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ALEKSANDRA GŁOS
Institute of Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University

SOLIDARITY AS AN ETHICAL ACTION[1]

Abstract

Solidarity is one of the most popular concepts in social philosophy, and one of the vaguest. Controversially, theses on its final decline and on its emerging new forms are being posed simultaneously. In response, this article describes the most important challenges to the theory of solidarity and proposes a new definition of it, based on contemporary social and political philosophy. Solidarity, because of the constituent role of values in uniting solidary associations, and because of its special ethos, can be described as a form of ethical cooperation stemming from recognition and trust, and leading to radical mutual responsibility.

Keywords: solidarity, trust, civic friendship, altruism, freedom.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of solidarity is being used increasingly often in social philosophy even though the idea remains vague. The growing interest in solidarity has been confirmed by a report on the subject prepared in Britain by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics; the authors claim that solidarity is a "new, emerging paradigm in bioethics."[2] On the other hand, in the context of the debate over the reform of the Dutch healthcare system, Ruud ter Meulen describes solidarity as the

[1] This article was written as part of the Józef Tischner—Polish Philosophy of Freedom and European Thought research project (11H 13 0471 82) financed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

[2] A. Buyx, B. Prainsack, *Solidarity: Reflections on an Emerging Concept in Bioethics*, The Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 2011.

"eternal," most traditional, and most fundamental principle of health care.[3] But do these two descriptions refer to the same concept? Is this newly emerging solidarity identical to traditional solidarity?

This question is even more intriguing as the proposition of, and the need for, a "new" solidarity—not only in healthcare systems, where it undoubtedly plays a fundamental role, but also in almost every area of social life. The task of tracking down signs of new solidarity is particularly onerous, as it is difficult to follow in the footsteps of traditional solidarity. The case of solidarity is a special one: despite the centuries-old popularity of the concept, no exhaustive theory of solidarity has yet been developed, as has been the case for the related notions of freedom and equality. Additionally, the existing, rudimentary concepts of solidarity are often mutually contradictory. Some researchers consider solidarity to be an emotion,[4] some a philosophical idea,[5] and others still a legal principle.[6] Some believe it is a particularistic concept that brings together groups of people, such as trade unions or political fractions, while others think it has a universal reach. Solidarity is also a concept that has a strong political element (again, with contradictions). These are only some of the controversies concerning the nature of solidarity, both in the traditional and the "new, emerging" form.

The purpose of this article will be, first of all, to outline a map of solidarity that will make it possible to navigate the thick *silva rerum* that could be compiled about the many often contradictory theories of solidarity. Its second purpose will be to determine the fixed features of solidarity, or in the language of analytical philosophy, the presuppositions underlying the different theories, thus indicating the fundamentals of solidarity. Consequently, the article will be divided into two parts: the first, presenting the problem, will pose three main questions about the nature of solidarity and its main concepts, the shape of which depends on the answers to these questions. The second part will contain an outline of the "minimum content of

[3] R. Ter Meulen, "Limiting Solidarity in the Netherlands: A Two-Tier System on the Way," *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 20(6) 1995, pp. 607–616.

[4] D. Heyd, "Solidarity: A Local, Partial and Reflective Emotion," *Diametros* (43) 2015.

[5] R. Rorty, *Przygoda, ironia i solidarność*, WAB, Warsaw 2009.

[6] R. Houtepen, R. ter Meulen, "Solidarity, Justice, Reflexivity and Participatory Citizenship, [in:] *Solidarity in Health and Social Care in Europe*, R. ter Meulen, W. Arts, R. Muffels, Springer Science Business Media, Dordrecht 2001, p. 451–463.

solidarity," as it might called by Herbert L.A. Hart,[7] a philosopher of law who proposed that there is a minimum content of natural law underlying each legal system. Here, "minimum content" means the various concepts' presuppositions or common points, which can be classified as characteristic features (*differentia specifica*) and which then allow for the building of a new solidarity on the "shoulders of giants," that is, the durable, classic foundations.

THE MAP OF SOLIDARITY: THREE QUESTIONS

The main controversies and questions that arise when attempting to develop a theory of solidarity can be divided into three groups. The first is related to the axiological question of the values that constitute solidary gatherings: which best express the idea of solidarity? Is it love of the fatherland, the yearning for freedom and justice, or perhaps the value of humanity itself? The second is a psychological question about the nature of the relationship between entities linked through solidarity, and is just as important. Is this a symmetrical or an asymmetrical relationship? Is solidarity more like the isonomy of the Greek agora, or more like mercifully reaching out to a suffering neighbor? Although the latter question is considered here as a psychological one, it has far-reaching social consequences: the answer results in a democratic or hierarchical model of social relationships. The third question is ontological, and concerns the relation between particular levels of solidarity (solidarity as an emotion, as a fine link between people, and as a legal principle), and therefore the issue of how to shape the social culture of solidarity, more than the ontic status of the phenomenon of solidarity itself.

THE AXIOLOGICAL QUESTION

The three most significant historical values that have given rise to large-scale solidary gatherings are shared experience, shared identity, and shared humanity.

SHARED EXPERIENCE

A shared experience as a basis for solidarity can be found in expressions such as "professional solidarity," "class solidarity,"

[7] H.L.A. Hart, *The Concept of Law*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1961.

"female solidarity," and "anti-apartheid solidarity." Andrea San Giovanni points to socialist solidarity as the main example of solidarity stemming from a shared experience.[8] The term "solidarity" itself, originating from the classical legal dictionary, was incorporated into philosophy by P. Leroux, who explained his reasoning as follows: "I was the first to borrow the term *solidarité* from the legal language in order to introduce it to philosophy, i.e., in accordance with my concept to religion: I wanted to replace the Christian *caritas* with the human *solidarietas*...."[9] In the socialist version, solidarity is part of the experience of toil, burden, exploitation, and discrimination. In this sense, a shared experience is an experience of a value in danger, be it justice, equality or life. This experience is negative and can lead to the conclusion that the nature of solidarity is negative, with solidarity being a criminal enterprise that brings its members together to oppose a common enemy. Its goal would be a revolt that stops at nothing, or "class revenge" leading to the guillotining of kings in the name of the masses of *les misérables*. Or, a resentment--fueled crime, like the one described in the setting of South Africa by John Maxwell Coetzee in his *Disgrace*,[10] as well as other forms of aggressive political and social fight.

