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# **Comparing Social Solidarity Across Historical Societies**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this thesis is to develop the concept of social solidarity such that it can be compared across different societies. This is demonstrated by comparing social solidarity across four different historical societies. This thesis develops the concept of social solidarity through a critical dialogue with the work of Emile Durkheim. By applying contemporary sociological and psychological theory to the concept of social solidarity this thesis develops a conceptual framework of social solidarity such that differing levels and forms of social solidarity can be inferred across societies. In particular this is done by linking human material and psychological needs to social solidarity. This thesis argues that those social institutions which meet the needs of people also increase the level of social solidarity between those people. By examining social institutions and the degree to which they meet people's needs it is possible to infer the extent of social solidarity in that society.

This thesis goes on to apply this procedure to four historical western societies, the feudal, early industrial, Fordist and neo-liberal societies. This thesis argues that the shift from a feudal society to an industrial capitalist one caused a significant decline in the level of social solidarity, although this social transformation was not without potential for generating a society with a much higher level of social solidarity. Fordist society is an example of one possible society which merges a high level of social solidarity with industrial capitalism. However the brief nature of Fordist society suggests that the underlying logic of capitalism may make such a society with high social solidarity an unstable equilibrium.

## **Preface**

This thesis evolved out of a desire to chart the changes in social solidarity over the last few centuries and contrast this with the form of social solidarity that existed before industrial capitalism. However the concept of social solidarity needed development before it was capable of being used for this purpose. I have developed the concept of social solidarity to the best extent that I was able given the time and space available in a Masters thesis, ultimately there is still much work to be done before social solidarity can be used in the manner in which I intended.

Given the difficulty of the task I attempted in this thesis I am particularly thankful for the help of many people. First and foremost is my supervisor Dr. David Neilson, his advice was particularly important for refining and developing my thought and has been hugely helpful. Also of importance are the staff of the Library of the University of Waikato who provided aid in the research of this thesis. Finally various people amongst my friends and family have been useful by offering me a friendly ear to discuss my ideas, this was very useful to help me present my ideas in a clearer manner.

However, while these people have contributed in some way to the outcome of this project all of the shortcomings, flaws and errors that may exist in this work are the result of my own efforts.

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## **Introduction**

Recently authors have stated that social solidarity is in crisis, eroding or dissolving (Delanty, 2008; Veen, Yerkes, & Achterberg, 2012; Veitch, 2011). In this thesis I develop a method of observing social solidarity so that it is possible to infer the consequences of social changes on social solidarity. With the methodology developed it will be possible to check the validity of such statements in a systematic manner.

In this thesis I develop a basic methodology to observe social solidarity and apply this to a number of historical western societies. My goal is to create a set of generalisable principles that can be used to observe the level and form of social solidarity within any particular society. Because of the aim to apply this methodology to a number of societies I have not attempted to quantify any aspect of social solidarity. Since the precise nature of social solidarity is different in every society coming up with a rigid system of relationships between various observations of social solidarity will bias these observations to a particular form of social solidarity. To demonstrate this we can look at the work of Cheung and Ma (2011) who used the reported feelings of people towards the mass media and government officials amongst others to measure the level of social solidarity. However, if we were to take these measurements to the feudal era we would be getting comparatively low results as the mass media did not exist and the nature of government officials was very different than in the neo-liberal society that the system was developed for.

In order to overcome this difficulty I critically develop Emile Durkheim's work on social solidarity. Durkheim developed social solidarity to explain why societies remained cohesive and enable members of society to act in concert. While Durkheim's work has been influential it is not without problems, for this reason I take his work in a different direction. I connect Durkheim's work to the material and psychological needs of people, arguing that a society that enables these needs to be met will remain cohesive and the members of this society will be able to act in concert. Ultimately I define social solidarity as an attitude of common interest and mutuality that unites people for a known and consented common purpose, that is underpinned by institutions and social structures that facilitate this understanding and meet peoples material and psychological needs

In this thesis I will examine social solidarity in four historical western societies, the feudal, early capitalist, Fordist and neo-liberal societies. The reason for choosing these four societies is because the transfer to capitalism was the original impetus for much of sociology and in particular Durkheim's work on social solidarity. The feudal society is a pre capitalist society while the other three are variations of capitalist society that demonstrate the changing nature of capitalist society over the past two centuries. It will be noticed that this does not provide a chronological description of western society and ignores a number of tendencies in twentieth century Europe (Fascism and Communism) as well as the non-western world.

The reason for ignoring these other social systems is because I wanted to explore the transition within societies from one era to the other, presenting a complete narrative. In retrospect the histories of the Soviet or Fascist countries and the

colonised peoples undergo a sharp transition when they were brought into the model of western capitalist society, making the previous histories of those people sharply disconnected from their history as a capitalist society. As such, the reason for minimising these histories has to do with the narrative structure and space limit of this thesis rather than any academic merit. Because of the broad approach taken and limited space available it has been necessary to limit myself to a core narrative and analysis rather than exploring all the possibilities offered by the concept of social solidarity.

For a similar reason there are two gaps in the chronological progression of western society. The first is the renaissance, enlightenment and age of exploration from roughly 1452 until 1792. This is because in retrospect these three and a half centuries appear to be a transition period from feudalism to early capitalist society. While an interesting time period, writing about this period would likely repeat a lot of what had already been said in the discussion of feudal society and would bring up a number of points that would be presented in later chapters.

The second shorter gap in the chronological is the period of the First and Second World Wars, 1914 until 1945. The First World War disrupted the economic system that had developed in the previous century which caused a series of crisis throughout the 1920's and 30's. A proper examination of social solidarity within this time period would be difficult as conditions varied significantly across national borders and changed over time. Essentially I would have struggled to come up with a series of factors that were common throughout western society in this time period and any examination would likely become bogged down in discussing the political

and economic events of this period. However this would be an appealing time period for further study as it was during this period that alternative forms of society, fascism and communism, developed suggesting that perhaps the social solidarity of these societies had reached such a low level that the former social order could no longer maintain cohesion. However in this thesis I have only discussed this time period as necessary to explain the origins of Fordist society.

I also hasten to point out that the societies that I examine are more demonstrations of a type, rather than a specific historical example. In this thesis I describe features common in the historical society, however not all individual examples of that society in that period had all these features. For example, not all villages in feudal society collectively organised their labour, not all early industrial workers had poor income security and not all Fordist workers had high income security. This is a limiting factor on my analysis and is a result of the broad nature of the approach I have taken. I could have taken a more narrow approach, say instead of looking at the feudal era simply examined the village of Montaillou around the end of the thirteenth century. But if I had done so I would have come down to more specific observations of social solidarity and these would be less generalisable to all societies. This point is particularly important for the discussion of feudal society as I have created a typical form based upon the social systems of a number of independent states that were gradually evolving over a period of three or four centuries. As such a number of social changes in this period are ignored in my discussion, most notably the beginnings of international trade and finance, the securing of certain rights to nobles and peasants through revolts and the dramatic consequences that resulted from the plague. On the other hand I do refer to

examples from eastern and southern Europe after the end of the feudal society in the west as the feudal social order generally spread east and south from its origins in north western Europe. Significant elements of the feudal society remained in Russia until 1905, almost at the end of the time period I offer for early industrial society in western society. This is less relevant in later chapters as the time periods covered are comparatively shorter. However, there are still significant differences that have been ignored or marginalised between countries in order to provide a single typical example of that society. While regrettable this is necessary in order to provide a single argument and demonstrating the application of the methodology I have developed.

There is an assumption which is central to my arguments in this thesis, this is that the purpose of society is to enable people to meet their needs. This is slightly in contrast to the tradition in philosophy that includes Thomas Hobbes that argues that society was formed for the mutual protection of the members of society. Individual security is an important need, however, this alone cannot explain the extent of social integration between individuals. I have extended the reason for society beyond the need for security to include the psychological and material needs. This is important for social solidarity because I argue that the cohesiveness of society results from the social institutions that enables people to meet their individual needs.

The arguments presented in this thesis were developed through a series of iterations as I applied the theoretical developments of the concept of social sociology to particular historical societies. However the thesis is presented in a fairly straightforward way. The first chapter puts forwards my theoretical arguments, the

next four chapters will examine the four historical societies and the nature of social solidarity in these societies in chronological order. The final chapter is a conclusion of the findings of this thesis and a discussion of some of the problems associated with comparing social solidarity across different societies.

Over these chapters I argue that social solidarity is the result of a society enabling its people to meet their material and psychological needs. I also argue that social solidarity can be observed in societies through examining a number of social characteristics that are linked to these needs. In this thesis I use poverty, inequality, the size of outsider groups, stable social institutions and common methods of governance as the characteristics for examination in historical societies. Feudal society did very well on these measures compared to the societies which followed it, in fact the feudal village is the form of social structure with the highest social solidarity in any of the societies studied. However, feudal society had two negative factors, firstly the large proportion of the population that were in outsider groups and secondly while the material needs of the majority were generally met, famines or other setback could drive large sections of the population in poverty. Early industrial society is almost the opposite of feudal society in that it did very poorly in all areas due to the dislocation caused by the transition from a rural to an urban society and the widespread dependence on unregulated wage labour. Compared to feudal society the only advantage of early industrial society is the decline in poverty towards the end of this period, which may have surpassed feudal society in this regard.

Fordist society offers an example of how industrial production can be combined

with high social solidarity. Compared to feudal society the Fordist period did better in terms of poverty, outsider groups and inequality, while feudal society was better in regards to stable social institutions and methods of governance, making it unclear which had the higher level of social solidarity. However, Fordism was obviously superior in terms of social solidarity than early industrial or neo-liberal society. Neo-liberal society is in many respects a partial return to early industrial society with a few of the Fordist institutions remaining in a weakened state. Without these institutions neo-liberal society would probably have a lower social solidarity than early industrial society as a result of the growing power of transnational institutions which are difficult for ordinary people to influence. However, the Fordist institutions remain in neo-liberal society which gives it a higher level of social solidarity than early industrial society.

Ultimately a more refined ranking than the one presented here is irresponsible until a better understanding of the interactions between these different needs and social solidarity is developed. This is particularly important with regards to the weight given to material needs and psychological needs as, the transition from feudalism to capitalism corresponds with a shift from enabling psychological needs to enabling material needs.

There is a final point to make before we enter this thesis' main argument around social solidarity. That is that the arguments presented in this thesis have many limitations. Simply put in the time and space available for a Masters thesis there is only so much refinement that I could do. The theoretical development of social solidarity in this thesis builds on the work of Durkheim, but is a novel direction of



inquiry which has not been developed to the extent that I would have liked in this thesis. The four social forms examined are also more simplified than I would have liked. There are also numerous directions in which research building on this line of thought can take, a number of these are highlighted in the conclusion. However, despite these shortfalls and limitations, this work does provide a starting point for the future development of the concept of social solidarity.

## **A Theoretical Development of Social Solidarity**

Social solidarity has been used in sociological theory for more than a century, however it is rarely defined and the definitions offered do not always agree. This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first I examine and criticise social solidarity as put forward by Emile Durkheim with the aim of defining social solidarity. In the second, I look at what generates social solidarity and, in the third I discuss how it is possible to observe social solidarity in historical societies. I argue that social solidarity is an attitude of common interest and mutuality that unites people for a known and consented common purpose, that is underpinned by institutions and social structures that facilitate this understanding and meet people's material and psychological needs. Therefore, I argue that we can infer the existence of social solidarity indirectly by observing social institutions, the typical means of governance, and the presence of poverty, inequality and outside groups.

The simplest definition of social solidarity I have discovered is that offered by Cheung and Ma(2011, p. 145) where they state that social solidarity is 'social interaction in society to bind people together for a common purpose.' However recently Prainsack and Buyx(2013, p. 75) have defined social solidarity as 'manifestations of people's willingness to carry costs (financial, social, emotional or otherwise) to assist others'. While there is a similarity between these definitions there are also clear differences. Cheung and Ma describe social solidarity as interactions within society, while Prainsack and Buyx describe it as a manifestation of the actions of many people. Likewise Cheung and Ma describe the purpose of

social solidarity as being mobilising a society for a common purpose, while Prainsack and Buyx appear to view social solidarity as focusing on redistribution of resources to those in need. Taking this redistributive aspect of social solidarity to its extreme is Weale (1990, p. 477) who describes the political embodiment of social solidarity as being when 'the state is prepared to take on the responsibility of insuring its citizens against a range of common misfortunes and contingencies'. If we were to use this definition we would find social solidarity to be highest in societies with modern welfare states because the definition fails to take account of the different forms of social solidarity in pre modern societies where concepts like the state and citizen are more difficult to apply.

In this thesis I define social solidarity as an attitude of common interest and mutuality that unites people for a known and consented common purpose, that is underpinned by institutions and social structures that facilitate this understanding and meet people's material and psychological needs. This definition was developed through a process of critical dialogue with the work of Emile Durkheim, who was the first sociologist to describe social solidarity, he argued that there were two ideal forms of social solidarity, mechanical and organic. Durkheim argued that these two ideal types were the highest forms of social solidarity. However, I reject these ideals as the factors that Durkheim argues generated these forms of social solidarity are insufficient to describe social solidarity in historical societies. Outside of these ideals Durkheim describes three aberrant forms of social solidarity: negative solidarity, the absolute minimum necessary solidarity for a society to function; forced solidarity in which social functioning is coerced; and anomic solidarity in which the purpose of society is not known by the members of that society. In my

conception of social solidarity these three forms are used to define the boundaries of social solidarity. Social solidarity must have more than the minimum interactions necessary for social functions, must not be coerced and the people must know what the societies collective aims are.

In order to untangle the definition of social solidarity I start with Emile Durkheim, primarily with his work *The Division of Labour in Society*. This was written in the late nineteenth century and was the first sociological work to develop the concept of social solidarity. Durkheim (1984) argued that social solidarity is the force that keeps a society together and operating for a collective purpose. He describes five types of social solidarity, two of these – mechanical and organic – are ideal. The other three - anomic, forced and negative - are aberrant forms of social solidarity. I will describe these five forms of solidarity, what causes them and develop some criticisms of these concepts.

