

THE RELEVANCE OF FRATERNITY

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The concept of fraternity has a strong emotive charge. It has been deployed rhetorically both in theory and in political action for a variety of goals, some of which stand in radical opposition to each other. Fraternity has been put at the service of nationalism and cosmopolitan humanism; it has been used to support both traditionalist and revolutionary visions; it has been proclaimed as the ensign of Christian, communist, and anarchist thought; it has been at the core of civil rights and workers' rights movements, and it has figured in the mottos of parties, trade unions, armies, factories, and mines. Despite its enormous politicizing potential, fraternity has played a marginal role in contemporary political theory and it has received much less attention than the other two ideas consecrated in the French revolutionary slogan, that is, liberty and equality.

This work aims to contribute to the theoretical reflection on fraternity and argue for its reinsertion in contemporary political theory. The structure of the paper is as follows. In the first section, I will examine some reasons why the concept of fraternity has been relegated in philosophical thought. In the second section, I will discuss briefly some approaches to fraternity that have been defended in contemporary political philosophy. In the third section, I will provide an analysis of the concept of fraternity and I will distinguish it from related concepts in political theory. In the fourth section, I raise a number of issues that a theoretical development of fraternity as a political ideal should address. I conclude with some general considerations about the possibility of meeting the challenges posed by the study of fraternity and its importance for contemporary political philosophy.

I. The Estrangement of Fraternity

The idea of fraternity has a long history—abruptly interrupted over two centuries ago. The concept has a medieval origin and it is associated with the craft and merchant guilds of the

ancien régime.¹ It is also possible to establish links between the concept of fraternity and the Greek terms *philadelphia* and *philia*, which acquired a politico-ethical function in the hands of the Stoics in the Hellenic period. The *philadelphia*, the Stoic fraternity, served as the base of the Christian fraternity, the core of which is agapic love. The modern, secular, concept of fraternity, in whose inception the Masons played a singularly important role, is generally associated with the revolutionary trilogy, “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,” even though fraternity was not a part of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of 1789 and was only included in the slogan in 1793.² Fraternity was a key concept in the 1848 Revolution, when it was incorporated for the first time in a constitutional text.³ It also played a fundamental role in the early days of the workers’ movement and figured in the first socialist and anarchist programs, only to disappear progressively from the political landscape in the second half of the nineteenth century.

What explains the estrangement of a concept which, like fraternity, was considered central in the most important political movements and revolutionary ideals of modern history? It is instructive to investigate the reasons why this concept occupies a marginal place in contemporary political theory. First, fraternity, with its emphasis on community, is in tension with the individualism characteristic of the dominant liberal tradition.⁴ Second, and relatedly, fraternity fits poorly with the language of rights through which demands for liberty and equality have gained privileged expression.⁵ Third, fraternity expresses a kind of social link that seems unrealistic in large-scale modern societies.⁶ Fourth, while equality and liberty can be realized through legal means and political reforms, it is not easy to discern the institutional mechanisms that are appropriate for implementing the ideals of fraternity.⁷ In this sense, fraternity seems to be placed, irreparably, in the terrain of utopia. Fifth, and closely related to the previous point, attempts to translate fraternity into the practical seem to be not only unrealizable, but they have

¹ On the history of the concept of fraternity see Hobsbawm (1975), Conill (2003), and Domenech (1993).

² On the concept of fraternity and its role in the French Revolution, see Ozouf (1989) and David (1987).

³ Since then, fraternity has had some constitutional recognition, appearing in the preamble of the 1848 French Constitution and in article 51 of the Indian Constitution, as well as in such international law texts as article 1 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. See Shetty and Sanayal (2011). See also Gonthier (2000), who maintains that although the Canadian Charter of Rights and Liberties does not explicitly mention fraternity, it implicitly recognizes the value of fraternity –which is also, he argues, protected by several branches of Canadian law.

⁴ Hobsbawm (1975: 471) and Bodei (1989).

⁵ Muñoz-Dardé (1999: 83) and Frankfurt (1987: 24).

⁶ Muñoz-Dardé (1999: 83) and Rawls (1999: 90).

