Three Kinds of Race-Related Solidarity

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Solidarity and Community

Solidarity is akin to community. "Community," of course, is a slippery notion that may be used in several different senses. It can name simply any collectivity—workers at Wal-Mart, sociologists, and students and faculty at a university. I will use it in a more restricted sense to mean a collectivity animated by a "sense of community" among its members. In this sense, both community and solidarity involve the following—meaningful bonds between members (of the solidarity group, and the community, respectively); a sense of belonging to a collectivity that is important to its individual members; some degree of mutual concern among the members greater than concern for human beings as such; a sense of mutual support among members; and a sense of linked fate, at least to some extent, or with respect to some specific characteristic.[1] These features not only characterize communities and solidarity groups, but constitute goods realized by them; it is a human good to have meaningful relations with one's fellow X's, to have and receive support and concern, to have a sense of belonging to and mutually identify with a good collectivity. However, these goods can be put to bad uses (solidarity among pedophiles) and in some such contexts may not be goods at all.

But solidarity and community are not the same. Solidarity seems *political* in a way that community need not be, in the sense that solidarity is something that responds to adversity, or at least perceived adversity, while community does not necessarily involve adversity. Solidarity is a kind of pulling together of a group in the face of perceived adversity, generally but not necessarily human-created adversity.[2]

Communities may exist entirely without a sense of adversity. Suppose a neighborhood is a community in the required sense; that is, it is not simply people living within a few blocks of each other, but the people who have a sense of community with one another. Such a community can go for long stretches without feeling a sense of adversity. The neighbors may help one another in various ways, and respond as a group to certain challenges to the neighborhood, for example, by pressing the city to put up a traffic light on a particular corner. Ethnic communities (whether geographically localized or not) may function similarly. The Asian-American students on a college campus, for example, may form a social grouping, a community whose members give one another support and which provides a

comfortable social setting for its members. They may go for substantial stretches without a sense of adversity. This is community but not solidarity.

Nevertheless, communities such as these can come to face adversity. Suppose a hate incident is committed against an Asian-American student, or the state plans to build a highway through the residential neighborhood that would have the effect of destroying it. In such situations, it is natural, though by no means inevitable, for the communities to become solidarity groups. They unite in the face of the threat to the group. The Asian-American students feel a sense of solidarity with one another as they try to figure out how to respond to the hate incident. The neighborhood feels a sense of solidarity in face of the threat to it. The community, then, *becomes* a solidarity group; but it does not therefore lose its character as a community. But when the adversity passes, or is successfully overcome or dealt with, the community may go back to being a community full stop, without also being a solidarity group.

Solidarity can also exist without community. Imagine an Asian-American student on the campus just mentioned who does not feel a sense of community with the other Asian-American students, although she does identify with her Asian-American (pan)ethnicity. She does not socialize with the other students or feel especially comfortable with them. But when the Asian-American community on the campus is attacked by the hate incident, her identification as an Asian American may lead her to feel and perhaps express a sense of solidarity with the other Asian Americans, for example, by attending a meeting to deal with the incident, or a demonstration to protest it. Although she does not feel socially connected with this community, the hate incident brings out an identification with them, mediated by their shared identity as Asian Americans, in the face of a threat. This solidarity requires only a sense of shared identification, not of community. During this period, this student comes to have the special concern, loyalty, and support that constitute solidarity with the Asian-American community on the campus.[3] If the threat dissipates, this incident could have the result that the student in question has and continues to have some sense of community with the other students; but it is equally possible that once the adversity has passed, she returns to a state of only latent connection to the group of Asian-American students.

"In-Group" and "Out-Group" Solidarity

Are there goods that solidarity realizes beyond those (mentioned above) shared with a sense of community—providing a sense of belonging to a meaningful collectivity, meaningful bonds to fellow members, and a sense of support and concern among the members? Another difference between community and solidarity suggests that there are. Whereas one cannot have a sense of community with someone with whom one does not have an ongoing relationship, the idea of solidarity allows someone to *show* solidarity with a group (or individuals) with whom this individual does not have such a relationship. Suppose that in a particular city there have been a rash of hate incidents directed toward

Muslims—people yelling to them that they are not welcome in the community, spray paintings on buildings saying "go back to Saudi Arabia" and the like, perhaps physical harassment as well. Let us suppose that the Muslim community within this particular city has a standing sense of solidarity within its own ranks. Those not in the Muslim community cannot participate in that group solidarity as they are not members of the group. However, they can express *solidarity with* the Muslim community. This out-group solidarity may be expressed in several ways—for example, holding a public meeting or demonstration in which the outgroup members protest the actions targeting the Muslim community, or writing letters to the local paper. Sometimes a symbolic form of expressing solidarity is created that individuals can engage in on their own. In a famous incident in Billings, Montana in 1993, the small Jewish community there had been a target of hate crimes. Non-Jews in the town protested this and expressed solidarity by putting a paper menorah (a candle holder used for the celebration of the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah) in the windows of their homes.[4]

So "out-group" solidarity is a form of solidarity expressed by members of one group toward another group; "in-group" solidarity is the more familiar kind that members of the same group have toward one another. What is the value of out-group solidarity? In general, members of a targeted group appreciate others standing with them, showing them that these others appreciate what they are going through, that they empathize with them and disapprove of or condemn what is being done to them. Such sentiments may contribute to the sense of self-worth or dignity of the targets, which may well have been damaged by the attacks in the wider community, especially when the solidarity is expressed publicly, so that the community facing adversity is affirmed in the sight of the wider society; but even purely private expressions of out-group solidarity can convey the sense that others recognize one's plight, that one is not simply standing alone in doing what one can to mitigate that plight. This sort of affirmation and recognition are typically a good to a member of the group facing adversity.

