

Political Solidarity, Justice and Public Health

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In this article, I argue that political solidarity is important to justice. At its core, political solidarity is a relational concept. To be in a relation of political solidarity is to be in a relation of connection or unity with one's fellow citizens. I argue that citizens of a shared state can be said to stand in such a relation when they have attitudes of collective identification, mutual respect, mutual trust, loyalty and mutual support toward one another. I argue that there are distinctly social bases for political solidarity and that justice requires that social and political institutions be structured so that they promote these. As an example of the sort of social and political arrangements that might encourage relations of political solidarity, I discuss Canada's response to the recent H1N1 pandemic and the failings of this response with respect to members of the Aboriginal community within Canada. I focus on these issues because considerations relating to solidarity and justice have received little attention in most discussions of them. I argue that ensuring that members of the Aboriginal community had equal access to the goods they needed to protect themselves against H1N1 infection would have more effectively promoted political solidarity and, in turn, would have more effectively promoted justice.

Political solidarity is solidarity that takes place within the political realm of the state and among fellow citizens. The importance of political solidarity to the aims of theories of justice is not often recognized.¹ This is largely because political solidarity is often conceived of as a feeling and, as such, it is not thought to be a proper concern of justice. The other reason for the neglect of political solidarity in discussions of justice is that many worry that it cannot be established. Consider one important account of political solidarity found in the work of Michael Sandel (1997). Sandel argues that we feel a sense of political solidarity with our fellow citizens only when we are all oriented toward and share in a common conception of the good life. He argues not only that such solidarity is feasible but also that it is necessary for the implementation of justice. Only when we feel a sense of solidarity with our fellow citizens, will we be motivated to make the sacrifices that justice demands of us. The worry, however, is that, conceived in this way, political

solidarity seems to be an impracticable ideal, an unlikely feat in modern liberal democratic societies, which are composed of citizens with distinct commitments and values.

Political solidarity need not be conceived of in this way, however. It can be conceived of in a way that is more practicable and, in turn, more useful to theories of justice. I will argue that, at its core, political solidarity is a relational concept. To be in a relation of political solidarity is to be in a relation of connection or unity with one's fellow citizens. I argue that citizens of a shared state can be said to stand in such a relation when they have attitudes of collective identification, mutual respect, mutual trust, loyalty and mutual support toward one another. The main claim of this article is that political solidarity, so understood, is an integral component of justice.

My article takes the following structure. In section II, I discuss previous attempts to give an account of political solidarity. In section III, I develop a new relational account of political solidarity. In section IV, I argue that political solidarity (so conceived) is an integral element of a theory of justice because it is essential to the realization of justice. More specifically, I argue that political solidarity plays an integral role in both the development of and the motivation to act on a commitment to justice. In section V, I argue that there are distinctly social bases for political solidarity and that justice requires that we promote these. In section VI, as an example of how political solidarity can be encouraged by social and political institutions and practices, I consider the realm of public health. In particular, I consider Canada's response to the recent H1N1 pandemic and the failings of this response with respect to members of the Aboriginal community within Canada. I focus on public health and, particularly, on pandemic response because considerations of justice have received little attention in most discussions of these issues. In sum, this article can be viewed as a beginning attempt to respond to Angus Dawson and Marcel Verweij's call for greater 'systematic reflection upon the idea of solidarity' and exploration 'of its implications in moral theory and the justification of public health policies' (Dawson and Verweij, 2012).

The Concept of Political Solidarity

Little has been written on the concept of political solidarity. Of what does exist, most accounts take it for granted that political solidarity is merely a feeling or sentiment of connection and unity. It is surely right that political solidarity is a feeling, but the view that it is merely a feeling fails to capture all that political solidarity is or could be. If, for example, I felt a strong bond with you, but failed to act in support of you when you needed it most, this would not genuinely be solidarity.² This suggests that political solidarity is not merely a feeling. It requires some sort of action.

It is perhaps for this reason that Avery Kolers has recently argued that political solidarity ‘is not an attitude or a sentiment, but a type of action’, namely ‘working with others for common political aims’ (Kolers, 2012). It is true that if they did not work together, then a citizenry would not genuinely be characterized by political solidarity. For example, if fellow citizens actively work against each other or could not work together, then they are not or could not be characterized by political solidarity. However, it is also true that, even if they did act together, if members of a shared state failed to have certain sentiments toward one another, then they would also not genuinely be characterized by political solidarity. For example, if I decided to hold a picket sign in protest of the poor health care you were offered or to fight for your freedom, but did not feel any sense of connection or bond with you, say, I did it only because of a dare by a friend or because I was ordered to do so by political officials, then we would hardly think that political solidarity exists in such cases. This suggests that political solidarity is not merely characterized by action but is also characterized by a distinct sentiment or feeling.

Barbara Prainsack and Alena Buyx (2011) offer a view that is somewhat similar to Kolers’s. They argue that solidarity, political and otherwise, is a shared practice.³ In claiming that it is a shared practice, Prainsack and Buyx mean to say that it is primarily an action. On their view, feelings of commonality and unity typically underwrite political solidarity, but are not sufficient for political solidarity.⁴ For political solidarity to exist, these feelings must manifest themselves in action. In particular, they must manifest themselves in actions that express the willingness to carry costs to assist others (financial, social, emotional and otherwise) (Prainsack and Buyx, 2011).

Prainsack and Buyx’s view of political solidarity advances over that of Kolers because, even if it does not

emphasize the necessity of an affective component in political solidarity, it at least explicitly aims to give an account of the affective component in political solidarity.⁵ Yet, there is at least one remaining problem. Their view fails to give an account of how those individual citizens, who are characterized by political solidarity, ought to interact with one another outside of acting in ways that express a willingness to take costs on to help one another. If one citizen acts so as to take on the costs of helping another, but does so while demeaning or insulting her/him, say, by berating her/him for needing help in the first place, then this would not count as a genuine instance of political solidarity. This suggests that how individual citizens interact with and treat one another are important to the phenomenon of political solidarity.

