

# 1 Solidarity in classic social theory

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The phenomenon of group loyalty and sharing resources existed long before the idea of solidarity developed. The core social units of precapitalist society were the family and the extended family. Ties of kinship were the basis for reciprocal loyalty, constituting specific duties and moral obligations. Moral norms required family members to help each other, remain together and defend each other against external threats and hazards. Outside the bounds of family in feudal society, peasants would help one another in the fields or when building houses. In some countries during the nineteenth century peasant solidarity developed a sophisticated cooperative movement that protected against the hazards of life and the growth of a market economy. Craftsmen established guilds that controlled the recruitment of apprentices, organised education and established security funds for their members (Christiansen 1997). Neighbours sometimes helped one another with food and money, when untimely death disrupted the household economy. Help with funeral expenses and looking after the neighbours' children, were not uncommon practices. The historian Knut Kjeldstadli has called the pre-working-class solidarity of the nineteenth century 'the community of ordinary people' (Kjeldstadli 1997). This involved an exchange of favours and services and reciprocal help between people. This behaviour was an everyday practice, the fulfilment of the widespread belief that 'if I help you then you will help me, if and when the need arises'.

The obligation to reciprocally assist one another existed in preindustrial societies and was based on common identity and a feeling of sameness with some, and of difference to others. These feelings were created by the cleavages of preindustrial society (Bartolini 2000). The cleavages followed cultural as well as functional lines of conflict, long before the class conflict was strong enough to predominate.

Historically speaking, the phenomenon of solidarity existed before the idea was formulated. The idea existed before the term became widespread, and the term was in general use before its modern meaning had developed. A Christian idea of *fraternity* was developed in the

early days of the Christian era, and was coined to identify and parallel the close relationships within the family to the development of community between Christian friars. A political idea of *fraternity* or *brotherhood* developed during the French revolution, and France was the birthplace of the *term* solidarity as well. In the first part of the nineteenth century, French social philosophers reflected upon the period of social and political unrest in the wake of the revolution. At the same time, they witnessed the early development of capitalism and the increasing influence of liberalism. These experiences prompted French social philosophers to find a way to combine the idea of individual rights and liberties with the idea of social cohesion and community. Here, the concept of solidarity was seen as a solution. The concept was a broad and inclusive one and it aimed at restoring the social integration that had been lost. In Germany, where Marxism became an early and dominating influence in the labour movement, the concept of solidarity developed later and was adapted to express the need for cohesion and unity in the working class and in the labour movement. This idea was more restricted, since it referred solely to workers, and more inclusive, since workers across national borders were included. It did not aim at integration and it implied conflict and divisiveness (class conflict) as well as unity. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Catholic social teaching inspired a third tradition of solidarity. Within Protestantism, the development of an idea of solidarity did not take place until after World War II.

In this and in Chapters 2 and 3, we will see how the idea of solidarity was developed in these three areas – classic sociology, socialist theory and Christian social ethics. The first objective is to trace the historical origins of the concept in social theory. The second is to map out how key contributors to classic sociology, the socialist tradition and to Christian ethics have configured the aspects of solidarity differently. In this way, different conceptions of solidarity will be explicated and used as a referential framework for the empirical study of the idea of solidarity in political parties in succeeding chapters.

### **Prelude: from fraternity to Charles Fourier and Pierre Leroux**

If there is a precursor for the term solidarity, it is the concept of *fraternity* or *brotherhood*, which points to the close relations and the feelings of belonging that exist within the family and extends this understanding to other voluntary associations and groupings. The history of this concept begins when a relationship between people outside the family is referred to by analogy as a relationship between brothers. According to

the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, the concept of fraternity was occasionally used in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds, but played a more significant role in the early Christian era. The Christian idea of brotherhood was a constitutive one for communities of friars. In the Middle Ages, the Christian idea of brotherhood was applied to the more mundane and profane relationships between men of the same profession, such as merchants, artisans and apprentices. In this way, the concept developed and changed, referring to the community and the cohesion of a social group. To a great extent, the concept lost its religious connotations (Brunner, Conze and Koselleck 1972). During the Enlightenment, the continuing process of secularisation further contributed to this development.

French lawyers already applied the term *solidarité* in the sixteenth century, referring to a common responsibility for debts incurred by one of the members of a group (Hayward 1959). The term was included in Napoleon's famous legal code, the *Code Civil*, in 1804. The transformation of the legal concept of solidarity into a political concept seems to have begun in the latter half of the eighteenth century. French historians of language have noted that revolutionary leaders, such as Mirabeau and Danton, occasionally used the term solidarity with a meaning that transcended the legal concept (Zoll 2000). During the revolution of 1789 the Jacobins made *fraternité* a key concept together with *freedom* and *equality*. Feelings of brotherhood were to be a means of realising equality, and the Jacobins established *societies of brotherhood* among revolutionaries to achieve the goals of the revolution. Fraternity or brotherhood came to denote a feeling of political community and the wish to emphasise what was held in common. Occupational differences and differences in the financial status of revolutionaries were downplayed, and the concept was part of the practical programme implemented to change society and its institutions. Brotherhood had now become a political concept that was close in its meaning to the concept of solidarity that would develop in the nineteenth century and become hegemonic in the twentieth century.

Andreas Wildt argues that the concept of solidarity was not politicised until the 1840s (Wildt 1998). He does not, however, concretise the criteria for what he would call a political concept. If *politics* means activities to influence the decisions of the state or activities of the state, we may discern a political concept of solidarity in Charles Fourier's *Theorie de l'Unité*. Charles Fourier (1772–1837) is often considered a forerunner of socialism. In 1821, he published this voluminous work in which he describes a utopia – *The Phalanx* – consisting of 1500 to 1600 people living and working together in harmony in common households (Fourier 1822a)

and (Fourier 1822b). Here, *solidarity* is used in four different ways. First, there is the principle of insurance, the legacy of the *Code Napoleon* concerning the common responsibility of a group of people for insurance and the repayment of debt. Second, there is the preparedness to share resources with people in need. Third, there is the more general application to describe a feeling of community – *solidarités sociales* and *solidarités collectives*. Fourth, there is Fourier's argument for the introduction of a guaranteed minimum income and for family support. He used *solidarity* to refer to public support for families and male providers in need – *la garantie familiale solidaire* (Fourier 1822b). The second and third ways of using the term *solidarity* are similar to the ways in which the concept is used today. These meanings were included in the meaning *solidarity* came to have in the Marxist and socialist tradition in the next hundred years. The fourth meaning has clear political implications and is close to the association between solidarity and the welfare state that is found today.

Fourier recognised the tension between collective organisation and individual freedom, but assured his readers that his harmonious utopia would allow for individual freedom because its members would own property and stock, and would use this ownership as a basis for the freedom of choice. In other words, class differences would still exist. Contrary to the commonly held assertion, one might argue that Fourier's ideas do not qualify him to be seen as a forerunner of socialism. What did inspire socialists later on were Fourier's fierce attacks upon competition, commerce, family life and capitalist civilisation.<sup>1</sup>

We might say, with Skinner, that the illocutionary force of Fourier's concept of solidarity was not strong. The concept was applied casually, it was not well defined or thoroughly discussed, and it disappeared from his later texts (Liedman 1999). Fourier's compatriot, the typographer, philosopher and economist, Pierre Leroux (1797–1871) was the first to elaborate on the concept of solidarity in a systematic way when he published *De l'Humanité*, in 1840 (Leroux 1985 (1840)).<sup>2</sup> Leroux was a pre-Marxian communist, and he later claimed – in *La Grève de Samarez* (1859) – that he was the first to introduce the concept of solidarity and the concept of socialism in philosophy (Leroux 1979 [1859]).

<sup>1</sup> For an early critique see Gide (1901). As a whole, the very extensive writing of Fourier is characterised by a strange combination of acute observations, peculiar speculations and detailed fantasies about society and his own prescriptions for utopia, i.e. detailed architecture and equipment in the rooms of the *Phalanx* (Fourier 1876).

<sup>2</sup> Leroux was elected to the Constituent Assembly in 1848 and later reelected to the Legislative Assembly. For a presentation of Leroux, see Peignot (1988).

This may be true, but only if we accept the idea that Fourier had not contributed to philosophy some years before, which is a matter of some controversy. There is no doubting that Leroux made an important contribution to the transforming of the legal concept of solidarity into a social concept.