NATIONAL SOLIDARITY

National identity is another constitutive value in solidarity. The typology adopted in the article is not disjunctive. National solidarity can unquestionably be regarded as a form of solidarity based on shared experience. However, more than solidarity stemming from a shared experience, when the values behind the solidary gathering are hidden behind its unique revolutionary/liberating nature, national solidarity clearly demonstrates its axiological origin. Even though fighting, in the form of the centuries-old tradition of wars of conquest and insurrections, plays an important role in shaping national awareness, it is the symbolic layer that is the overriding element: a common language, a shared cultural identity, the artistic and scientific output, a common national mentality. This symbolic layer, passed down from generation to generation in the subtle

[8] A. San Giovanni, "Solidarity as Joint Action," *Journal of Applied Philosophy* (32/4) 2015, pp. 340–359.

[9] Cf. M.P. Leroux, *De l'humanité,* in: J. Salij, "O solidarności trochę teologicznie," *Znak* (8) 2000, p. 37.

[10] J.M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*, Znak, Kraków 2001.

cultural tissue, has such far-reaching influence that national solidarity covers groups much more numerous than those whose solidarity stems from shared experience. These groups can comprise not only complete strangers, but also individuals who, unlike in the first type of solidarity, do not share most of their interests and goals and lifestyle. A nation is an "imagined community." Benedict Anderson, the author of this still-accurate term, describes its power in the following way: "Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings."[11] This antagonistic, deadly double-edged potential of national solidarity, which clearly demonstrated itself during World War II, has resulted in the idea of national solidarity being under constant philosophical bombardment.

UNIVERSAL SOLIDARITY

Due to the antagonistic nature of national solidarity, it is often juxtaposed with solidarity as a humanist project, which expands the scope of brotherhood wide enough to cover the entirety of humanity. Although the sources of universal solidarity date back to classical Greek philosophy, with a heyday in the Renaissance humanism inspired by Christian brotherhood, in its contemporary form the idea emerged as a reaction to the atrocities of World War II, that is, to the distortion of particularistic national solidarity. Its literary expression can be found in the writings of Albert Camus, and its practical manifestation in peace and humanitarian organizations, and in the economic and political unions created in the second half of the 20th century. Unlike its classical and Renaissance predecessors, the post-war version of humanist solidarity does not stem from a belief in the greatness of humans, justified through their judicious nature or by being the children of God, but on the contrary, in their defenselessness, sensitivity, and vulnerability to suffering. This understanding of solidarity has been developed by Richard Rorty, who expands solidarity, in line with its more organic bases, to cover not only all of humanity, but also all animals, all organisms capable of feeling pain.[12]

[11] B.R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London 1991, p. 7.

[12] R. Rorty, *Przygoda, ironia i solidarność*.

The example of humanist solidarity shows that the conflict between the axiological bases of solidarity gives rise to a tension between the particularistic approach and the universal approach. One of the arguments against the particularistic forms of solidarity is their antagonistic potential: as history shows, such forms of solidarity easily develop into "mafia solidarity,"[13] in which the driving force is hatred for a common enemy. However, the humanist form of solidarity also has its opponents. David Heyd[14] uses quite a realistic argument: in his opinion, the universalization of solidarity deprives it of its *spiritus movens*. This argument could be further reinforced by the equally justified skepticism about the abstract nature of such humanism (Daryl Gunson calls this type of solidarity, as in the Kantian imperative, the Leer Form,[15] for a reason). Unless it is made a reality through specific humanitarian missions, appealing to the idea of humanity and universal brotherhood, it easily falls into the category of being just another utopia, which is just as dangerous in terms of consequences as the distortions of particularistic solidarity.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL QUESTION

The second significant question about the nature of solidarity concerns the nature of relationships that would deserve to be called solidary. What type of bond is the relationship of solidarity? How is it created and what does it oblige? This question has been called "psychological," even though solidarity is more of a social bond than an intimate, interpersonal bond. However, it is obvious that social bonds are based on individual relationships and the general style of a community affects the means of establishing interpersonal relationships, and the types made. The preceding sentence already outlines two competing answers to the above questions. National solidarity and professional solidarity are examples of horizontal, isonomic relationships, while humanitarian solidarity creates asymmetrical relationships: the relationship of assistance, the relationship between someone stronger and someone weaker, the relationship between the beneficiary and the benefactor.

[13] D. Gambetta, "Can We Trust Trust?", in: *Trust: Making and Breaking Cooperative Relations*, D. Gambetta (ed.), Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1998, pp. 213–237.

[14] D. Heyd, "Solidarity...".

[15] D. Gunson, "Solidarity and the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights, *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, 34 (3) 2009, pp. 241–260.

SOLIDARITY AS CIVIC FRIENDSHIP

To describe civic friendship, use of the example of national solidarity is most appropriate, even though a nation is a wide and diverse concept in comparison to homogeneous classes or professional groups. National solidarity remains, however, the best example of civic friendship due to the concept of citizenship itself and its normative nature, which combines a catalog of rights and obligations with membership in a specific political community, and because of the symbolic form of friendship between citizens. Furthermore, as B. Anderson insightfully observes, in spite of social diversity citizens are equal: "Regardless of the actual equality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship."[16] An interesting recent example of this type of solidarity is the Polish Solidarity movement, which was an unprecedented example (in terms of scale) of social isonomy (intensive civic friendship between people of different views, statuses, and professions—from workers to intellectuals, actors, and poets), and the power of the influence of the symbolic and cultural layers. Solidarity can be interpreted in the light of Aristotle's philosophy of friendship. Aristotle distinguished three types of friendship: the "friendship of utility" based on an exchange of favors; the "friendship of pleasure" based on mutual attraction; and the "friendship of good," in which friends are united in a non-instrumental love for the common good.[17] This was the friendship of the virtuous, *philautos*, who, being attached to goodness itself, have also sufficiently good character to be able to enter into a disinterested "gift-relationship." Clearly, solidarity falls into the third category, as it is based on mutual respect and the voluntary practice of mutual help, as well as the pursuit of the "common good" — personal and political freedom and a just social order. As such, it reminds us that solidarity is primarily an ethical ideal, with its political dimensions being a secondary "spill-over," and as such, reminiscent of the ethical roots of politics, best understood in the classic terms of Hannah Arendt's poli-ethics.