Durkheim (1984) argued that social solidarity - defined as the unifying force that allow individuals to act in concert and maintain the continuity of their relationships - is the essence of society. Durkheim argued that there were two ideal forms of social solidarity, mechanical or organic, and that societies had shifted from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity over time. Durkheim argued that mechanical solidarity was the result of a lack of the division of labour in society, everybody performed the same tasks, and therefore acted and thought in the same way. Conversely in a society in which people specialised in certain tasks organic solidarity was assured through the mutual economic interdependence of society's members.

However, if a collective consciousness is sufficient to generate the mechanical type of social solidarity then there would not be significant conflict between people sharing a collective consciousness, in historical societies this was not always the case. Likewise if functional interdependence is sufficient to generate organic social solidarity then we would not see significant conflict between people who are interdependent upon each other, again in history this is not always so.

In a society characterised by mechanical solidarity Durkheim argued that cohesion and collective action was enabled by the collective consciousness of society. This collective consciousness is the ideas and behaviours that are shared by members of the community. When people thought and felt the same about actions they were easily able to cooperate in undertaking these actions with little external motivation. However, historical examples of this happening are rare. Durkheim describes the horde as expressing the most mechanical of social solidarities. As Thijssen (2012) describes it, the horde is the human equivalent of the herd, a social mass where there are no sub societal units between the horde and the individual. Although the term horde is most often associated with the steppe people of central Asia, Durkheim argued that the society most characteristic of the horde were the Australian Aboriginal people (Durkheim, 1984; Hawkins, 2004; Merton, 1934).

In Durkheim's conception the collective consciousness generates social solidarity which in turns defines the boundaries of society. However both the Australian and Central Asian population were riddled by social conflict despite the various shared activities, customs, languages and religions of these societies. The Australian

people had a varied armoury of weapons and shields before the time of European contact (Attenbrow, 2010), and oral history and documents both confirm the presence of intergroup conflict in Australian Aboriginal society (Ferguson, 2000; Gat, 2000). Likewise, warfare on the central Asian steppes was endemic over many centuries, despite the very similar way of life and world views of the various tribes (Irons, 1974; Prusek, 1966). In fact the societies of these populations are described as the bands, clans or tribes that existed within the population sharing the collective consciousness. These are not perfect examples of a shared collective consciousness, because for instance the various societies in conflict often had different totemic beliefs. However, these conflicts work to undermine the progression from shared lifestyles to a shared collective consciousness leading to social solidarity finally leading to a single society. It is clear that while the collective consciousness may be important for social solidarity it is not sufficient to explain how social solidarity is created.

By contrast, in an organic society the collective consciousness grows smaller as people begin to undertake a more diverse range of actions. In this form of society Durkheim argued that social solidarity is achieved through the mutual economic interdependence of the society's members. Because everyone depends upon the labour of everyone else, all people must move in sync to ensure their own survival. I find the argument that economic interdependence leads to social solidarity to be shallow. Collective action is an important aspect of social solidarity and requires a driving agency, it cannot occur as an automatic effect of people fulfilling their ordinary roles. What Durkheim describes as organic solidarity and his description of anomic solidarity may be much nearer to each other than Durkheim's argument

allows. In organic solidarity people are unified because they each perform a necessary part of a collective goal. In anomic solidarity people perform their social roles without knowledge of the goals they are working towards. Based on these two definitions it seems logical that the detailed division of labour will create an anomic form of solidarity, organic solidarity will only result in special circumstances when the individual members of society share a collective consciousness. In an organic society social consent is difficult to obtain for many collective actions. Where there is no collective consciousness around an action there will develop conflicts within society around the action. With two groups moving in countervailing directions on an issue, the interdependencies between people will cause social movements in both directions, meaning that society cannot take action as a collective. The only issues in which an organic society can actually act as a collective are those where there is a shared collective consciousness.

For instance in a business many of the interactions between workers and owners are conflictual in nature, because the parties involved have conflicting interests, which sometimes makes it difficult for a business to act in concert towards a single goal. Even when the business does appear to be moving towards a common goal there is often a level of passive resistance expressed by members of the workforce which serves to limit the efficiency of the business (Gellerman, 1976). The capacity of a modern business to act as a unit is not because the workers all depend on each other and management to fulfil their individual tasks and goals. Instead, it is because the concepts of the contract, wage labour and employment have all entered into the collective consciousness. This collective consciousness has helped to normalise and conceal the conflicting interests involved in modern businesses.

There is another issue with economic interdependence as a force generating social solidarity. That is there is economic interdependence between people in all societies. While the people in a hunter-gatherer society may undertake a narrow range of economic activities which all are more or less competent in this does not mean that people do not depend on others to maintain their livelihoods. In fact it could be argued that the nearer to subsistence a society is the greater the economic interdependence within society will be and the higher the level of organic solidarity. This line of thought runs counter to Durkheim's argument that organic solidarity has become more prevalent over time.

Like the societies discussed earlier, economic interdependence has not defined the boundaries of society. The expansion of trade and empires in the nineteenth century brought much of the world into a system of economic interdependence but did not prevent colonial, civil or interstate wars from developing between participants in this system of economic interdependency. Again it could be argued that the states involved in this economic system were not sufficiently interdependent to prevent conflict. However, given the spread of economic events like the great depression it is clear that even if interdependence is too strong a term then at least the economies of the various states were closely bound to each other.

Durkheim's argument stood in opposition to the thought of a number of his contemporaries in this regard. Herbert Spencer and others viewed their contemporary society as being largely free from social bonds while Tönnies argued that solidarity could only be found in a pre-industrial *gemeinschaft* or face to face



community, Industrial gesellschaft was instead based upon individualism (Coser, 1984). Durkheim argued that both industrial and pre-industrial societies produced social solidarity. However, the two forms of solidarity had different origins and resulted in different social outcomes. Marx (Morrison, 2007) argues that the division of labour between classes would not lead to social solidarity but instead leads to class conflict with solidarity becoming present only within economic classes as their class consciousness develops. Of course Marx and Durkheim meant slightly different things when they said the division of labour, Marx viewed it as primarily a separation between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat while for Durkheim the division was between occupational groups. This means that the observation of the difference in conceiving social solidarity in industrial society may be overstated. However, Marx's idea of class solidarity is nearer to Durkheim's conception of mechanical solidarity than the organic solidarity that Durkheim believed to unite industrial society.

Durkheim (1984) also made a distinction between negative and a normal form of social solidarity. Negative solidarity is a social cohesion that results from people simply trying to coexist with each other. In this form of society relationships are temporary and only contingent upon people's immediate needs. Durkheim (1984, p. 83) says that 'negative solidarity on its own brings about no integration,' On the other hand normal social solidarity requires relationships which extend beyond the absolute minimum necessary and acts to integrate people and allow them to act as a social unit.

Durkheim also discusses forced and anomic solidarity as temporary abnormal forms

of social solidarity. Forced solidarity is when coercion is used to maintain the unity of society, Durkheim argues that an external equality is needed between individuals in society so that they cannot be coerced into a social position they do not wish to occupy. Anomic solidarity is a form of solidarity in which people are not aware of the common purpose which they serve, and they only fulfil their function in the larger goals because of their position. We have already discussed how anomic solidarity can be very similar to the organic form of solidarity that Durkheim described.

There is still one final point must be considered before we can turn to bringing together this discussion on social solidarity and that is related to the concept of society. This is, how inclusive does social solidarity have to be? If a society has half the population that has a very strong level of solidarity while the other half is completely atomised, does this society have a high level of solidarity? Or low? Or perhaps the differences average out? Ultimately a significant part of this question is whether the atomised portion of this society can actually be considered a part of society.

For the purpose of this thesis I have chosen to take an inclusive view, that is, all people in the area dominated by a society are members of that society. I understand that this point may prove controversial but in the end it is actually of little consequence for this thesis. If I had decided the other way then I would only find high levels of social solidarity but in societies consisting of a variable proportion of the population. Instead I find variable levels of social solidarity across the entire population. The reason I adopted an inclusive view of society is because it better

fits the conception of society based around the nation state that was common in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and to the present day, while still being workable outside this period. The other question in the above hypothetical example was whether imbalances of social solidarity average out. I maintain that they do, that a high level of social solidarity in one part of society will strengthen social solidarity overall while a pocket of low solidarity will weaken the overall level of social solidarity.

From the discussion above we can see that social solidarity is a force that binds people together for a common purpose. We can also see that a collective consciousness is an important, but not sufficient factor in social solidarity. Durkheim also described some aberrant forms of solidarity. There is the negative form of solidarity in which social relationships and interactions are at the minimum level necessary for coexistence. This is one step above the Hobbesian state of nature, which can be conceived of as the complete absence of any form of solidarity. Negative solidarity does imply that social solidarity requires sustained social interactions that bring people together. Forced solidarity is a situation in which people do not support the society but are coerced into supporting it, this implies that consent to society is an important factor in social solidarity. Along the same lines it is important that the purpose of society is known by the participants in order to avoid the aberrant anomic form of solidarity.

For the purposes of this thesis I define social solidarity as an attitude of common interest and mutuality that unites people for a known and consented common purpose, that is underpinned by institutions and social structures that facilitate this

understanding and meet people's material and psychological needs. This definition captures the core argument of Durkheim while avoiding anomic, forced and negative solidarity.

### *Social Solidarity and Human Needs*

By looking at historical examples it is clear that Durkheim's argument that social solidarity arose out of either similarity, in the form of the collective consciousness, or diversity, in the form of the division of labour, is sufficient explanations of why societies have solidarity. But Durkheim was close to explaining why societies have solidarity and the characteristics of a society that has a high level of solidarity. The point where he came closest to explaining the nature of social solidarity is in the following quote.

*'It is certain that solidarity, whilst being pre-eminently a social fact, is dependent upon our individual organism. In order to be capable of existing it must fit our physical and psychological constitution.'* (Durkheim, 1984, p. 27)

In other words, while the level of social solidarity is a characteristic of a society, it is dependent on meeting the wants and needs of its individual members. Social solidarity is actually a product of a society that meets the material and psychological needs of its members. Creating a society that individuals wish to remain a participant in would lead to a society that is bound tightly together. Durkheim's collective consciousness is an important contribution to meeting people's psychological needs while the division of labour and the productivity it enables is

an important factor in meeting people's material needs. But neither collective consciousness nor the division of labour on their own is capable of meeting the needs of individuals within society. Likewise in my development of the concept of social solidarity I have moved away from using mechanical and organic solidarity as the two poles of social solidarity and instead look at these two as being complementary aspects of social solidarity. Instead, the two poles have become deprivation and fulfilment, this is the difference between starving in a society of strangers and being materially comfortable in a friendly society.

In this section I argue that there is a link between social solidarity and the fulfilment of people's material and psychological needs. Building on self-determination theory I identify three psychological needs, relatedness, autonomy and competency. However these needs have been constructed and used for psychological research and as such are focused on individuals instead of societies. The first task of this section is to develop these concepts so that they can be applied to a society as a whole. I argue that a society that meets the people's need for relatedness is one that has stable social institutions across a range of social activities. I argue that a society with a high level of autonomy is one in which people have a high level of influence over social decisions and institutions. I do not develop the concept of competency and do not use it in the rest of this thesis.

I then describe how stable social institutions lead to a higher level of social solidarity. I argue that stable social institutions which meet the need for relatedness of the people leads to repeated interactions between people who often have a high level of emotional entrainment. Building on symbolic interactionism and the theory

of interaction ritual chains I argue that these repeated interactions will lead to the creation, expansion and maintenance of a collective consciousness. The higher strength of the collective consciousness will lead to higher levels of social solidarity.

The psychological need for autonomy is a feeling that a person has control over their own actions. I argue that meeting the need for autonomy increases social solidarity as it increases the knowledge of, and consent to the social project. It will be recalled from the previous section that social solidarity is the binding together of individuals into society for a common purpose. In a society characterised by high levels of solidarity the purpose of this society is known and consented to by the members of society. When the decision making processes within society are discussed and people have influence on these processes then people will have a greater understanding of the goals of their society and will be more likely to consent to the objectives of the society. I also contrast the concept of autonomy with the idea of freedom as being the absence of constraints. Autonomy is not the absence of constraints but is instead people having decision making power, with or without constraints.

Finally I look at the material needs of people and the relationship between material needs and social solidarity. Building on strain theory I argue that the strain resulting from material deprivation and insecurity result in a lowering level of trust and empathy as well as a higher level of crime and deviance. Because of these factors there is a corresponding decline in social solidarity as people's material needs fail to be met.

In this section, the psychological needs of people are discussed. There are two contemporary psychological schools of thought which can aid our understanding of why people form societies and solidify already existing societies. The first of these is self-determination theory which holds that people have three fundamental psychological needs, autonomy, competency and relatedness. The other school of thought is grounded in the 'belongingness hypothesis' which argues that people have a strong drive to belong in groups with others.

In practice, both belongingness and relatedness have been defined in a similar manner. There is a single article which forms the basis for both the belongingness hypothesis and relatedness in self-determination theory. This is 'The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation' by Baumeister and Leary (1995).

Baumeister and Leary offer a comprehensive argument in support of a definition of the belongingness hypothesis which states that people are driven to form stable, long-term caring relationships with others. They argue that there are nine tests which must be passed in order to prove their hypothesis. That is do relationships:

*'(a) produce effects readily under all but adverse conditions, (b) have affective consequences, (c) direct cognitive processing, (d) lead to ill effects (such as on health or adjustment) when thwarted, (e) elicit goal-oriented behavior designed to satisfy it (subject to motivational patterns such as object substitutability and satiation),*

*(f) be universal in the sense of applying to all people, (g) not be derivative of other motives, (h) affect a broad variety of behaviors, and (i) have implications that go beyond immediate psychological functioning. ' (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 498)*

They use research from a variety of fields to argue that all of these tests are met, at least to a degree. Because their research comes from a variety of sources they do not have a consistent definition of relatedness in use across all the studies. For instance they looked at relationship formation when people had been randomly separated into two groups as examples of how relationships formed under most conditions (criteria a) and that these relationships led to differing behaviour (criteria b) However when looking at relationship breakdown or absence (criteria d) much of their research was looking at intimate couples separating. This leaves their argument open to the criticism that some types of relationships empirically show aspects of being a fundamental need but that no specific relationship meets all the necessary criteria.