Leroux's point of departure was his criticism of three other positions – Christian charity, the idea of a social contract as a foundation for society, and the conception of society as an organism. He criticised Christian charity for being unable to reconcile self-love with the love of others, and for considering the love of others an obligation, and not the result of a genuine interest in community with others (Leroux 1985 (1840)). Besides that, equality played no role in Christian charity, he complained. He wanted to supplant the concept of charity with the concept of solidarity, arguing that the idea of solidarity would be a more able one in the struggle for a justly organised society. He rejected Hobbes' and Rousseau's idea of a social contract, and saw the social contract as a misconceived notion because it presupposed an atomised view of the individual. Finally, he denounced the organic conception of society because he feared that this way of understanding social life would result in authoritarianism (Le Bras-Chopard 1992).<sup>3</sup>

Leroux conceived solidarity primarily as a relationship. Society was nothing but the relationships between the human beings that constitute a people. Socialism, Leroux wrote, is the organisation of greater and greater solidarity in society. Leroux's concept of solidarity was more social than political, and he did not believe that solidarity should constitute any rights for citizens, or that it should intend to influence the decisions or the activities of the state – (cf. also Wildt 1998). These two pre-Marxian concepts of solidarity are summarised in Table 1.1.

Compared to Fourier, Leroux brought the discussion of solidarity closer to the ideas developed in the classic works of sociology. Whereas Fourier's concept was very restricted and limited to his proposed utopia, the *Phalanx*, Leroux broadened the foundation and the inclusiveness of the idea of solidarity. At the same time, he tried to balance his position between an atomised view of the individual, in liberalism, and the authoritarian potential of the idea of society as an organism.

<sup>3</sup> Leroux understood society as based upon the triad of family, property and homeland. The problem for him was that the relationships between the three were not well organised. The family was based on the authority of the father, and property was based on man himself being a property. Thus, property served to oppress the proletariat. He argued for reforms and hoped that the bourgeoisie could be persuaded to implement peaceful changes. In this respect, Leroux's ideas, like those of Fourier, had a certain utopian flavour.

Table 1.1 *Fourier's and Leroux's conception of solidarity*

	Foundation	Objective	Inclusiveness	Collective orientation
Fourier	The household/ the <i>Phalanx</i>	Harmony	Very restricted (members of the <i>Phalanx</i> )	Medium: personal autonomy is preserved through private property
Leroux	Similarity Identification with others	Improved social relationships	Broad: the entire society	Medium: not made into a theme, but there is a general criticism of authoritarianism

A follower of Fourier, Hippolyte Renaud, brought the political idea of solidarity to broader public attention in 1842 with the pamphlet *Solidarité*. It was a very popular item and was reprinted several times (Wildt 1998; Liedman 1999). Although we might say that the immediate perlocutionary effect was strong, this concept of solidarity was naïve and based upon the world-wide diffusion of Fourier's idea of a *Phalanx*, with people living in harmony and happiness.

During the 1840s, the term solidarity spread to Germany and England. It was adopted and developed by socialists in the upheaval in France in 1848. After this revolution the term was definitely accepted as a political concept, even if the end of the Second Republic in 1852 relegated the concept to obscurity again for some years. It did not reemerge again as an important concept until Leon Bourgeois and the middle-class *solidarists* revived it in the 1880s, often with reference to the ideas of Leroux (Le Bras-Chopard 1992).

### **Comte: time, continuity and interdependence**

Concern about the idea of solidarity was part of a wider discourse concerning the constitution of social order and society. This preoccupation with social order must be understood in light of the development of capitalism in Western Europe in the nineteenth century. Modern capitalism had disruptive effects upon local communities and family ties. Rapid urbanisation, the crisis within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the growth of anti-Semitism were inducements for sociologists to be particularly concerned about social order and social integration (Turner and Rojek 2001). The fragility of the phenomenon of solidarity was part of the general concern about the conditions of society and the precariousness of social integration. Although Fourier and Leroux had introduced the concept of solidarity in the first decades of the nineteenth century, it

was the father of positivism, Auguste Comte, who brought the concept of solidarity into sociology.

In his book *Système de politique positive* published in 1852, Auguste Comte opposed the increasing influence of individualist conceptions of economy and production and the accompanying *laissez-faire* ideology in the first part of the nineteenth century (Comte 1973 (1852)). His ambition was to formulate a 'religion of humanity'<sup>4</sup> that would create an altruistic system of discipline that would be able to tame egoistic instincts. The individual personality was not to be sacrificed, only subordinated to the social concerns that would promote social advancement.

Comte was preoccupied with the integrative mechanisms of society. The first is embodied in the different roles taken by women. According to Comte, there are three kinds of social functions in society – reflection or intellectual activities, moral affections and practical activities. Different groups fulfil these functions. The main provider of reflection is the priesthood, whereas women are the main providers of affection, and practical leaders of activity. The problem is that these groups focus in an unbalanced way on intellect, affection and practical achievements in life. The priesthood tends to underestimate feelings, while women tend to exaggerate their importance. This creates serious inconvenience and disturbs the general harmony of society. Women's integrative function is found in their three different roles as mother, wife and daughter. These are, at the same time, three different modes of solidarity: *obedience*, *union* and *protection* – corresponding to the three forms of altruistic instinct, *veneration*, *attachment* and *benevolence* (Comte 1973 (1852)).

The second integrative mechanism is *continuity*, according to Comte. The special mark of human society is the faculty of cooperation between generations. Human society is characterised by subjective bonds and the continuity between generations. Humanity accumulates and capitalises upon the resources of previous generations, and man is fundamentally a being that is conditioned by *time*. Time makes possible the transmission of collective experiences and resources, and this ability of humankind distinguishes it from all other forms of life. Man is not simply an economic being determined by the material aspect of the social structure. In the long run, culture imprints itself on the collective and contributes to improving the human condition, Comte argued.

The idea of solidarity is included together with his concept of continuity. Solidarity follows from continuity and is an important factor in social

<sup>4</sup> Comte defined *religion* as a state of complete harmony peculiar to human life – a state when all parts of human life were ordered in their natural relation to one another and where reason and emotion were balanced and integrated.

life. 'Continuity, not Solidarity, is the great moving force of man's destinies, especially in our modern times', wrote Comte (1973 (1852)). Our interdependence in the past develops bonds that make us more interdependent in our present social organisation. We are dependent upon the past for its accumulation of experiences and resources, and we are dependent upon others in our own day for the production of goods and services. Because wealth is created by the effort of many, the individual is not free to use his wealth as he pleases. Wealth is always entrusted to someone tacitly for a social purpose. Comte directed attention to two aspects of the division of labour. On the one hand, he saw the division of labour as an expression of human solidarity. On the other hand, in the new industrial society that was developing the division of labour was also a source of disorganisation. It could not be considered the foundation of the unity between human beings (Cingolani 1992). These were aspects of the division of labour that Durkheim would elaborate on fifty years later.

The third integrative mechanism for Comte was *the religion of humanity* – a common set of values and ideas. Only this could produce personal unity and integrate reason and feeling within each individual, and create social unity between individuals. Affection based upon reflection unites men universally in the same feelings and in the same beliefs, and in this way restores harmony in society.

Comte's criticism of the *homo economicus* in *laissez-faire* ideology did not lead him to collectivism or communism, which he thought ignored both natural and affective differences. Thus, Comte's positivism represented a third alternative between utopian liberalism and utopian communism. In hindsight, his theories about the location of the affections, reason and practical ability, about the belief in the homogenising effect of reason and intellect, and his ambition to create a harmonious society without contradictions or conflicts, are easily dismissed. But his emphasis upon interdependence and upon our debts to previous generations are ideas that were built upon in the decades to come.

Leon Bourgeois further developed Comte's theories about the *debt* owed to previous generations (see Chapter 4). Theories about interdependence were formulated in the social ethics of German Catholicism, and later made explicit in papal encyclicals from the latter part of the nineteenth century. In Germany in 1887, Ferdinand Tönnies developed his famous ideal types, *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* or the distinction between community and society (Tönnies 1957). According to Tönnies, the development of capitalism made community weaker so that it gradually was replaced by *society*. Traditional social ties and personal relationships were weakened and economic rationality and a means–end orientation replaced cooperation and feelings of community.



Although *the term* solidarity is not always used, other classic sociologists such as Simmel, Durkheim, and Weber were concerned about the fragility of this phenomenon. Living at a time when liberalism was triumphant, they searched for mechanisms that would constitute social order and an integrated society. Simmel captured this search in the formulation of the title of his famous essay, *How Is Society Possible?* There were, of course, different proposals in answer to this challenge. Some noted the role of religion as the social cement of traditional society. Others found that solidarity should be considered the social fundament, and that solidarity was a prerequisite for the survival of society (Juul 1997).

