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## Moral Solidarity, Relationships and Relational Egalitarianism

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Moral Solidarity, Relationships and Relational Egalitarianism

by

Sabrina Ruby Green

Under the Direction of Christie Hartley, PhD

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2022

## ABSTRACT

In my thesis, I consider Jean Harvey's account of moral solidarity. Harvey claims that solidarity only occurs between people who share a personal relationship. I raise a concern regarding the limited scope of Harvey's account of moral solidarity. I challenge the view that one cannot extend the concerns they have for a friend experiencing injustice to a stranger who is also experiencing the same injustice. In order to address this concern and defend Harvey's account of solidarity, I offer a friendly amendment to her account. By drawing on Samuel Scheffler's account of relational egalitarianism, and in light of the relationships citizens may share with one another, I expand the types of relationships that should be considered solidarity under an account such as Harvey's. My account thus defends a more expansive view of solidarity than that of Harvey.

INDEX WORDS: Solidarity, Social Justice, Relationships, Egalitarianism

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2022

Moral Solidarity, Relationships and Relational Egalitarianism

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May 2022

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, George B. Green and Miwako Green, as well as my dear friend, Madeleine McEntire. Thank you for your constant support throughout the writing process.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

While there isn't one generally accepted account of solidarity, many accounts take a political approach in the sense that solidarity is always against something unjust.<sup>1</sup> Whether that be a racist person or a systemic injustice, political solidarity is focused on people coming together to fight against something. However, Jean Harvey's account is distinct insofar as she offers an account of moral solidarity. While she thinks that solidarity does involve resistance to injustice, central to her account is that persons must have a personal relationship for solidarity to be possible. She considers solidarity to be a moral obligation between people rather than a reaction against some injustice. Using a social lens, Harvey considers the motivations behind acts of solidarity as well as the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed. Harvey argues that there is more to solidarity than just committing a helpful action. On her view, solidarity also requires an underlying personal relationship.

In consideration of recent work on solidarity which treats solidarity as a means to address injustice, one might think that Harvey's view is outdated because of her emphasis on personal relationships. In my thesis, I consider her account of solidarity and her concern with when it is morally acceptable for someone to make a decision for another. I raise the criticism that the scope of her account of solidarity is too narrow. By claiming that personal relationships are the foundation for moral solidarity, some might claim that Harvey unnecessarily limits who a person can be in solidarity with for the wrong reasons. Harvey worries about the moral risks involved in making decisions for others. In order to defend Harvey's account of solidarity, I suggest a friendly amendment by appealing to Samuel Scheffler's view of relational egalitarianism and societal relationships in "The Practice of Equality" (2015). I consider different types of

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<sup>1</sup> Take for example, Sally J. Scholz's "Political Solidarity" (2008) and Tommie Shelby's "Foundations of Black Solidarity: Collective Identity or Common Oppression." (2002)

relationships within a society and suggest that a relationship based on civic equality is just as acceptable as a personal relationship for moral solidarity.

My thesis takes the following format. In the first section, I layout Harvey's conception of moral solidarity. In the second section, I raise and discuss a counterexample against Harvey's view and depict the issues that underlies the counterexample. I argue that we should be able to extend feelings that rise from injustices that personally affect us, or our loved ones, to strangers. Finally, in an attempt to salvage moral solidarity and its use of relationships as its foundation, I consider a conception of relationships within an egalitarian society. Using egalitarian relationships, particularly anonymous relationships between citizens, I argue that citizens who may not personally know each other are capable of moral solidarity due to the nature of anonymous relationships within an egalitarian society.

### **1.1 Harvey on Solidarity**

In "Moral Solidarity and Empathetic Understanding: The Moral Value and Scope of the Relationship," Harvey discusses her conception of a morally valuable solidarity. On her view, solidarity, generally, has to do with persons being in opposition to systemic injustice (2010, 22). She stresses that in conditions of systemic injustice, there are important differences in power between victims of systemic oppression and the perpetrators of the system (2010, 22).<sup>2</sup> Harvey believes the difference in power between the victims and perpetrators of oppression make solidarity possible between these two different parties (2010, 22). It is generally accepted that solidarity flows from the oppressor to the oppressed or between the oppressed. However, Harvey believes that solidarity can also flow from oppressed to oppressor (2010, 33), which will be

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<sup>2</sup> Harvey's use of the language "victims" and "perpetrators" may come across as particularly strong however Harvey isn't asserting a dichotomy where people can only be victims or oppressors. She is also not assuming that victims are the only ones who are in need of solidarity, the second point will become clearer in the next section.

discussed in more depth later. Like many philosophers, Harvey does not offer an exact definition of solidarity. However, she identifies some key elements.

