Global Solidarity and Collective Intelligence in Times of Pandemics*

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1. Introduction: the time of pandemics

The COVID-19 pandemic is teaching us many lessons, whether we are learning them or not.[1] After almost two years from the first outbreak in China and around five million officially registered deaths – which could actually be tenmillion – the pandemic is undoubtedly a major global threat that all humankind must face united. It is a gigantic challenge that calls for unprecedented global solidarity – for instance, in the production and distribution of vaccines – and requires our best efforts and highest collective intelligence to be overcome.

We face many other global challenges and threats, of course; some of which are new, and some others are rather old. World poverty and hunger, global inequalities of income and wealth, other forms of global health, the maintenance of peace, protection against international terrorism, nuclear security, the fight against tax havens, the preservation of ecosystems and endangered species, and, of course, climate change and climate emergency. All these challenges, and many others, are global in the sense that they threaten or affect, in one way or another, all human beings in the world. But some such challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, are also global in a different sense: because the only way for any country to fix them, to deal effectively with them, or to be safe from them, is by joining efforts and coordinating responses with the other countries in the world.

Severe poverty, for instance, is a global problem only in the first sense. There currently are pockets of severe poverty in all countries, including the richest ones. But this does not need to be the case. Some countries might completely eradicate such severe forms of poverty from their own soil by implementing truly ambitious social policies. That would fix the problem of severe poverty *for them*, even if it would continue affecting other countries. This kind of *individual* solution is, however, not possible for certain global challenges, like climate change or most of those related to global health. In regard to them, no country will be entirely safe until the others are safe too. Thus, certain global challenges and threats are global not only because they constitute a global *problem*, but also because their *solution* can only be global

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1 It might well be the case that human beings need a reiterated shock before being able to learn lessons from catastrophes or terrible experiences in life. But if we have not learned yet about global health crises, it is not because COVID-19 can be seen as the first shock or as a totally unexpected threat. See David Heymann, 'SARS and Emerging Infectious Diseases: A Challenge to Place Global Solidarity above National Sovereignty', *Annals Academy of Medicine* 35 (2006): 350-353.

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as well. Let me call this subtype of global challenges 'twofold global challenges'. We can only overcome those challenges by taking globally coordinated action, something that will require high levels of global solidarity and global collective intelligence. And, in fact, most of the threats mentioned above fall into this category.

As I said, the COVID-19 pandemic is one of these twofold global threats. This means that we will only find a solution or can fight it effectively if we join efforts and coordinate action at a global level out of global solidarity, since no country can be really safe unless the other countries are safe too.[2] Take the example of vaccines. All vaccines that have proven to be effective are being produced, sold, and distributed, under an intellectual and industrial property regime. They are all copyrighted. As it happens, rich countries are buying and accumulating most of them, creating a terrible global inequity. At the moment of writing, in October 2021, 6.3 billion vaccine doses have been administered in the world, 80% of them in the rich countries. Compare that number with the 311 million doses that have been administered through COVAX, the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT), the global system of vaccine solidarity articulated by the World Health Organization (WHO), CEPI and GAVI.[3] Only 5% of the total number of vaccines administered in the world has been distributed through such globally centralized systems of vaccine solidarity, even if such a system was initially intended by the WHO to articulate and be the vehicle for most of the international vaccine distribution. It is important to notice that it was not originally conceived to be the beneficence system that it has become, but a truly global system for coordinated and equitable action in response to the pandemic.[4]

It is obvious to everyone that the reason why COVAX turned into a beneficence system and only works at a marginal level is a combination of two powerful interests: the interest of states, especially the richest and most powerful ones, to keep the power of making their own decisions regarding the vaccination of their populations and to protect such populations even at the cost of the population of other countries, and the interest of the relevant pharmaceutical firms to keep the demand side divided to secure their bargaining power and, ultimately secure their very high profits. For that reason, you might think that vaccines make the COVID-19 crisis a global challenge just of the first kind, a onefold global challenge. If a country buys enough vaccines for its entire population, it will be safe from the pandemic, even if the virus keeps affecting the other countries. But, as we have

2 Takuma Kayo, 'Global Solidarity is Necessary to End the COVID-19 Pandemic', *Asia-Pacific Review* 27 (2020): 45-56; and A. Ho and I. Dascalu, 'Global Disparity and Solidarity in a Pandemic', *Hastings Center Report* 50 (2020): 65-67; Tanja Müller and Róisín Read, 'Humanity and Solidarity: Editors' Introduction', *Journal of Humanitarian Affairs* 3 (2021).

3 See https://www.gavi.org/COVAX-vaccine-roll-out.

4 See Reuters, 'Exclusive: WHO sweetens terms to join struggling global COVAX vaccine facility – documents', available at: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-who-offer-exclusividUSKBN25O1L5; Peter Figueroa *et al*., 'Achieving global equity for COVID-19 vaccines: Stronger international partnerships and greater advocacy and solidarity are needed', *PLoS Med* 18 (2021); and Armin von Bogdandy and Pedro Villareal, 'The Role of International Law in Vaccinating Against COVID-19: Appraising the COVAX Initiative', *Heidelberg Journal of International Law* 81 (2021): 89-116.

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seen in the last months, that is not the case. First, no vaccine provides 100% immunity against the virus. Second, no country can afford to close borders and self-isolate from the rest of the world. And finally, since the virus keeps infecting and replicating itself out there, it will surely mutate, and it is just a matter of time before one of these mutations or variants affects the vaccinated population of that country. Protecting the oldest and most vulnerable social groups through vaccination is a onefold global problem similar to that of severe poverty. But fighting effectively against COVID-19, with the aim of eradicating it or keeping it to a minimal tolerable level, remains a twofold global challenge. And a very complex one.

