Solidarity at Work: Concepts, levels and challenges

Abstract

Solidarity is not a unified phenomenon with unchanging qualities; it partakes of moral, political and performative elements that are underpinned and reinforced by a shared work context, an organizational infrastructure and an institutional frame which together create distinctive path dependencies in solidarity across different forms of capitalism. Neo-liberalism has challenged these path dependencies by changing the material conditions and the ideological terrain, by heightening the diversity of the workforce, by restructuring the institutional context. However, this is not the end of solidarity and the article addresses the question of what sort of solidarities are now emerging and how.

Keywords Boundaries, Institutions, Solidarities

Introduction

Alexander has stated that 'solidarity is a central dimension of social order and social conflict, yet it has largely been absent from influential theories of modern society' (2014: 303). Alexander's focus is on the issue of social order and how it has been undermined by a variety of challenges to previous forms of solidarity. In this paper we focus on solidarity at work which has long been considered essential to empowering labour in capitalist societies. By solidarity and collective organization in voluntary societies, trade unions and political parties, labour forged itself into a powerful actor in developed forms of capitalism during the 20th century. By acting together, labour was able to play a role in workplaces, in sectoral and industry bargaining, in shaping regulation of the labour market, in developing tripartite systems of policy-making and welfare states. In this era, inequality within societies reduced, both across classes and across regions, reinforcing the value of solidarity for labour (Piketty 2014).

Not surprisingly therefore, the perceived decline of labour solidarity at work in these societies beginning in the 1970s has been seen as part of a series of broader changes in society derived from the deregulation of markets, the privatisation and marketisation of state services and the growth of global value chains managed by multinational firms. These changes have been accompanied by legislation to undermine the ability of workers to engage in collective action within and across workplaces and to increase employer discretion over the cost, allocation and organization of labour (Baccaro and Howells 2017). These shifts have led to the decline of trade union membership and the weakening of links between trade unions and social democratic parties which themselves have been shrinking in numbers as well as accommodating themselves more to the liberalization of employment relations (Crouch 2011; Sisson 2013). Baccaro and Howells (2017) posit a gradual convergence across different varieties of capitalism away from an emphasis on maintaining social solidarity and towards an accommodation with more market driven, employer dominated work organization linked to a proliferation of precarious work statuses (including sub-contracting, temporary and agency work, and self-employment) where individuals have few collective protections (see also Doellgast et al. 2017; Greer and Doellgast 2017). On top of this, more recent developments in platform capitalism (Srnicek 2017), the sharing economy (Sundararajan 2016), Uberwork (Scholz 2017) as well as broader trends in the impact of new forms of technology on work (McAfee and Brynjolfsson 2017) have all pointed to forms of work relations becoming more individualized. As a result, efforts to build types of solidarity which can impact on policy and institutions becoming more difficult.

For Streeck, this reflects a deeper crisis in contemporary capitalism; he argues that 'the sweated workers of today and the middle class workers in the countries of 'advanced' capitalism, being so remote from each other spatially that they never meet, do not speak the same language and

never experience together the community and solidarity deriving from joint collective action' (2016: 25). In his view, this decline of solidarity reinforces the sense that 'contemporary capitalism is vanishing on its own, collapsing from internal contradictions….depriving individuals at the micro-level of institutional structuring and collective support, and shifting the burden of ordering social life and providing it with a modicum of security and stability to individuals themselves and such social arrangements as they can create on their own… cooperation is driven by fear and greed and by elementary interests in individual survival' (Ibid: 13-14).

Authors from a broad range of perspectives are therefore agreed that the decline of solidarity at work is central to understanding the multiple crises being faced by societies in the current period. However, there has been relatively little recent scholarly reflection given to the concept of solidarity itself in relation to work. Heckscher and McCarthy (2014: 628) point out that 'solidarity has been rather neglected as an academic topic because it is very hard to analyse' whilst Godard suggests that it has been discussed mainly through a focus on empirical contextual factors such as shifts in political, legal and market conditions but with limited reference to the concept of solidarity in wider social theory or to its historical instantiation in distinctive institutional environments, norms and traditions (Godard, 2008; see also Wilde 2007). The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to provide a wider theoretical and historical framework to the study of solidarity at work. How do we frame research questions about the changing nature of solidarity at work in ways which enable us to build up mid-level explanatory theories about the factors which reinforce or undermine solidarity? What future research questions might emerge from such an analysis?

