

Ashley Taylor  
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## **Solidarity: Obligations and Expressions**

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Solidarity: Obligations and Expressions  
Ashley Taylor  
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Just World Institute, University of Edinburgh, Chrystal Macmillan Building, 15A George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9LD  
Web: <http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/jwi>

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## Solidarity: Obligations and Expressions

### I. Cross Purposes

In some instances of solidarity individuals act with a group as a result of obligations incurred because of membership in that group. In other instances individuals act in solidarity to express empathy or support for a group in which they have never actually participated, and whom they could not possibly be considered to be acting *with*. Our options are to either accept the mutual exclusivity of these two dominant uses of the term; reject one of these views of solidarity; or to find a way of explaining that in fact both solidarity with a group and solidarity toward a group are instances of solidarity. This latter route must then explain how solidarity can bear two different normative compositions both of which are appropriately identifiable as solidarity.

Popular uses of the term solidarity vary in meaning from *unity* to *charity* to *sympathy* to *opposition against an out-group*, but these distinct uses entail different normative commitments. Most of the literature on solidarity recognizes but discounts these conflicting uses of the term by choosing to focus on either an obligation generating form of solidarity or a motivation generating form of solidarity—but not both.<sup>1</sup> Many of

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<sup>1</sup> See, among others, Tommie Shelby, *We Who Are Dark : The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005); Sally J. Scholz, *Political Solidarity* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008); Avery H. Kolers, "Dynamics of Solidarity," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 20 (2012) for examples of the former focus and see, among others, Klaus Peter Rippe, "Diminishing Solidarity," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 1 (1998); Carol C. Gould, "Transnational Solidarities," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 38 (2007); Sandra Lee Bartky, "Sympathy and Solidarity" *And*

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the former accounts focus on solidarity in a single group and are concerned with just aims or just methods that shape the group, together with the obligations that membership generates. Meanwhile, the latter set of literature often deals with solidarity between groups or nations focused on unity because of specified shared causes or projects. For instance, Tommie Shelby explains the normative element of solidarity in the following way: "It is because I feel solidarity with group X that I *ought* to do this or that for or on behalf of fellow members of group X."<sup>2</sup> Shelby calls this solidarity "robust" because it is able to "move people to collective action."<sup>3</sup> Shelby appears to have in mind a kind of solidarity that generates obligations because of membership in the group. We might contrast Shelby's account, however, with another kind of solidarity, for instance Carol Gould's account of transnational solidarities. Gould explains solidarity as a form of social empathy which manifests in "supportive relations we can come to develop with people at a distance."<sup>4</sup> These solidary relations "are aimed at supporting people in overcoming oppression."<sup>5</sup> The species of solidarity with which Gould is concerned involves commitments, but not obligations.

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*Other Essays*, Feminist Constructions (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002) for the latter focus.

<sup>2</sup> Shelby, *We Who Are Dark : The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity*, p.68.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Gould, "Transnational Solidarities," p.148.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.162.

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We can view these theorists as presenting orthogonal accounts of solidarity, or we can attempt to explain how the same core idea of solidarity admits such different normative outcomes. The latter route is the aim of this paper. Understanding the distinction between these two dominant uses can help us to better understand both solidarity—as a term that is inclusive of both uses—and its divergent normative composition.

This paper will set out a new distinction between two kinds of solidarity, *expressional solidarity* and *robust solidarity*. I will argue that these different kinds of solidarity are two species of the same fundamental idea of solidarity. What differentiates them is the multidirectional or unidirectional nature of the relationship. This will allow different accounts of solidarity that appear to talk at cross purposes to be seen as addressing different aspects of the same fundamental relationship. The structure of the paper is as follows. Section II briefly distinguishes two forms of solidarity based on their normative composition: robust and expressional solidarity. Section III articulates a full account of the conditions necessary to robust solidarity and then argues that when any of these features is non-reciprocal, the solidarity is expressional and not robust. Section IV seeks to explain the source of the obligations present in robust solidarity and contrasts these with the motivational force of expressional solidarity.

### **II. Clarifying Obligation vs. Motivation**

Solidarity is a kind of cohesive bond, seen in the capacity to affect the individuals related to that bond. Though somewhat elliptical, this definition will serve as a

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starting point of inquiry. We might now ask, which cohesive bonds are solidarity bonds? While much of this paper will be dedicated to establishing an adequate response to this question, here I offer a couple of examples I understand to be uncontroversial.

Example 1. A large group of Western university students organize a fast to show support for Palestinians fasting to protest a recent bombing. The students consider themselves to be acting in solidarity with the fasting Palestinians.

Example 2. Nearly a third of a nation's working class population joins a political movement which uses civil resistance to advance worker's rights and social change. The workers who are members of this movement consider themselves to be acting in solidarity with one another.

