

Call for Papers

Understanding Solidarity – New Challenges, New Approaches

International Workshop, 25-27 January 2019, University of Hamburg

Keynote lectures by Andrea Sangiovanni (King's College London/European University Institute) and Donatella Della Porta (SNS Florence)

Despite its prominence in the social and political vocabulary of our time, solidarity has arguably been one of the lesser-studied concepts within philosophy and the social sciences. However, things have changed considerably over the last decade, and there is now a veritable plethora of studies engaging with solidarity from a variety of different perspectives. A look at the recent literature on solidarity suggests that the recent crises, and the challenges they pose for democratic societies, have fostered the discussion on solidarity. Accordingly, solidarity is being discussed in the European refugee crisis (Agustín/Jørgensen 2018; Lahusen/Grasso 2018; Della Porta 2018), the Euro crisis (Gerhards et al. 2018; Hatje et al. 2015)), and, more generally, the political project of the European Union and the prospects of further (social) integration in view of the rise of populism and increasing nationalistic tendencies (Grimmel/Giang 2017; Knodt/Tews 2014; Malcom 2010; Sangiovanni 2013; de Witte 2015).

In contrast to this multitude of different (mostly empirical) perspectives on various forms and instances of solidarity, however, more strictly theoretical attempts at providing a systematic account of the nature or conceptual meaning of solidarity are far and few between (notable exceptions are Derpmann 2013 and Kolers 2016 as well as some of the contributions in Banting/Kymlicka 2017 and Laitinen/Pessi 2015). Unlike other central social and political concepts such as justice, democracy or freedom, solidarity has not yet become the subject of any identifiable theoretical or conceptual debate, to which different positions might be said to be contributing to. Finally, current theoretical and conceptual work on solidarity hardly ever seems to draw on empirical studies on solidarity, while the latter seldom engage with theoretical accounts in greater detail. As a result, it is difficult to tell whether the increased interest in solidarity of the recent past has resulted in a more comprehensive and differentiated understanding of solidarity overall or rather in a multitude of different perspectives on different types of solidarity in different contexts.

In view of this current state of research on solidarity, the workshop first and foremost aims at evaluating the prospects of bringing the existing research on solidarity into dialogue, thus initiating an ongoing interdisciplinary debate about the nature, meaning and role of

solidarity in contemporary societies and politics. Accordingly, we welcome papers from different research areas and perspectives. Given the workshop format, we are happy to include presentations of work in progress as well as research reports. Also, as research on solidarity is still an emerging field, we strongly encourage contributions from PhD students and early career researchers.

Themes that might prove particularly productive for the intended discussion include:

Types and concept(ion)s of solidarity: What do different studies take to be at the centre of solidarity (feelings, dispositions, specific actions etc.)? To what extent are there different types of solidarity on different 'levels' (local, national, supra-national, global etc.), and how do they relate to each other? How is solidarity conceptualised, and which concept(ualisation)s are different ways of operationalising solidarity based on?

(Normative) theories of solidarity and empirical research: How can normative theories and empirical research on solidarity fruitfully inform each other? To what extent do empirical studies on solidarity rely on normative conceptions other than solidarity (e.g. democracy, (social) justice, community etc.)? Are there (normative) conceptions of solidarity that particularly lend themselves to empirical research – and conceptions that do not, respectively?

Recent challenges: Is there a relation between recent challenges like the ones mentioned above and (a lack of) solidarity? Do these challenges call for reviving or strengthening existing forms of solidarity, or do they call for entirely new forms of solidarity? In light of the recent political and social developments (crises in the EU, Brexit, Trump election), do we see an end of solidarity or are there new emerging solidarity actions?

'Blind spots': Are there forms of solidarity, or actual appeals to solidarity (e.g. within particular social and political movements), which are not discussed in the recent literature? If so, how may these 'blind spots' be explained? Are they a result of dominant research interests or the hegemony of specific theories or approaches? To what extent do conceptual or methodological limitations affect which instances of solidarity make it onto research agendas?

Please send your abstracts (up to 500 words) to andreas.busen@uni-hamburg.de and wallaschek@bigsss.uni-bremen.de by 10 December 2018. Subject to available funding, travel and accommodation costs of presenters will be subsidised.