In order to answer these questions, the paper begins by defining the concept of solidarity as a set of bridging and bonding processes which are embedded in moral discourses, political coalitions and social performances. The paper then goes on to specify how the specific form of solidarity that arises from work can be distinguished in terms of levels of analysis starting with the nature of the labour process itself, then the formation of trade unions as collective actors and finally the embedding of solidarity in a range of formal and informal institutions. The paper argues firstly that the interconnectedness of these levels has varied historically across different forms of capitalism, secondly that the impact of neoliberalism varies not just across societies but also across these levels and thirdly some remnants of solidarity at work and some new upsurges may still be found. Building comparative and historical research agendas around this framework facilitates the development of a more effective understanding of whether solidarity at work is still possible. The final substantive section applies these insights to developing an analysis of the conditions underpinning the reconstruction of solidarities in the current transnational era.

The concept of solidarity

Solidarity is a form of identification and as such is both inclusive and exclusionary. Solidarity depends on a definition of 'us' distinct from them. The 'us' can be an occupational group, a factory location, a religious or national identity etc., distinguished from 'them'. 'Them' in relation to work might be employers or other workers who may take 'our' jobs. Forms of solidarity reflect what Putnam (2001) has called the 'bonding' and 'bridging' elements of social capital. 'Bonding' elements in social capital emphasize similarity within the group and the strength that this gives the group to act together. 'Bridging' elements of social capital refer to the ability to network across to different groups with some but limited commonalities. Whilst the bonds that tie these groups together may be weak, the bridging provides a strength,

extending possible networks of information, collaboration and cooperation beyond relatively isolated moral communities (Granovetter 1973). Solidarities which emerge from bonding and bridging are socially constructed and institutionally embedded, not pre-given and natural (Anderson 2006). With fellow employees working interdependently and face to face, it may be relatively easy to create bonds of solidarity; it is more difficult to bridge to employees working in a different location, in a different occupation, under different contractual terms, in a different company, a different sector, a different country. As Banting and Kymlicka (2017) point out (echoing Putnam's 'dark side of social capital'), the stronger and more intense the bonds become within a group, the more exclusive and closed the group becomes and therefore the more difficult and problematic it becomes to bridge to other different but equally cohesive groups. Bridging requires the development and maintenance of common discourses, network and organizational structures and institutions and these processes may weaken more intensive social bonding. The boundaries of inclusion within and exclusion from solidaristic processes of bonding and bridging may shift, intensify, or weaken as the contexts in which they are imagined, constructed and maintained change. Therefore, identifying solidarities at work requires an empirical account of how bonds and bridges are built and maintained or loosened and weakened in particular contexts.

At the discursive level, three sets of resources are drawn on by actors to explain and enact solidarity. The first is the language of morality deriving from a broader social normative vision about what 'we' share with others, and by contrast who may differ from 'us'. In this moral discourse, sharing binds us into relationships which go beyond individual calculation of benefits and costs. We engage in forms of solidarity because it is 'right' to do so. Stjerno (2004), for example, defines solidarity as "the preparedness to share resources with others by personal contribution to those in struggle or in need and through taxation and redistribution

organised by the state" (2004: 2). He argues that solidarity is made possible by the development of over-arching philosophies (such as social democracy and Christian democracy in post 1945 Europe) which become embedded in political and social movements and enable people to bridge potential divides and bond with each other in a collective endeavour. However, the implicit assumptions of these forms of moral solidarity have increasingly been exposed and challenged, e.g. the critique of their predominantly male centred, ethnically homogeneous assumptions, leading towards an acknowledgment of the need for a more inclusive moral solidarity in terms of women in the labour force and the role of ethnic minority and migrant workers. Achieving new sorts of moral bonding that can accommodate this wider bridging, however, has proved problematic. Whilst the rise of these voices has challenged many of the traditional sorts of moral solidarity based around male dominance and ethnic homogeneity, efforts to create alternatives that legitimate moral solidarity across this diversity of groups have been of limited effectiveness setting up many possible areas of conflict as reflected in the different fortunes of trade unions and social democratic parties across European varieties of capitalism (Simms 2012).

