

TAYLOR ON SOLIDARITY

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1. Sophisticated Communitarianism

If asked to place Charles Taylor's thought, most political theorists would probably say that it represents a kind of sophisticated communitarianism. They would do so despite the fact that Taylor never defines himself as a communitarian and despite his obvious misgivings about that term (Taylor, 1994: 250; 1995: 181-203; 1996). So what exactly justifies this commonplace way of situating Taylor's political thought? In the following discussion we shall suggest it has to do with Taylor's understanding of solidarity. By looking at what Taylor has to say about solidarity, we get a better idea of what sophisticated communitarianism means and why we might want to embrace or reject it.

It is not hard to see how competing views about the nature and significance of solidarity set up the fundamental terms of debate between communitarians and liberals. For communitarians, solidarity refers to a *good* that is plentiful in closely-knit, strongly bonded communities but scarce in the mainstream of modern liberal individualist society. This is not just a matter of how things supposedly *are*: for on the communitarian view, the shortage of this good is fundamentally what is wrong with modern liberal societies and it is this feature of them that communitarians most want to change. Communitarians are inclined to believe that in lacking a strong sense of community, in being only weakly and contingently bound to other members of the political community and to the community's defining institutions, the denizens of modern liberal societies are actually worse off, from a moral point of view, than the citizens of more traditional societies, despite the increase in individual freedom and other benefits modernity brings. The communitarian concept of solidarity thus provides a normative standard by which to criticise modern liberal societies, as well as liberalism itself for failing to appreciate the crucial contribution solidarity makes to the good life.

The charge rankles for liberals, who prefer not to get embroiled in controversial claims and endless disputes about the nature of the good life. They focus instead, of course, on the basic freedoms, the fundamental rights and duties, which just societies must secure, and which modern liberal societies do in fact secure, in the view of liberals, at least more effectively than any other social form. Furthermore, many liberals are suspicious of communitarian talk of solidarity because they see it as a *threat* to these basic freedoms. In particular, they are wary of the danger communitarian talk of solidarity represents to the freedom to formulate, endorse, and above all reject, prevailing conceptions of the good. A common liberal response to the communitarian claim that modern liberal societies have insufficient solidarity is to disavow a stake in the issue, or in a similar move, to suspend judgement on the grounds that it is not for the philosopher (and perhaps anyone else) to pronounce on how much solidarity a society needs to maintain itself or to flourish. But where it is acknowledged that some kind of stance on this issue is unavoidable, liberals tend to assume that solidarity and social cohesion *follow* more or less unproblematically from proper liberal institutions. Both these responses feed into the standard liberal view that the right amount of solidarity for a society is simply the amount that *emerges* from this process, that is to say, from the institutionalisation and exercise of basic freedoms.

Now Taylor certainly shares the view associated with communitarianism, but by no means unique to it, that a vivid sense of doing things together, of being bound by joint

commitments, common goals or projects, or a shared fate, lends depth to moral life and in this sense makes life better. He thus shares the communitarian conviction that solidarity is a crucial human good. Furthermore, for Taylor the good of solidarity is tied to what he takes to be a general human need to connect with, or participate in, some ‘larger life’ (Taylor, 1975). This need for connection with or participation in a larger life is a key feature of Taylor’s philosophical anthropology. It is owing to such connection or participation that human beings find meaning in life, and it is also how they tap into what Taylor calls ‘moral sources’ (Taylor, 1989). Many communitarians would no doubt find this anthropological view congenial. But Taylor himself does not see the good of solidarity, and certainly not the good arising from connection with or participation in a larger life, as at odds with liberalism as such. Unlike some communitarians, he does not make an argument with liberalism on this score. On the few occasions when Taylor does explicitly take up the theme of solidarity, he has no intention of defending it as a good to which the ‘liberal’ goods of freedom and equality ought to be made subordinate.

What, for the most part, we rather find to be at stake is the idea of solidarity as a *condition* or *presupposition* of the conception of the good to which liberalism, and modern liberal society generally, is *itself* committed. So whereas we could characterise the communitarian view as a normative claim for more solidarity and (where it is necessary to achieve this) less individual freedom, and we could characterise the standard liberal view of solidarity (the view that goes beyond discomfort at endorsing any such view at all) as a normative claim for only so much solidarity as freedom allows, Taylor views solidarity as a condition for the realisation of the ideals of freedom and equality more or less explicitly advanced by liberalism, and which at any rate are central to the self-understanding of modern liberal societies.

Thus Taylor’s thinking on solidarity is for the most part framed by the question: what conditions need to be in place for freedom and equality to be realised in a more adequate form in modern societies? This is not a *purely* normative concern, because the point of asking the question is to address some perceived inadequacy in the way freedom and equality are actually realised in modern societies. It is this doubt about the ability of modern institutions to deliver on their legitimising values that precipitates Taylor’s reflections on solidarity. Moreover, since in Taylor’s view freedom and equality have a *self-defining* significance for us, since they are so deeply entrenched in what Taylor calls the ‘modern identity’ (Taylor, 1989), any systematic failure to realise them is not just a normative but an *existential* problem, one that cannot but affect our understanding of who we are. The goal of reaching a more clairvoyant form of self-understanding *in view of the tensions and contradictions immanent to the modern identity* is never far from Taylor’s concerns, and this is no less true of his reflections on solidarity than it is of his other writings. Typically, in Taylor’s ‘sophisticated communitarian’ view we should be neither uncritical (liberal) ‘boosters’ nor over-pessimistic (communitarian) ‘knockers’ of modernity (Taylor, 1991).

2. Three Contexts of Solidarity

We shall distinguish three contexts in which Taylor develops this approach to solidarity: civic, socio-economic and moral. Taylor himself makes a distinction of this kind in the one essay he has devoted explicitly and singly to the theme of solidarity (Taylor, 2007b), and it is

implicit throughout Taylor's writings that touch on the subject.¹ We should point out though that Taylor does not offer a full theory of solidarity or a unified account of it, so what follows is a reconstruction aimed at drawing out the common threads of his various discussions.

