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Solidarity as Joint Action

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5 **□ ANDREA SANGIOVANNI**

6
7 **ABSTRACT** *The demand for social justice, especially in the context of the welfare state, is often*
8 *framed as a demand of solidarity. But it is not clear why: in what sense, if any, is social justice*
9 *best understood as a demand of solidarity? This article explores that question. There are two*
10 *reasons to do so. First, very little has been written on the concept of solidarity, and almost nothing*
11 *on why and how solidarity can both give rise to and be the target of a moral obligation. The first*
12 *aim of the article is to fill this gap. The second aim of the article is to explore the normative*
13 *implications of this account of solidarity for the commitment to social justice at the heart of the*
14 *welfare state, and in so doing, to put into question the idea that shared experience or shared*
15 *identity are either necessary or sufficient bases for social justice qua solidarity.*

16
17 The demand for social justice, especially in the context of the welfare state, is often
18 framed as a demand of *solidarity*. But it is not clear why: in what sense, if any, is social
19 justice best understood as a demand of solidarity? This article explores this question.
20 There are two reasons to do so. First, very little has been written on the concept of
21 solidarity, and almost nothing on why and how solidarity can both give rise to and be the
22 target of a moral obligation.¹ The first aim of the article is to fill this gap. The second aim
23 of the article is to explore the normative implications of this account of solidarity for the
24 commitment to social justice at the heart of the welfare state, and in so doing, to put into
25 question the idea that *shared experience* or *shared identity* are either necessary or sufficient
26 bases for social justice *qua* solidarity.

27 28 **Shared Experience, Shared Identity, and Shared Action**

29
30 Solidarity is a peculiarly modern concern. While one can trace the term to its roots in
31 Roman law — where an obligation *in solidum* was a joint contractual obligation in which
32 each signatory declared himself liable for the debts of all together — its use as a term
33 denoting a type of broadly *social* (rather than narrowly *legal*) relation only becomes
34 prevalent in Europe — and especially in France — during the 19th century. Why then?
35 As any cursory glance at the major early texts (e.g. Fourier, Leroux, Comte, Durkheim)
36 will reveal, the language of solidarity emerges as a response to growing anxiety regarding
37 the expansion of commercial society, large-scale industry, and the perceived collapse of
38 traditional communities.² From this perspective, it is no surprise that a language of
39 solidarity emerges in *France*, where the upheavals of the Revolution and its aftermath
40 had first placed the ideal of republican *fraternité* firmly on the map. If societies are to
41 hold together in the presence of the centrifugal, individualistic pull of markets, then

1 something must replace the old ties of kinship, family, and traditional religious practice.
2 That something was thought to require a form of fellow-feeling between strangers, in
3 which each is prepared to share in the good and bad fate of all the rest. But what could
4 possibly provide a basis for such social unity?

5 There are, broadly and schematically, three main (non-exhaustive) European social and
6 political traditions of thought on solidarity that have developed from these early 19th-
7 century beginnings: Socialist, Nationalist, and Christian. I intend to draw on them here as
8 paradigmatic instances of what is a much more variegated field of possibilities.³ This is
9 because my aim is philosophical and normative rather than historical. It will be useful
10 to have these in the back of our minds as we proceed, first because they will form a helpful
11 set of contrasts for the ideas set forth below, and because they will help us to introduce and
12 distinguish the three main socio-psychological bases for solidarity, namely shared experi-
13 ence, shared identity, and shared action. The rest of the article will be dedicated to
14 exploring the concept of solidarity and the normative implications of these three bases.

15 The Socialist tradition is class-based.⁴ The working class is the focal point of concern,
16 and, at least in one strand, solidarity is associated with the role of the exploited worker
17 in joint social production. Solidarity is name of the bond between those who recognise
18 one another as the objects of pervasive exploitation, who together create the essential
19 conditions in which modern societies flourish, and who have a common enemy against
20 whom the struggle must be waged, namely the capitalist. An old socialist song evokes this
21 sensibility well:

22
23 It is we who ploughed the prairies, built the cities where they trade,
24 Dug the mines and built the workshops, endless miles of railroad laid;
25 Now, we stand outcast and starving, 'mid the wonders we have made.⁵

26
27 There are, therefore, *two* bases for solidarity in the Socialist tradition: there is on one
28 hand the *shared experience* of exploitation and, on the other, the *shared action* involved in
29 joint social production (as in ploughing the prairies and building the cities). The Socialist
30 tradition has, of course, been sceptical of modern theories of social justice as Pyrrhic and
31 backward-looking attempts to pacify the worker, and paper over the contradictions
32 inherent in capitalist production.⁶ The central concern with solidarity was however also
33 invoked by later Social Democrats, who, historically, have been much more favourable to
34 the development of the welfare state and to theories of social justice more generally (and
35 who have also sought to appeal to a much broader base that included the bourgeoisie).⁷
36 It is no surprise that in later Social Democratic (and 'Solidarist') traditions, the emphasis
37 on exploitation diminishes as the emphasis on joint social production — this time
38 including the bourgeoisie — grows.⁸

39 The Christian tradition, most prominent in Catholic social thought but also in some
40 forms of Protestantism, is grounded as an ideal of fraternity or human fellowship in
41 which each human being is considered as *imago dei* and hence as deserving of the same
42 love that joins God and man. Pope John Paul II, who in many ways has done the most
43 to secure a place for solidarity in the Catholic tradition, writes:

44
45 Solidarity is undoubtedly a Christian virtue. . . . In the light of faith, solidarity
46 seeks to go beyond itself, to take on the specifically Christian dimension of total
47 gratuity, forgiveness and reconciliation. One's neighbor is then not only a
48 human being with his or her own rights and a fundamental equality with

1 everyone else, but becomes the living image of God the Father, redeemed by the
2 blood of Jesus Christ and placed under the permanent action of the Holy Spirit.
3 One's neighbor must therefore be loved, even if an enemy, with the same love
4 with which the Lord loves him or her; and for that person's sake one must be
5 ready for sacrifice, even the ultimate one: to lay down one's life for the
6 brethren.⁹

7 Solidarity, for the Catholic, is grounded in universal love. The basis for this love flows
8 from our *shared experience* of human suffering, which is a necessary result of original sin.
9 The focus of Christian love is therefore the relief of suffering in all its forms — a sacrifice
10 which, modelled on the life of Christ, aspires to a reconciliation with God. This kind of
11 solidarity was at the heart of the Christian Democratic political tradition, especially those
12 aspects that emphasised the social responsibilities of the Christian. The influence of
13 Christian Democracy on the evolution of the social ideals implicit in the development of
14 the welfare state has recently received renewed attention.¹⁰

15 The last part of our triptych is filled by the Liberal Nationalist. Solidarity becomes a
16 central plank of the particularly Liberal Nationalism that flourishes in the wake of 1848.
17 For the nationalist, solidarity is anchored in shared identification with an 'imagined
18 community' where membership is defined not in terms of class, or social position, or
19 family, or joint action or struggle, but in terms of an underlying *identity*, often based on
20 ethnicity, language, and/or social 'origin', and often invented.