⁷ Hobsbawm (1975: 471).

also been marked by coercion, totalitarianism, and Revolutionary Terror. Thus, fraternity belongs more readily, in this sense, to the history of dystopian, rather than utopian, thought.⁸ Sixth, fraternity possesses an affective dimension, which makes it a difficult concept to analyze with the tools of contemporary political philosophy, which only recently incorporated emotions within its realm of study. Seventh, fraternity seems to be incompatible with a capitalist system insofar as a fraternal society organizes social relations around the ideas of mutual assistance and cooperation, and not through the mechanism of the market.⁹ Eighth, the public-private divide, which serves to delineate the proper object of political theory in the liberal tradition, has made it harder to conceptualize fraternity as a political concept, relegating it to the realm of personal relations. As a result, fraternity has been viewed as a matter of ethics, not politics. Ninth, fraternity, insofar as it revolves around what brings us together rather than what pulls us apart, sits uncomfortably with contemporary political theory, which has been primarily interested in explaining and accommodating the pluralism that characterizes modern democratic societies.¹⁰ Finally, fraternity sounds not only archaic to modern ears but also politically incorrect insofar as it expresses an ideal of unity among men to the exclusion of women.¹¹

These, among other reasons, explain the displacement of fraternity to the periphery of contemporary political thought. However, the concerns and aspirations embedded in the ideal of fraternity, and even, to a limited extent, the concept itself have figured in the contemporary debate. I now turn to consider briefly the place that the concept has occupied in contemporary political philosophy.

II. The Concept of Fraternity in Contemporary Political Theory

Fraternity's theoretical space in contemporary political philosophy has been occupied by other ideas that seem to be less problematic and fit more easily with current political language,

⁸ Bodei (1989). See also Stephen (1874).

⁹ Hobsbawm (1975: 472) and Bodei (1989).

¹⁰ Bodei (1989).

¹¹ Swift (2006: 133), Pateman (1980), and Phillipps (1984).

such as “civic friendship,” “solidarity,” and “community.”¹² However, I would argue, the substitution of fraternity by these ideas results in a reduction of the concept of fraternity and the ideals that it evokes. Even though fraternity, insofar as it is associated with help and cooperation, is undoubtedly close to solidarity (in some versions of this idea),¹³ the replacement of fraternity by solidarity leads to a reduction of fraternity to the offering of help to those who are vulnerable or in need. Such substitution emphasizes links among “fraternity,” “humanity,” “benevolence,” and “beneficence”¹⁴ to the detriment of other dimensions of the concept of fraternity, such as the affective links that bind those who are in a fraternal relation or the mutual identification among members who belong to a fraternal community. Furthermore, fraternal relationships are fundamentally relations between equals. This egalitarian aspect of the fraternal relationship is compromised in the substitution of fraternity for solidarity, which adopts, to a large extent, a perspective of victimization.¹⁵ The substitution of “civic friendship” for “fraternity” also implies a reduction of the concept of fraternity, insofar as it focuses exclusively on the communitarian feelings that serve as the basis for a given conception of social unity and cohesion. Finally, the substitution of “community” for “fraternity” advances a multicultural social model embodied in the demands of “identity politics”. This model, however, is compatible with a high degree of insularity between different social groups, thus importantly limiting the reach of the ideals of fraternity.¹⁶ Something similar can be said in relation to “recognition.” Although this concept captures some important aspects of the ideal of fraternity, unlike fraternity, it also places respect for difference at the center of political discussion.¹⁷

Contemporary political theory has also attempted to address the concerns raised by the idea of fraternity, without actually appealing to this concept, by emptying its content in other central political concepts, most importantly, equality—as in the notion of social or relational equality—and liberty—e.g., liberty as non-domination.¹⁸ This strategy also comes with its own

¹² Some authors have gone so far as to explicitly argue for the replacement of fraternity by other terms. See, *inter alia*, Swift (2006L 133) (arguing for the substitution of “fraternity” by “community”), Agra (1994) (favoring “solidarity” over “fraternity”), and Stevens (2001) (proposing the replacement of “fraternity” for “civic friendship”).

¹³ See Bayertz (1999: 5).

¹⁴ These are the terms with which it is related in the *Enciclopedia*, Vid. Giretti (2003: 291).

¹⁵ Tatián, Torres, and Perié (2004: 7).

¹⁶ Boisvert (2005).

¹⁷ See, *inter alia*, Fraser and Honneth (2003).