Solidarity also emerges through the use of the language and practice of political alliances and the formation of collective solidarities as necessary to achieve goals that can be widely shared on a pragmatic basis. Habermas distinguishes this from the language of morality arguing that 'since the French Revolution and the early socialist movements, this expression (i.e. solidarity) has been used in a political rather than a moral sense. Solidarity is not the same thing as charity. Someone who acts in solidarity accepts certain disadvantages in his or her long-term interest in the expectation that the other will behave likewise in similar situations.' (Habermas: Social Europe blog 20 March 2017). From this perspective, solidarity is a political calculation based on developing a collective understanding of the situation of different groups of actors and how this can be defended and/or improved by collective action. However, like the 'prisoner's

dilemma', the beneficial outcomes of acting in solidarity are not guaranteed and may not be tangible or visible to particular groups. Therefore, a tight utilitarian calculus cannot be sustained and has to be abandoned in favour of a language of coalitions and mutual obligations and understandings which is effective so long as it continues over an indeterminate time period to bring advantages to those engaged in solidarity. Processes of bonding and bridging are likely to be more fluid than under conditions of moral solidarity as the boundaries of coalitions ebb and flow over time depending on political and economic contingencies. Bonds are forged around particular programmes rather than 'moral' identities. If they do not achieve the objectives to which actors originally aspired then they may atrophy or collapse altogether. The last decade has revealed the fragility of solidarity based on political calculation as social democratic parties which had built new coalitions in a number of countries in the late 1990s and 2000s have withered across much of Europe in the face of the difficulties of dealing with the consequences of the global financial crash. Significant numbers of their old supporters alienated by this process have turned to populists who draw on a version of moral solidarity based on an exclusionary nationalism to attack the failings of a 'corrupt establishment' and its coalitional, pragmatic alliance building and policy compromises that are criticised precisely for a lack of moral vision (Eatwell and Goodwin 2018).

The third resource through which solidarity is enacted and reinforced is in various rituals, symbols and rhetorical appeals and vocabularies (see e.g. the discussions in Crow 2002; 2010). These phenomena express and reinforce solidarities through the enthusiastic performance of activities and processes which are expressive of the collective, e.g. in relation to labour movements, phenomena such as May Day marches and associated cultural artefacts such as flags, banners, and slogans, the referencing and mythologizing of past struggles, victories and defeats. A focus on ritual also points to the role which is played by narrative and memory in

terms of framing the meaning of solidarity and in turn how such narratives and memories have to be reconstructed and made meaningful in new ways particularly if they are to open out the idea of solidarity to previously marginalised groups (McBride and Martinez 2011). Crow (2010) also emphasizes that an important characteristic of solidarity is that it can emerge as a bursting forth of energy from often unanticipated events, sometimes starting in just a few small places and involving a limited number of people but then spreading to engage and bridge across to other groups that can, momentarily at least, forge new bonds confounding existing expectations. When traditional expectations of moral norms of solidarity are violated, the response from 'the crowd' (Thompson's phrase to refer to rebellious social actors in 18th century England who invoked a traditional 'moral economy'; Thompson 1971; also Bolton and Lasser 2013) can seem like a live and immediate threat to the whole social order. This potential can be awakened in a variety of circumstances, e.g. by political actors articulating new visions, by acts of extreme injustice by sitting powers, by notable anniversaries of key events etc.. Crow suggests that "solidarity is an unstable phenomenon that oscillates between periods of relative quiescence and of intense expression during events such as strikes, revolutions and religious ceremonies. Durkheim's term 'collective effervescence' captures solidarity's mercurial quality by describing bursts of intense feelings of shared purpose that bring people together. The other side of this is the difficulty of maintaining consistently high levels of commitment to the common good as a matter of routine" (Crow 2010: 58-9). Effervescence draws attention to the speed with which other actors may be drawn in to express solidarity and to participate in a movement. But as quickly as some are engaged, others may just as quickly disengage. Hecksher and McCarthy (2014) describe this as 'swarm' effect but whereas they see this as contingent on recent technologies and relate it to phenomena such as the Occupy movement, the Durkheimian argument suggests this is a much more general characteristic of solidarity. For example, the UK Miners' strike of 1984-85 rapidly drew into its ambit not just families of

miners (leading to some examples of long-term politicisation of women in contexts which had previously been male-dominated) (Spence and Stephenson 2009; Sutcliffe-Braithwaite and Thomlinson 2018) but also support networks across the country (including solidarity from unexpected quarters such as the gay and lesbian communities). Equally relevant in this example is of course the lack of solidarity amongst the core group of miners themselves and in particular the unwillingness of many Nottinghamshire miners to come out on strike (Gibbon 1988).