21 [R]egardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each,
22 the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it
23 is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many
24 millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited
25 imaginings.¹¹

26 For the Liberal Nationalist, in short, *shared identity* is the basis for the mutual concern
27 and mutual identification central to the life of the nation. The solidarity called for by the
28 Liberal Nationalist was also central to the development of the welfare state, especially in
29 the wake of the Second World War. There is little question, for example, that the origins
30 of the post-war welfare state lie, at least in part, in the specifically national solidarity
31 created by the war effort and the productive and bureaucratic machinery it required.¹²

32 So we have three different (historical) bases for the kind of social solidarity that is at
33 the centre of calls for social justice at the core of the welfare state. Two sets of questions
34 remain to be answered. First, we have identified three different *bases* for solidarity, but
35 what is solidarity *itself*? What is it to act 'in solidarity' with another — whether we do so
36 because of a shared experience, identity, or action? In the next section, we answer these
37 conceptual questions. We then face a further, more explicitly normative, set of questions:
38 in what sense can demands of solidarity be demands for social justice and grounds for
39 mutual obligation? And, if they can, then which of the three bases provides the *best*
40 understanding of solidarity *qua* social justice?¹³

41 42 **The Concept of Solidarity**

43
44 What is solidarity? Or, put another way, what is it *to act in solidarity* with others? In this
45 section, I provide a philosophical analysis of the concept. I do not aim to illuminate the

1 ordinary meaning of the term, or to capture the wide variety in linguistic usage. There are
2 legitimate uses of the term that do not fit with the characterisation I shall give. The aim
3 of providing a philosophical analysis of the concept is to single out certain features that,
4 I believe, best explain its characteristic role in political and theoretical debates centred on
5 social justice, especially as regards the limits and aspirations of the welfare state.¹⁴ We
6 therefore succeed in our endeavour if we can isolate a concept that brings out aspects of
7 its general usage that are interesting and relevant for our guiding theme. With that in
8 mind I now list these central aspects, and then proceed to discuss each one of them.¹⁵

9 Solidarity involves a complex of interrelated relations, attitudes and dispositions that
10 is similar to, but not the same as, the attitudes, relations and dispositions involved in
11 shared agency of the sort discussed by Michael Bratman, Margaret Gilbert, Raimo
12 Tuomela and Kaarlo Miller, John Searle, and others (on which more below).¹⁶ In
13 elucidating what acting in solidarity with others is, I therefore also hope to distinguish an
14 interesting variant of collective action that is much more diffuse and less unified than the
15 ones discussed in the collective action literature, but none the less interesting for that.

16 I act in solidarity with you when:

- 17 1. You and I each (a) share a goal (b) to overcome some significant adversity;
- 18 2. You and I each individually intend to do our part in achieving the shared goal in ways
19 that mesh;
- 20 3. You and I are each individually committed (a) to the realisation of the shared goal and
21 (b) to not bypassing each other's will in the achievement of the goal;
- 22 4. You and I are disposed (a) to incur significant costs to realise our goal; and (b) to
23 share one another's fates in ways relevant to the shared goal.
- 24 5. Facts 1.-4. need *not* be common knowledge.

25 26 *Sharing Goals: Condition 1a*

27 When do we *share a goal* in the relevant sense? You and I both aim to get to Manchester,
28 and are on the same train together. But I don't know who you are, and you don't know
29 who I am. In this case, we have a goal in *common*, but our goal is not *shared*. It is also not
30 shared in the case in which our each going to Manchester is common knowledge
31 between us. Once again, we just happen to have a goal in common: whether or not you
32 go to Manchester makes no difference to me, and my going makes no difference to you.
33 For us to *share* the aim of going to Manchester requires that the specification of the goal
34 include a reference to the actions and aims of each of us. I not only say 'I aim to go to
35 Manchester', I also say, 'I aim to go *with you*'. The satisfaction of my goal to go to
36 Manchester requires your participation in achieving the very same goal, and the satis-
37 faction of your goal requires mine.¹⁷ Similarly, if we all aim to get top marks on the exam
38 next year, it will be true to say that we all individually aim to do so, but it will be false
39 to say that we *share* this goal unless each of our goals, to be satisfied, would require all
40 the rest to get top marks as well.

41 Notice that 1. refers to shared *goals* rather than shared *intentions*. This has important
42 implications for our understanding of the collective action required for solidarity. Cur-
43 rently, the literature on collective action is centred on the notion of shared *agency*, cases
44 in which a plurality of agents can together intend or decide on a single outcome or
45 activity. How can a committee composed of 10 people resolve to award a prize as a single

1 body? How can two or more people share a single, shared intention to clean the house
2 together? Part of the philosophical difficulty in such cases is to show how joint intentions
3 can be formed without presupposing the existence of a super-agent over and above the
4 set of individuals. Can the shared intention be explained solely in terms of a set of
5 individual, overlapping, interlocking intentions? But then how can *each* individual ‘settle’
6 the matter for *all the rest*? Isn’t that, as Velleman puts it, too many cooks and too little
7 broth?¹⁸

8 Sharing a goal is much less onerous.¹⁹ I can *aim* that we, the *sans-culottes*, overthrow
9 Louis XVI by starting to clamour for support, mounting the barricades, writing in the
10 papers, etc., but I cannot — just like that — *intend* that every *sans-culotte* do so. I cannot
11 settle the matter for every *sans-culotte* that *we* join the revolution. At most, I can do so for
12 a small group of compatriots whom I know personally, who also have an intention to
13 overthrow the King, and whose intentions interlock and mesh in the right ways. Shared
14 goals are therefore much more scaleable to large groups. After the revolution is finished,
15 it will be true that I may come to know of many of my fellow *sans-culottes* that they had
16 also participated — people whom I had never seen before and with whom I had shared
17 no plan — and had also shared my goal. And it will then be true of us (if conditions 2.
18 and 3. are also satisfied) that we had acted in solidarity. (I return to this example below
19 in discussing the absence of a common knowledge condition.)

20 So acting in solidarity with others does not require — though it does not exclude —
21 sharing an intention that we do something together. We can act in solidarity with
22 others even if our joint actions are not unified by an overarching, shared agency, or in
23 Gilbert’s terms, even if we are not part of a ‘plural subject’. A further example that
24 illustrates the distinction (and its importance) is the Civil Rights Movement. I take it
25 that participants in the Civil Rights Movement acted in solidarity with one another,
26 yet it would be crazy to argue that participants were unified by a shared agency
27 through which participants directed their joint actions (like the house cleaners) let
28 alone a corporate agent structured by a set of authority relations (like the committee).
29 The movement was much too diffuse, socially disconnected, and wide-ranging for
30 that. But it *can* be said of the Civil Rights Movement that participants *shared a goal*,
31 namely to overcome racial injustice and oppression. And, insofar as they also met
32 conditions 2. and 3., as we will see in more detail below, they can truly be said to have
33 acted in solidarity with one another.

34 Another related point. It is revealing that most current accounts of shared agency
35 focus *either* on very small-scale activities (such as dancing the tango or painting a house)
36 *or* on larger scale corporate agents — such as IBM or the state — with defined rules of
37 procedure and structured forms of hierarchy.²⁰ There is very little in the philosophical
38 literature, by contrast, on more dispersed forms of collective action, such as social
39 movements. This is not surprising, given how demanding it is to share an intention in
40 small non-organised groups or to unify decision-making by authority. Once we expand
41 our focus from instances of shared intentionality and/or authority to instances of
42 solidaristic action among more diffuse collectivities, we thereby also open the way for a
43 new line of inquiry into forms of *collective action without shared agency*.²¹

44 Let us return to solidarity more narrowly. We can already derive some intermediate
45 conclusions. Notice that the concept as I have outlined it excludes the possibility of
46 acting in solidarity with those with whom you do not share a goal. If I generously and
47 lavishly supply you with food because you are poor, but you feel that you do not need or

1 want it from me, I cannot be said to be acting in solidarity with you. This will be
2 important below when we discuss possible grounds for obligations of solidarity.

3
4 . . . and *Overcoming Adversity: Condition 1b*

5 When we play football together, or cook dinner together, we share a goal in the relevant
6 sense, but we do not act in solidarity. Solidarity requires that our shared goal include the
7 *overcoming of significant adversity*.²² I intentionally leave the idea of ‘adversity’ vague to
8 allow for variety and diversity in interpretation. To fix ideas, consider two examples.
9 First, soldiers — even soldiers who were coerced into participating in a war they believe
10 to be unjust — can act in solidarity if they share the goal of saving each other’s lives. The
11 adversity here is the risk of death. Second, consider again the Civil Rights Movement.
12 Even if some participants are in favour of violent resistance and some are not, all can act
13 in solidarity if they share the goal of overcoming racial injustice and oppression.

