

Solidarity and “Us” in three contexts: human, societal, political

There are many ways in which the concept of solidarity is used in the literature, but among them three are often distinguished: universal moral or human solidarity, society-wide social and civic solidarity, and political solidarity (See e.g. Wildt 1999; Bayertz 1999, Scholz 2008). This article discusses the interrelations of these forms of solidarity, and the constitution of “us” in these contexts. It argues that they share core features thanks to which they all are indeed forms of solidarity, and yet they are importantly different phenomena. The analysis reveals the importance moral solidarity at the core of all forms of solidarity (especially in Section Two).

The first section introduces solidarity with the help of the idea of acting “for our sake” or in the we-mode (see Tuomela 2013) and discusses how “our good” is related to “my good” and “your good”: is the relation bottom-up or top-down? This idea of acting “for our sake” is one conceptual feature that can, perhaps contrary to appearances, found in all three main forms of solidarity.

The second section analyzes human or moral solidarity, by discussing the slogan “all for one and one for all” in the context of a universal moral community and by making further observations of moral solidarity. The aim is to defend that there is indeed such a thing as moral solidarity and to suggest that it provides limits for acceptable forms of social and political solidarity, and while these go beyond it, the aims of moral solidarity may be included in the contents of social and political solidarity (Laitinen, forthcoming 2022). This role of moral solidarity provides the normative starting point for all forms of unity.

The third section discusses political solidarity (see Scholz 2008, Shelby 2005) in three guises: interest politics, identity politics and the central case of “critical politics” i.e. of movements motivated by “critical morality” which combines aspects of political and moral solidarity. It analyzes how the idea of “acting for our sake” and moral normativity are displayed in these three contexts of political solidarity. Further, it observes the ways in which political solidarity goes beyond moral solidarity.

The fourth section examines the context of whole societies and discusses two ways in which one can end up positioned outside of full social solidarity: not being in a position to contribute (say, due to unemployment or other forms of contributory exclusion) or (apparently) not being dependent on the societal good and support from others (say, due to extreme affluence, or being superrich) (see Bayertz 1999, Scholz 2008, Hegel 1821, Hegel 1983, Heisenberg 2021). This analysis supports the importance of acting “for our sake”, and continues the emphasis on the importance of moral solidarity as the normative core, and also observes ways in which societal solidarity goes beyond moral and political solidarity.

1. Introduction

Is solidarity a matter of actions or motivations or relationships? It has been suggested that lived solidarity is manifested in certain types of *actions* such as doing one’s share for the common good (instead of free-riding), distributing the fruits of shared labour fairly and supporting others in doing their share (see e.g. Lindenberg 2006). Solidarity may also be understood as the motivational basis for those types of actions, acting “for our sake”. Solidarity can also be understood as the *relationships* of mutual dependence and aid (perhaps relationships where such actions for such motivations are the default expectation). (See Laitinen, forthcoming 2023)

This section introduces solidarity with the help of the idea of acting “for our sake” or in the we-mode (see Tuomela 2013, Laitinen 2017) and discusses the role of many group-memberships and relationships (in relation to which one can act in the we-mode) in an individual’s single life.

Solidarity is arguably related to the motivation to do things “for our sake”; it is a form of “we-thinking” as distinguished from prudential “I -thinking” or altruistic “you-thinking”. In this section I

will examine whether the motivation of acting for our sake is conceptually and empirically separable from the motivation of acting for my sake or for your sake.

Secondly, having distinguished conceptually “our good”, “my good” and “your good” we can analyze how they are related. One option is a bottom-up fashion of “our good” simply being the sum of each member’s own individual good. Another option is that “our good” is primary, and acting for our good can in a top-down manner partly constitute each member’s own individual good.

Thirdly, in pursuing these questions I will defend the view that from the viewpoint of any group, only *some* aspects of an individual’s life are relevant – the rest being “private” matters in relation to this group – and from the individual’s viewpoint, there are typically many groups, whose well-being matters (and in addition to all of them, there may be aspects that are private in relation to any group). While seemingly trivial, for example Raimo Tuomela’s (2007, 2013) theory of “I-mode” and “we-mode” ignores this complication (see also Laitinen 2017).