First, solidarity involves at least two individuals or two groups: one is in solidarity with another. Second, we are in solidarity with those suffering from immorality or injustice, not from some natural disaster. Third, action may be involved, but there seems at least to be agreement that action alone is not enough. No matter what the action, if it is self-serving ... solidarity is not an appropriate term to use. There is some kind of alignment or unity or fellowship involved, although the nature of it is a matter of debate. (2010, 22)

Harvey aims to explore solidarity through a moral lens and focuses on situations that deal with oppression. She considers: Is solidarity morally called for? What would that look like? Could solidarity be morally desirable? Harvey argues for two claims: 1) those in power have a moral obligation to be in solidarity with the oppressed and 2) there is a distinction between acts of solidarity and relationships of solidarity. Acts of solidarity, she claims, are “reflections of a relationship of solidarity” (2010, 23). Morally speaking, acts of solidarity may be important; however, relationships of solidarity are foundational for moral solidarity.

## **1.2 Alliances vs. Solidarity**

Harvey thinks that alliances are distinct from relationships of solidarity (2010, 23). People form an alliance when they act together because of a shared goal (2010, 23). With an alliance, there may be nothing else between two groups except for their shared goal (2010, 23). Groups can be in alliance with each other while not liking or caring for each other. She gives the example of the US and the USSR during World War II (2010, 23). Alliances are commonly made against a mutual enemy (2010, 23). When the shared goal is reached (e.g., the destruction

of the enemy), the alliance will dissipate since there is no other common will or sentiment holding the two groups together (2010, 23). That is not to say that groups have not advertised or claimed to have positive feelings for each other. However, Harvey claims that if we look at the larger historical picture it is easy to see that these feelings were never strong (2010, 23).

By contrast to an alliance, solidarity requires more than a common goal between two people or parties. Harvey speaks about “the something more” within the context of co-members of an oppressed group (2010, 24). I imagine that in discussing co-membership that Harvey wanted to address a common view of solidarity, that it can only be amongst people who have shared a similar suffering. Harvey acknowledges that the benefits of co-membership in an oppressed group is “shared knowledge of the injustices involved in such oppression” (2010, 24). She and many others believe that “such shared knowledge is an advantage in setting appropriate goals” (2010, 24).

However, Harvey points out that co-members of an oppressed group may act out of their own interests. If Bob calls for solidarity due to an issue he faces, but only cares for his issue being resolved rather than everyone else who may face the same issue, then Bob isn't in solidarity with anyone. Morally speaking, it doesn't matter that Bob is a co-member of an oppressed group and may possess some shared knowledge because of it. In other words, despite Bob's co-membership status, his call for solidarity would not be considered solidarity in the moral sense that Harvey is striving for. On Harvey's view mere co-membership does not entail solidarity. Harvey points out that *all* relationships, even between co-members of an oppressed group need to be analyzed if there is to be moral solidarity.

### 1.3 Relationship Between the Privileged and the Oppressed

After arguing that relationships of solidarity need not occur between members of a particular oppressed group, Harvey describes how relationships of solidarity can occur between the privileged and the oppressed. She thinks the main hurdle for creating such a relationship is the difference in life experience between these different groups. The main cause of differences in life experience between the two groups can be narrowed down to the difference in societal status or power. Using the example of women and stalkers, Harvey points out that the privileged are guilty of not taking the experiences of the oppressed seriously (2010, 25). She discusses a case in which women share their concerns about stalkers and men do not understand their concern (2010, 25). She says that their lack of understanding stems from the fact that they could not see themselves in such situations (2010, 25). A lot of men dismissed the concerns as exaggeration or a distraction from “real” issues like women who were *actually* being assaulted (2010, 25). From this example, Harvey makes a distinction between “sheer information and empathetic understanding” (2010, 25). With sheer information, one is not emotionally engaged with learning about the oppressed. One need only consider again, the reaction of men in the stalking case. On the other hand, empathetic understanding does require an emotionally involved attitude towards learning about the oppressed.

Harvey believes that empathetic understanding can result in a type of knowledge that changes the relationship between the privileged and the oppressed for the better (2010, 27). She claims that knowledge about the oppressed should come from the oppressed, and that the privileged must interact with the knowledge gained in an empathetic manner (rather than an emotionally detached one)(2010, 27). Referring to Laurence Thomas’s *Moral Deference*, Harvey

seems to agree with Thomas in that the privileged are morally obligated to learn about the oppressed in an empathetic manner. Referring to Thomas, she states

Listening to the stories of the oppressed should not occur in a detached mode, nor with an attitude of curiosity or ridicule, nor with some self-interested goal in mind, but rather (*quoting Thomas now*) ‘letting another’s pain re-constitute one so much so that one comes to have a new set of sensibilities—a new set of moral lenses if you will.’ (2010, 27)

Harvey acknowledges that the privileged may be kind and well-intentioned people, like some of the men in the stalking case, but that does not entail an understanding about the oppressed and their situation (2010, 25). She also points out that possessing such knowledge is not enough on its own for the privileged to be in solidarity with the oppressed. What is needed is for people to empathetically understand the experiences of others, which is most likely to occur in personal relationships.