If we attend to the response given so far to the pandemic by countries and international institutions, our assessment cannot be very positive. It is true that some countries have done much better than others.[5] Compare, for instance, the policies and the current pandemic situation of New Zealand, Taiwan or even Australia with that of Brazil, Russia or United States. But regardless of the current situation of those countries, we all remain subject to this terrible global threat, and no one will be really safe until everyone has gotten rid of the virus, or until the virus reduces its lethality or its infectiousness and becomes a more tractable problem. Given that the pandemic is a twofold global threat, the focus should not be on how the states individually deal with it, but on how they are doing in terms of coordinating their policies and actions. And here the record is globally very poor.

It is to fight pandemics like this that United Nations and the international community founded the WHO in 1948 in Geneva. The WHO has actually worked very well in facing other global health challenges in the past, but it is clearly failing to fulfill its mission in the current one. It has not even been able to provide a common standard to count deaths in the same way in all countries, let alone prevent the disease from becoming a pandemic, or assess the different reactions and policies of governments throughout the crisis to provide some useful guidance, or effectively investigate the potential non-zoonotic origins of the virus in China, or, most importantly, grant an effective vaccine to everyone in the world in an equitable way. I am not blaming the people who run or work at the WHO. The organization has been systematically deprived of the resources it needs, and its powers have been increasingly limited by its member states, especially in the last few years.[6] Considering that, the WHO may have achieved all that it was reasonable to expect from it. It is a failure of the whole international institutional system and its design that we are experiencing right now.

States have not done much better in joining efforts. Even the EU member states have not been able to coordinate their policies, apart from the collective purchase

5 See Scott L. Greer, Elizabeth J. King, Elize Massard da Fonseca andand Andre Peralta-Santos, 'The comparative politics of COVID-19: The need to understand government responses', *Global Public Health*, 15 (2020): 1413-1416.

6 See Lawrence O. Gostin, 'COVID-19 Reveals Urgent Need to Strengthen the World Health Organization', *JAMA Forum*, 30 April 2020; and Eric Ip, 'The constitutional economics of the World Health Organization', *Health Economics, Policy and Law*, 16 (2021): 325-339.

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of vaccines and the recent adoption of the EU Digital COVID Certificate.[7] Countries like Russia and China have been selling their own vaccines to developing countries, but have done this out of other, long-term, geostrategic interests, rather than out of solidarity or a sense of justice. This is proven by the fact that they have preferred to do that on an individual, bilateral basis, rather than using COVAX as a vehicle of their 'aid'. COVAX was specifically designed to channel global aid and solidarity under objective criteria and in a way that makes it impossible for donors to require any set-off or compensation from the receivers.[8] All these examples, as well as the initial commercial war among countries for respirators and ventilators, among other supplies, or the imposition of hard travelling restrictions, are elements that have led many to consider that the COVID-19 pandemic has fueled the reinvigoration of a statist, multilateral world order, to the detriment of a strong system of global governance. Such failure of a scheme of global solidarity has also helped the arguments of those who believe that solidarity can only truly exist at a national level, apart from some exceptional and marginal efforts of genuine international altruism.[9]

Despite this pessimistic assessment, I will show in this article that global solidarity is urgently needed in order to address what I called twofold global threats, including the COVID-19 pandemic. And I will claim that such global solidarity is not only possible, but also relatively easy to create if we succeed in articulating global forms of collective intelligence. This must be understood as an early approximation to the ideal of global democracy. And even if we may be very far from attaining such ideal, it still provides a nice horizon to walk towards.

2. National vs. global solidarity

Since the time, at least, of Ancient Greece, the idea that we should be solidary with our fellow citizens has been an important theme in political philosophy. It was seen as a way of keeping political communities cohesive and as a requirement of social justice. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle famously claimed that

> 'as friendship appears to be the bond of the state; and lawgivers seem to set more store by it than they do by justice, for to promote concord, which seems akin to friendship, is their chief aim, while faction, which is enmity, is what they are most anxious to banish. And if men are friends, there is no need of

7 See Scott Greer, 'National, European and Global Solidarity: COVID-19, public health and vaccines', *Eurohealth* 26 (2020): 104-108.

8 See Ann Danaiya Usher, 'A beautiful idea: how COVAX has fallen short', *The Lancet* 397 (2021): 2322-2325.

9 For a comment and criticism of that position, see Nchangwi Syntia Munung, Samuel J. Ujewe and Muhammed O. Afolabi, 'Priorities for global access to life-saving interventions during public health emergencies: Crisis nationalism, solidarity or charity?', *Global Public Health* 2021, online publication. See also Sebastian Schneider *et al*., 'Does the COVID-19 pandemic threaten global solidarity? Evidence from Germany', *World Development* 140 (2021): 105356.

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> justice between them; whereas merely to be just is not enough – a feeling of friendship also is necessary'.[10]

This fragment seems to suggest that justice and the Aristotelian notion of civic friendship are different or even mutually exclusive. But that reading would be a mistake. In the same passage, Aristotle added '[i]ndeed the highest form of justice seems to have an element of friendly feeling in it', and he said later that '[t]he objects and the personal relationships with which friendship is concerned appear, as was said at the outset, to be the same as those which are the sphere of justice'. According to the Greek philosopher, both justice and civic friendship emerge as a need whenever there is some 'common business' among people, as happens with political associations.[11] However, as he also highlighted, different forms of political association require different types of civic friendship. And any virtuous form of government that relies at some point on the majority of the people, even if as part of a mixed regime, requires a type of civic friendship that is similar to 'friendship among brothers'. Such a republican ideal of democracy requires fraternal friendship or, in short, fraternity. This is the form of civic friendship that is based, according to Aristotle, in the equality of status among citizens, in an equal concern with the common good, and in an 'equal share of power'.[12]

As is widely known, fraternity was indeed the third value in Revolutionary French republicanism of the eighteenth century, after liberty and equality. And the republican tradition of political thought, in all its manifestations throughout history, has always emphasized the importance of developing some forms of civic duty, solidarity, or mutual concern, as essential for a well-functioning democracy. They were regarded as necessary both for social justice and for the legitimacy and stability of democratic government. In the end, as Aristotle foresaw, only if we as citizens commit to the common good out of a mutual concern and regard for each others as equals, will we be able to achieve meaningful self-government.[13] The terms 'civic friendship' and 'fraternity' are much less fashionable today, but the idea of solidarity is overwhelmingly present in both academic and practical or

10 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (Perseus Digital Library, ed. H. Rackham, online edition at www.perseus.tufts.edu), Book VIII, Ch. 1, 1155a. See also D.S. Hutchinson, 'Ethics', in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 228-232; and C.C.W. Taylor, 'Politics', in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 256-257.