Out-group solidarity can have a more distinctly instrumental value—contributing to the ability of the target community to organize to mitigate their plight. It can do so by boosting the morale of the targeted community and thus contributing to its sense of empowerment. It can contribute by making clear to the wider society that the group has allies and sympathizers in that community, and in that way contribute to the political forces necessary to stop the targeting of the community in question. But the way that out-group solidarity contributes to such goals involves non-instrumental value as well. The target community appreciates solidarity not only because it helps it achieve its aim of mitigating its plight, but also because simply knowing that others stand with one and recognize one's plight is a human good in itself. It is difficult in practice to pry apart the instrumental and non-instrumental dimensions, especially since the appreciation of the out-group solidarity itself contributes to the enhanced morale that enables the target group's action to improve its plight.

Nevertheless, out-group solidarity can be a good to members of a solidarity group even in the absence of action taken on its behalf either by the group itself or by others. An extreme but telling example of this non-instrumental good of solidarity is expressed by Ewa Berberyusz in a probing discussion of whether non-Jewish Poles under Nazi occupation could have done more to protect Jews from the Nazis' extermination campaign. Berberyusz recalls an incident during this period in which a Jewish child had wandered out of the ghetto to which Jews had been confined in Warsaw and she, a child herself, turned away from her impulse to help the child. She says, "I was therefore afraid of the consequences of helping him, but was that all? Was it not that he had found himself beyond that turning point which let me decide that he was beyond the frontier of human solidarity?"[5] Berberyusz further reflects that the non-Jewish Poles could have done little to affect the fate of the Jews in Nazi hands. But, she says, "if more of us had turned out to be more Christian . . . maybe it would not have been such a lonely death."[6] She is appreciating the way that an expression of solidarity can be of value even to someone for whom death is imminent.[7]

This support from outside may provide a distinct good not present in in-group solidarity. However, in-group solidarity conveys non-instrumental goods as well, including some of the same ones as out-group solidarity. Knowing that others appreciate one's plight and empathize with it can be a good to oneself as a member of a victimized group, whether the others are members of other groups or members of one's own group facing the same plight. One appreciates someone else's empathy for one's plight based on her own undergoing of the same adversity; but one also appreciates that someone who is *not* undergoing that adversity empathizes with one. In both cases, a recognized tribulation is easier to bear than a solitary one. And one's sense of damaged self-worth can be restored, at least partially, by a community of solidarity of others in a similar plight. Similarly, confidence that one is able to do something constructive to mitigate one's plight is enhanced by a solidarity community, as it is by out-group support.

But in-group solidarity also embodies goods that out-group solidarity cannot—the sense of loyalty and mutual trust from fellow members who stand together in face of shared adversity. These bonds within a solidarity community are valued in themselves, as well as instrumentally to goals that the community sets itself.[8]

Three Bases of Solidarity

(1) Identity Group

If in-group solidarity is a coming-together of members of a group in the face of a shared condition, then there can be many kinds of solidarity depending on the character of the shared condition. I want to distinguish three bases of solidarity in this sense, which bear specifically on ethnicity and race-related forms of solidarity—group identity, shared experience, and shared political goals. Almost

any kind of social identity (religious, sexual orientation, professional) can be the basis of a solidarity group, but my interest is in racial and ethnic (including pan-ethnic) groups. I am envisioning the mere shared identity, not necessarily experiences or perspectives associated with it, as the basis for solidarity. Perhaps if pressed to say why being Jewish, black, Muslim, or gay causes one to feel solidarity with that group, many people could articulate further reasons (we have the same beliefs or experiences) that make more sense than the bare identity; but it seems unquestionable that many people do feel an identity-based solidarity that is not just a proxy for shared beliefs or experiences.

Solidarity is not of course automatic among members of an identity group. Some members do not identify strongly, or even at all, with the identity in question. For example, some Korean Americans may not identify strongly with being Korean American, although they would acknowledge that it would be appropriate for others to regard them as Korean American in a classificatory sense. Some blacks do not identify strongly with being black. Some members of any ethnic, panethnic, or racial group will regard that particular component of their overall identity as unimportant to them in the larger picture. The absence of identification with the identity naturally translates into an absence of a sense of shared bonds with other members of the group in question, and thus with little solidarity with them in situations of adversity.[9]

A less common but still significant case of identity without solidarity is someone who strongly identifies with the identity but regards a significant number of members of the identity group as deficient in some way, or at least not worthy of affirmation, perhaps because, in this person's mind, these others cause the group to be seen in a bad light, or fail to live up to what this person regards as appropriate ideals for the group. The character of Sgt. Waters in the film, *A Soldier's Story*, is a good instance of such a person.[10] Waters is African American and identifies strongly as being African American (in the film's terms, black); but he regards a large number of black people as unworthy and as casting blacks in a bad light. In the film, these others are Southern, rural, and not well-educated. (Waters is pathologically contemptuous of and hate-filled toward one character who possesses these characteristics.)

Thus, through either indifference to, disidentification with, or devaluing attitudes toward one's group or members of it, a person can identify as an X without feeling solidarity toward other X's. Nevertheless, many members of ethnic or racial groups do feel community and solidarity toward the group and its other members. They feel a sense of community with other members, some sense of shared fate, and a specific concern for other members. When the group as a whole is facing adversity, they feel solidarity with it.