### **Durkheim: social norms and shared values**

The most famous and probably the most cited work in classic sociology on solidarity is Emile Durkheim's *The Division of Labour in Society*, published in 1893. Being part of the French tradition from Leroux and Comte, Durkheim's work represented a continuing dialogue with, and critique of liberalism, and the theory of a social contract in the writings of Hobbes, Locke, Spencer and others. Hobbes' view of *force* as an integrative mechanism in society did not pass unnoticed. The dissolution of traditions and social bonds that he observed in his own day persuaded him to formulate the basic question of sociology: *What holds society together?* His answer was that society was not a product of rational calculation, self-interest or social contract. Relationships based upon self-interest are the least stable of all. 'Today it is useful for me to unite with you, and tomorrow the same reason will make me your enemy', he said (Durkheim 1984 (1893)). Society is based upon social norms, shared values and rituals, and solidarity is one of the normative mechanisms that integrate members of society, he insisted.

Durkheim distinguished between two forms of solidarity, *mechanical* solidarity in a traditional society, and *organic* solidarity in a modern society. Mechanical solidarity develops in a simple and homogeneous society with a low degree of differentiation. People are linked together by their *sameness* in living conditions, life-styles, common culture and beliefs and by religion and rituals. According to Durkheim, all human beings have two kinds of consciousness, an individual consciousness that is characteristic of the person, and a common consciousness shared with all other members of society. In a traditional society, the latter form of consciousness is dominant within each individual. Durkheim's concept of mechanical solidarity integrates a material and a subjective element. Solidarity is strong in traditional society, because people *are* alike and because they *think* alike.

Contrary to traditional society, modern society is characterised by a high degree of occupational specialisation and social differentiation. According to Durkheim, citizens are not tied together by tradition and inherited social norms but by their interdependence created by the increased division of labour and specialisation. Modern society produces great differences in living conditions, culture and ideology. The increased division of labour reduces the space available for common consciousness, and individual consciousness becomes more dominant. *Organic* solidarity refers to the factual interdependence in modern society where occupational differences create a complex interdependence between the activities of different producers.

Durkheim is somewhat unclear about the relationship between mechanical solidarity in traditional society and organic solidarity in modern society. In some of his writings, he argues that the first simply disappears as a consequence of the increasing division of labour. At other times, when he argues in more detail, he maintains that the two forms of solidarity are, in fact, facets of the same social reality. Our common consciousness continues to exist in modern society, but it is a reduced entity. The advance of our individual consciousness has had this effect.

What worried Durkheim was that the process of weakening mechanical solidarity might leave a moral vacuum that would not automatically be filled. When mechanical solidarity is reduced, social life will suffer if a new form of solidarity does not take its place. Social progress does not consist of the dissolution of social life, but rather, on the increasing unity in society, and the only mechanism that can produce this is the division of labour, he argued. Because the increasing division of labour increases interdependence and the need for interaction and collaboration, law and morality will develop too. Human consciousness and morality are shaped by the influence of others in the group in which we take part. Law and morality represent the bonds that bind individuals to one another and to society. Morality is the source of solidarity, and morality is 'everything that forces man to take account of other people, to regulate his action by something other than the prompting of his own egoism . . .' (Durkheim 1984 (1893)).

Durkheim believed that the new organic solidarity of modern society would develop only if certain conditions were met. The division of labour would only produce solidarity if it were allowed to develop spontaneously. For Durkheim, this meant that all that prevented the free development of individual talents and abilities must be altered. The distribution of social functions should correspond to the distribution of natural abilities, and no obstacle should prevent an individual from obtaining a position commensurate with his talents. Thus, the established order had to be

changed so that the lower classes gained access to new functions in society. This was a question of justice for Durkheim. 'Justice is the necessary accompaniment to every kind of solidarity', he said – a formulation that Habermas would repeat one hundred years later (see Chapter 9). Grave social inequities would compromise solidarity. Modern society strives to reduce inequality as much as possible by helping in various ways those who are in a difficult situation. The equality between citizens is becoming ever greater and this development should continue, he argued.

Durkheim's pioneering contributions reflecting upon the concept of solidarity brought to light a range of themes and issues that continue to be discussed in social theory: the relationship between similarity and difference, and the relationship between solidarity, justice and equality, the law as an integrating force, the phenomenon of increasing individualism, and the loosening ties within the family, in other groups, and in the traditions of the local community. All of these issues have been made subjects of discussion for social theorists including Habermas, Luhmann, Giddens and others. Some elements of his theories are close to the social democratic concept of solidarity that Bernstein formulated and that came to be reflected in social democratic party programmes in the twentieth century.

Table 1.2 summarises the two conceptions of Durkheimian solidarity. Social interaction, in a broad sense, is a necessary precondition for both of Durkheim's concepts of solidarity. Social interaction refers here to social relationships and ties that bind individuals to groups, organisations and ultimately to society itself. The number and the intensity of these ties are important and variable characteristics of social interaction. They will determine how inclusive or how exclusive solidarity in society will be. Durkheim observed an inverted relation between the degree of solidarity and the degree of openness towards foreigners. 'The weaker solidarity is, that is, the slacker the thread that links society together, the easier it must be for foreign elements to be incorporated into societies' (Durkheim 1984 (1893)).

Durkheim 1 and Durkheim 2 differ in terms of two of the aspects emphasised here – the foundation of solidarity and how these forms of solidarity encompass the relationship between the collective and the individual. In a society dominated by mechanical solidarity, common consciousness 'envelops our total consciousness, coinciding with it at every point. At that moment our individuality is zero. In such a society, the individual does not belong to himself – he is literally a thing belonging to society' (Durkheim 1984 (1893)). Durkheim 2 – organic solidarity – entails a more complicated relationship between the collective and individual freedom. In modern society individuals are at once more autonomous and

Table 1.2 *Durkheim's mechanical and organic conceptions of solidarity*

	Foundation	Objective/ function	Inclusiveness	Collective orientation
Durkheim 1/ Mechanical solidarity characterises traditional society	Social interaction, homogeneity, social norms, shared values, rituals, and common consciousness	Social integration	All who are alike (this can be understood broadly or narrowly)	Medium/strong: common consciousness dominates individuality
Durkheim 2/ Organic solidarity characterises modern society	Social interaction, social norms, interdependence is a consequence of the division of labour, and complementary diversity characterises society	Social integration	Varying: dependent on the number and intensity of ties that link the individual to groups, organisations, and ultimately to society	Medium/weak: the dilemma is acknowledged, accepted and discussed Defence of liberal democracy

more mutually interdependent. The ever-increasing division of labour transforms social solidarity and creates the conditions for the individual's greater freedom and greater dependence upon others.<sup>5</sup>

Durkheim did not return to the distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity (Crow 2002). He continued, however, to be preoccupied with two issues that are of interest here – how shared beliefs unify society and the relationship between solidarity and individualism. He continuously insisted that common interests were not sufficient to sustain cohesion in a social group, and that a common moral code was also necessary. Emotions reinforce the commitment to solidarity, and the more intense social relationships are, the stronger the sentiments of solidarity. What he called *moral individualism* was necessary to counteract the destructive effects of egoistic individualism. This presupposes the fact that people are sufficiently aware of their interdependence and their mutual obligations in complex modern societies. This understanding would reinforce solidarity in society. He continued to worry about the dangers of egoistic individualism. He sought different ways to bond the individual to society, but he was afraid that the bonds he observed were not strong enough to restrain egoism (Seigel 1987).

<sup>5</sup> Durkheim seems to postulate this relation, as he maintains that 'there exists a social solidarity arising from the division of labour. This is a self-evident truth, since in them [modern societies] the division of labour is highly developed and engenders solidarity' (Durkheim 1984 (1893)).

### Max Weber: solidarity in social relations

Max Weber formulated a view of solidarity that differed from the group-oriented and integrative conception of Durkheim in two respects. First, whereas the tradition of Comte and Durkheim was mainly preoccupied with solidarity as a macro phenomenon binding society together, Weber was more inclined to conceive solidarity as a phenomenon at the micro level (Oorschot and Komter 1998). Solidarity was a special type of social relationship. In this respect, he picked up the thread from Leroux. Second, Weber saw solidarity as arising from the pursuit of economic advantage and honour. Thus, solidarity did not only integrate, but was divisive as well (Bendix 1960). Here, as in other respects, Weber's contributions are a result of the closer dialogue with his compatriot, Marx, than with the French tradition from Comte to Durkheim.