However, given the strength of the evidence supporting their argument in a number of cases it seems more likely that people do have a fundamental need for long term mutually caring relationships. Furthermore it seems likely that this need manifests readily and in non-intimate relationships.

Since this central article there has been a lot of progress made in developing the theory that people are driven to form long term mutually caring relationships. However much of this research serves to make the drive to connect with others less



clear than the work of Baumeister and Leary. For example Cockshaw, Shocket and Obst (2013) undertook a study of 369 Australians to determine the relationship between depression and belongingness. This study found that the variation in the measured belongingness accounted for 43% of the variance in the depression scale results of the participants. This provides strong evidence that not feeling socially connected to others is a significant factor in human mental health. Cockshaw et. al. (2013) found that workplace belongingness contributed 16% of this variance in depression while general belongingness was 11% with the rest being a combination of the two. The workplace and general measurements did not moderate each other, having a high sense of belonging in general did not reduce the depressive symptoms that resulted from low workplace belongingness or vice versa. In fact throughout this study the two measurements of belongingness gave every indication of being independent of each other, a particular score on one test was not a very good predictor of score on the other test. To further complicate the results of this study there was a strong gender difference amongst the respondents. Male respondents were more strongly affected by a low general belongingness than a low workplace belongingness while female respondents were strongly affected by their sense of workplace belongingness while general belongingness was less important.

This study was in general taken to be supportive of a theory put forward by Leary and Cox(2007), that there are multiple forms of social relationships that people are driven to form with others and that all are needed to create well-adjusted individuals. They argue that there are five different relationship categories: macro-level, instrumental coalitions, mating relationships, kin relationships and supportive friendships. Macro-level relationships are large scale – whole of society

identifications, these can be as small as a clan or village or as large as a nation. These relationships are ways that people feel they can politically influence their society. Instrumental coalitions are working groups, people are driven to work in groups for a collective goal which benefits the members of the group. Mating relationships are based on the desire people have to reproduce. Kinship is based on the dependency of children and adults. It acts as a form of safety net to minimise the individual risks in life. The final relationship category is supportive friendships which directly address the need that people feel for sympathy and other forms of emotional support. Leary and Cox (2007) also argue that people have an underlying need to belong based on some evidence of substitution amongst the categories in some instances. However, since the main example they offer is in shifts between mating relationships and supportive friendships it can be argued that what is actually occurring is that the mating relationship performs a double function of both reproduction (or its potential) and emotional support.

Kelly (2001) also provides some important observations for understanding people's need to belong. She argues that the degree to which a person needs to form these relationships varies from person to person and in the same individual over time. Kelly (2001) also demonstrates that people react differently to rejection, and that their method of coping with rejection can be predicted by their previous history of rejection. Generally, people who have been rejected previously are more likely to respond negatively to future rejections and are in turn more likely to be rejected as a result. This demonstrates that for some people, the absence of these supportive relationships in the past make it more difficult for them to develop supportive relationships in the future.

The final point relevant to relatedness is how it varies across different cultures. In the 1960's Anant (1969) compared the belongingness needs of university students in India and Canada. He used a definition and measurement of belongingness that was different than that used by later researchers which effected his results slightly, but he still found that there was a broad similarity between Indian and Canadian students. The differences were likely the result of the economic differences between 1960's India and Canada. Sultan (2010) looked at Pakistan more recently and again found that there was a similarity in the need for relatedness between the Western studies and the results of studies in Pakistan. An Australian study (Watt & Badger, 2009) on homesickness amongst international university students from 42 countries found that length of residence in Australia was a poor predictor of the need for an individual to belong and of the level of homesickness an individual found. This suggests that the felt need to belong was not dependent on the acculturation of the individual but instead was a more fundamental need that was of similar strength across Australia and the other 42 countries involved in the study.

With the support of the above evidence it is fair to propose that people need relationships which are stable in the long-term and involve mutual care. Furthermore, these relationships need to be facilitated across a variety of social institutions. It will not be sufficient for one relationship category in society to be stable and caring while in other parts of society (or life) relationships are unstable and exploitative.

Another of the psychological needs that self-determination theory proposes is

autonomy “... a basic social need that concerns the experience of self-endorsement or volition in behaviour. Autonomous actions, in other words, are those perceived as freely or willingly enacted” (Ryan, Bernstein, & Brown, 2010, p. 100). Autonomy is the feeling that an action or task is willingly undertaken. A person's need for autonomy can be met when they have little real choice in their actions if they believe that they are not being constrained to make that choice (Vallerand, Pelletier, & Koestner, 2008; Wichmann, 2011). However, this is not to imply that a social order based upon deception is equal to a more honest society, from a social solidarity perspective it is clear that a deceptive society will only have solidarity as long as the deception holds and so must be considered a lesser form of solidarity than an honest society. Constraint of choices also relates back to the concept of the collective consciousness and what actions are perceived as being right and wrong. If there are many possible actions in a given circumstance, but only one of them is considered 'right' in that society's collective consciousness many people will freely choose that action and will not feel constrained despite the moral limitations imposed by collective consciousness. In fact for all members in a society to have autonomy some constraints on the actions of all must exist in order to prevent coercion.

We need to clarify that autonomy is different from the concepts of liberty or freedom as they are commonly understood. These concepts are generally understood as meaning a lack of all external constraints, that the individual can act without concern for others. Autonomy is not the ability to act without concern for others but is instead the ability to choose how to act in relation to others. When we are instructed how to act by others we feel a lack of autonomy. However, when we

choose to consider others thoughts and feelings when deciding how to act we still have choice over the decision made, this does not subtract from feelings of autonomy. Schwartz (2000) has described how liberty, in the sense of making decisions without constraints or clear guidelines, can have negative psychological outcomes. In Schwartz's article and in the particular examples that he discusses it is not the high level of freedom that is leading to the high levels of mental health problems. Instead the lack of a collective consciousness built up through people fulfilling their need for relatedness is responsible for both the lack of social rules and increased mental health problems. The freedom of this society coincides with the absence of a collective consciousness.

Competency is the third of the psychological needs put forward by proponents of self-determination theory, Ryan, Bernstein and Brown (2010, p. 100) define competency as 'feeling effective in one's activities, as well as having opportunities to utilize one's capacities.' There are two aspects of the need for competency, the first is that we need to feel that we are effective while the second is that we feel that our skills etc. are not superfluous. Being competent is not the same as being well educated or particularly talented. Competency requires that the knowledge and skills that an individual may have is also used by that person.

Now that we have developed an understanding of what psychological feelings people are driven to achieve we have to develop the fields of relatedness and autonomy such that they can be observed in social institutions. I was not able to develop the psychological need for competency in the same way and so I do not use this concept in the rest of this thesis. Relatedness describes the need that people

have to develop long term mutually caring relationships I argue that this type of relationship can be facilitated in a society which has stable social institutions. Autonomy is the feeling that individuals voluntarily choose how they act, however, in collective decision making, it is more appropriate to look at influence over the decision making process rather than control over the decision made.

I argue that the collective consciousness as described by Durkheim is created in societies that facilitate people meeting their individual psychological need for belonging. This argument can be best developed by a discussion of symbolic interactionism and interaction ritual chains. Relatedness describes the need that individuals have to develop mutually caring long term relationships. I argue that the individual fulfilment of these needs is related to the presence of stable social institutions. In this argument a social institution is a social space where people come together for a common purpose or to meet a societal goal. These stable social institutions and the repeated social interactions that lead to the strengthening of the collective consciousness of society.

Symbolic interactionism (Burns, 1992; Goffman, 2003; Meltzer, Petras, & Reynolds, 1975) is a school of sociological thought in which the interpretations of actions by the people involved are of more significance than the objective results of the action. People associate objects and actions with particular values, the values that are associated form a symbolic realm of existence which permeates the physical realm of existence. When deciding how to act, people are operating in the symbolic world, as they consider the meaning of the objects that they will act with and what these meanings imply for their self. When interacting with other people we do not

decide our actions based upon their actual reality but instead base our actions on what we expect the reaction of the mental approximation of that other person to do. This sometimes leads to embarrassment or confusion as the mental approximation we had of the other person did not predict the actions of the other person. This same phenomena can be observed with objects and actions as culture shock.

For effective communication we need to have an extensive shared symbolic realm, the most basic example of this is a shared language but this misses all the non-linguistic aspects of communication and the sub-texts that are necessary for understanding much of what is said in conversation. When it comes to collective action the shared symbolic understanding necessary is even greater, the goal of the collective action must be understood as must the role of each of the actors and the responses each of them must make to the unfolding action. Delays caused by uncertainty or the need to communicate what must happen can prove a significant drain on the effectiveness of collective actions.

People are good at constructing these symbolic worlds. An experiment undertaken by Garfinkel (Allan, 2011) demonstrates this clearly. In this experiment participants were instructed to ask therapists yes or no questions of the participants own choosing to help them with some difficulty in their life. The therapists responded at random, there was absolutely no significance behind the answers they were giving. However in the post session interviews the participants had all constructed themes that the therapists were trying to get across and resolved apparent contradictions in the answers given. This demonstrates that people will give meaning to random data and will expend considerable effort in doing so.

The shared symbolic understanding of the world that is a fundamental aspect of the symbolic interactionism school of sociological thought is more or less the same as the collective consciousness that Durkheim discussed. The differences between the collective consciousness and the shared symbolic world are the result of the different viewpoint that academics have taken of the same social fact. But as was stated earlier, this collective consciousness and relatedness are linked. The former follows from fulfilling the need for the latter, because individuals will readily create symbolic meanings in the world to explain events for themselves. The interaction ritual chain theory of Randall Collins (2004) offers an explanation of how the collective consciousness arises out of people developing long term mutually caring relationships with one another.

Collins looks at interactions between people as rituals. He argues that the level of rituality of an interaction is dependent upon the emotional entrainment and the mutual focus of attention reached during the ritual.

*'[W]here mutual focus and entrainment become intense, self-reinforcing feedback processes generate moments of cultural significance, experiences where culture is created, denigrated or reinforced.'* (Collins, 2004, pp. xi–xii)

From these intense interaction rituals Collins describes four results: that social solidarity between the participants increases, that the level of emotional energy changes, that people develop shared symbols and that people develop a shared



morality. The last two results of interaction ritual chains are what result in a collective consciousness developing. Where people are engaged in long term relationships with one another then the length of these ritual chains will increase. If the relationships of the people involved in the ritual are also based upon mutual care then the level of emotional entrainment is likely to be high, strengthening the results of the ritual. In a society with social institutions characterised by long term mutually caring relationships it follows that the rituals of everyday interaction will lead to a strong collective consciousness forming amongst those people.

The need for autonomy describes how people need to have a feeling of control over their own lives. I have argued that in social situations this control is best conceived of as influence over the collective decision making processes of society. This relates to social solidarity because social solidarity is the binding of people together for a common purpose. In a society in which all decisions and projects are discussed, decided and implemented in an autonomy enhancing manner then this common purpose will be known by all people involved, which avoids anomic solidarity. An autonomous decision making process will also increase the consent of people towards the social projects and decisions. Because the decisions are discussed and people are able to exert their influence over the process then they will be more likely to consent to the decisions made, which avoids the forced form of solidarity.

Autonomy as used in psychological theory is the feeling that individuals voluntarily choose how they act, having people's need for autonomy met will strengthen social solidarity in two ways. Firstly there is the improved wellbeing, mental health and happiness of individuals who have their need for autonomy met (Ng et al., 2012;

Sheldon, Ryan, & Reis, 1996; Wichmann, 2011). People who are happy and healthy are likely to be content in their society and, at least, are unlikely to prove to be a disruptive influence in society. However this positive effect will probably be overwhelmed by the more direct influence that the need for relatedness has on community development and also moderated by the final psychological need for competency.

The second way that a high level of autonomy will enhance social solidarity is for a reason touched upon by Durkheim. He wrote about aberrant forms of solidarity which involved either coercion or the ignorance of the people regarding what they were working towards. This form of solidarity while outwardly presenting signs of cohesion and stability is actually highly unstable. The historical example of the Eastern European states in 1989-1990 is the one that springs to mind when discussing the stability, or lack thereof, of societies where the solidarity is forced. True social solidarity requires that people are autonomous, that they choose to act, engage and care for their fellows in society. When people are autonomous and decisions and projects are discussed publicly people will be aware of what is happening in their society. Likewise if decisions are made in such a way that everyone has been able to exert their influence over the decision making process then the people will be far more likely to consent to the decision and projects of society.

People have material needs as well as psychological needs, these also have an effect on social solidarity. I use strain theory to describe how societies that are characterised by low levels of material security are also those that have a lower

level of trust and empathy and a higher level of crime and deviance. Essentially when people are not materially secure than they are more likely to act selfishly and social solidarity is lower.

The question of what constitutes material or economic needs of people is one which we have not discussed so far but it very pertinent in a discussion of social solidarity. Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) provide a solid argument about the material needs of people. Their research demonstrated that the economic inequality of individuals in society would lead to different health outcomes and differing levels of empathy and trust for people in that society. Empathy and trust are essential for mutually caring relationships which we earlier argued to lead to social solidarity. Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) found that the wealth of a society effected these social facts in two ways, first very low levels of wealth per capita a positive increase in wealth leads to increases in empathy and trust. Secondly, once the wealth has reached a low to moderate level per capita the level of empathy and trust is more closely linked to how equally the wealth is spread around society than the per capita wealth of society.

Strain theory of criminology is also relevant when discussing inequality. In part this argues that crime and social deviance may result from inequality. Strain theory (Agnew, 1992, 2001, 2011; Zhang, Wieczorek, Conwell, & Tu, 2011) holds that people become more likely to commit deviant acts as the strains on them increase. A common source of these strains are the differences between two competing facts, such as between people's aspirations and their ability to meet these aspirations. Strain theory relates to social solidarity in two ways. Two of the most significant

sources of strain (Zhang et al., 2011) are related to inequality, these are relative poverty and the difference between an individual's aspirations and their reality. The resulting crime and deviance will lead to a decline in the levels of trust and empathy in society, further accentuating the decline associated with inequality itself.