#### **1.4 Too Restrictive a Conception of Solidarity & Too Heavy a Focus on Paternalism**

One view that Harvey rejects is Laurence Thomas’s idea that *moral deference* is required for moral solidarity. By this, Thomas means that people should defer to the experiences of others rather than try to understand 1) someone else’s experience which 2) they have never undergone. If done correctly, moral deference allows for someone who is not affected by an injustice to learn about the injustice in a way that goes beyond just reading facts about it. Rather, someone learns about injustice, through moral deference, by witnessing the emotional response of another with their consent. For Thomas, *moral deference* is an important step in living a moral life because it sets up a person to have the morally appropriate response to someone who has been wronged (Thomas 1993, 233).

Harvey thinks that such deference may do more harm than good (2010, 27). She has two major concerns with Thomas's moral deference. First, she believes that moral deference has a "morally dubious implication" in terms of what it requires from the oppressed (2010, 27). While the attitude of moral deference is a good start to creating the relationship necessary for a moral solidarity, moral deference does have a questionable implication. Harvey points out that in order for someone to morally defer to someone else's story, the oppressed person has to be a storyteller and verbally articulate their story (2010, 28). However, how are we to have a solidarity with people who are unable to share their own experiences? For people who are non-verbal or unable to speak about their own experiences, perhaps due to trauma, making moral deference a requirement for moral solidarity becomes an issue. Second, we should also take into account that children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities are part of oppressed groups. Making moral deference a requirement of moral solidarity means that we are unable to be in solidarity with these people because they may be unable to verbally share their own stories (2010, 28). Harvey points out the ridiculousness of the requirement that the oppressed must communicate their stories, especially since these may be the people who need solidarity the most (2010, 28).

### **1.5 Protective Aid and the Kind of Learning about the Other Involved**

Despite her acknowledgement of high-handed paternalism, Harvey believes that there may be situations where it would be morally appropriate for someone to speak on behalf of another who cannot speak for themselves (2010, 29). Harvey argues for *protective aid*, a morally neutral term for someone to speak about experiences they have never experienced (2010, 29). Harvey identifies two scenarios where protective aid is morally permissible (2010, 29). The first scenario involves some persons who are elderly and the second involves nonhuman animals. In both scenarios, the beings are identified as being vulnerable (2010, 29) and unable to verbally

speak for themselves. Harvey believes that concerned others are morally justified in speaking for the others in scenarios which feature vulnerable people or animals who are unable to advocate for themselves (2010, 29).

Harvey points out that even though a victim may be unable to articulate their needs, people can still empathize with them (2010, 29). It is not necessary for someone to tell you that they are uncomfortable when you can read their body language. However, Harvey is clear that the non-victim is going to have to engage with the victim in addition to doing their own research on the matter (2010, 30). She also points out that doing the research will be harder when the violence against victims become more subtle or less obvious (2010, 30). For example, there will probably be more research available about wage theft than companies gaslighting their female employees.

Harvey acknowledges that not all victims are going to be able to speak for themselves and articulate their own needs (2010, 30). Someone speaking on behalf of the victim, underneath protective aid, is going to be necessary to advance the interests of these victims (2010, 30). In other words, it will be essential for non-victims to be the ones to make the judgements necessary for the victims that Harvey has in mind. In defending her own view against Thomas's, Harvey emphasizes what makes protective aid morally acceptable,

Great attention and concern is owed the victims and their suffering, but they make no pronouncements others should defer to and there are no consultations where the approval of the victims must be given, *not because we would not wish to do so, but because by the nature of the case it cannot be done.* (2010, 30)

Harvey is clear that her view is different from Thomas's moral deference because it demands more from people. It is not enough, morally speaking, for one to defer to another

person's experience. Rather, Harvey's view seems to demand that people act or speak for those who may not be able to, even if the person acting has never experienced that specific wrong. Harvey continues by acknowledging that "there is nothing in fact that places the victims in an "authoritative" role as distinct from a morally central role" (2010, 30). Thomas's view is limiting because it not only requires victims to speak about their own experiences but also treats them as *the* authority. In some cases, this may prevent any desirable action, especially if the victims are unable to speak about their experiences. Harvey continues,

If actions are to be taken to change the situation of these victims, then except for articulate adults who were once child victims, it will be on the basis of the best judgements made by non-victims who have placed themselves in a protective relationship with the victims. Such relationships are morally sound even though there is always some risk of misunderstanding or misperceiving. (2010, 30)

As with all relationships, there is some risk of misunderstanding. However, Harvey seems to imply that with Thomas's view we make victims *the* authority figure on their oppression and depending on their verbal ability that may be too much pressure. It would also stifle a lot of action that may need to happen if it can only come from the victim. In other words, Harvey's view questions the need to defer to someone else's experience when something morally wrong happens. People do have the right to act, and Harvey may even argue that they should, even if the moral wrong does not happen to them.