14
15 *Coordinating, Meshing, and Interlocking: Condition 2*

16 Every goal has what we might call ‘satisfaction conditions’, i.e. token activities or
17 outcomes that would count as satisfying the goal. For us to share a goal, how much
18 agreement must there be in satisfaction conditions? There must be some overlap, but this
19 overlap need not be extensive. For example, if you and I both share a goal to overcome
20 current and past vestiges of racial oppression, but you think this will only be achieved
21 when we form a separate black nation in Sub-Saharan Africa whereas I think this will
22 only be achieved if we pursue our goals via the US government, then there can be (let us
23 assume) many token outcomes and/or activities that we agree would count as satisfying
24 our goal (such as the realisation of greater educational and economic opportunity, pride,
25 and intra-group cohesion among blacks). In this case, when you act so as to begin an
26 emigration movement and I act via legislative channels, we can still count as acting in
27 solidarity despite our having very different ideas about what is required to achieve our
28 shared goal. If, on the other hand, we have completely non-overlapping ideas about what
29 would count as overcoming racial injustice and oppression, then we cannot act in
30 solidarity because we cannot be said to share a goal in the relevant sense.²³

31 This brings us to the heart of condition 2.: to be acting in solidarity, we need to form
32 an intention that our subplans mesh. Subplans mesh just in case there is a way for each
33 participant to satisfy their subplans that is compatible with achievement of the shared
34 goal. It is important to emphasise that for our subplans to mesh, however, they need not
35 mesh *all the way down*. If, for example, we realise that your pursuing an emigration-based
36 policy and my pursuing a legislative agenda will end up somehow making racial oppres-
37 sion *worse* than if we only did one but not the other, then, insofar as we are acting in
38 solidarity, we ought to coordinate our actions to prevent this from happening. But we can
39 still act in solidarity if we each pursue our course of action despite our knowledge that
40 we would do even better by uniting forces. This might be the case if some of us believe
41 there are other, overriding reasons (for example, of pride or community) to pursue, say,
42 an emigration-based policy even if we could end more oppression in the US by uniting
43 to further a coherent legislative agenda. As long as we are not actively undermining our
44 shared goal or each other, there is no need to sacrifice our other, non-convergent goals
45 for the maximal realisation of the shared goal.

1 *The Commitment Condition: Condition 3*

2 The need for a commitment condition is evident if we consider the following two
3 scenarios (corresponding to 3a and 3b). You join the struggle because someone has paid
4 you good money to do so. You are a mercenary, and would not help in the struggle were
5 the money not forthcoming.²⁴ In this case, I believe you cannot act in solidarity with
6 other participants. There must be some sense in which you are committed to the struggle
7 *because* you believe it is a form of adversity worth overcoming. This doesn't mean, of
8 course, that this must be your *only* reason for joining the struggle, but it must at least be
9 a reason that is not easily defeated or undermined by other considerations. Hence 3a.²⁵

10 Second, imagine I were to coerce you into joining the struggle, or coerce you to
11 adopt subplans that mesh with mine. In this case, I cannot be said to act in solidarity
12 with you. When I coerce you to adopt subplans that mesh with mine, I do not achieve
13 the intended mesh via your reciprocal commitment to the shared goal; I rather bypass
14 it entirely, hence 3b. Such coercion might be justified, and it might even be justified
15 *because* you have an (enforceable) obligation to participate (on which more below), but
16 as long as you do not commit yourself and I need to coerce your participation, I
17 cannot be said to act in solidarity with you. Notice, however, the presence of what we
18 might call 'background coercion' is *not* sufficient to undermine the possibility of
19 solidaristic action. Imagine we are planning a difficult attack on the occupying force,
20 and know that we are liable to falter in the face of danger. To provide each other
21 assurance that we will not abandon the mission, we agree that were we not to follow
22 through, the others would be authorised to kill us. As long as none of us falters, we
23 can still act in solidarity. The key is that the coercion here is designed to get us to do
24 what we are already committed to doing; its primary aim is not to bypass the other's
25 commitment but to reinforce it.

26
27 *Condition 4: Costs and Fates*

28 We will have more to say about Condition 4 below, when we turn to the grounds for
29 possible obligations of solidarity. In this section, instead, we treat the disposition to incur
30 significant costs for the shared goal and to share one another's fates in ways relevant to
31 the shared goal simply as necessary components of an analysis of the concept. We remain
32 neutral on what the grounds for such dispositions usually are, and to what extent and in
33 virtue of what they may be justified.

34 As with 'adversity', I shall leave the notion of 'significant costs' and 'sharing one
35 another's fates' vague for now (I return to it below). In brief, the idea is that someone
36 who is only willing to pay minor costs to support the struggle, and who is disposed to
37 abandon it as the going gets tough, cannot be said to act in solidarity with his partners.
38 A group that does not expect much by way of such sacrifice is an interest group. Think,
39 perhaps, of organisations that defend the interests of consumers. Even if the organisation
40 thinks of itself as combating significant adversity — e.g. the powerful interests of
41 corporations — it does not expect much of its members, and members have very weak
42 dispositions to come to the aid of one another as participants. To name another example,
43 the majority of 'passive' donors to Greenpeace (though not all) don't count, on my view,
44 as acting in solidarity with 'active' members. They count, at most, as supporters of a just
45 cause.

1 What about the idea of ‘sharing one another’s fates in dimensions relevant to the
2 shared goal’? We share one another’s fates when we are willing to see others’ misfortune
3 — at least insofar as it is connected with the pursuit of our shared goal — as giving us
4 reason to come to their aid. Should another fall in our struggle to storm the Bastille, we
5 are prepared to come to their aid. Should one of our ranks meet unjust resistance, we will
6 stand up for and by them. Should another be imprisoned by a perpetrator against whom
7 we are struggling, we will do what we can to free them. Should another be robbed or
8 despoiled because of their participation, we will support them through hardship. And we
9 are disposed to do all of these things even if we don’t endorse the ‘subplans’ of those
10 affected. The fact that someone contributes and is committed to the cause, has a
11 disposition to coordinate, and incurs significant costs in the process, is enough.

13 *Condition 5: No Common Knowledge*

14 Accounts of small-scale collective agency often include a common knowledge condi-
15 tion. I must not only know that you share my goal, are disposed to coordinate, and so
16 on, but you must also know that I know, and I, in turn, must know that you know that
17 I know, all the way down. In a view like Bratman’s (which we are taking as paradig-
18 matic for small-scale shared agency), this makes sense. If we didn’t have common
19 knowledge that we each had the interlocking pattern of attitudes involved in shared
20 intentionality, then we would merely be acting in parallel. I cannot intend that, for
21 example, *we* \mathcal{J} , if I don’t know what your intentions are, and know that you know that
22 I know what your intentions are, etc., since I then wouldn’t be able to ‘settle the
23 matter’ along with you. And symmetrically, you wouldn’t be able to settle the matter
24 for me if you didn’t know what my intentions were, and know that I know that you
25 know, etc. This also explains why shared intentionality of the Bratman type is usually
26 confined to small-scale groups: that kind of deep knowledge of other’s intentions
27 doesn’t come easily.

28 Solidaristic action, by contrast, does not require common knowledge.²⁶ Even if we act
29 ‘in parallel’ on behalf of our shared goal, it can still be true of us that we acted in
30 solidarity. The shared goal, of course, must include reference to your participation, but
31 you could be picked out by a definite description. And it may be true (and will definitely
32 be true in any large-scale action) that I do not know all the members within the extension
33 of that description. Return to our French revolutionaries. I aim that we, the *sans-culottes*,
34 overthrow the King, and you aim for the very same thing. We can share that goal even
35 though we don’t know of each other’s existence. It is enough that, in addition to sharing
36 the goal, we have an intention to coordinate (were that necessary), are committed to the
37 struggle, and are willing to sacrifice both for it and for each other (were we to meet). As
38 in our example above, after the King has been executed, we can meet others who, we
39 come to realise, shared the same goals, etc., and rightly think ‘we acted in solidarity’.
40 Whether or not we acted in solidarity is a fact about the structure of our attitudes and
41 our resultant action — a fact that we may come to know (and which may *become* common
42 knowledge) after the struggle has ended.