The work around the social implications of inequality have only looked at contemporary societies, which leaves open the possibility that in other societies it is possible for the specific effects of inequality on social solidarity to be differ to an extent. In particular the effects of inequality may be moderated or enhanced by whether the collective consciousness of that society deems the prevailing level of inequality to be justifiable. This is only conjecture but it is a point which I will keep in mind throughout this thesis.

When examining a particular society to ascertain its relative level of social solidarity, there are two economic factors to examine. Firstly whether the population has their basic needs met, and secondly if they have their basic needs met how equally the wealth in society spread around is.

Social solidarity is built upon the material and psychological needs of people. The collective consciousness grows as long term mutually caring relationships based on empathy and trust are developed. And the knowledge and consent to a collective purpose increases as the level of autonomy in society increases. When the material needs of people in society are not being met, or are insecure then this increases strain on individuals which lowers the levels of empathy and trust in society and reduces the level of social solidarity.

## **Observing Social Solidarity**

This section of the thesis searches for characteristics of society that can be applied across different historical forms of society to observe and compare social solidarity. These characteristics of society relate to central elements of society, particularly the presence of stable social institutions, poverty, inequality, outsider groups and the common methods of governance in that society. Together these elements are deemed to be useful comparative indicators of degree and form of social solidarity in different historical societies.

Social solidarity is defined here as an attitude of common interest and mutuality that unites people for a known and consented common purpose, that is underpinned by institutions and social structures that facilitate this understanding and meet peoples material and psychological needs. Social solidarity is the force that keeps a society together and comes about in societies in which individual's needs are met. There are a number of social facts and institutions which can be observed in societies that either effect the level of social solidarity in that society are indicative of the level of social solidarity within that society.

In the previous section I discussed the effects that poverty and inequality have on the levels of trust and empathy in society and following from that the level of social solidarity. Levels of poverty or inequality have a significant impact on the level of social solidarity across different forms of society. It is argued that inequality and poverty are a significant constraint on social solidarity. Conversely it is argued that broad material security combined with material equality strongly indicates the presence of solidarity. However this is not the only social fact or institution that is

related to social solidarity.

An important fact that facilitates social solidarity is the stability of social units across a range of activities. Earlier we discussed that people need to feel a sense of belonging in five types of relationship, macro-level, instrumental, mating, kinship and friendship. In some societies all of these relationships are fulfilled through a single social unit, such as the familial clan, however often these different forms of relationship are spread across a number of social units. For example, in contemporary western society the workplace, nation, family, school, clubs, churches are a few of many institutions which can fulfil the human need for belongingness. The strength, stability and reach of these institutions within society is what is important to meet the individual need for relatedness and therefore social solidarity. In a clan it is impossible not to be a member of the relevant social institution, the clan itself. However, in modern western societies it is possible for an individual to not be involved in relationships of one or more of these forms. It is even possible for an individual not to be involved in any relationships of any of these forms. So when trying to make a judgement on the level of social solidarity in a society we must look at the institutions that people use to engage with one another but also the reach of these institutions through societies, the stability of these institutions with regard to population flows as well as their effectiveness in promoting a mutually caring attitude between participants.

A similar effect is caused by outsider groups, portions of the population that exist outside of the established social institutions. Most societies have an underclass in some form or another but the size of this class varies across different societies.

While it is be tempting to express the size of the underclass as a percentage of the population, in practice this is difficult, especially so in the earlier time periods studied in this thesis. However, the presence of an underclass is observable in the historical record and some idea of the relative size of this class can be observed through commentary in the transition period from one era to another. In this thesis I shall be using the latter methodology to describe the relative size of the underclass.

Durkheim (1984) argued that the form of social solidarity that a society used could be inferred by examining their laws. Unfortunately, Durkheim's argument that mechanical solidarity is characterised by repressive laws while organic society is characterised by restitutive laws was based upon poor ethnographic research (Hawkins, 2004; Merton, 1934). In making this argument Durkheim makes an effort to expand the concept of laws beyond the traditional legal sense to include customs and other forms of social regulation. He viewed these regulations as resulting from the lasting social relations of the individuals in society which over time became institutionally embedded in order to preserve these relationships. Unlike myself Durkheim was trying to learn the different forms that social solidarity take, making his arguments around restitutive and repressive laws less relevant for my thesis. However, while the laws of society are not relevant for discerning differing levels of social solidarity, the method used to make these laws is very relevant.

The method a society uses to construct its laws is indicative of the level of autonomy that people within that society have, and in turn indicates the extent of social solidarity in that society. Here I use laws to mean a formal agreement of future conduct, the breach of which may have consequences beyond ill-feeling from

fellow members of the society. To put this statement in the context of modern western society, a promise made between two people (such as to meet at a certain time or place) or a general social expectation (such as language use in front of children) are not 'laws' as they do not have significant repercussions if they are broken. Contracts however I consider to be laws as the breach of a contract may have financial or other implications. It should be noted that the definition of law that I use here is slightly narrower than that used by Durkheim in his work, since I do not include customs as laws. In terms of social solidarity it is important that people feel that they have some degree of choice in how laws are created, implemented or modified. This is essential if they are to feel some degree of autonomy in the law making process. It will be recalled that psychological need for autonomy is a feeling that an individual has choice in their decision and actions. However, for laws operating at the social level choice is the wrong term to use. A better way of looking at the issue of autonomy would be the ability of individuals to affect the outcomes of the governance process. Although I will admit that this last statement goes beyond the research on autonomy that I have cited it is a logical extension of the principle of the need for autonomy to the law making process. This also ties in with the need for relatedness through macro-level relationships, these are those which provide a common identity and allow an individual to influence the decision making of their society. A society in which individuals have a high influence over the systems of governance will result in the members of that society feeling a greater fulfilment of their need for autonomy while also strengthening the macro-level relationships that are important for fulfilling the need for relatedness.

Crime rates can also be another social indicator of social solidarity. Earlier when



discussing mechanical and organic solidarity I said that military conflict within the extent of the collective consciousness or economic interdependency undermined the argument that these two alone were sufficient explanations for social solidarity. However every society has some internal conflict, regardless of the strength of any of the factors described above. This conflict occurs across a broad range and not all of it necessarily undermines solidarity. At one extreme there are civil wars which indicate a breakdown of social solidarity, at the other extreme there are interpersonal disagreements which could usually run their course without disrupting social solidarity.

In between there are crimes which provide an interesting question. Durkheim(1984; Morrison, 2007) argued that crimes would ultimately support the collective consciousness as the punishment associated with the crime would provide a ritual that would help reinforce the boundaries of social conduct. While this may be true, not all crimes are punished and the crimes themselves lower the level of trust between people in society which is an important prerequisite for people developing the relationships necessary to meet their need for belonging. Overall this decline in trust in society is likely to undermine social solidarity to a greater extent than the greater cohesion resulting from the reinforcement of boundaries. Crime also generates an outsider group, criminals, which is a breach in an inclusive model of society. However, while crime could also provide an informative perspective on social solidarity I could not find sufficient evidence to make confident judgements on the changing rates of crime. In part this is the result of the scarcity of source information for the earlier eras and in part due to the changing definition of what acts constitute crime.

Earlier I argued that there were some social structures and institutions that indicated the level of social solidarity and others that generated social solidarity. However, all the discussion points can be viewed as both generators and indicators of social solidarity at the same time, social solidarity has a form of feedback loop. For example a high level of social solidarity will tend to decrease inequality, while this decrease will lead to an increase in caring relationships in society and a further increase in social solidarity. In this example a low level of inequality is both an indicator of social solidarity and a generator of higher levels of social solidarity.

Stable social institutions, low levels of poverty and inequality and autonomy enhancing forms of governance tend to generate social solidarity as these facilitate the type of social interactions that are the core of social solidarity. The size of outsider groups is better understood as an indicator of the level of social solidarity. Outsider groups are a direct break in the solidarity of a society and as such is an important indicator of the extent of solidarity.

### **Conclusion**

Social solidarity is an attitude of common interest and mutuality that unites people for a known and consented common purpose, that is underpinned by institutions and social structures that facilitate this understanding and meet people's material and psychological needs. I have argued that social solidarity is generated by social institutions that facilitate members of that society to meet their material and psychological needs. Looking at social solidarity from this perspective it is possible

to examine societies to discern which ones are more solidaristic than others. In particular I will look at the levels of poverty and inequality within a society, the presence of stable institutions at a variety of social levels and the presence and size of outsider groups outside these institutions, and finally the methods of governance common in the society. While some of these factors tend to be indicative of social solidarity and others to be causative I find that together they provide an acceptable tool for assessing and comparing of social solidarity across different historical societies. However these factors cannot be a complete list of the relevant factors for social solidarity, for instance there is no direct measure of the level of competency in this list. Throughout the rest of this thesis we will be using these factors to examine various historical societies in order to practically demonstrate how this perspective can be used.

## **Feudal Society**

In this chapter I examine feudal society to infer the level of social solidarity in a typical feudal society. I describe feudal society with an eye to key characteristics that I identified in the previous chapter. These are the presence of stable social institutions, the common forms of governance in society, the levels of inequality and poverty and the presence of outsider groups. Generally speaking the feudal village provided a very stable social institution for most of the people in feudal society, which enhanced autonomy through its decision making processes and helped keep inequality and poverty in check. However feudal society had a significant economic underclass as well as outsider groups based on religion or health status. Because of this while feudal society had a high level of social solidarity compared to the other societies examined in this thesis it is not a perfect form of social solidarity.

The feudal social system developed out of the expansion of the Frankish Carolingian Empire in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and it only disappeared from Europe with the emancipation of the Russian serfs in 1905. This social system developed as the Franks adapted the villa and slave based economic system they had inherited from the Romans to the new grains that were beginning to be farmed, and the maintenance of heavily armoured cavalry which were the backbone of the Frankish military forces (Mitterauer, 2010).

The institutions that were developed were based around a feudal agreement between lords and vassals. The vassals had obligations to the lords and the lords had

obligations to the vassals (Bisson, 1994; Mitterauer, 2010). It should be noted that there is some controversy around whether this society should be termed feudal or not. This is because only a minority of the population was directly engaged in a feudal relationship (Fossier, 2010). The feudal agreement was between members of the aristocracy while the relationship between an aristocrat or clergyman and the peasantry was usually called manorial or seigneurial. In this essay I use the term feudal society because while there are differences between these two types of agreements there are also a number of similarities. While feudal society is not a perfect term to describe society in Western Europe between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries I find it to be a term that is commonly understood. This society was based on a differentiation of people into different estates. The most common description of this differentiation were the three estates, people were divided into those that work, those that pray and those that fight.

In this chapter we will look at feudal society to infer the degree of solidarity that was present in this society. Firstly we will describe those that work, in both their rural and urban settings. Then those that pray, the Roman Catholic Church, which was the dominant in feudal Western Europe until the reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The nobility will not be described separately as the essential aspects of their role in society are covered in the section on the other two estates. Using this description I will then determine the key features of feudal society and the implications that these features had for the social solidarity of Western Europe in the feudal era.

## **Rural Society**

The vast majority (80-90%) of the world's population before the 19<sup>th</sup> century lived in rural areas and were dependent upon the produce of the land for their livelihood.(Braudel, 1981) In Europe the population was gradually becoming more urbanised, but the rural lifestyle was still dominant. Because of this, the relationships that were common in rural areas are central to any discussion of the social solidarity of medieval Europe. Through looking at the structure of the rural village we can ascertain much about the level of social solidarity in feudal society. The following discussion of the village draws out the aspects of the rural lifestyle that is relevant to looking at the stability of social institutions, methods of governance, poverty, inequality and the presence of outsider groups. The relevant facts for this discussion are the stability of village institutions, the collective decision making of the village and the reciprocal nature of social obligations, as well as the provisions for the welfare of the villagers and the willingness of villages to exclude others.

The most common form of social organisation in feudal society was the manor and associated villages. In the feudal era the lord of the manor owned the rights to an area of land, the peasants who farmed the land did so in exchange for providing certain services to the manorial lord. Peasants were divided into two classes depending upon the services they gave to their lord, freedmen only owed their lord manorial dues in cash or a share of their harvest, villeins on the other hand owed their lords manual labour as well as a share of the harvest. In practice the distinction was not always clear cut as freedmen would often still owe boon works and other form of labour, while in other instances the majority of the villeins services would

be paid in dues.

The form of agriculture practised in medieval Europe fell into two distinct variations which had significant implications on the social relationships of the countryside. In areas where there was poor land closed agriculture was common. In closed agriculture the land was usually farmed by free peasant families who had significant rights over managing, dividing and transferring the land. In this form of agriculture each family tended to operate as an isolated economic unit without much cooperation with their neighbouring families (Homans, 1960). The households were led by a head of household who was generally male and had extensive authority over the other members of the household which often included household servants and farm workers who were not related to the head of household (Mitterauer, 2010). An extraordinary household in 1484 Caen had 70 members including 10 married couples (Le Roy Ladurie, 1976). In this form of agriculture the land would generally be divided up into very small parcels through inheritance over many generations and the peasants would not be able to subsist on their personal plot and would seek out other forms of income, in 15<sup>th</sup> Century England about 30% of the population primarily made their livelihood through wages (Martin, 1983).

The other type of agriculture was called open or champion agriculture. This form of agriculture was one where fields were large and peasant families would own a small section of the field which would be farmed cooperatively by the village as a whole. Generally a village would have two or three large fields along with meadow lands for their livestock. Decisions about how to manage the lands would be decided at the village level, although the head of the peasant household would be responsible

for their own lands (Hilton, 1966; Homans, 1960; Martin, 1983). Again the household was the primary economic unit, outside of harvest and sowing when the village operated as a whole. In champion agriculture the peasant could not divide the land, this could only be passed on to a single inheritor, however in order to provide for other members of the household it was customary for a share of the produce of the land to be given to the descendants of the husband (head of household)(Fossier, 2010; Homans, 1960). A common custom was for a third of the produce of the land go to the heir, a third would go to the widow and a third to the husbands other children if they were unmarried and remained living in the village. If any of these people married, died or left the village then their share of the produce would revert to the heir. These people were also usually entitled to live on the land as crofters or cottagers (Homans, 1960). Through this mechanism the welfare of less privileged members of the household were ensured while the land was kept large enough to maintain a household. In a similar vein it was common for villages to only permit disadvantaged members of the community to 'glean' grain left in the fields after harvest (Fossier, 2010; Harding, 1993; Homans, 1960). In many medieval villages the crofters and other poor members made up the majority of the community while there was a minority of true villein or free peasants and only a minority of these had large land holdings (Hilton, 1966). The one area of welfare where the feudal village falls short is in the provision of healthcare. Sickness was often seen as a sign of Gods displeasure and the sick were sometimes excluded from society, this is particularly true of lepers who were almost always excluded from society (Fossier, 2010).