## **1.6 Civilized Oppression and Contributing Agents**

Harvey pays special attention to civilized oppression in order to consider the oppressed being in solidarity with the non-oppressed. Civilized oppression "refers to forms of oppression that involve neither violence nor the use of law" (2010, 31). Contributing agents are people who

contribute to civilized oppression without any intention to harm someone. Harvey suggests that many forms of civilized oppression are “heavily socialized and unthinkingly sustained” (2010, 32). One example might be when a man calls his male colleague by his title, “Dr. Jones,” but refers to his female colleague with the same credentials by their name, “Melissa.” Harvey recognizes that contributing agents may be nice people who donate to victims of natural disaster but would also be flabbergasted at being described as an oppressor due to unintended features of their actions (2010, 31). She points out that the privilege of contributing agents shields them from the effects of their oppression (2010, 31).

Harvey defends the contributing agent by pointing out that not everyone is aware of all their habits. Returning to empathetic understanding, Harvey argues that

Empathetic understanding can sometimes be morally appropriate not only between agents of oppression and the oppressed, but between the oppressed and at least some who are contributing agents of oppression, not because we should tolerate the oppression involved, but because lying behind it is a failing just about everyone who is ruthlessly honest can lay claim to, namely, being unaware of all our actions (2010, 33).

For example, someone can recognize the discrimination of women in a job applicant pool but also fail to recognize their own racial discrimination in judging that same pool. Harvey suggests that empathetic understanding is also owed to contributing agents who are trying to change or be more self-aware. Returning to the idea of moral solidarity, Harvey claims that for the reasons above that people are in solidarity against oppression and *not* oppressors because some contributing agents deserve empathetic understanding (2010, 34). With this claim in mind,

Harvey argues that moral solidarity should not only apply to victims of oppression but to agents of oppression as well (2010, 33 -34).

Harvey claims that the value of moral solidarity is rooted in the relationships of the people in solidarity with each other. Harvey states that she sees “building a relationship of empathetic understanding as an expression of caring and respect of the victims in their own right and it is because of that respectful caring that we are motivated to work to improve their lot” (2010, 34). Harvey’s empathetic understanding treats the oppressed as individual humans, rather than a tool of education meant for overcoming their oppression. For Harvey, the treatment of others, non-humans included, is important for creating what she calls a moral community (2010, 24). Harvey’s community is a safe place for people to support each other as they become more self-aware about their own oppressive habits which contribute to injustice. Harvey is clear that moral solidarity is not the same as a political solidarity which would work against systematic injustice or support the oppressed in their struggles against oppression (2010, 35). People can provide support without being in moral solidarity with another person, only because moral solidarity requires an emotional commitment fulfilled through empathetic understanding.

### **1.7 The Challenges of Moral Solidarity**

Harvey stresses the challenges of moral solidarity, though she points out that “empathetic understanding will not always be mutual, and in some cases cannot be, but it may develop even if only one of the two parties has the ability and commitment needed to develop it” (2010, 35). Harvey means mutual in the sense that each person in a relationship is equally contributing the same thing or at least something equivalent in value. However, that isn’t to say that there won’t be relationships where one person is giving more to the other person in the relationship where moral solidarity occurs. Harvey also points out a logistic limit to empathetic understanding. We

are not going to have empathetic understanding for everyone because we are not going to have relationships with everyone we encounter (2010. 36). This doesn't mean that we should not try. Indeed, she thinks that there's something wrong with not trying at all. However, as with any relationship, there should be no fault if an attempt to create a relationship necessary for moral solidarity fails. At the end of the day, the relationships for moral solidarity are all going to look different. In either case, moral solidarity will still be necessary to build the moral community that Harvey desires.

## 2 COUNTEREXAMPLE AGAINST HARVEY'S VIEW

When reading Harvey's view, a concern arises when looking at the necessity of a personal relationship for moral solidarity. On her view, again, personal relationships are different than just mere alliances where people share a goal. Rather, with personal relationships, there is a sense of *something more*. Harvey does not directly state what *something more* entails. However, she seems to interpret it as some sort of emotional connection that could be unique to the relationship due to her emphasis on empathetic understanding. Another way of putting it is that personal relationships go beyond just a shared goal. The individuals have care and concern for each other. Hence, even after a goal is achieved, the relationship would remain and that cannot necessarily be said for alliances. Personal relationships are central to solidarity because they are what allow people to create the moral community Harvey desires. You cannot create a community with other people in an alliance because you know that they may leave as soon as they obtain what they desire.