43 We are now in a position to return to the distinction between shared intentions and
44 shared goals from a new perspective. Recall that the central difficulty in accounts of
45 shared intentionality is to explain how it is that each of a number of individuals can each
46 ‘settle’ what *we* are going to do. Bratman’s solution to this particular puzzle is to require

1 for each participant's intentions that we \mathcal{J} to be interdependent in the following sense: it
2 must be the case that we each intend that we \mathcal{J} *only if* the other also intends that we \mathcal{J} ,
3 and our intentions are common knowledge between us.²⁷ When that is the case, my
4 intention that we \mathcal{J} can be fully effective since I know and can rely on the fact that you
5 *also* intend that we \mathcal{J} . We each know that our respective intentions that we \mathcal{J} depend on
6 the other person's. This is also why common knowledge is such an important condition
7 in Bratman's framework.

8 Sharing a goal, on the other hand, doesn't require this kind of interdependence. I can
9 aim for every *sans-culotte* to overthrow the King in the *expectation* or *hope* that my fellows
10 will do so, without *intending* that they do so. Unlike the scope of the 'we' in a shared
11 intention, the scope of 'every *sans-culotte*' in the statement of my goal can therefore
12 remain stable in the face of shifting membership in the class of individuals who share my
13 goal. This has important implications for solidaristic action: within our framework, it is
14 possible for us to share a goal even in cases where Bratmanian interdependence *fails*, in
15 cases where, for example, I don't know and therefore can't rely on knowledge of others'
16 intentions. And this is as it should be: it seems clear that we can act in solidarity without
17 knowing that we are acting in solidarity. Had we adopted shared intentionality as a
18 necessary condition for acting in solidarity, large-scale solidaristic action — as in the
19 Civil Rights Movement — would have been impossible.

21 **Reasons Of and For Solidarity**

22
23 In defending our account of the concept of solidarity, I remained silent on the grounds
24 participants might have either (a) for joining together in solidarity in the first place or (b)
25 for sharing one another's fate. I merely claimed that having a disposition to (a) and (b)
26 were necessary conditions for the presence of solidaristic action. But dispositions can be
27 motivated or unmotivated. I might have a disposition to pull a face in the presence of
28 something disgusting. But it is not motivated. My response is not a response to reasons.
29 I might think that I have no good reason to be disgusted but go on being disgusted. Other
30 dispositions are motivated. When I show a disposition to share other participants' fates
31 and to incur significant costs, this is because I think I have strong moral reasons to do so,
32 and, in some cases, these reasons flow from a felt sense of obligation towards others. Were
33 I to come to believe that those reasons were no longer good ones, I would, all else equal,
34 cease being disposed in the relevant ways. This is important because 'solidarity' is often
35 treated as a form of fellow-feeling that is not readily susceptible to rational assessment,
36 akin to those emotions or passions that merely overcome us, and for which we have no
37 justification. I think this is a mistake. If solidarity is meant to name an important and
38 valuable form of collective action — and one that is closely connected with social justice
39 — it should be capable of being grounded in reasons. In this section, we explore three
40 possible bases for solidarity of both kinds — i.e. of kind (a) and kind (b) — with an eye
41 to their role in arguments for social justice. This will allow us to come full circle. It is
42 important to emphasise that I do not claim to cover *all* possible motivating grounds for
43 solidarity. My aim here is rather to highlight the most common ones (especially in
44 debates about social justice and the welfare state), to query whether two of them actually
45 constitute *good* reasons, and to highlight the third, which gets relatively little attention
46 but which is pivotal.

1 *Shared Experience of Adversity*

2 The first ground is *shared experience of adversity*. I might believe there are strong (a)-type
3 reasons to act in solidarity with you, according to this basis, because we have shared a
4 history of facing the very same adversity. We might suppose that our families were both
5 killed by the occupying forces, and, for this reason, I believe there are strong reasons for
6 us to join the Resistance. This is clearly a commonly avowed basis for solidaristic action
7 of exactly the kinds we have been focusing on. But, on reflection, I wonder what role,
8 exactly, the shared experience *as such* plays in our reasons for acting in solidarity. Clearly,
9 we have an individual reason to avenge the death of our families by destroying and/or
10 expelling the occupying force. And we also see that the other has the same reason. But
11 what reasons do we have to join forces? The main reason to join forces, it seems clear, is
12 that together we are more likely to be effective in expelling the occupying force. The fact
13 that we have shared an experience of trauma is no reason to join together *on its own*. At
14 most, the fact that the other bereaved families have also suffered provides us with a kind
15 of assurance that they can be trusted to pay significant costs on behalf of our struggle —
16 a trust that, all else equal, is greater than we would feel with people who have not suffered
17 as we have. But our primary reasons for joining together do not flow from the special
18 quality and character of the experiences we share. They flow rather from our desire to see
19 the occupying forces expelled.²⁸ Were joining forces not to make any difference to our
20 effectiveness (or make those chances marginally worse), we would have no reason to join
21 in solidarity — at most we would have reason to mourn our losses together but, barring
22 special cases of joint action related to the mourning, shared mourning is not an instance
23 of *acting in solidarity*.

24 Consider further that it will also be true that we have very strong reasons to resist the
25 occupying force not simply to avenge the death of the bereaved but also to fight the
26 injustice perpetrated by the occupiers. Yet, this is a reason that can also be shared by
27 those whose families have not been killed. If fighting injustice were our primary reason
28 to act in solidarity, then the only reasons for being disposed to seek out other bereaved
29 families would be, again, that trust would come much more easily with them.

30 I have similar doubts with respect to the (b)-type reasons for sharing our fates with
31 other bereaved families. Once again, it doesn't seem that merely sharing an experience
32 of adversity *as such* is enough to trigger a strong reason to share one's fate with other
33 bereaved families (let alone an obligation). I do not dispute that once the Resistance
34 got going, there would be strong reasons to share one another's fate, but I do not see
35 how such reasons could be grounded, even partially, in shared experience. Imagine
36 you and I are at opposite ends of the city, and both of our houses burn down in a fire.
37 Do we have any special reason to share one another's fate that doesn't extend to
38 others whose houses did not burn down, but who have experienced loss of other
39 kinds?

40 So why is it reasonable to suppose that participants in the Resistance — quite apart
41 from whether they have been personally affected by the Occupation — have strong
42 reasons (even obligations) to share each other's fate? Anticipating, it seems to me that
43 such reasons stem from the prospect and then the reality of acting together on behalf of
44 the shared goal. On this view, we owe others with whom we have acted because they have
45 sacrificed both for us and for overcoming an adversity that we also face, or that we have
46 invested in overcoming. Without them, we would not have been able to mount an

1 effective insurgency. The horizontal obligations constitutive of solidaristic action are, I
2 am suggesting, obligations of *reciprocity*. We return to this below.

3 This preliminary discussion of *shared experience of adversity* also allows us to return to
4 Christian solidarity with a fresh pair of eyes. Recall that on the interpretation offered
5 above, Christian solidarity is grounded in the shared experience of human suffering. For
6 this strand of Christianity we have a duty to engage in joint action designed to overcome
7 the adversity that we all face but for ‘the grace of God’. In Catholic Social Thought, for
8 example, this adversity often takes the form of economic and social exclusion. Solidarity
9 requires us to join in struggle and to share our fates with those who have been shut out
10 of participation in society and in the market. But if I am right about the fact that merely
11 shared experience is not sufficient to ground strong reasons to share others’ fates or to
12 take up solidaristic action, then what to say about Christian solidarity?

