Ethnic Diversity and Solidarity

Ethnic Diversity and Solidarity:

A Study of their Complex Relationship

Edited by

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INTRODUCTION

PAUL DE BEER

In the past decade, both policy makers and academic scholars have called attention to the possible detrimental effects of ethnic heterogeneity on socially desirable outcomes, such as public goods provision, economic growth, trust, social capital and solidarity (e.g., Alesina and LaFerrara 2005; Leigh 2006; Putnam 2007; Habyarimana et al. 2007; Hooghe et al. 2009). In their view, in ethnically heterogeneous neighbourhoods, cities, regions or countries, citizens find it more difficult to identify with each other, trust each other less and are more reluctant to co-operate. This would be related to the perceived social distance between people who belong to different ethnic groups (cf. van Kempen and Bolt 2009). Some scholars claim that ethnic diversity might also hamper trust and co-operation between people within the same ethnic group (Putnam 2007). The consequences of ethnic heterogeneity might thus be broad and far-reaching. Ethnically diverse neighbourhoods may be characterized by less community activities and be plagued by vandalism and crime (Wilson 1987; Ellen and Turner 1997; Morenoff et al. 2001; Haynie et al. 2006), ethnically diverse cities may lack effective governance and may have less public provisions such as parks and sports facilities , and ethnically diverse countries may offer its citizens less protection by social services and income transfers and may turn out to be less prosperous in the long run.

As a consequence of immigration and, in addition, fertility rates which are often higher among ethnic minority groups, ethnic diversity is growing in many regions and countries (Zorlu and Hartog 2002). If the worries expressed above are justified, this may have serious detrimental effects. Ultimately, increasing ethnic diversity might even result in a higher incidence of riots, civil war and ethnic cleansing. Both from a scientific and from a societal point of view it is, therefore, of great importance to know more about the societal consequences of ethnic diversity. Up to date, the results of empirical studies are, at best, mixed. Some studies confirm the expectation that ethnic diversity erodes trust, social capital and public goods provisions (cf. Kleinhans et al. 2007), while other studies find no

relationship at all between ethnic diversity and various outcomes at the community level, and a few studies even find positive effects of ethnic diversity (cf. Portes and Zhou 1993; Portes 1995).

This volume adds to the existing knowledge of the effects of ethnic diversity in three important ways.

Firstly, of the many societal outcomes of ethnic diversity that have been studied, this study focuses on just one, namely social solidarity, rather than social capital, trust or public goods provision. By solidarity we mean any act that purposefully benefits another person at a cost for the agent, without any guarantee of an equivalent return. While social capital, trust or co-operation does not impose any cost on the actor, solidarity does. Even though this cost may be repaid in the future, there is no guarantee that this will happen. Thus, solidarity is a stronger indicator of pro-social behaviour than most other indicators. Consequently, an empirical study that focuses on the intention to act solidary or on solidary behaviour itself offers a more robust test of the effects of ethnic diversity than most previous studies.

Secondly, in most previous studies ethnic diversity or heterogeneity is measured by a single, one-dimensional indicator, such as the fractionalization index, which measures the probability that two persons, meeting each other at random, belong to different ethnic groups. In this volume, we take a broader perspective on diversity by using various ways to measure ethnic diversity. Thus, we do not assume a priori that there is one best way to measure diversity or that there is a simple linear relationship between ethnic diversity and solidarity. To illustrate, we do not assume *a priori* that there is a dichotomy between natives (autochthones) and non-natives or immigrants (allochthones), but we also examine the possible tensions between various ethnic groups and consider the possibility that religious differences or linguistic differences matter more than ethnic differences.

Thirdly, this study applies various research methods, including a field experiment in a multicultural neighbourhood, a content analysis of mass media, a vignette study of a nation-wide survey and a statistical analysis of a large cross-country survey. The use of different research methods allows us to cross-examine the outcomes of the various studies that this volume reports on. Thus, the conclusions we draw do not depend on one particular research method and one particular pool of data, but are corroborated by various methods.

In this introductory chapter, we will take a closer look at the two central concepts of this volume, viz. solidarity and diversity.

What is solidarity?

As mentioned above, we define a solidary act as any act that purposefully benefits another person at a cost for the agent, without any guarantee of an equivalent return. This definition of solidarity includes a broad range of pro-social behaviours, such as alms-giving to a beggar, helping your neighbour, raising children, voluntary community work, donating money to a charity organization, paying an insurance premium and paying taxes. These examples show that solidarity can be both informal and formal, either voluntary or mandatory, and one-sided as well as two-sided or reciprocal (cf. De Beer and Koster 2009, chapter 2).