11 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VIII, Ch. 9, 1159b.

12 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VIII, Ch. 11, 1161a.

13 Republicanism nowadays is a very popular and even fashionable political theory. Its most influential version is the one developed by Philip Pettit. See Philip Pettit, *Republicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), and *On the People's Terms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Frank Lovett, 'Republicanism' in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 19 June 2006 (revised 4 June 2018). For some panoramic collections of essays, see Cécile Laborde and John Maynor, eds., *Republicanism and Political Theory* (Oxford: Willey-Blackwell, 2008), and Samantha Besson and José Luis Martí, eds., *Legal Republicanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). For a view focused on the importance of civic duties, see Richard Dagger, *Civic Virtues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

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political discussions. Paradoxically, it is quite undertheorized, especially in comparison to the concepts of freedom and equality.[14]

Since the time of Aristotle, most students of solidarity have assumed or taken for granted that even if there might exist some exceptional forms of transnational or global solidarity, the natural scope for solidary ties to emerge is drawn by the boundaries of the nation state or the political community.[15] It is within such national boundaries that people may be inclined, as a matter of fact, to show mutual concern and be solidary with each other.[16] In the ancient world, and for much of our history, the idea that one might have duties of solidarity regarding citizens of other political communities was simply unthinkable. Ultimately, solidarity was regarded as a necessary civic virtue to keep one's own political community cohesive, and more concretely to make internal distributive justice possible, not for dissolving or merging such a political community with others. In the modern world, divided into nations, solidarity was simply assumed to be national solidarity. It was seen as a domestic virtue, not a cosmopolitan one.

14 There are some remarkable exceptions. See, for instance, Jürgen Habermas, 'Justice and solidarity', in *Studies in contemporary German social thought. The moral domain: Essays in the ongoing discussion between philosophy and the social sciences*, ed. T.E. Wren (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 224-251; David Kahane, Daniel Weinstock, and Alison M. Jaggar, 'Symposium: Diversity and Civic Solidarity', *Journal of Political Philosophy* 7 (1999); Steven Lukes, 'Solidarity and citizenship', in *Solidarity*, ed. K. Bayertz (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999): 273-279; Arash Abizadeh, 'Does Collective Identity Presuppose an Other? On the Alleged Incoherence of Global Solidarity', *American Political Science Review* 49 (2005): 45-60; Jean Harvey, 'Moral Solidarity and Empathetic Understanding: The Moral Value and Scope of the Relationship', *Journal of Social Philosophy* 28 (2007): 22-37; Sally Scholz, *Political Solidarity* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 'Seeking Solidarity', *Philosophy Compass* 10 (2015): 725-735, and 'Solidarity', *International Encyclopedia of Ethics*, 29 June 2019; Jeff Spinner-Halev, 'Democracy, Solidarity and Postnationalism', *Political Studies* 56 (2008): 604-628; Patti Tamara Lenard, Christine Straehle and Lea Ypi, 'Global Solidarity', *Contemporary Political Theory* 9 (2010): 99-130; Andrea Sangiovanni, 'Solidarity in the European Union', *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 33 (2013): 213-241; and 'Solidarity as Joint Action', *Journal of Applied Ethics* 32 (2015): 340-359; Lawrence Wilde, *Global Solidarity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); Christian Smith and Katherine Sorrell, 'On Social Solidarity', in *The Palgrave Handbook of Altruism, Morality, and Social Solidarity*, ed. Vincent Jeffries (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014): 219-247; and Avery Kolers, *A Moral Theory of Solidarity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

15 The work of David Miller is paradigmatic of this view, see *Citizenship and National Identity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).

16 Some exceptions to that popular view may be found in Habermas, 'Justice and solidarity; Ulrich K. Preuss, 'National, Supranational, and International Solidarity', in *Solidarity*, ed. Kurt Bayertz (Dordrecht: Springer, 1999); Carol Gould, *Globalizing Democracy and Human Rights* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), and 'Transnational Solidarities', *Journal of Social Philosophy* 38 (2007): 148-164; Spinner-Halev, 'Democracy, Solidarity and Postnationalism'; Christine Straehle, 'National and Cosmopolitan Solidarity', *Contemporary Political Theory* 9 (2010): 110-120; Lea Ypi, 'Politically constructed solidarity: the idea of a cosmopolitan avant-garde', *Contemporary Political Theory* 9 (2010): 120-130, and *Global Justice and Avant-Garde Political Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Sangiovanni, 'Solidarity in the European Union'. Unlike in the philosophical literature, in the fields of medicine, global health and international relations the idea of global solidarity is seen as a central principle. See, for instance, Munung, Ujewe and Afolabi, 'Priorities for global access to life-saving interventions during public health emergencies: Crisis nationalism, solidarity or charity?'.