The first context concerns the *political allegiance* of the *citizens* of democratic states. We are dealing here with the kind of solidarity required for keeping regimes that understand themselves as self-governing liberal democracies together. The second context concerns the *social union* of full members of a particular social world as beneficiaries of and contributors to the common good of a particular society. Taylor presents the choice between capitalism and socialism as one between more or less solidary associations of this sort. The third context concerns the *moral ties* that bind all human beings together as part of *humanity*, or what binds the universal, boundary-less community of moral subjects. The parable of the Good Samaritan, who acts without consideration of existing social relations, is a paradigm case of what solidarity means in this context.

In each of these contexts, talk of justice or *rights* is appropriate and common (moral rights, democratic rights, socio-economic rights). But talk of relations of solidarity will complement the picture. It is not only that it would be a mistake, as Taylor has famously argued, to conceive of the bearers of rights according to an *atomistic* ontology whereas talk of solidarity will provide a more relational or holistic picture (Taylor, 1985b). (Such atomistic ontology does not currently have many followers among political philosophers, and Taylor's early polemics have certainly been influential in this respect.) It is also that standing in such relations is not mere enjoyment of rights and protected statuses, but they bring with them *burdens, duties and high demands* (to vote, to read newspapers and even go to war in defence of one's country; to participate in humanitarian action in order to alleviate the suffering of strangers, or to make sacrifices in the name of justice; to pay taxes, to work etc.). And where there are great burdens and high demands, a question of *motivation* of compliance may arise: why carry the burden in the situation, here and now? Why not do something more immediately gratifying than comply with the demands?

Solidarity may be relevant here. It provides an answer which differs from self-interest, mere sense of duty or rightness (and the related self-perception of being 'righteous'), and arguably differs from altruism as well. In a sense solidarity shares elements with all of these, but is different in having to do with the ideals of mutuality, reciprocity, belonging, sharing or unity. These aspects can be highlighted with comparison to friendship. Although none of the relations in question are literally forms of friendship, and there are important differences, there may be some aspects that an analogue might illustrate. For example, it may be that moral solidarity involves the possibility of standing in a relationship, which like friendship, has certain built-in burdens, but can also be experienced as meaningful, important and rewarding: it is constitutive of being a friend both that one takes the burdens as binding reasons to act, and that one does that gladly, and does not miss the joys of friendship. Perhaps something similar can be said to hold of moral relations between strangers? (see section 5). At least Taylor holds that the civic relationships that are characteristic of liberal democracies resemble friendships in that the sharing in question is valued in itself, and not merely instrumentally (see section 3). And Taylor has some sympathy with the view (proposed by

¹ The essay of Taylor's we refer to here is a commentary on Tischner, 1981. Taylor's original text was written in English. It was published in Polish in 2000 and in German in 2000/2001. It was published in English in 2007 as translated from the Polish version; the translator Artur Rosman tells us that this was because the English original was lost. The English translation was approved by Taylor, but it also departs significantly at times from the German.

Josef Tischner in his book on solidarity) that socio-economic relations have a normative structure that is comparable with that of face-to-face conversation, even if this structure is necessarily at odds with the dynamic of capitalist societies (see section 4).

Taylor's distinctive move in each of these contexts of solidarity is to claim that the relationship at stake, be it civic, socio-economic or moral, poses normatively *justified* demands, which are motivationally *demanding*, but *insufficiently motivating* on their own. He thinks we need some understanding of *extra* motivational sources or thicker resources which explain why people do (or would) live up to the exacting demands. Taylor accepts that our self-understanding as members of either particular communities or humanity at large has *some* motivational power, but he suspects they are too thin to resonate deeply and enduringly within us. In Taylor's view, a realistic picture of what moves people to solidarity has to account for the extra motivation, when it happens. But taking the analogues to friendship seriously suggests that morality, democracy and socio-economic cooperation can be viewed as separate spheres or relations which are normatively *justified*, motivationally *demanding*, but also *sufficiently motivating* on their own. We will cash out this suggestion in more detail in the three contexts below.

3. Civic Solidarity

Let us move on then to the first context of solidarity Taylor highlights: what we are calling *civic* or *citizen solidarity* and which Taylor often refers to simply as *patriotism*. Civic solidarity is the allegiance that binds together citizens of a political community. Taylor argues that such solidarity is indispensable for well-functioning democracies. The general reason he gives for this is that citizen solidarity, or patriotic allegiance to the political community, provides the *motivation to participate in self-rule*, and to defend the institutions of self-rule when they come under threat. The structure of Taylor's argument here, as we have already seen, is to identify a shared good (in this case the practice of self-rule) which is *inherently motivating* (it does not need to supervene on other goods or be instrumental to them to motivate action), but which when taken together with other goods or inherently motivating things is not *sufficiently motivating* to sustain the practice in question.

At one level, Taylor is simply saying that being a good citizen, especially a good citizen of a democracy, *isn't easy*. This is obvious at times of crisis and war, when citizens may be called upon to act with great courage and self-sacrifice for the sake of others and the political community at large. If that kind of action is to be willingly undertaken, if it is to be done freely and not just under coercion or duress - as democracy requires it to be - then it must be motivated by something more, Taylor suggests, than the rewards inherent in democratic activity itself. But it is not just extreme situations such as defending the community from outside threats that call for solidaristic sacrifice. For even in normal times democracies (understood as regimes of self-rule) require smaller scale sacrifices from their citizens in order to function properly as democracies at all: they require citizens who will voluntarily and routinely perform the mundane duties of citizenship, such as paying taxes, doing jury service, voting and so forth. Taylor's point is that one would not bother being a good citizen, or be troubled to go out of one's way to do the right thing as a citizen, unless one had an *attachment* to the political community. And this attachment, he thinks, comes primarily through some kind of *identification*. It is this identification with the political community that provides the *extra* motivation needed for the prosecution of the onerous duties and burdens of democratic citizenship.

But Taylor makes a further point about solidarity in this context which is worth remarking on. It is that in order to act *effectively* as a *collective agent*, the political community requires an effective collective will. It must have *shared goals* that matter to a majority of the people. These goals must therefore be integrated into the identity of the people. Possession of such identity is the mark of a *patriot*. Strong democracies, in the sense of self-ruling societies capable of effective action, need patriots. They need people whose love for and attachment to the political community is such that they are able to put the common good of the political community (or its shared goals) above other shared goods (such as friendships and family well-being) and private interests.