We must distinguish two forms of identity-based solidarity groups, which we can call "whole group" and "known group." To advert to our earlier example, suppose the Muslim community in a particular city has been the target of attacks, and the community pulls together in solidarity in face of these attacks. The solidarity which members of this group feel with each other—"known group"

solidarity—is of a different character than the solidarity they feel with Muslims as a whole (or Muslims in the United States)—"whole group" solidarity. Sometimes when someone calls for solidarity, she is referring to solidarity among a known group, for example, students from a certain ethnic group on a given college campus. But sometimes, what is meant is solidarity among all members of the group in question wherever they might be located. Both are genuine types of solidarity. Neither solidarity nor community requires that those with whom one has solidarity or community be personally known to oneself. So it is possible to feel solidarity and community with far-flung members of one's group—blacks, or Asian Americans, or Salvadorans.[11] Yet there is a difference between known group and whole group solidarities. One feels closer and more involved with groups known to oneself than to the whole group. The character of the mutual trust one feels is much different among members of a known group whom they have specific reason, based in shared activities and relationships, to trust, than for unknown members of the whole group. On the other hand, some persons feel a kind of connection, attachment, and even loyalty, to the abstract whole group that they may not to concrete members in known groups.[12]

(2) Shared Experience

A second potential basis for solidarity is shared experience, such as being a rape victim, or a target of racial discrimination. By "experience" I mean something undergone by all members of the solidarity group, rather than each of their subjective experience of what is undergone, which might well differ in significant ways.[13] People suffering racial discrimination might experience this in different ways; for example, some may find it devastating to their self-confidence, while others may bounce back from it without lasting psychological effects, though both forfeit the good regarding which they were discriminated against. But for everyone, being a rape victim or being racially discriminated against is a negative experience that can form a foundation for solidarity. People who have experienced racial discrimination can identify with one another in a "whole group" sense, and can also form a particular "known group" solidarity group in a particular location (though it can be an internet location as well).

Identity-based and experience-based solidarities may be confused with one another, and in any case bear important connections to one another as related to race and ethnicity. Let me illustrate by looking at two recent discussions. In the paper " 'South Asian American': Powerful Solidarity or Mere Illusion," Rajini Srikanth argues in favor of a solidarity of South Asian Americans.[14] She argues that since the terrorist attacks in the United States in September 2001, individuals of South Asian ancestry have become a target of suspicion, and that, in addition, such individuals have certain shared experiences, of racial profiling and being denied advancement in the corporate and professional world ("glass ceilings").[15] In his recent work, *We Who Are Dark: The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity*, Tommie Shelby argues that the soundest basis for a politically directed

black solidarity lies in shared experience rather than shared culture, racial essence, ethnicity, or nationality. (His argument is very complex and I am oversimplifying a bit.) The shared experience that Shelby points to is the experience of antiblack racism, discrimination, and stigmatizing. Thus, both Shelby and Srikanth are advocating a certain kind of group identity and citing a set of experiences that are meant to ground that identity.

Srikanth and Shelby are engaged in somewhat different projects. Srikanth is arguing that Americans of national ancestry on the Indian subcontinent (especially Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis) who may possess an ethnonational identity should adopt the pan-ethnic "South Asian American" one in addition to it. She argues that such a pan-ethnic identity does not require suppressing the ethnonational ones, and that South Asians will be a more powerful pan-ethnicity if its component ethnicities are acknowledged and given voice within the wider pan-ethnicity. Shelby, by contrast, is discussing an already-existing identity and solidarity group, namely blacks, or African Americans. He is not giving reasons in favor of adopting such an identity, but rather suggesting that there are both constructive and problematic ways of thinking about that identity, and that blacks should opt for the constructive ones. What Shelby and Srikanth do share is the providing of arguments favoring a certain kind of group identity and offering a set of experiences as the optimal or appropriate basis for that identity.

However, exactly what is meant to be the relation between the identity itself, and the experiences proffered to ground it? In Srikanth's case, no basis *other* than the experiences are offered, so it may look as if she is proposing an identity based solely on those experiences, thus calling for an experience-based solidarity. However, the experience of being a target of suspicion in post-9/11 United States is not confined to South Asians but encompasses Arab Americans as well, as Srikanth herself points out.[16] If a solidarity group (or coalition) were to be grounded on those experiences, it would embrace Arab Americans along with South Asian Americans. And experiences of racial profiling and glass ceilings apply to an even wider group, including other Asian Americans, and Latinos and African Americans; so a solidarity group built on those experiences would embrace those groups as well. Neither would provide an adequate basis for a distinctly South Asian–American identity.

I think we should interpret Srikanth as tacitly appealing to a pan-ethnic identity as *itself* the basis for identity-based rather than experience-based solidarity. She is assuming that persons of various South Asian ethnonationalities (in the United States) can recognize that identity as a possible, plausible, and viable one. Several of her arguments presuppose such an identity, for they are clearly meant to address possible objections to, or worries about, such an identity—for example, the concern that smaller groups will go unheard in the larger pan-ethnicity, as has historically happened to Filipinos in the broader "Asian-American" pan-ethnic group, or the need to have different ethnicities heard and recognized within the broader pan-ethnicity.[17] Such arguments presuppose a recognition that ethnic and pan-ethnic identities are themselves legitimate sources of identity and solidarity in

their own right independent of specific and distinctive experiences. Perhaps Sri-kanth also sees the shared experiences she mentions as providing resources to strengthen South Asian–American pan-ethnicity, which they might do for those who have them (but not those who do not). But she is not thinking of those shared experiences as the actual *basis* of the pan-ethnicity. Her recognition that those experiences are shared by groups other than South Asians is perhaps best inter-preted as a reason for South Asians (once formed into a solidarity group) to unite politically with those other groups, perhaps forming yet a broader solidarity group, or at least a political coalition, based on shared experience, with identity-based subgroups as its component members.

To reiterate: there is a difference between an experience-based and an ethnicity/pan-ethnicity-based solidarity or community. Who is and is not in the group, and the basis of the members' connection to the other members, differs in the two forms. Even if one feels that all South Asians are targets of post-9/11 suspicion, to think of oneself as part of a South Asian pan-ethnicity is different from thinking of oneself as part of a solidarity group based on the experience or potential experience of being targeted for suspicion, in part because the latter group is larger than the former, but more fundamentally because the focus of the solidarity is different in the two cases.