In either system of agriculture the relationship between peasant and noble was seen



as being reciprocal, the lord allowed the peasants access to their land and the peasants provided either a share of their produce or a labour service. The lord also provided justice through the manorial court and bailiffs as well as certain ceremonial roles. For instance in various English villages the lord was obliged to provide meat and drink to villagers on particular festivals (Homans, 1960). The villagers could use this perceived reciprocity to oppose the nobility attempting to expand their powers. For example the villagers of Monte Libretto in the Papal States stopped taking their grain down to the Tiber River in the mid seventeenth century. The villagers claimed that they had never been obliged to undertake this action, but had always done so in exchange for a meal of 'bread, wine and cheese' (Castiglione, 2004, p. 789). The Papal courts found in favour of the villagers, their lord had to provide them a lunch in exchange for this service or pay the monetary value equivalent.

The villagers of Monte Libretto used their traditional *consiglio*, or council, to present their case to the courts. Each village had an assembly of the male head of households who ran the affairs of the village (Castiglione, 2004). Every village had at least one assembly, although if there were villeins in the village there were sometimes two separate assemblies divided on class. These assemblies were often responsible for appointing officials to manage certain aspects of the village economy. For example, in England these councils appointed haywards, woodwards and numerous other officials to ensure that the resources of the village were protected and used for the benefit of the community (Harding, 1993; Homans, 1960). An important institution of rural society was the manorial court, this court was the primary source of justice on the manor, and in this court the custom of the

manor was paramount. Because of this, despite being under the lord's control, it acted for the villagers as much as for the lord (Harding, 1993; Homans, 1960; Le Roy Ladurie, 1978). It was common in the manorial court and other forums for the peasants to interact with the lord as a group rather than individuals. Even in cases of assault and murder the crimes would be taken to the courts by a group of villagers rather than the family of the victim or a representative of the lord or state (Hilton, 1966).

Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie(1978) wrote an extensive study of the village of Montaillou around the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> century which I will use as an example of the structure of a typical medieval village. Montaillou was a small village in the Pyrennes, at the time it was part of the Comte de Foix a small satellite state of France. This state was governed by the Comte de Foix for whom the territory was named after. The village of Montaillou was part of the noble lands of the Comte, meaning that he received the taxes from the village and was responsible for the feudal obligations towards the villagers. In order to extract taxes and maintain order in the region the Comte appointed a châtelan and a bayle. The first was a nobleman who maintained and governed the fortress above the village. There was a small area of land attached to the office of châtelan, although because the villagers were free they could not be compelled to work this land, instead the châtelan did much of the necessary labour on this land and had to pay villagers to undertake the rest. The bayle however was a villager of common descent, although in the time period examined the bayle was the head of the richest peasant household. The bayle was responsible for resolving disputes between villagers and ensuring the flow of taxes back to the Comte. The other local office holder was a priest (for much of this period

the bayle's brother) who was appointed by the Bishop of Pamiers to ensure the flow of tithes to the church and provide religious services to the villagers.

The villagers of Montaillou generally found the tithes of the church to be more exacting than the taxes paid to the Comte, the church demanded an eighth of the harvest and an eighth of all the new lambs born every year. This tended to exacerbate the religious tensions in the town between the Catholics and the Cathars, this tension meant that the village assembly was dysfunctional during this time period. In fact there was very little conflict between the nobility and the peasants in Montaillou or the larger Comte de Foix, mostly because the nobility was perceived as being poor, such as the châtelan working his own fields in Montaillou, and because the nobility tried to protect the peasantry from the agents of the church. The Comte Richard-Bernard was particularly forceful in his resistance to both the extraction of tithes and to the inquisition, however after his death in 1302 the church authorities began to gain in influence. In 1305 the entire village except for the very young children were arrested by the inquisition in an attempt to eliminate the Cathar heresy.

The economic functions of the village were undertaken by the ostal (household) led by the chef d'ostal. The ostal was often based around a nuclear family although it sometimes included grown children or more than one married couple. It also often contained servants, workers and lodgers who were considered to be a part of the ostal as much as the blood relatives of the chef d'ostal. The chef d'ostal had complete authority within the ostal over both the people and property attached to the ostal. Much of the possessions of the members of the ostal were impartible from the ostal,

notably this included the land of the ostal. The chef d'ostal selected their successor from the members of the ostal, if a son of the chef did not inherit the ostal than he received a share of the wealth of the ostal as a *fratrisia* when he left, a daughter received her share of the wealth of the ostal as a dowry when she was married. Because the village assembly was not functioning during this time period then the village functions that could not be handled by a single ostal were undertaken by a cooperating group of ostal's or under the direction of one of the appointed village officials.

Because the soil of the region was not conducive to large scale agriculture sheep raising was a very important economic activity. Shepherds were generally sons who had not inherited and so had to make a living outside the ostal. They were often employed by an ostal which had some form of connection with the one they were born into. While they were employed by the ostal they were considered to be a member of that ostal and under the authority of the chef d'ostal. Usually they were pay was a mixture of in kind and monetary, and served for agreed upon time periods, a year appears to have been a customary term although it was not fixed. Out in the pasture away from the villages the shepherds would band together into *cabanes* which recreated the ostal amongst the shepherds. The *cabanes* consisted of up to six shepherds and up to 300 sheep and were led by an elected *cabaner*, they would have two meals together every day. The flocks of their employers and the shepherds (if they owned their own sheep) were divided by functional requirements for work purposes, such as age, with each shepherd looking after a different set of sheep. It was only when the shepherds returned from pastures that the sheep were again divided into flocks based upon ownership.

The reason that the ostal was replicated out on the pastures was because it was central to the value system of Montaillou. Actions were often interpreted by their consequences for the ostal, actions of the inquisition or the bayle on individuals were perceived as being actions against the ostal to which they belonged. The reputation and the continued prosperity of the ostal was used to justify good or bad actions. Le Roy Ladurie(1978) recounts a number of examples of people refusing heretics entry to their ostal as this was perceived as allowing evil into the ostal. When another member of the ostal was seen interacting with a heretic, it was generally kept a secret as it would damage the reputation of the ostal. However some ostal's were openly heretic, partly because the village bayle and (Catholic) priest were both Cathar.

While rural communities such as Montaillou were where most people lived and worked in the Middle Ages there are other social arenas which were important in this social order, primarily the town.

### **Urban life**

The urban population of feudal society was smaller than the rural society, but is still significant for a discussion of social solidarity. Generally the urban social institutions were not as stable, did not provide for the welfare of the townspeople nor as autonomy enhancing as the rural village. The following discussion looks at the urban institutions of feudal society to demonstrate these tendencies.

While the population of towns was growing over the middle ages it started from a very low point. For example Cologne was the largest town in Germany, in 1500 it had a population of 20,000. (Braudel, 1981) The population of the towns was usually not sufficient to replace itself and they relied upon immigration from the surrounding countryside to renew their population. These immigrants would often return to their villages for the harvest and so provided an unstable workforce for the town. The towns were centred upon a market and this was where most people purchased the material goods they desired, food was a particularly important commodity in every market. These urban markets were however fairly heavily constrained by the town authorities particularly the local guilds.

While there is much debate over whether the craft guilds could be considered to have true monopoly rights in a town, they did undoubtedly have a privileged status, at least when it came to the production of goods. Usually only guild members were legally allowed to produce a certain good in the town, although outside of the town anybody could produce the good in question and generally the good was able to be sold in the town market regardless of the origin of the product. Usually the only restriction on sale in the town was that the salesperson had to be a member of the local merchants guild for retail sales or a foreign merchant colony that had been allowed the right to sell. Genoa and Venice had the most liberal trading laws in Europe any citizen of the city or a member of a foreign merchant guild could sell retail in the cities. However the granting of citizenship was closely regulated throughout much of Europe (again Genoa was comparatively lax) Venice operated under a three tier citizenship model in which around 3-5% of the population were patricians with full citizenship and a further 5-10% had limited citizenship

rights(Ogilvie, 2011). In general European towns and cities had less than half of the population being citizens and sometimes as low as 2% of the population.

These restrictions on town citizenship was important as citizenship was a basic requirement in gaining some security in a town. Citizenship was usually required to join a guild, which usually also required a monetary payment and either the completion of an apprenticeship or descent from a guild member. The guilds performed a variety of roles for the medieval urban society, while there is argument over their primary function they did undertake social, religious, regulation and economic functions. The guilds usually obtained their legal monopoly of production or sale from the local lord in exchange for undertaking to collect taxes owed by the members and paying them n to the lord. Often guilds also took it upon themselves to ensure the quality of production and it was common for the guild members of the town to all locate together so that the members could all observe the conduct of each other to ensure that nobody tried to undermine the guild reputation. Where there were multiple guilds in a single towns prices and contracts would sometimes be agreed upon by negotiation between guilds rather than the free market process (Harding, 1993; Ogilvie, 2011). A large proportion of the craftsmen in a town were journeymen, people who had completed an apprenticeship but was not a current member of the guild and so was not allowed to perform their craft for their own benefit. Instead they worked for the guild members (masters) who paid them wages by the day (Journeyman derives from the French word *journée* which means a days worth of activity). While in the countryside it was common to pay workers in both cash and kind, in the town cash payments were far more common, in fact in 1398 Strasbourg when the furniture-maker masters tried to pay their journeymen in kind

the journeymen complained to the town *Rat* (council) which found in favour of the journeymen and compelled the masters to pay them in cash (Rosser, 1997). The journeymen would often form fraternities which performed some of the functions of the guild for them, particularly around opportunities for socialising. Sometimes these fraternities would gain the power to negotiate with the masters on pay and conditions in the workplace (Durkheim, 1984).

The guilds were important in the governance of the towns, particularly the merchants guilds who were often very wealthy the town councils tended to be made up at least in part of guild representatives (Ogilvie, 2011). Indeed in 13<sup>th</sup> century Leicester the gild merchant's 'morning speech' became used as the mechanism for undertaking affairs for the whole town (Harding, 1993). However the power of the guild to enforce their privileges was often restricted. In the towns and cities there was a large underclass of people who were not citizens and could not practice a legitimate trade under craft protection. As such they were often poorly paid and lived unstable lives with little access to credit to help them bear periods of underemployment. The guilds provided welfare functions to the master, journeymen and apprentices of the trade but there was little or no support for those people who lived outside of the guild system (Mitterauer, 2010; Rosser, 1997; Van Leeuwen, 2012). Sometimes these people would find employment in the suburbs outside the town walls where the guilds had no authority, leading to numerous attempts by guilds to extend their authority (Allen, 2011). If not there was usually a large black market operating inside the towns which people could gain employment in (Ogilvie, 2011).



In summary the population of the towns of medieval Europe appears to have been fairly hierarchical although there was a reasonable flow between the different ranks of society (Rosser, 1997). The largest group in the town was most likely the urban class of poor workers, who were most likely recent migrants from the countryside and would return their periodically, they worked in unskilled jobs with low pay and little security. Some of this class would become apprentices in a guild, learning the skills required to practice a craft that was regulated by a guild, although the number of apprentices was usually heavily restricted so only a few would be able to follow this path. When they completed their apprenticeships the apprentices became journeymen who were qualified to work for a guild master in their workshop, these journeymen often travelled to different towns to practice their trade. However a few of these journeymen would become citizens of the town and purchase entry into the guild as a master, giving them the right to practice their craft in their own name. These masters would in turn select representatives to serve on the town council which governed the town as a whole. Like in rural society the different classes of society tended to interact with each other as corporations rather than individuals, for instances the council would negotiate with a guild rather than an individual master while the guild would often negotiate with the representatives of the journeymen as a whole rather than with individual journeymen. However this was not always the case and there are numerous examples of individuals negotiating to their own advantage outside of guild channels (Richardson, 2004; Rosser, 1997).

## **The Church**

The Church was a crucial institution in feudal life, which was a very stable over the period in discussion. In the early medieval period the church was very important in spreading the feudal system, both through establishing feudal estates in areas new to the practice and through negotiating feudal settlements between the nobility and the people (Bisson, 1994; Mitterauer, 2010). Beyond this the church was itself an important feudal lord with many peasants having a bishop or an abbot as their liege lord. As has been seen in our discussion of the village of Montaillou the church was also a significant economic burden on the peasantry. Like the other feudal lords the church was perceived as being in a reciprocal relationship with the lay people of the region, in exchange for the tithes to the church the church would provide salvation to the people (Homans, 1960; Le Roy Ladurie, 1978). This is why the religious conflicts in Montaillou were so detrimental to the churches authority in the community and their ability to collect their tithes. The villagers were not confident in the catholic churches ability to supply the salvation that was expected of the church and so were reluctant to pay the tithes the church expected of them.

The medieval church is also interesting because, at least in Western Europe it was a part of a single organisation that reported to a Pope who claimed universal rule. Whereas Emperors, Kings, Princes and Dukes commanded the loyalty of significant numbers of lesser nobility and peasants they did not achieve the same scale that the Roman church acquired in the middle ages. Also unlike the nobility the church was very centralised, there was a chain of command from the Pope down which enabled a significant degree of standardisation amongst the churches of Western Europe (Mitterauer, 2010).

This standardisation of the church teachings over a wide area made the Roman church into a very powerful ideological force in medieval society. While on the local level the traditional customs of the manor or town were superior to the teachings of the church, the teachings of the church did still provide a significant influence on the people of Europe (Mitterauer, 2010). Very important amongst the church teachings that were adopted by the population as a whole were the ideas around the undesirability of profit and the divine nature of social distinction (Harding, 1993; Hilton, 1966; Le Roy Ladurie, 1978).