Weber's concept of solidarity follows from his key ideas; *social action*, *social relationship* and *social class*. For Weber, action is social when the individual gives it a subjective meaning that takes account of the behaviour of others and lets this orient his own course of action (Weber 1978 (1922)). Social relationships develop when many actors take into account the actions of others. A relationship is symmetrical when each actor gives it the same meaning. However, complete symmetry, Weber maintained, is rare. Generally, the parts of a social relationship orient their actions on a rational basis (*zweckrational* – *goal-oriented*), but in part they are also motivated by their values and sense of duty. Weber's exposition here is not explicitly about solidarity, but we may deduce that in a social relationship based on solidarity we will find varying degrees of identical reciprocal expectations and a mixture of instrumental and normative elements.

Although we find the term *solidarity* only sporadically in Weber's text, *Economy and Society*, the idea of solidarity is integrated in his discussion about the relationship between *Vergemeinschaftung* and *Vergesellschaftung*. *Vergesellschaftung* refers to actions based upon considerations of material advantage or utility, irrespective of personal or social considerations. He contrasts this with actions that are invoked by a sense of solidarity with others. Thus, *Vergemeinschaftung* represents communal actions based upon a sense of community, including those that are shared by family members, friends, professional colleagues or other social groups with an internal code of conduct (Oorschot and Komter 1998). As a general rule, Weber maintains, a communal relationship based upon *Vergemeinschaftung* is associated with another based upon *Vergesellschaftung*. Most often, elements of both types of action are interwoven, as all individuals are engaged in the pursuit of both ideal and material interests. Parents

Table 1.3 *Weber's conception of solidarity*

Foundation	Objective	Inclusiveness	Collective orientation
Interests and honour	Realise interests and increase power	Restricted: social groups or professions	Medium? Not explicitly formulated, acceptance of dilemma
Norms and duties			

look to the economic aspects of the marriage of their children, and even businessmen develop a sense of ethical conduct in their commercial relationships. The feeling of being part of a 'we' characterises the experience of solidarity. For Weber, every 'we' presupposes a 'they', those others who are excluded from the group or community.

In his analysis of social status and social stratification, Weber describes how social groups combine honour and the monopoly over ideal and material goods and opportunities, to distance themselves from others. The feeling of belonging together is always associated with the exclusion of others. All social actions that defend or preserve status differences are based upon the feeling of belonging together, he maintained. Weber did not apply the term solidarity to discuss how workers developed into a class, but his analysis of the development of class-consciousness almost implies class solidarity. Class-consciousness succeeds most easily when the following conditions are met: (1) when a group is able to identify immediate opponents (workers against entrepreneurs, but not against stockholders); (2) when large numbers of people are in the same situation; (3) when they are concentrated and easier to organise; (4) when a group has goals that are easy to identify, to identify with, and to understand, and when there are others, outside of their class (the intelligentsia) who are able to formulate and interpret these goals. This way of reasoning echoes that of Marx and Lenin.

Because solidarity is constituted by a mixture in the elements of community and society that bind people together (*Vergemeinschaftung* and *Vergesellschaftung*), and because this mixture has to be studied empirically, Weber's idea of solidarity may be broadly inclusive or narrowly limited. The mixture of the two may vary from group to group and from time to time, he wrote. Because his concept of solidarity applies to social relationships in general, it may be applied in more contexts than the concept of solidarity in the Marxist tradition, as will be made clear in Chapter 2.

Weber wanted to distinguish between two kinds of social relationships – the one that is governed by reciprocal expectations, and the other that is maintained by the exercise of authority. The latter implies the acceptance of a legitimate order and the rights of certain individuals within that

legitimate order to exercise power. In Weber's view, it is possible to understand the workings of a society by making an analysis of the conditions that promote the solidarity that is based upon legitimate authority and the solidarity that is based upon reciprocal expectation. Weber's concern with authority, and with power and domination are further reasons for placing his ideas closer to those formulated by Marx than to those that were formulated by Durkheim.

### **The discourse in the development of social theory in the early days of sociology**

The different ideas of solidarity in classic social theory are summarised in Table 1.4. As we have seen, Fourier, Leroux, Comte and Durkheim primarily understood the idea of solidarity as a means of restoring harmony and social integration in society. All of these thinkers were writing in a society that was still trying to come to terms with its own most recent history, with the violence and the terror of the revolution and with the reversal of fortunes that transformed that revolution into the rise and fall of Napoleon's empire. The need for a stable order, for harmony and social integration, was felt everywhere, and this mood is tacitly reflected in this early French discourse. Certainly, another answer must be added to this first. The emergence of capitalism, and the problems associated with the early phases of capitalism impelled these thinkers to find ameliorative solutions, without raising the spectre of yet another social revolt or upheaval.

Of course, their understandings of the idea of solidarity do vary, and their discourse is a complex and detailed elaboration of their differences and similarities. Their discourse seems to underscore the need to have a broadly inclusive understanding of solidarity, to include and encompass all essential parts of society in the great social task that is embodied in their common goal, the promotion of a harmonious society. The most important distinctions, in a discussion of the idea of solidarity, are to be found in the mechanical and organic forms of solidarity in the writings of Durkheim.

All of these French writers are deeply concerned about the dilemma found in the relationship between individual freedom and in the collective requirements of solidarity that are imposed by groups, organisations, communities and societies. They all recognise that the strong social ties integrating the individual to the group will conflict with a high degree of individualism, but none of them argue that personal freedom should be abandoned. The concern about this relationship exists throughout the French discourse, but it is most clearly expressed in the texts of

Table 1.4 *Conceptions of solidarity in classic sociology*

	Foundation	Objective/function	Inclusiveness	Collective orientation
Fourier	The household/the <i>Phalanx</i>	Harmony	Very restricted	Medium: personal autonomy preserved through private property
Leroux	Similarity Identification with others	Improved social relationships	Broad: the whole society	Medium: not made a theme, but a general criticism of authoritarianism
Comte	Time and continuity Interdependence	Social harmony Integration	Broad: all	Medium: acceptance of the dilemma/subordinate but do not sacrifice individual freedom
Durkheim 1 Mechanical (traditional society)	Homogeneity Social norms, shared values, rituals Common consciousness	Social integration	Broad: all	Medium
Durkheim 2 Organic (modern society)	Interdependence is a consequence of the division of labour	Social integration	Broad: all	Medium: the dilemma is accepted and discussed
Weber	Interests and honour Norms and duties	Realise interests and increase power	Restricted: social groups or professions	Medium Not explicitly formulated Acceptance of the dilemma



Durkheim. It may be argued that the French discourse has an element of nostalgia, a tendency to look back at the past and to idealise conditions existing before the revolution of 1789, to a society that had all but disappeared. In particular, Comte and Durkheim have elements of this backward-looking view in their discussions of solidarity. But their conceptions were relevant in their own day and Durkheim's writings also look to the future. However, neither of these two had the strong future orientation that was to characterise the concept of solidarity in the labour movement.

Weber's idea of solidarity represents a different approach. Whereas Comte's and Durkheim's ideas of solidarity are located in a prepolitical tradition, Weber's concept is closer to a political idea of solidarity. He locates the basis for solidarity in the interests, norms and duties of *groups* that want to realise their interests. He was not a revolutionary and his own writings do not directly engage the Marxists of his day, but Marxist thinking did have its effects upon his own thinking. His writings about solidarity diverge from the French discourse and are closer to the Marxist tradition that will be discussed in Chapter 2.

## 2 Politics: solidarity from Marx to Bernstein

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Marxist and socialist theory developed side by side with classic sociology, but only partly in confrontation with it, as Marxist theorists saw their theoretical contributions primarily as part of their political struggle. The concept of brotherhood or fraternity in the French revolution was made into a key concept in the bourgeois revolutions in Europe in 1848, but the defeat of bourgeois democrats meant a setback for the concept of brotherhood as well. However, in the first decades of the nineteenth century, the idea of brotherhood between *workers* started to spread. The concept of brotherhood in the first labour organisations referred to a proletarian mental attitude that should stimulate class-consciousness and the insight that workers had common interests (Brunner *et al.* 1972). In Germany, Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–64) made *solidarity* a theme in his writings in the 1850s. He distinguished between *corporatist* and *human* solidarity. Corporatist solidarity is developed in the sphere of labour, but is too restricted and should be universalised into a general human solidarity, Lassalle maintained (Zoll 2000).

Marx developed his theories and conceptual language as an integrated part of the labour movement struggle that was in the process of developing. The essential innovation of this language was its instrumentality in uniting the working class and constituting it as a subject in the struggle against a defined adversary – the bourgeoisie. The new way of understanding the idea of solidarity was a part of this project. Although Marx only rarely used the term solidarity, he developed a theory of working-class solidarity that was further developed in two very different directions by Karl Kautsky and Georg Lukács, respectively. Mikhail Bakunin made solidarity a key idea in anarchism, but the defeat of anarchism made this a cul-de-sac. Finally, Eduard Bernstein and the Swede, Ernst Wigforss, were the first to formulate a social democratic idea of solidarity and to reflect on the problematic relationship between collective solidarity and individual freedom.