Now we can assess the merits of this view under three aspects: 1) does democracy really need an *extra* source of motivation, that is, one beyond the rewards inherent in democratic practice? 2) Does the extra motivation need to arise from a solidaristic *identification* with the community? Need it take the form of *patriotism*? 3) Even if it does, has Taylor picked out the *most appropriate* community for playing this role? Assuming that the citizens of a healthy democracy have to identify solidaristically with *something*, is it the *kind* of thing Taylor suggests it is? What kind of solidarity is *best* suited to democratic purposes?

1) It is surely too strong a claim to say that a democracy whose citizens carry out the burdens of self-rule willingly and for its own sake, without any extra source of motivation, is *inconceivable*. Or to put it in the terms we introduced before, there seems little reason to assert that the shared goods of democracy are *necessarily* insufficiently inherently motivating. But the abstract question of what is or is not humanly possible, taken independently of particular historical contexts, is not really what is at issue here. The more interesting question, and the one Taylor grapples with, concerns the motivational resources that are available to citizens of *modern* democracies, and in particular the different forms of mass liberal democracy. In these cases, Taylor can point to a number of factors that mitigate the sufficiency of the motivation for political self-rule. First, there is the highly individuated nature of democratic citizenship, which makes the nature and extent of political participation much more a matter of individual choice (and in many cases at least, matters of more or less rational calculation). Second, there is the value modern civilization places on what Taylor calls 'ordinary life' (Taylor, 1989), roughly family and working life, which provides powerful motivations of its own to rival those for self-rule. Third, there is the massive pluralisation of belief and value-horizon within the modern world, and the corresponding 'diversity of goods', that creates many more possibilities for non-political self-expression. The sheer scale of modern liberal democracies (and the associated emergence of 'free-riding' phenomena), the rise of 'procedural liberalisms' with their focus on state neutrality and individual rights and entitlements (as opposed to the common good of political participation), the fragmented and 'mediatised' state of the public sphere, and so on, lend additional weight to Taylor's thesis that the willing assumption of the burdens of self-rule requires some extra source of motivation *at least for us*.

Of course it would hardly be a negligible consideration in favour of this thesis if it could be shown that the best descriptions of what *actually* mobilizes the citizens of modern liberal democracies to defend their democratic way of life invoke some extra motivating source. And this is just what Taylor believes such descriptions do. In some cases this is obvious: it is some shared ethnic, linguistic, religious, and above all national identification that mobilizes the citizens of liberal democracies freely to take up the sacrifices and burdens of their citizenship. But there are also less obvious cases of liberal democracies exhibiting reliance on this

solidaristic force. Taylor gives the example of the outrage precipitated by the Watergate scandal amongst American citizens, and the affront to American democracy Watergate seemed to represent (Taylor, 1995: 196). Rather than being an expression of individual self-interest or altruism, the outrage had its roots, Taylor suggests, in patriotic identification. It was identification with the 'American way of life', defined in part by a commitment to the ideals articulated in the such documents as the Declaration of Independence and Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and the shared history they helped forge, that made the Watergate affair so intolerable to many Americans and that mobilized them against it.

Taylor argues that this pattern of mobilization is typical of the way democracy maintains, defends, and reproduces itself. He directs this argument against 'atomist sources of allegiance', such as rational self-interest, as if democracies could rely on them when in times of crisis. The point he is making here is that some kind of *solidarity* is required over and above 'atomist' sources of allegiance. He writes:

'Pure enlightened self-interest will never move enough people strongly enough to constitute a real threat to potential despots and putschists. Nor will there be enough people who are moved by universal principle, unalloyed with particular identifications, moral citizens of the cosmopolis, Stoic or Kantian, to stop these miscreants in their tracks. As for those who support society because of the prosperity and security it generates, they are only fair-weather friends and are bound to let you down when you need them' (Taylor, 1995: 197).

But now the reach of Taylor's claim extends much further than atomism. For a start, it is presented in a way that makes it look like an answer to the 'abstract' question raised above about what is humanly possible under *any* historical circumstances. Like all such answers, it appears dogmatic: Who is to say how many people will be motivated by what to defend democracy in the future? But more important, in the course of this passage the target of Taylor's claim moves from the atomistic denial of the need democracy has for solidarity *as such*, to Stoic or Kantian denials of the need democracy has for a *specific mode* of solidarity, namely patriotism based on local identifications. This brings us to the second aspect of Taylor's overall view.

2) One way of tackling the problem of motivating citizens to take on the burdens of democracy is to strengthen the source of motivation. Another way is to reduce the burdens. This is arguably the option 'procedural liberalism' takes. Democracies in the procedural liberal mould, such as the United States, secure freedom more by constitutional principles and legal entitlements than political participation. We have just seen that Taylor thinks even procedural liberal democracies need more than atomistic sources of allegiance. This is one reason why the atomistic self-understanding of such democracies is wrong. It is wrong because it fails to acknowledge the indispensability of some kind of civic solidarity. But procedural liberalism of course need not have this atomistic self-understanding. It can and often does acknowledge the importance of civic solidarity. But what kind of solidarity is it truly able to countenance?

The main problem here, as Taylor sees it, has to do with the procedural liberal conception of state *neutrality*. The procedural liberal insistence on the neutrality of the state is justified by the reasonable requirement that the state ought not arbitrarily to favour particular individuals or groups. A truly liberal democratic, pluralist state ought not to discriminate against groups whose conception of the good happens to depart from the majority or state-endorsed

conception, so long as those groups abide by general constitutional principles, or principles of right. But by presenting this point as if it amounted to a hard and fast principle that the state be neutral with respect to the good, procedural liberalism is unable to acknowledge the *particular* good on which the requisite solidarity of its citizens is based. It is not just, as Taylor points out, that liberal democratic states, even of the procedural variety, can hardly be neutral between patriots and anti-patriots. In addition, there must be some common goal or project which the solidaristic sentiment attaches to, and which attaches to *this* political community in particular. The bond has to be forged by way of 'a love of the particular', as Taylor puts it, and it is just this that patriotism provides. The state therefore cannot be neutral with respect to the solidaristic force that sustains 'this specific historical set of institutions and forms'; on the contrary such sustenance 'is and must be a socially endorsed common end' (Taylor, 1995: 198).