Like Kolers and Prainsack and Buyx, Sally J. Scholz emphasizes the active component in her account of political solidarity.⁶ However, she also emphasizes the primacy of a cognitive component in political solidarity. On her view, political solidarity occurs only when a community of individuals enters into a shared cognitive relation that is ‘formed when individuals or groups unite around some mutually recognized political need or goal in order to bring about social change’ (Scholz, 2009). More specifically, political solidarity is based in each individual’s shared cognitive commitment to or belief in ‘a political cause in the name of liberation or justice and in opposition to oppression or injustice’ (Scholz, 2007). Hope also plays a central role in political solidarity, on Scholz’s view. Hope is the belief that the future can be altered to be better than the present (Scholz, 2008).⁷ For political solidarity to genuinely exist, ‘each individual must share in the belief that together they can create change’ (Scholz, 2008). In this way, hope lays the groundwork for the collective action that is needed to end injustice, which is essential to political solidarity, on Scholz’s view.

Three problems arise with Scholz’s account. The first worry regarding Scholz’s account runs parallel to a worry that arose with Sandel’s view. On Scholz’s view, political solidarity arises among citizens only when they share in the cognitive commitment to ending or changing unjust social structures. This type of political solidarity depends on individuals sharing in a conception of justice. Among a diverse population, this type of shared commitment seems unlikely. Citizens are likely to have differing and perhaps even conflicting conceptions of justice. They are likely to have different ideas about what justice requires, what counts as an instance of injustice (or oppression), and which justify immediate (or perhaps any) action. While it is certainly something

worth striving toward, in the face of pluralism about justice, the kind of political solidarity that Scholz has in mind seems untenable on a large scale.

The second worry is that the sort of political solidarity that Scholz's account favours is reactive. On her view, political solidarity arises after an injustice has occurred. It arises, on her view, only after citizens have perceived an injustice and become unified in their commitment to changing or ending it. Scholz's account is right in the sense that this is an important form of political solidarity that might arise among citizens (assuming the first worry does not hold). Yet, her view fails to take into account the fact that political solidarity can occur before and in the absence of injustice. Imagine an ideal political society where no injustice has occurred. It seems that political solidarity could arise among members of such a society. Indeed, to some extent, political solidarity seems more likely among members of such a society, a political society where everyone lives under the conditions of justice and where there is no injustice to oppose or struggle against. If these intuitions are correct, then there must be additional non-reactive forms of political solidarity, forms that can exist before or in the absence of injustice.

The third worry is that her view, like Prainsack and Buyx's, fails to take into account that how individuals interact with and treat one another is important to political solidarity, especially when it is understood relationally. Scholz is right in her assessment that political solidarity is a relational concept. Political solidarity is necessarily a relation that takes place between at least two people. It cannot occur when there is only one person. To the extent that we are concerned with political solidarity, it is a relation that takes place between those within a shared state, that is, among fellow citizens. What Scholz's misses, however, is that political solidarity is and ought to be relational in a deeper sense than she describes. It does not and ought not merely concern the relation that citizens have in regard to a particular belief or set of beliefs, though this is important in some sense. It is and ought also to be relational in the sense that it involves particular ways of relating to or interacting with other citizens. An individual might, like her/his fellow citizens, be committed to ending injustice, believe that the injustice can be overcome and, in turn, might act along with her/his fellow citizens to satisfy this commitment, but if she/he fails to treat them with respect, for example, then this would not be a genuine instance of political solidarity.

In sum, this discussion of current accounts of political solidarity suggests that a complete account of political solidarity must take seriously the affective, active

and cognitive elements of political solidarity. It must also give deeper consideration to the relational elements of political solidarity because specifying how individuals interact with and treat one another is important to providing a complete account of political solidarity.

A New Relational Account of Political Solidarity

In what follows, I will make some beginning steps toward developing a more complete account of political solidarity. I will tentatively suggest that citizens of a shared state can be said to stand in a relation of political solidarity when they are characterized by the attitudes of collective identification, mutual respect, mutual trust and loyalty and mutual support. These are the necessary and (jointly) sufficient conditions for political solidarity. The account that I give is both descriptive and normative. It is descriptive in the sense that it describes what seem to be common features of relations of political solidarity. It is normative in the sense that it outlines features that we should aspire to and seek to promote among the citizenry.

Collective Identification

For citizens to see themselves as being in a relation of political solidarity, they must identify with each other as members of the collective, of the state. Collective identification is both an affective and a cognitive attitude. Collective identification involves feelings of identification such as fellow feeling or sympathy. Collective identification also involves the belief that we are part of or belong to the collective political unit of the state.⁸ For collective identification to exist in a political society, most citizens must believe that they are part of the collective political unit of the state.

Collective identification also consists in another cognitive attitude: namely, a citizen's belief that the successes and the failures of the collective citizenry are somehow her/his own successes and failures (or that they 'belong' to her/him). This belief likely results from the individual's belief that she/he is part of the collective. As a result of this belief, citizens will tend to feel a sense of pride in relation to the successes of the collective and shame in relation to its failures. For example, consider the pride that is felt among its citizens when they have come together to elect a worthy leader or the shame that is felt when an unworthy or bad leader is or has been elected. Citizens will also tend to feel a sense

of pride over the successes and failures of individual members of the collective. For example, consider the pride that citizens feel when one of their fellow citizens wins a gold medal in an Olympic competition. Or, alternatively, consider the shame that is felt when that individual loses in an Olympic competition.