It is important therefore to recognise that the language of solidarity is both a plea for recognition of the need for collective action but also an effort to shape this recognition in particular ways that conceals some key assumptions. For example, as we have discussed, historically in many countries and sectors, moral solidarity has been defined in white masculine terms and in the male breadwinner model (Anderson 2010) with various ideological framings of the role of women and children in subordinate but theoretically in 'morally protected' positions. Shifting from this model to one which recognises women's rights to equal status in employment has been a long and difficult struggle as the interconnections of home and work and the gendered nature of social reproduction continue to evolve in complex and conflictual ways in different national contexts (Glucksmann 2005). Germany, for example, remains dominated by concepts of solidarity rooted in the idea of the full time male worker earning high wages in the manufacturing sector. In 2011, 19.9% of women workers in Germany worked in mini-jobs which limit hours and rewards, whilst 28.8% were in part-time employment; 84.4% of men by contrast worked full time (Weinkopf 2014). The OECD reported that these factors contributed to a persistent gender pay gap of 17.1% in Germany in 2014, above the OECD average of 14.3. In 2018, 85.72% of women worked in services in Germany compared to 59.48% of men (OECD, 2017). Wage inequalities in Germany also increased from the mid-1990s though the introduction of the minimum wage indicates the continuing struggle to maintain forms of solidarity (Bosch 2018).

Equally, incorporating into the notion of moral solidarity, migrant workers or those of different ethnicity has proved a complex task. The Danish version of moral solidarity, for example, was built on a tightly bonded homogeneous culture and the challenge from migration over the last two decades has introduced new fissures into Danish society which have been difficult for Danish social democrats to deal with (see e.g. Jenkins 2012). Ibsen and Thelen (2017), for example, argue that Sweden and Denmark have taken quite different trajectories of solidarity over the last two decades because of the way in which Swedish trade unions have continued to commit to an idea of wage solidarity across the economy as a whole – including the service sector and public sector employment – whilst Danish trade unions have turned away from the commitment to wage solidarity and instead concentrated on making their members employable in new firms by 'pursuing expansive rights to education and training' (2017: 413). Where moral categories of solidarity are strong, boundaries against outsider groups are likely to be high (Rosetti 2018), exacerbating conflict, unless positive bridging measures are put in place. Danish social democrats have found it difficult to pursue a consistent line in part because of fear of electoral losses to the growing popularity of anti-immigrant parties.

More pragmatic and coalitional approaches may allow a wider form of solidarity to be created but because it is temporary and contingent upon specific contexts, it may collapse, whilst older more embedded forms of moral solidarity may survive but transmute into defensive identities that aggressively oppose change and opening up to diversity and bridging. Rituals linked to moral solidarities may be appropriated in ways which make them exclusionary against marginalised or new groups in a society whilst efforts can be made to establish new rituals which can become inclusive (e.g. Gay Pride marches).

The articulation and organization of solidarity, therefore, involves the interaction of moral frameworks, political calculation and coalitions and an understanding of the rituals, symbols

and narratives of particular contexts (Table 1). The more moral, political and performative elements of solidarity overlap and reinforce each other, the more potentially powerful political and social movements can become but as the examples of Denmark and Germany illustrate, this may be at the expense of building barriers against excluded groups who may be unable to access the benefits of solidarity.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

The social underpinnings of solidarity

What are the social underpinnings of these different types of solidarity? We suggest that three levels need to be distinguished; firstly the workplace and the community; secondly the organisational level of trade unions and thirdly the institutional level, and the formal and informal norms which shape the conditions under which collective action and solidarity can take place and be expressed.