Taylor's point about the tension between procedural liberalism's commitment to neutrality and its acknowledgement of the need for patriotic solidarity is well-made. It is hard to see how these two requirements for liberal democracy can be reconciled. But there are other ways of acknowledging the need for solidarity amongst citizens within the framework of procedural liberalism. Perhaps the most influential attempt at doing this is Habermas's notion of constitutional patriotism (Habermas, 1998: 225; 2001: 74).

On the one hand, Habermas wants to defend a thin legalistic or procedural model of political integration, one which allows for multiple, diverse and contested conceptions of the good. The key point of contrast here is with models that invoke a pre-politically determined '*Volk*' or 'people' for the purpose of securing political integration. On the other hand, by invoking the idea of constitutional *patriotism*, Habermas seems to be acknowledging the force of Taylor's 'republican' thesis that self-rule requires strong bonds of solidarity between citizens, and so identification with the political community. Constitutional patriotism, taken literally, requires constitutional *patriots*: people swept up by their care for the constitution, and the institutions and particular forms of life that embody it, to the point where the constitution means more to them (at least sometimes) than their self-interest or local allegiances. This love of the law, or attachment to it, and not just the mechanisms of law itself, presumably serves a politically integrative function: it pulls people together who otherwise would be politically antagonistic or indifferent to each other.

Now Taylor has no objection to this model in principle. Indeed his notions of 'shared identity space' (Taylor, 1999: 281) - where political identity is itself made a matter of public deliberation - and 'deep diversity' (Taylor, 1993:183) - where different modes of belonging and so ways of being a patriot are acknowledged and accepted - bear a close resemblance to Habermas's model and can easily be seen to supplement it. So long as the 'constitution' is understood as historically and culturally indexed, as 'permeated by ethics' as Habermas himself says (Habermas, 1998: 218) - Taylor concedes it is an appropriate object of patriotic sentiment. The problems, from Taylor's point of view, emerge when the object of patriotism is understood not this way, but *purely* procedurally. The pure procedural model abstracts the self-defining principles of democracy from history and culture altogether. But it is asking a lot for people to identify so closely with such a thing. This is all the more evident when contrasted to the source of actual political identification and commitment amongst the citizens of modern liberal democracies: the nation (Taylor, 1997). It is not hard to see why people identify so strongly with the imagined community of a nation, with its history, myths, symbols, public presence and so forth. It is less reasonable to expect the citizens of a liberal democracy to identify so readily and fully with legal principles or constitutions.

Indeed, on the face of it, the pure proceduralist model of constitutional patriotism, one that divorces the object of patriotic sentiment from all particularity, looks like an unstable hybrid of what we have called civic solidarity and moral solidarity. The model acknowledges that common sources of mobilization are needed for citizens to sustain the shared goals and projects of a particular democratic life form. But the very universality of its constitutional principles seems to require it to extend this solidarity to everyone, that is, to the universal community of moral beings. This creates an instability, because the latter is not the kind of solidarity that we would expect to be able to motivate purposeful collective action, which is of course crucial for solidarity of the former kind. As if reflecting this tension, Habermas himself seems to oscillate between the ‘thick’ model of constitutional patriotism (which Taylor finds quite congenial) and a ‘thin’ more purely procedural cosmopolitan model (which Taylor finds much more problematic) (Fine and Smith, 2003; Boon, 2007). It is revealing for Taylor’s own view of the matter quickly to consider why this oscillation arises in Habermas’s thought.

3) The first point we looked at had to do with Taylor’s rejection of atomist construals of liberalism. The second concerned his misgivings about procedural liberalism, especially its commitment to a doctrine of the neutrality of the state. The third feature we want to look at briefly is directed against what Taylor takes to be a well-intentioned but misguided view of the universal inclusivity of the liberal democratic community. In Taylor’s view, the patriotism that liberal democracies require necessarily *excludes* some people. And it is this feature of Taylor’s view that cosmopolitans cannot accept.

But as I have just suggested, this is also a feature of Habermas’s view. Just as Taylor maintains that liberal democracies cannot but distinguish between patriots and anti-patriots, and be partial towards the former, so Habermas maintains that ‘any political community that understands itself as a democracy must at least distinguish between members and non-members’ (Habermas, 2001: 107). It must distinguish between the included and the excluded. This distinction is entailed by the ‘love for the particular’ that Taylor and Habermas agree is needed by liberal democracies. Cosmopolitan critics of Habermas might object to this view on the grounds that it paradoxically makes it impossible for a democratic political body to include everyone. But there is surely only an appearance of a paradox here. Democratic rule, as the self-rule of a people, does indeed include *all* the citizens who make up ‘the people’ or the political community. It is perfectly consistent with this model that *everyone* belongs to such a community, or in other words, that every political community is democratic. But what neither Habermas nor Taylor can countenance is that this will be the *same* community for everyone. In the terms we are introducing here, such a view would conflate civic or citizen solidarity with universal moral solidarity.

As we mentioned before, it would be too strong a claim to say that it is *inconceivable* that there would ever be such a single, all-embracing democratic community that included everyone on the planet. But it is very far from the situation we face today or that we can realistically envisage facing. And it must be born in mind that both Habermas and Taylor aim to develop models of solidarity that have application to the contemporary situation. Furthermore, they see their models as providing leverage for concrete social *criticism*. A key target of criticism, for both Habermas and Taylor, is the threat to democracy posed by the hegemonic power of the United States. This is particularly clear in Habermas’s recent writings on Europe, but is also true of Taylor, who has spent a long time in Canadian politics

fighting the same battle. What interests us here is what the role envisaged for Europe by Habermas (and to a certain extent Taylor) requires by way of solidarities and exclusions. It is clear that if we are plausibly to conceive of Europe as a powerful political actor, capable of effective action on the world stage, it is going to require a source of mobilization much more potent than one that would fit the pure procedural model. Habermas *has to* construe European identity in a ‘thicker’, more substantive, more ethically permeated and particularised way if it is to be capable of advancing the purposes of democracy in the current *political* constellation. This means a solidarity shaped around shared European values and traditions, that is, a rich ethical-political self-understanding. Of course, it would be absurd to suppose that everyone could have this self-understanding. Solidarity generated this way must exclude. But such exclusions are the inevitable price of mobilizing power.