### Marxism: Karl Marx

Marx broke with the utopianism of Fourier and Leroux, but created, as we shall see, his own version of utopianism. He formulated what came to be known as the idea of class solidarity – in this book referred to as *classic class solidarity*. Marx described how the development of industrial capitalism destroyed social bonds and older forms of community where people were firmly integrated in local and social structures. In the *Communist Manifesto*, he and Engels described how the bourgeoisie had put an end to all ‘patriarchal idyllic relations’, torn asunder ties and ‘left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous cash payment’ (Marx and Engels 1959 (1848)). Contrary to most of the classic sociologists, he did not witness this development with much regret.

At the same time as capitalism broke down social bonds and relationships, it created new social conditions that brought workers closer to one another, Marx maintained. The number of workers increased, workers were concentrated in large factories in the towns, and this physical proximity reduced mutual competition and enhanced solidarity. The working class was ‘disciplined’, united and organised by the very mechanisms of the process of capitalist production itself. In addition, the workers were confronted with the same prospects for the future and these prospects did not give hope of an individual escape (Dahl 1999). Modern means of communication made more contact between workers possible, and facilitated agitation and the establishment of worker organisations across national borders. All this created the preconditions for working-class solidarity.

According to Marx, the competition between capitalists and their desire to survive the economic battles and to maximise profits would make the conditions of life and the interests of the proletariat more and more equal. Differences between different types of labour would be obliterated and wages reduced to the same low level (Marx and Engels 1959 (1848)). Although this thesis was not corroborated by events, it represents a postulate about the relationship between the social structure and solidarity that became fundamental for later social scientists; solidarity develops out of a social structure with a high degree of homogeneity.

Gradually, in the later decades of the nineteenth century, the term solidarity was adopted in the language of the German labour movement. Nonetheless, in the writings of Marx the *term* solidarity is a hard one to find. It appears nowhere in the subject indexes of the forty-seven volumes of the *Collected Works* of Marx and Engels. It is briefly mentioned in

*The German Ideology* in a passage about the free development of individuals in communist society.

Within communist society, the only society in which the original and free development of individuals ceases to be a mere phrase, this development is determined precisely by the connection of individuals, a connection which consists partly in the economic prerequisites and partly in the necessary solidarity of the free development of all, and finally in the universal character of the activity of individuals on the basis of the existing productive forces. (Marx 1998a (1846))

More or less equivalent terms such as *community* (*Gemeinschaft* and *Gemeinwesen*), *association* and *unity* occur more frequently. In his early texts, Marx referred to *brotherhood*, but came soon to the opinion that the concept of brotherhood was so generic that it could easily obscure class interests. In *The Class Struggles in France*, he mocked the concept of brotherhood as the snug abstraction from class contradictions and the sentimental smoothing out of conflicting class interests (Marx 1998b (1895)). The *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* asserts that Marx wanted to exclude the concept of brotherhood from the vocabulary of the labour movement, after the collaboration between the working class and the democratic bourgeoisie in the revolution in 1848 had ended (Brunner *et al.* 1972). The continuous appearance of terms such as *brothers*, *fraternal feelings* etc., raises some doubt about this. References to *brotherhood* and to *fraternal feelings* continued to appear in writings by Marx that were meant to promote agitation in the actual struggles of the labour movement. Here, he often mentions *worker unity*, *feelings of brotherhood between workers* and *the community of action*. In the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, the words *brother* and *brotherhood* had disappeared and been supplanted by the famous rallying call: Workingmen of all countries, unite! Here, Marx and Engels declared that the struggle *itself* would create unity:

Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruits of their battles lie not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers. This union is helped on by the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry, and place workers of different localities in contact with each another. It was just this contact that was needed to centralise the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes. (Marx and Engels 1959 (1848))

What is interesting in this famous passage of the *Manifesto* is not the disparagement of the results that might be achieved in the day-to-day struggle, but the use of the concept of *practice* which had been laid out in the *Thesis on Feuerbach* a few years earlier.

The metaphor of fraternity and of being brothers continued to turn up in Marx's texts. When he addressed the founding conference of the International Workingmen's Association, in 1864, he told his audience that socialists should not underestimate the 'fraternal bonds that should unite workers in each country and inspire them to unite in the struggle for liberation. This underestimation would always punish their ambition and result in defeat', he said (Marx 1971 (1864)). Later, addressing the Council of the International Workingmen's Association, he declared: 'It is one of the great purposes of the Association to make the workmen of different countries not only *feel*, but act as brethren and comrades in the army of emancipation.' Thus, Marx expressed the idea of solidarity by the use of several other terms, and the term *solidarity* itself was not firmly established as an integrated part of his vocabulary.

In *The German Ideology* Marx elaborated on the feeling of community among people in capitalist society. He believed that community (*Vergemeinschaft*) could not be genuine in a capitalist society. Individual members of a class could engage in communal relations with others, but because their relations were determined by their common interests against a third party, and because people do not participate as individuals but as members of a class, this relationship is not a genuine one. When a class is oppressed and community is part of the relations of that class, people appear as average representatives of their class and their individuality remains undisclosed. In such a situation community is illusory. Community becomes independent of the individuals themselves and even a new fetter for them. Thus, only when people join freely together as individuals in a society where revolutionaries are in power and private ownership of the means of production is abolished, can a true community of individuals emerge, a genuine and free community prevail, and people enjoy their common freedom (Marx and Engels 1976 (1846)). In his contributions to social theory Marx argued that a genuine feeling of community can only exist in the future. The daily struggle of the working class does not, in itself, produce a true community.

The relationship between his theoretical conception of genuine community in a future socialist society and the feeling of being brothers in a present capitalist society is not at all clear. Marx asserted that under communism there would be no conflicts between the self-interest of different individuals, and no conflict between individuals and the community/the public/collective interests (Lukes 1985). Only under communism would the individual be free to develop his own personality, to realise himself and to cultivate creativity. Exactly how individual self-realisation and being in a community with others is mediated or reconciled is not clear. How can abolishing private ownership of the means of production not induce

people to feel more solidarity with family, friends and others they know personally, than with strangers and people of different ethnic origin or from other nations? Why would individuals in a society without the private ownership of the means of production not experience any conflict between their own strivings for self-realisation and the need to acknowledge and give room to the strivings of others? The idea of *Gemeinschaft*, community or solidarity, under communism does exist, but Marx does very little to elaborate or clarify this idea in his writings.

Neither is the relationship clear between the instrumental interest in worker unity and the normative feelings that workers have of being brothers in a capitalist society. On the one hand, in his theoretical contributions Marx argued that workers establish a communal relationship based on common interests against a third party; on the other, he frequently used concepts like *fraternal feelings*, and *being brothers*, in his political texts – metaphors that certainly imply affection and a normative orientation. Generally, in his theoretical work, Marx was careful to emphasise the instrumental aspects of worker unity more than the normative and affective aspects. The Leninist tradition developed this instrumentality even further, whereas Bernstein and the social democratic tradition further elaborated upon the normative and affective aspects. This dualism in Marx's concept of solidarity is probably due to what Steven Lukes has labelled the paradox in the view of morality in Marxism (Lukes 1985). Morality is a form of ideology and represents an illusion without content, at the same time as the texts of Marx and of his successors abound in moral judgements, in condemnations and in explicit references to moral values.

We may conclude that Marx had two different ideas of solidarity. The first is what came to be known as the classic concept of working-class solidarity under capitalism which he described by using terms like *unity*, *brotherhood*, etc. The second is solidarity in postcapitalist society – under communism. This is what we may call *ideal solidarity*, which Marx described with the concept *Gemeinschaft* (*community*). These two different ideas have been summarised in Table 2.1.

