

Call for Papers

'Debating Transnational Solidarity. Multidisciplinary interpretations and projections on future scenarios'

Inter-alliance conference

The Coimbra Group Social Sciences and Humanities Working Group, together with the EC2U Virtual Institute for Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, in cooperation with the Universities of Bologna and Pavia, and members of different university alliances, are co-organising an event to study, reflect and discuss the theme of Transnational Solidarity. The event will take place at the University of Pavia (Italy), 19-20 March 2025.

Guests are expected to arrive by lunch time on March 19 and leave in the evening of 20 March or morning of March 21st, 2025. PhD students are welcome both as guests and speakers. Speakers will include scholars and practitioners.

The approach will be multidisciplinary including areas of study such as economics, history, philosophy, international studies, law and linguistic. Presentations will be given by scholars selected by the organising committee and chosen among those submitted via this call for papers.

Context

The idea of solidarity has inspired Romanic civil law, taking up new perspectives of semantic and normative articulation across the centuries. On this path Durkheim's concept of organic solidarity has represented a turning point, moving beyond the idea of a social integration between members of a society endowed with shared values and beliefs.

At any rate, as an overarching idea, both descriptive and normative, solidarity continues to present us with high levels of contestation, as it evokes a variety of meanings and is not reflected in one single theory that has achieved universal acceptance. Solidarity is invoked in political contexts in which requests of social equality, economic justice, integration of diversity and, more generally, support of vulnerable individuals and/or groups are at risk. For centuries appeals to solidarity as a political principle reflecting multiple meanings have been launched by political theorists and philosophers in relation to its supposed capacity to strengthen social bonds not only within relatively homogeneous communities (such as nation-states championing allegiance to shared political, cultural and/or religious values and traditions), but also, more

recently, in liberal-democratic societies and international and supra-national organizations, addressing a plurality of perspectives and ideas of justice, equality and welfare. Solidarity is a two-way phenomenon: it emarginates those who fail to meet the needed requirements for membership in a certain community or promotes a form of cohesiveness which appears able to coexist with diversity. In this respect, as the sociologist Judi Dean has contended, we refer to a tension between an “exclusive” and a “reflective” solidarity¹.

Focusing on Transnational Solidarity (TS) means broadening further the concept of Solidarity *per se* by including sustainability in international relations, especially international economic relations, coexistence, equal partnerships and equitable sharing of benefits, resources, and burdens. Transnational networked solidarity can be spontaneous or manufactured in response to old or new threats. At the European level, cross-national solidarity, at difficult times can produce togetherness. But is an “ethos of togetherness” sustainable? (Maurizio Ferrera 2022). Sustainable solidarity can be seen as common interest versus self, national interest and implies a certain degree of reciprocity, also defined as profitable altruism. (Nikolaidis and Viehoff, 2012) EU solidarity is a significant test case: in this regard, the redistributive policies of the EU are not just conceived to correct the outcomes of supranational market and economic integration, but they can foster a sense of togetherness, reinforcing the EU polity. However, EU solidarity implies that some member nations are expected to make significant sacrifices for the benefit of others (Etzioni 2013; Ferrera and Burelli 2019) and that some member states are closer to each other than to others. A special relationship between member states within the EC/EU can impact on cross-national solidarity (Ferrera, M. (2022). In the field of political theory, we should ask whether conceptualizations of solidarity as an ideal capable of inspiring and normatively justifying political decisions are needed or a theoretical effort in this area is redundant (Sangiovanni 2013, 2015, 2023).

Historically, we know that within the European and global frameworks, crises such as the economic and financial crisis and later the refugee crisis have challenged transnational solidarity (Krunke and Petersen 2020) However a long-term process since the 19th century is still ongoing with solidarity replacing fraternity, brotherhood or charity, with a vision of a new, diverse and emancipating society in a scenario populated by individualised and unconnected actors (Jacek Kołtan 2023). Since Durkheim, defining TS as a cooperative relation between individuals based on a mechanism of division of labor, parcelization has not been considered necessarily an obstacle in granting support within dis-homogeneous groups. (Durkheim, 1893) A link between solidarity and justice framed by Habermas has enriched further the discussion with an interconnection between solidarity, rights – particularly human rights -and justice (Habermas 1986,1990).

The Conference

Building on the ongoing, multidisciplinary debate on transnational solidarity, the Pavia conference will focus on common regional and global responses confronting poverty, wars, population pressure, the impact on labour and migration and the misuse of natural resources. David Featherstone’s comprehensive approach is

a starting point for scholars of the Global South to look towards the *labour* of building solidarity (Featherstone 2012, 46) and discuss the numerous strands of anticolonial solidarity within the Global South. Finally, most AI ethics principles are drafted in the global North and be alien to the Global South, even as the latter provides resources for the development of AI data infrastructure. There is a risk that AI related anti-solidarity measures will be strengthened, thereby worsening the digital divide between and within countries and among different sectors of society.

Against this very rich and stimulating background, the conference will seek to explore ethic, economic relations and models of solidarity over time, the European and non-Eurocentric view, the lexicon of solidarity, solidarity and postcolonialism, future scenarios of solidarity/non-solidarity, including conflict and post-conflict situations and the AI debate in los.

Key questions to be addressed at the conference:

- Can TS be created or re-created in international relations?
- Does TS contribute to shaping contemporary views of international justice?
- Which are the cleavages that divide groups aiming at TS solidarity: European and non-European test cases.
- How has TS developed in the historical processes that lead to the progressive elaboration of a distinctively European Union?
- Which philosophical theories might contribute to the elaboration of contemporary practices of TS?
- Is the language or linguistic of TS helping us to understand how to frame or perceive cross national solidarism?
- What is the role of culture in shaping and representing sentiments of solidarity across geographical and political/ideological boundaries?
- The question of 'the other' and solidarity in Europe: from Enlargement to Neighborhood policies and immigration policies.
- Is TS leveraged by soft power/public diplomacy and undermined by disinformation?
- Does AI represent a challenge to TS?

Proposals on the topic of the conference and more specifically related to the above areas should be sent to Ilaria Poggiolini (ilaria.poggiolini@unipv.it) and Elena Irrera (elena.irrera2@unibo.it) by 7th February 2025.