So, first, to act for someone’s sake is to aim at that someone’s good, or well-being, or flourishing. Acting for “our sake” encompasses both you and me as members of “us”, but it differs from acting for “your sake” or for “my sake”. It is a different motivational basis than acting for one’s own sake, or doing something for your sake, although both me and you are included in the group of beneficiaries – in our role as members of the plural “us” – of acting for our sake.

What is best for us may differ from what would be best for you or what would be best for me. This can be illustrated by a couple’s choice of where to live. For me, it might be best to live in the Capital, for you, it might be best to live in the rural area, but what is best for us together, for our relationship, may be to live in a smaller city with a tolerable distance to the Capital and to the countryside. It may be only the second best option for both of us individually, but the best option for us collectively. Especially if living in the Capital would be really bad for you, and living in the rural area would be really bad for me, it is quite likely that some option that would not have these downsides would come out as the best option “for us”. Our point of view is *a distinct point of view*, and we can both individually agree on what is best for us, and what is best for me, and what is best for you. Acting for our sake is acting in the light of what would be best for us, rather than best for me or best for you. So, first of all, solidarily acting for our sake differs conceptually from prudentially acting in one’s own best interest or altruistically acting in the other’s best interest.

Secondly, even though the collective viewpoint is distinct, it is *intimately related* to our individual points of view. The collective or communal well-being can have a *distributive* reading in which the communal well-being consists in the aggregated well-being of the members – at its simplest, the sum of the well-being of the members. In the toy example, the sum of the couple’s well-being is highest if they live in the small town. There is a bottom-up relation between individual well-being and collective well-being. The bottom-up relation can be more complex than a sum: it may be that only some aspects of the individuals’ well-being are relevant, whereas some other aspects are private and irrelevant, and it may be that for example the equality of distribution matters, and not a mere sum. But even in this more complex case, the relationship is a bottom-up one. Especially when we consider people as *subjects* of negative and positive *experiences*, it is appropriate to focus on such a bottom-up relationship: as groups or collectives do not have feelings of their own, it is fitting to construe the “happiness” of the group as consisting in a (weighted) sum of aspects of the individuals’ happiness; where happiness can be understood as the experiential aspect of flourishing, the negative or positive feel of life. When “acting for our sake” focuses on the experienced quality of life, the contents of the collective viewpoint are best understood in this “bottom-up”-sense.

But there is more to well-being or flourishing than experienced happiness, and concerning those aspects a non-distributive reading is more appropriate.

Collective well-being can have a *non-distributive* reading in the flourishing or preference-satisfaction of the collective agent that its members constitute. It is true that the collective agent can act, succeed, or be virtuous, only through its members (or hired external actors), and that from the viewpoint of this collective or group only *some aspects* of the individual's lives are relevant. The other aspects of the individuals' lives are lived – from the viewpoint of that group – in an “I-mode” (Tuomela 2013, Laitinen 2017.), they are private in relation to that group. But as a flipside, the collective agent as a conceptually separate agent from its individual members *can* act, succeed or be virtuous through its members' *we-mode functionings* – there are aspects in the lives of the individuals that are lived *for* the group, *in the name of* the group, and *for the sake of* the group. This is a top-down relation: the groups's goals have a primacy to the individuals' goals, they explain why the individual pursue the goals they do, and their point is to contribute to the collective goal. The group's well-being, understood as an agent, can consist directly in the collective preference-satisfaction; no bottom-up summation of individuals' preference-satisfaction is needed. According to Tuomela's collectivity condition, any member can be successful in the pursuit of the group's goal if everyone else is, and if the group is.

They may be top-down determination also of the well-being of the members: if the flourishing of the group matters to the individual (if the individual cares about its flourishing, identifies with it), its flourishing partly constitutes an aspect of the individual's flourishing. To some extent, the same is true about anything that we care about, as Harry Frankfurt's (1988) idea of the importance of what we care about suggests. The flourishing of an individual I love may constitutively contribute to my flourishing (given my emotional attachments and investments) even when we do not form a group. Even more generally, the progress of an important cause, for example world peace, may contribute to my flourishing as caring person or “a lover of ideals” (again, given my emotional attachments and investments). But here, the relevant thing is that a member of the group may care about the group, and therefore the well-being of the group may directly constitute some aspect or part of the individual's well-being; there is top-down determination from the group's well-being to the individual's well-being. Admittedly, this is mediated by what matters to the individual, but arguably, genuine solidarity includes such care for the group (see e.g. May, 1996). For solidary members, the top-down determination of well-being works.