There may be a variety of grounds that underwrite the beliefs associated with collective identification. For example, an individual's belief that she/he is part of a collective could, but it need not, be based on a shared language, history or on a common understanding or interpretation of a set of beliefs or values (such as religious beliefs or values). Collective identification can exist among citizens in a modern freestanding society, such as Canada, even though there may not be a common culture, history, language or religious view among fellow citizens.⁹

However, an individual's belief that she/he is part of the collective, for example, must be based on the right grounds or reasons. For example, if an individual's belief is based on deceit or manipulation, then her/his belief is not grounded in the right sorts of reasons and, as such, the sort of collective identification that exists is not worth striving for. It would also be doubtful that collective identification genuinely exists when the individual's belief in belonging is based on deceit or manipulation. In short, the beliefs that are necessary for a valuable and genuine attitude of collective identification—and for the other components of political solidarity—must be grounded in good reasons. This requirement stems from the normativity of the concept of political solidarity and from the nature of the concept itself. In part, what makes political solidarity what it is and what makes it valuable is that it is grounded in good reasons.

Mutual Respect

Mutual respect is a cognitive and an active attitude. A relationship between citizens of a shared state is characterized by mutual respect only when, generally speaking, each citizen, even if she/he is among the weakest or the most vulnerable, believes that she/he is equally valued by her/his fellow citizens as a fully participating and equal member of the political community.¹⁰ This belief, like all the other beliefs associated with political solidarity, must be grounded in good (or right) reasons. Typically, for them to have such reasons, citizens must, at minimum, not be regarded or treated in ways that depend on or reflect discrimination, subordination, deference, coercion or fear.¹¹ This suggests that for mutual

respect to exist, citizens must be disposed to regard and interact with one another on the terms of equality.¹²

Mutual Trust

Trust is also an essential component of political solidarity. It consists of two different cognitive attitudes. First, each citizen must believe that the other citizens are reliable and that they can be depended on to promote her/his interests as an individual, particularly when she/he is vulnerable, and as a member of the collective. Second, each citizen must believe that her/his fellow citizens can be relied on not to free ride on the efforts and sacrifices of herself/himself and other fellow citizens (Shelby, 2002).

Loyalty and Mutual Support

Relations of political solidarity are characterized by loyalty, which is composed of cognitive, affective and active elements. Loyalty is the result of collective identification, mutual respect and mutual trust. If citizens believe they belong to and are an equally valued part of the national collective and that they can depend on their fellow citizens to promote their interests and those of the group and not to take advantage of them or their efforts, then citizens will believe in the value of their participation and membership in the collective. They will, as a result, tend to have a special desire that the collective continues and that they will continue as members of the collective. In turn, they will have feelings of allegiance and attachment to the collective. For these reasons, citizens will be disposed to act in support of the collective as a whole and of individual members, particularly those who are the most vulnerable and in the greatest need of support. They will be disposed to exert extra effort and to make sacrifices when necessary to advance the group's collective interests and to help individual members of the collective to meet their own interests, and this is particularly the case regarding the most vulnerable members. Citizens will also have a tendency to do what is necessary to encourage, validate, take care of and provide for their fellow citizens, even if it is of some cost to themselves. Actions of political solidarity can take many different forms. They include small actions such as signing a petition in support of a political cause and they include more significant actions such as fighting (and perhaps dying) for one's country.¹³

Each one of the elements that I have identified here—collective identification, mutual respect, mutual trust, loyalty and mutual support—are necessary for political solidarity and together they are also sufficient for

political solidarity. On the view that I have been constructing here, political solidarity is relational in three ways. First, as Scholz's points out, political solidarity is relational because it necessarily occurs between at least two individuals or citizens. Second, it is relational in the sense that individuals, in a relationship of political solidarity, stand in the same relation to cognitive, affective and active attitudes. They have similar beliefs regarding belonging and membership in the collective. They also have similar beliefs regarding the inherent value of the members of their collective and in their reliability. They also possess certain feelings toward one another such as fellow feeling and loyalty. Those who are in relations of political solidarity are also disposed to act in ways that express respect for and are supportive of their fellow citizens. Third, political solidarity is relational because it involves specific ways of interacting with or relating to other individuals. In particular, it involves interacting in ways that are supportive of other individuals in the group and of the group as a whole. It also involves interacting with other members of the group in ways that are respectful of their inherent equality and that are not demeaning or insulting.

To use an example, as I conceive of them, relations of political solidarity are much like those among genuine, or ideally conceived, friends. Friends identify with one another, and see themselves as being friends. Each friend sees herself as being a friend to the other person and, in turn, sees the other person as being a friend to her. They have a sense of pride over the relationship. Friends regard and treat one another as equals in the sense that they value each other's participation and membership in the friendship equally, no matter what their vulnerabilities and weaknesses may be, and interact with and treat each other in ways that are expressive of this commitment. Friends also trust one another to promote their interests and to be sensitive to their vulnerabilities. They wish for the relationship to continue ('friends forever'). Friends are also disposed to act in support of one another, particularly when one is in a state of vulnerability or need.

The Value of Political Solidarity

For a conception of justice to be feasible, it must sufficiently encourage those who are subject to it to adhere to it. Coercive measures may certainly play their role. Citizens will be more likely to adhere to the requirements of justice, if they are under threat of penal sanction for violations of these requirements. However, if, following John Rawls and other theorists,

we assume that a theory of justice will itself require that we give priority to the least coercive measures in encouraging citizens to adhere to its requirements, then, in part, the feasibility of a particular conception of justice will depend on whether those who are subjected to it can reasonably be expected to have the dispositions that will lead them to adhere willingly to its requirements (Gilbert, 2006).