While the necessity of personal relationships for solidarity makes sense against the context of alliances and with a desire for a community, it still seems strange to claim that you could not be in solidarity with someone if you did not have a *personal* relationship with that same person. If anything, solidarity may be needed most in situations where you may not know the other individual personally but that person is experiencing injustice in your society. For example, you may care about your neighbor (John) who is a black man, and you may act in solidarity with him (under Harvey's view) if something were to happen to him due to police violence or racism. However, the consideration you have for John would not extend to any other black person in your society you see being killed on the news due to the same issue. You don't

have a relationship with any of these other black men being killed and cannot be in solidarity with them under Harvey's view.

If you are able to have solidarity with John, why shouldn't you be able to extend that sort of kinship with or emotion towards the man on the news who is part of your society? Extending the feelings that occur because of your relationship with John to someone else in a similar situation doesn't seem to do harm to your relationship with John. If anything, it may set you up to have the morally appropriate response, in the words of Thomas, to a wrong that has been committed. The counterexample seems to suggest an issue with Harvey's view about solidarity being limited to personal relationships. It unnecessarily limits, and fails to consider, the scope of feelings that people can have for one another despite a lack of personal connection.

Before moving on I do want to point out it might be said that this counterexample fails to consider the main point of Harvey's account. The purpose of moral solidarity is not to solve issues like systemic racism or the oppression of certain people. Rather, the purpose of moral solidarity is to build a community. How can we have a moral community with others if we treat their experiences, or even their life, as a means to an end for some larger goal or if we don't know the individual personally? While I think this consideration is important, there is a way for us to still have a moral community and achieve moral solidarity without limiting eligible relationships to only personal ones. Harvey only considers three types of relationships: personal ones, alliances, and co-memberships.<sup>3</sup> To broaden the scope of Harvey's solidarity, in terms of who and what sorts of relationships should count towards solidarity, I will consider a different account of how relationships should work in an egalitarian society.

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<sup>3</sup> Co-membership refers to people who may be a part of the same group (race, gender, socio-economic class, etc.) who share similar experiences (24 Harvey). Harvey talks about co-membership in the context of "something more" and therefore being allowed to make decisions for others within the group.

### 3 CONSIDERING EGALITARIAN RELATIONSHIPS

In discussing relational egalitarianism, a view of egalitarianism based off the relationships between people, Samuel Scheffler considers two types of relationships. He is concerned with how personal relationships and anonymous relationships would work within an egalitarian society. Personal relationships refer to relationships where both parties know one another and anonymous relationships refer to the relationship that people share as citizens within an egalitarian society despite not knowing a citizen personally. An important part of Scheffler's conception of relational egalitarianism is not only the relationships within a society, but how the citizens in a society make decisions on a personal and societal level. Scheffler uses the egalitarian deliberative constraint as the main method of making decisions within an egalitarian society. People in both personal relationships and anonymous civic relationships act under the egalitarian deliberative constraint when they treat other people equally and take into consideration the different factors that may influence the other's decision within the relationship (2015, 25). The most common factors include values, preferences and persons needs (2015, 25).

Take for example the following scenario, imagine that Sue and Jeff are trying to decide where to eat lunch. Jeff and Sue both have dietary restrictions. Jeff is vegan and Sue is allergic to lettuce. When Sue and Jeff are trying to decide where to eat, Jeff is going to be constrained by the fact Sue cannot eat lettuce, eliminating some potential lunch options such as the salad place he was going to suggest. However, the same also applies to Sue. Sue is also limited by the fact that Jeff is vegan, so the barbeque place she was going to suggest is no longer an option. They end up settling on an Indian restaurant. Both Sue and Jeff were equally limited by the needs of the other person in their relationship and neither of them had more authority than the other in

making their lunch decision. It is important to note that no one in an egalitarian relationship has more authority than the other person in a relationship.

Scheffler is clear that coming to a decision that satisfies both people in a personal relationship is not easy, or even possible in all cases. He suggests a multitude of strategies for decision-making, *splitting the difference*, *choosing the second-best*, *taking turns*, *joint satisfaction*, *trading off* and *separation*. When a pair *splits the difference*, they take into consideration what they each want individually and then choose an option in the middle. Scheffler gives the example of a couple, one of them wants to go to Paris for three weeks, the other one only wants to go to Paris for one week (2015, 25). The couple makes their decision by splitting the difference and going for two weeks (2015, 25). When a pair *chooses the second-best option*, both people usually have different first choices but the same second choice. Imagine that Sue's first choice was the barbeque place and Jeff's first choice was the salad place. However, they both had the Indian restaurant as their second choice. If they chose to go the Indian place, then they used the *choosing the second-best* strategy. However, let's say that Sue and Jeff could not find a place to eat that fitted their dietary needs *and* that they both liked. Instead, they could choose to *take turns*. Sue invited Jeff to lunch so she lets him pick where to eat, granted it fits both of their dietary needs, and Sue will get to pick where they eat lunch next time. *Joint Satisfaction* would be a strategy where Sue and Jeff both pick up lunch from their separate number one choices but then eat together in the park. *Trading off* is a strategy where Sue would get to pick where the pair ate lunch, but Jeff would then get to pick where they got coffee afterwards. The final strategy is *separation*. Jeff and Sue decide not to get lunch at the same place and choose not to eat together.