Whereas the idea of a genuine community of individuals was referred to in a *future society*, where private ownership of the means of production had been abolished and where the proletariat was in power, conceptions of unity, union and association were relegated to the realm of political practice, to trade-union meetings, rhetoric and propaganda. The true theoretical contribution of Marx in this field of study is not what he wrote about solidarity, but rather the two theories that emerge from a study of his work. The first is the conception of the relationship between social structure and solidarity – that solidarity is contingent upon specific economic and social structures. The second is that solidarity is the result

Table 2.1 *Marx's two ideas of solidarity*

	Foundation	Objective	Inclusiveness	Collective orientation
Classic Marxist solidarity	The working class: physical proximity/ common situation/ similarity in social and political practice/common adversary/discipline	Realise interests: revolution, socialism-communism	Restricted to the working class, but the confines of the working class are not clear; includes workers across national borders	Strong: personal autonomy is not a theme; Bourgeois democracy is disparaged
Ideal Marxist solidarity	Abolition of the private ownership of the means of production	A genuine community?	Unclear: all those who had not been exploiters in capitalist society?	Unclear/medium: the relationship between individual interests and collective interests are discussed but not seen as being problematic

of specific forms of political practice. These two theories have inspired social inquiry that has proven to be very fruitful for later social research.

### **The road to revisionism and social democratic theory: Karl Kautsky**

The most influential theorist and interpreter of Marxism in Germany, and throughout Europe in the latter part of the nineteenth century, was Karl Kautsky. He played a key role in the formulation of political programmes and by writing authoritative texts on Marxism and socialist theory. In Chapter 4, I will describe his role as a primary contributor to the SPD's Erfurt programme in 1891 when the party consolidated itself on a Marxist platform. Here, Kautsky's contribution to the development of the idea of working-class solidarity in socialist theory will be analysed. Kautsky published an official interpretation of the Erfurt programme – *The Class Struggle*<sup>1</sup> in 1892, which Kautsky himself characterised as *the catechism of social democracy*. This work was regarded as the official interpretation of Marxism at that time; it became a very influential document in the international labour movement and was translated into many languages. Citing the *Manifesto*, Kautsky developed the theories of

<sup>1</sup> I refer here to the Norwegian translation – see Kautsky (1915). For a version in English, see Kautsky (1971).

Table 2.2 *Kautsky's idea of solidarity*

Foundation	Objective	Inclusiveness	Collective orientation
A working-class feeling of community that emerges when common interests are recognised; a general feeling of togetherness	Socialism/ a society built upon solidarity	Broader: the working class and other ill-situated groups; even farmers in some situations	Strong? Individual freedom is not made into a theme

Marx and elaborated extensively upon the idea of solidarity. His work introduced the term to new audiences and contributed to its widespread use.

Kautsky maintained that the goal of social democracy was to transform society into one where the economy was based upon solidarity. He utilised *solidarity* both as a general concept, meaning the feeling of togetherness in general, as 'servants may have in the families in which they live', and more particularly as the feeling of community that develops among workers when they recognise their common interests (Kautsky 1915). Whereas the first usage has some similarity with Leroux's concept of solidarity, the other usage points to the specific Marxist idea. This double meaning made possible a gradual transformation from the last to the first among social democrats in the succeeding decades. Similarity, in working conditions brought about by industrialisation, Kautsky argued, arouses feelings of solidarity in the proletariat, and these feelings are bound to become increasingly stronger as long as capitalist production endures. This will result in the moral renaissance of the proletariat. The feeling of solidarity in the modern proletariat stretches out to embrace the entire working class and becomes an international force. As the working class increases in number and becomes more dominant in society, the ideas and feelings of the industrial proletariat will influence the way of thinking of *every* wage earner. Finally, this same feeling of solidarity will grow to encompass independent artisans and even, under certain conditions, some farmers (Kautsky 1915).

Kautsky's interpretation of Marxism was particularly innovative in two ways that affected the concept of solidarity. First, he adopted the term into Marxist theory. Second, he widened the concept to include groups outside the working class. Although *The Class Struggle* preserved the privileged role of the working class, it did not repeat the formulations from



the *Manifesto* that characterise different segments of the middle class, farmers, artisans, merchants, etc., as reactionary, unless they voluntarily joined the revolutionary working class. Although Marx did open up the possibility of an alliance between the working class and these other social categories, it was quite clear that these groups would be subordinated to the working class in any alliance.<sup>2</sup>

Kautsky was obviously eager to find a way to formulate what the relationship between the working class and other classes should be in more positive terms. He insisted that the workers' party should develop into a *national people's party* that represented all those who worked and who were exploited. However, Kautsky considered Marxism to be a *science* and believed that morality was alien to science. This prevented him from developing his idea of solidarity further and from introducing ethical elements into the concept (Lukes 1985). After Kautsky, socialist theory developed in two distinct and diverging directions – social democracy and Leninism. The first continued Kautsky's hesitant step towards broadening the concept of solidarity: the second stressed a pure working-class conception of solidarity.

### **Revisionist theories of solidarity: Eduard Bernstein and Ernst Wigforss**

The great revisionist of Marxism, Eduard Bernstein, took up Kautsky's discussion about solidarity and developed the modern idea of solidarity that became so influential, particularly in the northern part of Europe. In 1899, he presented a fundamental critique of Marxist theory and political analysis in *Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus (Preconditions of Socialism)*. Bernstein noted that by and large Marx's predictions had remained unfulfilled: the petty bourgeoisie and the middle class had not been proletarianised, and the working class had not become a majority in society. Capitalism had survived economic crises and recessions, and because there was no prospect of an imminent breakdown of capitalism, social democracy could wait no longer for the demise of capitalism and had to develop a concrete policy of reform and seek alliances with other classes and groups in order to establish a new majority in Parliament. Because socialism was a long-term and unclear goal, individual freedom could not be temporarily sacrificed as Leninists would later argue. Increasing differentiation in the class structure and a reduction of social differences between the industrial working class and other groups cleared the way

<sup>2</sup> See also Marx's polemics against Lassalle in *Critique of the Gotha programme* (Marx 1971 (1875)).

for a broader conceptualisation of solidarity, Bernstein argued (Bernstein 1973 (1899)).

In 1910, Bernstein published *Die Arbeiterbewegung – The Labour Movement*. Here an entire chapter was devoted to the concepts of rights and to the ethics of the labour movement (Bernstein 1910), themes that so far had been alien to Marxist theory. According to Bernstein, socialist ethics consisted of three core ideas: the idea of equality, the idea of community (*Gemeinschaft*) or solidarity, and the idea of freedom or autonomy. The problem was that these ideas had to be balanced against one another. Solidarity had to be balanced against individual freedom or autonomy, and equality had to be balanced against individual freedom. It is not possible to have unlimited solidarity if one wants to preserve individual freedom, and it is not possible to create equality and at the same time have maximum individual freedom, he argued.

Whereas, on occasion, Marx had spoken in a derogatory manner about those who understood equality as being an essential part of socialism, Bernstein argued that equality was a key socialist idea. Although the demands for equality were inherent in the modern working class, because of the capitalist transformation of working conditions, Bernstein believed that the working class had to recognise that equality was not possible in an absolute sense and that it had to be restricted.

Solidarity, he maintained, developed when workers understood that they could reduce their dependence on employers voluntarily, by uniting with fellow workers and by pooling their strength in trade unions. This voluntary act is the expression of an ethical commitment.<sup>3</sup> The more capitalism develops, the more workers recognise that the individual employee is dependent upon the superior power of the employers. The feeling of belonging together is reinforced and grows into a well-developed understanding of solidarity which becomes the strongest intellectual factor within the labour movement. The feeling of solidarity is stronger in the labour movement than in all other groups, and no principle or idea within the labour movement is more cohesive than the insight necessitating the exercise of solidarity. No other norm or principle of social law can compare to the binding power of this idea.

The third key idea for Bernstein was *freedom* or, as he sometimes preferred, *autonomy*. For Bernstein, equality was a historically contingent concept, but freedom was an ideal of humanity. There is no civilised

<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that Bernstein refers to solidarity as ‘the technical-legal concept of solidarity that has been taken into general use’ – indicating that solidarity was not yet firmly established as a political concept at the time (1910) or that this only recently had become the case.

Table 2.3 *Revisionism: Bernstein's view of solidarity*

Foundation	Objectives	Inclusiveness	Collective orientation
A feeling of belonging together among workers and others	Reform Socialism Freedom	Broad: the working class, the middle class and other populous groups	Medium: emphasis on individual freedom Acceptance of the difficulty in determining a proper balance between solidarity and individual autonomy
Ethics			

nation that does not appreciate the idea of freedom, because freedom is a yardstick of culture, he stated. Workers may acquire more freedom due to their greater collective efforts, but only if they resign themselves to the relinquishment of some personal freedom. By voluntarily relinquishing some personal freedom when they unite in a labour union, workers may be able to overpower the social forces that are allied against them. For the worker, sacrificing personal autonomy and engaging in collective action may result in material gains and in an increase in one's own relative freedom, he reasoned.