13 It strikes me that there is a crucial ambiguity in the Christian notion that signals its
14 limits. Charitably construed, the demand to share others’ fates is not grounded primarily
15 in the shared experience of human suffering but in the injunction to universal love. The
16 reason to fight social and economic exclusion is to relieve the suffering of our fellow
17 human beings. It has little to do with shared experience, and, I believe, also little to do
18 with solidaristic action. On this interpretation, joining in action with others is just a
19 means of alleviating suffering wherever it is found. It is no coincidence that in Christian
20 texts, it is often very difficult to discern a distinction between the use of the term
21 *solidarity* and *caritas*, often translated as love, compassion, or charity. But if talk of
22 solidarity is warranted here, such usage implies a concept that is very different from the
23 concept of *acting in solidarity* with others.²⁹ Rather, Christian solidarity seems equivalent
24 to action that aims to alleviate the suffering of others; it is action *on behalf of* another
25 rather than *with* another. This is clear when we ask: among *whom* does the Christian
26 believe there is solidarity? Imagine a case in which a Church group organises a soup
27 kitchen to feed the homeless. Is the solidarity among the members of the Church group,
28 or among the Church group and the homeless? Surely the Christian will want to say that
29 it is the latter, but what is the basis for this claim? Solidaristic action of the kind under
30 discussion requires *joint action* on behalf of a shared goal. To be sure, there will be cases
31 in which there is joint action to overcome adversity — which may involve, of course,
32 Church groups and the homeless — but it will generally involve shared social or political
33 action.

34 This is important also for our understanding of the normative basis for the welfare state
35 and social justice more broadly. If the emphasis is on universal love and the alleviation of
36 suffering, there will be a marked tendency to favour more residual forms of social policy,
37 aimed to provide primarily for the most deprived. The state is perceived as a means to do
38 one’s Christian duty to those who are worse off than us through no fault of their own. The
39 basis is the compassion of the strong or lucky for the weak or unlucky. But, as I will try to
40 argue in more detail below, conceiving of social justice in terms of solidarity triggers and
41 justifies an outlook in which other citizens and residents are not distinguished by their
42 suffering but by their participation in a common struggle against adversity.

43 44 *Shared Identity*

45 The second basis for solidarity is shared identity. I might believe that I have strong
46 (a)-type reasons to act in solidarity with you because we share an identity, and strong

1 (b)-type reasons to share your fate for the same reason. Like shared experience, this is a
2 commonly avowed source of solidarity. But here too I wonder what role shared identity
3 really plays in generating (a)- or (b)-type reasons.

4 Let us take (a)-type reasons first. The most relevant case for us is the way shared
5 identity figures in Liberal Nationalism. For the Liberal Nationalist, shared identity is a
6 product of a shared history which has formed, in an important sense, who we are. But
7 where's the adversity that requires solidaristic action? We might suppose that the adver-
8 sity to which solidaristic action is a response is the threat of extinction. I will discuss two
9 main reasons why nations, it is often argued, ought to band together via an 'imagined'
10 sense of community. First, solidaristic action is often perceived as necessary to protect
11 against oppression or subjugation at the hands of other peoples — think here, for
12 example, of nationalism as a response to colonialism. Second, it is often perceived to be
13 necessary to protect against more general trends that tend to reduce the meaning or
14 relevance of national belonging, such as for example cultural globalisation or immigra-
15 tion.³⁰ With respect to the first reason, we must be careful to distinguish *why* fostering
16 and reinforcing the national identity is necessary. If the primary aim is to overcome
17 oppression or injustice, then shared identity may only have an *instrumental* role. Here the
18 claim is not that shared (national) identity is valuable in itself; rather, national identity
19 is just a good means of ensuring the trust and sacrifice required to defeat the oppressors.
20 This is similar to the way shared experience can serve to enhance trust among partici-
21 pants in solidaristic action.³¹ In both cases, shared identity (like shared experience) does
22 not give us any reason to overcome injustice; shared identity just makes it easier to rally
23 together once we have some *other* reason to overcome injustice or oppression (such as the
24 oppression or injustice itself).

25 The second reason why nations ought to join in solidaristic action is to preserve and
26 protect the nation against dissolution. On this view, national identity is viewed as
27 valuable in itself. Is this a good reason to band together? For the sake of argument, I want
28 to grant that, *for those who already identify with the nation as a valuable and important source*
29 *of identity*, this can be a powerful reason to engage in solidaristic action designed to
30 defend that identity against incursions both from oppressors or from more impersonal
31 forces. But, even if we assume that one's own national identity has noninstrumental value
32 (as the Liberal Nationalist believes), I wonder how strong a reason it can generate for
33 those who do not *already* value their national identity, or who do not see their attachment
34 to their own national identity as giving them reasons to protect it against dilution or
35 extinction.³² What reasons might they have to identify with their own national identity —
36 an obligation that those who are foreign lack? If there are no such reasons, then the
37 argument will limit the scope of the obligations to share in one another's fate, and hence
38 be incapable of supporting duties of social justice, which are meant to apply to us *whether*
39 *or not we identify* with our national identity.

40 Perhaps this move could be blocked. Would it be convincing to argue that those
41 nationals who do not identify have reasons to do so because it is 'who they really are'?
42 Surely they will claim that this is a non-sequitur — they can agree that they 'really are',
43 say, British, while denying that this requires them to act, for this reason,³³ in solidarity
44 with other British people to defend their identity against dilution. Perhaps we could
45 argue that they have strong reasons to act in solidarity with other Britons because their
46 national identity has promoted their wellbeing (e.g. by promoting a flourishing cultural
47 life from which they benefit). This is a better argument, but notice that the reasons do not

1 flow directly from *sharing* the identity but from how they *benefit* from that identity. The
2 same argument could be put to a British resident who lacks a British cultural identity.
3 The grounds for (a)-type reasons to join in solidaristic action would, on this argument,
4 be ones of gratitude or reciprocity, rather than common identity *as such* (on which more
5 below).³⁴

6 The fact that arguments directed towards those who do not already identify are
7 weak is important because it shows the limits of shared-identity-based (a)-type
8 reasons. And it also has important consequences for (b)-type reasons as well, to which
9 we now turn. It is often believed that shared identity, and especially shared national
10 identity, can trigger strong reasons, even obligations, to share the fates of fellow
11 nationals. But how can merely sharing an identity generate such a strong demand? You
12 and I share an identity as supporters of AC Fiorentina. Suppose that this identity plays
13 an important role in each of our lives, and contributes significantly to our wellbeing.
14 Let us further suppose that we are socially related in no other way, and that neither
15 of us goes to the stadium, nor is a fee-paying member of the club. I see no grounds
16 for saying that we have any obligation to share one another's fates in any way.³⁵ How
17 is national identity any different? Liberal nationalists will here respond that sharing
18 one another's fate is a *constitutive part* of national identity.³⁶ You cannot identify, in the
19 proper sense, as a member of the nation unless you conceive of yourself as having
20 precisely such obligations towards other fellow nationals. Let us assume this is true. As
21 with (a)-type reasons, it seems to generate no rational pressure on the fellow national
22 who fails to identify *in the relevant sense* with his national identity. He may agree that
23 he is culturally a Briton but not feel himself bound by obligations to share other
24 Britons' fate simply in virtue of his Britishness (note that he may have other reasons).
25 A defender of the Liberal Nationalist argument can at most say the following: 'That's
26 not *real* Britishness, which constitutively requires sharing the fate of your fellows!' The
27 response will be obvious: 'Then I'm not British in that sense. So what?'

28 This has important implications for the view that a solidaristic commitment to social
29 justice and the welfare state can be grounded in shared nationality. If what I have said is
30 correct, then Liberal Nationalists can at most mount an argument addressed to fellow
31 citizens and residents who *already* identify with the nation, and who *already* view it as
32 intrinsically valuable. To them, the Liberal Nationalist can say: you must join in solidarity
33 and share your fate with other nationals to protect and preserve the nation that is
34 constitutive of your identity. But to everyone else, the Liberal Nationalist can say very
35 little.

