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# Putting flesh to the bone: Looking for solidarity in diversity, here and now<sup>i</sup>

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STIJN OOSTERLYNCK\* is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Antwerp. ADDRESS: Department of Sociology, University of Antwerp, Sint-Jacobstraat 2, B-2000 Antwerpen, Belgium. Email: [Stijn.Oosterlynck@uantwerpen.be](mailto:Stijn.Oosterlynck@uantwerpen.be)

MAARTEN LOOPMANS is Associate Professor in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at KU Leuven. ADDRESS: Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, KU Leuven, Celestijnenlaan 200E, B-3001 Heverlee, Belgium. Email: [Maarten.Loopmans@ees.kuleuven.be](mailto:Maarten.Loopmans@ees.kuleuven.be)

NICK SCHUERMANS is post-doctoral researcher at the Department of Sociology at the University of Antwerp and post-doctoral teaching associate at the Department of Geography, Vrije Universiteit Brussel. ADDRESS: Department of Sociology, University of Antwerp, Sint-Jacobstraat 2, B-2000 Antwerpen, Belgium. Email: [Nick.Schuermans@uantwerpen.be](mailto:Nick.Schuermans@uantwerpen.be)

JOKE VANDENABEELE is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences at KU Leuven. ADDRESS: Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Vesaliusstraat 2, B-3000 Leuven, Belgium. Email: [Joke.Vandenabeele@ppw.kuleuven.be](mailto:Joke.Vandenabeele@ppw.kuleuven.be)

SAMI ZEMNI is Full Professor at the Department of Conflict and Development Studies at Ghent University. ADDRESS: Department of Conflict and Development Studies, Ghent University, Universiteitsstraat 8, B-9000 Ghent, Belgium. Email: [Sami.Zemni@ugent.be](mailto:Sami.Zemni@ugent.be).

\* = corresponding author

## **Abstract**

In many Western European countries, concern rises that both formal mechanisms of redistribution and informal acts of charity, reciprocity and support are challenged by ethnic and cultural diversity. Against such gloomy perspectives, this paper draws on insights from sociology, geography, pedagogy and political science to argue that four traditional sources of solidarity (interdependence, shared norms and values, struggle and encounter) remain relevant, but require a rethinking of their spatial and temporal framing to capture today's intricate engagements of solidarity. More specifically, we draw on theories from the aforementioned disciplines to claim that our understanding of solidarities grounded in the spatial boundedness of territorial states and the intergenerational continuity of supposedly culturally homogeneous nations should be complemented and enriched with an in-depth knowledge of solidarities developing in an entirely different spatio-temporal register, namely that of the everyday places and practices in which people engage across ethnic and cultural boundaries.

## **Keywords**

Solidarity, diversity, citizenship, learning, place, Western Europe

## 1. Introduction

*'In multiple ways the word "solidarity" is patiently looking for flesh which it could become. And it won't stop seeking eagerly and passionately until it succeeds.'* (Bauman 2013, 5)

It is no coincidence that the concept of solidarity is returning to the center of social debates in many Western European countries. International migration and neoliberal economic restructuring have created a situation of socio-political turmoil not dissimilar from the historical conditions under which the modern concept of solidarity emerged. With the rise of industrialization, urbanization and modernization in the late eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century, solidarity was the answer of the newly formed discipline of sociology to the quest for a renewed social order. In times of social and political upheaval, cultural shifts and economic instability, solidarity was defined as the willingness to share and redistribute material and immaterial resources drawing on feelings of shared fate and group loyalty (Stjernø 2004, 25). Although the effects of social changes on solidarity are always politically mediated - and therefore vary significantly between countries - Europe-wide debates on the 'failure of multiculturalism' (Lentin and Titley 2011) testify to the declining support for solidarity mechanisms under conditions of growing ethnic and cultural diversity. In reaction, this paper explores, from an interdisciplinary theoretical perspective, innovative forms of solidarity in diversity. Our basic assumption is that classic conceptualizations of solidarity remain relevant, but need to be rethought to match rapidly changing societal conditions. Just like the classical sociologists conceptualized solidarity in the turbulent context of industrializing societies, this paper looks for new ways of understanding the sources of social order and cohesion in contemporary Western European societies marked by ethnic and cultural diversity.