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David Hume famously stated in the *Treatise of Human Nature* that sympathy, which he took to be the basis of our moral evaluation and of the capacity to take an interest in the public good, which was regarded in turn as the condition of solidarity, is stronger, as a matter of fact, for those with whom we share some similarities, such as a common language, a common culture, or a common citizenship.[17] Many have used this Humean idea of sympathy to define solidarity as an attitude of mutual concern, or as actions that we may take out of such mutual concern, regarding only the members of our own national political community, and have refused the possibility of developing global solidarity or global justice.[18] Others have used it to support the view that democracy cannot emerge beyond national borders, even in transnational integration projects, such as the European Union,[19] let alone at a global level.

However, it is important to notice, first, that in the *Treatise* Hume was simply making a descriptive claim about a general human psychological trait or inclination, which has many exceptions, is contingent, and should have no implications for our normative obligations (at risk of violating the so-called Hume's Law, according to which norms or obligations cannot simply derive from facts). In effect, it is one thing to explain at a psychological level how individuals usually find the right motivation to act in compliance with their duties, but quite a different thing to answer the normative question of what duties they have, regarding whom. It is true that if our duties are very demanding, we may face a motivational problem.[20] But it is also true that the theory of justice has always found an easy way out from such motivational problem. When people are not willing to cooperate or be solidary on a voluntary basis, as with paying taxes, the theory of justice may justify the use of legal coercion under some circumstances in order to make such cooperation or solidarity compulsory. All that you need, at a more pragmatic level, is a sufficient number of people convinced of the justice of such duties of solidarity who could lead a social

17 David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, eds. David F. Norton and Mary J. Norton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007 [1739-1740]): 3.3.1.9 and 2.1.11.5.

18 See, again, Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*.

19 See Dieter Grimm, 'Does Europe Need a Constitution?', *European Law Journal*, 1 (1995): 282-302; Wolfgang Streeck, 'Neo-Voluntarism: A New European Social Policy Regime?', *European Law Journal*, 1 (1995): 31-59; Fritz Scharpf, *Governing in Europe. Effective and Democratic?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); David Miller, 'Republicanism, national identity and Europe', in *Republicanism and Political Theory*, eds. C. Laborde and J. Maynor (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008): 133-58, and 'Democracy's domain', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 37 (2009): 201-228; and Richard Bellamy, 'An Ever Closer Union Among the Peoples of Europe: Republican Intergovernmentalism and Democratic Representation within the EU', *Journal of European Integration* 35 (2013): 499-516.

20 For an appeal to this argument of the motivation problem as a way of opposing global solidarity, see Patti Tamara Lenard, 'What's solidaristic about global solidarity?' *Contemporary Political Theory* 8 (2009).

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and political movement that might succeed in legally implementing such obligations.[21]

In addition to that, Hume was explicit in pointing out that this sympathy builds upon some similarities or commonalities, but not necessarily national ones. It is true that he mentions sharing citizenship as one potential example, but that is not necessarily the clearest or strongest basis for solidarity. Other commonalities might provide stronger support, such as family ties, friendship or neighbourhood in the same municipality, among others. In fact, if we examine how inclined we are to be solidary in general with our fellow citizens, we can find that our inclination is rather small, and that there exist significant differences across countries and, perhaps more significantly, across generations, which proves how contingent this Humean psychological observation is. It is for this reason that, in fact, most instances of national solidarity are not left to voluntary cooperation but legally imposed, as in the case, again, of paying taxes. On the other hand, it is also obvious that many people have attitudes of solidarity and take solidary action towards people beyond their borders, citizens of other countries. It happens all the time.[22] Global solidarity, as a matter of fact, already exists. And if it does not exist to a larger degree that is in part due to the lack of adequate means and institutions to channel it.

As I mentioned above, the fact that we may feel stronger sympathy for some individuals than for others does not imply that we should have stronger duties of solidarity or justice towards those individuals, since contingent facts cannot justify duties or norms. But such disparities in our sympathies do not even correlate with our own actions. The countries that have donated more vaccines or money to COVAX are not those that feel more sympathy for other countries, or those that share some commonalities with them, such as a common language, a common culture, or a common history. In addition to that, Hume himself made a different analysis in his other major work, the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, where he rarely mentions sympathy and prefers to speak about the principle of humanity, which emerges from the realization that human beings recognize each other as equals and feel concern for each other's well-being on a more universal basis.[23]

21 This is what Lea Ypi, with the case of global solidarity in mind, calls 'a cosmopolitan avant-garde', which might be integrated by social organizations and movements, NGOs, intellectuals and individual citizens. See Ypi, 'Politically constructed solidarity: the idea of a cosmopolitan avant-garde'and *Global Justice and Avant-Garde Political Agency*. For a similar response in the case for the democratization of the European Union, despite the absence of a thick pan-European common identity, see José Luis Martí, 'European Democracy and the No-Demos Thesis', in *A New Narrative for a New Europe*, eds. Daniel Innerarity, Jonathan White, Cristina Astier and Ander Errasti (Rowman and Littlefield, 2018): 49-70.

22 See Kevin Watkins, 'Human Development Report 2007-2008: Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World' (New York: United Nations Development Program, 2007); and Ulrich K. Preuss, 'National, Supranational, and International Solidarity', in *Solidarity*, ed. Kurt Bayertz (Dordrecht: Springer, 1999).

23 David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998 [1751], 5.39.

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Despite the classic view that has conceived civic friendship, fraternity, or solidarity, as circumscribed by the boundaries of political community, whether the polis or a nation state, there is no reason to deny, at least on a conceptual basis, the possibility of global solidarity. If the basis of our solidarity is some mutual recognition as equals deserving equal concern, there is no normative reason either not to recognize any other human being as an equal moral agent. Advocates of national solidarity, such as David Miller or Richard Bellamy, argue that we do not – and ought not to – accord the same concern to foreigners as to our fellow citizens.[24] They might be right about this, but it still does not prove that there should be no global solidarity. The same argument they make when they compare our fellow citizens with foreigners might be applied to the comparison between our relatives or friends and our fellow citizens. Whilst we should of course recognize our fellow citizens as equals, we do not – and ought no to – accord them exactly the same concern as we accord our relatives and friends; we do not – and should not – think that they deserve just the same concern *from us* as do our relatives and friends. We may certainly have some special duties regarding the latter than we do not have regarding other fellow citizens. As a result of that, it is very plausible to believe – and actually hard to deny – that we have stronger duties of solidarity regarding our relatives and friends than regarding our fellow citizens. For the same reason, we may have stronger duties of solidarity towards our fellow citizens than towards the other human beings on the planet. In any case, the disparities in the strength or scope of our duties of solidarity do not prove that we do not have global duties of solidarity towards all human beings in the world.