Bernstein observed that the contemporary working class had not sufficiently developed the idea of freedom. He believed that the worker would learn to aspire to and develop a free personality through engagement in the labour movement. The road to personal freedom can only be reached by travelling together freely on the path of collective association. The industrial worker will be able to acquire personal freedom through the achievements of his trade union, where on equal terms with the other members of the union the individual becomes a voluntary agent of the common will of the collective.

Bernstein brought earlier socialist reflections concerning the idea of *solidarity* a significant step further. He was the first to integrate the three concepts of equality, solidarity and freedom into socialist discourse. He did this half a century before the SPD adopted those three concepts in the Bad Godesberg programme in 1959. He emphasised the ethical aspect of solidarity and was the first socialist theorist to discuss the problematic relationship between these three key concepts of contemporary social democratic ideology. Yet, he is not very clear on how to rank the relative importance of solidarity to personal freedom. He praises both: the first as the most important concept in social law, and the second as the yardstick for civilised nations.

Bernstein's idea of solidarity is, in many ways, closer to Durkheim's than to that of Marx since he emphasised *values* and the relationship

between solidarity and individuality. We should note, however, that another key figure of revisionism developed similar ideas about solidarity at about the same time that Bernstein did. The Nestor of Swedish social democracy, Ernst Wigforss, published ideas that were similar to Bernstein's in exactly the same year and criticised orthodox Marxism for being reluctant to introduce moral and ethical thought into socialist discourse (see Chapter 4). Thus, with Bernstein and Wigforss a process that transformed the classic Marxist concept of class solidarity had been initiated in the labour movement.

With Bernstein and Wigforss, elements beyond self-interest were introduced into socialist conceptions of the foundations of solidarity. As we shall see in Part II of this book, this change was part of a more general tendency within the labour movement in Western Europe in the first decades of the twentieth century.

### **Austro-Marxism: a third alternative?**

In the years prior to World War I, a group of Marxist thinkers in Vienna sought to establish an alternative to what they saw as the revisionism of Bernstein and the dogmatism of Kautsky. After the split in the international labour movement, following the revolution in Russia and World War I, they also positioned themselves as being an alternative to Leninism. Most prominent among the Austrian Marxists were Max Adler, Otto Bauer, Rudolf Hilferding and Karl Renner. This group made an important contribution to the development of a modern Marxist social science – non-dogmatic, but critical of the developing revisionist tendencies within social democracy (Bottomore 1978). Particularly influential were Max Adler's philosophical and sociological contributions. Adler was inspired by neo-Kantian philosophy and he was prone to ask the basic question of sociology: *How is society possible?* My concern is to determine to what extent the Austrian Marxists formulated a third alternative, between Bernstein and the Leninists (see below), in their ideas about solidarity.

In *Die Solidarische Gesellschaft*, in 1934, Adler distinguished between two types of society. The first is characterised by the solidarity of primitive people in the distant past, and our knowledge about these societies is limited and uncertain (Adler 1964 (1932)). All written history is about class contradiction and class struggle, he declared, referring to Engels. This other type of society is characterised by the exploitation of one group by another, by class formation, by the contradictory interests that develop between classes and by a social life that is determined by the divisions and cleavages in a society based upon exploitation. This type of society lacks

solidarity because societal solidarity is not possible in a society characterised by the exploitation of one group by another. According to Adler, the statement that societal solidarity is only possible in a classless society is a tautology. In a capitalist society solidarity is based on the recognition of common interests that develop when members of the same exploited class understand their social conditions, understand that they share a common economic destiny, and join together in common suffering and hope. Such a class will develop an ideology with an ethical idea about the general interest. The next step is when the revolutionary class interest is integrated with a more idealistic view about the general interest in society. Except for this emphasis upon societal ethics, Adler's conception of solidarity is very close to the one that Marx formulated. The scheme is as follows: *class situation*→*class interest*→*class consciousness*→*class community/solidarity* (*Gemeinschaft*).

Adler's idea of solidarity does not really transcend the classic Marxist concept described above. He mentions ethics, but his interest in Kant's philosophy does not extend to Kant's ethics. Even if Austrian Marxism did promote an alternative socialist position that was different to that of both Bernstein and Lenin, it did not represent an original contribution or a renewal of Marxism in terms of the idea of solidarity. This seems to be confirmed by an analysis of the party programmes of the Austrian Social Democratic Party (see Chapter 5).

## Leninism

*Solidarity* did not become an important concept in the Leninist school of thought which inspired the direction taken by the Marxist parties within the international labour movement. Lenin himself was not very preoccupied with solidarity, and the concept is not found in *What Is To Be Done?* (Lenin 1967 (1902)) or in *The State and Revolution* (Lenin 1964 (1917)), two of his most important theoretical contributions. Lenin was concerned with uniting the working class on a politically correct platform. Without a platform built upon *his* interpretation of Marxism, unity was neither desirable nor possible. He was more preoccupied with drawing lines of demarcation against groups with whom he disagreed, than on elaborating upon matters that united different groups. He stated briefly that a task for the party was to 'unify all forces in the name of the people', but this referred to an aim of the party, i.e. unifying forces under its own banner, and does not say anything about how attitudes and feelings of individuals within different classes can be unified. Opponents and heretics in the party or elsewhere in the revolutionary movement were to be fought ruthlessly and vanquished. Although class solidarity and

political unity are different ideas and are not easily confused analytically, it may have been difficult for some to distinguish between the two in practice. The paradox in the Marxist view of morality is even more pronounced in Leninism, and normative aspects that are associated with the idea of solidarity were of no interest to Lenin.

In his books and articles, Lenin emphasised the need for *discipline* in the struggle against capitalism. Contributions that discuss and elaborate ideas like community or solidarity are hard to find. His strong dislike of any kind of sentimentality and his eagerness to avoid all concepts that encourage a mood of solemnity may explain his avoidance of these ideas. Linguists have drawn attention to Lenin's struggle against smooth and glib phrases with a low degree of precision. Words like *freedom* or *equality* are seldom found. His severe style of writing and his contempt for sentiment, pathos and declamatory concepts have had an enduring impact on the language of political programmes in Leninist parties (Tynjanow 1970; Kasanski 1970; Jakubinski 1970).

Nevertheless, another Leninist, Georg Lukács, did develop a Leninist idea of solidarity in his book *History and Class Consciousness*. Lukács discussed the relationship between individual freedom and solidarity and criticised the freedom found in capitalist society. It is the freedom that an isolated individualist has to reify private property and a freedom against other individuals, one that entitles egoism and the pursuit of private interests. In capitalist society, ideas of solidarity and interdependence are at best useless 'normative ideas' (Lukács 1971 (1923)). Individual freedom in existing bourgeois society cannot be built upon solidarity, but only upon the lack of freedom of others. It is a corrupted and corrupting privilege, according to Lukács. Normatively speaking, the individual should not only abstain from individual freedom but also subordinate himself to the collective will of the communist party. Bourgeois freedom will only transform the party into a loose collection of separated individuals and prevent them from developing an effective collective will. The subordination of the individual will help the party to realise its goal – a new society where freedom and solidarity is combined in a relationship between free individuals who feel solidarity with one another.

Lukács' Leninist idea of solidarity represents a further development of Marx's contention that genuine solidarity is not possible in a capitalist society. To achieve genuine solidarity and genuine freedom one must temporarily sacrifice individual freedom. The problem here, of course, is incorporated into the question: What is temporary? If the revolution is believed to be imminent, the Leninist position can be more easily defended. If the prospect of revolution is one that can only be imagined in

Table 2.4 *The Leninist conception of solidarity*

Foundation	Objectives	Inclusiveness	Collective orientation
The working class, its common situation and the similarity of its social and political practices/its common adversary, and its need for discipline	Revolution The dictatorship of the proletariat Communism	Restricted: the working class, but only the revolutionary part of it	Very strong: bourgeois democracy is disparaged, the sacrifice of individual freedom and autonomy is required

the long term, then a call to sacrifice individual freedom will appear to be overly romantic and dangerous. This was a contentious issue in the discussions between Leninists and social democratic revisionists. Moreover, the Leninist position not only implied a short-term sacrifice of individual freedom, since the revolution would necessarily be followed by a period of proletarian dictatorship, but also a sacrifice without a time limit. As we know, in practice this entailed the permanent abolition of individual freedom in the name of the working class and the institution of dictatorship *by* and *for* the communist party.

Whereas Lukács' idea of solidarity was a logical corollary of Leninist ideology, another Leninist developed a more fruitful approach to the concept. Antonio Gramsci, one of the fathers of the Italian communist party, had witnessed the defeat of the workers' councils in Turin in 1919. He found the cause of defeat in the inability of the Turin working class to develop solidarity with other exploited groups and with the peasants in surrounding areas (Macciotta 1970).