Solidarity as civic friendship is the basis and the power of democracy—the transformation of the Polish political system from

[16] B.R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*..., p. 7.

[17] Aristoteles, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warsaw 2007, VIII, 1157a.

totalitarian to democratic is the best evidence of this. Conversely, the lack of this type of friendship prevents the development of democracy. For instance, Hauke Brunkhorst[18] sees the lack of a European demos as the main reason for the crisis of the European Union. At the same time, Brunkhorst emphasizes that the condition for the existence of this type of friendship is the horizontal, isonomic structure of civic relationships. Achieving this, in his opinion, was the purpose of the 1947 Declaration of Human Rights and other, subsequent legal acts, intended to abolish hierarchy and level the playing field for members of European societies.

FROM HUMANISM TO HUMANITARIANISM

A different type of social relation is postulated as part of humanistic and humanitarian solidarity. The idea of humanitarianism covers, first of all, the misquoted Hippocratic formula of "*primum non nocere*"—the concept of non-maleficence and aversion to cruelty. In the opinion of R. Rorty, after the atrocities of World War II, which were perpetrated in the name of "higher purposes," the main task of a liberal intellectual who wishes to propagate the idea of solidarity with his or her pen should be to "help us become less cruel," instead of further developing the symbolic layer.[19] Secondly, solidarity involves the postulate of active provision of assistance if need be. Calls for this type of solidarity are always voiced when a natural or social disaster occurs. Not only is its reach more universal, but its structural nature is also different. The relationship of humanitarian solidarity is not an isonomic relationship of equals, but an asymmetrical relationship, in which the benefactor is necessarily in a better situation than the beneficiary. It is also more individual in nature than national solidarity, which has to be rooted in a wider civic structure. Another, even more universal example illustrating this type of humanitarian solidarity is the biblical image of the good Samaritan, often perceived as the prototype of solidarity. The philosopher Józef Tischner provides an interesting interpretation of this image.[20] He points out that the person helped by the Samaritan suffers because he was harmed "by robbers," that is, due to a social

[18] H. Brunkhorst, *Solidarity*: *From Civic Friendship to a Global Legal Community*, MIT Press, Cambridge 2005.

[19] R. Rorty, *Przygoda, ironia i solidarność*..., p. 217.

[20] J. Tischner, *Etyka solidarności oraz homo sovieticus*..., pp. 12–14.

mishap and not a natural disaster, as in our mutilated world.[21] The pre-solidarity world is a world of pre-care, precarity (*pre-caritas*), where the individual has no social security, and is discriminated against, or even harmed.

However, are charity and humanitarianism equal to solidarity? Which of these images holds more truth about solidarity: the men debating in the agora; or those standing together, especially when the people are threatened;[22] or the good Samaritan helping the robbed man? Undoubtedly, the two phenomena are related: friends, even if bound through a thin civic type of friendship, should help each other in a crisis. On the other hand, it seems that reducing solidarity to humanitarian aid strips it of the pleasure of "talking, acting, breathing with no constraint, under the rule of God and laws only."[23] Hannah Arendt was also quite right when she warned about the social consequences of solidarity based on compassion toward *les misérables*.[24] The contemporary political version of asymmetrical solidarity—the practical realization of which is the welfare state——institutionalizes the relationship between the master (in this case, the Leviathan) and the slave, and clearly illustrates these social consequences. These include the expansion of bureaucracy, learned civic helplessness,[25] and the fall in civic virtues (including voluntary, non-taxed solidarity).

THE ONTOLOGICAL QUESTION

In spite of Arendt's warnings, the concept of solidarity as an emotion is becoming increasingly popular—not only humanitarian solidarity, which in a natural way stems from feelings of compassion, empathy, and pity, but also particularistic solidarity, which is a synonym for civic friendship and a basis for democracy. For instance, D. Heyd differentiates a specific type of emotion: the political emotion of solidarity, which he describes in the following

[21] A. Zagajewski, *Try to Praise the Mutilated World*, translated by C. Cavanagh, URL= https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/57095/try-to-praise-the-mutilated-world-56d23a3f28187.

[22] A. Dawson, M. Verweij, "Solidarity: A Moral Concept in Need of Clarification," *Public Health Ethics* (5/1) 2012, p. 1.

[23] A. de Tocqueville, *Old Regime and the Revolution*, Aletheia, Warsaw 1970, in: P. Śpiewak, *Ideologie i obywatele*, Biblioteka Więzi, Warsaw 1991.

[24] H. Arendt, *On Revolution*, Czytelnik, Warsaw 2003.