Informal solidarity, which one might also call ‘warm’ solidarity, springs from a direct involvement and sympathy with concrete other persons, for whom one has ‘warm feelings’. The most intense forms of informal solidarity are usually found within the family: between husband and wife, and between parents and children. This solidarity can be so strong that one is prepared to sacrifice one’s life to save another, e.g., a parent that risks her life in trying to save her drowning child. Less intense forms of informal solidarity are often found between good friends, neighbours or colleagues. The compassion expressed by giving alms to a beggar is also an example of informal solidarity.

Formal or ‘cold’ solidarity originates from commitment to or sympathy with anonymous others, whom one does not know personally, but to whom one is nevertheless connected through a formal bond. Some examples are the solidarity with poor fellow citizens, which are supported by a social benefit system to which everybody contributes, solidarity with the unlucky person whose house burns down and who is compensated by the insurance company to which one regularly pays an insurance premium, and the solidarity with poor people in developing countries to which your government pays development aid, which is financed from taxes.

Whereas informal solidarity is expressed by the direct relation between persons, the formal solidarity between persons who do not know each other is always mediated by an institution such as the state or an insurance company.

A solidarity act can be voluntary as well as compulsory. Showing solidarity voluntarily is a choice; compulsory solidarity is enforced, usually by the state. Compulsory solidarity does not rule out that one is actually prepared to act out of solidarity, but this is, contrary to voluntary solidarity, not a prerequisite.

There is often a close relationship between the (in)voluntariness of solidarity and the organization of solidarity. However, not all informal solidarity is voluntary and not all formal solidarity is compulsory. Contributing a premium to a fire and theft insurance is an example of formal voluntary solidarity, and the solidarity of parents with their children is informal but compulsory, since they are legally obliged to take care of their children.

In case of two-sided solidarity the agent expects, on balance, to benefit just as much from others as s/he contributes to others. It should be stressed that this only refers to the expected, *ex ante*, balance between contributions and receipts. The actual, *ex post*, contributions and receipts will, in general, differ. Indeed, this is the feature which distinguishes two-sided solidarity from an ordinary market exchange, which one undertakes knowing that the benefits outweigh the costs. In case of two-sided solidarity one does not know beforehand whether one will end up being a net-contributor or a net-receiver.

In case of one-sided solidarity a person expects beforehand, *ex ante*, that his/her contributions and receipts will not balance. This is clearly the case if one expects nothing in return for one's contribution. In giving alms to a beggar or in donating money for the victims of an earthquake in a faraway country, one cannot reasonably expect to get anything in return. In this sense, one-sided solidarity is always unselfish, although one may of course feel satisfied or get a 'warm glow' from showing solidarity. The taxes levied on rich persons for financing social assistance, from which they will probably never benefit themselves, is also a form of one-sided solidarity.

Our definition restricts solidarity acts to relations between persons. The persons towards whom one acts solidary may be either concrete persons or anonymous representatives of a group (e.g., the victims of a natural disaster). In the last case, one could also say that solidarity is a relationship between a person and a group.

The term solidarity is sometimes also used for the contribution of an individual to a public good or an ideal. For instance, a financial

contribution (by means of taxes) to the construction of roads or taking part in the activities of a political party or an environmental organization can also be called solidary acts. We will, however, leave these kinds of solidary acts aside and limit ourselves to solidarity between persons.

In our study, solidarity is merely a descriptive term for a particular kind of behaviour. We do not address the normative question whether solidarity is desirable from a moral point of view. Although the term solidarity probably has a positive, desirable flavour for most readers, the relevance and valence of our research does not depend on this positive connotation.

Since our definition of solidarity refers to a particular kind of behaviour, the underlying values, motives or attitudes do not determine whether a particular act is considered to be a solidary act. Thus, a solidary act need not be motivated by altruism or benignity, but may also arise from selfish or egotistic motives, as long as the act benefits others. This does not mean that we are not interested in the motives for solidarity and the feelings or emotions that trigger solidary behaviour. On the contrary, one of the main purposes of this research is to find out which attitudes, feelings or emotions motivate solidary behaviour. However, explaining solidary attitudes or feelings is not our goal as such, but only a way to understand solidary behaviour.

What is diversity?