¹⁸ On relational equality see Fourie, Schuppert, and Wallimann (2015).

costs. To begin with, as argued in relation to the concepts of “civic friendship,” “solidarity,” etc., relational equality and liberty as non-domination emphasize some of the central aspects of fraternity—those that are more directly linked to equality and liberty, respectively—but they fail to account for the complexity of the idea of fraternity. Once fraternity is reduced to some conception of equality or liberty, essential aspects of this concept are excluded. In addition, the inclusion of some characteristics of fraternal communities—like the mutual recognition among community members as equals, or the fact that these are communities in which social relationships are not marked by domination or oppression—in the concepts of equality and liberty might explain the controversy over whether social equality and liberty as non-domination can be properly understood as conceptions of equality and liberty, or whether, to the contrary, they posit valuable political ideals, which are, nonetheless, distinct from equality and liberty.

Notwithstanding the displacement of the concept of fraternity in favor of other notions, there are some approaches to this concept in contemporary literature, which I will present briefly.

a) *Liberal Conceptions*. Two key authors in the liberal egalitarian tradition, namely, John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin, have given fraternity a role within their theories. Rawls argues that the principle of difference, according to which social and economic inequalities are permitted as long as they make the least advantaged better off than they would be under strict equality, corresponds to the idea of fraternity. Thus, fraternity occupies a distinct place within Rawls’ theory of justice, imposing a clear requirement that the basic structure of society should satisfy.¹⁹ Dworkin assigns fraternity a fundamental role in the justification of political legitimacy. According to Dworkin, a state is legitimate if its constitutional structure and practices are such that its citizens have a general obligation to obey legal decisions imposing duties. The best argument in favor of this obligation, argues Dworkin, consists in showing that political obligations (including the obligation to obey the law) satisfy the conditions that characterize genuinely fraternal obligations. In other words, in Dworkin’s view, the legitimacy of a political community depends upon whether it is a true fraternal community.²⁰

¹⁹ Rawls (1999: 90-91). For a discussion of this interpretation of fraternity, see Muñoz-Dardé (1999: 86-87), Puyol (2004: 127ss), Rodríguez-Zepeda (2009: 48ss), Cupit (2013), Inamura (2013), and Estlund (1998).

²⁰ Dworkin (1986: 206-216). For a critical reading, see Muñoz-Dardé (1999: 87-88).

b) *Republican Conceptions*. Despite the fact that the concept of fraternity has a natural place within republican political thought, the concept is, surprisingly, absent from contemporary Anglo-American republican discussions.²¹ Nevertheless, several concepts that are central to this tradition—like civic virtue and, especially, the concept of liberty as non-domination—have important points of contact with the idea of fraternity.²² In contrast to Anglo-American republicanism, in other versions of republican thought the centrality of fraternity has been widely recognized. Antoni Domenech’s work provides an exemplary illustration of the way in which the republican program may give an account of the ideal of fraternity.²³ Domenech starts from a conception of political philosophy that sees political concepts as essentially historical and that requires that conceptual analysis be done in a way that is responsive to the historical trajectory through which political concepts were forged. Domenech then examines the concept of fraternity in its historical context, as an ensign that was meant to transform radically the *ancien régime*’s social relations of dependence and domination. On the basis of this historical analysis, he defends a republican interpretation of the socialist tradition, which is best viewed, argues Domenech, as the heir of the fraternal, emancipating, project of revolutionary democratic republicanism.

c) *Socialist Conceptions*. Fraternity plays a prominent role in Gerald Cohen’s socialist theory.²⁴ According to Cohen, a fraternal society is a “justificatory community” ruled by the principle of “communal reciprocity.” In a justificatory community, the behavior of individuals satisfies the so-called “interpersonal test,” which demands that arguments in favor of a given behavior can also serve as justification in a communicative exchange between any two members of that society.²⁵ The principle of communal reciprocity is satisfied when the members of a community are mutually motivated not by what they might obtain in exchange, but by a desire to serve and be served and a concern for the needs of each of the members of the community. In

²¹ This absence might be explained by the fact that American republicanism did not need to resort to fraternity, insofar as the vindication of for fraternity made sense in the context of a struggle against the European *ancien régime*. Vid. Domenech (2006: 12-14).

²² Lovett (2014).

²³ See Domenech (1993), (2006), and (2013). For a discussion of Domenech’s work on fraternity, see Santesmanes (2005), Pastor (2005), and Peña (2005). See also Peña (2009).

²⁴ See Cohen (2008) and (2009). For a discussion of the concept of fraternity in Cohen, see Vrousalis (2010), (2012), and Fatauros (2013).