Now we come to the central question of this section: do we have global duties of solidarity? I believe so, and at two different levels that mirror the distinction between onefold and twofold global challenges that I drew in the previous section. Let me start with the most basic moral duties. Remember that, according to the philosophical tradition that has theorized the concepts of civic friendship, fraternity, and solidarity since the time of Aristotle, all that is needed in order to justify the existence of a duty of solidarity is the mutual recognition between agents as equals to whom we owe some equal concern. I take to be obvious that at a very basic moral level all human beings are to be regarded as equal agents to whom we owe equal concern, regardless of their nationality or vicinity.

The arbitrary fact that someone is born in Zimbabwe, Argentina, or Spain should not make any difference in our most basic moral duties regarding others. As in Peter Singer's famous example of the drowning child, if a child is drowning before us, we are the only ones who can save her, and if we can do it at no significant cost or risk for ourselves, it is obvious that we have a duty to be solidary and save the child, quite regardless of the color of the child's passport.[25] Similarly, if there is an

24 See David Miller, 'Cosmopolitanism', in *The Cosmopolitanism Reader*, ed. Garrett W. Brown and David Held (London: Polity Press, 2010): 377-392.

25 See Peter Singer, 'Famine, Affluence and Morality', *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1 (1972): 229-243, *One World. The Ethics of Globalization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), and *The Life You Can Save* (New York: Random House, 2009).

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earthquake in Haiti destroying a good part of the capital, killing thousands of people, we all have a duty to be solidary and send assistance and help. It is irrelevant where such an earthquake takes place. We must show such basic equal concern for all human beings, since we can recognize each other as equal moral agents in this basic fundamental sense.

Remember now the example of severe poverty that I gave to illustrate the category of onefold global challenges. If other human beings are deeply suffering because they are in a situation of severe poverty and hunger, we have a moral duty to show solidarity and help them to thrive regardless of their nationality. If you are not convinced, just consider the most extreme case, that of child destitution in certain areas of Africa, of children dying from malnourishment. As I explained in the introduction, onefold global threats are global in one sense, because they are a common problem all over the world, but not necessarily in the other sense that the solution to that problem must be globally coordinated as well. However, the fact that there are people in situations of extreme poverty and destitution is a problem for all human beings: severe poverty in a distant land might not, as a matter of empirical fact, threaten the well-being of those living in wealthier countries, but it affects all human beings in the sense that it must concern us all simply in virtue of our common humanity, and we all have a duty to show moral concern for their deep suffering and help them try to save their lives. Therefore, it is not only the problem of the people who are hungry or of the states where these people live. It is a global problem, at least a onefold problem. And, therefore, it triggers global duties of solidarity, more particularly *moral* global duties of solidarity, even if such duties do not necessarily require coordinated action to be fulfilled.

It is clear that we also have moral global duties of solidarity in regard to the situation of countries suffering an uncontrolled outbreak of COVID-19. When India experienced its giant second wave of COVID-19 and its hospitals rapidly collapsed, running short of ventilators and oxygen, many countries showed concern and started sending supplies, assistance, and help. Similar examples arose in other countries, including Peru, Namibia and Indonesia. The mere fact that a particular country or a more specific group of people in that country face some deep suffering or serious harm immediately raises our moral concern and triggers our *moral* global duties of solidarity.

However, as I argued in the introduction, COVID-19 is a global threat of a special kind that I called a twofold global challenge. That means that it is global in *two* different and cumulative ways. It is global because it is *a common problem* for the entire world. Additionally, it is global because the only *solution* for that problem must come from joining efforts and coordinating a *global response*. And this means that the kind of global solidarity that it triggers cannot be exclusively moral. When a relatively large group of people has a common problem that requires some joint or coordinated action in order to be dealt with, we can affirm, following Jeremy

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Waldron, that the circumstances of politics have emerged.[26] If we need to vaccinate all adults on the planet against COVID-19 because that is the only way to deal effectively with the pandemic and because we will be safe from it only when everyone is safe from it, then we have not only a moral global duty of solidarity (and a self-interested reason to discharge that duty, since our own interests are also affected), but also a *political* one. This duty is political in the sense that discharging it will require joint, coordinated action.[27] Thus, we may argue that onefold global challenges trigger moral global duties of solidarity, while twofold global challenges trigger, by definition, moral as well as political global duties of solidarity.

One might think that if some personal interests are also involved, then we are not facing a case of pure solidarity. In my opinion, that would be a mistake. If personal interests are involved in a particular action, such action may not be motivated by pure altruism. There still can be some dose of altruism in it, but it is not purely altruistic anymore. However, altruism and solidarity are two different things. This is, in fact, the claim that is more consistent with the classic tradition of civic friendship and fraternity, from which solidarity emanated. Remember that for that tradition, looking back to Aristotle, or Hume, or Jefferson, or Rousseau, the duty of solidarity – or civic friendship – emerges from the fact that the agents share some 'common business', or 'common good', or 'public good', or 'general interest'. And this is exactly what transforms the duty into a political one. It is the fact that the interests of those who need help are intertwined with the interests of those who must help them in some form of public or common good that makes their relationship not only moral, but political. In sum, in twofold global challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic – but also climate change, the preservation of species, or nuclear security, and many others – political, as well as moral, global solidarity is needed.