[25] J. Dixon, J. Frolova, "Existential Poverty: Welfare Dependency, Learned Helplessness and Psychological Capital," *Poverty & Public Policy* 3 (2) 2011, p. 1–20.

way: "It is essentially local (rather than universal), partial (rather than impartial) and reflective (an emotion mediated by belief and ideology, interest and common cause)."[26] The notion of solidarity as a social bond is a precious alternative to the concept of solidarity as an emotion, and is more common. Zbigniew Stawrowski is right to define this bond as "based on the deepest ethical values" and "radically and principally apolitical."[27] R. ter Meulen sees solidarity in a similar way, defining it as the sum of the "relations of personal commitment and recognition that originate from decent treatment of the other person."[28]

In view of the contemporary emotional reduction and blurring of the concept of solidarity, it is worth reaching back to its classical sources. The father of sociology and precursor of the academic approach to solidarity perceived it as a type of social bond. Emil Durkheim differentiated two types of bonds. The first is organic solidarity, typical of small communities that believe in similar values, in which the norms of social co-existence effectively regulate interpersonal relations (through inclusion and exclusion). The second is mechanical solidarity, based on the division of labor that is typical of large, diverse societies in which solidarity results from the division of labor—that is, the need for mutual services, and not from a sense of community and the views of its members.[29] An interesting contribution Durkheim made to the theory of solidarity includes not only the still-topical distinction between limited solidarity (drawing on similarities), mechanical solidarity (drawing on differences and free choice), and a number of fascinating social analyses, but also a proposition to link solidarity to its normative forms. As for the normative sphere, Durkheim goes *ad fontes*, that is, to the obligation *in solidum*, which was contracted by the members of the Roman *societas*, imposing radical liability for the entire debt on each of the debtors. It is worth noting that this radical liability was deeply rooted in Roman culture and respect, and was nearly religious in nature, in both friendship and civic life. Therefore, the principle

[26] D. Heyd, "Solidarity...," p. 55.

[27] Z. Stawrowski, *Solidarność znaczy więź*, Instytut Myśli Józefa Tischnera, Kraków 2010, p. 107.

[28] R. Ter Meulen, "Solidarity and Justice in Health Care: A Critical Analysis of Their Relationship," *Diametros* (43) 2015, p. 1.

[29] E. Durkheim, *On the Division of Labor in Society*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warsaw 2012.

of solidary liability was not a top-down *dura lex* or an empty form having no social content, but a deep ethos of Roman community and a reflection of its fundamental principles.

Durkheim's socio-legal analyses aptly present the truth about the need to root normative solutions in the culture of the given community. In the context of the distinction between the two types of solidarity and the two corresponding types of law, a question must be answered about legal institutions being tailored to suit contemporary culture. The form of institutional solidarity most common today, that is, the welfare state, produces paradoxical social effects. It has grown from an incorrect perception of solidarity as an asymmetrical relationship, thus additionally deepening the social asymmetry, and is an answer to the war-fare state. It has also ceased to correspond to the 21st-century culture of cooperation, the basis of which is not the expansion of state institutions caused by experiences related to the *bellum omnia contra omnes*, but open borders and the possibility of establishing supranational bonds. Such cooperation is further facilitated by communication and infrastructure solutions of the technological era.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOLIDARITY

The above map of solidarity has made it possible to structure the field to a certain extent. On that basis, a classification of solidarity can be created and the differences between the particular theories can be seen more clearly. For instance, Heyd's concept of solidarity can be classified as psychologically symmetrical, national-political, and emotional, while Rorty considers solidarity to be an asymmetrical, universal bond that stems from compassion. The above deliberations show that solidarity has different, often conflicting values that entail different models of social relationships and different institutional and legal structures. In spite of this diversity, in each of the manifestations of solidarity, the constitutive element is acting in the name of values for which people are sometimes ready to make the ultimate sacrifice. Considering this constitutive role of values in bringing together solidary groups and their special ethos, solidarity could be defined as a form of ethical cooperation based on recognition, trust, and mutual radical responsibility. These values are the minimum content of solidarity, which is further discussed below.

SOLIDARITY AS AN ETHICAL ACTION

Ethicality is the inner tissue of solidarity, or in the language of contemporary analytical philosophy, its presupposition.[30] Solidarity can be illustrated by the image of French Liberty leading the people to the barricades, the symbol of the flowers in the gates of the Gdańsk Shipyard, and photos of soldiers rescuing children from the ruins of war-torn cities—in the background of solidarity, there is always a fight for the endangered good, concern for public matters, and heroism. This does not exclude the existence of solidarity in times of peace. Examples here are the solidarity of pilots, who, according to the memoirs of the French writer and pioneering aviator Antoine Saint-Exupéry,[31] were ready to sacrifice their lives to save lost comrades, or the solidarity of explorers, who together strive to conquer the highest mountains. All of the above types of solidarity, both the particularistic and group kinds, the universal and humanitarian, express the same truth: solidarity is an action that "pulls you up," and is axiologically motivated. It seems that the most glaring examples of defective solidarity—the negative solidarity focused around the idea of a common enemy, such as amoral familism[32]—create around them a certain distorted world of values, a specific culture of honor that requires vengeance. If one looks at Shakespeare's Romeo Montague, the famous lover who pays for avenging his friend by ruining the future of his marriage to Juliet, being exiled, and ultimately dying, this distorted culture of honor does seems to have a tragic yet appealing power. The bottom line of these clashes with the forces of nature, the bestiality of man, an unfair, even catastrophic, social situation, has the same value (even though the motives and concepts of what is good are different)—to show that man is something more than a "beautiful beast," and that he has dignity and creative freedom.

Rafael Jaeggi[33] calls solidarity a non-instrumental action, emphasizing the difference between the logic behind this type of action and the instrumental rationality that dominates today. Unlike

[30] P.F. Strawson, "On Referring," *Mind* (59) 1950, pp. 320–344.

[31] A. de Saint-Exupéry, *Night Flight*, Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, Warsaw 1967.

[32] D. Gambetta, "Can We Trust Trust?"

