this paper to explore the effects of active solidarity on the political and organizational outcomes identified above, if we can develop a clear way of discerning such an approach, we would hope that future research can provide the empirical tests of our ideas. We expect that those movements and SMOs that adopt an approach closer to the active end of the spectrum should be characterized by greater organizational persistence (for example, longevity) and greater cultural and policy impact (new concepts and idioms, received wisdom; new actions by governments and international bodies).

Young (1994) describes such collective action as the phenomenon of a specific social group arising out of a ‘series’ or social collective defined by practico-inert structures, by combinations of material and cultural institutions and objects. These collectivities remain mostly at a latent or unconscious level, coordinating but not consciously motivating action until some event or crisis occurs that focusses attention on a problem. Social group members then do the identity work that makes sense of the common situation in which they find themselves. This is facilitated when the target is clear, as in the case of the AWWF. Active solidarity pushes this collective action from mere passive support to a form that is likely to persist.

This discussion may seem to suggest that shared goals or ideas precede coordinated political action, but that is not what we conclude. The movement on gender violence demonstrates the

importance of inclusive deliberations for developing a shared language that can be used to motivate and frame activists' common goals. Occupy Wall Street similarly used a deliberative participatory process to develop movement statements, language and procedures that helped to define the character of the movement. Both Occupy and Anonymous eschewed a formal structure and leadership, which made it difficult to ensure inclusion through formally articulated and observed rules about movement leadership. Future research can explore the effects of such a decision on movement persistence.

Active solidarity is a procedural map for activists, a guide to a process through which they can develop more inclusive issue frames that will be more broadly mobilizing, more sustainable over the long run, and more influential politically. It is through the collective discussion and articulation of a shared language, and even a shared vision of a just society, that such inclusive frames can be generated. Such a process rests on values of inclusion, values of justice, more than shared identities or interests derived from material structures, at least at the outset. It is not that such structures are not relevant-. They are, as they define the context in which political action arises, and they define the world in which inclusive meanings must resonate. The point is that political coordination does not arise automatically from structural change, and in some ways, it is not well-predicted by an approach that relies entirely on the analysis of materiality. The contingent, political strategies of political actors, their agency and values, must also be part of the story. We hope that future research will continue in this vein.

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