In the first example, the students are motivated to ensure recent events get attention in the West. In the second example, members of the workers' party have obligations to act in certain ways to promote the group's interests or goals. I use the term motivation to refer to how committed one is to undertaking some act as a matter of moral psychology. I use the term obligation to refer to something that it is wrong not to do.

In the first example, the students may have a moral duty to help the oppressed Palestinians but this has nothing to do with solidarity. The students are not motivated because they have any kind of special obligation to the Palestinians who are fasting

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to protest their own situation. Examples of solidarity of a similar form will reveal similar motivation and lack of obligation. For instance, a European parade for Women's Rights in Africa may, all things considered, be the right or good thing to do, but individuals who participate in such a parade are motivated by attitudes or feelings of solidarity toward the oppressed women, not because they have obligations to oppressed women in Africa. One significant factor is that if the parade were to stop or the students were to begin eating again, neither the oppressed women nor the fasting Palestinians would hold the Western supporters responsible or consider that they hadn't fulfilled a duty. In this kind of solidarity, individuals are not wronging any group by not acting in solidarity with them, even though individuals may be committed enough to feel guilty or as though they are letting the group down for not continuing the solidary actions. This is an essential mark of what I will call expressional solidarity. Expressional solidarity involves individuals committed and motivated to act, but not obligated to act. Because of its motivational aspect, expressional solidarity is weakly normative.

We can contrast this with the second example in which the members of the workers' party do have obligations toward one another regarding their shared cause. For one of them to act in a way that undermines that group's aims would be to threaten their position in the group. As an example, imagine if the workers' party goes on strike, but a small assortment of workers turn up to work. The workers' party would not only be right to blame those who turn up to work for undermining the group's aims, but would be justified in holding those workers responsible and viewing the workers'



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actions as wrong. This is typical of what I call robust solidarity. Robust solidarity is strongly normative and entails positive obligations. The following section seeks to offer a description of solidarity in which both of these forms of solidarity can be explained by the same conditions. The nature of these conditions—whether they are unidirectional or multidirectional—will in turn explain the normative differences between these two forms of solidarity.

### III. Solidarity

If we have solidary obligations, under what conditions do those obligations exist? In this section I articulate what I take to be the four jointly necessary conditions of robust solidarity: *joint interest*, *identification with the group*, *disposition to empathy*, and *mutual trust*. Here I seek to establish that these features are necessary for a relation to be considered solidarity and that my understanding of how they are mutually supportive helps us to explain how solidarity is both motivation and obligation generating. Though this section aims to treat solidarity descriptively—to explain the features that exist when solidarity is strongly normative—justifying the descriptive features will sometimes make reference to normative aspects of solidarity. My analysis does not, I hope, conflate the descriptive and normative. If my account of robust solidarity is successful, it will explain why expressional solidarity is not strongly normative, but is still properly considered a species of solidarity. Because expressional solidarity exists when any of these conditions is unidirectional, it should be noted that though the same conditions will exist for expressional

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solidarity, the nature of some of these features will change in the context of expressional solidarity.

### *Joint Interest*

A joint interest provides the content which defines the solidary group. A joint interest is an interest or aim that is held by all members of the group, but which could not be realized by the individuals alone. Individuals will have an interest in the ends of their solidary group, but individuals cannot realize this end without the shared aims and interests of others. The joint interest can be something as specific as getting a political candidate elected or as broad as promoting the general well-being of a group or working out how a set of individuals can live together peacefully. A joint interest is not the same as parallel identical interests. While a group of individuals on a train may all have the identical interest of getting to the same destination, this is not a joint interest as it is achievable without other group members. However, if an armed robber stops the train and the passengers are held hostage, they may develop the relevant kind of joint interest in getting out alive, because only if all individuals perform in certain ways will this be possible (e.g., they must not antagonize the armed robber). This condition rules out any sort of crowd or assembly being in solidarity.

Another feature of a joint interest is that solidary groups will have an *executive interest* that defines the group as well as *subsidiary interests* and aims that members of the group understand to promote the group's executive interest. In reference to

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example 2 above, the workers' party in question might have an executive interest of creating a capitalist labor economy. Some members of the workers' party may think that this involves a subsidiary interest of retirement benefits necessarily linked to one's labor. However, other members of the workers' party think that the group has a subsidiary interest in not advocating retirement benefits linked to labor because they believe that retirement benefits distract from and undermine the group's executive interest of promoting a capitalist economy. As long as the group's executive interest is shared, conflict in subsidiary interests present no threat to solidarity. It may even be the case that there is some conflict in the interpretation of executive interests. In diverse groups with more abstract goals such as the joint promotion of the well-being of some set of individuals, the executive interest will be sufficiently abstract that it may even involve essentially contested concepts. This presents no problem for the group so long as there is a sufficient amount of convergence on what they must do and how each member works toward the group's executive interest. As Kolers puts it, "What distinguishes solidarity is that it occurs notwithstanding disagreement about [shared interests]; it survives incompletely shared interests."<sup>6</sup> As long as it is the subsidiary interests of the group that is subject to disagreement, and there is still sufficient agreement on the executive interest, some disagreement poses no threat to the solidary relation.