Thus, interestingly one aspect of well-being is determined in a bottom-up fashion from member level to group level (even in the case of solidary members – not even solidary groups have experiences of their own) at the same time as another aspect of well-being is determined top-down from the group level to the member level.

Importantly, it is possible to have a pluralist theory of well-being so that different aspects of our selfhood or personhood matter differently for the different aspects of well-being (Kauppinen 2012). We are not merely subjects of experiences, whose flourishing consists in happiness, or Frankfurtian “carers”, whose flourishing consists in the flourishing of the targets of our care or concern. We are arguably also relational selves, and arguably our flourishing as “relational selves” consists in the flourishing of the groups and relationships to which we belong and identify with (Laitinen, forthcoming 2023).

Less controversially, an important part of anyone's well-being relates to *agency*: one's success in worthwhile goals (Raz 2004). These goal-directed activities are partly those that the individual engages in in their role as a group member, in the different groups or collectives one belongs to.¹

¹ It is worth adding that although there is a tendency in theories of well-being to focus on success in *intrinsically* valuable activities (deriving partly from Aristotelean prejudices against work, repeated also in Martha Nussbaum's theory of capabilities), it is good to note that also success in *instrumentally* valuable activities constitutes one's well-being: being a successful medical doctor saving lives is instrumentally valuable, but also directly constitutes the good life of the doctor (Raz 2004).

Success in such goals may constitute directly both the group's well-being and the individual's well-being – there is no bottom-up summation like in the case of experiential happiness.

Thus, we have seen that the group's well-being and the individual members' well-being are intimately intertwined, in a number of ways. The relationship is different concerning different aspects of well-being: when we consider our flourishing *as subjects of experience*, *as agents*, *as relational selves*, *as Frankfurtian* (1988) "*carers-about*". There is a multiple overlap and when we act *for our sake* we can thereby necessarily contribute to our own flourishing or the other members' flourishing as individuals, as a kind of "non-causal flipside" (for the term, see F. Kamm 2007, 25 and *passim*).

Even in the cases of such constitutive connection, it *may* be motivationally different to do the thing that benefits also me *because* it benefits us, or the same thing that benefits also us *because* it benefits me. Both of these considerations may be good normative reasons, but the agent acts only on one of them (Mele 2003). In other words, it is possible that the motivational field is so determinate as to allow for true counterfactuals of the kind that "I would not have done it otherwise, I did it for us". It is equally possible, however, the motivational field is not that clearly articulated, and such detailed questions about the motivational basis of any single action do not have a determinate answer. The agent may be moved to action, because thinks there is sufficient reason to do so, without acting for any specific reason. In many cases, some courses of action may be overdetermined and various motivations play a combined causal role together. (This is related to the Davidsonian question of *which* reasons did the agent act for, in cases where there are several reasons. The answer may well be that the agent acted for a combination of reasons. Mele 2003).

Thirdly, things are further complicated by the fact that there will typically be many groups to which I belong, and whose well-being matters to me – so the flourishing of any one group will ever constitute less than everything about my well-being. The aspects of my life that are in the "we-mode" relative to one group are typically not so in relation to another group (Tuomela 2013, Laitinen 2017). Different groups are of different importance. Core family may often come with the deepest attachments and cover the widest area of one's life, but given the fluidity of human relationships, and the plurality of contexts (from one's nation, workplace, bands, circles of friends, sports clubs, political movements or parties), no group ever comes to cover everything – if only for the reason that there are other groups to which I have a we-mode attachment.

In this section I have defended the views, first, that the motivation of acting for our sake is conceptually, and in some cases empirically, separable from the motivation of acting for my sake, or acting for your sake. And secondly, that *our good* can be at the same time distributively related, in a bottom up fashion, to *my good* and *your good* (especially when considered as subjects of experience this is the most natural and right construal), and non-distributively related, in a top-down fashion so that *our good* partly constitutes *my good* and *your good* (especially when the members are considered as agents, "carers-about", and relational selves, this is a natural and appropriate construal). And thirdly, from the viewpoint of any group, only *some* aspects of my life are relevant – the rest being "private" matters in relation to this group – and from the individual's viewpoint, there are typically many groups, whose well-being matters (and in addition to all of them, there may be aspects that are private in relation to any group).