With this in mind, relations of political solidarity are important to the feasibility of a theory of justice on two fronts. The first contribution that such relations make is *developmental*. Relations of political solidarity are essential to engendering a firm commitment to justice in citizens.¹⁴ The commitment to justice is not something that we are born with, but is something that we, in part, learn through our relations with fellow citizens. In part, it is through mutually respectful, trusting and supportive interactions and relations with fellow citizens with whom we identify that we come to understand what justice is and what it requires. In part, it is through these interactions that we also learn what it is to be committed to justice and what it is to properly express this commitment.

The second contribution that political solidarity makes is *motivational*. Relations of political solidarity are also among the central factors that will motivate citizens to act on their commitment to justice. They play an important role in making our commitment to justice *effective*. There are two different reasons for thinking this. One, if we are not in relations of political solidarity with our fellow citizens, then we are less likely to be friendly with them in the routine interactions that are a necessary part of daily public life. Lack of this kind of 'neighbourliness', will tend to breed resentment and hostility among citizens and, as a result, participation in public life will become unenjoyable for many of them. Moreover, if we are not in a relation of political solidarity with our fellow citizens, as we will see our fellow citizens as distinct and unconnected to ourselves, we are more likely to turn away from public life and to withdraw into our own lives. Both of these factors will lead citizens to be less motivated to engage in the kind of social cooperation that is essential to a just social order. For example, the kind of democratic cooperation that is required by most theories of justice seems less likely.

Two, political solidarity is an important precondition to the sorts of sacrifices that are often demanded by a theory of justice. When citizens are in a relation of political solidarity with one another, they will be more disposed to make the sacrifices that will be demanded of them.¹⁵ If certain members of a community do not see themselves as being in a relation of political solidarity

with the rest of their political community, then they will not be motivated to make the sorts of sacrifices that the law often requires of them. If, for example, the most advantaged do not have a sense of political solidarity with those who are worst off, then they will be less motivated to ensure that they pay the appropriate and required amount of income tax. They might be more motivated to fudge their report, for example. As we will see, this second role of political solidarity is particularly relevant in the case of pandemic response.

The contribution that political solidarity makes to theories of justice is better understood when we consider the aims of theories of justice. Theories of justice typically have two aims. The first aim is to give an account of what a just society consists in, that is, of what principles it would follow or adhere to.¹⁶ The second aim is to give an account of the means of implementing or realizing a just society and its principles.¹⁷ On my view, the value of political solidarity relates to the second aim of theories of justice. The account of the value of political solidarity that I propose here is a causally relational account. Relationships of political solidarity play a causal role in the development and ongoing exercise of our commitment to justice.¹⁸ Relations of political solidarity are best understood as background conditions of justice or as contributory factors to its implementation and realization.¹⁹ Such relations are not constitutive, or part of the definition, of justice itself. Most recent discussions of justice focus on the first aim, that is, on giving an account of the principles of a just society. This is why the value of political solidarity to theories of justice has largely been missed.²⁰ The account of political solidarity that I propose here is, for this reason, unique because it encourages us to think more deeply about the second aim of theories of justice and the role that political solidarity can and ought to play in such theories in relation to this aim.

The Social Bases of Political Solidarity

The previous arguments suggest that relations of political solidarity play an integral role in engendering a firm commitment to justice, in the developmental and motivational senses, among citizens. So, if these arguments are right and justice requires the conditions that make it reasonable for those who are subject to it to be disposed to adhere to its requirements, then justice requires the conditions that promote relations of political solidarity. In ensuring the grounds for political solidarity, we must

focus on ensuring its social bases. The social bases of political solidarity are those aspects of social institutions that are normally necessary for people to have relations of political solidarity. We should focus on the social bases of solidarity for at least three reasons.

First, it is not the role of the state to distribute political solidarity as a sentiment, attitude or disposition toward others because this is not something that the state can in itself distribute. The most that society can legitimately do (i.e., without too much interference in private life) is to provide the social bases for realizing relations of political solidarity.

Second, certain social bases are normally essential to relations of political solidarity. A person's ability to enter into relations of political solidarity is significantly affected by social institutions and practices. Social institutions play an important role in the development of the characteristics that are necessary for political solidarity. Social institutions and practices play an integral role not only because our personal relations—wherein we first learn to identify with, trust, respect, support and be loyal to others—take place against and are shaped by the background of social institutions and practices but also because social institutions and practices themselves educate citizens to the attitudes, sentiments and dispositions that are part of political solidarity. Acquaintance with public culture is one way that we learn to identify with, respect, trust and to express loyalty to and act in support of our fellow citizens.

Third, social institutions also play a further role in establishing political solidarity. In general, our sense of political solidarity is undermined when we are not regarded and treated in ways that acknowledge and promote the characteristics of political solidarity. How we feel and what we believe about our relationships with others is shaped to a great extent by how those others regard and treat us. In a democratic society, citizens recognize that social institutions and practices exist at the sanction of their fellow citizens. So, if certain social institutions and practices exclude and discriminate against particular citizens, they will be less likely to conceive of themselves as being in a relation of political solidarity with their other fellow citizens. It might be true that some of those who are excluded or discriminated against will be able to maintain some sense of political solidarity with their fellow citizens, even in the face of being treated and regarded in such ways, but this is rare and would be difficult in most cases.

I have argued that, if justice requires that we must ensure the conditions necessary for a firm commitment to justice, then, as far as is reasonably possible, social institutions and practices must be arranged so that they

encourage the conditions necessary for relations of political solidarity. There are different ways of promoting the social bases of political solidarity. How to appropriately promote the social bases of political solidarity will depend on the context. We will consider some of these means more concretely in the following section, when we consider the context of public health.