Of course, in distinguishing experience-based and identity-based groups, I am describing ideal types. In actually existing "known groups," not all members may agree as to the actual basis of the group, and some may be unclear in their own mind whether the basis is experience or identity. A South Asian–American group-ing on a campus, for example, may include some who see the group as based on shared experiences, others for whom the bond is simply the shared identity, and still others who have no settled view on the matter. ("Whole group" is a different matter, since such groups exist only as defined, as based on experience or ethnic-ity, or some other foundation.)

Shelby presents a different but interestingly related issue. He explicitly takes the racial solidarity as a given, and assumes that black people have a basis for solidarity in their shared black identity, although he does not take that solidarity by itself to provide a normative basis for action. (More on this below.) However, he uses the notion of "identity" in a distinctive way that requires some explanation. He is concerned to refute what he calls "collective identity theory"—the view that "a shared black identity is essential for an effective black solidarity whose aim is liberation from racial oppression" (p. 203). Against this view, Shelby argues that blacks need not see themselves as sharing a racial essence, a distinctive black culture, or a black ethnicity in order to create the political solidarity necessary to achieve liberation from racial oppression; in that sense, then, he sees solidarity as not requiring what he calls "thick" identity.[18] But "thin" black identity—an imposed classification based on a combination of visible physical characteristics and ancestry as descendants of persons from sub-Saharan Africa—is required for solidarity. It is so not in itself, for visible characteristics apart from their social meaning do not provide a meaningful bond, nor can the mere fact of being

classified together do so. But thin blackness can trigger antiblack racism, and the experience of such racism can provide a basis for solidarity. Sometimes Shelby implies that these experiences can, by themselves and apart from the identity bond, provide a basis for a robust solidarity among all blacks or African Americans. This is doubtful; the forms of racial wrong experienced by professional blacks and those by urban poor blacks are very different in character. Similarity of experience, for example, among the professional blacks profiled in Ellis Cose's *Rage of a Privileged Class*, who find their competence questioned, are often treated disrespectfully in public places, are mistaken for lower-class blacks, have to expend energy reassuring white people that they do not "have a chip on their shoulder," and the like, may provide a bond among those suffering those experiences, but it will be one that enhances an already-existing identity-based solidarity.[19]

It is true that middle-class blacks often identify powerfully with poor or working-class blacks, and see themselves as very much part of the same group, despite this difference in experience. But this supports the point I am making here, that identity is a different basis for solidarity than experience, and that black identity (in my sense) provides the foundation for a good deal of black community and solidarity, perhaps enhanced among subgroups of blacks by shared experience. In contrast to Srikanth's pan-ethnicity in-the-making, African Americans already constitute a distinct historical people—a group regarded by others as a distinct "race" and treated as such and, as a result, that has developed a set of institutions and practices of resistance that expressed the humanity, intelligence, and moral character of black Americans that was denied in their racialization. I think that Shelby recognizes that it is this historical people with whom U.S. blacks most fundamentally feel solidarity.[20]

As in the case of South Asian–American pan-ethnicity, contemporary experiences of antiblack racism can strengthen an already-existing identity-based community and solidarity, among those who have those experiences, which will never be all members of the group. But they are not fundamentally the basis of the group.

(3) *Political Commitment*

Srikanth and Shelby share a certain aim in their arguments, and that is to describe a form of solidarity that will play a particular political role—that will lead the group in question to adopt certain political aims. Let us look, therefore, at the third type or basis of solidarity—political values, principles, and commitments.

Solidarity communities can form around very limited, proximal political goals, such as pressuring a municipal council to build affordable housing, put more money into a music program in the schools, pass a law limiting access to abortion, or one increasing such access. But for our purposes, I would like to focus on political commitments that have more than such a short-term dimen-

sion, and that are taken by their adherents to involve important political principles. The Civil Rights Movement as a whole, or in a particular locale, is an obvious example. A union drive can be seen as such a political commitment in this sense if it is understood as part of a longer-term effort to secure protections and well-being for a disadvantaged segment of the working population. The point, for our purposes, of "political solidarity" is that the group in question may comprise persons of different identities and experiences, but who agree with one another in political commitments. Of course, a given political solidarity group is not *necessarily* diverse in this way. Many even long-term political endeavors of a principled sort involve people who are homogeneous on various important identity and experiential dimensions, although certain political commitments (e.g., black nationalism) are more likely to generate homogeneity, and others, diversity.

In political solidarity, what forms the basis of the solidarity is the shared commitment to the political cause, principle, and value in question. It is on this basis that the participants identify with one another, come to trust and support one another, and have mutual and reciprocal concern.

Not all shared political commitment results in a solidarity community. Just as a group of individuals can share an identity without feeling any bond with one another, and as a group can share a common experience without having a sense of community around that experience, so persons who share political commitments, principles, and values do not necessarily form a sense of solidarity with one another. They might go about their lives without a sense of community or identification with one another. Or they may "team up" with one another to reach a common goal. That is, they might form a coalition. They may respect one another and recognize that achieving their goal depends on the participation of the others. But this can all happen without a sense of community or solidarity forming among them.