36 37 *Shared Action*

38 So far, we have been exploring possible normative reasons to join in solidarity with
39 others ([a]-type reasons), and to share the fate of those with whom we have joined in
40 solidarity ([b]-type reasons). We rejected the idea that shared experience or shared
41 identity *qua* national identity could independently provide (noninstrumental) (b)-type
42 reasons. And we came to a mixed conclusion with respect to (noninstrumental) (a)-type
43 reasons. Shared experience in itself does not seem to provide any noninstrumental
44 reason to join in solidarity with others. Shared identity fared better, but only if we took
45 national identity to be under threat, and worth preserving for its own sake. But even in
46 this case the value of national identity does not seem to generate any rational pressure on

1 those who do not identify with the identity, or do not identify with it sufficiently to think
2 of themselves as sharing the fate of those with a similar national cultural background. At
3 this point, we can ask: what other (a)- and (b)-type reasons might there be?

4 I shall now argue that *shared action* (and the shared history that emerges from such
5 action) can provide a strong basis for (b)-type reasons, and explore the possibility
6 (mentioned at various points above) that *natural duties of justice* can provide a strong basis
7 for (a)-type reasons. This account of shared action will then allow us to open a new
8 perspective on how social justice can be understood as a form of solidarity.

9 10 *Mandatory and Non-Mandatory Aims and Their Relation to (A)-Type Reasons*

11 When might we have a moral obligation to join with others in solidarity? When, that is,
12 do we have a strong, normally overriding reason to overcome some adversity together
13 with others? Notice that overcoming adversity might be a *non-mandatory* aim. There are
14 many, perhaps most, cases of acting in solidarity with others that do not morally *require*
15 our participation. I might act in solidarity with others to stop depredation of the
16 rainforest, going so far as to risk my life in doing so, even if I do not have a prior
17 obligation to do so. But then there are what we might call *mandatory aims*. We might have
18 a mandatory aim to join in solidarity with others where we have, for example, promised
19 to do so. But the most interesting instances of mandatory aims, I believe, flow from a
20 subclass of the broader class of *natural duties*, which are duties that bind one independ-
21 dently of past interactions, exchanges, or relations. Most agree that, among such natural
22 duties, we have a duty to establish just institutions where none exist, at least, as Rawls
23 puts it, 'where this can be done at little cost to ourselves'.³⁷

24 It is, however, unclear why such duties must only exist where they can be realised
25 at *little* cost to ourselves. This is most evident when we consider an often overlooked
26 corollary of the duty to establish just institutions, namely the *duty to fight injustice*. If
27 there is a duty to establish just institutions where none exist, then this must include
28 duties not only to *create* institutions in, for example, a state of nature, but also, and
29 more importantly, to *reform* or *transform* institutions that are unjust. But if that is true,
30 then surely ~~this~~ duty will vary according to the degree of injustice of the institutions
31 and our degree of involvement in them. This duty seems relatively weaker where we
32 have no relation to the unjust institutions, where, for example, we do not benefit from
33 the injustice or participate in propagating it. But the duty increases in strength — and
34 hence in its capacity to outweigh or override competing considerations — the more we
35 benefit from the injustice and the more we are complicit in the preservation of the
36 current (unjust) institutions.³⁸

37 Let us therefore suppose that we have strong *pro tanto* (a)-type reasons that are either
38 grounded in a natural duty to overcome significant injustice, or grounded in other
39 powerful prudential or ethical considerations. And let us further suppose that we col-
40 lectively pursue the overcoming of such injustice (according to Conditions 1.-3.). How
41 would (b)-type reasons emerge? As we mentioned in passing above, I want to argue that
42 the most obvious source for such reasons is *reciprocity*. We owe other participants a fair
43 return for their engagement in the joint effort. That fair return is best captured, in the
44 case of overcoming adversity, in the idea that we ought to share the fate of other
45 participants in the dimensions relevant to our joint action. Think again of the Civil
46 Rights Movement. We are Freedom Riders; the KKK beats one of us. Do we have strong

1 reasons, indeed even obligations, to defend the person beaten at significant risk to
2 ourselves? It seems clear that we do, not only out of pity, or even out of independently
3 endorsing the Freedom Riders' goals, or because we share an identity or some shared
4 experience, but because she or he has sacrificed their wellbeing to help us achieve a goal
5 to which we are jointly committed in the presence of risks to which we are all subject. It
6 is only via the participation of this person along with every other Freedom Rider that our
7 joint effort succeeds, and so we owe it to them.

8 We are now in a position to tie the strands of our discussion together, and explain the
9 sense in which the commitment to social justice that is at the heart of the welfare state
10 can be understood as an obligation to act in solidarity with others. While I will only be
11 able to sketch an answer here, my hope is that this will be enough to provide at least some
12 initial motivation for the view.

13 The first step is to see how joint cooperation and action required to sustain common
14 political institutions, such as the state, are aimed primarily towards the overcoming of a
15 special kind of adversity. But what is the adversity to which basic political organisations,
16 like the state, are a response? At the most fundamental level, the state is a response to the
17 ever-present danger of *civil dissolution*. Here it is enough to think of life in a failed state
18 — a state that can no longer perform its basic security, extractive, and administrative
19 functions. Let us assume, therefore, that we have at least a set of strong *prudential* reasons
20 to set up and maintain political institutions sufficient to prevent the worst evils of the
21 state of nature.³⁹ But do we have any strong *moral* reasons, let alone obligations, to exit
22 the state of nature? Although we cannot establish the conclusion definitively here, I shall
23 assume that, following Kant, we do. We have strong moral duties to exit the state of
24 nature because choosing to remain in the state of nature would necessarily involve us in
25 wronging others 'in the highest degree'.⁴⁰

26 If this general account of the duty to exit the state of nature (or some close cousin⁴¹)
27 is correct, then we have not only a strong reason but also a *moral obligation* to together
28 create a political organisation (like the state) that can remedy the morally relevant
29 [2] adversity that we would all face in a state of nature.⁴² And, as we saw above, as a corollary
30 of this duty, we also have a similar obligation to reform or reconstitute such institutions
31 where they exist but fall into injustice, and to maintain them in cases where they exist
32 and are already just. Put in our terms, we have (a)-type obligations to coordinate our
33 action in order to create and maintain a just system of governance. *We have, that is, an*
34 *obligation to ensure that Conditions 1.-3. are realised*: we have obligations to share the goal
35 of emerging from the state of nature and to commit ourselves to the formation and
36 maintenance of a political organisation that will help us to prevent the worst evils of the
37 state of nature. But we cannot yet be said to have an obligation to act in solidarity until
38 we also have reason to share one another's fate across the dimensions relevant to our
39 cooperation. How, in other words, do we get from an obligation to realise Conditions
40 1.-3. to Condition 4.?

41 As we have seen, the state's main point and purpose is to secure basic conditions for
42 human flourishing against the ever-present danger of dissolution. But *how* does the state
43 secure such basic conditions in the first place? The state secures such conditions by
44 providing a central class of collective goods. To illustrate, take the basic extractive,
45 regulative, and distributive capacities central to any modern state. When well-
46 functioning, these basic state capacities, backed by a system of courts, administration,
47 police, and military, free us from the need to protect ourselves continuously from

1 physical attack, guarantee access to a legally regulated market, and establish and stabilise
2 a system of property rights and entitlements. But state capacity in each of these areas is
3 not manna from heaven. It requires the participation and collaboration of all persons
4 residing in a territory. Without that participation and collaboration, the state would be
5 unable to provide the goods that form its central purpose.