Historically sociologists and labour process theorists have identified the material conditions of solidarity at work with the nature and organization of the work process, the role of management in the control of labour, and the use of the labour market in disciplining employees. Classic studies in the British industrial sociology tradition focused on groups of white male workers such as miners (Scott et al. 1963), printers (Martin 1981), steelworkers (Scott et al. 1956), dockers (Turnbull 1992), shipbuilders (Brown and Brannen 1970), fishermen (Tunstall 1962) and railwaymen (Wedderburn 1964) where the overlap of work and community created a strong sense of solidarity, linking these highly gendered workplaces with patterns of gendered power in households and communities. In this tradition, what were termed ‘working class images of society’ (Bulmer 1975) were based to a considerable degree on the way in which work and community location interacted. Thus in the industries mentioned, strong identifications amongst the workforce gave rise to class based images of society in which

employees and employers were seen as in conflict even in contexts where workers themselves might be divided by occupations and craft divisions. In contexts such as agriculture (Newby 1977) or clerical workers (Lockwood 1958), where employers and employees were often co-present on a regular basis and evolved paternalistic ways of managing employees, the 'deferential worker' image of society was identified, i.e. where workers deferred to the employers' authority for reasons of tradition and respect for authority. In the Affluent Worker studies conducted during the mid-1960s, scholars identified instrumental attitudes to work which focused on work as a source of material reward and solidarity as an instrumental way for groups with power in the workplace to maximize their earnings (Goldthorpe et al. 1969). Solidarity had different meanings in each of these contexts related to the particular combination of work and community context.

Few of these studies went beyond a cursory attention to management to consider the underlying dynamics of capitalism. Labour process theory by contrast developed a strong focus on how processes of accumulation drove the organization of work and in the neo-liberal era increasingly found ways to fragment the workforce in order to weaken the potential for solidarity, e.g. outsourcing, offshoring, temporary work, precarious work etc.. It was also within the labour process and labour markets framework that the relationship between existing forms of solidarity and women workers emerged through studies of workplaces and industrial action (e.g. in studies such as Pollert 1981). Similarly research focused on how in spite of shared work conditions, white trade unions sustained their old exclusive view of solidarity with consequences for ethnic minority and migrant workers (McGovern 2007). A more complex view of solidarity in the workplace has therefore emerged reinforced by the decline of mass factory employment (in the West but certainly not in Asia), the decline of the standard employment contract and the rise of part-time, temporary and agency work.

The second level of solidarity which we identify is the organizational level, i.e. the structures and strategies of trade unions in relation to maintaining and growing membership, playing a role in labour market negotiations and regulations. Historically, in the UK context, these organizations grew up as part of what we earlier described as a 'bridging process' because it was relatively easy for local communities to recognise similarities in other communities, e.g. of miners or steelworkers or dockers and to recognise that acting collectively against employers could bring gains. Within these categories a 'bridge' from one locality to another and then bonding again at a higher degree of organization helped to build solidarity beyond localities though regional traditions could survive, e.g. in differences between areas in the UK National Union of Miners. Solidarity, bridging and bonding at this level also embedded a particular structure of gender and age relations. Mining communities in the UK noted for their solidarity had a rigid gendered division of labour as well as strong controls based on the distinction between younger workers and older more mature workers who controlled local union branches. The ability to bridge up to the national level and create centralised confederations varied across countries as different models of unionism (craft, industrial, general) diffused and different moral communities (based on ideology and religion in particular) shaped the bonding and bridging processes, affecting the ability of trade unions to unite in engaging both with national employers' associations and with the national state (see also the application of social movement theory to trade unions: Kelly 1998).

Whilst in broad historical terms, our analysis so far implies that material and face-to-face conditions give rise to the organizational level, this needs qualification. Once the organisational level arises and is embedded in a society, then it carries forms of solidarity within its own structures in three senses. Firstly the organisational level acts as a continuous producer of the

particular forms of embedded solidarity, e.g. by negotiating trade union recognition, closed shop agreements, the check-off system, works councils, collective bargaining systems. Relatedly, experience of the union as a real social phenomenon in everyday life, occasionally heightened by participation in strikes, rituals and effervescent one-off events can create and sustain local residues of solidarity beyond any actual specific moments (McBride et al. 2013). Secondly, as an organised structure, trade unions can strategize and work to extend ideas of collective action and solidarity into new groups. Their embedded organizational form therefore is sustainable up to a point even when the initial conditions which gave rise to it change; thus union renewal can take place because the organization survives its originators, particularly where substantial funds accrued over the years of mass membership are controlled by the union organization. So for example the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation in Britain lost many members as the steel industry declined but has sought to renew itself by rebranding itself as Community and recruiting members in a range of sectors, but with a focus on new and more precarious forms of employment. Thirdly organization structures, no matter how attenuated and denuded of active members can continue to be the carrier of solidarity rituals, narratives, symbols and stories which reawaken memories of collective action (e.g. the annual Durham Miners Gala that continues in spite of the closure of all Durham pits).