Although political solidarity is in the service of political aims, not all the goods of political solidarity are purely instrumental ones. The support, loyalty, trust, and mutual concern within the solidarity group are goods in their own right, apart from their instrumental value to achieving the group's aims as is the case regarding solidarity of other types as well. They are humanly good relationships, of a sort that are absent in mere coalitions or alliances. Whether one succeeds or not in attaining one's political aims, that others stand with one in reciprocal relationships of trust, concern, and loyalty in the process of attempting to reach those aims is a good. This does not mean that these non-instrumentally good relationships could exist if the shared political goal were abandoned, however. Their goodness is conditional upon the shared struggle to attain the political aims.[21]

Guinier and Torres describe a struggle for unionization and pay equity in a K-Mart distribution center in Greensboro, North Carolina that exemplifies political solidarity.[22] The majority of workers were black, and the campaign was supported by an association of black pastors in the Greensboro area, who helped

to organize demonstrations at the K-Mart plant. Eventually white workers and community members joined in the struggle. At one point, when K-Mart sought an injunction against black demonstrators, a group of white workers publicly protested their failure to be included in the injunction. "They had not only joined with black workers to resist the unfair wage structure but they had also stepped up to be arrested and sued, because they saw their fates as linked to the black workers."[23] The resultant political solidarity group thus eventually came to comprise white and black workers, and white and black church and community people.[24]

Solidarity and Shared Values

Of the three modes of solidarity I have discussed—identity, experience, and political commitment—only the latter is based on shared values within the solidarity group. What holds the political solidarity group together is that its members have the same aims and values—securing decent wages, reducing racial discrimination, and the like. The group comes together around these values and the activities designed to realize them. By definition, the source of the bond that links the members and on which they develop trust, concern, and loyalty are these values, not shared experiences or identity.[25]

By contrast, identity group solidarity and experience group solidarity do not require shared values. What allows solidarity within an ethnic or racial group is simply the shared identity as members of that group. It is as "Asian American" that those Asian Americans who form a solidarity group do so, not necessarily because they share substantive values in common. They may very well diverge greatly in their values, yet still feel a sense of solidarity and community. This is true of black identity as well; blacks may differ greatly in many substantive values (nationalist, religious, feminist, liberal, integrationist, separatist, Marxist, conservative, liberal, and so on), yet may feel a sense of solidarity with one another on account of their shared black group identity.[26] Both Srikanth and Shelby wish to make use of an ethnicity-based identity and solidarity in service of one founded on political values; whether their arguments are successful or not, my point here is only that the group-identity-based solidarity can itself exist independent of where it is taken politically or axiologically.

The same is true of experience-based solidarities, such as the experience, mentioned by Shelby as being DuBois's view (stated in *Dusk of Dawn*), of being racially stigmatized, insulted, and discriminated against.[27] Certain kinds of experiences can make for solidarity based purely on having undergone that experience, and independent of the substantive values held by members of that solidarity group. Coming together around that experience can lead to support, trust, mutual concern, and loyalty within the group, but these solidaristic sentiments do not require any further unity in values.

One might think that experience-based solidarities must be at least tacitly value-based. When the experiences are negative ones, such as being a victim of

rape, or racial discrimination, members of the solidarity group are surely committed to the value of helping rape victims, or fighting rape; or to mitigating racial stigma. This is misleading, for two reasons. First, even if all members of the solidarity community were committed to such values, it would still remain true that the *source* of the solidarity between them could well be the shared experience, not the shared values. But in any case, I do not think one can assume that all members of an experience-based solidarity community actually do hold the same values relating to the experience (beyond the very general level, "racial stigma is bad") or what to do about it. Not all victims of racial stigmatization will look at its sources or what should be done about it the same way. Some may think a broad-based attack on cultural racism in order; others may focus on behaviors among the target population that they think contribute to the stigma. Some may eschew political values relating to the shared experience and just try individually to cope as best they can. Some of these responses might seem short-sighted or misdirected; and this might be relevant to disputes about what response is most appropriate and efficacious for a group bound by shared experiences or identities. However, it is not relevant to my point that solidarity around shared experiences does not require or necessitate shared political values or commitments.

There is a difference between solidarity with *people suffering oppression*, and solidarity with *those actively resisting it*, which is not brought out in statements such as the following, "I defend a conception of solidarity based strictly on the shared experience of racial oppression and a joint commitment to resist it."[28] The composition of the group sharing the experience differs from the one committed to resisting the cause of the experience, since those who do not share the experience can be committed to the shared values that respond to it. Guinier and Torres's example could be taken to illustrate this point, as the church and community people engaging in the demonstrations with, and on behalf of, the workers did not face the same plight as the workers themselves. But also, not all who suffer injustice or oppression are committed to resisting it. Indeed, it is very seldom the case that all members of an oppressed group will actively strive to improve the lot of the group as a whole. Typically, only some will have that dedication and orientation. Others will just try to live their lives as best they can, not necessarily harming the group's justice-related interests, but not necessarily doing anything to foster them either. Others may try to gain advancement through a betrayal of the group's interests, a betrayal held out as a possibility by more powerful interests of the dominant group which is opposed to any group advancement of the group in question. In sum, political commitments and shared experiences are two distinct bases of solidarity, and constitute different membership in their respective solidarity groups, though there can be a political solidarity group consisting of the overlap between these groups.

We can now see how all solidarities are "political" in the sense of being a collective response to usually human-created adversity; but only political solidarity is political in the sense of being aimed specifically at political goals.

Political Solidarities of a Racial Character

Let us look more closely at political solidarity as it bears on racism or racial injustice. We can distinguish three different forms, distinguished by their animating values. One is concerned with racial justice, but only with respect to one particular identity group—for example, blacks, or Mexican Americans. I will call this a "single- (identity)-group-focused solidarity group" or "SGFSG." A second—a "racial justice group" (RJG)—is a group working for racial justice and antiracism generally, and so is concerned with racism against *any* group. A third is a "social justice group" (SJG), seeing racial justice as one part of a larger goal of social justice to which the group is dedicated.

An SGFSG differs from a pure "interest" group—one that is concerned simply to further the interests of an identity group. The difference is that the pure interest group advocates for the group's interests whether or not, and beyond the point at which, the group suffers from injustice. It is not sensitive to justice concerns and is simply looking out for its members (whole group or known group). In a case of conflict of interest with another (identity/interest) group, this (interest) group will not care whether the other group is more deserving, or whether some compromise position might represent a just outcome; it will simply push to maximize its group interests. (It may engage in compromise, but only because it sees doing so as the best way to maximize the group's interests in the circumstances.)