This is not to say that others need be excluded from the consequences of solidaristic action motivated by love of the particular. On the contrary, it may well be that the interests of the universal, so to speak, are *best* served by actions empowered by a love of the particular. This is an argument put by some American critics of cosmopolitanism who argue that the most effective way of putting the world back on track is to change the way America behaves in it, which in turn is best achieved through internal transformation (Schwarz, 2007). The idea is that cosmopolitan goals may be better served by American patriots swimming against the tide than by deracinated cosmopolitans calling for a new, all inclusive world democracy. The same may be true in Europe: rather than the peoples of Europe rallying around values of autonomy, social justice, and rational cooperation that are in some sense distinctly European, it might be more realistic to work out from national identities. To give another example, it is politically important for green activists protesting against deforestation in Tasmania to be publicly perceived as true Australian *patriots*, for this shows they are drawing on the same sources of motivation and the same fundamental values that bind together the rest of the community. This suggests that perhaps the best strategy is to engage in social criticism at all relevant levels: to argue *both* that justice is a global matter and that in a just global order no country would have a disproportionate influence, *and* that in the current less than ideal global situation, in which some countries obviously do have a disproportionate influence, such and such internal changes within them would lead them to act in more acceptable or responsible ways. At least it is hard to see any valid *a priori* reasons showing that this latter kind of social criticism will not do, say, because it takes some non-ideal ‘impure’ realities as its starting point. Similarly, if people’s national identifications continue to be a central motivating force, it is certainly worthwhile to try to affect the directions these forces take, even if one thinks that national identity should ideally be left behind.

4. Socio-economic Solidarity

We have seen that for Taylor solidarity is a presupposition of democracy in the sense that it provides the extra motivation needed for citizens to carry the burdens of self-rule. The higher the standard a democracy measures itself by, the stronger the motivation its citizens must have to meet it. Liberal democracies that measure themselves by the extent and quality of participation in the practices of self-rule require a strongly committed citizenry whose motivation, Taylor argues, comes from identification with the political community. It is this ‘we-identity’, over and above the ‘I-identities’ the citizens have, that enables them to be *good* citizens. But of course the scope and quality of political participation is not the only measure of liberal democracy; it is not only in this way that the liberal values of freedom and equality are manifest. For many liberals at least, these values are also embodied in the social

distribution of resources and opportunities. And the more egalitarian the principle of distribution in a liberal democracy is, Taylor maintains, the greater the social commitment to it that is required on the part of the contributors. This, according to Taylor, is the kernel of truth in the communitarian critique of Rawlsian liberalism. As he put it: 'Rawls's egalitarian difference principle, which involves treating the endowment of each as part of the jointly held resources for the benefit of society as a whole, presupposes a high degree of solidarity among the participants. This sense of mutual commitment could be sustained only by encumbered selves who share a strong sense of community' (Taylor, 1995: 184). The critique is directed not against the egalitarian principle of distribution itself, but against the idea that it could be implemented among citizens lacking strong bonds of solidarity and mutual commitment, which Taylor takes to imply a strong sense of identification with the community.

But is it only through identification with the political community, or as Taylor also calls it, patriotism, that the necessary motivation for this kind of socio-economic practice can arise? Might there not be other sources of solidarity capable of sustaining an economic order that at least resembles Rawlsian egalitarianism? This is a possibility Taylor considers in the course of his reflections on Tischner's work. Here we find what looks like an alternative model of socio-economic (and indeed 'democratic') solidarity to the communitarian one based on identification (patriotism).

Taylor credits Tischner with an insight about economic exchange that is analogous to one that can be credited to Habermas about linguistic interaction. The Habermasian thought is that unless participants in conversation were entitled to assume that their action was effectively guided by certain mutually accepted norms, the practice itself would become unsustainable. It is only on the assumption, for example, that participants in a conversation are free to offer or reject claims, that their utterances are truthful and on the whole oriented by a concern for the truth of the matter discussed, that conversational practice can reproduce itself as a meaningful activity. Of course this does not mean that the norms are actually satisfied in any given case of linguistic interaction. But it does imply that engagement in the practice carries a *tacit mutual commitment* on behalf of the participants to the norms themselves. Without such a mutual commitment - or the justified expectation of it - there would be no point in engaging in the activity. On Taylor's reading, Tischner draws attention to a similar feature of economic activity. Each participant in an economic exchange aims to gain something or to satisfy a need. In this sense participants in the activity are motivated by self-interest. But the self-interest pursued in an exchange is always mediated by an offer to another person. The structure of *reciprocal benefit* is thus integral to the exchange of goods in the market, at least in cases where it can be presumed that the participants enter the practice voluntarily and on a more or less equal footing. And the validity of this presumption, of course, is crucial to the self-understanding of liberal market democracies. Economic activity in such societies is premised on the assumption that the benefits gained through exchange are mutual, and it is on this basis that free and equal persons can be expected to participate in it. The system of free exchange can thus be said to depend on a *tacit mutual commitment* on the part of the participants to a norm of reciprocal benefit or mutual satisfaction of needs; or negatively put, a norm against producing harmful or useless things and against exploitation: 'no one will say: here is my product - you could poison yourself with it; or: it is totally worthless; or: it was made thanks to the fact that I took advantage of the poor souls working in my factory' (Taylor, 2007b: 70).

Upon entering the system of free exchange, or the market economy, the members of a liberal democracy implicitly declare their common allegiance to this norm, just as participants in a

conversation implicitly bring with them a shared commitment to the norms of truthfulness, the force of the better argument, and so forth. And just as open repudiation of the norms of truthfulness, concern with the truth and so forth would corrode conversational practice to the point of rendering it meaningless, so explicit renunciation of the norm of *mutual* benefit - for instance by one party openly denying the full worth of the other's contribution to the exchange, or by openly demeaning the worth of the other's offer in some way - must undermine the practice at least insofar as it is understood as *voluntary* activity amongst *equals*.