One might object that if the executive interest of a solidary group is open to such interpretation by group members, perhaps the identification of a joint interest is

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<sup>6</sup> Kolers, "Dynamics of Solidarity," p.366.

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merely imputed by outsiders attempting to define a group in a way that its own members do not recognize. In such cases, a group may appear to fulfill the conditions of solidarity, but the group members would not recognize a joint interest. The problem is that this is not the kind of group we want to call solidarity.

My response is twofold. First, robust solidary groups do not need to *explicitly* recognize an executive joint interest but they must all share the aim of said interest to be in solidarity. If the joint interest is only imputed by outsiders, then the group is not a solidary group. Second, a group can exist and not be in solidarity; it is not the case that every group is a solidary group. Solidarity does not exist in all human interactions or groups and a joint interest alone is not enough for solidarity. Solidarity marks only certain kinds of group relations that involve all four conditions currently under discussion. I will return to this concern later in this section.

### *Identification With the Group*

This second characteristic of robust solidarity must be bidirectional. Not only does an individual need to identify with the group, to some extent the group needs to recognize the individual. Mason explains group identification as “[committing] oneself to it in a way that normally involves endorsing its practices and seeking to promote its interests, whilst regarding one’s well-being as ultimately linked to its flourishing.”<sup>7</sup> For a person to be able to commit herself to a group, she must conceive of the group

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<sup>7</sup> Andrew Mason, *Community, Solidarity and Belonging : Levels of Community and Their Normative Significance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.23.

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and its practices as valuable. Solidarity involves adopting the group's interest as one's own interests and linking the achievement of such interests to one's own well-being. This does not mean that every subsidiary interest of the group will be linked to one's well-being. Rather, the group's executive interest, whether it is explicitly identified by all individuals or not, is the goal which is linked to members' well-being. From example 2 above, if Jon, a member of the workers' party, disapproves of the party's subsidiary interest of only promoting the rights of workers who are citizens of that nation (i.e., he wants to promote immigrant worker's rights as well), Jon is still in solidarity with his party, but disapproves of a subsidiary interest and its ensuing actions. He may act within the group to change this subsidiary interest while at the same time be promoting the group's executive interests. Jon still acts in solidarity with the group even though the group endorses a goal he does not promote. Jon may act to prevent the plan to exclude foreign workers because he feels his involvement in the workers' party reflects on him and he would be ashamed if the group were to promote such practices. Conversely, if the workers' party can achieve its ends while at the same time securing working rights for immigrant laborers, we can imagine Jon being proud of this. What this example illustrates is that, to some extent, a person can view his or her moral status as linked to the projects and interests of the group. It is a feature of all robust solidary groups that, because of one's identification with the group, one sees one's own well-being and moral standing reflected by the group to some degree.

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An important feature of identification with the group is that it requires that each member have some degree of interpretive competence of the group's joint interest. This interpretation does not need to be explicit. In some groups this will be understood tacitly. For instance, we can imagine that the workers' party was a post-communist Eastern Block workers' party. This party might garner support from individuals outside of the economic community in question. For instance Western capitalists or members of other Eastern Block nations that also want to promote a capitalist market system might coordinate with and take on responsibilities for the workers' party. In this case, those who identify with the group will not necessarily reside within the community's physical territory. It is not shared language or way of life or history that delimits or engenders solidarity groups. It is identification with a group insofar as it promotes the group's joint interest, in conjunction with the following two conditions.

Another central feature of identification with the group diverges from the typical treatment of solidarity in the literature. Generally, solidarity is examined in the context of a single group and an individual will belong to that one group. It is important to recognize, however, that individuals may identify with a number of robust solidary relations at any given time. In traditional typologies of solidarity, those that do suggest something beyond membership in an individual group tend to discuss a distant relation or sympathy with distant people, not overlapping robust solidary commitments. In fact, it is possible to identify with two occasionally conflicting groups, as long as the only subsidiary interests of the group—and not the

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executive interests—conflict. In large groups, such as a nation or a political organization, a group may be rife with economic and political conflict along smaller group lines (e.g., political parties). Such conflicts may undermine the unity of the larger group and the degree to which individuals identify with the group, but these conflicts and the weakening of identification with the larger group do not undermine solidarity so long as there is still some degree of identification with that larger group as an entity.

