

The Problem of Political Owing

The classic problem of political obligation comes in many versions.

After reviewing some of these, I focus on one of them,
which I call "the problem of political owing": does each member of a
political society owe it to the others to uphold and support
its political institutions? In my book A Theory of Political Obligation
(2006) I argued that if we understand membership in a political society
in a particular, somewhat traditional way, the answer is positive.
This leaves open whether other understandings of such membership
give the same result. After saying something of the argument in the
book I turn to some recent accounts of the existence of a legal system
in a particular society and ask whether the members of a political
society in which a legal system exists according to the account in
question owe each other to uphold and support that system.

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