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) seems to me a good example of a particular-group, justice-informed solidarity organization (SGFSG).[29] This organization focuses primarily on the justice-related concerns of black people. It would not, for example, press black-owned enterprises or black-run public agencies to hire black employees wherever possible and independent of whether other applicants were better qualified. It is true that the NAACP is not, perhaps, a pure case of specific group focus, since to some extent it pays attention to the situation of all people of color (in the United States), not only blacks. However, it is primarily oriented toward blacks, so it is not a true RJG. As Shelby points out, a black antiracist solidarity, to remain genuinely principled, must be critical of racial prejudice and unjust favoritism toward blacks within its own ranks.[30] Though justice-sensitive, such a solidarity group is not the same as an SJG whose aim is social justice more generally.

The distinction between an interest group and an SGFSG allows us to recognize that just because a solidarity group is focused on justice for one particular identity group, this does not disqualify it from being a political solidarity group—that is, one animated by genuine political principles. There is nothing incoherent or dishonorable about being focused on justice for a specific group in preference to others (whether one is a member of that group or not). The plights of distinct groups have features that make them unique, even if they share features of that plight with others.[31]

SGFSGs and Identity-Based Solidarity Groups

Although an SGFSG is focused on a single identity group, it is distinct from an identity-based solidarity group. The former is defined by its aims, and the latter by its membership. The NAACP is an organization of people who favor justice for black Americans; although the large majority of its active members are black, some are not. Some are white—for many years the executive director of its legal defense fund was white—and there are other non-blacks as well. Amy Gutmann, in her acute discussion of the role of identity in democracy, muddies the waters on this point when she refers to groups like the NAACP as "organized identity groups."[32] She implies that they are the organized form of an identity (or identity-based) group, while in fact they are groups dedicated to the justice-related inter-ests of such a group. That is, Gutmann conflates the aims of the group with its membership. Identity groups suffering injustice have almost always had a few allies from other groups, who have often played an important role in those groups' struggles. As the United States becomes more ethnically pluralistic, and as more individuals become better informed about the plight of those in groups other than their own, it is perfectly natural that some will wish to become part of solidarity groups devoted to justice for the group in question. Because a political solidarity group, even one focused on a specific identity group, is founded on shared goals and values, it is perfectly possible for identity out-group members to be as dedicated to that cause as some identity in-group members.

Some out-group members, because of their dedication to justice for the group in question, will be much more reliable and trustworthy members of the political solidarity group than many in-group members of the larger ethnic group for whose interests the political solidarity group aims. This is so even though the personal stake in the group's advancement is very different for in-group and out-group members. It is true that the out-group member can just decide to abandon the cause without harm to himself, while the in-group member must continue to deal with the injustice. This asymmetry notwithstanding, *dedication to* a group's welfare does not entirely track *personal stake in* that group's welfare. It does so only for the most part, leaving room for some even if only a few out-group members to be as trustworthy, loyal, and dedicated members of the political solidarity group as its in-group members, and more so than other in-group members (of the larger identity group in question) who are not appropriate candidates for the political solidarity. One thinks here of James Reeb, Viola Liuzzo, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman, white activists of the Civil Rights Movement in the Southern United States whose work put them in harm's way and who lost their lives in doing so. They are only the most extreme cases of many whites, many from fairly privileged backgrounds, whose dedication to the cause of civil rights rendered them worthy of being included in the political solidarity group dedicated to the justice-related interests of African Americans.

When the focus of a political solidarity group is a particular identity group, but the membership of the solidarity group contains several such groups, the

smooth and effective functioning of the group requires some recognition of these differences. In the Civil Rights Movement, some whites were not accustomed or ready to take leadership from blacks in the movement. Historical relations of power and subordination must be recognized and faced within the solidarity group. Without questioning anyone's dedication to the cause, and thus the appropriateness of their membership in the solidarity group, it still behooves the group to be attentive to identity differences that can affect interaction in the tasks of the group.

General Racial Justice Solidarity Groups

The same holds, though in a somewhat different way, for general RJGs—that is, ones not focused on a particular identity group but on all forms of racial injustice and victimization. I cannot think of an RJG organization comparable to the NAACP that is devoted to racial justice in general, not privileging any one group. Perhaps the interracial group that puts out the magazine *ColorLines* can serve in its absence. This magazine reports on struggles for justice for various particular people of color groups, and also on particular alliances between different groups for common aims, or tensions between different groups that would need to be overcome for a successful coalition.

Such groups are likely to have a wider range of identity groups present within its membership than are SGFSGs. What Srikanth says about pan-ethnic groups such as South Asian Americans and Asian Americans applies to such groups more generally. (This is partly because Srikanth tends to conceive of these pan-ethnic groups as political solidarity groups rather than simply identity solidarity groups.) The identity subgroups composing the wider solidarity group should be recognized as such and encouraged to speak and speak up *as* such subgroups in the wider solidarity group. Since different groups experience racial victimization and injustice in somewhat distinct ways, it is important that those differences be recognized in planning the strategy of the broader RJG, just as issues of privilege and power that would typically affect the white members of the group must also be faced, as in SGFSGs.