Finally, identification with the group often yields some loyalty to the group's goals and, sometimes, to the group itself. The extent that one is loyal to the group may depend on a number of factors, including how one interprets the success of the group at achieving its executive interest, and how one ranks the value of the group's interest amongst one's own set of values. Another factor may be how one is recognized in the group and one's corresponding role as a member. What is significant is that some loyalty toward the executive interest or the group itself is often manifest.

### *A Disposition to Empathy*

The third necessary condition of solidarity is something more than sympathy with the plight of others.<sup>8</sup> A disposition to empathy involves being affected by other individuals' situations or, minimally, being disposed to being affected. In the context

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<sup>8</sup> Taxonomies of global solidarity or solidarity outside simple communities tend to discuss solidarity as sympathy for other's situations; the global cosmopolitan thinkers mentioned above, for instance.

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of solidarity, empathy involves understanding the kind of social facts with which other members of the group are living (those facts about the social environment related to the group's executive interest, not all social facts) and willingness to understand the *emotional configuration* that arises in response.

Emotional configuration is a useful notion introduced by Lawrence Thomas in the following example. Most men when walking alone at night give very little thought to being raped or attacked, though it is possible. Most women, however, when walking alone at night do think of and fear the possibility of an attack or rape. Thomas explains that the difference in the two attitudes "marks a difference in the emotional configuration between men and women."<sup>9</sup> This does not mean all men or all women have the same emotional configurations. A number of experiences shape the emotional configuration of any individual. However, individuals who identify with a group united around a single executive interest will share salient features of their emotional configuration. They not only share common knowledge regarding events that lead to endorsement of their common interests, but actually share (to varying degrees) the emotional experience involved in having those interest.

A *disposition* toward empathy is met when one's attitude makes empathy readily possible. This will involve, primarily, a willingness to hear relevant information regarding social facts and a willingness to imagine the emotional experience which

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<sup>9</sup> Laurence Thomas, "Moral Flourishing in an Unjust World," *Journal of Moral Education* 22 (1993): 83-96 at p.86.



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results from these social facts. It is important that this only requires social facts directly relevant to the group's executive interest (or future executive interest).<sup>10</sup> So, if you and I are in a national solidary group, my social experience in my running club is nothing you will be expected to be disposed to be empathic about. If, however, we are both Americans and I tell you that my family was in the World Trade Center attack, I can reasonably expect you, if not to actually feel empathy toward my situation, at least to understand the social experience of the facts involved and imagine my emotional configuration as a result, and act accordingly.

A disposition to empathy most clearly obtains in examples of solidarity against a shared oppressor or out-group, whether another nation, a political group, a different race, or environmental conditions. An out-group forces recognition of shared emotional configurations. However, empathy is also pervasive in solidary groups that do not form against an oppressor. A community in an underdeveloped nation, for example, in which there is a joint interest of working together to survive and common identification with this community, could be a solidarity group. In the experience of sharing a life marked by similar challenges, empathy within the community may be what motivates recognition of a shared joint interest. A disposition to empathy may be the condition that leads a group to identify joint interests and come to be in solidarity.

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<sup>10</sup> Hence, it is possible to actually hate or greatly dislike individuals in one's solidary group and still be in empathy, or minimally, be disposed to empathy toward them insofar as the group's executive interest is concerned.

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A disposition to empathy may manifest itself in a number of ways, depending on the strength of the solidary bond within the group. In a strong friendship group or family, this condition may appear as love. In a community, it may appear as a mild concern for the well-being of one's neighbors and a willingness to assist where possible. In a weak group it will, minimally, appear as a tendency to consider members of one's in-group as morally equal.<sup>11</sup>

### *Mutual Trust*

Mutual trust is the final condition of solidarity. The other three conditions act as intensifiers of mutual trust and produce the specific kind of trust present in robust solidarity.<sup>12</sup> Hence, the stronger the other features, the more robust the trust and corresponding obligations within the group. This trust is not an all-encompassing trust in individuals with whom one is in solidarity, but a goal-specific trust, in which one trusts the individuals in one's solidary group regarding the group's executive interest. Solidarity-trust is distinct from ordinary mutual trust, though it is a species of mutual trust.

Following Baier, Jones, and McLeod, I take it to be fairly uncontroversial that trust involves: (1) that we be vulnerable to betrayal, (2) that we think well of others in certain domains, and (3) that we are optimistic that others are competent in certain

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<sup>11</sup> The tendency to see in-group members as equal corresponds with Bayertz's first use of solidarity.

<sup>12</sup> Thanks to Michael Ridge for suggesting framing this in terms of intensifiers and these examples.