Our starting point is that a narrowly national framing of solidarities no longer captures the complex and multiple entanglements and engagements of people. In fact, we will develop the theoretical argument that concepts of solidarity grounded in the spatial boundedness of territorial states and the intergenerational continuity of supposedly culturally homogeneous

nations can be enriched by solidarities that develop in the different spatio-temporal register of everyday place-based practices. By shifting our perspective from the spatio-temporal register of the nation-state to what diverse populations do, learn and collectively engage in *hic et nunc*, we aim to identify innovative forms of solidarity in diversity.

To do so, we draw on theoretical insights from sociology, geography, pedagogy and political science. From sociology, we derive an understanding of four classical sources of solidarity. Based on scholarship in human geography, we shift our focus from the bounded territory of the nation state to the relationally constituted places where diversity is encountered and negotiated. Political science writings on citizenship as a practice inspire us to make an accompanying shift from the historical continuity of the national community to concrete everyday practices in which issues of redistribution, representation and/or recognition become the focus of action and debate. Scholarship in social pedagogy urges us to see solidarity in diversity as a result of learning processes implicated in community making.

The paper is divided in four sections and a conclusion. Reviewing classical and contemporary sociological literature, the following section identifies interdependence, norms and values, struggle and encounter as four sources of solidarity. In the third section, we analyse how Western European welfare states consolidated local forms of solidarity into state-organized forms of collective solidarity through the demarcation of national territories, the establishment of formal citizenship rights and pedagogical processes of socialization. In the fourth section, we explain how both formal mechanisms of redistribution and informal acts of charity, reciprocity and support are said to be eroded by growing ethnic and cultural diversity. In the fifth section, we will substantiate our claim that diversity compels us to look for solidarity in a different spatio-temporal register, namely that of the everyday places and practices in which people engage across ethnic and cultural boundaries.

## **2. Four sources of solidarity**

The recent revival of interest in solidarity has inspired several attempts to identify and classify different conceptualizations of solidarity (Silver 1994; Crow 2002; Stjernø 2004; Thijssen 2012). In this paper, we add to this literature by identifying four main sources of solidarity (see table 1). Each of these four sources specifies a distinctive basis for feelings of

shared fate and group loyalty. Each also implies a specific perspective on the value and role of social difference and individuality in society. As such, the four sources of solidarity reflect different ideological positions on how societies develop social order and cohesion.

*(Table 1)*

### **2.1. Interdependence**

Interdependence is the first source of solidarity. This liberal orientation on solidarity stresses the positive aspects of social differentiation. It assumes that solidarity emerges from the division of labour and the awareness of interdependence. Its classical formulation is to be found in Durkheim's concept of organic solidarity. Durkheim (1984, 173) argues that 'even where society rests wholly upon the division of labour, it does not resolve itself into a myriad of atoms juxtaposed together, between which only external and transitory contact can be established'. Instead, he states that 'each one of the functions that the members exercise is constantly dependent upon others and constitutes with them a solidly linked system' (ibid.). Before Durkheim, classical social thinkers such as Spencer and De Tocqueville had also already advanced concepts of solidarity grounded in the mutual interdependencies between free individuals pursuing private interests (Spencer, 1982; De Tocqueville, 1971). Among contemporary sociologists, the interdependence perspective is adopted in the work of Beck and Giddens. For Beck (1997), growing individualization does not necessarily rule out the possibility of solidarity as long as individual citizens are reflexive about their social relationships and interdependencies with one another. Giddens (1991, 1994) considers solidarity as not only deriving from reflection on social relationships and interdependencies, but also from the active building of trust in other humans with whom we are interdependent.

### **2.2 Shared norms and values**

Shared norms and values are a second source of solidarity. Its classical formulation can be found in Durkheim's oeuvre as well. Durkheim (1984) was convinced that interdependencies are insufficient for nurturing solidarity and that societies cannot sustain themselves without a common belief system ('collective consciousness'). As such, he became interested in the

symbolic and emotional components of social life that bind groups and societies together (Collins 1994, 190 & 204).