Taylor notes that, for Tischner, it is in the capitalist *labour market*, or the system of exchange of work for wages, that we find the most egregious violations of the norm of reciprocal benefit. Tischner interprets the exploitation of labour under capitalism as fundamentally a *breach of trust*: workers enter a wage-relation *as if* they were free and equal partners in a mutually beneficial activity - this at any rate is how the activity is socially imagined and widely pretended to be - but they actually find themselves subject to the alien purposes of capital accumulation and are systematically let down by their presumed partners in cooperation. The wrong they suffer, as Tischner describes it, goes beyond inadequate remuneration, poverty, or unfair treatment: more deeply, it involves a *betrayal* of one party by another because it involves a breach of the *tacit mutual commitment* to contribute to each other's good by giving in proportion to receiving. Workers who do not receive what they deserve for their work, whose product is wasted or put to improper use, are effectively excluded from the community of 'free and equal subjects working for one another' which is counterfactually assumed by their very participation in the system of labour exchange (Taylor, 2007: 71).

Taylor makes an interesting point about the significance of solidarity in this context. He points out that the principle of reciprocity described by Tischner is so fundamental to the self-understanding of modern democracies that it cannot be openly denied. Contradictions of the principle, and breaches of the mutual commitment tacitly made to it in everyday economic life, must therefore be masked. Both the elemental significance of the norm, and the invisibility of its violations, makes it difficult and dangerous to bring the betrayal of trust embedded in the system to public awareness. And it is only once we get public awareness or acknowledgement of the betrayal that corrective mutual action becomes possible. This leads Taylor to reflect on the key role played by dialogue and free expression in the public sphere in the formation of solidarity. For it is in this way that isolation amongst individuals is broken and 'the spirit of the social bond' re-awoken.

But in highlighting this point, Taylor fails to notice another, perhaps even more significant, feature of Tischner's model of solidarity. For on Tischner's account it is not just the *betrayal* of reciprocity which is hidden under capitalism and which in Taylor's reconstruction must be made public before true solidarity can take hold. In addition, capitalism keeps the *solidarity itself* of those who contribute to the social good from view. Tischner's model serves to remind us, in other words, that solidaristic relations are *already* in place in the capitalist system of exchange, notwithstanding the degree of awareness that accompanies it, and notwithstanding, of course, all those betrayals. This is a consequence of Tischner's insight regarding the essentially cooperative nature of exchange. And by positing solidarity as a structural feature of cooperative activity, Tischner's model suggests itself as an alternative to Taylor's stress on a 'sense of community' in two respects. First, it suggests that the source of socio-economic solidarity is *immanent* to economic activity itself - understood as mutually beneficial, cooperative activity - and not dependent on some external factor. We can see the

tacit mutual commitment to the mutual satisfaction of needs as sufficient source for the bond. If this is right, then it is not clear why we need a model, such as Taylor's, that invokes some *extra* source of motivation, that is, a source that transcends the purposes inherent in the activity itself. It suggests that there may be no need for an extra source of motivation.

Second, Tischner's model suggests that socio-economic solidarity need not be construed in terms of some shared *identification* with a community. We can accept Tischner's idea that the exploitation of workers under capitalism amounts to their exclusion from the community of free and equal persons working together without inferring that solidarity between them arises directly from their shared identification with this community. Rather we can appeal to the socialising, bond-forming role of working with and for others, of performing tasks well, of making things or engaging in services that satisfy others' needs, and so forth. In each case, it is the *experience of productive cooperation* that work provides, rather than identification with the larger life of a community, that counts.

Taylor does not pick up on this alternative model of solidarity, but of course other social theorists have. We find versions of it in Hegel, Marx, Durkheim, Mauss, and Dewey; prominent contemporary expounders of it include Axel Honneth and Christophe Dejours (Honneth, 1995; Honneth, 1998; Dejours, 2006). In their different ways, these thinkers show that participation in the division of labour and the exchange of goods and services is a crucial source of social bonds that capitalism neglects at its peril. For each of these thinkers, the experience of inter-dependency and cooperation that arises in socio-economic contexts of action is at least as important a source of solidarity as shared identification with a political, cultural or national community and participation in a public sphere separated from the world of production and exchange.

Indeed, it may be that it is more important. One reason for supposing so is that it is less vulnerable than the identification model of solidarity to mass compensatory illusion. As Taylor himself has observed with great acuity, strong feelings of patriotic identification with a larger life, such as a nation, can be mobilized precisely in situations where opportunities for meaningful participation in the larger life of the community are *lacking* (Taylor, 1970). Even if I make no contribution to the life of the community, if my words and deeds count as nothing to it, my patriotic sentiment still makes me *feel* connected, it makes it *seem* as if I matter. It fulfils a deep human need to participate in a larger life, but only by way of compensating for real life meaninglessness. The patriotic feeling generates an illusion of connection. Solidarity born of identification, when not backed up by real opportunities for participation, is clearly a serious threat to democracy. Solidarity arising from the experience of productive cooperation does not seem to present such a danger.

But Taylor has always been too much of an Arendtian to appreciate the significance of productive cooperation as a source of human solidarity. As far back as his book on Hegel, Taylor has been denouncing the 'productivist' anthropology he takes this model of solidarity to be based upon. Diagnosing the spirit of the times in the late 1960s and early 70s, for instance, he wrote of the 'crisis' precipitated by 'the coming of a generation which is losing allegiance to the goal of conquering nature and affirming man through work and production' (Taylor, 1975: 459). Sharing in this scepticism about the productivist paradigm, and aiming to contribute to the dismantling of it, he follows Arendt in downgrading the moral significance of work to the level of merely instrumental action and in raising the significance of the liberal public sphere to the level of the true realm of freedom.

This Arendtian blindness to the socialising (and therefore humanising) significance of work is evident in many disparaging comments about Marx, and it is also evident in his treatment of Tischner. The fundamental flaw in Tischner's account, according to Taylor, is that it fails to incorporate the 'capitalist' as well as the 'democratic' context of practical justification. The former deploys norms of economic growth, efficiency and personal qualities such as entrepreneurship and innovation, whereas only the latter relies on mutuality in the sense described above. Both contexts of justification are indispensable for us, Taylor asserts, and they both serve purposes we cannot honestly renounce. This leaves us with a 'tragic conflict' between democracy and capitalism. There are many points to take issue with here but we must confine ourselves to three brief remarks. First, it is not clear why capitalist growth represents a self-contained context of justification, as if growth were a norm to itself, a standard of justification that can *in principle* be separated from other practical contexts. Second, if the virtues recognised in the capitalist context of justification are to mean anything more than a proclivity to make money or accumulate capital, it is not clear why democratic contexts of justification should not also have room for them. The promotion of innovation, risk-taking and so on can of course come into conflict with other values, but value conflict *within* the democratic context of justification is normal. Third, and most important for our present purposes, none of this says anything about the *experience of productive cooperation* that forms the core of Tischner's insight about solidarity.