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respects.<sup>13</sup> In ordinary mutual trust then, we may assume that both parties experience all three conditions. For example, if you make a promise to me to meet for coffee, we are both vulnerable to betrayal, that is, being stood up. However, we each think well enough of the other in this domain to trust each other to respect the commitment and we are optimistic that the other will be competent to show up (e.g., pay attention to time, find the coffee shop, etc.). Instances of mutual trust may be more or less robust than meeting at a coffee shop. For instance, a wedding vow, given the circumstances under which it is taken, involves a stronger kind of trust and corresponding duties than meeting for coffee. This is because a wedding vow carries certain features with it that other instances of promises and mutual trust do not; for example commitment to longevity, emotional attachment, and the weight of a formal vow. These features are intensifiers. In solidarity, the conditions of a joint interest, identification with the group, and a disposition to empathy all foster an environment of trust that generates a more robust species of mutual trust than ordinary mutual trust.

Within a solidary group, the agent's having and understanding the aims that she trusts others to achieve depends on other individuals having and understanding those same aims. In addition those other individuals must understand the agent's intentions with regard to a shared executive interest. To rely on another person doing

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<sup>13</sup> This largely follows Carolyn McLeod, *Self-Trust and Reproductive Autonomy*, Basic Bioethics (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002) ch.2; Karen Jones, "Trust as an Affective Attitude," *Ethics* 107 (1996): 4-25; and Annette Baier, "Trust and Antitrust," *Ethics* 96 (1986): 231-260.

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his relevant part toward a joint interest, the proposition that he intends that they act and that he will perform his part enters the agent's cognitive framing of her own intention that they act. This framing is reciprocated by the other person.<sup>14</sup> This reciprocity makes the relevant kind of mutual solidarity-trust contingent on others sharing one's executive interests and this knowledge being shared, but also on there being a mutual disposition to empathy and mutual identification with the group. So, if I know that you and I identify with a group, that we share its joint interest, and that we share an attitude of a disposition of empathy toward one another, mutual trust of a robust nature is warranted. The other conditions of solidarity act as intensifiers which create a distinct kind of robust mutual trust that differs from ordinary mutual trust, similar to the way that the features of wedding vows distinguish them from ordinary promises like meeting for coffee. The more robust the other conditions, the more warranted this mutual trust and the more robust the solidarity.

The environment of mutual trust that develops in a solidary group is necessary for people within solidary groups to make claims upon one another and undertake the duties necessary for the fulfillment of those claims. Only if I can trust that you will respond in kind will I make myself vulnerable and constrain my behavior or make sacrifices in such a way as to achieve the group's joint interest. So, the success of a solidary group is dependent on the degree of mutual trust amongst the individuals regarding the group's aims and interests.

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<sup>14</sup> Facundo M. Alonso, "Shared Intention, Reliance, and Interpersonal Obligations," *Ethics* 119 (2009):444-75, p.457.

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A unique aspect of this kind of trust is that a fairly robust level of trust is possible among people who have never interacted. In other kinds of trust, some degree of interaction is usually required for warranted mutual reliance and trust. Ordinary mutual trust usually a good reason to believe in an agents' performance of what they are being trusted to do (e.g., they have been paid, they have promised, etc.). Solidarity-trust, however, can involve robust trust between individuals even if there has been no direct interaction. An example of the robust nature of solidarity-trust can be found by extending the example 2 from above. Imagine the workers' party decides that a strike is in order: those who strike make themselves very vulnerable. Minimally, they risk loss of wages and employment. Only if all workers strike will it achieve or contribute to the achievement of the group's political aims. However, to strike, workers must trust that all the other workers, including many one has never met, will in fact strike. If a worker does not strike, the individual's actions will risk the group's efficacy in achieving its joint interest, and may even result in an alteration in the individual's position of trust within the group.

It is essential to my account that all of these conditions be mutually supportive of one another. Generally, the stronger the conditions, the stronger the solidarity bond. A group will seem to exhibit more of some conditions than others depending on its joint interest. In a friendship or club, empathy or identification with the group may seem stronger because the group's interest is related to actually caring about and valuing other members. In political solidarity, which typically centers on opposing some out-

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group, group members would have a more dominant joint interest than, say, empathy, because the group exists to achieve that political, oppositional aim. It is important to note, however, that members will have duties because of membership in the group only when all four bidirectional conditions are met.

Earlier I argued that placing joint interest at the center of a description of solidarity does not risk making the solidary relationship overly inclusive and, in fact, preserves the notion of solidarity as a rare and unique relationship, rather than simply the convergence of interests or recognition of shared norms. A concrete example in light of the additional conditions may help clarify my position. An example of the concern about over-inclusiveness can be found in the history of the American civil rights movement. Two organizations, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) were often thought to be a single group.<sup>15</sup> The groups appeared to have similar joint interests in the way necessary for solidarity. Both held an executive interest of promoting equality between African-Americans and other Americans in the United States. The SCLC saw its subsidiary interests as more linked to ending Jim Crow laws and organizing large-scale activities such as marches and protests to create public awareness of endemic racism in the South. The SNCC favored shock tactics with less chance of individual recognition, and put voter registration at the forefront of their agenda. Initially, Martin Luther King Jr. hoped that the SNCC would become the

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<sup>15</sup> Thanks to an anonymous referee at the *Journal of Political Philosophy* for this example.