Today, communitarian scholars are the main proponents of this perspective. By reinvigorating the community as the motor of social integration, they steer a middle course between the idea of solidarity as the mere aggregation of individual's rational pursuit of self-interests and the expression of solidarity into rights controlled by the state (Crow 2002, 43-48; Stjernø 2004, 295-299). While the term 'solidarity' is not very central to their thinking, references are frequently made to a concept of social justice based on reciprocity in the community. Such reciprocity is founded on moral commitments grounded in shared beliefs, common values, joint practices and collective histories (Etzioni 1998).

The communitarian debate has inspired a whole body of research on social capital and social cohesion (Putnam, Leonardi & Nanetti 1993; Putnam 2001). Often, these concepts seem to have replaced solidarity as the core concept of the discipline of sociology. Although the social capital literature can by no means be reduced to a communitarian perspective, its popularity cannot be understood apart from the latter's attraction either.

### **2.3 Struggle**

A third source of solidarity sprouts from the work of Marx and Weber. For them, solidarity is related to unequal power relations and their capacity to give rise to collective action. Solidarity is then rooted in a joint struggle around common interests against a shared enemy. Historically, this perspective has been most commonly associated with the social-democratic and socialist tradition. Although this notion of solidarity is still very much present in the literature on social movements, contemporary conceptual work in this tradition is rare.

For Marx, the capitalist mode of production and its tendency to produce social polarization forms the precondition for making the working class a 'class for itself', i.e. a group of people who entertain strong relations of solidarity amongst one another in the face of a common class enemy (Bottero 2009). Like Durkheim, Marx acknowledges that interests alone do not provide a stable basis for solidarity (Crow 2002, 25). His solidarity concept therefore

combines instrumental (the 'objective' interests that workers share with each other in a joint struggle) and normative aspects (common values and norms and fraternal feelings that are nurtured through joint political practices and struggle).

Like Marx, Weber acknowledged that society is structured by unequal power relations and that solidarity is nurtured by being part of a particular group in a struggle with other groups. Yet, for Weber (1978, 927) class position was only a 'possible, and frequent, basis for social action'. Other bases of social consciousness, such as status group, cross cut economic position. Status groups combine specific notions of honour and monopolize opportunities and resources to distance themselves from others and strengthen internal solidarity (Weber 1978, 927 & 935).

#### **2.4 Encounter**

The sociological literature identifies encounter as a fourth source of solidarity. This line of thought is associated with the work of Simmel and the urban sociologists of the Chicago School. Central to Simmel's work are processes of 'sociation'. While 'society' consists of permanent interactions and their embedding in consistent structures, 'sociation' refers to the more contingent forms of human action, conscious or unconscious, that bind people together in the informal ordering of social life (Simmel 1950, 10).

This sociological perspective on informal interactions and everyday encounters as a basis of solidarity was further developed by Chicago School urban sociologists. When analysing the rapidly changing and hyper-diverse populations of America's arrival cities, they revealed how traditional social bonds were eroded by the division of labour and the weakening of family attachments and replaced by informal social relations and solidarities in the neighbourhood.

One could argue that solidarity grounded in encounter should be seen as complementary to the macro-level sources of solidarity rooted in interdependencies, struggle and shared norms and values (Thijssen 2012). Indeed, the three macro-level sources of solidarity discussed above can be supported by informal interactions at the micro level. However, we maintain encounter as a separate source of solidarity as it may nurture solidarity in the

absence of the aforementioned macro-level sources of solidarity. This was very much the point Simmel and the Chicago School researchers aimed to make.

### **3. The nationalization of solidarity**

Since the late nineteenth century, Western European nation states have made efforts to mitigate the consequences of the expansion of capitalism and the concomitant social struggle through a gradual centralization and nationalization of local forms of solidarity. In this process, locally organized forms of solidarity were transformed in compulsory and universal (i.e. applying to all citizens) institutions. After the Second World War, a steady economic growth allowed for the development of increasingly complex and expansive institutions and redistributive mechanisms in Western Europe. This process culminated in welfare states which aimed to 'provide standardized benefits, in an impartial and automatic form, based on precisely defined rights and obligations, according to highly specialized procedures and with a national scope' (Ferrera 2005, 54).