General Social Justice Solidarity Groups

Insofar as we are interested in any form of solidarity group whose aims would advance the cause of racial justice, we must include here general SJGs, the achievement of whose aims, although not explicitly racial in character, would advance racial justice by disproportionately benefiting people of color in their justice-related interests. In his book *The Bridge Over the Racial Divide*, William Julius Wilson describes the Living Wage campaigns of the 1990s, which sought to make municipalities require their contractors to pay a higher minimum wage than the federal minimum (still $5.15/hour as of this writing).[33] These campaigns, several of which were successful (and several more successful since Wilson's

1999 book), disproportionately benefited black and Hispanic workers, since these groups hold a disproportionate share of minimum wage workers; but they still benefited all employees of the municipal contractors equally.[34]

It is an empirical matter whether the justice-related interests of a particular racial group, such as blacks or Latinos[35], are best served by SGFSGs, RJGs, or SJGs. William Julius Wilson has famously argued in various writings (including the book mentioned above) that in the case of blacks, they are best served by SJGs. This is not because he denies that there are historical and contemporary dynamics that render blacks a more distinctly disadvantaged group than other groups, but both because he thinks that blacks are also affected by non-race-related dynamics (such as a too-low minimum wage) and because alliance with other non-black groups is blacks' best hope for improving their lot given demographics and political dynamics in the United States. Shelby, though focused on the instrumental value of black political solidarity for the advancing of blacks' justice-related interests, does not reject Wilson's view; he remains agnostic about the empirical issue of the solidaristic (and other political) forms that are *most* likely to achieve justice for blacks, claiming only that all forms will be necessary.

Apart from this question, however, is that of the non-instrumental goods to be achieved by SGFSGs, RJGs, and SJGs. Mutual trust, concern, support, and loyalty are goods for any solidarity group members if their cause is just (or even if it is merely morally acceptable). But one might suggest that when the membership of solidarity groups is diverse in terms of racial identity, an additional good is realized. Solidarity is more difficult to achieve in such groups. Although they are bound together by shared political aims, the identity differences come with the challenges of mistrust, unfamiliarity, differences of privilege and power, and lack of comfort that often attend working with people from different racial groups. Meeting such challenges constitutes a further source of value in the resultant trust, loyalty, and so on, built up among members of the solidarity group. In addition, it can be argued that the kind of interracial cooperation and harmony that results from meeting such challenges (without erasing the particular identities composing the group, that is, without assimilation) stands as a model or at least inspiration for a multiracial society, and is valuable for that reason as well. bell hooks invokes the solidarity of black and white in the Civil Rights Movement to call for a contemporary vision of what she, following Martin Luther King, Jr., calls the "beloved community." "Like all beloved communities we affirm our differences. It is this generous spirit of affirmation that gives us courage to challenge one another, to work through misunderstandings, especially those that have to do with race and racism. In a beloved community, solidarity and trust are grounded in a profound commitment to a shared vision."[36,37]

Conclusion

Solidarity within a group facing adversity realizes certain human goods, of which some are instrumental to the goal of mitigating the adversity, but some are

non-instrumental, such as trust, loyalty, and mutual concern (though these can be instrumental as well). There are three distinct bases for solidarity that bear on racial forms of solidarity—identity group, shared experience, and shared political commitments. Not all members of the same identity group necessarily share the same experiences of adversity; nor do they, nor those who do share those experiences, necessarily share political values about what to do about that adversity. So solidarity groups built on these different bases will include different members, even when all bear some relationship to the same adversity, for example, racial injustice suffered by African Americans. In particular, solidarity groups built around political commitments will include members of more than one identity group, even when the political commitments focus primarily on the justice-related interests of only one identity group (such as African Americans). And there is a special value in successful, racially pluralistic solidarity groups that goes beyond the achievement of political goals, and the normal non-instrumental goods of solidaristic relationships, precisely because of the value in meeting the special challenges of working together with those of different races.

Notes

[1] I am drawing my conception of solidarity partly from Tommie Shelby's discussion in *We Who Are Dark: The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2005), especially pp. 67–71.

[2] To say that adversity is required for solidarity is not to say that solidarity occurs only among disadvantaged, oppressed, or stigmatized populations. Solidarity requires only a belief among the group that it is facing adversity, and privileged people can feel this. Wealthy people who band together to stop an attempt to increase their taxes may have a sense of solidarity in doing so, insofar as they regard the tax increase as adverse to their interests. So the adversity required by solidarity is not measured by an objective standard, but is in the eyes of members of the group. We might say that the wealthy people's sense of solidarity is unjustified, meaning that they are wrong to oppose the tax increase. But they may nevertheless have a sense of solidarity.

[3] Bill Lawson, in a comment on a previous draft, points out that another possible scenario is that the Asian-American student experience a sense of vulnerability as a potential victim of a hate crime, but without feeling solidarity with the other Asian Americans. There are several distinct options here, and I mean only to bring out the difference between solidarity and community. In a previous paper, I have referred to the Asian-American students' form of group consciousness as an "anti-discrimination identity." See my "Ethnicity, Identity, Community," in *Justice and Caring: The Search for Common Ground in Education*, eds. M. Katz, N. Noddings, and K. Strike (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999), 127–45.

[4] The perpetrators were a white supremacist group who also targeted Native Americans and African Americans in the town. Other forms of solidarity were proffered to those communities. For

example, when hate messages were painted on a Native American family's home, many members of the community came to the home as a union group and painted over the hate messages. "Not in Our Town" (aired on PBS in December 1995).

[5] Ewa Berberyusz, "Guilt by Neglect," in *My Brother's Keeper? Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust*, ed. Anthony Polonsky (New York: Routledge, 1990), 70.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Such out-group solidarity is directed toward a group that may be too demoralized to experience in-group solidarity. Perhaps this form of solidarity is akin to a use familiar in philosophical literature, in which one speaks of solidarity with the human race, or with human beings as such. Richard Rorty says, "At times like that of Auschwitz . . . we want something that stands beyond history and institutions. What can there be except human solidarity, our recognition of one another's common humanity?" ("Solidarity," in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989], 189.) Rorty goes on to argue that there is no such common humanity to be appealed to in morality. Martin Luther King, Jr. disagrees, and recognizes and affirms such solidarity: "A third ethical demand of integration is a recognition of the solidarity of the human family." ("The Ethical Demands for Integration," in *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. James M. Washington (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 121.

[8] Shelby discusses mutual trust and loyalty as two features of solidarity, in *We Who Are Dark*, 69–70.