2. *Moral or human solidarity: The party of the humankind*

Acting out of human solidarity is to be analyzed with reference to the non-exclusive moral community or "party of the humankind" (Wiggins 2009, drawing from Hume; cf. Kolers 2016).

When civilians are attacked by a foreign army (to take the salient example at the time of writing), the rest of the world can feel that they have been attacked. The group one identifies with can be that of the whole humanity. What is taking place is an assault on humanity, that everyone belongs to. When an

assault on civilians takes place, “we have been attacked” is literally true for anyone, even though only some individuals have been the direct target. Anyone identifying with the whole humanity, or anyone for whom this group-membership matters, can feel offended, and can feel the pressure to act in solidarity with the individuals who suffer the direct blows.

Approaching morality with the notion of “moral solidarity” should not be seen as affecting the contents of best moral theories. Moral solidarity is rather something that consists in responsiveness to the moral demands. Rival moral theories of course postulate different duties, and it is a matter of moral argumentation to choose between them. Despite appearances to the contrary, for example Kantian moral duties can well be united with a theory of moral solidarity: Human beings have special equal dignity or moral standing, and immoral or dehumanizing behaviours are violations of that moral standing.² A plurality of basic human rights and corresponding moral duties capture aspects of that moral standing. The moral duties include perfect and imperfect duties. These duties themselves can arguably be articulated without the concept of “solidarity”: moral solidarity is primarily a matter of collective responsiveness to such moral demands, rather than a subset of the demands. (see Laitinen, forthcoming 2022).

“The party of the humankind” can and should adopt, as its party policy of sorts, the policy of respecting everyone. We are collectively responsible for the human policies together; we cannot expect help from the outside.

In this moral community, each person has three roles: everyone is first of all a moral patient, a bearer of the moral standing and as such a protected beneficiary or victim; secondly, everyone (or almost everyone) is a moral agent fit to be held responsible, at least for the main part of one’s life (not in childhood, or in the possibly demented old age); thirdly, all the agents are also judges, capable of defining or interpreting the moral demands and judging their relative weights in concrete situations. Who has the “say” – with moral community everyone has the equal standing as an interpreter, but moral demands are not socially construed or decided or voted for in the same way as laws. (Further, the moral violators belong to the same group as well – despite signaling that they do not care about this group. After any wrongdoing, moral repair is needed, and the ultimate aim of punishments must be to restore moral relations. Thus, a fourth role in a moral community is that of a moral violator.)

The perspective of moral solidarity is that of a moral community, and it is illuminating to compare a communal perspective to morality with monadic or dyadic perspectives. Above we distinguished different motivations of action: for our sake, for my sake, or for your sake. Acting out of moral solidarity is one variant of acting for our sake – where the “we” covers the whole humanity. Acting out of duty, or because one ought to, can be “monadic” moral motivations – motivations of an agent facing a moral choice and morality guiding towards one alternative. “Dyadic” motivations such as acting out of respect for someone, or avoiding wronging someone differ in that they explicitly have places for two individuals: an agent and a patient. Yet, importantly, acting out of duty, or because one ought to, is constitutive of the relevant relationship. (see Scanlon 1998). Communal motivations go beyond that, they are forms of “first person plural” where the community includes everyone. This community includes the dyadic moral relations between all members, and acting out of duty, or because one ought to, can be constitutive of acting as a good member of the moral community (see Laitinen 2015a). Thus, acting “for our sake” when the “we” is the moral community of humankind, consists in acting morally.

In terms of the contents of the solidary aims, moral of human solidarity is in a normative sense primary in relation to social or political solidarity. It first of all limits them: any acceptable social or political formations or solidarities need to be compatible with moral solidarity, to be morally

² Other animals also have moral standing: not being a moral agent or a moral judge does not prevent one from being a moral patient.

acceptable. As mentioned above, moral solidarity can be understood as a matter of responsiveness to the perfect and imperfect duties based on the dignity of persons. Secondly, morality may provide positive aims for political solidarity: some (but not all) political movements, or aspects of political movements, may be morally motivated struggles against injustices and wrongs. Similarly, established social solidarity can be understood as an “ethical life” (Hegelian *Sittlichkeit*) which goes beyond, but may include narrowly moral contents, institutionalizing them in social practices.