6 This view highlights the way we depend on the joint contributions of myriad other
7 citizens and residents for the ability not only to develop but also to act on a plan of life.
8 Without the support those contributions provide for the political and legal authority of
9 the state, we would lack the resources necessary to function as biological, social, and
10 political beings. Without the stable background provided by common political institu-
11 tions, what would the skills of the computer programmer, or architect be worth? And
12 how would the doctor or nurse or soldier have acquired his skills and instruments?
13 Herbert Simon, for example, estimates that 90% of our income is generated not by
14 isolable acts of talent or effort but by the positive externalities of living in an industri-
15 alised society with its wide provision of public goods.⁴³ Therefore, those who are better
16 able to gain from the scheme owe those less able, but who have made their gains possible,
17 a fair return for what they have received. This fair return, I contend, is best captured by
18 principles that do not treat their relative position in the distribution of marketable talents
19 and abilities as such⁴⁴ as moral grounds for greater reward. The egalitarianism of
20 principles that respect this embargo (such as those captured in Rawls's *justice as fairness*
21 or Dworkin's *equality of resources*) reflects the particularly deep and pervasive nature of
22 our mutual dependence as citizens and residents.

23 Reciprocity-based conceptions of social justice usually underscore productive contri-
24 bution to GDP (or, in more expansive versions, to a broadly defined social product that
25 takes into account, for example, various forms of unpaid labour such as care for
26 dependents). The account defended here, on the other hand, emphasises our joint
27 contribution to the reproduction and maintenance of the basic collective goods consti-
28 tutive of the state.⁴⁵ The reason for this shift of emphasis is that mutual contribution to
29 the structure that allows us to develop and make use of our talents is more fundamental
30 than mutual contribution to economic production. Successful economic production and
31 exchange on a societal scale cannot exist without a stable background of state-based civil
32 and criminal law.⁴⁶

33 To sum up the discussion thus far, it will prove useful to consider an objection. How,
34 we might wonder, should we view someone who feels no particular degree of commit-
35 ment to his or her state, or to other citizens and residents *qua* citizens and residents,
36 someone who merely complies with law, but would happily pay lower taxes and be done
37 with the welfare state (on which they do not depend)? Or someone who merely complies
38 out of fear of punishment, but who would gladly avoid taxes could they get away with it?
39 Such people see no reason to act in solidarity with others. But, if I am right about the
40 reasons grounding commitments of solidarity, they are mistaken about the reasons they
41 have. They ought to see that the quality of their life crucially depends on the support of
42 other citizens and residents, and that their ability to make use of their special talents and
43 abilities does as well. Were they to act on their beliefs, for example, by seeking to disband
44 the welfare state, which they perceive as onerous on them, or avoid paying taxes, they
45 would therefore be doing something wrong. They have reasons, that is, to be disposed to
46 pay greater costs than they envisage for the maintenance and reproduction of a system
47 on which they, and others, depend so fundamentally. In our terms, they have strong

1 (a)-type reasons to realise Conditions 1-3 alongside Condition 4. However, notice that
2 if they do continue to support the state by complying with law, and thereby continue to
3 contribute to the reproduction of state institutions, they are still owed the fair return
4 captured by principles of egalitarian justice, even if they do not acquire the dispositions
5 constitutive of solidaristic action. This is why I have said that the demand for social
6 justice is, in the first instance, a demand of *reciprocity* — a reciprocity that, *when recognised*
7 *and endorsed*, also becomes a form of solidarity. This is just another way to say that, unlike
8 the liberal nationalist, the demand for justice is not grounded in fellow-feeling, but in
9 joint action.

10 Much more, of course, would need to be said to fully vindicate this picture. But it is
11 enough, for our purposes, if we have been successful in at least opening up a promising
12 line of inquiry into the connection between solidarity and social justice.

14 Conclusion

15
16 In this article, I have provided an analysis of the concept of solidarity, discussed
17 possible normative grounds for participating in solidaristic action, and examined their
18 place in a defence of social justice. We can summarise the argument mounted for
19 social justice as a demand of solidarity by placing it in the context of the three
20 accounts of solidarity with which we started. My argument shares with the socialist an
21 emphasis on joint social production (in the widest sense that includes the production
22 and reproduction of political institutions such as the state), but is not limited to the
23 role of the working class. It therefore rejects the strict dualism between capitalist and
24 worker. It questions whether the socially oriented Christian is right in locating soli-
25 darity merely in the demand to relieve suffering, arguing that there is a more explicitly
26 egalitarian content to social solidarity *qua* justice. The argument has, moreover,
27 nothing to do with the nature of God or his creation, and actively rejects an ideal of
28 fraternity based on universal love. And, finally, the argument eschews the Liberal
29 Nationalist emphasis on identity and fellow-feeling as a ground for solidarity. The
30 basis of solidarity offered here grounds it in our joint action as authors of *political and*
31 *social institutions*, rather than in a collective identity grounded in a *nation*. What matters
32 is what we together *do*, rather than what we happen to *be*, or what we have *experienced*.
33 It is worth mentioning that the kind of solidaristic action that I have identified could,
34 however, form the basis, over time, of an identity founded in a shared history, but it
35 is an identity, once again, founded not in something we *are* or *have experienced* but in
36 something we have *done together*. The identity follows the action, on this account,
37 rather than the other way around. The fact that we can then see our commitments —
38 our mutual struggle over adversity and on behalf of justice — in the institutions we
39 together create and sustain can provide the basis for allegiance and loyalty to them
40 and to each other (and a concomitant shame when they, and we, fail).⁴⁷ But, on a view
41 like this, the loyalty is an appropriate *response* (if it is appropriate) to the aspiration to
42 justice of the institutions and the solidarity of those who sustain them, rather than a
43 *ground* for either the justice or the solidarity.

44
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NOTES

- 1 Cf. J. Habermas, 'Democracy, solidarity, and the European crisis', lecture delivered at the University of Leuven, 26 April, 2013. Available at <http://www.kuleuven.be/communicatie/evenementen/evenementen/jurgen-habermas/en/democracy-solidarity-and-the-european-crisis> (accessed 28 April, 2014) in which he argues that reasons of solidarity do not have the categorical binding force of moral commitments. Such reasons, at most, ground supererogatory demands to those with whom one already stands in some kind of associative relation. They are demands, essentially, to go beyond the call of duty in support of others to whom one shares a 'pre-existing community'. The account I offer here dissents from this picture.
- 2 For a more comprehensive history, see Steinar Stjernø, *Solidarity in Europe: the History of an Idea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- 3 There are, of course, politically important traditions that draw together different elements of these ideal-types, such as Christian Socialism. But, because my aim is not historical, this variation is not germane to this article.
- 4 An important exponent of this tradition is Eduard Bernstein. On Bernstein, see S. Stjernø, *Solidarity in Europe: The History of an Idea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 49ff. Orthodox Marxists and Leninists were much more sceptical of the use of the term 'solidarity', no doubt reflecting, in part, the suspicion of moralism more generally.
- 5 Ralph Chaplin, 'Solidarity Forever', quoted in G. A. Cohen, *If You're an Egalitarian, How Come You're So Rich?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).
- 6 See, e.g., K. Marx, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. R.C. Tucker (London: Norton, 1978). With reference to the evolution of the welfare, see also C. Offe, *Contradictions of the Welfare State* (London: Hutchinson, 1984); N. Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism* (New York: New Left Books, 1978).
- 7 See, e.g., T. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class: And Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950); Stjernø op. cit., chapter 5.
- 8 See, e.g., L. Bourgeois, *Solidarité* (Paris: Colin, 1912); J. Hayward, 'The official social philosophy of the French Third Republic: Léon Bourgeois and Solidarism', *International Review of Social History* 6 (1961): 19–48.
- 9 From *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (1987).
- 10 See, e.g., K. Van Kersbergen, *Social Capitalism: A Study of Christian Democracy and the Welfare State* (London: Routledge, 2003).
- 11 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 2nd edn. (London: Verso, 1991), p. 7.
- 12 See, e.g., N. Barr, *The Economics of the Welfare State* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 31ff; H. L. Wilensky, *The Welfare State and Equality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), Ch. 4.
- 13 See also K. Bayertz, 'Four Uses of "Solidarity"' in K. Bayertz (ed.) *Solidarity* (London: Springer, 1999), pp. 3–28, for the distinction between solidarity as a disposition and as an obligation.
- 14 Cf. J. Raz, *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 165–6.
- 15 These are not meant to be necessary and sufficient conditions; rather, as I have intimated, they are meant to be core or defining aspects. It may be that there are important examples of solidarity where one or more of these features are missing, but, if so, then they will be marginal cases.
- 16 See M. Bratman, *Shared Agency: A Planning Theory of Acting Together* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); M. Gilbert, *On Social Facts* (London: Routledge, 1989); R. Tuomela & K. Miller, 'We-intentions', *Philosophical Studies* 53 (1988): 367–89; J. R. Searle, 'Collective intentions and actions' in P.R. Cohen, J. Morgan & M.E. Pollack (eds) *Intentions in Communication* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990).
- 17 Cf. C. Kutz, 'Acting together', *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research* 61 (2000a): 1–31; see also C. Kutz, *Complicity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000b).
- 18 J.D. Velleman, 'How to share an intention', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 57 (1997): 28–49 at p. 34.
- 19 Velleman makes a similar point in Velleman op. cit., at pp. 31–3.
- 20 On corporate agency, see, e.g., P. French, *Collective and Corporate Responsibility* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); C. List & P. Pettit, *Group Agency: The Possibility, Design, and Status of Corporate Agents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- 21 I am not alone in this. Kutz (2000b op. cit.) has also explored such more diffuse forms of collective action. His account, to which I am indebted, is discussed further below. He conceives of his work as a competitor to views like Bratman's. I don't, however, believe we have reason to see it that way, since Bratman only claims