In this section, I have shown that global solidarity is not only conceptually possible, but actually required to deal with global challenges, of both the onefold and the twofold kind. It is important to notice that the type of such global duties is different depending on the kind of challenge that we face. Whilst onefold challenges can be addressed, without international coordination, by groups or countries acting out of moral solidarity, twofold global challenges can be effectively tackled only

26 Waldron actually identifies two circumstances of politics: the perceived need for a common framework, choice, or action and the existence of disagreements or conflicts about what such a choice or action should be. See Jeremy Waldron, *Law and Disagreement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 99-103. As I have argued elsewhere, it seems pretty clear that Waldron's idea of circumstances of politics is fully applicable to the global context, making it possible to speak about global politics in a genuine and strict sense. See José Luis Martí, 'Política y bien común global', *Anuario de la Facultad de Derecho de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid*, 16 (2012): 17-38; José Luis Martí, 'A Global Republic to Prevent Global Domination', *Revista Diacrítica*, 24 (2010): 31-72; and José Luis Martí, 'Republican Freedom, Nondomination, and Global Constitutionalism', in ed. Renata Uitz, *Freedom and Its Enemies. The Tragedy of Liberty* (The Hague: Eleven, 2015): 57-78.

27 For a similar view of the political dimension of global solidarity, see Ypi, 'Politically constructed solidarity: the idea of a cosmopolitan avant-garde', and *Global Justice and Avant-Garde Political Agency*. For the notion of political, as opposed to moral, solidarity, even if still conceived as working mainly at a domestic level, see Scholz, *Political Solidarity*.

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through global joint, coordinated, solidary actions. And for that reason the kind of global solidarity they require is not just moral, but political. The question is now whether such global political solidarity is empirically possible, and how we could arrange things to make it possible and effective. To this question I turn briefly in the next section.

3. Global collective intelligence for twofold global threats

Is global solidarity possible? As I argued in the previous section, as a matter of fact it already exists. However, the example of COVID-19, and more particularly the example of vaccine solidarity, paradigmatically shows that the level at which such solidarity exists is still clearly insufficient. This, I would say, is not surprising, given that, despite the fact that the kind of global solidarity that is needed is a political one, we lack adequate global political institutions that may effectively channel such solidarity when it emerges voluntarily, and that are able to legally impose further levels of global solidarity when voluntary cooperation is not enough.

A well-known position in the debate about global justice is the so-called 'institutionalist critique', which rejects the idea of global justice merely on the grounds that, as a matter of fact, we lack an adequate global institutional system that might carry the burden of imposing or enforcing such global justice.[28] However, just as with the motivational problem, even if the lack of an appropriate institutional system clearly poses some pragmatic obstacles to the implementation of a truly political scheme of global solidarity (just think, again, of the current limited powers of the WHO and its fruitless efforts to generalize the use of COVAX), this institutional deficit does not cancel our global duties of solidarity. More importantly, it triggers the additional obligation to create such an adequate institutional system in the first place. If the only equitable and genuinely effective way to fight the pandemic consists in joining efforts and coordinating our health policies, particularly in the distribution of vaccines, then states should agree to grant the WHO the appropriate powers to enact and impose a really effective COVAX global programme, one able to transcend the current 5% of share of the global distribution of vaccines and achieve a much higher share of it. I am aware of the tremendous difficulty of that challenge. But this is at least what social organizations and activists, intellectuals, and individual citizens who care about global justice and global solidarity, what Lea Ypi calls the 'cosmopolitan avant-garde', should be claiming and fighting for.[29]

In the introduction I claimed that we are under the pressure of gigantic global threats, many of which are existential, and many of which are of a type that I identified as twofold global. In the previous section I argued that these twofold global challenges, in contrast to the onefold global ones, require not merely moral, but

28 See, for all, Michael Blake, 'International Distributive Justice', *Stanford Encylopedia of Philosophy*, 24 October 2013, revised in 4 May 2020.

29 See Ypi, 'Politically constructed solidarity: the idea of a cosmopolitan avant-garde', and *Global Justice and Avant-Garde Political Agency*.

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political global solidarity. The kind of global institutional system that is needed in order to deal effectively with such existential threats, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate emergency, nuclear security or the preservation of ecosystems, is certainly so thick, complex, and powerful, that it is very far from our current reach. The only way of dealing with these problems effectively and in a legitimate way is ultimately through some kind of global democracy with some level of integration of powers.[30] And we do not seem to be very close to that scenario, even if the global threats are very serious and pressing.

However, global democracy will not emerge or be constituted in a day, and the fact that we may still fall very short of making real progress in approximating it does not prevent us from taking decisive steps towards such a normative horizon. The view of global solidarity I am defending here is idealistic enough to be immune to the so-called realist view, to objections such as those based on the Humean motivational problem or to the institutionalist critique, but at the same time is pragmatic enough to accept that global solidarity, even of the political kind that I have argued is needed, might grow progressively but continuously, and all that we need to ensure is that it does so in the right direction, that is, the direction of global political legitimacy on the way towards global democracy, even with some level of trial and error and experimentation.[31]

The political global solidarity that is necessary to deal effectively with global threats such as the pandemic basically requires two components. First, we need thicker and more empowered global institutions. Second, we need more democratic forms of global decision-making within those institutions that may keep them accountable and legitimate.[32] We need a more powerful global order and we need to democ-

30 For a more complete justification of such claim, see Martí, 'A Global Republic'. For some central defenses of the idea of global democracy, see David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), and *Cosmopolitanism: Ideals, Realities, and Deficits* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010); Simon Caney, *Justice Beyond Borders: A Global Political Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Joshua Cohen and Charles Sabel, 'Global Democracy?', *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics*, 37 (2006): 763-797; James Bohman, *Democracy across Borders: From Dêmos to Dêmoi* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007); Terry Macdonald, *Global Stakeholder Democracy: Power and Representation Beyond Liberal States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Daniele Archibugi, *The Global Commonwealth of Citizens: Toward Cosmopolitan Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Robert Goodin, 'Global democracy: in the beginning', *International Theory*, 2 (2010): 175-209; Daniele Archibugi, Mathias Koenig-Archibugi, and Marchetti, Raffaele, eds., *Global Democracy: Normative and Empirical Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

31 See, for instance, Grainne de Búrca, Robert Keohane and Charles Sabel, 'Global Experimentalis Governance', *British Journal of Political Science* 44 (2014): 477-486.