The two theses about moral solidarity are that moral solidarity can be seen as responsiveness to moral demands, and at the same time, acting “for our sake” when the “we” is the moral community of humankind, consists in acting morally. Further, such moral solidarity forms the core of the normativity of other forms of solidarity as well.

3. *Political solidarity*

The metaphor of “being in the same boat” is illuminating in some contexts: for example, biodiversity loss, climate change or the threats of full-scale nuclear war threaten the whole humanity – and human solidarity can be needed in uniting our forces against such threats. But as is often pointed out, that metaphor does not take into account the differences between the advantaged and disadvantaged, the oppressed and the oppressors, the powerful and the powerless. Analyses of political solidarity start from such divisions.

Political solidarity can be illuminated by struggles for social change, such as strikes or ongoing feminist movement (Scholz 2008, Gould 2014, Fraser 2008). They typically are demanding forms of collective action, where the participants show readiness to bear personal costs and changes to ordinary routines in order to promote collective change. They may demand considerable social unity – freeriding can for example render a strike ineffective.

The principle “all for one and one for all” is most clearly seen within the group of collective agents, the active members. There is typically a wider group of beneficiaries – for example when feminist movement works for improvement for the lot of all women, or more broadly to bring about gender justice for all. Thus, the idea of acting “for us” is less clearcut in cases of political solidarity (and in cases where the activist is not one of the beneficiaries, we can have a case of outgroup solidarity, see Kolers 2016, Laitinen forthcoming 2023)

But importantly, there are also the enemies or opponents, who typically are the active defenders of the existing structures of systems, normally those advantaged or powerful position would be changed via the transformation. This group can also have a somewhat similar solidarity among their ranks.

How does this kind of political solidarity relate to human solidarity? In two ways: human solidarity restricts legitimate forms of political struggle, and gives aims to some (but not all) legitimate struggles.

We can examine first of all different forms of political solidarity as to whether they are compatible with human solidarity – with its demands of full and equal moral standing of all. In some conflicts it is clear that one side has the support of whole humanity on its side, whereas the other side is to be sanctioned or punished for their moral violations or aggression. This is the familiar idea of assessment of moral permissibility: are the ends and means morally acceptable? Note that while the aims of a political struggle could be morally acceptable, they are not to be pursued by whatever means available. Some campaigns and some measures in fulfilling those campaign are to be morally judged unacceptable. Ultimately, any political victories will be sustainable if compatible with human solidarity – the winners and losers of any campaign are to restore relationships compatible with human solidarity. Winning a short-term struggle with unjustifiable, immoral means will just create a longer-term project of moral repair.

But further, moral assessment leaves a lot of room for more particular aims within the realm of the morally acceptable. There are further three kinds of legitimate political aims, or three aspects to legitimate political aims, I will call them interest politics, critical politics, and identity politics.

First, it is legitimate that different interest groups compete for resources selfishly as it were. It is understandable that, say, different professions or professional organizations promote their own interests, and let the other professions focus similarly on their interests. Yet, like Hegel (1821/1991) theorized concerning professional organizations or “corporations”, this may have important solidarity effects for the members, and these kinds of mediating organizations may be societally important. From the viewpoint of human or moral solidarity, the specific claims that different organizations make are on a par – they can all be morally acceptable but not morally compulsory. Call this “interest group politics”.

At the other end of the spectrum are cases, where an oppressed group fights for justice and adequate recognition, and has the backing of human and moral solidarity – all moral agents should support such political struggles. The situation is not one of a reasonable disagreement, but an unreasonable one: justice ought to prevail, and the oppressed group should win this fight. As mentioned above, the current war in Ukraine is of this sort, but many long-standing forms of racial and gender oppressions fit this pattern as well, and so do patterns of socio-economic injustice, where some do not have sufficient resources for life, and some have extraordinary wealth. Here, human solidarity provides the aims for political fights against injustice. Not all movements are motivated by universal moral appeals to justice, human rights, or universal human good, but many are, for example movements against feminism and racial oppression, or the international peace movement. They can often be abolitionist in nature – campaigning for an end to human rights violations.