Diversity or heterogeneity – two terms which we will use interchangeably – can be simply defined as the negation of uniformity or homogeneity. But, while a group can be uniform or homogeneous in only one way, that is, that all group members are identical with respect to a particular characteristic, there are many ways in which a group can be diverse or heterogeneous.[1] Most measures for group diversity or heterogeneity that are used in the literature start from a dichotomous relationship between group members: two arbitrary group members are either equal or different with respect to a particular characteristic (ethnicity, mother country, language, etc.). Next, an indicator is constructed to aggregate the dichotomous relationships between all possible pairs of persons. A well-known indicator is the fractionalization index or, alternatively, one minus

[1] Cf. the distinction between income equality and inequality: income equality can only be measured in one way (all incomes are equal), but there are many different ways to measure income inequality, e.g., the Gini coefficient, the Theil coefficient, the coefficient of variation, the D9/D1 decile ratio, etc..

the Herfindahl index, which measures the probability that two randomly selected individuals belong to a different (ethnic) group. Although this index may be a useful indicator for (ethnic) diversity in many contexts, it has two serious limitations. First, it is based on the assumption that there is no gradation in the extent of difference between two persons. Two persons are either the same or different, but not a little different or very different. As we know from studies of social distance, the extent to which people experience or perceive a distance to people from other ethnic groups, may vary considerably depending on the particular ethnic group. For example, the (perceived) distance between a native Dutch and a fellow citizen with a Surinamese background may be smaller than the distance with a Moroccan Dutch. In studying the effects of ethnic heterogeneity, it is important to take these differences into account.

Secondly, the fractionalization index is only one way to aggregate differences between individuals into an overall indicator of the heterogeneity of a group or community. It assumes, for example, that the diversity of a community consisting of many different, relatively small ethnic groups is larger than the diversity of a community that is made up of two large ethnic groups. In a literal sense, this is of course true, but when studying the societal impact of ethnic heterogeneity, two large ethnic groups that confront each other may have worse consequences for social cohesion or solidarity than when a larger number of smaller groups cohabitate. To illustrate, compare the tensions between the Flemings and the Walloons in Belgium to the more harmonious relationship between the various ethnic groups in Switzerland.

It is also important to take into account, that the ethnic diversity of a community may vary considerably, depending on the level at which we measure diversity. To illustrate, an ethnically homogeneous neighbourhood may be part of an ethnically diverse city, which is situated in a largely homogeneous region in an ethnically divided country. Depending on the level at which one measures ethnic diversity, one may find quite different societal effects.

The concept of ethnicity is, of course, also far from self-evident. It can refer to a common ancestry or tradition, to people with the same culture, religion, language, et cetera. We do not claim that ethnicity has an objective, essentialist meaning, but only that ethnicity is one of the dimensions along which people tend to categorize each other and one of the characteristics that people use to evaluate other people whom they do not know in person (Brubaker 2002). Thus, the fact that another person is

(perceived as) Turkish, may conjure up a particular image of that person, referring, for example, to his/her competence ('Turkish people are diligent') or his/her sympathy ('Turkish people are callous'). Whether this stereotype is correct – which, as we know, is usually not the case – is not relevant for our research, but only whether people act on it. Do people show less solidarity towards people from another ethnic group because they have an unfavourable image of that group? For this reason, we also study (in chapter five) the images that are depicted of various ethnic groups in the Dutch mass media.

Outline of the book

This book is divided into two parts. The first part, consisting of chapters one and two, sketches a theoretical framework that can be used to study the relationship between diversity and solidarity. The second part, consisting of chapters three to six, reports on a number of empirical studies of diversity and its relation to solidarity. The book concludes with a chapter which draws some general conclusions.

The first chapter sketches the outlines of an interdisciplinary theoretical framework for studying solidarity. The chapter first briefly discusses the explanation of solidary behaviour offered by five scientific disciplines: sociology, anthropology, social psychology, economics and socio-biology. Next, it combines the common and complementary elements of these disciplines, to construct an interdisciplinary framework of solidary behaviour. This framework distinguishes between other-regarding and self-regarding motives for solidary behaviour on the one hand, and between particularistic and generalized kinds of solidarity on the other hand. These two dimensions give rise to four ideal-typical kinds of solidarity: empathic solidarity, bilateral solidarity, multilateral solidarity and normative solidarity. The chapter concludes that most solidary acts in real life are a mix of these four ideal-typical kinds of solidarity.

The second chapter discusses, from a theoretical point of view, which kind of effects ethnic diversity is expected to have on solidarity. Although many recent studies start from the assumption that ethnic diversity is detrimental to social goods, such as trust, social capital and solidarity, this chapter argues that, from a theoretical perspective, the relationship between ethnic diversity and solidarity is ambiguous. The chapter distinguishes between the aggregate effect of an ethnic difference between pairs of individuals, on the one hand, and the direct effect of ethnic diversity as a characteristic of a group or community, on the other hand. It concludes

that solidarity is possible both between similar and between different persons and both in ethnically homogeneous and in heterogeneous groups. Very large differences or very large heterogeneity are generally detrimental to solidarity. This is simply so, because solidarity presupposes recognition of the other or some common purpose, interest or values. However, this does not imply that the more similar persons are the stronger will be their willingness to act solidary towards each other. This depends on the motives for solidary behaviour and on the possibility (and willingness) to identify with others.