[33] R. Jaeggi, *Solidarity and Indifference*, in: *Solidarity in Health and Social Care in Europe*, R. ter Meulen, W. Arts, R. Muffels (eds.), Springer Science Business Media, Dordrecht 2001, pp. 287–307.

manifestations of the latter, a solidary action is not undertaken for egoistic interests, and the operation of a "practical mind" does not consist in choosing the most effective means of achieving a desired goal. Instead, it is taken in the name of certain values in a way that is independent of their pragmatic effectiveness; it is an example of thinking and acting "according to values," as Józef Tischner might put it. Solidarity is the ultimate form of friendship, which Aristotle described as resulting from "common love of the good," unlike the friendship of utility based on exchanging benefits, or the friendship of pleasure or lust. In both of the inferior types of trust (which are not fully deserving of this name), friends have an instrumental value; they provide each other with certain favors. Aristotle defines it in the following way: "Thus friends whose affection is based on utility do not love each other in themselves, but in so far as some benefit accrues to them from each other."[34] Things are different with the friendship of people who are "ethically brave"—such friendship is free from instrumentalism and is always a result of pure liking of the friend and a common love for the good.[35] The constitutive moment for solidarity is this moment of pure friendship, altruism, or fascination with the moral beauty of the given action, reaching beyond rational calculation: a solidary action demonstrates its ultimate authenticity when it is taken or continued *contra spem* (most acutely presented in Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus*).

However, this non-instrumentality of operation, constitutive of solidarity, does not entail a defeatist view that solidary undertakings are not fruitful. In fact, solidary actions often produce results that exceed even the most optimistic expectations of the persons undertaking them. This is illustrated by a still-topical and inspiring study (despite a number of methodological deficiencies) by Richard Titmuss, who in order to describe the nature and consequences of relationships governed by the non-instrumental logic of giving, compared the functioning of two types of blood banks: the British ("altruistic"), and American ("material").[36] He found that British blood banks, at which blood is donated for free and out of good will, are not only bigger, but also have better quality blood. In the USA, the motivation to donate blood is financial gain, and the persons

[34] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1156a.

[35] *Ibidem*, 1157b.

[36] R. Titmuss, *The Gift Relationship: From Human Blood to Social Policy*, LSE Books, London 1970.

donating are often ill or infected themselves. In contrast, the British blood banks attracted donors acting for noble reasons (the persons interviewed by Titmuss explained their decision with statements such as "After the death of my 41-year-old husband I felt so alone that I thought that maybe my blood could help save someone from the pain of a broken heart." "It's 1941, war, everyone needs blood, why not donate mine?" And, "I donated blood because I wanted to help others and as I'm blind, my options are limited." Titmuss's hypothesis is confirmed by today's studies on social capital, which show that social solidarity, trust, the ability to cooperate and other soft social skills all contribute to increasing the welfare of societies, often to a more significant extent than hard material resources.[37] At the same time, however, these fruits of solidarity cannot lead to the perspective of a *homo oeconomicus*. As Agnus Dawson and Marcel Verweij[38] emphasize in their discussion of the reduced form of "rational" solidarity (that is, interpreted in the spirit of the theory of rational choice), this is because to remain what it is, it has to be a normative action. That is, non-instrumental and ethical, and thus sometimes leading to choices clearly in conflict with the theory of rational choice, such as taking a high risk for the good of the cause, sacrifice, or even voluntarily giving up one's own life. The above epithets for solidarity—"non-instrumentality," "altruism," and "normative nature"—show that in spite of the great benefits solidary actions may generate, and regardless of the specific axiology as part of which the given solidary action is taken, the deepest level of solidarity is the ethical level. "Authentic solidarity is a solidarity of consciences," as Józef Tischner aphoristically put it.[39]

At the same time, even though the ethical moment taking place in the internal space of an individual conscience and sensitivity is constitutive of solidarity, solidarity cannot remain purely an "imagined community"[40]; it cannot exist without the actual practice of friendship and non-instrumental interpersonal bonds,

[37] R.D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York: *Simon & Schuster*; F. Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, New York: Free Press, 1995; R. Inglehart, "Trust, Well-being and Democracy," in: *Democracy and Trust,* M.E. Warren (ed.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1999.

[38] A. Dawson, M. Verweij, "Solidarity: A Moral Concept in Need of Clarification," *Public Health Ethics* (5/1) 2012, pp. 1–5.

[39] J. Tischner, *Etyka solidarności oraz homo sovieticus*, Znak, Kraków 2018, p. 18.

[40] A. San Giovanni, "Solidarity as Joint Action," *Journal of Applied Philosophy* (32/4) 2015, pp. 340–359.

and therefore without action. Jaegi emphasized that solidarity is an "ethical *action*" or an "instrumental *action*," while to Dawson and Verweij it is a "normative *action*" or in the interpretation of A. San Giovanni, simply a "joint *action*."[41] The proper sense of these definitions can be discovered through an analysis of the concept of "an action" as understood by Arendt.[42] In *The Human Condition* she differentiates between labor and production. Labor is intended to sustain the biological existence of humans, production is aimed at transforming the physical matter of the world, and action consists in establishing a proper *human* order in the world. It is only when acting that man deserves his human dignity; when only taking care of biological continuation through labor he is just an *animal laborans*, and when producing an "artificial" world, he stays at the level of a *homo faber*. According to Arendt, action is the only activity that takes place directly between people, without any thing or matter being involved, with its object being to specify the model of interpersonal relations. In Arendt's opinion, the core of actions is the fact that there are many types of people in the world, which means that they have to agree on the rules of their co-existence, that is, to define their mutual rights and obligations. The purpose of actions is to specify the scope of civic freedoms, with the introduction of a new, normative order itself being a method of experiencing and updating one's own subjective freedom. A solidary action defines mutual rights and obligations and requires cooperation and the Aristotelian "common love of the good," that is, altruism. As Titmuss has illustrated, this is the most radical way of going beyond individual and social conditions and attempting to implement a truly human, "decent"[43] order in the world.

RECOGNITION AND TRUST

Solidarity as an ethical joint action undertaken for a higher purpose has a certain loftiness to it, or even religious touch, which is present both in its Roman origins as described by Durkheim, during the socialist heyday (Leroux tried, in his own words, to create a new "secular religion"), and in the contemporary versions of atheist humanism. Paradoxically, however, serving a greater good,

[41] R. Rorty, *Przygoda, ironia i solidarność*.

[42] H. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Aletheia, Warsaw 2010.