Practical Consequences

I argued above that justice requires that social institutions and practices must be arranged so that they encourage the salient features of political solidarity. There are different institutional structures that will work to encourage political solidarity, and they will do so to different degrees. In what follows, I give one concrete example of how institutions and practices can be arranged so that they promote political solidarity. Because it is under theorized, I focus on the realm of public health.

The lack of attention paid to issues of justice in public health is largely because core thinkers such as Rawls fail to acknowledge that public health institutions and practices are proper concerns of justice. Rawls limits his discussions of justice to basic social and economic institutions and practices, arguing that they are the primary subjects of justice because their 'effects are so profound and present from the start' (Rawls, 1999). Rawls considers these institutions as the proper and primary concerns of justice because, from the beginning, they have such a significant effect on our life prospects, on how well our lives go. Rawls also focuses on these institutions because they are coercively maintained and, as such, he believes that they stand in need of special justification.²¹

It is unclear, however, why Rawls does not consider those institutions and structures that govern public health as important concerns of justice.²² The institutions that govern public health seem to meet both of Rawls's criteria. How well we fare with respect to our health is integral to how well our lives go over all. For example, institutions and practices that work to distribute vaccinations to prevent the spread of pandemic diseases such as H1N1, or that carry out health screening tests such as screening for breast or cervical cancer, or that aim to prevent public smoking, all have a significant impact on our health and, in turn, on how well the rest of our lives go.²³ Moreover, public health measures such as these are carried out through social institutions and can be backed by the coercive apparatus of the state. For example, penalties and sanctions can be imposed on the

violation of public health laws such as those regarding public smoking. Quarantines can be imposed through force to prevent the spread of infectious diseases such as H1N1. For these reasons, it seems that the institutions governing public health should be considered among the proper (and perhaps even among the primary) concerns of justice.

If public health institutions and the policies they implement are proper concerns of justice, and justice requires that relations of political solidarity are promoted, then public health institutions and policies must be arranged so that they encourage relations of political solidarity. As an illustration of how public health measures can be arranged so that they promote political solidarity, I will consider Canada's response to the H1N1 pandemic. I focus on pandemic response because many of the recent discussions of public health ethics among policy makers have focused on pandemic response (Baylis *et al.*, 2008). While these discussions have highlighted and clarified key ethical issues that arise in pandemic response (such as conflicts that arise between the duty to care for one's own family and the duty to care for those who are or might be infected), most of these discussions have failed to consider what justice and, particularly, the value of political solidarity would require of pandemic responses. My hope here is to give some guiding suggestions.²⁴

A pandemic is a worldwide outbreak of a specific disease that affects a large proportion of the population. The most recent pandemic was the H1N1 pandemic of 2009. The first cases of H1N1 were found in Mexico in March 2009. Later, in April 2009, H1N1 emerged elsewhere in North America. The H1N1 influenza virus spread quickly around the world. In June 2009, the World Health Organization declared an influenza pandemic.

The H1N1 influenza virus was a new strain of virus that had not circulated among people before (PHAC, 2012). This meant that people had little or no immunity to it (Chan, 2009; PHAC, 2012). H1N1 preferentially infected young people. The majority of cases occurred in people under the age of 25 years (Chan, 2009). Many of the severe cases occurred in people with preexisting chronic conditions such as asthma, cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Pregnant women were also among those at greater risk of complications.

Among the central failings of the Canadian response to the H1N1 pandemic was the failure to take adequate account of the Aboriginal community within Canada when responding to the H1N1 pandemic. The greatest rates of H1N1 incidence were among members of the Aboriginal community (Kermode-Scott, 2009). It has

been argued that this increased rate of H1N1 incidence was tied to the lack of access to the material, social and economic goods that were needed to prevent H1N1 infection.²⁵ For example, members of the Aboriginal community fared poorly with respect to economic wealth and lacked access to adequate housing, adequate food supply, adequate health care and clean water (necessary for hand washing).²⁶ Many members of the Aboriginal community also lacked access to hand sanitizer, even though it was specifically recommended by the Canadian health community as a means of protecting against H1N1 infection in areas that lacked access to clean water such as reserves or other rural areas in Canada (PHAC, 2009). This type of arrangement—which left Aboriginals with insufficient access to the goods they needed for protection against H1N1—undermined the salient features of political solidarity and, for this reason, was not consistent with the requirements of justice.

First, vast inequalities in access to the goods necessary for adequate health undermine collective identification. To, at least, some extent collective identification shuns distinctions and comparisons (Crocker, 1977). There must be enough similarity or commonality between individual members of a collective for them to see themselves as being part of or belonging to a collective. Insofar as we see ourselves as having a fundamental interest in health and survival, we also see ourselves as having an important interest in protecting ourselves against H1N1 infection. If we lack access to the goods that we need to satisfy this important interest, while others have such access, we are differently situated from them in an important respect and we will see ourselves as being so situated. In turn, while we will tend to identify with others who lack access to the goods they need, it will be harder for us to see ourselves as genuinely belonging to a collective with those who do have such access. Similarly, if members of the Aboriginal community lack access to the goods necessary for protection against H1N1 infection, then they will find it difficult to identify with other Canadians who have such access. In failing to address the vast inequalities in access to goods that were necessary for protection against H1N1, the Canadian pandemic response undermined the grounds for collective identification.