²⁵ Cohen (2008: 41-46).

other words, this principle demands that people who exchange services in any way treat each other with the same reciprocity that is characteristic of friendship.²⁶ According to Cohen, communal reciprocity is the opposite of a market society, where productive exchange is based on monetary gain and is typically motivated by a mix of greed and fear, thereby promoting relationships in which people are seen as “possible sources of enrichment” and “threats to personal success.”²⁷ Thus, in Cohen’s view, fraternity is a value antithetical to the market.

d) *Christian Conceptions*. The concept of fraternity is still crucial in current Catholic political thought. In addition to contemporary defenses of the traditional Christian conception of fraternity as a community of believers,²⁸ the last few years have witnessed a growing interest in the study of diverse aspects of fraternity inspired by the work of the Abba school and the Political Movement for Unity (PMU). This interest has taken a particularly strong hold in Latin America, where several seminars and conferences have been organized around the theme of fraternity, culminating with the creation of the University Network for the Study of Fraternity (RUEF). These conferences have been interdisciplinary and international, bringing together academics from several Latin American and European countries, especially from Italy, and have not been exclusively academic, as participants in these seminars also include public servants, politicians, theologians, and jurists. A body of work that analyzes different aspects of fraternity, including its relevance to law and politics, the relationship between fraternity and conflict, the role of fraternity in regional integration in Latin America, the link between fraternity and democracy, and the relationship between fraternity and education have been published as a result of these regular meetings.²⁹

Thus, there are different conceptions of fraternity in contemporary political philosophy that can provide a starting point for an in-depth study of this concept. These conceptions, however, are limited. In the liberal tradition, the concept of fraternity is, arguably, too thin, and overlaps, in the end, with the concept of equality – given Rawls’ claim that the principle of difference provides us with an interpretation of fraternity. Meanwhile, when the republican

²⁶ Cohen (2009: 38-45).

²⁷ Cohen (2009: 40).

²⁸ Guiretti (2003) and Ratzinger (1962).

²⁹ See Mardones (2012a), (2012b), Baggio (2006), (2009), Barreneche (2010), Ramirez (2011), Ighina (2012), and Cerviño (2012).

tradition has not addressed the concerns of fraternity by appealing to the concept of liberty (as non-domination), it has adopted a broadly historical perspective which, although illuminating, is also limited in that it fails to show the relevance of fraternity for general political thought beyond the scope of a given political culture. Similarly, it is difficult to extend the conclusions of the studies of fraternity coming from Christian thought into a political philosophy without religious commitments. The socialist conceptions—particularly Cohen’s— are, I would argue, promising, and they point to the potential to subvert the social and economic order that is commonly associated with the concept of fraternity. Nevertheless, before we are in a position to assess the reach of the ideal of fraternity, it is necessary to carry out a detailed analysis of the concept. The following section attempts to provide a preliminary conceptual analysis.

III. The Concept of Fraternity: An Analytical Proposal

Fraternity is a metaphorical concept that links the realm of the family with the realm of politics.³⁰ Fraternity (in the metaphorical sense) projects qualities of the fraternal relationship (in the literal sense) on the realm of politics. It is possible to distinguish three dimensions or aspects of fraternity as a principle, an ideal, or a public virtue.

a) Communitarian Dimension. The existence of a common bond is a constitutive feature of fraternal relationships. Individuals united by a fraternal relationship have something in common. It is important to note that what they share is not a good, but an intrinsic feature of the agent.³¹ In the cognatic family, what is shared is a common ascendancy. This is also the case of fraternity in the Christian sense. Diverse fraternities arise depending on the feature that is considered as relevant to determine membership to the community of *frates* and *sorites*: citizenship (in nationalist versions), devotion to the same cause (among brothers in arms or in political struggles), shared humanity (in the cosmopolitan versions), and race or gender (in the

³⁰ See Domenech (2013) for an exploration of fraternity as a conceptual metaphor.

³¹ Esheté (1981: 28).

civil rights movements). In contrast to relationships based on the sharing of goods, in fraternal relationships, individuals share certain goals or values.³²

The goals or values shared by those who are linked by a fraternal bond have three fundamental characteristics.³³ First, people who belong to the same fraternal community identify themselves with the shared goal (e.g., the abolition of social classes) and, indirectly, with others insofar as they are all committed to advancing the same end (e.g. with other proletarian brothers). This identification explains why an individual would feel emotions that are typically self-regarding, like pride or shame, in relation to the conduct of others to whom that individual is linked by a fraternal bond. Second, the shared goals are indivisible: their achievement or failure is necessarily a collective question. Third, the facts that these shared goals are goals with which individuals in fraternal relations identify and that they are indivisible are not facts external to the fraternal relationship itself. Rather, agents mutually recognize that they share goals with those precise characteristics.