Chapter three investigates the relationship between ethnic diversity and a number of solidarity intentions (the willingness to contribute to the welfare state) using international comparative data. Prior studies rely either on archival data at the national level or use census data at the neighbourhood level within a single country. Both approaches have some limitations. The first approach does not allow to investigate variation in diversity within countries and the second approach misses the possibility to investigate cross national differences. This chapter brings these two approaches closer together by constructing diversity measures based on the European Social Survey (ESS). The ESS includes individual level data that allow replicating earlier measures of ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity for thirty European countries. Furthermore, since respondents are asked to indicate in what region they live, it is possible to construct disaggregated measures at the regional level. Our analyses show that regional diversity is more strongly related to different kinds of sociality than diversity at the national level.

Chapter four presents the outcomes of a so-called vignette analysis, based on a representative survey among the Dutch population, to analyse the preferences of the respondents for helping fellow citizens belonging to different ethnic groups. As resources are scarce and solidarity can never be completely unrestricted, we need to think about whom to direct our solidarity at. For this chapter, we conducted two vignette analyses. Respondents were asked to express their preferences for helping fellow citizens with varying characteristics. Because each vignette (a fictional person) is constructed from several characteristics, this methodology is less vulnerable to socially desirable answers. In the public solidarity study, we varied eight characteristics: the sex and age of the beneficiary, his/her ethnic background, working experience, type of welfare state entitlement, willingness to do volunteer work, familiarity in the neighbourhood and the number of under-age children. We identify the variables that foster (public) solidarity, and also study the interaction with the characteristics of the

respondent. In the private solidarity study (about concrete helping situations directed at neighbours) the same basic design was used. Five attributes varied between the vignettes: sex, age, ethnic background, interactions in the neighbourhood and willingness to reciprocate. We found that people systematically favour certain beneficiaries over others. In particular, natives were more willing to help people with a Surinamese than with a Moroccan background. From these findings it is likely that persons are motivated by motives such as helping the needy, rewarding deservingness and favouring similarity, including ethnic similarity. The same mechanisms seemed to underlie both public and private solidarity, although a few interesting differences emerged as well.

Since the attitudes of citizens towards people with a different ethnic background depend strongly on their image of various ethnic groups, chapter five analyses the images of ethnic minority groups as depicted in some of the most widely read and viewed Dutch news media. The investigation rests on the assumption that by voicing specific norms and values, and by presenting a particular image of social life in a society, the media contribute to creating and maintaining symbolic boundaries between groups, thus influencing the nature of inter-group relations. The analyses revolve around the question of diversity in the media presentation of ethnic minorities, focusing on the visibility of different ethnic groups in the Dutch news media (diversity in presence) as well as the content of their portrayal (diversity in presentation). The results show an imbalance in the media presence of various groups and some noteworthy discrepancies in the content of their presentation, with Turks enjoying the most favourable descriptions and Moroccans the most unfavourable ones. The analyses uncover important nuances in the media construction of ethnic minorities, showing how different aspects of negativity (e.g. hostility, illegality and/or incompetence) take precedence in the description of various ethnic groups. The results of the media analysis are juxtaposed with some factual information on the "performance" of various groups in Dutch society.

Chapter six studies the effects of ethnic diversity of a group on the solidarity between the group members by conducting a field experiment in the multicultural Dapper neighbourhood in the city of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. In the experiment, the participants played a game in groups with varying ethnic composition. The experiment allows to discriminate between Putnam's (2007) constrict theory, which states that ethnic diversity hurts in-group solidarity, and the alternative conflict theory, which maintains that an ethnic difference between two persons results in

less solidarity. We find some evidence for the latter theory, but not for Putnam's constrict thesis. A difference in ethnic background between two players has a strong negative impact on the gift they bestow each other in the experiment. This result provides support for the conflict theory, which asserts that members of different ethnic groups discriminate against each other.

We also find an effect of the ethnic composition of a group on solidarity, but there is no straightforward linear relationship between ethnic diversity and solidary behaviour. We find no evidence that group diversity reduces in-group solidarity. On the contrary, in-group solidarity among natives is the lowest in fully native groups. Moderate ethnic diversity increases in-group solidarity, although maximum diversity reduces it again. We suggest that these results may be explained by the fact that individuals try to avoid belonging to a minority within their group.

In chapter seven we draw some general conclusions from the empirical studies in the previous chapters. We conclude that ethnicity is indeed an important factor in understanding patterns of solidarity. However, there is not a simple linear relationship between ethnic diversity and solidarity. Even though ethnic difference in itself may be a source of discrimination, one cannot conclude from this that increasing ethnic diversity will necessarily result in less solidarity. Under particular circumstances, ethnic diversity may even be beneficial for overall solidarity.