[43] A. Margalit, *The Decent Society*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1996.

which determines if a solidary action is noble, is also the source of the potential doom of those actions. Serving higher values, additionally fueled by compassion and the belief in the possibility of building a "brave new world," is an easy justification for sacrificing individuals on the altar of a greater good. In the name of creating a new religion for humankind, various *anciens régimes* have been overthrown and their representatives, and others, guillotined—easily, and at the same time, brutally. Considering the historical examples of criminal solidarity, the question arises: is revolutionary cruelty a logical consequence or a perversion of solidarity? Can the concept of solidarity itself be used to infer a (theoretical) prohibition of such actions? In the context of this controversial issue, the question about the sources of the concept of solidarity, about its simplest analytical elements and foundations, sounds even more distinct.

David Wiggins[44] asked himself a similar question when looking for the sources of solidarity, as did Thomas Nagel[45] in his search for the sources of a corresponding concept: altruism. Importantly, they both arrived at similar conclusions, and the simple phenomenon they both cite could be seen as the basis of solidary behaviors. For Wiggins, it is the recognition of a human being by another human being. In explaining the nature of this very simple, pre-reflection ("primitive") power, Wiggins quotes Simone Weil: "Humans around us, through their sheer presence, have the power, which only they possess, to stop, restrict, and transform each of the movements of our bodies. A passer-by does not change the direction of our walk in the street in the same way a sign does, and when being alone in the room, we do not stand up, walk around, and sit down in the same way as when we have a visitor."[46] Wiggins argues that this recognition is something different than fellow-feeling or benevolence; it is a subliminal perception of someone as a representative of the same species, a human recognizing someone else as a human, which entails subconscious changes in behavior. A similar argumentation is presented by Nagel, who finds the bases of altruism in a human recognizing someone else as a human: "Even though altruistic motives depend not on love, or on any other interpersonal sentiment,

[44] D. Wiggins, *Solidarity and the Root of the Ethical*, The Lindley Lecture, The University of Kansas 2008.

[45] T. Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1970.

[46] S. Weil, "The Iliad, or the Poem of Force," in: *Dzieła*, S. Weil, Brama, Poznań 2004, p. 473.

but on a presumably universal recognition of the reality of the other person, altruism is not remotely universal, for we continually block the effects of that recognition."[47]

Even though the power of "recognizing a man in a man" may seem too primitive to become the basis of universal morality, the thesis can be proven indirectly. These arguments reference examples of the consequences of contradicting the seemingly natural mechanism of recognizing a man in a man. The phenomenon is insightfully described by Israeli philosopher Avishai Margalit in *The Decent Society*.[48] In his opinion, indecent institutions are those that humiliate citizens. The most fundamental example of this humiliation is one person or a group of persons being excluded from the category of "one human family" by presenting them as lesser beings: "sub-humans," "animals," "things," or "monsters." A clear historical example in this respect is the anti-Semitic propaganda in Nazi Germany, which presented Jews as "non-humans," "devils," "animals" (Judensau), "germs," and "parasites," and therefore subordinate to the Arian race of superhumans. This effectively led to their reduction to mere numbers in the concentration camps. Even though solidarity is something more than just a minimum of decency, that minimum of decency is the backbone of authentic (ethical) solidarity, reflected in the phrase "an impulse of solidarity," cited by supporters of humanistic solidarity. Since man is a "dialectic of universality and exception," as Anna Gałdowa has put it,[49] this "primitive" impulse of solidarity could be seen as putting identity over differences, involvement over indifference, and activity over passive participation. But free choice always permits the other option: white South Africans do not have to sympathize with their next-door neighbors, putting skin color over living on the same soil. In the same way, Polish intellectuals did not have to get involved with the workers. Even the seemingly unquestionable membership of a human family can, with the right propaganda efforts, be undermined. In spite of the "primitive" nature of the mechanism of recognizing a man in a man, it seems that the ethical minimalism of a man that takes others seriously is sufficient to prevent crime.

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[47] T. Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*..., pp. 145–146.

[48] A. Margalit, *The Decent Society*...

[49] A. Gałdowa, *Powszechność i wyjątek. Rozwój osobowości człowieka dorosłego*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2000.

However, solidarity is something more than decency, which is a *sine qua non*, but not a sufficient condition for the existence of solidarity. The duties of a "decent man"[50] are mostly negative in nature: do not humiliate others, do not treat them as a means to achieve your ends, do not kill, do not take their property. These negative duties do not exhaust the phenomenon of solidarity, which is a force capable of truly Copernican social turnabouts. Therefore, power has to be accompanied by a force capable of bringing about such social revolutions. It seems that as solidary communities get closer, as common actions intensify and a unity of consciences occurs, the *spiritus movens* grows and so does the feeling that builds friendship: trust. Trust is something more than recognition, as it requires not only recognition of a human in a human, but also for "a man to trust another man"[51] or, in the words of Piotr Sztompka,[52] to "bet" on his good will. Of the various concepts of trust, two are particularly worth looking at: the concept of altruistic trust and the concept of calculated trust. The theory of calculated trust, rooted in the paradigm of the theory of rational choice, defines trust as encapsulated interest.[53] For instance, a mother can trust her babysitter because she knows that the woman has no interest in not taking care of the baby, as this would lead to losing her job and, potentially, legal sanctions. Calculated trust, as a form involving egotistical motivations, closes the individual in a world of monads without windows, a world in which perception is narrowly egotistical, or in some cases broadened to include enlightened self--interest. Altruistic trust, which goes beyond the logic of profitability, expands the narrow, egotistical horizons. Jane Mansbridge,[54] the main proponent of this phenomenon, gives the example of a white woman who passes a black man in the street at night; the decision not to cross to the other side of the road requires the woman to give the man a credit of trust, and if this is to be an example of altruistic trust, it has to be given because of a belief in his humanity. This example shows that the center of altruistic trust is the moment of

[50] W. Bartoszewski, *Warto być przyzwoitym*, W drodze, Kraków 2005.