The third level of these solidarity processes and interconnections occurs when political movements are formed to ensure that societal institutions provide support for the expression of solidarities, e.g. at the level of trade union rights such as the legal right to union membership, rights of collective bargaining, rights to strike etc. and at the level of forming a welfare state that builds on and reinforces solidarities. The state may also institutionalize rituals, such as May Day, that provide linkages to the past with various degrees of moral and emotional weight

that legitimate and celebrate traditional concepts of solidarity. State action may therefore substitute for strong local or even organizational forms of solidarity (Table 2).

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Are these sufficient or necessary conditions for the emergence, maintenance and evolution of forms of solidarity? No one level is likely to be sufficient in itself to sustain solidarity at work; there need to be shared material conditions, organizational structures and institutional reinforcements but the way they interact may differ significantly not just across countries but also across time. At times local solidarity may decline but solidarity per se may be sustained by organizational and institutional features of the context. Similarly the institutional level may be dismantled by right wing governments explicitly to weaken the mechanisms that have sustained worker solidarity but in itself this does not kill off either the organisational or the local level. It is necessary to examine these interconnections and potential substitutions. For example, France has been traditionally characterised by a diverse employment structure (with a lot of small firms and a small number of large ones in both manufacturing and services), a split trade union movement and a low level of membership inside firms with strong employer power over the work process. In spite of this, rules about the application of collective agreements to all workers in a sector have in the past reflected a commitment to a form of qualified solidarity amongst large numbers of workers even if they are not trade union members (Baccaro and Howell, 2017). This is also reflected in the strength of ritual symbols of solidarity such as large May Day celebrations as well as in the background expectation of employers, the state and employees that there could be outbreaks of mass disobedience if key pillars of the current system are challenged, causing French Presidents to tone down their pre-election calls for labour reform once they are in office (see e.g. the *gilets jaunes* upsurge of protest against

Macron in 2018-19). In this respect, the mass 'effervescence' of May 1968 continues as a symbol and myth of the sleeping 'solidarity' of the French population.

Solidarity in the transnational era

In this section, we build on our previous analyses to consider what this means for solidarity in the current transnational era, and consequently to interrogate the 'imagined' solidarity of the future. The current period makes it difficult to sustain a close alignment of the moral, political and social performance of solidarity because of the changes in the material organization of work and in trade unions organizational capabilities, partly through reductions in membership but partly through direct political efforts to weaken them, and finally changes in the degree to which solidarity is institutionalized in laws and regulations brought on by the continued rise of neo-liberalism. The ascendance of a neo-liberal rhetoric downplays issues of social justice and solidarity and instead emphasises market-oriented values as at the core of contemporary processes of marketization, financialization and deregulation. The implications for solidarity are several but most importantly we note here that in many economies where solidarity had been based on a shared moral code and community of fate, these processes have been linked to a sharpening of the symbolic boundaries between benefit recipients and other citizens (for example new immigrants). Under the current market-based order a fundamental new question is posed of how far solidarity should go particularly where rising levels of economic insecurity, linked to austerity and the growth of precarious work, is increasingly common (Oesch, 2013). This is clearly illustrated by studies showing that one of the best predictors of welfare chauvinism is the extent to which any one individual feels economically vulnerable (Mewes and Mau, 2012).

A variety of mechanisms have contributed to undermining solidarity in the era of transnational capitalism and neo-liberalism. In terms of the workplace and labour process level of solidarity, 'fissures' in the employment relationship (Weils, 2014) have taken the form of subcontracting, labour hire, franchising and disguised employment relationships, such as the emergence of digital platforms. In particular, platform capitalism entails the creation of a new range of individualised social identities increasingly associated with being a 'self-entrepreneur', a 'consumer' and a 'self-reliant' individual. This raises concerns for solidarity and militates against programmes of redistribution and collectivism. At the organizational level of solidarity, mechanisms of fragmentation and isolation challenge the role of trade unions traditionally involved in developing a sense of belonging and understanding of common interests, identity and common language in the workforces. Trade unions find themselves forced into competitive collective bargaining combining concession bargaining for the inner core with allowing increasingly different terms and conditions of employment for the peripheral workforce, leading to insider/outsider divisions. All forms of solidarity suffer from the fragmentation of working conditions, the weakening of the trade unions' organisational strength, and the decline in the degree of inclusion secured by institutional protections. On the other hand, the maintenance and development of inclusive or encompassing legal regulations and institutions, which insist on groups of workers being treated the same, make it easier for unions to organise and represent groups of workers that come from very different sectors and jobs but have equal rights so fight backs such as the development of the minimum wage in Germany. and 'living wage' campaigns in the UK suggest efforts to revive solidarity in new circumstances can be effective.