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CHAPTER ONE

TOWARDS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY THEORY OF SOLIDARITY

PAUL DE BEER, MAARTEN BERG, LAURENS BUIJS, FERRY KOSTER AND DOROTA LEPIANKA

Introduction

Pro-social behaviour, or solidarity, for short, has puzzled social scientists for a long time. Acting for the benefit of another at a cost for oneself has often been considered as anomalous or aberrant behaviour, at odds with the self-interest of the acting person. For economists and evolutionary biologists, in particular, pro-social behaviour seemed to be inconsistent with their basic assumptions and was thus largely disregarded as an anomaly, which did not fit into their theories. For sociologists, social psychologists and anthropologists, pro-social behaviour has always been a more familiar phenomenon, but for them, too, it was often difficult to reconcile solidarity with the simultaneous existence of self-interested behaviour.

At first sight, both the salience and the explanation of solidarity vary widely between the various scientific disciplines. It may thus seem an impossible task to integrate insights from these various disciplines into one overarching and encompassing interdisciplinary theory. However, on further consideration one notices remarkable similarities between the various disciplinary approaches, which are hidden from sight due to the fact that different disciplines use different terms for similar concepts. In this chapter, we attempt to draw the outline of a comprehensive theory of solidarity which combines insights from sociology, anthropology, social psychology, economics and socio-biology.

We first give a brief overview of the interpretation and explanation of solidarity in each of these five disciplines. Next, we enumerate the similarities and differences between the disciplines and draw up an interdisciplinary framework by using the common and complementary elements of the various disciplines. Before starting with the overview of the five disciplines, we first explain what we mean by pro-social behaviour or solidarity.

Solidarity

Pro-social behaviour and solidarity will be used interchangeably in this volume. We restrict the definition of solidarity to a particular kind of *behaviour*, irrespective of the underlying attitudes, motives or preferences. Pro-social behaviour or a solidary act is defined as any act that purposefully benefits another person at a cost for the agent, without any guarantee of an equivalent return. Some examples of pro-social behaviour are alms-giving to a beggar, helping your neighbour, raising children, voluntary community work, donating money to a charity organization, paying an insurance premium[1] and paying taxes. The last example shows that solidary acts, according to our definition, need not be voluntary. Moreover, solidarity includes both informal behaviour and formal behaviour, that is, solidarity behaviour that is mediated through a formal organization, such as the state or an insurance company.

This definition implies that we exclude normative interpretations of solidarity and focus only on objective interpretations of actual behaviour. Therefore, we refrain from the question whether solidarity is a good thing, worthwhile to be promoted or not.

The fact that we restrict our definition of solidarity to behaviour, does not mean that we are not interested in the motives for solidarity and the feelings or emotions triggering solidarity. On the contrary. One of the main purposes of this chapter is to find out which attitudes, feelings or emotions, according to the various disciplines, motivate solidary behaviour. However, explaining solidary attitudes or feelings is not our goal as such, but only a way to understand solidary behaviour.

[1] A voluntary insurance may be considered a borderline case, since it can also be interpreted as an ordinary market transaction, in which the guarantee for the insured person of receiving a compensation in case of a damage or an injury is equivalent to the premium.

Sociology

From the very beginning, solidarity has been a central concept in sociology, since it relates to social order and collective action, generally considered as the alpha and omega of classical sociological theory (Hechter 1998). Many scholars, both classical and contemporary, placed the concept at the core of their theories and empirical research. This has led to a wide variety of definitions, operationalisations, and applications of the term.

In early sociology, the concept of solidarity came to the fore in response to the changes wrought by the development of industry, the rise of market economies and the expansion of cities. New kinds of communities emerged that were bigger, denser and more diverse than the rural communities that dominated before. Most classical theorists regarded the cohesion or solidarity of agrarian communities as unproblematic. In their view, such communities were technologically and demographically stable and were not involved in long-distance trade. Social mobility was minimal and most children were destined to follow in the (professional) footsteps of their parents (cf. Hechter 1998). Since these agrarian communities offered little scope for individual choice, the attainment of solidarity was viewed as relatively straightforward. According to Tönnies (1887), such communities (which he termed *Gemeinschaften*) were breeding grounds for social relations based on strong emotional, quasi-familial commitments. Émile Durkheim (1893) coined the term 'mechanical solidarity' for this kind of society, implying that it had a certain automatic quality. Mechanical solidarity is based on common values and internalized social norms and beliefs in a community with strong moral (often religious) norms, which tie the individuals to the society as a whole. In these communities the individual consciousness is fully integrated into the collective consciousness. This binds the individual to society and makes him or her act in accordance with the shared norms (Durkheim 1893: 60-61).