[51] G. Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, Free Press, New York 1950, in: G. Mollering, *Trust, Reason, Routine, Reflexivity*, Elsvier, Oxford 2006.

[52] P. Sztompka, *Trust: A Sociological Theory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1999.

[53] R. Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness*, Russell Sage, New York 2002.

[54] J. Mansbridge, "Altruistic Trust," in: *Democracy and Trust*, M.E. Warren (ed.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1999, pp. 290–309.

recognition of someone else's humanity, as described by Wiggins and Nagel, or of Kantian respect for the man as an end in itself, and goes beyond it. Unlike recognition, trust is not a subliminal cognitive act, but a voluntary act, a virtue streaked with strong emotions (trust makes the body produce oxytocin, a neurotransmitter responsible for creating stronger and more intimate interpersonal relations; the same hormone is produced during childbirth, building an emotional bond between mother and child).[55] Generalized trust is a social bond and a social capital, which positively affects the quality of functioning of democratic institutions, lowers crime rates, and contributes to the "wealth of nations."[56] R. Putnam[57] differentiated two types of social trust: one "binding" the lowest level social structures, from the family to the small local community, and one "bridging" social structures, which makes it possible to cooperate with strangers. The duties undertaken in such communities are not solely negative in nature: the closer the bond of trust, the easier it is to voluntarily carry out mutual duties, and to a greater extent.

MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY

Solidary groups are constituted by a common love of the good, and by the fervor of acting together. This has been compared by Arendt to the magic of the performing arts, especially the theater, which is known to "enchant" audiences (just like solidarity, which is considered by some to be the "new religion" of humanity—since antiquity the theater has had a religious halo around it, performing the function of a liturgy of catharsis). The values that constitute a group and give sense and an aesthetic panache to the actions of its members also produce special rules of cooperation, that is, the ethos of solidarity mentioned above. A. Buyx and B. Preinsack defined the "new paradigm of solidarity emerging in bioethics" in the following way: "Solidarity comprises manifestations of the willingness to carry the costs of assisting others with whom a person recognizes sameness or similarity in at least one relevant respect."[58] As shown by historical examples, such readiness to incur costs often takes

[55] P. Zak, M. Kosfeld, M. Heinrichs, U. Fischbacher, E. Fehr, "Oxytocin Increases Trust in Humans," *Nature* (2) 2005, pp. 673–676.

[56] Cf. R. Inglehart, *Trust, Well-being and Democracy*...

[57] R.D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1994.

[58] A. Buyx, B. Prainsack, *Solidarity: Reflections on an Emerging Concept in Bioethics*, The Nuffield Council on Bioethics, Swindon 2011, p. 47.

a radical form. In the Roman *societas*, it involved the responsibility of each of the debtors for the entire debt. In the Polish Solidarity movement, which grew out of the Workers' Defense Committee, it helped the persecuted and those left with no means to live. And in the proponents of humanistic solidarity, it is the postulate of responsibility for the fate of all humanity. Solidary cooperation is different from other forms of cooperation, such as cooperation to earn money or provide services, not only because of the different sense of the actions (being neither labor nor production), and not only because of the constitutive role of the values, but also because of the ethos of radical mutual responsibility that follows from these values, and which cannot be expected in other, looser associations or interest groups. However, this ethos is not charitable in nature, as might be suggested by the image of the good Samaritan, which is often referred to in the context of solidarity.[59] An insightful alternative is proposed by Zbigniew Stawrowski, who refers to the biblical story of the Good Samaritan to mark the difference between a relationship of mercy between the injured man and his savior, and the relationship of solidarity that could arise if, apart from the Samaritan, there had been other noble people there, such as a Greek or an Egyptian, who would collectively take care of the robbed Jew.[60] A similar approach is presented by Andrea San Giovanni, who in discussing the activities of charities, concludes that solidary relationships exist between those members who take axiologically inspired actions and help one another, and not between these members and the persons they help.[61] In view of the above profound comments, solidarity appears to be a bond that was originally horizontal, and the assistance provided by solidary associations is secondary to other types of activities, such as creative, civic, or ethical activities. However, this bond is also strong enough to oblige people to take far-reaching responsibility for one another, sometimes taking merciful, asymmetric forms of helping citizens in need. Such forms are, however, incidental to the horizontal core of solidarity. Solidarity thus differs from mercy, charity, and other relations of help. Although they share many common features, such

[59] Cf. i.a. J. Tischner, *Etyka solidarności oraz homo sovieticus*...

[60] Z. Stawrowski, "Solidarity, Mercy, Justice," in: *In Freedom, In Solidarity: Civil Reistance in Poland and the Philippines 1980–1990,* Clarinda E. Calma (ed.), Kraków–Manila 2016, pp. 45–56.

[61] A. San Giovanni, "Solidarity as Joint Action," p. 350.

as disinterest, a gift attitude, and a readiness to carry the cost of helping others, solidarity is an inherently horizontal friendship like an isonomic civil relation (even if accidental disturbances of this horizontality can occur), while charity is primarily vertical—it is the relation of beneficiary and benefactor, someone more powerful with someone weaker and in need of help, which is constituted by this need of assistance.

The image of solidarity as spontaneously born friendship governed by the logic of a gift—which even though it can often take the radical form of repaying someone's debts or taking on their burdens—remains a voluntary and isonomic relationship, and raises the question of the social and legal form of solidarity. How can friendship be institutionalized? As the institutions of welfare states show, the forced institutionalization of mercy produces results contrary to those intended, including excessive "administrative charity," the learned helplessness of the beneficiaries, and the crowding out of civic virtues, including spontaneous solidarity.[62] At the same time, as pointed out by A. Buyx and B. Preinsack,[63] the authors of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics report, there are several layers to this rule. The first is the private and interpersonal layer, which also covers informal groups and associations; the second is the layer of the general public; and the third is the normative layer, the layer of institutionalized solidarity. It is obvious that every form of solidarity has a legal dimension: even spontaneously created groups and solidary associations of friends or colleagues, whether scientific societies, charities, or trade unions, at some stage decide to formalize their activities, thus moving to the normative level. As such, they can encounter either legal facilitations or obstacles from state institutions, and it is crucial to the development of social capital that they encounter the primary—supportive but subsidiary—obligation of the state. Second, most European states do take on some solidary functions, which due to their complexity, importance, or the size of the solidary group, can or should be performed by institutions with a nationwide reach. This is why it is so important to reflect on the nature of such institutions in order to determine both their legitimization and the boundaries of such solidary actions, so they do not become barriers or competition

[62] M. Radzikowski, *Państwo socjalne. Przyczyny i skutki,* Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper, Warsaw 2013.