The object of recognition in a fraternal relationship is not limited to shared values or goals that are intrinsic to the agent and have certain characteristics. Rather, in fraternal relations, individuals recognize each other as equals in virtue of the shared value, e.g., shared humanity, womanhood, belonging to a worker's movement, etc.³⁴ The mutual recognition of members of a fraternal community as equals in virtue of the shared quality also implies the reciprocal recognition of a certain normative status: those bounded by a fraternal relationship recognize each other as individuals who possess the same rights, obligations, and responsibilities deriving from the shared feature.³⁵

b) Affective Dimension. Individuals linked by a fraternal relation exhibit a number of affective attitudes. Loyalty, love, affection, trust, concern for the wellbeing of others, friendship,

³² Esheté (1981: 29). It is essential to note that such ends do not have to be morally worthy. It is enough to point, for example, to the fraternal bonds that undoubtedly existed among members of the Ku Klux Klan.

³³ Esheté (1981: 30-31).

³⁴ Cf. Esheté (1981: 42), who reduces the object of mutual recognition to the shared value and its characteristics, and claims that equality is not necessarily a part of fraternity.

³⁵ On the relationship between recognition and fraternity, see Barzotto (2007).

empathy, and subjective feelings of belonging and sympathy for the other person are some of the emotional attitudes that usually associated with the fraternal relationship.

c) Practical Dimension. Fraternal relationships have a practical dimension insofar as those who are united by a fraternal link tend to act disinterestedly in the benefit of others as well as in the advancement of the common cause or value. The fraternal relation is a relation of mutual aid and voluntary cooperation. The altruistic character of the practical aspects of fraternity does not prevent fraternity from giving rise to a series of responsibilities, rights, and expectations.³⁶ Fraternal relations in the political domain—unlike fraternal relationships within the family—are voluntary, but once established they imply the acceptance of certain obligations and responsibilities, including the provision of material goods, e.g. helping families of miners or political prisoners. Thus, although the fraternal bond arise by sharing an intrinsic feature or value, the existence of this bond also implies a disposition to share material goods in cases of necessity.

These three dimensions (communitarian, affective, and practical) are constitutive conditions of fraternity. The communitarian dimension allows us to distinguish between fraternal ties and other social relations, e.g. market relations or relations of servitude. The affective and practical dimensions of the fraternal link are also constitutive: if my brother in arms is neither concerned about my safety nor is he willing to give me a hand when I am in need, he can hardly be called properly my brother. Thus, the lack of the affective and practical attitudes characteristic of fraternity implies a serious weakening and, ultimately, a rupture of the fraternal bond.³⁷

Each of these three dimensions admits of diverse interpretations, which result in different conceptions of fraternity. The concept of fraternity responds to a “logic of inclusion-exclusion,” which delineates the boundaries of the relevant community.³⁸ The fraternal community can be more, or less, broad—e.g. fellow citizens, members of the same political party, social class, cultural tradition, race, or species—and the meaning of fraternity varies enormously “as the

³⁶ In some situations—for example, in organization statutes, good Samaritan laws, and military codes—fraternal relations are institutionalized in such a way as to give rise to legal rights and obligations.

³⁷ Esheté (1981: 39) also addresses this point.

³⁸ Agra (1994: 152).

radius of the circle being applied itself changes.”³⁹ The affective dimension may also be variously interpreted as requiring a range of different attitudes that go from “individualized impersonal concern”⁴⁰ to “intense interpersonal affection.”⁴¹ Similarly, there are different views on the kinds of practical attitudes and dispositions characteristic of a fraternal relation, which could include a general disposition to help as well as a number of more specific obligations. Although the three dimensions are independent from each other, not all combinations of their interpretations are equally plausible. For example, an interpretation of the affective dimension as love makes a universalist interpretation of the communitarian dimension less plausible than a more local interpretation of that dimension. Different interpretations along the three axes, community, affectivity, and practicality, result in more or less strong or demanding conceptions of fraternity.