It is worthwhile to mention that the feudal society contained people who were not part of the Christian Church, including people of Jewish or Muslim faith. These people were generally tolerated, but were not included in any Christian society, the Muslims of Southern Europe tended to live in separate villages apart from Christians while Jews often had a separate urban ghetto to live in (Fossier, 2010).

### ***Social Solidarity in Feudal Society***

The feudal system existed in various forms for a millennia from the 9<sup>th</sup> century Frankish Kingdoms to early 20<sup>th</sup> century Russia. In this section I shall discuss the core indicators of social solidarity and what they can tell us about social solidarity in feudal society. These features are the presence of stable social institutions at a variety of social levels, the method of governance, the presence of outsider groups and the levels of material poverty and inequality.

Inequality in feudal society was based upon class lines, the nobles and clerics were generally immune from famine and the peasant organisation based upon the household was normally sufficient to keep the peasants and their immediate family out of poverty. However, in the countryside there was a large class of people who did not have the secure tenure that the peasants had. These people were often in poverty and relied on selling their labour for their subsistence. This class of people often provided the majority of the population of towns and cities. Here their income was as insecure as in the countryside, unlike the guild members who often had a reasonable large income with collective welfare provisions. Taking all this into consideration, it to be fair to say that during non-famine years a significant proportion of feudal society was in poverty or at the immediate risk of poverty. Much of the rest could be considered poor, remember that in Montaillou even the local nobility were tilling their fields.

A significant feature of feudal society was that a small community acted as the primary economic unit of society. In the countryside this was based on the household and village while in the urban centres the guilds took on this central role.

All of these institutions were stable, in the sense that they generally existed for a long time with a slow movement of people in and out of the institution. These institutions provided a stable framework for people to build relationships around, they facilitated relationships at the instrumental, mating, kinship and friendship levels, with only the macro level identity not being covered by these institutions. However the Catholic Church was another significant institution in medieval society and may have provided a macro level identity to the people of feudal society. The church was important because it reached out to the people who lived outside of the formal institutions of household, guild and village providing them with an institution they could build relationships around. It will be recalled that these stable institutions facilitate long term mutually caring relationships to develop which will in turn cause a collective consciousness to be created and reinforced. The church was also significant to the maintenance of this collective consciousness as it provided a centre of moral instruction reinforced by rituals. Overall I consider that feudal society had a range of stable social institutions which facilitated many people meeting their need for belongingness. However these institutions were not always open to outsider groups, lepers, Jews and Muslims and the economic underclass.

Overall these outsider groups constituted a significant proportion of feudal society. Lepers and the economic underclass were generally viewed with fear and excluded from society. The economic underclass could generally find insecure employment in the urban centres but this was not always sufficient. Lepers were generally excluded from urban centres but could find a leper colony which would take them in and they could live apart from society. Jewish and Muslim communities also existed outside of Christian society, contacts did occur but they were discouraged

at all levels of society. However the exclusion of (non heretical) religious minorities within Christian society did not usually become active persecution until towards the end of the feudal period.

Governance is the final aspects of feudal society that we will examine. In the feudal society decision making was generally collective and class based. The guild masters, journeymen and peasants would gather together periodically to manage their collective affairs. From the perspective of an individual member of these corporations they had some influence over the decision making process within the corporation. Therefore it is likely that they would have felt their need for autonomy to be encouraged by these institution. When decisions were made across corporations, or conflicts arose, the more powerful corporation generally got what they wanted. However, this was usually seen in reciprocal terms which would help to mask any exploitation present. The peasants at Monte Libretto were able to stop their traditional duties because their lord had not provided the traditional reciprocal duties, this would have made it seem like the villagers were not coerced but this arrangement was instead one of mutual benefit. In general male members of these corporations had a fair degree of autonomy in their decision making, however women, children, the underclass and adult men who were not senior enough (ie. crofters, apprentices) to take part in the decision making process did not.

Overall, feudal society had a high degree of social solidarity amongst most classes of people. However, the large outsider groups did not have any of their physical or psychological needs met and so would have been a significant destabilising force in feudal society. The main limitation of feudal society was its low levels of

productivity and the inability to provide for the materials needs of all. Those people that did have a secure livelihood were able to take part in a number of institutions that allowed them to meet their psychological needs and so a feudal society without outsider groups would have likely had a very high level of social solidarity.

## **Early Industrial Society**

The next historical era I shall examine is that of early industrial society. Like the other era's discussed in this essay there are no perfect examples or boundaries of the early industrial era. For the purpose of this chapter I shall consider early industrial society to be present from 1793 to 1914 in Europe and the United States, although in the early years of this period it was concentrated in the United Kingdom and only reached Eastern Europe towards the end of this period. The choice of dates is fairly arbitrary and is based on the beginning of the Napoleonic Wars and the First World War, both of which were transformative to the societies involved. When describing early industrial society I will mainly be referring to the United Kingdom as this was the first industrial power and most other countries followed the same broad path when they industrialised.

In this chapter I shall first discuss the historical origins of early industrial society and its temporal relationship to feudal society. From there I will move on to describing the key features of early industrial society and the ideological and moral basis for these features. This discussion will be focused on the key characteristics of society that I use to infer the level of social solidarity. Social institutions were much less stable in early industrial society than in feudal society as a wave of migration to the cities broke down institutions in both the city and countryside. Poverty, inequality and the size of outsider groups increased in the early years of this society under the pressure of the industrial labour system. Towards the end of this period these characteristics stabilised and even decreased as governments and



trade unions implemented better protections for workers. Early industrial society also decreased the power people had over their day to day lives as they found themselves entering into industrial labour relations. However, over this period governments and other high level institutions became more democratic giving people some influence over society level decision making which they had not had in the feudal society.

### ***The Historical Origins of Early Industrial Society***

In Western Europe the feudal order gradually decayed over the centuries leading up to the industrial revolution. During this period religious conflict and the growing bureaucracies and absolute monarchies eroded the traditional paternal relationship between classes that had ensured stability. This resulted in an increased level of social conflict in Europe that would ultimately lead to bourgeois controlled governments in England, the Netherlands and later in France and the newly independent United States of America. Raising the national income became of paramount importance, in part due to the need for taxation to pay for larger and more expensive armies and fleets and partly due to the culture of the rising urban bourgeoisie class.

The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars acted as a catalyst for the previously slowly developing economic changes in Western Europe. These wars started as a result of the French Revolution, which replaced the absolute monarchy of Louis XVI with a republican state. After three years of internal strife a republic was declared in 1792 triggering 23 years of almost continuous warfare across all of

Europe from Russia to Portugal and in a number of the external colonies of the European powers. All of the major powers faced significant financial difficulties in maintaining this war, but the United Kingdom faced particular problems as they were also helping fund the armies of their continental allies. In order to pay for the extra cost of the war a dramatic increase in land enclosures occurred in Britain.

These land enclosures were effectively the end of the reciprocal relationship that formed the basis of the feudal era. Agreements which had restricted the use of common, waste and arable land by the land owners were removed so that the land owners could use the land currently in subsistence farming to produce cash crops, usually wool. While this had been occurring in Britain and France before the Revolutionary Wars, the war dramatically increased the pace of enclosure. Hughes (1970) gives figures of land enclosure in England in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Looking at common and wasteland there were 554,000 acres enclosed between 1726 and 1792 while over the duration of the war one million acres were enclosed. In terms of arable land the change was more dramatic, 232,000 acres were enclosed in the first 60 years of the eighteenth century while 2.4 million were enclosed in the final 40 years of that century and a further 1.6 million between 1801 and 1844.

Each of these millions of acres represented the traditional means of livelihood for the rural people of Britain, these people were now dependent upon wage labour to sustain themselves (Patriquin, 2004). However in the urban centres of the United Kingdom a new method of production centred on the steam engine had been developing since the 1760's. This factory system generated a demand for low skilled

labour compared to the traditional hand-craft method of production. Moving to an urban environment was not an easy decision for a rural peasant farmer, at the time the United Kingdom had a system of parish welfare which guaranteed a minimum income to everyone who remained in their own parish. The rural people could move to the towns to find work in the factories, but risked falling into poverty if they could not find a job. If they remained in the country underemployment was a certainty but they were also guaranteed a low income. At first only fairly small numbers moved to work in the factories, however the system of parish welfare was reformed and ultimately abolished resulting in a great wave of urban migration occurred in the United Kingdom in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The certainties of the feudal era had all been abolished, people no longer had their own land to grow food to eat and they were dependent upon wage labour for their livelihood. They no longer had traditional obligations and entitlements in their employment, these were decided on a case by case basis. The factory workers were not entitled to negotiate or otherwise interact with their employers as a collective, in fact this was illegal for much of the nineteenth century. The factories were often dangerous and unhealthy and the workers were usually obliged to work long hours for low wages.

The changes to the everyday life of people also occurred outside of their economic relations, the rapid urbanisation meant that many of the new inhabitants lived in poor conditions. The communal institutions that had been an important part of their lives could not always be transferred into the cities. The nineteenth century also saw significant emigration of Europeans to colonial states around the world, again often

with significant social dislocation.

### **The Key Features of Early Industrial Capitalism**

Capitalism is based upon a relationship between individuals who own capital and individuals that sell their labour to these capitalists. Capital is money that is used with the intention that the investor receives more than they originally invested. In industrial capitalism capital is invested in owning the means of production of goods, the capitalist then receives the profits of the goods produced through these means. The means of production require the application of human labour in order to produce goods, to meet this demand the capitalist purchases the labour power of people who do not have capital. There is a conflict between the economic interests of the capitalist and the worker, as the profits of the capitalist and the wages of the worker both come out of the same revenue.

Compared to the preceding feudal era the workers had lost a substantial degree of autonomy compared to their peasant or craft working predecessors. While the feudal workers could determine their own methods of work, to a degree, in a factory the worker was constrained by the rate of operation of the machines that they worked. Likewise the hours of work were generally determined by the capitalist or managers appointed by the capitalist with the worker having little power in their determination. Towards the end of the nineteenth century this trend would lead to the scientific management techniques promoted by Frederick Taylor. In this form of management the production process was examined and an optimal method of production was developed, workers were instructed to comply with this optimum,

to the extent that their slightest movements were controlled by management.

A central feature of early industrial capitalism was the insecurity of employment and income. The urban population grew dramatically and there was a substantial group of unemployed people in every urban centre (Engels, 1892). There was also a large group of people who worked day by day with no certainty of employment on any particular day. For workers this meant that they could be easily replaced, employment was insecure and the result was low wages. Poverty was rampant in the United Kingdom, Engels (1892) describes how a single benevolent association in Dublin in this time period gave food to one percent of the population of that city, and further Engels states that 1 in 5 people in Liverpool lived in cellars. Numerous others were homeless or lived in overcrowded slums in which a number of people starved to death. The majority of the population who were reliant upon wage labour living from hand to mouth was normal, there was little opportunity for saving money.

If the workers were not in a financial position to save money against the threat of unemployment the state or employers provided little assistance to them. There was money available from the state for the poor, but usually to obtain it required working in a poor house for which there was limited spaces. There were also benevolent associations and refuges which provided food or shelter for the poor, but as in the example in the previous paragraph they were often strained by the demand placed upon them by poverty. This situation is a stark contrast to the rural welfare of the feudal era where the customs of the village provided a source of income for all family members who remained in the village (Homans, 1960).

Poverty was common in the nineteenth century, however in the industrialised nations the rate of poverty decreased over that century (Morris & Adelman, 1983). Based on the data available it seems likely that the shift to capitalism caused an increase in the rate of poverty, at least this was the case in Russia and other countries that were coming to rely upon the market for the workforce's subsistence (Morris & Adelman, 1983). Inequality also increased as industrial capitalism became dominant in British society. Williamson (1980) demonstrates that between 1823 and 1871 the share of the national wealth held by the wealthiest 5% of the population increased by around 10 percentage points, from then until 1913 inequality was slowly declining as wages increased in Britain.

The rural society of the United Kingdom was also transformed by the industrial revolution. Farming began to operate on a larger scale and more extensively used machinery, fertilisers and other developments to maximise the productivity of the land. This meant that small farmers who did not have the capital to purchase these new technologies were unable to compete with their wealthier neighbours, resulting in a decline in the numbers of small farmers and a corresponding rise in the average size of farms (Engels, 1892). Much of the rural population were also dependent upon wage labour, they were largely employed by their wealthy farmer-capitalist neighbours. This employment was often at lower rates than their urban counterparts and with less secure employment owing to the seasonal nature of much agricultural and pastoral work. When the system of parish welfare was ended in the early nineteenth century then the working rural population that remained fell deeply into poverty and subsistence agriculture was no longer a viable option since their land

had been enclosed. The poor houses and benevolent associations that were found in the cities were less common in the countryside. The impoverishment of the countryside relative to previous centuries meant that the towns and cities still provided opportunities that were not open to rural people.

Indeed centralisation was a key trend in the early capitalist era. Urban centres grew in size, as did factories as capital was concentrated into the hands of relatively few capitalists. In the end of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth efforts by government to break up the monopolies that capitalists had developed were common. This centralisation ultimately resulted from the prevalence of competition in society and was particularly common since the possession of capital gave individuals an advantage in competition with others. Winning the economic competition one day would make it more likely for a person to win the next day.

In order to maintain and encourage the economic competition between people the governments of the nineteenth century acted in a *laissez faire* manner. That is they tended not to intervene in the economic relations of their subjects, when governments did intervene it was usually to remove previously imposed protections and regulations. Examples of this can be seen in the land enclosures and poor law reform already described, in practice however *laissez faire* was never total and on occasion throughout the nineteenth century governments intervened to protect particular industries, improve trade relationships or protect workers. While this does undermine the importance of *laissez faire* government as a defining feature of early industrial capitalism the overall trend was towards a government that let the economic relations of their subjects alone.

In the previous few paragraphs I have described the key features of early industrial society. That the common labourers were in a much more precarious and impoverished position compared to the immediate past, these workers had also lost much control of their own manner of work and were now regulated by their employers, managers and supervisors. Outside of wage employment there was little legitimate opportunity to make an income, public or private charity was insufficient to meet the needs of the whole population and often came attached with stringent criteria for access. The economic relationships between people came to be created through competition and contract, instead of duty and tradition as it was created in the feudal era. Governments also tended to take a laissez faire approach to economic intervention, generally restricting themselves to maintaining property rights and the rule of law.