Second, exclusion of members of certain groups from the material and social goods they need for protection against H1N1 undermines mutual respect. Many of the goods needed to protect against H1N1 infection, such as clean water or, as an alternative, hand sanitizer, were available and relatively easy to provide.²⁷ Indeed, members of other groups and communities were provided

with access to these goods. Failing to provide members of the Aboriginal community with access to the goods they needed to protect themselves against H1N1, when they were easily available, conveys the message that Aboriginals are not equally respected or valued by their fellow citizens as part of the Canadian community. When social practices do not give equal consideration to our interests and these institutions are viewed as existing at the sanction of our fellow citizens (as they would be in a democracy), then such practices suggest that our interests are not equally valued by our fellow citizens. This is undermining of mutual respect within the collective. Mutual respect, an essential part of political solidarity, requires that each member of the collective believes that she is valued as an equal participant in the collective. Insofar as our interests are part of who we are, equally valuing us requires treating us in ways that indicate that our interests are equally valued. To the extent that Aboriginals were not provided with access to the goods that they needed to satisfy their interest in protecting themselves against H1N1 infection, when they could have been, it would seem that the interests of Aboriginals were given little consideration by their fellow citizens. In turn, it becomes difficult for Aboriginals to see themselves as being equally valued by their fellow citizens. The Canadian pandemic response failed to encourage mutual respect among Canadian citizens.

Third, the grounds for mutual trust were also not encouraged. Trust is based on a belief in the reliability of our fellow citizens. To trust our fellow citizens we must, among other things, believe that we can depend on them to provide for our most basic and significant interests, particularly when we are vulnerable. If members of the Aboriginal community believe that they cannot depend on fellow Canadians to provide them with the goods they need for protection against H1N1 infection, a basic and significant interest, then it will be difficult for Aboriginals to trust fellow Canadians. For example, they will be less likely to trust their fellow citizens to meet their interests in future pandemic plans and responses. This lack of trust makes relations of political solidarity more difficult between members of the Aboriginal community and other fellow Canadians.

Fourth, the grounds for loyalty and mutual support were undermined. I suggested earlier that loyalty and mutual support are the results of the other features of political solidarity. When there is collective identification, mutual respect and mutual trust among members of a collective, then the members of the collective are more likely to feel a sense of loyalty to the collective and to act in ways that are supportive of the collective and its

members. They are more likely to make sacrifices for the good of the other members of the collective. Loyalty and mutual support among fellow citizens are important during a pandemic such as the H1N1 pandemic because significant sacrifices can be required of people in the time of a pandemic. For example, once infected with H1N1, Canadians were asked to sacrifice their freedoms in various ways. In some cases, they were asked not to travel abroad, not to assemble with others and not to leave their home. Such measures are often favoured during a pandemic because it prevents those who are infected from infecting others and, in turn, works to contain the disease. Coercive measures could be used in all of these instances to motivate compliance with public health measures and policies, but justice favours a scheme where compliance is willing. It seems, at least on the face of it, that willing compliance is more likely when relations of political solidarity exist. People will be more likely to willingly take up public health measures and to follow public health policies, such as quarantine, and to make the required sacrifices, if they see themselves as being in relations of political solidarity with their fellow citizens. For instance, I will be more likely to sacrifice my freedom to leave my home, even though it will impose a significant burden on me, if I see myself as being in such a relation. If I see myself as standing in a relation of political solidarity with my fellow Canadians, then I will see myself as being connected and bonded with them through a relationship of equality and trust. This will breed a feeling of concern for my fellow citizens and, in turn, make it more likely that I will be motivated to act in ways that are supportive and protective of them, particularly when some of my fellow citizens are members of vulnerable groups (such as those who are pregnant or have pre-existing diseases). Similarly, my suggestion is that, members of the Aboriginal community, like others, would be more likely to make the kinds of significant sacrifices that are demanded of them by public health policies and measures during a pandemic, if they saw themselves as being in a relation of political solidarity with fellow Canadian citizens.²⁸

The discussion so far has largely been negative. It has given us an indication of how the Canadian response to H1N1 undermined the conditions necessary for relations of political solidarity. In short, the claim is that unequal access to the goods that are needed for protection against H1N1 infection undermines the conditions that are necessary for relations of political solidarity. We can also tentatively draw some positive conclusions from this discussion, namely that pandemic response should guarantee equal access to social and material goods—such as income, clean water and adequate

shelter—that are necessary for protecting ourselves against infectious diseases such as H1N1. Equal access to such goods would encourage the salient features of political solidarity during a pandemic. Having equal access to the goods needed for good health would foster a greater sense of collective identification because there would no longer be two distinct groups (i.e., ‘the haves’ and ‘the have nots’) with respect to such goods. It would also foster a sense of mutual trust and mutual respect among citizens. Citizens would feel that their basic and significant interests in protecting themselves against infectious disease are given equal consideration and, in turn, would feel that they are equally valued members of the collective. Insofar as the other features of political solidarity would be encouraged, loyalty and mutual support among fellow Canadian citizens would also be encouraged. To the extent that political solidarity would be more effectively promoted by an arrangement that guarantees equal access to the goods needed for protection against H1N1 infection, justice would also be more effectively promoted.

The conclusions I argue for here are both in contrast to and complementary of those reached in Prainsack and Buyx’s work, which also considers the relevance of solidarity between citizens of a shared state in the context of pandemic influenza (Prainsack and Buyx, 2011). Recall, on their view, for such solidarity to exist, individuals must act in ways that express a willingness to take on the costs of helping others within the same state. They are largely skeptical about the relevance of political solidarity in the context of a pandemic. They argue that, because there will be differing levels of risk of infection between individuals (say, between old and young individuals) in a pandemic, the sense of sameness or belonging that is typically a precursor for actions of political solidarity will tend not to exist. In turn, their work suggests that, during a pandemic, political solidarity will tend not to exist among the citizenry.

The main conclusions reached in this article are in contrast to those of Prainsack and Buyx insofar as they suggest that political solidarity is relevant in the context of a pandemic. On my view, depending on how they distribute access to the goods needed for protection against a pandemic, preparation for and response to a pandemic can work either to promote political solidarity (even when it may not already exist) or to undermine it (even when it may already exist). Prainsack and Buyx’s analysis fails to recognize the importance of political solidarity in the context of a pandemic largely because their analysis is concerned with the question of whether political solidarity can or does exist during a pandemic and not with the important question of whether

preparation for and the response to a pandemic, such as H1N1, can itself foster or undermine political solidarity.