Mechanical solidarity appeared to be threatened, however, by the rise of modern industry and the expansion of market economies in the Western world, starting in the late eighteenth century. Among many other effects, this transformation increased the size and scope of social networks, thereby offering individuals more options in their daily life, ranging from the choice of a marriage partner to the choice of an occupation. This resulted in a growth of individualism and the concomitant decline of the *conscience collective* (Simmel 1922). It was far from evident how groups, communities, and societies could maintain solidarity in the wake of this

increasing individualism. At that time, many theorists were deeply worried: "This transformation means the doom of culture itself if none of its scattered seeds remain alive." (Tönnies 1887)

Durkheim, the foremost early theorist of solidarity, shared Tönnies worries of the decline of 'mechanical solidarity', but believed it was replaced by a new form of solidarity. In his book *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893), he posed that industrial societies were held together by individuals' mutual functional interdependence. This new form of solidarity was a result of the division of labour – a form of solidarity that he termed 'organic'. By distinguishing organic from mechanic solidarity, Durkheim emphasized that a coherent social organization based on individualism and large communities was indeed possible. He acknowledged that the nature of solidarity changed, but it remained the foundation of any society.

In a modern industrial society, Durkheim (1893) said, social cohesion depends upon the division of labour. Individual specialization leads to mutual interdependence and ensures cooperation for a final end. However, Durkheim warned that an extreme division of labour would result in anomaly and endanger the priority of the whole over the individual. He believed that the intensity of social conflicts was positively correlated with the lack of perception of solidarity. This made social tensions ultimately a political problem. For Durkheim, this showed the importance of the modern democratic state. Solidarity had to be maintained by keeping the right balance between social pressures and individual liberty, constantly enhancing the perception of solidarity (Hechter 1998).

With these early attempts to define the influence of societal processes on solidarity, sociology established itself among the social sciences.

Durkheim was not very explicit about the mechanism by which the division of labour translates into social solidarity. For a self-interested individual, acknowledging that one is dependent on others does not necessarily result in solidary behaviour, since it might also elicit free-riding on the efforts of others. This would mean that people take advantage of the solidary behaviour of their fellow men without contributing to the common good themselves. However, if free-riding becomes the dominant strategy, the free riders will ultimately crowd out the co-operators and solidarity will disappear in the end. According to Durkheim (1893) civil law, in particular contract law, plays an important role in preventing free-riding behaviour, but contract law can only prevent non-compliance with

private, bilateral contracts. More is needed to explain why individuals contribute to the common good if this does not directly affect the benefits they reap from the common good.

In *rational choice theory*, it is assumed that individuals can only be made to contribute to the common good if the expected cost of free-riding is larger than the cost of contributing. Thus, there has to be a credible threat of a sanction in case of non-compliance with the social norm of helping others. This sanction can take a wide range of forms, from a simple verbal rebuke to a physical beating or ostracism. A self-interested person "will comply only if the probability of detection multiplied by the sanctions imposed given detection equals or exceeds the benefits from noncompliance" (Chai & Hechter 1998: 36, 37).

However, the monitoring and punishment of defectors are also costly. These costs will have to be added to the expected contributions to the common good, for example in the form of a tax. If these costs are very high (for example, because detecting non-compliance is difficult), it may be impossible to maintain solidarity, because many group members will leave the group (Hechter 1987, Chai & Hechter 1998).

An alternative way to deter free-riders is spontaneous punishment by other group members. However, since punishing is costly (partly because it requires some effort, partly because the defector may retaliate by hurting the punisher), a purely selfish person will not punish a defector (unless a non-punisher is also punished, but this results in an infinite regress). Thus, this explanation needs the additional assumption that people are willing to unselfishly punish a defector (so-called altruistic punishment, cf. Boyd et al. 2003), which does not fit well within the rational choice framework which starts from the assumption of self-interest (Coleman 1990: 31-32).

Anthropology

In anthropology the classical example of solidarity is the reciprocal exchange of gifts. The act of gift-giving binds groups and individuals; it creates and reinforces a network of rights and obligations that generates and sustains social cohesion.

Exchange of gifts in archaic societies is far more than an economic transaction. As noted by Lévi-Strauss, "[g]oods are not only economic commodities, but vehicles and instruments for realities of another order, such as power, influence, sympathy, status and emotion" (Lévi-Strauss

1967 [1949]: 54). The goods that are exchanged embody not only – or not even primarily – material value but also social meanings (Malinowski 1985 [1922]). These goods are by no means limited to material objects; they include borrowing things, getting help, accepting an obligation, or assuming responsibilities for another.

Gifts are common and ever present in archaic societies. They do not constitute an exception for special occasions (such as our birthday gifts), but are rather the norm. Lévi-Strauss (1969:54) talks about a "passion for the gift, accompanied by the ritual obligation on the recipient to accept and to give".