### **Nineteenth Century Capitalism and Collective Consciousness's**

Nineteenth century European capitalism was the society that Durkheim (1984) based his description of organic solidarity on, although he believed it could be described as forced solidarity due to the high levels of inequality and material deprivation. Durkheim argued that the division of labour created a mutual interdependence amongst individuals that would result in social harmony. However, while discussing the period Marx argued the opposite, that the division of labour into two opposing classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie would result in class conflict, leading to a reduced level of social solidarity.



Durkheim (1984) argued that another source of social solidarity is having a collective consciousness that justifies the differences between people. The Industrial revolution provides an interesting example of how these collective consciousness's are created, there were a number of philosophies that attempted to justify the distribution of resources in the industrialising society although none came to dominate society to the extent that Christian theology had in previous centuries. In this essay I would like to examine three ideas to demonstrate how these consciousness's are developed, the first is the protestant ethic, the second are ideas around social Darwinism and the third is nationalism. Partly because these continue to influence debates about society into the twenty first century (Martin, 2010).

The transformative power of the protestant work ethic was most famously put forward by Max Weber (1976). He argued that the rise of the Calvinist asceticism fundamentally changed the concept of work for much of protestant Europe, previously work had been seen as something that a person needed to do to fulfil their social obligations and provide for themselves and their dependants. The Calvinist reformation instead promoted work as a religious 'calling', and wealth as a sign of God's grace. Coupled with the uncertainties regarding entrance to heaven that Calvinist theology promoted this created a strong drive to work hard while living frugally in order to maximise wealth. Weber argued this changed the nature of wealth in society, transforming it from a means to obtain and display luxury to a means to make even more money. This last way of using wealth transforms money into capital and is the basis of capitalism. There are problems with Weber's argument, Grossman (2006) points out that the earliest signs of capitalism occur in catholic Italy and argues that the Calvinist ethic was adopted by those that had

gained a fortune, rather than driving them to gain a fortune. In a similar manner Samuelsson (1964) argues that it was the wealthy trading cities of Holland and northern Germany that were most receptive to the Calvinism, again the protestant ethic found the greatest acceptance in cultures that were already becoming profit oriented. Delacroix and Nielsen (2001) find little empirical evidence that there was any link between religious belief and the origins of capitalism, other than an increased rate of savings amongst Protestants. It is safe to say that while this protestant work ethic may not have had a significant impact on the origins of capitalism it was a prevalent as a system of ethics in early capitalist society. Weber (1976) even argues that by the early years of the twentieth century the protestant ethic had been stripped of its religious justification existing only as an ethical concept.

Weber (1976) and Hamer (1998) demonstrate that even when the religious backing for the protestant ethic was not explicit the arguments around work, frugality and profit were still presented in moral terms, Hamer argued that is increasingly prevalent in society. In fact hard work and frugality was even presented in virtuous terms by Engels (1892), although he criticised the factory system for not rewarding the hard work and frugality of the working class. Even without the religious context of the protestant ethic the idea that people are rewarded for hard work and frugality acts as a powerful justification for the capitalist system. It implies that the wealthy are in that position because they worked harder, spent less and made more profits than the competitors and likewise that the poor person could become wealthy if only they worked harder or saved more.

The other justification of nineteenth century social difference that I will discuss in this chapter is the concept of social Darwinism that developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century (Spencer, 1851). In contrast to the protestant work ethic social Darwinism developed out of scientific developments rather than religious. Particularly the concept of evolution via natural selection that was put forward by Charles Darwin in the 1860's. The theory of natural selection argued that beneficial variations in animal populations would become more prevalent over successive generations as the individuals with these beneficial variations would have a greater number of offspring than those without these variations. Social Darwinism was promoted by Herbert Spencer (1851) and others, this theory argued that competition between individuals and societies would cause the superior individuals and societies to become prevalent while the inferior would gradually decline in proportion. In practice this is a miss-application of the theory of natural selection and is in fact more similar to Lamarck's earlier, discredited, theory of evolution. Fundamentally this is because the factors that social Darwinists generally point to as being evidence of superiority do not result in more offspring for the superior individual (See (D'Addio & d' Ercole, 2005)). Regardless of the claim to validity of social Darwinism it did acquire and maintain a following in the late nineteenth century and the belief that competition would bring out the best traits of the population as a whole was used to justify the laissez faire policies that were practised by industrial capitalist states. Social Darwinists argued that any attempt to improve the conditions of the working class or otherwise intervene in economic competition would result in the continuation of current negative habits into future generations (Hamer, 1998).

Darwinism was not only used to justify laissez faire policies however, it was also, less popularly, used to promote alternatives to capitalism. Some Fabians argued that the primary social unit that selection acted on was society as a whole, they argued therefore that the state should intervene in the economy to make the society more competitive relative to other societies. Kropotkin (2009), took a different approach to unifying evolution and anti-capitalistic politics when he argued that cooperation was an important aspect of natural selection as well as competition and that the social form which optimises the balance between the two would be that which proliferates.

I mention these last two examples to demonstrate that there was not a single dominant justification of early capitalism in the nineteenth century. In fact there were a variety of arguments that were often made countering the operation of early capitalism. The most historically significant of these counter arguments was found in the broad socialist school and the closely related trade union and chartist movements. The followers of these movements argued that, in fact, the nature of early capitalism could not be justified. Some, like Robert Owen(1927) put forward economic arguments against early capitalism, the chartists based their arguments on a concept of justice, Kropotkin's(2009) arguments were based on scientific developments and there were occasional people like Marx(Harvey, 2010; 2012; 1967, 1970; Morrison, 2007) whose critiques touched on all these areas. By the end of the century these movements were starting to become significant powers in many states and had a number of victories under their belt. This alone demonstrates that while there were attempts at creating a collective consciousness for early capitalist society none become completely dominant.

The final ideological trend in this time period is nationalism. This was the idea that a national group should be united within a political state (Hobsbawn, 1997). This thought led to the movements to create, Germany and Italy and significant separatist movements in the Austrian (later Austro-Hungarian), Ottoman and Russian Empires. Later nationalism was the guiding concept in the division of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires after the First World War. This is significant for social solidarity as the growth of national identity gave people a macro level institution that they could build relationships on as the traditional social institutions declined. However the nation is an imagined community so the gain in feelings of relatedness and social solidarity resulting from the rise of the national community must have been overpowered by the decline in real communities.

In early capitalist society there were a number of attempts to create a collective consciousness however none of these attempts came to dominate society before the First World War. It is difficult to say what this means in terms of social solidarity, I have argued that a collective consciousness is as much a result of a high level of social solidarity as it is a cause. Seeing that there were numerous attempts made to develop a framework to explain early industrial society suggests that there was some degree of solidarity amongst some parts of society. However, it is difficult to say whether given any more time any of these attempts would have become the basis of a true collective consciousness. Without this knowledge I can only conclude that the attempts to form the core of a collective consciousness cannot be reliable indicators of the level of social solidarity within society.

Now we can turn to a more thorough examination of social solidarity in early capitalist society and the changes in social solidarity compared to the feudal era.

### ***Social Solidarity in Early Industrial Society***

We now turn to looking at our specific factors that influence social solidarity, inequality, poverty, outsider groups, stability of social institutions and governance. I will also compare how the typical early industrial society compares to feudal society in terms of social solidarity.

First we will discuss inequality and poverty, both were common in early capitalist society and seems to have increased in the early decades of industrialisation. However, poverty decreased in the latter half of the late nineteenth century, probably as a result of the increased material productivity that the industrial production process generated. Compared to feudal society inequality in early capitalist society was higher, however after the initial decades inequality was declining slowly as poverty decreased. In the first decades of early capitalism both poverty and inequality were having a negative effect on social solidarity compared to feudal society. After this period the effects should have had a positive effect on social solidarity. Related to these developments is the growth of the economic underclass. This class grew dramatically with the increasing income insecurity that was prominent in early industrial society. This underclass found a home in the slums of the growing urban centres and existed on the edge of the social institutions of early industrial society.

I have argued that the collective consciousness in a society is dependent upon the stability of social institutions. It is the stability of the social institutions and the interactions based on them that spread and reinforce the collective consciousness of a society. In early capitalist society there was a decrease in the stability of social institutions, this is in part the result of urbanisation and partly a product of precariousness of capitalist employment. With the enclosure of peasant landholdings there was a tremendous wave of migration into the urban centres. The rural social institutions that had existed in feudal society were not transferable to these urban environments and the urban institutions were not able to accommodate the rate of growth. Most importantly the workplace, where we would expect to find the individuals need for instrumental belongingness to be met was very precarious. In this situation creating long term mutually caring relationships around instrumental goals would be unlikely. This is because people were not likely to work together in the long term and because the workers were in competition for the positions, making caring relationships difficult. The employment practices of this time period also impacted on other types of social institution, specifically those that enabled kinship, mating and friendship by compelling people to work long hours. This left little time to take part in other social activities, the low wages of much of the work in this period also made people less able to participate fully in these other social institutions. At the macro-level things are slightly different, the church remained as a possible institution to build relationships with co-religionists on, however nationalism had been gradually rising and would become significant macro-level institutions towards the end of the nineteenth century. This allowed a people to engage with others upon a shared (or opposed) sense of national identity.

The final thing that we look at when examining social solidarity is the methods of governance of that society. Compared to the feudal era democratic states were more common, but much of Europe were ruled by monarchies with absolutist and/or bureaucratic tendencies. Generally over this time period suffrage increased with a greater proportion of the population having a role in the formal political processes of their societies. However because of the expected laissez-faire policies of governments this political power did not reach as far as it would in the following century. While the common person gained more political power compared to the feudal period they lost a significant degree of everyday power over their activities. It will be recalled that a feudal village organised their activities in a fairly democratic process, this contrasts sharply with the practices of the early industrial era. The major economic unit had shifted from the village to the factory, and the worker was regulated in every activity by supervisors and managers. Even at the level of general factory policies the workers had little influence as workers collective organisation was usually illegal. The workers actions and work rate were also decided by the type of machines that they worked on, rather than any form of autonomous or democratic process. Even in the countryside the village no longer offered a place for autonomous work, because the villages had been enclosed and the peasants were made into farm labourers who did not have the extensive rights over their own work that the peasant had. The powers of managers and supervisors was near to absolute during the early capitalist period and correspondingly the workers had little power to control their own actions in the workplace.



## **Conclusion**

Ultimately it is apparent that social solidarity was lower in early capitalist society than in feudal society. This is because of the higher levels of poverty and inequality, the growth of outsider groups and the destruction of the traditional social institutions and the increasing lack of everyday decision making power of the majority of the population. Early industrial society also did not allow a lot of time or resources to the common worker to try to improve their situation, this hampered the development of stable social institutions to replace those that had been put aside in the transition to capitalist society.

However as the nineteenth century continued and political compromises were made between the proponents and opponents of capitalism and rates of poverty decreased it is likely that the level of social solidarity increased. It is unlikely to have reached the levels of the feudal era because the stable communal institutions and reciprocal relationships that dominated life in that era or a new equivalent did not develop.

## **Fordist Society**

The early industrial economic system, while making numerous small changes, continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, a series of crises including the great depression and the Second World War would lead to a series of dramatic changes in how social and economic relations were organised in Western countries. A new consensus was established on the role of government within society centred on the ideas of Fordist production, Keynesian economic intervention and the welfare state. These three tendencies had significant impacts on the level of social solidarity within society, Fordist industrial relations led to a greater influence by workers over their work and workplace, economic intervention helped to make the economy more stable and remove the threat of long term unemployment and poverty. The welfare state removed some of the inequalities and misfortunes found in that society such as unemployment, income in old age and lack of access to services like education and healthcare.

The Fordist era was not perfect for social solidarity, while providing these protections against material deprivation greater regulation and discipline was imposed on the ordinary people in society, most of the benefits of this intervention in the capitalist economic system were bureaucratic in nature, people were homogenised and commonly had their decision making powers undermined by a new technocratic elite that was coming to dominate much of the social institutions. Representative democracy and universal suffrage were on the increase, particularly compared to the decades immediately before the second world war, which

combined with the interventionist nature of government gave people a significant influence of society level decision making.

This chapter shall examine the historical origins of the Fordist economic and social system, before examining the three main features of this society in greater detail and the impact that this form of society had on social solidarity. In particular we will observe the forms of inequality, poverty, the existence of outsider groups, governance and stable social institutions. In general Fordist society performed better than early industrial society in all of these areas of investigation.

### **The Great Depression**

The Great Depression started in mid-late 1929 when a sustained decline in share value on the New York stock exchange resulted in massive monetary losses for much of the United States financial elite. The share prices eventually recovered but the results for the larger economy was much more widespread. The financial shock spread worldwide as businesses shut down and millions were unemployed.

For example the United Kingdom already had high unemployment in 1929 compared to previous years due to the decline of the traditional coal, iron and shipbuilding industries. However the Great Depression led to a significant increase in the number of unemployed in Britain, by July 1930 there were 2 million unemployed and in 1932 this figure peaked above 3 million, it would only fall below a million in 1939 (Stevenson & Cook, 1994). The impacts of the depression varied from country to country, some, such as Germany and the United States,

suffered a larger growth of unemployment, while others, such as Sweden, were much less effected. Likewise the length of time taken to recover from the depression varied significantly across national boundaries.

The government responses to the growing problem of unemployment varied from country to country. In the initial stages of the Great Depression governments generally made attempts to cut spending in order to compensate for the decline in taxable incomes. In Britain this took the form of reducing unemployment benefits and adding a means test that people had to pass before becoming eligible for unemployment benefits (Stevenson & Cook, 1994). Businesses tended to follow a similar logic, wages decreased in the early years of the depression to help recover lost profits. In some countries this decrease was more than compensated by the rapid decrease in the cost of living. To examine Britain again, wages declined from 1929 and had only recovered by 1939, over this same decade the cost of living declined by a third, meaning that in real terms (employed) workers in 1939 were significantly better off than a worker in 1929.