From a sociological point of view, the nationalization of solidarity in welfare states is rooted in a specific combination of the aforementioned sources of solidarity. First, the institutions of social protection draw on the notion of interdependence. As a social insurance system at the national level, the welfare state is based on the recognition that citizens of a nation state are dependent on each other for their welfare and social protection (Cantillon and Van Mechelen 2013). Secondly, shared norms and values clearly play a crucial role in supporting the nationalization of solidarity in the post-war period. These shared norms and values have never been pre-given, but were imagined and institutionalized through processes of nation building (Anderson 1991). Third, the development of a regime of social rights is the result of decades of social struggle by trade unions and working class parties (Stjernø 2004). While this struggle had an important international political dimension, it was to a large extent 'nationalized' in the sense that it was waged by national political parties and trade unions and that its gains were embedded in national states.

From a geographical perspective, the state's efforts to organize solidarity were predicated upon the territorialization of social relations and the spatial boundedness of supposedly

culturally homogeneous populations within these territorial limits. In human geography, territoriality is seen as a particular form of socio-spatial structuring based on boundary-making (Jessop, Brenner, and Jones 2008). For Agnew (2007 in Gregory et al. 2007, 744), territoriality refers to 'either the organization and exercise of power, legitimate or otherwise, over blocs of space or [to] the organization of people and things into discrete areas through the use of boundaries'. During the second half of the twentieth century, the development of strong welfare states in Western Europe prioritized national space as a bounded and bordered territory. The nationalist project aimed to contain social and cultural life, economic interactions and political dynamics within the boundaries of national territories. On the one hand, rights and responsibilities were made dependent upon long term presence in the national territory and assumed integration in its associated culture (Desforges, Jones, and Woods 2005). On the other hand, the nurturing of solidarity reinforced the importance of strong boundaries to oblige solidarity between those inside national boundaries and inhibit solidarity with those outside (McEwen 2002).

In mainstream political science accounts, the nationalization of solidarity is strongly connected with the notion of citizenship as a legal status. This is perhaps best described by Marshall (1950). He held the idea that citizenship is mainly about equal treatment of citizens by endowing them with increasing rights, especially social rights. In this perspective, social citizenship – as the entrance to solidarity arrangements – mitigates the negative impact of capitalist markets through the redistribution of (scarce) resources on the basis of social rights.

Yet, treating citizenship as a formal status that gives access to various social and other rights does not mean that it is solely a bureaucratic affair. Educationalists point out how citizenship as a status is bound up with particular processes of community formation and how the making of national political communities in which citizenship rights are embedded have been accompanied by the development of 'civic learning' (Peters 1996; Dahlgren 2006). Through processes of socialization, children, youngsters and adults are introduced to the norms, values and rules that exist in society and learn that they belong to a community which transcends their individual lives. The link between citizenship and solidarity is maintained by initiating citizens into a cluster of interrelated knowledge claims: 'knowledge

about what a good citizen is; knowledge about what a good citizen needs to learn; and knowledge about how individuals can learn to become good citizens' (Biesta 2011, 142).

When these sociological, geographical, political and pedagogical understandings are put together, it can be seen that the nation-state was able to embed solidarity in the assumed intergenerational continuity and cultural homogeneity of the population within its territorial limits. Western European welfare states can be seen as encompassing myriad processes of sharing and redistributing resources promoted by varying combinations of social struggle, shared values and norms and awareness of interdependence. Solidarity is accessed through citizenship rights linked to the formal membership of a territorially defined community and supported by the educational process of socialization.

#### **4. The nationalization of solidarity in decline**

Over the last decades, scholars have studied the effects of growing ethnic and cultural diversity on nationalized solidarity mechanisms. A first strand of research focuses on the institutional flexibility of welfare states. In this context, Faist (1998 in Mau 2007, 5) remarks that it is a fundamental challenge to 'preserve the balance between the openness and exclusivity of the welfare system without endangering the universal consensus of the welfare state to protect the right to entitlements of both the native population as well as the various immigrant groups'.