A gift is rarely purely voluntary. All anthropologists stress the compulsory nature of reciprocity: gift-giving is generally considered to be a social obligation, just as the duty to repay the gift (Malinowski 1985 [1922]:182). Accepting a gift is obligatory, too: a gift cannot be properly refused.

The exchange of gifts is not the result of economic self-interest (Sahlins 1974:160). Most often, the exchange of gifts brings no tangible results or profits, and after the exchange, the partners are no richer than they were before. In fact, from an economic point of view, most transactions do not make any sense, as usually neither partner acquires any real material benefit. Actually, it is the exchange itself that matters and not the object of exchange!

Anthropologists distinguish between various types of gifts, primarily depending on the extent of reciprocity, although there is no agreement on the number and kind of categories.

Malinowski (1985 [1922]) distinguished seven types of gifts. At one extreme, there is the pure gift, defined as "an act, in which an individual gives an object or renders a service without expecting or getting any return", which according to him is exceptionally rare. Mauss rejected the idea of 'free gift' altogether. The idea of a 'free gift' is to him a contradiction, a misunderstanding. Every gift triggers an obligatory counter-gift and perpetuates a (dominant) system of reciprocity.

At the other extreme is ordinary trade (e.g. barter), in which mutual advantage to the trading partners is clearly present. In between are various forms of customary gifts that are partially or conditionally returned. The value of the counter gift is (almost) never strictly equivalent to the value of

the original gift and the economic value of the counter gift might be even symbolic.

Sahlins (1974) makes an interesting distinction between reciprocity, i.e. "vice-versa movements between two parties", and pooling or redistribution, i.e. "centralized movements: collection from members of a group … and redivision within this group". An important difference is that "pooling is socially a within relation, the collective action of a group … [while] reciprocity is a between relation, the action and reaction of two parties" (Sahlins 1974:188). Within the category of reciprocal exchanges, Sahlins distinguishes between generalized reciprocity, balanced reciprocity and negative reciprocity (Sahlins 1974:191-196).

Generalized reciprocity is similar to Malinowski's pure gift, but it seems broader and is not necessarily restricted to the closest kin. It is help given freely, altruistically, out of disinterested concern and without any (open) stipulation of return. It includes 'sharing', 'hospitality', 'free gift', 'help', 'generosity', but also 'noblesse oblige'. If there is an obligation to reciprocate, it is vague, meaning that the counter-obligation "is not stipulated by time, quantity or quality: the expression of reciprocity is indefinite". Generalized reciprocity is a "sustained one-way flow". As stated by Sahlins, "[f]ailure to reciprocate does not cause the giver of stuff to stop giving: the goods move one way, in favour of have-not, for a very long time" (Sahlins 1974:194).

Balanced reciprocity refers to direct mutual exchange. Reciprocation always takes place within a finite and narrow period of time in the form of "the customary equivalent of the thing received" (Sahlins 1974:194). The economic and social interests of the parties are central and clearly stipulated, and the failure to reciprocate within the given time may cause a disruption of the relation between the parties involved (Sahlins 1974:195). Transactions have usually a utilitarian purpose as well, but the 'moral' purpose of "renunciation of hostile intent or of indifference in favour of mutuality" remains central (ibid., p. 220).

Sahlins also distinguishes negative reciprocity, which is defined as "an attempt to get something for nothing with impunity" (Sahlins 1974:195). However, this form of transaction is exceptionally rare and might be charged with negative social sanctions.

Central to anthropological theory is, that gift-exchange is not considered to perform an economic function, but is seen primarily as a social act to

acquire and maintain social status, to create and consolidate good relations or to comply with social norms.

One of the main motives for gift giving, is according to Malinowski, the "fundamental human impulse to display, to share, to bestow" (Malinowski 1985 [1922]:175). This fundamental impulse may be fed by vanity, but may also serve the purpose of acquiring and maintaining prestige and power (ibid., p. 175).

The exchange of gifts also helps in creating, sustaining and strengthening social ties. According to Douglass, this purpose lies at the heart of gift giving: "A gift that does nothing to enhance solidarity is a contradiction" (Douglass 2004: x). To Lévi-Strauss, "reciprocity is … the most immediate from of integrating the opposition between self and others" and the gift, which "makes … individuals into partners", constitutes the symbolic agent of this integration (Lévi-Strauss 1969 [1949]:84). According to Sahlins, gift-giving "underwrites or initiates social relations" (Sahlins 1974: 186). Malinowski states that the purpose of ceremonial re-payments is "to thicken the social ties from which arise the obligations" (ibid., p.182).