[63] A. Buyx, B. Prainsack, *Solidarity...*

to actions taken at the social or group levels of solidarity. Józef Tischner's idea could be a guideline in the process of determining the legal framework of solidarity, which is especially intriguing in view of the then paradoxical situation of confrontation between the spontaneous movement of social solidarity, and the rhetoric of solidarity and universal brotherhood presented by the socialist state: "Solidarity has another aspect: it does not have to be imposed on people by force. Solidarity is about one thing only: that no obstacles are put in front of it, no stupid, pointless obstacles."[64] In the light of this tradition, and the well-argued thesis about the crowding out of solidarity,[65] it should be concluded that rather than welfarist or socialist maximalism, broad minimalism seems to be the answer, in which the task of legal institutions is primarily to create a framework for developing a social culture of solidarity, including, for instance, administrative facilitations for establishing new associations, tax relief for charitable organizations, and decentralization of state administration to the furthest possible extent. In the context of this legal minimalism, A. Margalit's proposition of a decent society whose institutions do not humiliate the citizens (including by means of excessive care) is constitutive—in other words, in the language of classic philosophy, a society believing in the idea of the state's subsidiary role. Another argument in favor of this minimalism is the fact that, as Leszek Kołakowski put it, too rigorous codes exclude the taking of supererogatory actions, preventing the "production of saints."[66] A similar claim can be made with respect to the "production" of solidarity, which in the heyday of the Solidarity movement was referred to as being a miracle (a miracle of a new beginning, an *initium*, as Arendt might put it). The prerequisite for such a miracle of solidarity is that it must be ethical and voluntary, not imposed by any legal or extra-legal force, or nature of actions.

SUMMARY: SOLIDARITY IN A "POST-TRUTH" AGE

Alberto Giacometti, a Swiss sculptor, was concerned with the atrocities of World War II, and had a sensitive understanding of all

[64] J. Tischner, *Etyka solidarności oraz homo sovieticus*, p. 13.

[65] I. Bohnet, B.S. Frey, S. Huck, "More Order with Less Law: On Contract Enforcement, Trust and Crowding," *American Political Science Review* 95, pp. 131–144.

[66] L. Kołakowski, "Etyka bez kodeksu," in: *Kultura i fetysze*, L. Kołakowski, Warsaw 2000, pp. 139–173.

the intellectual changes it would bring, along with the nature of the new, emerging, postwar world. During the war and afterwards, the figures of men he sculpted were so tiny that he could transport them all in a suitcase. This minimization was his response to the fall of humanity and the disgraceful bankruptcy of all the classic "big ideas" that were constitutive of European identity by cynical warfare ideologies. The postwar epoch was a time of lucidly sad reckoning with the fallen faith in moral progress, rationality, and the possibility of building a brave new world. It resulted in a cautious attitude, minimalistic in its philosophical claims, and mistrustful toward the "grand narratives" and grand ideas of postmodernity. The same, or even greater, mistrust characterizes our post-truth[67] world today. Our postmodern and post-truth taste cannot stomach any overly grand, over-abstract, and excessively visionary ideas, even if we are still hungry for philosophical reflection and pragmatic cooperation.

The proposed theory of solidarity arises from these contradictory contexts: simultaneous mistrust and cautious philosophical minimalism, coupled with a quest for trustful, solidary relations and the guiding ideas of solidarity—as such, it is a product of, and answer to, its times. The minimalist theory of solidarity outlined here is not an expression of essentialism; it is an expression of caution. Its aim is to remind us of the ethical presuppositions and self--obliging fundaments of solidarity and its moral roots. It is to remind us that a politics undertaken in the name of solidarity—in order to be faithful to its ethical roots, to the language it deploys, and the philosophical traditions it refers to—cannot be Machiavellian, but has to be moral. Is the "solidarity" of criminal organizations worth its name? Is the amoral familism of a mafia, or inner loyalty of a terrorist organization, real trust? I doubt it. The proposed ethical theory of solidarity explains why: the ethical roots of solidarity oblige. Obviously, in practice different kinds of solidarity can enter into conflict. The specific duties of solidarity depend on the density of the moral bond linking the solidary group. It is clear that duties arising from local solidarity will usually be more abundant than the duties arising from universal solidarity, just as the duties we have toward close friends are usually more abundant than the duties toward distant colleagues. However, minimal solidarity reminds us of the

[67] "Post-truth" was named word of the year by Oxford Dictionaries, Alison Flood, *The Guardian* (November 15, 2016).

necessary moral core of every solidary action, which obliges us not only to faithfulness toward our own group, but also to recognition of the humanity of the other. That this approach is possible, even in politics, is best proven by the Polish Solidarity movement, which was an example of a self-limiting revolution and bloodless political change.

The search for new forms of solidarity, claims of its new, recently emerging forms, and even the voices announcing its crisis, all testify to the correctness of the above diagnosis: we still need solidarity, both pragmatically and philosophically. The constant revival of solidarity stems both from the social nature of man (rooted in his capacity for altruism) and from the yearning for a broadening spectrum of individual and social freedom. Solidarity is a way in which freedom exists, as Józef Tischner might say. Calling for solidarity in a time of a crisis does not mean there is a crisis of solidarity; it is rather indicative of the creative work of freedom, which can produce new solidary miracles.