Between these, a third group of conflicts concerns various issues of ethical, value or identity-issues characterized by reasonable disagreement. Take the intrinsic moral worth of biodiversity. Some share the conviction, whereas others are of the view that nature has mere instrumental value. One or the other party may get things right – if there are objective values – but we may not have any uncontroversial method of finding out which party it is. The best we can do is rely on our moral understandings, and take into account respectable disagreements. Or even if the issue is such that there is no expectation of a correct answer on which everyone ought to agree, there are forms of identity which are to be respected: the dynamics is different than with the interest groups, as there might be a struggle for recognition rather than for a share in resources.

Thus, of the three forms of legitimate political struggles, one is such that human or moral solidarity takes sides: one party does not have moral legitimacy for their struggle, but the other party does. In that sense, the struggle on the whole is not legitimate from the moral viewpoint as one of the parties should simply concede, but the struggle for justice is legitimate – the other party should not concede but keep fighting.

The demands of human solidarity go further than more local political struggles against injustices, in the sense that once the struggle is over, there is the human question of what attitude to take towards the (defeated) violators: the ultimate aim is to restore human solidarity and repair moral relations between violators, victims and others, but that may take genuine expressions of guilt, apologies, punishments, sanctions, forgiveness, and so on as intermediate steps. In collective cases it may well take generations before genuine reconciliation takes place; and especially experiences of dehumanization may be hard to mend (see Kronfeldner, ed. 2021).

Political and social solidarity are also interestingly intertwined. The former may be motivated by existing social injustice and be a corrective to forms of social solidarity. One aim of such movements is abolitionism, but another aim is establishing social practices built around the central values:

establishing a *Sittlichkeit* which has morality as its contents. Once that aim has been established, we enter the third important form of solidarity – social or civic solidarity in the normal phases of society.

4. Societal solidarity

Human solidarity, and the moral rights and duties that everyone owes to everyone, draw the limits of acceptable human arrangements. These considerations are “thin” in contrast to the “thick” relationships that prevail in societies within which we live our lives.

An important context for solidarity is that of thicker political communities, societies, polities, peoples or nation-states. Sometimes two kinds of relationships are distinguished within them: vertical relationships between the rulers and subjects, and horizontal relationships between citizens; here we include both under the rubric of societal solidarity (see e.g. Baldwin 1990, Banting and Kymlicka, ed. 2017, Brunkhorst 2005, Durkheim 1947, Stjernø 2005).

The logic of “all for one and one for all” captures the sense of shared responsibility in a society. When someone commits a crime, it is thought to be a violation of the rights of the victim, but at the same time an affront to the whole legal system. When something is decided democratically, everyone has an equal say on the outcome, and everyone is bound by the outcome. Via a division of labour, everyone contributes to the common good while working for their own livelihood, and benefits from the contributions of others. Via taxation, various public goods and infrastructures that are available for all, are funded. Society is in this way a system of cooperation that binds the fates of the members together. Societal matters can be arranged individualistically in many respects (emphasizing individual rights, autonomy, market exchange), but these individualistic structures are embedded in the societal infrastructure and mutually beneficial arrangements of cooperation.

As an ongoing system of cooperation, society necessarily draws the distinction between members and non-members. When legislating the law, who does it apply to? Who ought to pay taxes? Who is entitled to social benefits and rights? Who have citizen’s duties? Whose capacities for well-being are a direct concern for the political state? The answers to these questions overlap strongly, along the distinction between members and non-members. Membership is typically that of officially granted citizenship, and there are special rules for acquiring the status.

Social solidarity as a relationship between members has the nature of mutual dependence and aid. Such relationships are mutually beneficial, for example thanks to a division of labour, and each party has several roles in such relationship (analogously to the several roles in a moral community): each is, in turn, a contributing agent and a benefiting patient. In addition, each can be a (democratic) judge of how the interdependencies ought to be arranged or regulated, and a subject of the general laws and policies that apply to all. Each member can also get recognition for belonging, thus meeting the human social needs of togetherness or belonging.³

Division of labour is not only important for making production more effective, as Adam Smith 1776 famously demonstrated. It can also create an organic network of social ties and dependencies, where everyone is a contributor and beneficiary to other’s contributions. It both gives a context to a shared active life with others (exercising human capacities in ways that constitute good human life, or exercising virtue as Aristotle would say), and it develops one’s character so that it is easier for one to enjoy well-being (or developing virtue as Aristotle would say), and it meets human social needs – providing experiences of togetherness or belonging (social needs that beasts and Gods do not have, according to Aristotle). In Hegel’s (1821/1991) terms, such institutionalized social life, *Sittlichkeit*,

³ For Walzer (1983), membership is the most important good to be distributed in social justice, as the other goods are distributed among members.

may be so directly constitutive of who one is, that even the notion of trust suggests a too distant relationship.