Malinowski repeatedly stresses the obligatory nature of gifts. Gifts are almost always given to fulfil social obligations "and with a great deal of formal punctillo" (Malinowski 1985 [1922]:174). The obligation to (give, accept and) reciprocate is frequently enforced by social sanctions. However, as noted by Sahlin, "[t]he norms are relative and situational rather than absolute and universal. A given act… is not so much in itself good or bad – it depends on who the "Alter" is" (Sahlins 1974:199). It is important to note, that the obligatory nature of the gift-exchange rules out pure altruism. Mauss notes a peculiar integration of interest and disinterest, generosity and egoism, altruism and selfishness of the gift exchange.

Social psychology

The term 'solidarity' is not frequently used in the social psychological literature. The related terms in social psychology are 'pro-social behaviour' (any act performed with the goal of benefiting another person) and 'altruistic behaviour' (pro-social behaviour that involves a cost to the helper). Social psychology is not based on one theoretical perspective but combines insights from various perspectives, which often originate from other disciplines. For example, evolutionary psychology stems from

evolution theory in biology and will here be discussed under the heading of socio-biology.

Social exchange theory borrows from economics and rational choice theory the concept of social exchange. It stresses the role of self-interest in pro-social behaviour by assuming that people aim to maximize their own utility or happiness. The (psychological) social exchange theory is broader than its economic equivalent, in the sense that it is less focused on monetary rewards. Relationships between people are also explained in terms of costs and benefits. Helping others can be beneficial if others return the favour (now or in the future) or when a confrontation with misery is stressful for the helper (e.g. Eisenberg and Fabes, 1991). Moreover, by helping others we gain psychological rewards, such as social approval and increased feelings of self-worth. However, if the costs of helping are large (for example when it is dangerous, embarrassing or time-consuming), people are less inclined to help (e.g. Dovidio et al., 1991).

Another motive for solidary behaviour can be empathy, which social psychology borrows from psychology and socio-biology. Batson (1991) argues that people sometimes help other people purely out of the goodness of their hearts, which presupposes the ability to feel empathy. Toi and Batson (1982) manipulated the level of empathy and found that when empathy is low, there is a big difference in willingness to help, depending on whether or not helping is costly. When empathy is high, however, willingness to help is almost independent of the cost of helping.

The specific contribution of social psychology to explaining solidary behaviour is its focus on the conditions and circumstances that promote solidarity.

For example, the willingness to help others depends on someone's mood. Isen and Levine (1972) manipulated mood ('mood induction') by leaving small amounts of money on a telephone cell. People who had just found the money seemed to be much more willing to help others than people who did not find any money. When people feel good, they do good. When they perform well on a test, receive a gift, have happy thoughts or listen to pleasant music, they contribute more to charity, are more willing to donate blood or to help co-workers on the job (e.g. Carlson, Charlin and Miller, 1988; Salovey, Meyer and Rosenhan, 1991). Feeling good makes us look on the bright side of life. Moreover, helping others is an excellent way of prolonging our good mood (e.g. Williamson and Clark, 1989).

But also negative emotional states might foster solidary behaviour. An example is feeling guilty (e.g. Estrada-Hollenbeck and Heatherton, 1998). Churchgoers were more likely to donate money to charity before attending confession than afterwards, presumably because confessing to a priest reduced their guilt. But also feeling sad can boost helping behaviour, as sad people are motivated to engage in activities that make them feel better (Wegener and Petty, 1994). This is sometimes called the 'negative-state relief hypothesis' (e.g. Cialdini et al, 1987). According to this theory, the helping behaviour does not have to be related to the source of our sadness.

Although not directly related to solidary behaviour, an important strand of social psychology that is relevant in studying solidarity is *social identity theory*. According to this theory, people try to build a positive self-image through social categorization (thinking in terms of groups), social identification (identifying with certain 'in-groups') and social comparison (differentiating their in-group positively on particular dimensions from relevant out-groups). Each individual has a repertoire of (social and personal) identities open to her/him, each identity informing the individual of who he/she is and what this identity entails. Which of these many identities is most salient for an individual at any time varies according to the social context. Where personal identity is salient, the individual will relate to others in an interpersonal manner, depending on their character traits and any personal relationship existing between the individuals. However, under certain conditions a group identity might take precedence.

What is a relevant out-group? According to the concept of distinctiveness, a relevant out-group is not too different from the corresponding in-group. The most rivalry exists between quite similar football-clubs, such as Ajax and Feyenoord, or between two Ivy-league universities, or between Protestantism and Catholicism (rather than Buddhism). Important for social identity theory is that no interaction is required to speak of 'a group'. When a single woman is in a meeting with ten other men, her social identity (female) is salient, despite the fact that there is no (physical) contact with other women.

Self-esteem is an important motive for identification. People strive for positive differentiation of their in-group.

Self-categorization theory is an elaboration of social identity theory (e.g. Turner, Oakes, Haslam and McGarty, 1994). According to this theory, identity is a flexible and multi-dimensional concept. What part of your identity is active is dependent on the social context.