Scheffler gives many strategies for acting under the egalitarian deliberative constraint as noted above. However, acting under the egalitarian deliberative constraint for societal relationships may have to work differently due to their anonymous nature. Unlike with our example featuring Jeff and Sue, where they are able to talk through the decision with each other using the different strategies being suggested, decisions being made under anonymous relationships would have to make the decision using available generalized knowledge on the issue. Scheffler uses the example of gay marriage to explain how anonymous relationships among citizens would work on the societal level. He states, “the interests of homosexuals in being able to marry are just as strong as the interests of heterosexuals and, accordingly, that both sets of interests should be accommodated in the same way in our laws and institutions” (2015, 36).

In the gay marriage example, the people who are making this decision are not reaching out to individual people to ask them what they are thinking about marriage equality. Instead, they are using whatever knowledge they have available about our society (laws, institutions, marriage in general) in order to come to the conclusion that there is not only an interest in marriage equality among some people. After having come to the conclusion, those making the decision act under the egalitarian deliberative constraint and recognize that the interests of homosexuals need to be respected, and this can only be done by giving them the same marriage rights as those of heterosexual couples. In other words, under the egalitarian deliberative constraint, the interests of gay people who desire marriage would have to be considered in the same, and equal, manner that marriage is considered for heterosexual couples.

Returning to the idea of solidarity, under an egalitarian society like the one Scheffler depicts, the interests of the people who need solidarity should be respected. For example, John is

a black man who is constantly scrutinized by the police because of his skin color. In the same society Susan, a white woman, does not suffer from the same scrutiny by the police because of her skin color. Following Scheffler, we can understand all members of society as in an anonymous relationship with their fellow citizens. They are responsible for considering the values, preferences, and needs of others of fellow citizens. Members of society should accommodate the interests of John, who is interested in not being discriminated against because of his skin color in education, employment, places of public accommodation and the political sphere. Unlike Harvey, who makes the assumption that if there is no personal connection, there would be no impetus for seeking knowledge about an issue or an experience. Scheffler holds that citizens in an egalitarian society must think about their fellow citizens and their values, preferences and needs as such. In other words, citizens in an egalitarian society may be constantly acquiring knowledge about the needs of others, while others do the same for them, due to the egalitarian deliberative constraint. I think that once you begin to constantly consider the consequences of any decision you make for another person in your society, or in other words extend empathetic understanding to your fellow citizens, there can be an established relationship to a complete stranger through genuine consideration for one another.

For example, imagine that you hear a story on the local news about a rise in shop lifting in the area you live in. It catches you by surprise that the number one thing being stolen is diapers and baby formula. You have no idea who the people shop lifting from the local stores are, but you think it's absolutely ridiculous that these parents have no means to provide for their own children other than through theft. You understand, and agree with some feminists, that caretaking is both necessary and valuable work within a society. There needs to be someone taking care of children and their needs in a household. You also believe that caretakers should

have the necessary resources to take care of the needs of their children or dependents, while being fairly compensated for their work. You talk with your friends about this news story. They share your concerns about the story and the implications it has on your society. You might worry that caretakers do not have (enough) access to adequate resources that would allow them to care for their children and now have to resort to theft in order to do so. You all decide, in an effort to prevent theft and help parents in need, to start a charity drive that focuses on gathering needed materials (baby clothes, diapers, baby formula and food, etc.) for parents who may not be able to afford them. You decide to donate to local women's shelters and homeless shelters the materials you are able to gather.

I think you can claim that there is a mutual relationship between the people who are organizing a charity drive and the people who are in the unfortunate situation of needing to steal formula for their baby in this local area. While the donors won't know who the parents are, making this relationship an anonymous one, chances are many of the people who helped with charity drive are parents themselves. These parents can empathize with how hard it is to take care of babies and can imagine how much harder parenting is when you don't have enough money to feed your own children. While the relationship between the two parties is anonymous since they don't know each other personally, it still seems strange to say that there is no meaningful connection between these different sets of people. They both share traits in common such as being parents and living in the same area. Another factor that connects these strangers together is their respect for each other as equal citizens within a society. The person within our example is able to see the news story as something that endangers equality within their society. Rather than treating those who need to steal as the threat to equality in their society, they are able to recognize that caretakers are suffering from a lack of resources. While that may not be

enough on its own to create a personal relationship between strangers, I do believe it should be enough to create a relationship based on empathetic understanding between two equal citizens. There can be emotional connections in anonymous relationships and Scheffler's account of relational egalitarianism does a good job of creating a foundation for it.