In conclusion, my proposal (a very preliminary one) would be as follows. Fraternity is realized in a community when three conditions are satisfied: a) members of the community regard each other as equals by virtue of a shared value or feature intrinsic to the agent, b) community members are joined by affective bonds, and c) they have a disposition to help each other. In the following section, I point out some problems that a detailed study of fraternity should address.

IV. The Challenges of Fraternity

A research agenda on the idea of fraternity would include, among others, the following problems:

a) What is the relationship between justice and fraternity? What is the role of fraternity in a theory of justice? Some authors, particularly those writing from a communitarian perspective, have argued that fraternity is a value that is beyond or prior to justice.⁴² Authors working within

³⁹ Bueno (1990: 33).

⁴⁰ Muñoz-Dardé (1999: 93).

⁴¹ McWilliams (1973: 7).

⁴² Sandel (1982: 32-35). See also Baier (1995).

the liberal framework have argued, to the contrary, that fraternity is perfectly compatible with the belief that justice is the primary virtue of a social system.⁴³ Yet others have argued that while the inclusion of fraternity into a theory of justice does not necessarily contest the priority of justice, it would nevertheless put forward a rather different conception of justice.⁴⁴

b) It is necessary to explore the relationship between fraternity and the concepts of liberty and, especially, equality.⁴⁵ The conceptual connection between fraternity and equality seems to be bidirectional. On the one hand, one may argue for equality on the grounds that it is indispensable for the realization of fraternal ideals. On the other hand, it seems that equality is not only a condition, but also a consequence, of fraternity insofar as a fraternal attitude favors an egalitarian distribution of resources.⁴⁶ In any case, it seems plausible to argue that the concept of fraternity leads to a re-signification of the ideas of liberty and equality.⁴⁷

c) How can the ideals of fraternity be implemented? What forms of fraternity is it desirable to promote institutionally? Which legal or social institutional means would be most appropriate for advancing the ideal of fraternity? And, which consequences for civic education would follow from taking fraternity to be an important political value? There is also a need to investigate the relationship between the value of fraternity and the civic virtues as well as the role that fraternity could play in a theory of citizenship.⁴⁸

d) The set of practical attitudes and dispositions that, as argued, are constitutive of fraternity are critical for the realization of democratic ideals. It seems, therefore, necessary to examine the proper place of fraternity within democratic theory.⁴⁹

e) Fraternity is relevant to achieve a better understanding of some fundamental problems in contemporary political philosophy, such as problems of social division besetting post-colonial societies, questions about the nature of discrimination, the impact of immigration on social

⁴³ Muñoz-Dardé (1994) and (1999).

⁴⁴ Suissa (2010: 71).

⁴⁵ See, *inter alia*, Ginsburg (1986).

⁴⁶ Frankfurt (1987: 24) and Miller (1982). Vid. also Suissa (2010: 68).

⁴⁷ Guiretti (2003: 302).

⁴⁸ On some of these issues, see Stevens (2001).

⁴⁹ On the connection between fraternity and democracy, see Hurtado (2014), Gonthier (2000), and Holland (1995).

cohesion as well as some questions of transitional and global justice. An adequate analysis of fraternity could, therefore, importantly contribute to current debates on these problems.

f) Another fundamental question concerns the relationship between fraternity and liberalism. Is it possible to incorporate fraternity within a liberal framework? Or would such inclusion, to the contrary, amount to abandoning or superseding the liberal paradigm? And, what is the relationship between fraternity and the market economy? Can they be shown to be compatible? Or is fraternity an ideal that leads us necessarily to call into question some fundamental principles of liberal capitalist democracies?⁵⁰

V. Conclusions

As I have argued, fraternity requires that a community structure its social relations in such a way that its members regard each other as equals, are bounded by affective ties, and have a disposition to cooperate and help each other. To be sure, a through development of a theory of fraternity poses important challenges. These difficulties are, however, worth facing. Even though fraternity has been marginalized in current political thought, it continues to be a permanent aspiration among different groups trying to advance diverse political projects.⁵¹ “Fraternity -as Hobsbawm says- is still what enables men and women to fight. It is also what they make revolutions for.”⁵² Given the political potential and the theoretical relevance of the concept of fraternity, it seems necessary to vindicate its reinsertion into the language of contemporary political philosophy.

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⁵⁰ See, *inter alia*, Cunningham (1990-91), Stevens (2001), and Critch (2010).

⁵¹ See, for example, “The Political Movement for Unity,” or “Fraternité 2020.”

⁵² Hobsbawm (1975: 473).

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