Due to socio-economic dynamics, however, society may have tendencies to exclude some from such mutual relationships.⁴ This can happen in two ways. Some, the “underclass”, may end up in a position where they cannot contribute, and some others, the superrich, may end up in a position of one-sided independence (Hegel 1991, Hegel 1983, Ruda 2011, Heisenberg 2021). The independence will of course be less than full, and the sense of independence partly illusory. A good society has reasons to control such tendencies, for the benefit of all – social solidarity can be protected by controlling such centrifugal tendencies.

The two ways in which one may fail to take part in such relationships constituting the basic societal existence are in some sense opposite extremes. The contributorily excluded (such as the marginalized unemployed people; although being outside wage labour does not as such prevent one from contributing) on the one hand, and the superrich on the other hand, do not stand in these relationships. The former are in a position where they cannot contribute to the societal good, or to the good of others, but continue to be dependent on it. The superrich or affluent are not similarly dependent on the society, and typically want to control themselves how they contribute to the good of the society. In contemporary world the rich can often hire lawyers to minimize their taxes and organize their personal riches in tax havens. They may form a character type, which does not see organic contribution to the society as desirable.

Hegel’s lectures on philosophy of right (1983) discuss one mechanism on which this can take place. Hegel’s “rich rabble” do not enjoy social freedom, and they may suffer, just like the masters in Hegel’s dialectic of masters and slaves suffer from lack of recognition. Ultimately suitable recognition can only come from an equal, and being in a position to dominate means that the position is not that of an equal.⁵

Hegel, especially in his unpublished lectures, theorizes the problem of affluence. Hegel sees four interrelated problems: the wealthy may end up undermining their own freedom, disrespecting others, developing an unhealthy attitude towards the surrounding social order, and having an unhealthy influence on the social order itself. (Heisenberg 2021, 11). Hegel thinks that through work we acquire and maintain the skills needed for realizing individual ends, and not having to work tends to deteriorate those capacities. He also suggests that wealth corrupts the relations of recognition towards others, whom there is a tendency to categorize as ‘lesser’ beings with lesser rights, in comparison to the privileges owed to the wealthy. And thirdly, if the society fails to recognize such self-image, the wealthy may feel like being victims: if their superiority is not recognized, and they are forced to pay taxes and obey societal rules like commoners, they feel their “legitimate” expectations are not met. And, thanks to such experiences of “rightlessness”, they lose their cooperative attitude towards the society whom they feel is ignoring them. It is this attitude that Hegel thinks deserves the label of “rich rabble” (analogously to the poor, who rightfully feel betrayed by the society). Finally, thanks to such attitudes, the wealthy end up having a negative influence on the social whole itself. (Heisenberg 2021, 7-11; cf. also Streeck 2014).

⁴ The dynamics can be explained with the nature of capitalism, with the distinction between labourers and capital owners, the dynamics of a market of wage-labour. In this article the dynamics is simply presupposed, not examined in detail.

⁵ Two forms of recognition, namely those of social esteem and care for others are intimately related to the two aspects of relations of social solidarity. Further, a special attachment or belonging to a “we”, where one has special significance in the eyes of others, is a third relevant form of recognition. So, there is a loss in terms of social solidarity, in forms of mutual recognition, and in the contributions to one’s own well-being and social freedom, that being in the position of the superrich generates.

Having received a position of affluence, it is understandable that a person would like to sustain that position. This chimes with the social psychologist Siegwart Lindenbergs (2006) basic idea: we can all be either solidary or selfish, and contextual variables largely affect which way we go. Naturally, also individual differences may make a difference. But by and large, one can examine what it is like to be in that position, while abstracting from individual differences. The superrich are understandably reluctant to lose control over their assets, even though that would be part and parcel of social solidarity and the positive relationships of dependence. Outside the mutually beneficial ties of solidarity, one may begin to see other individuals as obstacles and threats, whereas the lesson of mutual dependence, mutual solidarity, mutual recognition is that one is who one is, and one is free, *through* the social relationships and social roles: social roles in a rationally organized society provide a chance to contribute to the good of others and contribute to one's own well-being in so doing.