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youth division of the SCLC, but the groups' differing ideals prevented this. This example is a case in which there was a common joint interest between two groups and probably a disposition to empathy, but an insufficiently similar interpretation of the joint nature of their projects, a lack of shared identity, and no solidarity-trust. The concern that may arise from placing a joint interest as the defining condition for a group is that this could result in the SCLC and SNCC being identified as a single solidary group. However, given the necessity of the other conditions for the robust solidarity with which I am concerned, the two groups were not in solidarity with one another (though possibly in the beginning of the SNCC it was unclear if solidarity would develop between the two). Central to my account of solidarity (and similar to many other descriptions of solidarity in the literature) is the notion that solidarity is not so easily come by as many other types of social relations.

### *Expressional Solidarity*

With this account of robust solidarity in mind, we can now return to expressional solidarity and ask, does expressional solidarity fit with these conditions? A strength of my account of the necessary conditions of robust solidarity is that it can explain how both of these species of solidarity are properly considered solidarity. In each of the four conditions of robust solidarity above, solidarity involves mutual or bidirectional conditions (i.e., *mutual* recognition of identifying with the group, *mutual* trust, *mutual* disposition to empathy and a *joint* interest). Expressional solidarity occurs when any one or more of the four conditions is unidirectional. This is because the reciprocal nature of the characteristics of robust solidarity generate reliance upon

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other members of the group. However, without being able to rely on an individual regarding all four characteristics, the group would risk too much to trust that individual to carry out duties pertaining to the group's executive interest. In the context of expressional solidarity, the features of mutual trust and a joint interest will look slightly different.

A joint interest is no longer joint, but a parallel interest in a group's executive joint interest. Mutual trust will not be mutual solidarity-trust, but a demonstration of oneself as trustworthy in the eyes of the group toward which one has solidarity. The disposition to empathy, though not returned, will involve the same commitment for the individual in both forms of solidarity as will identification with the group.

Examples of unidirectional solidarity could involve identifying with a group that does not recognize that individual, sharing a group's interest when it is not a joint interest, or feeling empathy or trust toward a group's members when none is returned. Such solidarity is expressional solidarity. It is sometimes the case that acts of expressional solidarity such as marching, conscientious purchasing, or fasting are attempts to gain membership in or understanding of a specific solidary group. Fasting in support of a political group's hunger strike, for instance, seems like an appropriate expression of support because one is trying to gain empathy for the situation experienced by those toward whom one is acting in solidarity. Individuals participating in a parade in support of women's rights in the Africa, for instance, may march because they want to express their similar interests and perhaps gain the



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trust of the robust solidary group. These are actions that could lead toward membership in some robust solidarity groups, but that will only be the case when all four universal features of solidarity are bidirectional. The purpose of expressional solidarity, however, is generally not to gain membership in a robust solidary group, but to offer aid or support to that group.

### **IV. The Normative Aspect**

Given this interpretation of solidarity and the way in which its four necessary conditions function together, we can now ask how these features account for the normative nature of the relationship in both expressional and robust solidarity. After all, that a plausible descriptive account of solidarity is able to accommodate both kinds of solidarity may give weight to calling both forms *solidarity*, but unless there is also a plausible description of how precisely these features yield their different normative outcomes, the account would hardly be complete. I begin with expressional solidarity and its weakly normative commitment, which I call motivation.

Expressional solidarity occurs when any one of the four necessary conditions of solidarity is unidirectional. In the following I consider how each feature, when unidirectional, lends itself to the motivation, rather than the obligation, to act in solidarity. When the joint interest of a group is held by an individual who is not a member of that group, it is no longer a joint interest but a parallel interest. Specifically, it is a parallel interest in some group's executive joint interest. A university student from example 1 may hope that her fasting gains awareness and

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promotes the fasting Palestinian's joint interest in a nonviolent Palestine. However, the Western University students' actions are not marked by joint intention. Neither do the Palestinians rely on her actions in the promotion of their goal. The Palestinians do rely on one another to fast—a single person fast is hardly a political statement—for the success of their executive interest, but they do not jointly promote their interest with out-group individuals who show them support. Though in fact, out-group individuals may do much to advance the group's joint interest.