32 For a more comprehensive account of such democratic legitimacy at the international level, see José Luis Martí, 'Sources and the Legitimate Authority of International Law: Democratic Legitimacy and the Sources of International Law', in *The Oxford Handbook on the Sources of International Law*, eds. S. Besson and J. D'Aspremont (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017): 724-745. See also Samantha Besson and José Luis Martí, 'Legitimate Actors of International Lawmaking', *Jurisprudence* 9 (2018): 504-540, and 'Cities as Democratic Representatives in International Law-Making', in *Research Handbook on International Law and Cities*, eds. Janne Nijman and Helmut Aust (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2021).

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ratize it, even if following a gradual, step-by-step strategy.[33] We need a more powerful and economically well-funded WHO and a constellation of other powerful international organizations collaborating with it, and we need them to be more accountable and democratic. If the WHO in recent years has not only not grown more powerful, but has actually significantly weakened, it is obviously because many powerful states were not interested in letting it grow and limit to some extent their national sovereignty. But it is also because citizens around the world do not perceive the WHO as a trustworthy and legitimate institution to which we should delegate our power to fight against pandemics, and consequently they have not put enough pressure on their respective governments to empower such global institutions.

Part of the problem with the current international system is that it is perceived as distant, mostly technocratic, unaccountable, and suspected of falling prisoner to international lobbies and other powerful private actors. This is, actually, the case of the European Union, a system that has a Parliament democratically elected with co-decision power, mechanisms of citizen participation and engagement, supervising independent courts, and oversight bodies.[34] If despite all these forms of democratic engagement and accountability the EU is perceived as distant and technocratic, how will the global order, with no elected parliament, no courts vested with controlling power, and virtually no mechanism of public accountability, be perceived?[35] Just remember, for instance, what happened with the WHO management of the 2009 H1N1 crisis. Whether the public accusations of manipulation, collusion and favouritism were true or not, it is clear that the WHO lacks proper mechanisms to be held accountable by the citizens of the world.[36] How can it claim, then, to be trusted by such citizens or expect them to push their governments to further empower the institution?

There is certainly a case to be made for technocracy. All the major global threats that I mentioned in the introduction are very complex challenges, problems that interact with each other, that require interdisciplinary work from different experts

33 For advocates of similar strategies, see Eva Erman and Anders Uhlin, eds., *Legitimacy Beyond the State: Re-examining the Democratic Credentials of Transnational Actors* (New York: Springer, 2010); John Dryzek, *Deliberative Global Politics. Discourse and Democracy in a Divided World* (London: Polity Press, 2006); John Dryzek and John Pickering, *The Politics of the Anthropocene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); John Dryzek and A. Tanasoca, *Democratizing Global Justice: Deliberating Global Goals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

34 See, for all, Ignacio Sánchez Cuenca, 'From a Deficit of Democracy to a Technocratic Order: The Potscrisis Debate in Europe', *Annual Review of Political Science* 20 (2017): 351-369. See also Martí, 'European democracy and the no-demos thesis'.

35 A *locus classicus* in the justification of such a technocratic approach to international organizations is Robert Dahl, 'Can international organizations be democratic? A skeptic's view', in *Democracy's Edges*, eds. Ian Shapiro and Casiano Hacker-Cordón (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 19-36. See also Andrew Moravcsik, 'Is there a "democratic deficit" in world politics? A framework for analysis', *Government and Opposition* 39 (2004): 336-363.

36 See Shawn Smallman, 'Whom Do You Trust? Doubt and Conspiracy Theories in the 2009 Influenza Pandemic', *Journal of International and Global Studies* 6 (2015): 1-24.

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in order to be tackled effectively.[37] In addition to that, these problems are extremely pressing, and do not seem to leave enough time for a more open, participatory, bottom-up, and deliberative management. But it would be a mistake to identify the need for experts in public decision-making, including crisis management, with technocracy. Similarly, more democratic forms of decision-making open to citizen engagement are not necessarily conducive to less correct, efficacious or efficient decisions. The emerging field of collective intelligence studies is showing with evidence and persuasive arguments that, under the right conditions, larger and more diverse groups of people open to citizen collaboration may prove to be smarter decision-makers than small and homogenous groups of experts.[38]

Collective intelligence is signalling the way to go. We can make our global institutions more open and accountable, more democratic, more legitimate, and at the same time allow them to make better decisions. Digital technology may be extremely helpful here. As the concept of CrowdLaw has captured well, 'parliaments, governments and public institutions work better when they boost citizen engagement, leveraging new technologies to tap into diverse sources of information, judgments and expertise at each stage of the law and policymaking cycle to improve the quality as well as the legitimacy of the resulting laws and policies'.[39] Citizens possess distributed knowledge, with different perspectives and approaches, and they have the potential to bring in new and fresh ideas. They do not possess technical expertise. But they have the capacity to interact with experts, learn from them, and together make better decisions that might be more effective in dealing with the existential global problems that we face. And contrary to what one might expect,

37 For the interconnectedness of such global challenges and the need for interdisciplinary work, see Josep Maria Antó *et al*., 'The Planetary Wellbeing Initiative: Pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals in Higher Education', *Sustainability* 13 (2021): 3372.