[9] The example of Asian-American students who lacked communal bonds with the other Asian-American students on her campus but felt solidarity with them in a situation of adversity (p. 52) is not inconsistent with this point, since she did feel a personal identification with Asian Americans generally. The difference between the two situations reflects the distinction between "known group" and "whole group" solidarity, discussed below.

[10] *A Soldier's Story* (1984, Norman Jewison director, screenplay by Charles Fuller, from his play, *A Soldier's Play*).

[11] There may be a difference between solidarity and community with regard to the known group/whole group issue. The notion of "community" tends to suggest a face-to-face grouping, while this is not so of "solidarity." But even so, most would admit that community can exist among persons not known personally to one another—national and religious communities (the communities of believers in a given faith tradition, rather than geographically localized members of such faiths) are obvious examples, but racial and ethnic communities are as well.

[12] I owe this point to Tommie Shelby.

[13] I owe this distinction to Sally Haslanger.

[14] Rajini Srikanth, " 'South Asian American': Powerful Solidarity or Mere Illusion," *The Subcontinental* 1, no. 1 (2003): 15–25. Srikanth often refers to what she is arguing for as a "coalition" rather than a solidarity group. That is an important distinction that I will discuss below, but the argument here does not depend on it.

[15] Srikanth, "South Asian American," 19, 20.

[16] Ibid., 19.

[17] Ibid., 18, 20f.

[18] Shelby's explanations of these "thick" forms of blackness is summarized on pp. 209–12. His argument against them is on pp. 216–36, although other parts of the book contribute to this argument.

[19] Ellis Cose, *The Rage of a Privileged Class* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993).

[20] African Americans are not simply a descent-based solidarity group, although elements of solidarity play a part in constituting it. The peoplehood of African Americans transcends historical solidarity. This historical people often disappears in Shelby's argument in the book, perhaps because it might seem that to acknowledge it would be to move too close to the racial, ethnic, cultural, or ethnonational forms of identity that Shelby is concerned to show are not essential, and are positively harmful, to the political project of seeking racial justice. Although it would take me too far afield to attempt to do so here, I would argue that the "historical peoplehood" conception of

blackness that provides the identity basis for solidarity does not require the forms of thick blackness that Shelby rejects and is correct to worry should not be made a requisite of black political identity and solidarity.

[21] The goods of solidarity referred to here are non-instrumental but extrinsic (rather than intrinsic); they depend on the existence of the shared political goal. Shelby recognizes that political solidaristic relationships do not exhaust the forms of valuable bonds among members of an identity group, and that communal bonds can be valued non-instrumentally. However, he tends to see the alternative to political solidarity as social solidarity, which is close to what I mean by "community." (See Shelby, *We Who Are Dark*, 206f.) What seems absent in his account is the non-instrumental but extrinsic value of political solidaristic bonds.

[22] Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres, *The Miner's Canary: Enlisting Race, Resisting Power, Transforming Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

[23] Ibid., 135.

[24] The workers could be construed as an experience-based group that (minus members of the former who do not join the struggle) becomes a solidarity group with the members of the community becoming part of that political solidarity group.

[25] Of course in actual political solidarity groups, shared experiences, such as the ones generated by taking actions toward political goals, can serve to strengthen solidaristic bonds, as can shared preexisting identities among members of the political solidarity group. Moreover, values exist at different levels, so there can be agreement at a very abstract level (the situation of blacks should be improved) but not at more concrete levels (governmental action is required vs. blacks should improve themselves without looking to government).

[26] This is not to deny that for some people, their political values can impact their identity-based solidarity. They may withdraw solidarity from members of their identity group who they regard as having unacceptable political values. The result, in my scheme here, would be neither a purely identity-based nor a purely political solidarity, but some sort of hybrid.

[27] W. E. B. DuBois, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1984), 117, referenced in Shelby, *We Who Are Dark*, 243–44.

[28] Shelby, *We Who Are Dark*, 11. Similar passages are on pp. 237 and 247. Shelby may mean that the solidarity in question requires the conjunction of the shared experience and the joint commitment to resist it.

[29] Not every solidarity group is an actual organization; and not all members of an organization form an actual solidarity group. Perhaps only some members of the NAACP count collectively as a solidarity group; a local NAACP chapter might be likely to be an example of a solidarity group.

[30] Shelby, *We Who Are Dark*, 248

[31] "[A]ntiblack racial injustice . . . has features that make it unique as a form of racial subjection in the United States." It shares this feature, Shelby says, with anti-Asian racism, oppression of American Indians, antisemitism, and harassment of Arab Americans (Shelby, *We Who Are Dark*, 240.)

[32] Amy Gutmann, *Identity in Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[33] William Julius Wilson, *The Bridge Over the Racial Divide: Rising Inequality and Coalition Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 83–85.

[34] USAction (http://www.usaction.org) and ACORN (http://www.acorn.org) are two well-known organizations that do not focus on racial issues as such but, by working on justice-related concerns related to low income (health care for all, opposing tax cuts for the wealthy, quality public schools, social security protection), disproportionately benefit blacks and Latinos and other racial minorities in their justice-related interests.

[35] We need not here engage the issue of whether Latinos are rightly thought of as a racial group all things considered. (On that issue, see Linda Martín Alcoff, "Latinos and the Categories of Race," in *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2006], chap. 10.) For the purposes of this paper, Latinos are sufficiently race-like to be grouped with blacks in this context.

[36] bell hooks, *Killing Rage: Ending Racism* (New York: Henry Holt, 1995), 272.

[37] Solidarity sets a relatively high bar for the sense of connection among members. Such a standard is not met by every alliance or coalition that is dedicated to the very same political ends and principles as the solidarity group. Shelby recognizes the importance of interracial political alliances in promoting the goal of racial justice, but he does not clearly distinguish alliances from solidarity groups, and his discussion of the goods of solidarity is focused only on the identity-based solidarity group of blacks.