

**Solidarity as a Form of Life –
Conceptualizing solidarity within the framework of social philosophy
(Dr. Bastian Ronge, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)**

Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité were the famous keywords of the French Revolution. Modern philosophy reflected intensely on the concepts of freedom and equality, but neglected fraternity or rather solidarity. Hence, solidarity remained a “wishy-washy concept” (Jaeggi 2001, 287) until today. In my presentation I would like to suggest conceptualizing solidarity as a *form of life*. That means: I will put forward the thesis that solidarity can be understood as a bundle of social practices, which pursue a particular goal and which are based on common judgments about the social world.

It makes a difference, however, whether solidarity (as a form of life) is practiced within a social group (as shared solidarity) or performed with regard to other individuals or social groups (as sympathetic solidarity), since the social practices involved are different as well as their foundation (while the overall goal remains often the same, namely to establish social relationships, in which people fulfill other’s needs and desires by fulfilling their own ones). The following schema provides a comprehensive overview of the approach to solidarity, which I would like to present:

Solidarity as a Form of Life	Social Practices of Solidarity	Overall Goal of the Practices of Solidarity	Foundation of the Practices of Solidarity
Shared Solidarity (within a group)	Fighting together, helping each other out, avoiding hierarchies, making decisions consensually, performing sympathetic solidarity etc.	Mutual fulfilment of one another’s needs and desires	Sharing a common fate or way of living, which lead to common judgements about the social world
Sympathetic Solidarity (with other individuals or groups)	Supporting other individuals or groups in a material or nonmaterial way, risking something without payoff etc.	Assisting other individuals or social groups in his/her or their fight (for establishing shared solidarity)	Sympathy, i.e. affirming the other’s way of acting and his or her judgements about the social world

Conceptualizing solidarity as a form of life offers three considerable advantages: (1.) The distinction between shared and sympathetic solidarity allows one to analyze the challenge of ‘globalizing’ solidarity – in terms of overcoming the distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’ as well as with regard to learning from less developed societies with stronger shared solidarity. (2.) The account enables one also to identify the political battlefields of solidarity (commoning vs. un-commoning shared solidarity; creating sympathetic sympathy vs. provoking antipathy) and last, but not least, (3.) it permits to grasp the genuine *economic* dimension of solidarity, namely to organize the economical in such a way that it leads to mutual fulfillment of needs and desires.