5. Moral Solidarity

Mostly in his more recent writings on secularism, modernity and religion, Taylor has discussed the kind of universal solidarity which is not rooted in existing relations of shared membership or past interaction. This is the kind shown in humanitarian actions aimed at improving the condition, or alleviating the suffering, or protecting the human rights, of people outside one's own society. Taylor takes the parable of Good Samaritan, who helps *outside* any established institutional framework, to illustrate this kind of moral regard for non-members. Taylor holds that recognition of universality in moral matters has been a clear step of progress in modernity (Taylor, 2007a: 255). The modern moral order seems to demand that *no one* should be forced to suffer extremes of poverty, hunger, persecution, exploitation and so forth - no matter what political community they belong to. Morality seems to require humanitarian measures in such circumstances. The demands can be summed up, in Taylor's umbrella title, as those of 'universal benevolence or justice' and 'universal human rights and well-being'. These demands of *universal moral solidarity* (or 'human' or 'humanitarian' solidarity) seem to be very demanding goals, at least in comparison to ethical demands in earlier epochs: 'Never before', Taylor writes, 'have people been asked to stretch out so far, and so consistently, so systematically, so as a matter of course, to the stranger outside the gates' (Taylor, 2007a: 695).

Taylor's distinctive concern is that such moral solidarity poses very high demands which require strong motivational sources, and which have a great risk of backfiring and turning dialectically into great disappointment, misanthropy and even despotism. Do we have sufficient sources to meet the high demands? What can motivate sustainable, meaningful interventions of this sort? If it is to be more than just occasional acts of benevolence, enough say to sooth a niggardly conscience, it must involve some powerful motivational forces. In Taylor's view, we need 'moral sources', that is, 'considerations which (for us) inspire us to embrace this morality, and the evoking of which strengthens our commitment to it' (Taylor, 2007a: 693). Sometimes Taylor gives a rather intellectualist picture of moral sources as

something ‘the contemplation of which empowers us’. But he also means that our lived experiences or patterns of moral life may have implicit views concerning moral sources, and the experience of being motivated is more fundamental, whereas contemplation or reflection are relevant especially as strengthening the motivation (Taylor, 2007a: 251-3).²

In Taylor’s view, the more one thinks about the demandingness of universal benevolence and justice, the less surprised one is if the motivation fails. Taylor is ultimately pessimistic concerning any non-theistic ‘exclusive humanist’ sources of motivation. He thinks that it is only with theistic grounding that we can have sufficient motivation for sustained action of this kind - although he admits that theism has its record of disappointing and despotic consequences as well.

Taylor discusses briefly three kinds of motivational patterns which he finds insufficient. First of all, calculative self-interest as a sole motivation is not likely lead to solidary behaviour in contexts where there is no pay-off for the agent. Secondly, purely natural feelings of sympathy (à la Hume) do not provide a promising answer either, uninformed by any judgments of when such sympathy is fitting, or gets things right, or is called for. Third, the sense that as a rational and moral being one owes it to oneself not act beneath one’s dignity is essentially self-regarding, and can at best supplement genuine other-directed motivations.

Having put these three candidates aside, Taylor turns to a more adequate candidate, which focuses on *the humanity and dignity of others*. That certainly seems to give the right kind of motivation: the very features and potentials of the other which *justify* our help, and make sympathy and regard for the other *fitting*, may also directly *motivate* us. This is the central modern idea that human dignity, human needs and human rights require certain responses from us.

But Taylor gives this idea a twist, which is worth considering more closely. First Taylor points out that humans have a certain dignity because they have ‘potential for goodness and greatness’, and ‘the higher the human potential, the greater the enterprise of realizing it . . . the more the carriers of this potential are worthy of our help in achieving it’ (Taylor, 2007a: 696-7). But the phenomenon is Janus-faced, thanks to what can be called ‘the dialectics of high demands and big disappointments’: the higher the demands, based on the dignity of humans alone, the bigger the disappointment when we realize how far people are from fulfilling their potentials.

‘Faced with the immense disappointments of actual human performance, with the myriad ways in which real, concrete human beings fall short of, ignore, parody and betray this magnificent potential, one cannot but experience a growing sense of anger and futility. Are these people really worthy of all these efforts? Perhaps in face of all this stupid recalcitrance, it would not be a betrayal of human worth, or one’s self-worth, if one abandoned them. Or perhaps the best that can be done for them is to force them to shape up. . . . Before the reality of human shortcomings, philanthropy - the love of the human - can gradually come to be invested with contempt, hatred, aggression.’ (Taylor, 2007a: 697).

² See however the criticism of Taylor’s notion of moral sources in Laitinen, 2008.

This transformation of love into hatred, contempt, and aggression can culminate in the worst forms of despotism. History provides plenty of cases, Taylor suggests, of despotisms aggravated by experiences of bitter disappointment in human performance. The higher the initial sense of the potential or greatness of the people is, the deeper the contempt for them in the light of their failures. This can then justify the kind of 'ruthlessness in shaping refractory human material' we associate with totalitarian regimes - the same horrors which the Enlightenment picked up in societies dominated by religion (Taylor, 2007a: 697).

How to assess this train of thought? For one thing, it is based on neglecting a pretty standard distinction between two kinds of regard or respect for other humans, an *unconditional* one based on the mere fact that they are humans (recognition respect) and a *conditional* one reflecting their achievements (esteem; appraisal respect) (Darwall, 1977). Taylor seems guilty of confusing unconditional basic respect for persons, and conditional 'appraisal respect'. The former is something that is not conditional on one's merits or achievements or quality of one's will - all humans or all persons are entitled to the basic respect, basic rights and basic means for living irrespective of their merits. By contrast, appraisal respect is precisely about their merits. But humanitarian moral requirements are largely independent from questions of merit, and concern some basic goods and minimal standards of decency - so they seem invulnerable to the kind of dialectic Taylor envisages.