A second strand of research focuses on the effects of multicultural policies of recognition and welfare state mechanisms of redistribution on the social mobility of cultural minorities. By way of example, Koopmans (2010, 1) infers that the combination between a generous welfare state and multicultural policies without strong incentives for language acquisition 'have produced low levels of labor market participation, high levels of segregation and a strong overrepresentation of immigrants among those convicted for criminal behavior'. Other authors argue, however, that there is no zero-sum relation between cultural recognition and socio-economic redistribution and that multiculturalism policies can even strengthen socio-economic status by reducing prejudice and mistrust (Tully 2000; Parekh 2004). Canada is frequently cited as an example that has subverted the so-called 'progressive's dilemma' (Banting 2010).

A third group of researchers studies the effects of ethnic and cultural diversity on the support for the welfare state. Conflicts might emerge from two sides (Zemni 2011). On the one hand, minority groups might contest universal public services as reflecting the cultural norms of the dominant culture. On the other hand, majority cultures might resent the expansion of social welfare to what they consider as 'outsider' minorities (Kymlicka and Banting 2006). Based on case study research and statistical analysis, many claim that negative views vis-à-vis migrants and the general feeling of a 'failure of multiculturalism' have eroded feelings of community and solidarity (Barry 2001).

When these three strands of research are confronted with the framework outlined above, it is clear that part of the legitimacy crisis of Western European welfare states stems from the way in which migration challenges the different sources of solidarity. In culturally diverse societies, shared norms and values are weakened as a source of solidarity. Because ethnic-cultural minorities are often overrepresented in unemployment statistics and situations of precarious employment, interdependence through the labor market also has very clear limits as a source of solidarity, given that it excludes those that are perceived as non-contributing. In addition, struggle has become more complex as a source of solidarity as questions of social justice do not only include struggles over redistribution, but also struggles for the recognition of ethnic and cultural minorities and for the political representation of different groups in society (Fraser 1995, 2010).

Migration does not only affect different sources of nationalized solidarity, but also their geographical and temporal underpinnings. The nation state model is undermined when its territorial 'container' starts to 'leak'. The erosion of national boundaries by flows of information, people and commodities has led to a rethinking of citizenship space, emphasizing overlapping and interlocking networks instead of distinct and clearly separated territorial units (Taylor 2003). At the same time, in the temporal dimension, the correlation between a bounded territory and the intergenerational continuity of supposedly culturally homogeneous nations is losing ground. These changes, in turn, have impacted on the conceptualization of citizenship, separating political membership from (national) belonging.

Against this background, our theoretical perspective stands in marked contrast to strategies that advocate minority assimilation. Whereas assimilation of newcomers and minorities in

the dominant lead culture has been the classic nationalist strategy to forge national social cohesion (Brubaker 2001), such a strategy no longer holds under the pressure of global connections and mobilities, particularly in super-diverse cities. Declaring minority assimilation into a dominant lead culture a dead-end street, our theoretical approach also differs from the one developed by Putnam (2007). In response to his own empirical findings that in the short and medium run ethnic and cultural diversity impact negatively on solidarity, he pursues a long term strategy aimed at the construction of new and more encompassing national identities, 'a novel "one" out of a diverse "many" ', as he describes it (p. 165).

While we do not necessarily want to contest the viability of this claim, we suggest another perspective. Putnam's suggested road for nurturing solidarity in diversity is predicated on the idea of reconstructing some form of historical continuity, now including a more diverse set of ethnic-cultural trajectories, through repeated social interactions across ethnic and cultural lines. Hence, Putnam's proposal forecloses the potential for solidarity in diversity in the short run. Therefore, we will not look for solidarities in shared identities, which require time and repetition, but for solidarities nurtured through the very practices people jointly engage in in diverse places.