While there is room to interpret the need for an egalitarian society as a shared goal amongst equal citizens, making the anonymous relationship they share only an alliance, I don't think this interpretation necessarily holds. If achieving an egalitarian society was a simple goal, where once obtained that was the end of it, this interpretation would have some hold. However, I think equality in an egalitarian society is not something that can be *both* achieved and maintained without constant involvement. For example, pretend there were two countries in an alliance that had the shared goal of assassinating a dictator. This goal is simple in the sense that it can be achieved through one event, the death of the dictator. I think equality in an egalitarian society is a far more complex goal, where sure it can be achieved between two allies, but it needs to be maintained through consistent efforts through personal relationships or the egalitarian deliberative constraint. The need to maintain equality between two people, or the members of an equal society goes beyond just achieving a goal. It in fact demands more from the citizens. There is an understanding that equality will only occur as long as the citizens maintain it within an egalitarian society and I think that creates room for a relationship and a connection between citizens that goes beyond what an alliance can provide. Harvey requires empathetic understanding and Scheffler relies on the egalitarian deliberative constraint in order to create the desired relationship between equal citizens that is necessary for solidarity. Both accounts rely on citizens relating to one another in a way that isn't necessary for alliances and actually prioritizes

the relationship over any material end goal. In fact, with alliances, the goal shared has nothing to do with the relationship between the parties.

Now, are the emotions created from an anonymous relationships going to be as strong from the emotions of a personal relationship? No. People tend to have stronger reactions or feelings towards matters that are more personal because they are able to see how an issue directly impacts them or someone they love. However, that shouldn't make any sort of solidarity that stems from an anonymous relationship any lesser than one from a personal relationship. People should be allowed to act against any wrongs committed even if it does not personally affect them out of a sense of an equal citizenship. It should be enough that someone else has experience a wrong and that someone else wants to act against it within an egalitarian society, if only to maintain the equality of a society. There is a sense of kinship that can bond two strangers in a society and acting against an inequality that they both oppose can reinforce that bond. Such mutual consideration can provide the *something more* that Harvey desired for solidaristic relationships.

There are two potential points of contention when it comes to my use of Scheffler's relational egalitarianism in order to broaden the scope of Harvey's solidarity. First, one might worry that the requirement of personal relationships in order to have solidarity does not appear to be compatible with the anonymous nature of societal relationships. Harvey's account of moral solidarity considers the right of people to make decisions for others with, and without, a personal relationship. She only finds it permissible for a person to make decisions for other under the umbrella of *protective aid* where people should act for others when they cannot act for themselves. The second point of contention focuses on the manner in which information about the society is obtained. For Harvey, she requires empathetic understanding when it comes to

acquiring information about issues such as oppression. Scheffler only seems to rely on generalized assumptions in order to make societal decisions. While both points seem to suggest an incompatibility with Harvey and Scheffler's view, there is actually no conflict between either of their views.

### **3.1 First Point of Contention: The Incompatibility of Solidarity and Anonymous**

#### **Relationships**

As discussed earlier, Harvey's account of solidarity requires personal relationships. One cannot be in solidarity with another that they do not know, nor would they be justified making decisions for others without a personal relationship. On the other hand, Scheffler allows people to make decisions for their society without a personal relationship. While it seems that these two points should conflict, making Harvey's solidarity and Scheffler's relational egalitarianism incompatible, they actually don't conflict. There is far more nuance with Scheffler's view on societal and anonymous relationships than the person making the objection of incompatibility is assuming. The person is falsely assuming that if one does not have a personal relationship with another, they do not have any relationship with that same person. Under Scheffler's relational egalitarianism, that just isn't true. Not having a personal relationship with someone could instead suggest that a person may just have a societal relationship with someone they do not personally know. Such a relationship is one based on shared values, commitments and understanding of society as being made up of equal and fellow citizens. Regardless of whether or not a person knows all the citizens in their society, each member of the society is going to live in accordance with these key features of the relationship which do require concern and respect for other members of their society.