My arguments can also be understood as complementing Prainsack and Buyx's because my arguments give an account of the grounds for the active component of political solidarity.²⁹ My claim is that individual citizens will be more motivated to make sacrifices for the sake of others if they have attitudes of collective identification, mutual respect and mutual trust. So, my arguments suggest that if we, like Prainsack and Buyx, are concerned with motivating individual citizens to act in ways that express a willingness to take on the costs of helping one another—which is similar to my notion of acting to make sacrifices for others—then we ought to focus on the promotion of the attitudes of collective identification, mutual respect and mutual trust.

One might worry that, as they entail equal access to certain goods, the conclusions reached here are no different than those that an ethical analysis of the concept of justice would lead us to and hence lack theoretical significance. Whether this is true will depend on whether justice, like political solidarity, does in fact require us to provide equal access to the goods that are needed for protection against a pandemic. If justice does not require this, then considerations of political solidarity will lead us to different conclusions about how to distribute access to such goods than considerations of justice would. This would be of theoretical significance because it would give us some clues as to how political solidarity and justice differ, even if the former is causally essential to the latter.

However, even if justice, like political solidarity, does require equal access to the resources that are needed for protection against a pandemic, the conclusions relating to political solidarity are still significant. This is because considerations of political solidarity can be understood as giving us further or independent reasons, reasons that go beyond those relating to justice itself, for ensuring more equal access to resources for protection against a pandemic. The thought is that doing so would work to promote political solidarity, which would, in turn, work to better promote whatever it is that justice requires. Even if, in the end, justice does require equality in the distribution of goods needed for protection against a pandemic, this would still be a significant conclusion. It would suggest that equality in access to such resources is not only a requirement of justice (if this is in fact what justice requires) but is also itself essential to the maintenance of justice. In this way, the conclusions regarding political solidarity and access to the goods needed for protection against a pandemic have important implications for theories of justice, particularly, in relation to

the realization or implementation of justice more broadly.

According to most theories of justice, justice requires much more than the equal distribution of the resources that are needed for protection against a pandemic. For example, justice may require democratic participation in politics or equality in income and wealth. The conclusions relating to the H1N1 pandemic in Canada suggest that ensuring equal access to the goods needed for protection against an H1N1 pandemic is one means of engendering a greater sense of political solidarity among Canadian citizens. A greater sense of political solidarity among citizens is, in turn, one way of engendering a more effective commitment to justice among them. If this is right, then ensuring equal access to the goods needed for a pandemic, will work to promote justice more generally. For example, if, because of equal access to goods needed for protection against a pandemic, Canadian citizens feel a greater sense of political solidarity with their fellow citizens, then they are more likely to be motivated to participate more broadly in public life or to be more truthful about their income for tax-related purposes. These are just a few examples. There are likely to be many other positive outcomes in relation to the promotion of justice that result from a more equal distribution of the goods needed for protection against a pandemic.

Conclusion

After explaining why previous accounts of political solidarity fail, I presented an alternative account of political solidarity. On my view, political solidarity is a relational concept. It is a relation that takes place between fellow citizens who have attitudes of collective identification, mutual respect, mutual trust, loyalty and mutual support toward one another. I argued that political solidarity is integral to justice. I argued that it is integral to ensuring that citizens are disposed to adhere willingly to the requirements of justice. Relations of political solidarity play both a developmental and a motivational role. On the one hand, relations of political solidarity help us to develop attitudes that are necessary for a firm commitment to justice. On the other hand, relations of political solidarity are essential in motivating us to engage in mutual cooperation and to make the kinds of sacrifices that are necessitated by justice. I also argued that social institutions should be structured so that they promote the conditions necessary for relations of political solidarity. As an indication of what types of institutions might do this, I discussed Canada's response to the

recent H1N1 pandemic. I suggested that giving members of the Aboriginal community access to the goods they needed to protect themselves against H1N1 infection, would have better promoted the conditions that were necessary for relations of political solidarity and, in turn, would also have better promoted the conditions for justice.

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Notes

1. Theories of justice are typically understood as applying to states. For example, John Rawls's theory of justice aims to specify the principles that ought to govern the basic institutional structures of states or domestic political communities. Given this understanding of the scope of political solidarity, political solidarity could also be understood as 'civic solidarity', where civic solidarity is simply the sort of solidarity that could and ought to exist among citizens of a shared state. There are, of course, questions about what constitutes a shared state. It is far beyond the scope of this article to address this issue in detail. For the purposes of this article, a shared state can be understood as an organized political community that shares a geographic territory and a set of basic social institutions such as those relating to government and politics that are coercively imposed and that have a significant and broad impact on the life prospects of those they are imposed on.

