British Journal of Industrial Relations public lecture

Transient Solidarities: commitment and collective action in post-industrial societies

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Suggested hashtag for Twitter users: #LSEHeckscher
Transient Solidarities

Charles Heckscher
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Solidarity

Shared sense of obligation
to participate in collective action
for social change

RAWA Solidarity Scotland - rawascotland.org.uk
 Strikes
Solidarity = Relations + Ideology (moral appeal)
# Types of solidarity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relations</th>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Organization / collective action</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Craft</td>
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Craft solidarity

Relations
- Strong self-governing occupational communities
- Internally established status hierarchies

Ideology
- Universalization of way of life: artisanal, independent, communal, local self governance

Collective action / organization
- Participative, continuous
- Status-dominated organization
- Small scale
- Multiple tactics, flexible
- Not essentially conflictual
Industrial solidarity

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/14/chicago-teachers-strike-n_0_n_1883626.html
Industrial solidarity

Relations
- Similar jobs in large groups (factories)
- Constant friction with management

Ideology
- Extension of equal rights
- Balance of power
- Dualism / battle

Collective action / organization
- Centralized organization, large scale
- Focused demands
- Mass actions
Industrial solidarity: organization
Types of solidarity

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<td>Way of life; utopian decentralized community</td>
<td>Continuous, decentralized</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The factory: mass, oppositional</td>
<td>Extension of rights Confrontation</td>
<td>Centralized episodic, oppositional, simple focus</td>
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New relations? Attractive ideological appeals? Types of action?
What’s happening with relations?
Transient relations

At work
- Decentralization
- Instability / fluidity

In society
- Personal entertainment
- Self-enhancement
- Weakened loyalties
Small world
But ...

**Shooting to 1 Billion Users**

- **Sept. 2006**: Opened site to public
- **Feb. 2004**: Facebook founded
- **Late 2007**: Growth team formed
- **March 2012**: Latest tally: 901 million

1.3 billion
Transient relations: “Friending”

*Developing since (at least) 1960s*

- Deliberate (conditional)
- Complex
  - Diverse, multiple intersections
  - Wide scope
  - Many levels of intensity
- Seeking understanding
Small world

Cohesive small world
Who are these “frienders”? 

- 1/3 – 1/2 of (US) population
  - 44% say they join diverse groups to learn about themselves
  - 40% say they are active in web discussions

- Not heavily young or educated

- Embrace classic ethic of hard work and individual responsibility
Social media users (research)

- Equally or more engaged in community and politics
  - Maintain “real world” friendships and relations
  - Act on political messages, transmit them to wider circles
- Have diverse extended circles
- Not limited to those with high social confidence
Cohesive small world

Solidarity?
Ideology (vision of desirable society)

- Diversity
- Openness
- Sharing
- Mutualism
- Learning
- Contribution
Collaborative solidarity: the Mozilla mission

We’re building a better Internet

Our mission is to promote openness, innovation & opportunity on the Web.

At Mozilla, we’re a global community of technologists, thinkers and builders working together to keep the Internet alive and accessible, so people worldwide can be informed contributors and creators of the Web. We believe this act of human collaboration across an open platform is essential to individual growth and our collective future.
Collaborative solidarity: MozFest

“more hack less yack”
“more hammer less yammer”
Organizing a cohesive small world
Orchestrating the new relations

1. Purpose
   - Image of a desirable shared future

2. Platform
   - Tools
     - Data
     - Connections

3. Process
   - Celebrating successes
   - Enforcing norms
   - Focusing campaigns
Focused (conflictual) action: Swarming

“systems in which autonomy, emergence and distributedness replace control, preprogramming and centralization”
Swarming: examples

- Disabilities movement (US)
- Zapatistas
- Anti-SOPA mobilization
- Wal-Mart campaign?
- Banking campaign?
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<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>Networked “friending” (Cohesive small world)</td>
<td>Openness, diversity, understanding</td>
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Collaborative solidarity

- Multiplex
- Coordinated projects
- Reflexive (connection to purpose)
- Not essentially conflictual
Workers of the world: hack! network! swarm!
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