Another factor to consider when it comes to Harvey's solidarity is that Harvey does allow for protective aid, which allows people to act on behalf of those who cannot act for themselves. While Harvey's personal relationship requirement may seem limiting, she also recognizes that people should not have to wait for someone, for example a victim of an injustice, to demand for justice in order for other people to act against a wrong. I believe this is distinct from acting on someone's behalf against a wrong. If a wrong is clearly committed, we do not have to treat the victim as the only person who is allowed to demand for change. This fact in conjunction with how Scheffler characterizes relationships amongst equal citizens should alleviate the concern for an incompatibility between Scheffler's account of relational egalitarianism and Harvey's account of solidarity. Both accounts are concerned for others and allow people to act against injustices regardless of having to personally know someone.

### **3.2 Second Point of Contention: The Acquisition of Information for Decision Making**

As previously stated, when two people in a personal relationship are making a decision both people have access to individualized information about the other person in the relationship. Individualized information often looks like knowing a person's individual preferences, needs, values, etc. and does not occur for decisions being made at the societal level through anonymous relationships. Due to the large amount of people affected by societal decisions, it is unlikely for someone making such a large decision to have access to individualized information from every person who may be affected by the decision (37). In other words, if a group of people are making a decision for an entire society, they do not have access to individualized information from every single person of that society. Instead, when making the decision-making process, people will have to rely on their own generalizations about their society, such as we saw earlier with the marriage equality example (36). Depending on who is chosen to make the decision, people

relying on generalizations in order to make a decision for the entire population poses a concern, especially if the generalizations are inaccurate.

Harvey is clear that her account of solidarity requires empathetic understanding. Having access to data about oppression is not the same thing as understanding and genuinely empathizing with the effects of oppression on minority groups. I think this may be the reason she strongly emphasizes personal relationships. It is easier to emphasize when you have a personal relationship with someone else. However, it would be a mistake to believe that personal relationships are required in order to have empathetic understanding.

Consider an example within Scheffler's model of a relational egalitarian society where a group of people are making a decision for an entire society. Assume that in the decision-making group the people who will be most impacted by the decision being made are not a part of the decision-making group. While in Scheffler's society generalized knowledge may be enough for making decisions because everyone is under the hold of the egalitarian deliberative constraint, the same would not apply in our current society. Generalized knowledge about the people impacted is not going to ensure that disenfranchised people will obtain whatever resources they need, especially if those in the group making decisions for the society already benefit from holding more resources than others. It should also be noted that depending on who is within the decision-making group, the group may possess outdated or biased generalized knowledge about their own society, especially if not everyone is involved in the decision-making process.

This example raises a valid point. Scheffler's standard of knowledge for making decisions at the societal level is not demanding enough. We can respond to this concern without having to suppose personal relationships are necessary for empathetic understanding. For example, we could require that generalized assumptions made by the society need to be backed

with empirical evidence before allowing people to act on said information. I would also like to go a step farther and caution against requiring *personal* relationships in order to act on or make decisions regarding issues of injustice. People who believe that personal relationships are necessary for solidarity may fall prey to the idea that they are only justified in acting against issues of injustice if they, or some they personally know, are affected by it. One should not need to have a personal relationship with another person in order to act against any injustice. That is not to say that having a personal relationship with a person will make it easier to act against injustice. I resist the claim that such relationships are a necessary condition for being in solidaristic relationships. I would also like to reiterate a concern that was introduced by Harvey earlier when it comes acquiring information for the decision making process. We should be wary of attempting to obtain empathetic understanding through demanding that people share their traumatic experiences. Just as Harvey suggests, not everyone is verbally able to or required to share those experiences in order to see action against injustice.

Returning to the original counterexample against Harvey's account of solidarity, while it may seem problematic that one can only be in solidarity with John (the black man with whom one might have a personal relationship), we need to be thinking about solidarity in a larger context. Solidarity as Harvey is defining it is not just standing with a cause or disenfranchised people. If that was the case, solidarity would not require relationships of any sort. Rather, solidarity sometimes involves making decisions for these people when they are unable to make these decisions for themselves. Harvey limits the scope of who is allowed to make decisions for others by focusing on whether or not the person in need of help is able to help themselves. By using Scheffler's relational egalitarianism as a basis, I have expanded the scope of acceptable decision making for others by grounding these decisions under the egalitarian deliberative

constraint within an egalitarian society. People within in an egalitarian society can make decisions for others, even without personal relationships, when wrongs are committed that harm the equality between citizens. People do not need to be personally affected by a wrong to take action against it.

#### **4 CONCLUSION**

I argue that we should accept Harvey's account of solidarity as it manifests itself under Scheffler's egalitarian society with a suggestion. A person, or the decision-making group may not have a personal relationship with every single person in their society in order to be justified in making a decision for the collective or another member in their egalitarian society.

Anonymous relationships would benefit from being treated more along the lines as societal relationships, where people do not need to personally know one another in order to believe that everyone within their own society should be treated equally. While not as easily justifiable as decision making under personal relationships, where people are easily validated through a personal connection, decision making under societal relationships should still fall under the umbrella of solidarity.

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