Could we conclude then that narratives, rituals and the effervescence and performance of solidarity can be reconstructed in response to egregious examples of recent exploitation? And

if yes, what are the conditions underpinning the reconstruction of such solidarity? As Hyman (1999) argued solidarity is strategically constructed through inclusive workers solidarity, and this is indeed considered as one of the major purposes of trade unions. Thus, inclusive worker solidarity need unions to build on organizational and institutional rights as well as on encompassing and inclusive institutions. But solidarity also needs coalition building and bridging across workers themselves and their communities. For example, Piven (2008) illustrated how 'interdependent power' can emerge as the result of integration in complex and far-reaching systems of cooperation and networking. New solidarities can expand far beyond the specific institutional locations that informed traditional ideas about democratic and labour power. This is because although institutional life socializes people to conformity, at the same time, "institutions yield the participants in social and cooperative activities the power to act on diverse and conflicting purposes" (Piven, 2008: 5). Particularly relevant here are building inclusive forms of collective action that incorporate labour market outsiders experiencing precarity and exploitation at work through new forms of organizing. For example, some sense of solidarity amongst zero-hours workers and amongst the growing group of 'fake' self-employed in digital platforms such as Uber, Foodora, Deliveroo etc., has started to emerge (see [authors] in this issue for more details). Following Deliveroo's workers manifestation of discontent in August 2016 in London, struggles by Foodora 'bike-riders', denouncing their bad pay and working conditions have flared up among London, Paris, Berlin and Turin. Likewise, Cillo and Pradella (2018) show how processes of international production restructuring and just-in-time production gave greater power to those mainly migrant precarious workers in the logistics sector who used blockades and strikes to reach improved agreements with large employers. Overall, these protests indicate solidarity occurs in the workplace, which is at the root of the contradictions of capitalism and as the result of the process of socialisation of the working class (Atzeni, 2016). These events also indicate the importance of the social

performance of solidarity especially where workers are dispersed. This is particularly the case of platform workers. Coordinated strikes in London in October 2018 brought onto the streets Deliveroo and UberEats employees together with staff from MacDonalds and Wetherspoons subject to low pay. It gave visibility to this group and their potential identity. The strikes were supported by the Independent Workers Union of Great Britain formed in 2012, which deliberately uses highly visible social performances to create publicity for its causes. Therefore, shared material conditions can be articulated and this can contribute to upsurges of solidarity so long as there are intermediaries or organizational forms to articulate this possibility. Whether these organizational ties are created within traditional unions or in new trade unions or even in new forms of platform based collective identity, e.g. Smart in Belgium (Xhauflair et al. 2018) is an open question which in turn links to whether such actions can draw on existing organizational and institutional resources. Furthermore, it is also an open question whether the emergence of these new forms of solidarity are strong enough to facilitate complementarity among what we define in this paper as the languages and discursive resources of solidarity or whether some trade-offs among the moral, political and performance of solidarity can be identified. This is evident in the emergence of transnational institutional structures (e.g. European Works Councils) to facilitate the cross-border involvement of labour during the process of European integration. These are primarily forms of political solidarity where moral aspects of solidarity are downplayed and cross-border union cooperation is regarded as a necessary political bridging activity if national workforces are to be served effectively (Erne 2008).