The disposition to empathy in the case of unidirectional, expressional solidarity entails that one is disposed to be empathic with members of the group one identifies with. This condition explains the content of many expressions of solidarity. When one is not actually a member of a particular group, but wants to show support and understanding for that group's plight or position, an excellent way to better grasp that group's reality is to act so as to develop actual empathy with the group (as opposed to sympathy or simply being disposed to be empathic toward that group). Hence, the fasting example above might be explained as trying to better understand the actual experience of the fasting Palestinians. It is important to note that to be moved to act so that empathy might be realized involves already being disposed to be empathic toward that group.

When the feature of trust is unidirectional, an individual will not be trusted or relied on by the group. Such an individual may be allowed to help support the group's joint interest, but the group would not depend on them to do so. However, the desire to

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gain the trust of or to be viewed as trustworthy by the group is often a motivating reason. This is particularly true when one possesses the other features of solidarity (even if all of them are unidirectional), which involve holding the same interest as the group one wants to support, identifying with that group in light of this interest, and attempting to develop greater empathy with the group. To act in a way that betrays one's own interest, identification, or feelings toward that group would be irrational. Such agents will act in a way that is trustworthy toward the group and its executive interest, even if the group does not recognize or trust them.

Group identification is perhaps the most important factor in explaining the motivation to expressional solidarity. It involves identifying oneself as a member of a group whose practices are viewed as linked to one's well-being. Identification with any solidary group affects how one sees oneself as an individual. Hence, a person will be moved to act in ways that accord with his or her solidary groups and roles insofar as this person values these executive interests. The adoption of a solidary identity is a reason for individuals to act in ways that promote the executive interest of the group, rather than expressing that value in some other way. So while an individual will understand themselves to be in this kind of solidarity relationship only if he or she already values the group's ends, the fact of the group and its specific goals and interests specifies particular actions to the individual by which to express his or her value of the executive interest.

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The students in example 1, for example, may have already valued the promotion of rights for marginalized individuals and that may be why they want to express solidarity for the fasting Palestinians, but they could have expressed the value that led to their solidarity toward the Palestinians in a number of ways. They may have tried to support some other marginalized group, or simply shared information about Palestine and Israel, or they may not have been motivated to act in accordance to that value at all. However, because the students value a group's particular interests, and that group chose a course of action to promote its own executive interest (thus giving the students a group toward which to have expressional solidarity), the students now have reason to act to aid or help the group's particular plans of action. In this case, it motivates them to fast, and to act in ways that support the Palestinian group's interests. Under this description, rational action will involve acting for reasons that support an individual's various identities, including whatever solidarity groups one identifies with.

It is important to note that each of these features generate the same motivation for robust solidarity. Robust solidarity is different in that the features also generate obligations because the bidirectional nature of these conditions generates warranted reliance. Before considering these obligations however, it merits mention that while expressional solidarity usually involves voluntary association, robust solidarity groups do not always involve voluntary associations, but are still motivation generating. For example, how do we account for the motivation of a native-born citizen in the nation-state or of a child raised in a family to act in solidarity with that

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group? My response is that in involuntary solidary groups, one is motivated because one values the shared group interest, regardless of how one became a member. If it is possible for an individual to stop valuing the interest, either through dissolution of the group or a change in one's personal values, then one could leave the group. Many solidary groups have this exit capacity. However, membership in groups like the nations or the families in which we are raised are rarely ever relinquished. It is outside the scope of this project to explain why there are some associations and their related values that individuals seem unable to give up. I simply observe that one is motivated to act in accordance with involuntary solidary bonds because one still identifies with the group in a strong enough manner that one cannot cease to value its executive interest.

In light of the four conditions of solidarity, we can piece together an explanation of why they generate obligation when bidirectional or multidirectional in contrast to their motivation generating status when unidirectional. My aim is to show how a certain kind of obligation is generated within robust solidary groups as I conceive them; it is *not* to identify obligations to be in solidarity. The four necessary conditions of solidarity jointly assure agents that they are warranted in trusting one another regarding the group's executive interest. Mutual recognition of the group's executive interest, members' group identification, and a disposition to empathy for other group members, serve as intensifiers that generate solidarity-trust. This trust generates weighty *pro tanto* obligations among members of the group to perform their roles

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within the solidary group. Insofar as interpersonal, participatory obligations are moral obligations, then solidarity obligations are moral obligations.

When an individual signals that he or she is to be trusted regarding the executive joint interest of the group, whether intentionally or through negligence, that individual is then obligated to perform what he or she is being trusted to do. Following Scanlon's analysis, to reinforce a person's reliance and then disappoint is to act in a way that the other would have reason to object to, and thus morally wrongs that person.<sup>16</sup> One might reject Scanlon's contractual reasons behind the obligation to honor the expectations one creates. However, it remains that, given membership in a solidary group, one has a *pro tanto* obligation to perform the actions one has led others to trust one to do. If one fails to perform, the solidary group has standing to rebuke or even banish the individual and, minimally, trust will be lessened, as will the likelihood of being identified by the group as a member of the group. One's standing in the group will be negatively affected.