## **5. Solidarity in diversity here and now**

Our basic claim is that the four aforementioned sources of solidarity remain as relevant as ever, but that the temporal and spatial register in which these sources function needs to be shifted. More specifically, it is our contention that innovative forms of solidarity are not primarily nurtured in the spatio-temporal register of the territorialized nation state, but that the growing ethnic and cultural diversity of the population makes it necessary to look for innovative forms of solidarity elsewhere, namely in the here and now of actual practices in particular places. From a spatial perspective, we propose a shift from the bounded territory of the nation state to the relationally constituted places where diversity is encountered and negotiated. From a temporal perspective, a similar shift is needed from the imagined historical continuity of the national community to concrete practices of solidarity.

The temporal shift builds on the reconceptualization of citizenship within political science. Political scientists generally discuss the issue of solidarity in connection with citizenship and the making and unmaking of political communities. At least three different conceptions of citizenship can be distinguished. In the conception of citizenship as a legal status, citizens are considered formal members of political communities inhabiting clearly bounded territories and upholding shared values, identities and rights (Marshall 1950). This is the case in national welfare states (cfr. supra). In a second conceptualization, a group-differentiated politics of cultural recognition and political representation is directed at specific demands of minority communities and groups excluded from political decision-making. Kymlicka (1995) has called this 'differentiated citizenship'. A third conception of citizenship does not define citizenship in terms of legal rights, but in terms of acts (Isin and Nielsen 2008) or practices (Mouffe 1992). As the growing attention for issues of recognition and representation has called dominant assumptions and representations of citizenship into question, it is understood that citizens can no longer be treated as abstract individuals fitting in particular legal categories, but need to be understood as subjects with varying, and often contradictory, positions in different spheres of society.

Our approach of solidarity in diversity mobilizes this third conception of citizenship. It focuses on the actual interpersonal practices of those diverse individuals present in a particular location. We claim that these interpersonal practices in diverse places can redefine communities and provide the foundations for new and innovative forms of solidarity. By linking solidarity explicitly to citizenship, our approach departs from classic communitarian approaches focusing on social cohesion and community building and sustaining 'a conception of community as embodied in a shared sense of place and cultural order based on consensus, primordialism and harmony' (Delanty 2002, 162). Seeing the interpersonal practices of diverse people as acts of citizenship makes us move from purely social conceptions of community towards more political understandings of community. Community is then no longer only about cohesive social relationships, but primarily about the extent to which issues of social justice such as those relating to material redistribution, political representation and cultural recognition can be raised and made visible to each other and become the object of discussion and action (Fraser 2010). Interpersonal practices

are hence only practices of citizenship when the new types of collective 'being together' allow for the possibility to make personal issues visible and turn them into a public concern.

The concurrent shift in the spatial register is based on new understandings of place in the era of globalization. In discussions on citizenship and national belonging, place is often defined as a bounded space inhabited by a culturally homogeneous group with long-term linkages to that location. In the meanwhile, such a territorial view of place has been challenged by a relational or networked perspective that asserts that places cannot be understood by looking at internal relations over time alone, but that they are also constituted through temporary relationships with other places (Amin 2002a; Massey 2004; Appiah 2010). Places are not just bounded and homogeneous, but heterogeneous and constituted through a diversity of relationships that often stretch far beyond that particular place. For Massey (1991, 29), the definition of a particular place 'does not have to be through simple counterposition to the outside: it can come, in part, precisely through the particularity of linkage to that 'outside' which is therefore itself part of what constitutes the place'.

Whereas relational perspectives of place dismiss an emphasis on boundaries and timeless identities, they maintain an interest in emotional experience, proximity and intimacy as constituting characteristics of place (Jessop, Brenner and Jones 2008). Proximity and emotional attachment to place continue to play a role in the development of community and solidarity, even if places are no longer characterized by proximity of homogeneous elements, but by the proximity of culturally diverse elements and a multiplicity of experiences of its essence and identity (Harvey 2009). Hence, Amin (2004, 38) proposes to 'explore a politics of place that is consistent with a spatial ontology of places as sites of heterogeneity juxtaposed within close spatial proximity, and as sites of multiple geographies of affiliation, linkage and flow'. Amin's politics of place consists of a 'politics of propinquity' and 'a politics of connectivity'. With the former, Amin (2004, 39) calls upon us 'to take spatial juxtaposition seriously as a field of agonistic engagement', while the latter implies that this agonistic engagement should result in a political program for particular places, which draws not only on what is inside that particular place but also valorizes its connection to other places.