2. This sentiment is probably best understood as sympathy.
3. It is important to note that Prainsack and Buyx do not use the term 'political solidarity' in their work. Prainsack and Buyx are interested in the general phenomenon of solidarity as it might exist at different levels, for example, between individual citizens and between different groups or collectives. For the purposes of this article, I focus on their account as it relates to individual citizens because this is what is most relevant to our discussion of political solidarity.
4. It is unclear whether on their view the affective element is essential to (political) solidarity. Their main focus is on illustrating that feelings are not sufficient for solidarity.
5. I say that their view 'at least makes room for the affective component' because it may turn out, in the end, that the sentiment is not necessary for solidarity on Prainsack and Buyx's view. See n. 4.
6. Unlike the sort of political solidarity I am concerned with here, Scholz's notion of political solidarity is 'political' in a broader sense of the term; it does not just deal with 'the political system of the state' and can extend beyond it (Scholz, 2008). However, her account of political solidarity is relevant to my discussion of political solidarity (i.e., of the sort that exists within the state) because Scholz's kind of solidarity could take place between citizens of a shared state. Scholz (2008) does briefly discuss 'civic solidarity', a sort of solidarity that takes place 'between citizens within a political state'. However, the concept is vague and underdeveloped. Moreover, and rather interestingly, she does not consider whether 'political solidarity' can be part of 'civic solidarity'. This is the issue that I am interested in evaluating here.
7. Scholz sometimes refers to 'hope' as a feeling, but when she describes her notion of 'hope' in detail she typically explains it in terms that relate to 'belief'. So, in the end, it seems that hope, on her view, is a cognitive attitude. In any case, the three points raised in my critique of her view hold, even if, in the final analysis, hope is a feeling on Scholz's view.
8. For collective identification to occur between a group of citizens, it must be generally true that each citizen believes herself/himself to be part of the collective. Imagine that there is a group of citizens, A . . . Z. In order for collective identification to occur, most of the citizens A . . . Z must stand in a similar cognitive relation to the proposition 'I am a member of the collective constituted by A . . . Z'.

More specifically, most of them must believe that the proposition that 'I am a member of the collective constituted by A...Z' is true. If a significant proportion of citizens, say, citizens M-Z, do not believe themselves to be part of the collective constituted by A...Z, then collective identification does not occur in the group composed of A...Z. Note that collective identification need not be stable or continuous. It might be that at time T1 that citizens A...Z believe that they are part of the relevant collective. In this case, the conditions for collective identification are met. If, however, at time T2, citizens A...K do not believe themselves to be part of the group, then the conditions for collective identification are not met.

9. As my discussion of the H1N1 pandemic will highlight, ensuring that citizens have equal access to important goods, such as those needed for health and survival, is one element that can work to ground collective identification among members of a diverse political community such as Canada.
10. A and B stand in a relation of mutual respect if and only if both A and B stand in the same cognitive relation to the proposition that 'I am an equally valued member of this group'. More specifically, A and B must believe that this proposition is true for mutual respect to occur.
11. This position is in direct opposition to some recent accounts of solidarity that emphasize the value of 'deference' such as Avery Kolers (2005). It seems to me that a relation of political solidarity would be unlikely between the most advantaged and the least advantaged, if the most advantaged had to constantly defer to the least advantaged (or vice versa). It would be hard to see oneself as an equally valued member of the group if one had to constantly defer to others.
12. To be disposed to act is simply to have an intention to act. The intention to act will typically stem from related beliefs and/or desires.
13. At least in some cases, patriotism can be a form of political solidarity.
14. As I understand it, a firm and willing commitment to justice is similar to Rawls's notion of the sense of justice.
15. Sandel (1997) makes a similar point about Rawls's difference principle, arguing that citizens would only be motivated to make the sort of sacrifices demanded by the difference principle, if they have a sense of solidarity with others.
16. Rawls (1999), for example, argues for three principles of justice: the principle of equal basic liberty, the principle of equal opportunity and the difference principle.
17. In his discussion of his theory of justice, Rawls, for example, spends significant time discussing moral development largely because he believes that the development of certain moral capacities are essential to the realization or implementation of justice.
18. The connection between relations of political solidarity and justice is a tight one and not a necessary one. While relations of political solidarity will have a strong tendency to promote justice, this may not always be the case.
19. This sort of account differs from potentially constitutive relational accounts of political solidarity, which would hold that certain relationships and social environments, such as those relating to political solidarity, are part and parcel of justice itself.
20. Two notable exceptions are the works of Rawls (see n. 19) and Sandel (see p. 1).
21. On Rawls's reasons for focusing on the basic structure and the importance of coercively maintained institutions see Neufeld, 2009.
22. One explanation is that Rawls conceived of health as a natural good, a good that is not directly under the control of basic social institutions (Rawls, 1999). This assumption is challenged by much of the recent work on the social determinants of health, which suggests that health is a social good.
23. These types of institutional arrangements and practices are considered to be among the social determinants of health.
24. The goal of this section is also to show that there are real conditions under which political solidarity can be furthered.
25. Initially, it was argued that the greater incidence among Aboriginals was due to their greater susceptibility to H1N1. This theory was later debunked. On this see CBC News (2010). It is now widely held that deprivation of material and social goods is among the central causes of the increased incidence of H1N1 among Aboriginals. For an example of this view, see Spence and White, 2010.
26. For example, on the conditions in Winnipeg, Manitoba, see Rabson, 2010.
27. Delivery of hand sanitizer to Aboriginal communities was delayed by Health Canada because of worries about its alcohol content. A number of reserves have policies that forbid alcohol in any form, and distribution of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer would have violated this policy. However, the problem could easily have been avoided by providing alcohol-free hand sanitizers, which were easily

available and could easily have been stalked, if Aboriginal interests had been given adequate attention in pandemic plans. For more information on the hand sanitizer incident see CBC News (2009).

28. This is not to say that members of the Aboriginal community have not been willing to make such sacrifices. The point is simply that they would be even more motivated to do so if there was a greater sense of collective identification, mutual respect and trust among them and fellow Canadians. Increasing such motivation is important in the context of a pandemic because it is important to motivate as much compliance as possible to contain the infectious disease. However, such motivation is often difficult because complying with public health orders during a pandemic can often be difficult because of the sacrifices it requires. Promoting collective identification, mutual respect and trust could help in such a context.
29. This motivational issue is something that Prainsack and Buyx are concerned with. See, for example, their discussion (Prainsack and Buyx, 2011, pp. 74–75) of how media could be used to foster a sense of similarity among citizens and, in turn, could work to foster (the active component of) political solidarity.

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