To the extent that they select to contribute to the good of others, this character type prefers to do it in the form of one-sided altruistic charity, and not organic solidarity entailing mutual interdependence. The superrich as individuals resemble multinational companies, which can make societies compete for their contributions, and they typically favour states with low taxation. They can pick and choose, based on their arbitrary preference, which charity, if any, to contribute to, or they can perhaps decide on the basis of expert advice of e.g. Peter Singers (2015) effective altruism. It is indeed good of them to donate to charities, or form new charities in their own names, but the very position of being superrich is problematic from the viewpoint of solidarity.

There is a separate normative argument from equal political freedom as non-domination for keeping extreme wealth at bay (Christiano 2012, Robeyns 2019). Analogously to how companies are prevented to become monopolies, there could be laws against individuals getting too rich. The republican argument that one gets too much political power if one is too rich, could be applied to individuals so that taxation gets higher and higher – and at some stage one's political rights could be temporarily frozen until one is no longer superrich. Good societies try to see to it that money cannot be translated to political power, but in many ways it can.

In terms of standpoint epistemology, the superrich can see the world so that they are "self-made men" (typically they are indeed men). They tend to ignore the multiple ways in which societal infrastructures contribute to their economic success – they can take such things for granted, or subject them to economic calculation, missing out the significance of belonging.

As a tried and tested means, progressive taxation of income and wealth would be a good mechanism for preventing extreme wealth that combines egalitarianism and individual freedom and supports the ties of solidarity.

Let us next take a look at the opposite end of the spectrum of cases: contributory marginalization. One must be careful to emphasize that this is not the same as unemployment. A citizen can contribute to the good of others, and the good of the society, outside wage labour, in many ways. One need not be employed to contribute. Artists, entrepreneurs, researchers, students, unpaid caretakers, voluntary labourers in NGOs need not be employed for their activity to be valuable to the society. In principle, universal basic income or a citizen's wage could provide the best part of their economic security, and their contributions could be based on occupying roles with tasks, and with expectations that they indeed fulfill their tasks even when this does not affect their income, but affects the social rewards (Laitinen 2015b).

So, to reverse the Kantian slogan, every person ought to be treated not only as an end to be respected, but also as a useful "means" to be engaged with. It is wrong to rob anyone of the role of a contributor, of the role in social solidarity. (Kant 1996, Laitinen 2015a). The variety of small things via which people can contribute must be appreciated: even speaking a language at the same time contributes to the survival and development and thriving of that language, and writing public texts does the same.

For academics from small language areas, writing texts in one's own language will contribute to the development of the vocabulary and expressive means concerning one's special area of research.

In terms of societal solidarity, both forms of exclusion can be detrimental. From the viewpoint of human solidarity, extreme poverty, inequality and injustice are problems to be addressed independently of reasons of societal solidarity – demands of human dignity, human rights and moral standing have normatively speaking priority. But further, within the moral limits of human solidarity, there are further reasons to favour forms of cooperation that are rewarding and mutually beneficial to all participants, and this section has addressed two ways of failing in this, illustrated by contributory exclusion or marginalization, and extreme affluence.

5. Conclusion

This article has discussed the sense in which solidarity is a way of acting “for our sake” and thereby constitutive of human flourishing in different ways, and what the relevance of that is in the context of human solidarity, political solidarity and societal solidarity. It distinguished between bottom-up and top-down relations between our good and my good, and linked these to different aspects of well-being.

In the moral context of human solidarity and “the party of the humankind”, the idea of “all for one and one for all” illuminates some aspects of morality that do not come to fore in standard individualistic moral theories, which do not need the notion of solidarity in answering the questions they pose. Political solidarity is in two ways related to moral relationships: all forms face the question of whether they are morally justifiable, but some are further motivated by prevailing injustice and wrongness. In the context of social solidarity, there are two positions that should be prevented from arising: the contributorily excluded and the extremely wealthy. In addition to questions of justice and morality, what is at stake are considerations of social solidarity, and via that, the relational aspect of flourishing of the individuals.

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