Such a relational engagement with place ties in closely with the idea of performativity of citizenship as elaborated above. Relational places do not hold timeless identities to which individuals have to adapt in order to be accepted into the autochthonous community rooted in that place and to gain access to the rights and solidarities within that community. Places themselves are open and fluid, and issues of recognition, redistribution and representation can be made visible and negotiated through the enactment of citizenship relating to that place. Places then become sites for the everyday agonistic negotiation of claims of diverse subjects.

Taking relationality as a starting point therefore opens up perspectives for solidarity amongst heterogeneous populations who do not have anything in common apart from the place they share. In schools, parks, factories, offices, sports fields or neighborhood centers, innovative forms of solidarity develop around the joint appropriation and the envisaged common future of a particular place. Such solidarities do not necessarily presuppose assimilation into a pre-given set of shared norms and values, nor the necessity of historical time to build up social capital between diverse citizens, but require a willingness to negotiate the diversity of people and the practices they are engaged in here and now.

The shift from status-based citizenship based on a relationship to a bounded place towards instantaneous acts of citizenship in relational places entails a different perspective on civic learning too. The main assumption is that it is not a separate educational practice that prescribes a top-down curriculum, but that it is inextricably linked to the efforts of citizens made at very different places to address social issues that affect them. Instead of socialization into an established community, it concerns a learning process that occurs through engagement in interpersonal practices and interactions. Such learning is intrinsically related to the experiment of democracy itself (cfr. Dewey 1927). According to Biesta (2011, 6), 'it does not lead [...] from a state of not being a citizen to being a citizen, but fluctuates with people's actual experiences of citizenship and with their engagement in democratic experiments'.

Citizenship practices can contribute to learning for solidarity in diversity in various ways. People can learn to work and discuss together and in doing so learn to appreciate that there is something more than the self. Interactions with different others can tighten into a

community in which the activity of each refers to the activities of others. People learn to collaborate with others, sharing interests and problem solving strategies. According to Biesta (2012, 692), 'the direction in which such processes move is not determined from the outset, but is part of what is 'at stake' in such processes of collective political learning'.

Yet, cooperative forms of learning are often not a cut-and-dried solution to deal with the diversity of contemporary societies. Often, the learning taking place in and through citizenship practices is more radical and transformative, because it happens through a strong sense of being part of a 'community of those who have nothing in common' (Lingis 1994). Learning from this perspective does not consist of being able to (re)produce the norms and values as a member of a particular political community, but is about the becoming of a new subject in and through acts of citizenship (Masschelein 2010; Biesta 2012). It is about being able to live in the fragile concern for a 'we' for which no common denominator is yet available and which always entails moments of transformation and disruption of the established social order (Biesta 2006, 53; Rancière 2007).

These insights from geography, political science and pedagogy lead us to the following theoretical position. Innovative forms of solidarity in diversity can emerge from concrete interpersonal practices. These practices do not only generate feelings of togetherness and belonging, but allow culturally diverse subjects to make issues of recognition, representation and redistribution visible and public. Such practices are located in relationally constituted places that become sites for everyday negotiation and agonism. As such, solidarity in diversity is dependent on subjectivating practices where learning is not triggered by claims of commonality or sameness, but can result from being exposed to the otherness of others and their voicing of issues of recognition, representation and redistribution.

This position questions the idea that solidarity can be nurtured most easily by the adoption of - and assimilation into - mainstream norms and values (Desforges, Jones, and Woods 2005). By shifting the focus to the concrete moments and places where cultural diversity is encountered, the idea that shared norms and values are a source of solidarity needs to be reconsidered. Amin (2004) points out, for example, that claims of autochthony become invalid under these circumstances and that no privileged group is to impose norms and values on others. Instead, more progressive place-based communities are shaped by

continuous negotiations on the norms and values governing particular places and facilitating co-existence (Lepofsky and Fraser 2003).