Conclusions

The article argues that solidarity is an 'essentially contested concept' (Gallie 1956) and its three faces – moral solidarity, calculative political solidarity and solidarity as ritual and rhetoric –

co-exist within a hierarchy of importance depending on particular contexts. This context is shaped by three embedded and interconnected levels of social reality– a shared material context (which may bond work and community), an organizational structure of collective action (trade unions and collective groups of employees) and an institutional framework of laws and regulation which shape the sorts of collective action and rules over labour markets, collective bargaining, and employment conditions which are legitimate and acceptable. In the article we illustrate how these social underpinnings have created distinctive path dependencies in the evolution of solidarity across different forms of capitalism. Thus, we contend that scholarly understanding of these underpinnings is key when shedding light on the pitfalls and potentialities of solidarity across (and within) different institutional contexts, regions, communities and workplaces. In particular, we illustrate how, for example, solidarity becomes weak under the rise of neo-liberalism, which indeed – we contend - has challenged these path dependencies by changing the material conditions, by changing the ideological terrain, by heightening the diversity of the workforce, and by restructuring the institutional context.

However, as discussed in the final section of this article, this is not the end of solidarity. What is required is both a recognition of what remains and an understanding of what may be emerging (Kelly 2015). There are ongoing developments around industries (e.g. platforms and logistics) and social groups (e.g. migrants) and around transnational trade unionism more generally that deserve further consideration. As Fishwick and Connolly (2018) illustrate working class resistance within (and across) new contexts (spaces)/levels is not dead and this can enable the construction of new basis of solidarity in new forms. Likewise, our analysis shows that lived forms of solidarity can emerge in spaces where the contradictions of capitalism are evident. However, we also contend that new solidarities can emerge beyond the capitalist workplaces where new basis for social relations are created. In this regard we also argue that

central to the understanding of solidarity will continue to be issues of inclusion and exclusion – who is in solidarity and why? As we have demonstrated solidarity is a contested concept and is often used in ways which conceal how particular groups' interests are marginalised whilst others' interests become the taken-for-granted measure by which solidarity is conceived. In that sense, any reconstruction of ideas of solidarity must examine issues of gender, race and ethnicity and it should target issues of intergenerational justice. Organizations such as trade unions have deeply embedded structures that may make it difficult for them to reorient their ideas of solidarity but there are indications that this reform is difficult but ongoing. Further empirical and analytical work identifying new forms of solidarity, understanding the source of this solidarity and comparing results across different institutional contexts and different forms of capitalism will be essential to moving this agenda forward.

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Table 1: Types of solidarity

	Moral solidarity	Political solidarity	Performative solidarity
Bases of solidarity and forms of variation	Class Religion Nation state Ethnicity	Political calculations about need for solidarity	Rituals Effervescence
Types of bonding	Membership criteria and clear boundaries: struggle to make shared bonds meaningful in changing contexts	Based on identification and articulation of contingent shared interests	Engaging in traditional rituals, evoking narrative and memory and engaging in spectacles
Types of bridging	Requires 'conversion' of outsiders, limiting bridging ability	Building coalitions with formal and informal agreements about the range of solidarity – open to new or excluded groups	Moments of spontaneity and effervescence are open to diverse influences and forces, but strong rituals and narratives promote closure and exclusion.
Limitations	Limited capability to respond to change and emergence of excluded and new identities both within and beyond the core.	Pragmatism weakens bonds and undermines solidarity at times of pressure and crisis	Difficult to sustain intensity of spectacle or relevance of traditional rituals and narrative to both old and excluded/new groups.

Source: Own elaboration

Table 2: Institutionalizing Solidarity: Levels and types

Sites of institutionalization of solidarity	**Manifestations of solidarity**	**Types of strong solidarity**	**Types of weak solidarity**
Workplace and community	Interdependence and identification in the labour process and the labour market linked to community ties	Overlap of work tasks, work groups and identity, images of 'the enemy' and distinctive shared community locations	Individualized employment relations, identification with employers, disparate community locations
Organizational forms of solidarity in trade unions	Types of trade unions and divisions across occupations, sectors, political affiliations and trade union confederations	More diverse the organizations of the labour movement, the more difficult to organize solidarity across different unions etc. On the other hand, solidarity may be strongest amongst small groups with high levels of shared workplace and community conditions	Trade union membership low, activity low, benefits low leading to vicious cycle of declining trade union capabilities to support solidarity.
Societal institutionalization embedded in formal and informal law and regulation	Embedding in law collective employment rights and rights of trade union membership, recognition and participation in forms of decision-making	Rights to collective bargaining, to trade union representation, to labour market organization embedded as part of law (e.g. versus UK tradition of voluntarism)	Rights of trade unions removed under different trajectories of neo-liberalism

Source: Own elaboration