The normativity of solidarity involves morality insofar as the interpersonal obligation produced when the four conditions of solidarity are present is a moral obligation. The solidarity relationship is not necessarily a moral relationship.<sup>17</sup> The consequence of

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<sup>16</sup> Thomas Scanlon, "Promises and Practices," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 19 (1990): 199-226. This account of interpersonal obligations largely follows Alonso, "Shared Intention, Reliance, and Interpersonal Obligations."

<sup>17</sup> This contradicts much of the literature on solidarity, which claims that it is a moral relationship. See among others, Émile Durkheim, *On the Division of Labor in*

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this is that solidary obligations are similar in structure to the obligations of promise keeping rather than obligations of fair play. This is because fair play duties hinge on benefits received, whereas solidarity duties involve signals of trustworthiness—and recognition of trustworthiness—with the group. The receipt of benefits is not enough to entail obligation. In fact, many individuals may receive benefits of a solidary group who are not members of that group, for example any member of the labor class who is not a part of the worker's union from the example above.

Solidarity obligations are *pro tanto* obligations; one's membership in such a group generates weighty obligations to perform in compliance with the group's interests. One might object that an upshot of this analysis is that I have labeled clearly immoral groups (e.g., Pirates and Nazis) as solidary groups. However, this objection stems from an understanding of solidarity as a concept with moral content, but it is not. Robust solidarity is simply a relation that entails a moral form of obligation. If a *pro tanto* solidary obligation conflicts with a moral *ultima facie* obligation *ceteris paribus* one ought to abandon the solidary obligation.<sup>18</sup> Solidarity as a normative

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*Society*, trans. George Simpson (New York,: The Macmillan company, 1933); Scholz, *Political Solidarity*; Jean Harvey, "Moral Solidarity and Empathetic Understanding: The Moral Value and Scope of the Relationship," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 38 (2007).

<sup>18</sup> This analysis of *pro tanto* vs. *ultima facie* reasons is compatible with an account of contextualized reasons in which one does not have reason to do something unless there are no contradicting reasons against so acting. For example, a group of pirates may be in solidarity but do not have reasons to engage in piracy because better, moral reasons outweigh the choice to be a pirate.

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phenomenon can be understood without requiring that the group be moral. Whether or not the group is moral will hinge on the content of the joint interest and the reasonability or rationality of the practices and actions the group chooses in promoting that interest. The fact of a solidary relation has no relevance to whether or not the group itself is moral.

This account of interpersonal group obligation applies to situations in which people have been led, intentionally or through negligence, to rely on another individual. Such reliance is clearly the case in voluntary associations. However, there seems to be grounds to ask whether individuals are obligated to perform acts that promote the joint interest in involuntary solidary groups. To have obligations for which one has not volunteered or reinforced may be decidedly anti-liberal. However, the actions one is obligated to perform in a solidary group are proportional to the strength of the solidary bond for that individual.

Given that a group has an interest in achieving and continuing its joint interest, roles and duties within the group are assigned to members according to the level of trust they hold. For instance, in a nation-state, one might reasonably expect that those who volunteer to take on more burdens for the association (e.g., political leaders) might feel solidarity with the nation more acutely than those who hold no role beyond that necessary for basic membership (e.g., native birth or not committing treason against the nation). Those with more burdens and duties have them because they have signaled their trustworthiness and are trusted by others. In the family, those



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who voluntarily take on obligations of parenthood have greater duties to the family than children who have no choice in their membership. And if the children, when able to take on more demanding obligations choose not to do so, or do not value the family's joint interest (e.g., the value of association and promotion of members' well-being), they can leave it. In the case of both the nation-state and the family, feelings of membership and identification may always linger. However, in the absence of the other conditions these feelings are not sufficient for solidarity. Further, mere disapproval of the policies or workings of the institutions of a group does not warrant exit from the group; disapproval does, however, warrant attempts to change the group from within. To be in solidarity, whether one entered the association voluntarily or not, involves some personal endorsement of the group interest and leads to corresponding obligations only insofar as other group members believe one can be relied on. I make no prescriptive claims about when a person should be in solidarity. My purpose has been to explain how the relationship itself generates obligations.

### **V. Conclusion**

Solidarity is a social bond that endures different normative interpretations. The four necessary conditions of solidarity offer a description under which solidarity is a single concept with two different normative aspects. The fact that all four characteristics of solidarity are essential to both expressional solidarity and robust solidarity and furthermore, that these conditions can explain the normative differences in the two types of solidarity, not only lends the conditions support, but suggests that their interpretation herein is correct. Solidarity is both expressional and robust, it

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generates motivation to support certain interests of a group and it generates obligations to act with a group in which one is a member.