The spatio-temporal shift also requires us to view interdependence differently. Interdependence, as a source of solidarity, is nurtured through the sharing and taking joint responsibility for the places where one lives and works. Acknowledging that places are constituted through networks that stretch far beyond them makes it necessary to become aware of how interdependencies exceed the boundaries of administrative territories defining and circumscribing formal citizenship (Agnew 1994; Massey 2004).

In the new spatio-temporal register, struggle requires a different substance as a source of solidarity as well. Struggles over the rules governing co-existence in cultural diversity in particular places and the processes and relations that constitute them cross-cut established social and cultural boundaries. Such struggles strengthen awareness of the democratic value of difference, rather than of sameness.

Finally, the spatio-temporal shift revalues encounter as a source of solidarity. The three macro-level classical sources of solidarity remain as relevant as before, but it is the real life encounter with difference that determines how they are put to work. While many interactions across ethnic and cultural lines provide, at worst, opportunities for fleeting exchanges which harden stereotypes and, at best, incidental encounters which comply with norms of civility (Valentine 2008), engaging in joint practices at work, at school or at leisure can still be the beginning of a learning process that disrupts stereotypes and initiates new attachments among strangers (Amin 2002b, 970).

## **6. Conclusion**

This paper draws on insights from sociology, geography, pedagogy and political science to make a theoretical point about solidarity in diversity. Our basic argument is that the understanding of solidarities has been limited by framing it almost exclusively in the spatio-temporal register of the national state with fixed territorial boundaries and perceived historical continuity. In this spatio-temporal register, solidarity is strongly institutionalized and access is regulated through legal citizenship status. Citizenship is learned through civic

education. This particular configuration draws – in varying combinations - on the different sources of solidarity identified in the classical sociological literature (see left column of table 2).

*(Table 2)*

Inspired by innovative theories developed in four different disciplines, we argue that increased ethnic and cultural diversity does not negate a continued relevance of solidarity and its main sources (interdependence, struggle, shared norms and values and encounter), but requires us to look for solidarities in a different spatio-temporal register. Using insights from political science on citizenship as acts and practices, from geography on the politics of propinquity and connectivity and from social pedagogy on different types of learning and community formation processes, we have called attention to those forms of solidarities which can be found in the here of relational places and the now of instantaneous acts and practices between very different people (see right column of table 2).

Obviously, this call is not to do away with the ‘old’ types of solidarity situated at the national level. The national legacy of defining solidarity remains strong. Local practices of citizenship evoke an alternative ontology, but take place on a terrain structured by the silent operations of the national welfare state as a territorial ‘solidarity machine’ and its politics of assimilation, differentiation and selection (Isin 2000). The everyday is where the practices of solidarity in the here and now and the mechanisms of solidarity institutionalized on the national scale meet and interact. For this reason, it would be erroneous to separate them as two worlds apart. Solidarity in diversity implies plural models of being in the world and a sensitivity to the various spatio-temporal registers in which social life plays out.

From a methodological perspective, such sensitivity requires a move away from attempts to understand the relationship between diversity and solidarity in general terms. While Putnam (2007) and many other scholars cited above have studied the interrelationships between diversity, solidarity, trust and/or social capital through large-scale – often even transnational – surveys, we advocate a place-based and time-specific methodological approach that is rooted in ethnographical methods and in-depth, qualitative research (see e.g. Blommaert 2014; Blokland, 2004; Wessendorf 2014; see Sturgis et al. 2013 for another argument on the importance of contingent conditions to assess the relationship between solidarity and

diversity)<sup>ii</sup>. It is our conviction, indeed, that such empirical research will generate a much more contextualized understanding of the specific conditions under which people engage in everyday practices of solidarity across ethnic and cultural lines. In line with our theoretical argument, we believe that such studies will offer a convincing alternative for the 'loss of community' narrative of communitarians and ground solidarities in particular relational places and practices of citizenship, thus bringing them closer to the everyday engagements of ordinary people with issues of representation, recognition and redistribution.

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<sup>ii</sup> This paper presents the analytical framework of a large-scale collaborative research project called DieGem and is currently used to analyze 30 cases of place-based practices of solidarity in diversity.