38 For some important contributions to the field of collective intelligence, see Howard Rheingold, *Smart Mobs. The Next Social Revolution* (Cambridge: Basic Books, 2002) and *Net Smart. How to Thrive Online* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012); James Surowiecki, *The Wisdom of Crowds* (New York: Little Brown, 2004); Cass Sunstein, *Infotopia. How Many Minds Produce Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Yochai Benkler, *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), and *The Penguin and the Leviathan. How Cooperation Triumphs over Self-Interest* (New York: Crown Business, 2011); Scott Page, *The difference. How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Beth Noveck, *Wikigovernment, How Technology Can Make the Government Better, Democracy Stronger and Citizens More Powerful* (New York: Brookings Institution, 2009) and *Smart citizens, smarter state: The technologies of expertise and the future* of *governing* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015); Hélène Landemore, *Democratic Reason. Politics, Collective Intelligence, and the Rule of the Many* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Cass Sunstein and Reid Hastie, *Wiser. Getting Beyond Grougthink to Make Groups Smarter* (Cambridge: Harvard Business Review Press, 2014); Thomas Malone, ed., *Handbook of Collective Intelligence* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015), and *Superminds. The Surprising Power of People and Computers Thinking Together* (New York: Little Brown, 2018); and Geoff Mulgan, *Big Mind: How Collective Intelligence Can Change the World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

39 Victoria Alsina and José Luis Martí, 'The Birth of the CrowdLaw Movement: Tech-Based Citizen Participation, Legitimacy and the Quality of Lawmaking', *Analyse und Kritik*, 40 (2018): 337-358, at 338. See also Beth Noveck, 'CrowdLaw: Collective Intelligence and Lawmaking', *Analyse und Kritik*, 40 (2018): 359-380, and *Solving Public Problems. A Practical Guide to Fix Our Government and Change Our World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021). See also https://crowd.law/.

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they can also do this in circumstances of crisis or emergency.[40] Collective intelligence of the right kind does not emerge in all circumstances, but under very strict conditions, which we do not entirely know in detail yet, even if the idea of 'the wisdom of crowds' has been present in political philosophy since the time of Ancient Greece, and Aristotle himself was one of its strongest advocates.[41] For that reason, a high degree of experimentalism and an ambitious and interdisciplinary research agenda are needed.

Let me turn back to the initial point of this article as a way of summarizing my argument. We are facing gigantic global challenges and existential threats. Some of them, like the COVID-19 pandemic, are twofold global challenges, and that means that they are not only global common *problems* for the entire humanity, but also that any plausible *solution* or effective management of them will require joining efforts and coordinating action at a planetary level. They require high levels of global solidarity of a kind that we have never seen before. This leads us inevitably to the issue of global politics, since the only way of articulating effective global responses that can be effective, equitable, and legitimate at the same time, will require a deeper empowerment of the global institutional system but also its democratization. The most promising way to do this is by relying on collective intelligence mechanisms, such as those of CrowdLaw, that is, processes of decision-making in which citizens may engage with politicians, experts, and civil servants in order to find the most adequate solutions, mostly through the use of emergent digital technologies, such as data analytics and artificial intelligence. These are new unexplored avenues that, again, will still require important doses of experimentalism and research. But, as the pandemic is clearly proving, the statist, Westphalian international order will not be able to respond adequately to these categorically new problems.

Take, again, the example of COVAX and global vaccine distribution. The current distribution of vaccines has been inequitable, inefficient and also technically wrong from a medical, epidemiological point of view. COVAX, as a centralized system of vaccine distribution, has largely fallen short of its original aspirations and its ideal mission of coordinating global solidarity. State governments have eluded COVAX

40 See, for instance, Adriana Vivaqua and Marcos Borges, 'Collective Intelligence for the Design of Emergency Response', *The 2010 14th International Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work in Design* (2010): 623-628, and 'Taking Advantage of Collective Knowledge in Emergency Response Systems', *Journal of Network and Computer Applications* 35 (2012): 189-198; Monika Büscher *et al*., 'Collective Intelligence in Crisis', in *Social Collective Intelligence. Computational Social Sciences*, eds. D. Miorandi, V. Maltese, M. Rovatsos, A. Nijholt, J. Stewart (New York: Springer 2017); Juliane Kramer *et al*., 'The Potential of Collective Intelligence in Emergency Medicine', *Medical Decision Making* 37 (2017): 715-724; Gianluca Elia and Alessandro Margherita, 'Can we solve wicked problems? A conceptual framework and a collective intelligence system to support problem analysis and solution design for complex social issues', *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 133 (2018): 279-286; and Victoria Alsina, José Luis Martí and Beth Noveck, eds., 'Special Issue. CrowdLaw and Collective Emergency Intelligence on the Ground', *Digital Government: Research and Practice*, forthcoming. See also the modules to the course 'Collective Crisis Intelligence' in https://covidcourse.thegovlab.org/.

41 See José Luis Martí, 'Aristóteles y la sabiduría de la multitud', *Teoria Politica* 8 (2018): 139-166.

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partly under the excuse that they have a mandate to protect their own respective populations. As a result, COVAX has become a mere instrument of international beneficence, able to channel some marginal moral solidarity, but far from having the political dimension it should have had. Part of the reason for such failure derives from the fact that world citizens do not trust – or do not even know about – the international institutional system in general, and the WHO in particular, so they have not put any pressure on their governments to take a different approach through COVAX, which would have enabled a more equitable and efficient system. However, for COVAX to be a success and to centralize a good share of the global distribution of vaccines, we would have required much better mechanisms of political control and accountability, better forms of citizen engagement and participation, and more legitimate international institutions.

If we can learn anything from our own mistakes, with a view to not repeat them in the future, if we can get better prepared for tackling the next pandemic as well as for dealing better with the other global existential threats, it is time to carefully reflect on all these issues and work hard to trigger a stronger global solidarity through a better collective intelligence.

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