- to identify a set of *sufficient* conditions for collective actions. He explicitly denies trying to explain larger scale forms of collective action.
- 22 This condition is shared by the majority of the literature on solidarity. See, e.g., C.C. Gould, 'Transnational solidarities', *Journal of Social Philosophy* 38 (2007): 148–64; L. Blum, 'Three kinds of race-related solidarity', *Journal of Social Philosophy* 38 (2007): 53–72; S.J. Scholz, *Political Solidarity* (Philadelphia, PA: Penn State Press, 2010); T. Shelby, *We Who Are Dark: The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009). But see A. Mason, *Community, Solidarity, and Belonging* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), where solidarity is defined as mutual concern.
- 23 See, e.g., the helpful discussion in Shelby op. cit.
- 24 We leave aside the satisfaction of Condition 4 in outlining this possibility.
- 25 The commitment condition is also stronger than Kutz's notion of a 'participatory intention', since someone can have a participatory intention, for Kutz, but not be committed to the realisation of the shared goal. And it is also stronger than merely having an *intention* in favour of the shared goal: Someone can form an intention in favour of the shared goal as a result of being offered a significant sum.
- 26 Or, for that matter, the 'mutual openness' involved in Kutz's types of collective action. See Kutz 2000a op. cit., pp. 6–7.
- 27 See Bratman op. cit., pp. 56, 64–9.
- 28 Cf. Shelby op. cit., pp. 241, 5, where he emphasises the *motivational* and *assurance* functions of shared experience; but the reasons for joining together, he also emphasises, are above all to overcome racial oppression.
- 29 Cf. J. Wolff & A. De-Shalit, *Disadvantage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 171.
- 30 Charles Taylor, for example, writes of Quebecois nationalism: 'it is not simply a matter of having the French language available for those who might choose it. . . . Policies aimed at survival actively seek to *create* members of the community, for instance in their assuring that future generations continue to identify' (C. Taylor, *Multiculturalism and 'the Politics of Recognition': An Essay* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 58).
- 31 Cf. Shelby op. cit., chapter 6.
- 32 Cf. J. Horton, 'In defence of associative political obligations: Part two', *Political Studies* 55 (2007): 1–19 at p. 14, where he discusses the necessity of a subjective 'identification' condition for the existence of associative, identity-based obligations; he therefore appears to accept that, where someone does not identify with the community in the relevant sense, the identity-based argument will have nothing to say. See also C.H. Wellman, 'Associative allegiances and political obligations', *Social Theory and Practice* 23 (1997): 181–204, for a similar argument.
- 33 Note that there may be other reasons for them to act solidaristically.
- 34 For similar arguments, see Shelby op. cit., pp. 172–6.
- 35 Cf. Wellman 1997 op. cit., at p. 199.
- 36 Y. Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); D. Miller, *On Nationality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); cf. S. Scheffler, *Boundaries and Allegiances* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- 37 J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 294.
- 38 See, e.g., T. Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002); D. Butt, 'On benefiting from injustice', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 37 (2007): 129–52.
- 39 This is, of course, disputed by some anarchists. Adjudicating the dispute definitively would take us beyond the scope of this article, so I simply assume that it is true. It is worth noting that *philosophical* anarchists accept that states in many cases facilitate the provision of important public goods and are justified (though not necessarily legitimate) for that reason; see, e.g., A John Simmons in C. Wellman & J. Simmons, *Is There a Duty to Obey the Law?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 133ff.
- 40 See, e.g., the helpful reconstruction of this duty in A. Ripstein, *Force and Freedom: Kant's Legal and Political Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), chapter 6.
- 41 A different, but structurally similar, natural duty argument is pursued in C.H. Wellman, 'Toward a liberal theory of political obligation', *Ethics* 111 (2001): 735–59; see also A. Buchanan, *Justice, Legitimacy, and Self-Determination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 86–92; J. Waldron, 'Special ties and natural duties', *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 22 (1993): 3–30; A. Stiliz, *Liberal Loyalty* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), chapter 2.
- 42 Also note that the argument in the text just shows that we have obligations to establish, maintain and reform political institutions in accordance with justice; it does not, however, say that we have obligations to obey the

1 *law*, which is a stronger claim (indeed, one may even have an obligation to *disobey* the law which flows from
2 the same natural duty to fight injustice).

3 43 Herbert Simon, 'A basic income for all: Response' *Boston Review* 1 October (2000). Available at [http://](http://www.bostonreview.net/forum/basic-income-all/herbert-simon-ubi-and-flat-tax)
4 www.bostonreview.net/forum/basic-income-all/herbert-simon-ubi-and-flat-tax (accessed 10 December
5 2014).

6 44 I do not deny that there might be cases in which giving greater rewards to those with these talents and
7 abilities is justified. This could be the case, for example, when greater rewards to those more talented makes
8 those worst off better off than they otherwise would have been without the rewards.

9 45 What about people who are able but unwilling to work? If they continue to comply with the laws (and if they
10 continue to pay taxes, assuming they have any to pay), they are participating and contributing to the
11 maintenance of the state according to solidarity as reciprocity, hence aiding in the mutual provision of a
12 system of societal norms which allows me, along with others, to develop and make use of my talents and
13 abilities. They are, therefore, rightful beneficiaries of equality as a demand of justice. This leaves open
14 whether it would be legitimate to scale the benefits to which they are entitled by their willingness to search
15 for work (given the ability). The important point is that such scaling would itself have to be justified in terms
16 of a conception of distributive egalitarianism. On the notion of 'workfare' and its connection to reciprocity
17 see Stuart White, 'Liberal equality, exploitation, and the case for an unconditional basic income', *Political*
18 *Studies* 45 (1997): 312–26.

19 46 Cf. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1985).

20 47 Cf. models of constitutional patriotism, in which loyalty is grounded in a shared commitment to the ideals
21 and principles embodied in a historically just constitution. See, e.g., A. Ingram, 'Constitutional patriotism',
22 *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 22 (1996): 1–18; C. Calhoun, 'Imagining solidarity: Cosmopolitanism,
23 constitutional patriotism, and the public sphere', *Public Culture* 14 (2002): 147–72; J-W. Müller, *Constitutional*
24 *Patriotism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

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