Among Gramsci's contributions to Marxism, and to sociology in general, was his concept of culture and cultural hegemony, and his concept of solidarity was integrated in his reasoning on these concepts. For Gramsci, the dominant patterns of moral philosophy are essential components of the culture of a society. In all societies, a class or a group has a cultural hegemony which is an essential part of the domination of this class or group over other classes. Consequently, the working class not only had to concentrate its activities on conquering the state and its apparatuses. It had also to create another cultural hegemony in civil society. Besides, it had to develop a culture that could overcome the fragmentation of the working class itself and its separation from the peasants. Capitalism could be defeated and the revolution could be successful only through the establishment of a social force or block that constituted itself as an alternative to

capitalist domination. The worker must 'step out of the sphere of individualism' and competition with other workers. The principle of unity and solidarity is a critical one for the working class and it requires a change in the psychology of workers and peasants (Gramsci 1973b (1919)). The working class should create bonds with other social groups and develop an alternative culture based upon attitudes and values that differ from the hegemonic capitalist attitudes and values (Gramsci 1973a). The most elementary change would embody an economic and corporative sense of solidarity. The next step would be the development of consciousness about the solidarity of interests between all of the members in a broader social and political alliance, but still restricted to economic matters only. A third step would be to create a consciousness that transcended the corporative group and was in the interest of other social groups as well. This would indicate the aspiration of becoming a hegemonic force, according to Gramsci.

Gramsci enriched Marxist theory with his emphasis upon culture, moral understandings and psychology. He used the term solidarity more often than the other Leninists analysed here, although he alternated between solidarity and other equivalent terms such as unity. But he was part of the Leninist tradition, and he, too, emphasised the need for *discipline* in the communist party and in the working class and its allies (Gramsci 1973a). Although he was preoccupied with normative questions, he did not incorporate in his work ideas about solidarity that are found in the works of Bernstein, probably because he belonged to the tradition that understood Bernstein's revisionism as a betrayal of true Marxism.

Finally, Mao Zedong continued the approach of Leninist tradition in terms of solidarity. In the texts of Mao, *unity* is a central concept, particularly regarding the unity within the communist party itself, and the unity between the party and the masses.<sup>4</sup> The concept of solidarity is hard to find in his theoretical works, but he did employ the term frequently in speeches and in materials used for political agitation. The term *solidarity* is reserved mainly for denoting the relationship between the Chinese Communist Party and what Mao regards as the working-class parties in other countries. Besides, it is used about the relationship with countries that he considers progressive or friendly. Thus, generally Mao Zedong was as tepid as Lenin in his attitude towards the term solidarity. As we shall see in Chapter 8, this is also reflected in the programmes of Marxist–Leninist parties.

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, *Reinforce the Unity of the Party and Carry Forward the Party Traditions and Opening Speech at the Eighth National Congress of the CPC*, in Zedong (1957).



### **Anarchism: Bakunin**

In power, Leninists perverted the liberating aspects of socialism and Marxism and did not provide any room for solidarity or for individual freedom. The strong focus on the party in Leninist tradition directed attention away from the normative and ethical aspects of solidarity within the working class. The concept of solidarity became far more important in the tradition within the trade union movement that was least concerned with party matters. The anarchists failed to achieve political power and became almost irrelevant in politics, although their ideas did influence the ideas of segments within the trade union movement in France, Italy and Spain. The only country where anarchism did become important was Spain, especially in the period before and during the Spanish Civil War (1936–39).

One of the protagonists of anarchism, Mikhail Bakunin (1814–76), integrated the concept of solidarity into his theoretical and strategic contributions to a far greater degree than did Leninists. For Bakunin, solidarity was a necessary element in every society. Solidarity is a quality that is found in the individual which makes him join with others and create a community (Bakunin 1992a; 1992c). The proletariat is ‘the carrier of the standards of humanity’, and the guiding principle for the proletariat is solidarity. He defined it in this way:

All for one – one for all, and one by virtue of all. This is the motto, the fundamental principle of our great International [Working-Men’s] Association which transcends the frontiers of States, thus destroying them, endeavouring to unite the workers of the entire world into a single human family on the basis of universally obligatory labour, in the name of freedom of each and every individual . . . And there are two ways to realise this wish. The first is by establishing, first in their own groups and then among all groups, a true fraternal solidarity, not just in words, but in action, not just for holidays, but in their daily life. Every member of the International must be able to feel that all other members are his brothers and be convinced of this in his practice. (Bakunin 1992d)

Bakunin’s preoccupation with the idea and practice of solidarity was not an isolated phenomenon among anarchists. Some decades later, Kropotkin described solidarity as the basis for social integration and as a moral idea (Zoll 2000). The idea of anarchist solidarity was integrated in an organisational programme that emphasised the development of trade unions and other organisations, such as consumer and producer cooperatives, common funds for struggle, etc. In this way, anarchists developed a consistent and coherent theory and practice of working-class solidarity. Whereas Leninists overstated the importance of the party and endowed

Table 2.5 *Aspects of solidarity in socialist theory*

	Foundation	Objectives/ Function	Inclusiveness	Collective orientation
Classic Marxist solidarity	Class interests Recognition of 'sameness'	Realise interests: revolution socialism	Restricted: only the working class, but in all nations	Strong: Individual autonomy is not made a theme
Leninist solidarity	Class interests Recognition of 'sameness'	Realise interests: revolution the dictatorship of the proletariat Socialism	Very restricted: only the 'conscious' part of the working class, but in all nations	Very strong: Individual autonomy is explicitly suppressed
Classic social democratic solidarity	The common interests of the great majority of people Acceptance of difference Ethics and morality	Realise interests: reforms Socialism Create a sense of community	Broader: almost all groups; the nation?	Medium to weak: individual freedom is valued and the dilemma is recognised

it with dictatorial powers, anarchists did not see the necessity of a party in the struggle for power within the labour movement and within society as a whole.

### **Conclusion: Marxist, Leninist and social democratic solidarity**

If we ignore the anarchist concept of solidarity, because anarchism failed to achieve political power, almost universally, in Europe, there are three diverging concepts of solidarity identified in socialist theory. I have labelled them *the classic Marxist*, *the Leninist*, and *the classic social democratic* concepts of solidarity. These concepts are summarised in Table 2.5.

The socialist ideas of solidarity did not refer to premodern societies, with integrated local communities that were strongly bonded together, as do some of the classic sociological concepts. Socialist concepts of solidarity reflect the experiences of workers and militants under capitalism. The importance of solidarity often reflects an urgency; the necessity of joining together in order to avoid defeat by adversaries. The concept was filled with connotations promising a different and much better future, and was seen as being an important instrument in the struggle to achieve a desirable future. These concepts differ in many other respects, first and

foremost in the way they are founded and in the role of ethics and morality in constituting solidarity.

The classic Marxist concept is founded upon the recognition of class interests and the community between fellow workers. The goal is to realise the interests of the working class by revolutionary means and by the establishment of a socialist society. This is a restricted concept; it includes only the working class, although the exact confines of that class are not clear. National borders do not limit working-class solidarity. The emphasis upon the collective is strong, and there are no significant worries about how individual freedom and collective solidarity are to be reconciled.

The foundation for the Leninist conception of solidarity does not deviate from the classic Marxist concept. The goal is to realise the interests of the working class by revolution and by the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat. In principle, this kind of solidarity should be able to encompass the entire working class. However, Lenin emphasised the view that unity could only be founded upon a correct analysis – his own analysis – and consequently, only the revolutionary segments of the working class that are in line with his thinking are included. The emphasis on the collective is very strong, and individual freedom in bourgeois society is a gravely disparaged ideal.

Finally, classic social democratic solidarity is founded upon a much broader definition of interests. It entails the interests of the working class and the interests of other popular classes, or strata, and includes an acceptance of difference among these classes and groups. In addition, there is an ethical or moral component constituting the foundation for solidarity. The goal is to realise the interests of the majority by concrete reforms that will eventually lead to a fully democratic and socialist society. Solidarity should create a feeling of community between those who are included. The social democratic concept is clearly broader than the classic Marxist concept. Emphasis on the collective is classified as medium to weak, since individual freedom is highly valued. The potential contradictions between individual autonomy and the requirements of collective solidarity are clearly recognised.

Since so much differs in the socialist concepts of solidarity, i.e. the role of ethics, class and other populous groups, the place of individual freedom, etc., it may be more appropriate to consider these conceptualisations within the confines of the distinctive discourses in which they appear. This will be done in Chapters 4, 5, 7 and 8.