So one can stick to the view that there are unconditional universal moral demands based on the mere fact that the others are humans and possess human rights and human dignity. Taylor hasn't given any reason to doubt that. The humanity of others seems to be able to justify and motivate moral actions. But perhaps, empirically speaking, the motivation may often be overridden by other seemingly worthwhile options (which perhaps contribute more to one's own well-being), although it shouldn't. So are there auxiliary considerations that might help?

It seems that the motivations that Taylor was quick to put aside can be re-examined. There are richer conceptions of self-interest, sympathy and sense of one's own dignity, which provide right kinds of motivational support for our regard concerning others. These conceptions presuppose that the concern for the other is justified in a proper other-regarding way, by the dignity, needs or merits of the other. The ultimate justification for humanitarian action is not that it is in my self-interest, or that I happen to have an emotional response, or that I owe it to myself. But these features can nonetheless provide extra motivation: seeing that justified humanitarian action can be an aspect of one's self-interest or *eudaimonia*, and that one's sympathy is appropriate given the other's distress, and that it would be beneath one's dignity as a moral person can certainly supplement the motivation for action. Indeed, these richer, roughly Aristotelian, conceptions of self-interest, sympathy, and evaluative self-image are all ones put forward by Taylor in his earlier writings on strong evaluation (Taylor, 1985a; Smith, 2002; Laitinen, 2008).

Let us turn now to yet another motivational resource, which seems to be very central to moral *solidarity* in a strict sense, as opposed to altruism or sense of duty. We can value certain kinds of relationships to others, or certain kinds of belonging or unity. This is most evident in close relationships such as that of friendship or parent-child relationship, but it has been argued that there is a structural analogue with moral relationships with strangers. To avoid misunderstandings here, it is important to stress that moral relations between strangers are in many important respects *unlike* friendship, but the suggestion is that they may share something relevant which explains the motivation to comply.

One theorist drawing the analogue is T. M. Scanlon (Scanlon, 1998: chapter 4). He points out that friendship comes with characteristic joys and rewards, but also has its burdens and duties of loyalty. Being a friend is constituted by taking such duties of loyalty as good reasons - a genuine friend visits her friend in a hospital for the reason that the other person is in need, and not because of an abstract sense of doing the right thing, or out of self-interest. Such thick relations as friendship may be demanding, but they are also intrinsically motivating. No extra resource of motivation is needed, at least when the friend's situation is not extraordinarily demanding.

Scanlon suggests that *moral* relationship with others has something of the structure of friendship: one does not really count as standing in the relationship unless one regards the relevant unconditional moral demands as justified. But one does not merely meet these demands robotically and unemotionally, but a certain pattern of caring is involved: one values standing in this relationship, and holds it important, significant, to stand in such 'unity among strangers'. While people as members of the moral community need not be acquainted, they are not alienated from each other either - and this lack of alienation is quite satisfactory (or at least, the experience of alienation would be deeply unsatisfactory). Carrying the moral burdens is not an *external means* to reach this satisfaction, it is a *constitutive part* of what is satisfactory. Note that whether others carry their burdens is also a constitutive part - one cannot be a friend alone, and one cannot stand in any kind of mutual, reciprocal relationship alone. One may perhaps behave morally on one's own, do one's duty or be an altruist, but one cannot stand in a reciprocal relationship that we call *moral solidarity* in the strict sense on one's own.

Taylor, too, draws an analogy between universal solidarity and a more intimate type of human relationship which is deeply moving, that of parents to their young and growing children. 'This is a bond where each is a gift to the other, where each gives and receives, and where the line of giving and receiving is blurred. We are quite outside the range of 'altruistic' unilateralism' (Taylor, 2007a: 702). Then he asks: 'Could it be that, in a very different way, something analogous lies behind the sense of solidarity between equals that pushes us to help people, even on the other side of the globe?' (Taylor, 2007a: 702).

Of course, loving one's children and being in solidarity with strangers are different relations in almost every way. The analogue is meant *only* to highlight the structural claim that *sharing* or togetherness matters intrinsically. The difference to one-sided altruism is that this is mutual, reciprocal. Is this kind of response towards strangers possible? In Taylor's view it is, 'but only to the extent that we open ourselves to God' (Taylor, 2007a:703). Taylor's hunch is that this kind of universal solidarity is possible only for people who are in the image of God, because that gives us a very strong motivation, an experience of some kind of higher love: 'Our being in the image of God is also our standing among others in the stream of love which is the facet of God's life we try to grasp, very inadequately, in speaking of the Trinity' (Taylor, 2007a: 701). Note that Taylor's suggestion here is not a divine command theory suggesting that we have obligations towards other humans only because God wills so - his views concern the motivating effect of experiences of being loved by a higher being. As a claim about motivational power this may be quite appropriate: experience of being so loved may no doubt be motivating. But it does nothing to show that the non-theistic alternatives do not suffice. Taylor seems simply to assume that such universal solidarity is possible only if God exists.

Above we saw that there are traditional, richer pictures of self-interest, self-respect, sympathy and basic respect for others than the ones that Taylor regards insufficient. And concerning the possible *non-theistic* moral solidarity in the strict sense, Taylor has no argument at all, he does not even formulate the position. But surely it is conceivable that this kind of relationship where sharing matters intrinsically, could add to the secular motivations.

Note that there is a distinct form of backfiring when reciprocity is a central motivation: it is constitutive of moral solidarity that *each party* regards the reasons and obligations as genuine and valid and acts on them. One may be deeply disappointed and disillusioned by the fact that *others do not do their fair share* in the struggle towards universal justice and well-being. *If* others would do their share as well, everything might work, given human motivational resources - it is just that the virtuous circle should first be up and running. But the difficulties of coordination and cooperation seem to prevent acting in concert: in a disappointing fashion, the option of moral solidarity in sufficiently large groups is always blocked by some members who do not do their share - the option of one-sided altruism is of course open, but it lacks this kind of motivational resource of the unity of reciprocal relationships. Typically large-scale collective action requires some institutional measures to encourage complying. Given how *undemanding* universal justice might be when everyone would comply, the absence or presence of the institutional and collective arrangements of justice may make a greater difference to the humanitarian actions of individuals, than their all-too-human motivational weaknesses.³

³ Acknowledgements

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