Even in the early years of the depression some governments implemented less orthodox solutions to the problem of unemployment. The Hoover government in the United States implemented a public works program as a method of unemployment relief, essentially the government directly employed people constructing and improving infrastructure. When Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected in 1933 and expanded the public works scheme as part of his 'New Deal', the aim of this project was mostly to restore business confidence (Bleaney, 1985).

Sweden also implemented a significant public works program, however an important difference between the United States and Sweden was that in Sweden the public works were intended as an economic stimulus to the depressed industries. A social democratic government was elected in 1932 which, influenced by the thoughts of Swedish economists such as Gunnar Myrdal, was willing to go into deficit in order to provide an economic stimulus for particular industries. This program was a great success after a slow initial implementation, unemployment dropped in Sweden and by 1938 all of the loans taken out as part of this stimulus program had been paid back as the more buoyant economy increased the governments tax income (Bleaney, 1985).

The New Deal and the Swedish model were to become important justifications for what would come to be known as Keynesian economics which put forward that the government should spend more during depressions in order to increase demand and stimulate the private sector. While this theory was developed and published by Keynes in the 1930's it would not become dominant until after the Second World War (Wapshott, 2011). The Second World War proved to be a significant catalyst for economic and social change as it led to a dramatic upheaval across much of the world, particularly Europe.

### ***The Second World War and Social Change***

The period of time between the world wars was one of significant political change in Europe, before the First World War much of Europe had been under the rule of constitutional monarchies with the rest being more absolutist form of monarchy. By

1939 however central, eastern and southern Europe were ruled by a variety of forms of authoritarian regime. A number of these states, particularly Italy and Germany, were nationalistic and expansionist. War broke out in 1939 after Germany invaded Poland and the United Kingdom and France went to the defence of Poland. Over the next six years much of the world would be brought into this war resulting in the death of millions.

Germany and their allies (the axis) were very successful in the early years of the war defeating and occupying much of Europe. However they were ultimately defeated by an alliance dominated by the Soviet Union, the United States and the United Kingdom. The experience of the occupied countries and that of the victorious powers differed significantly but both experiences undermined the existing economic and social order.

The countries that were occupied by Germany or Italy were subjected to economic exploitation by these countries in order to further their war efforts. The experience varied from country to country with eastern European nations generally being treated more harshly than western. Alongside this a resistance movement developed in most of the occupied countries that fought against the occupying forces and assisted allied forces when possible. In all these countries there had been significant political differences between people within these nations, however with the exception of Yugoslavia the resistance was able to come to a general political compromise centred on values that were anti-fascist, humanitarian, egalitarian and patriotic. When these countries were liberated the resistance were not given power by the allies, in the east the Soviet Union instituted the dictatorial rule of the local

communist parties under the leadership of the Russian party. However, in the west the liberating powers introduced democratic rule which, while not giving the resistance significant powers helped give a platform for their values to influence post war politics. This was helped by the illegitimacy of most of the traditional political and economic elite who had been tarred due to collaboration with the occupying forces (Buchanan, 2006).

In the countries that were not occupied the war also led to significant social changes, all parties in the war eventually implemented a significant degree of central economic planning and mobilization in order to maximise the efficiency of their war economies. Most of the people of these countries were mobilised to aid the war effort, in either military, logistical support or production capacities. The ordinary people accepted the tasks and hardships that were placed upon them but to a varying degree the people came to expect a greater security after the war (Hennesy, 1993). During the war the governments came to have a greater involvement in moderating economic production and relations and providing services to citizens that had traditionally been supplied by private enterprise. These measures would often be retained and expanded after the war to form the basis of the welfare state which would become a central function of Fordist governments.(Fraser, 2006) The war also acted to bring people together who in previous decades would not have met, the requirements of services and the presence of refugees meant that people from all social classes and from both urban and rural areas were thrown together, this helped to bring the experience of poverty and unemployment to a wider audience if only in a second hand form (Fraser, 2006).

The end result of the war was the Western Europe was dominated by democratic governments that had come to be driven by a broad social democratic set of values.

### **Redevelopment in Western Europe and the Post War Consensus**

However after the war ended much of the world was in disarray and the process of demobilisation was expected to be long and difficult. Eastern Europe was under the control of communist dictatorships imposed by the Soviet forces and the leaders of the western allies believed that the economic turmoil in Europe increased the chances of communism spreading further west. Because of this the United States government introduced the Marshall plan, this plan offered European states substantial redevelopment money in exchange for those states meeting certain criteria. For the purposes of this discussion the most important of these criteria was the insistence that the development be based upon the assembly line and the associated Fordist model of production (Buchanan, 2006). Initially another of the criteria of the Marshall Plan was to prevent the expansion of the welfare state, however because of the values common in post war society the European nations refused to meet this criteria and it was ultimately dropped (Buchanan, 2006).

With the aid of American money Western Europe rapidly recovered from the war and throughout Western Europe a broad consensus developed centred on Keynesian economics, the welfare state and the Fordist production system. This consensus spread around the world although a number of countries did not adopt all the aspects of this new model of society, government and economy, even in Western Europe particular aspects were not found in all countries. West Germany only began using Keynesian economic intervention in the 1960's while Britain never made a formal



commitment to full employment or central government economic planning (Buchanan, 2006; Cutler & Waine, 2001; Hennesy, 1993; Hobsbawn, 1993).

This society based upon Keynesian economics, the welfare state and the Fordist production system would exist for a fairly short period of time in a historical sense. In the late 1970's the economic basis of the Keynesian system began to be undermined as a wave of unrest within the core institutions of the Fordist state developed (Lipietz, 1992). However, despite its brevity it is still significant in the discussion of social solidarity in capitalist society as it expresses a significant counter movement to the normal state of capitalist society.

In the next three sections I will discuss each of these three aspects of Fordist society and the impact of these on social solidarity in Fordist society.

### **Keynesian Economics**

Keynesian economics differs from the classical economics that was the orthodoxy before the 1930's primarily in how it sees the relationship between the government and the economy. Classical economics largely viewed government intervention in economic matters as being detrimental to the overall functioning of the economy, in contrast Keynes argued that certain forms of government intervention in economic matters could promote economic growth and development. Specifically Keynes argued that it was a lack of demand that led to reductions in economic activity, by increasing demand from consumers or government spending economic growth could be promoted. While Keynes generally followed a free market

approach to economic regulation he used the newly developing macroeconomic approach to economics to argue that government spending could help to increase the wealth of the nation as a whole. He particularly argued that this was useful in a depression as government spending could help to compensate for the reduction in overall investment and consumer spending in the economy. He argued that in a sense the nature of this spending didn't matter, even burying money and allowing businesses to hire staff to dig it up would lead to economic benefits as the diggers would go on to spend their wages. Having said this different forms of intervention would lead to differing levels of benefit to the economy, this differing level of benefit was known as the multiplier, essentially how much increase a dollar spent in a certain way would increase national GDP (Bleaney, 1985; Wapshott, 2011).

In practice however the Keynesian economists did not limit themselves to arguing that governments should spend their countries out of a recession. They argued that the governments of countries should be responsible for managing the economies of those countries in the best interest of their citizens. Keynes had first been drawn to this line of thought when he was looking for ways to reduce unemployment. Classical economists argued that in the long run, when the economy reached stability it would naturally be at a state of full employment. Keynes wanted full employment in the immediate future not in some hypothetical future economy. Keynesian economists argued that the government was not only responsible for intervening in economic affairs during depressions but also in normal times to ensure the continued growth of the economy and the wealth and employment of citizens.

Keynesian economists pointed to the success of public works schemes such as those in Sweden and the United States as examples of what the government could, and should, do to promote the economic welfare of its citizens. The Second World War itself also demonstrated the power and efficiency of government control of the economy. Governments of capitalist societies had never intervened in the economy to the extent that they did in the war, nor had those governments ever spent so much money at a single time. However, instead of leading to the economic downturn that the classical economists predicted, it removed the last traces of the depression from most of the capitalist economies.

In Western Europe in particular government economic control of the economy was very popular, the pre-war capitalist and political elite were discredited by the association with the occupying forces. Instead a new class of technocrats rose to dominance over the economy, people who used the power of the state to direct the economies of nations (Buchanan, 2006). Overall these efforts appear to have been successful, the economies of the six wealthiest capitalist (The U.S.A, The U.K., Japan, France, West Germany and Italy) economies GDP per capita rose by an average of 3.8 percent per year compared to 1.2% from 1913 to 1950 (Cutler & Waine, 2001). The driving force behind this economic growth was the Fordist production system which allowed significant productivity gains and the economic benefits that went along with increased productivity.

With the material security that arose from Keynesian government intervention came a greater degree of equality in control over the economic future of the nation that had not been present in early industrial societies. While in early capitalist society

economic decision making was exercised exclusively by the business owners a democratic Keynesian government gave the common worker an input into economic decision making. In practice the influence over governments was still strongly in favour of the business elites but unlike in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the workers did not have to strike and lead mass demonstrations in order to have some influence over the country's economic direction, or the conditions of their role in the economic system.

### **The Fordist Production System**

The Fordist production system was based upon developments in industrial management originating in the United States of America. The assembly line had allowed the mass production of standardised yet complicated goods. On an assembly line each worker performed the same operation or operations on the products as they moved down the assembly line, by using this method companies like Ford were capable of churning out finished cars on an hourly basis. In fact in its first year of operation, 1913, the Ford Motor Company assembly line produced 199,000 cars (Williams, Haslam, & Williams, 1992). The assembly line was coupled with scientific management in which the production process was divided and rigorously managed so that each worker had exactly enough time to perform the operation in the correct manner and little more. Through the assembly line and scientific management the Ford Motor Company and others were able to produce a large number of products at a cheap cost compared to their competitors.

Under scientific management the actions of the workers were heavily regulated in

order to maximise the productivity of labour. In effect this meant that the intellectual side of the workplace was divided from the physical side. Control of the production process was largely in the hands of management, although never completely (Lipietz, 1992). In the Fordist era there was also a significant growth in the bureaucratic side of the production process, with management increasingly taking on human resource related tasks that were previously left to individual foremen and workers.

Workers had less control over their actions in the workplace compared to the preceding decades and centuries, however this was not the full extent of the Fordist production system. The Fordist production system also offered significant benefits for the workers, to illustrate this I shall briefly discuss the history of the Ford Motor Company.

Scientific management required strict control of the workforce. Initially the Ford Motor Company used techniques like spying, intimidation and propaganda to control the actions of the workers on their assembly line. However, this helped contribute to a very high rate of resignation on Fords assembly line. Ford implemented the five dollar day which became a core aspect of Ford's approach to workplace relations. This was twice the usual rate of pay for unskilled workers in Detroit of the time and was implemented to decrease the very high turnover and also to prevent the growing influence of trade unions (May, 1982). This family wage, as it was known, was initially only paid to men and the Ford Motor Company often sacked women who were discovered to have husbands, this wage was intended to be the sole means of support for a middle class family. Workers could

also be excluded because of vices such as drinking, gambling and a lack of thrift, although few were (Raff, 1989). In practical terms the high wages paid by Ford increased the standard of living and consumption of factory workers, it also had the effect of relegating women and children to the domestic sphere.

The Ford Motor Company was forced to drop their anti-union stance in the 1940's after a significant period of unrest amongst their workforce (Neilson & Rossiter, 2008). This led to a cooperation between senior management and trade union representatives in managing the workplace relations of the company. This came to be one of the defining features of Fordism in the post war period. Workplace relations were managed through a centralised cooperation between the workers representatives and the management of the company, often arbitrated by the government (Walsh, 2012).

After the Second World War the system of production that had been developed by Ford and other companies was applied in the restructuring and reconstructing economies of the advanced capitalist world. The exact nature of the Fordist production system varied from country to country, however the Fordist production system had common features throughout the developed world. These were scientific management of the assembly line, the workforce receiving a share of the increased wealth generated by increased productivity and some degree of cooperation between the company's management and the union representatives.

For the capitalists the Fordist method of production led to a stable workforce which was highly productive. Because of cooperation with trade unions they lost some of

their traditional authority over their workforce, but they gained more control at the level of production. The workers in this method of production had fairly high wages allowing them a middle class level of consumption, a comparatively stable employment status and some control of their work conditions via their union. However the assembly line effectively deskilled the worker while giving them less autonomy in the workplace and relegating women to the domestic sphere (Neilson & Rossiter, 2008). Women were now expected to stay at home and manage the family, effectively isolating them from others (Zinsmeister, 1996). The 'traditional' nuclear family was seen as being a bulwark against socialism and governments and businesses implemented policies to keep women in the domestic sphere. In the 1950's women's involvement in the workforce was lower than at any time after the First World War and would only increase slowly throughout the Fordist period (Buchanan, 2006). While a decent income was given to those inside the workforce for those outside the workforce the welfare state provided the necessities of life. This is the focus of the next section.

### *The Welfare State*

As Fraser (2006) makes clear, social welfare has a long history in (British) capitalist society. However the Great Depression and the resulting mass unemployment and the sacrifices of the Second World War acted as a catalyst rapidly accelerating the trend towards increased state financial support for many people in society. In 1930's Britain the government had reduced unemployment payments and introduced a means test before a person was eligible for these payments, after the war both the conservative and labour parties were committed to cradle to grave welfare support for British citizens (Fraser, 2006; Hennesy, 1993).

The welfare state is a relationship between state and citizens in which the state transfers resources to certain classes of people in need of them, or provides particular services, such as education or healthcare to all members of society (Fraser, 2006). The rationale behind doing this varies, but commonly it exists to remove many of the negative consequences of capitalist economics while ensuring that the workforce is healthy, well-educated and productive. Esping-Andersen (1990) identifies three different motivations that led to the foundation of the welfare state. These are conservative, liberal and social democratic focused on maintaining social structure and stability, correcting market failures and promoting equality respectively. However, all welfare states show characteristics of each motivation, regardless of the initial motivation for their foundation. The early initiatives towards a welfare state were often implemented for national defence purposes, Britain found during the Boer and first world wars that one in three recruits were unsuitable for military service, leading to a call for improved healthcare and education and a reduction in child poverty (Fraser, 2006). After the depression and the war this argument changed and the welfare state was increasingly viewed as being necessary for the maintenance of human dignity.

Le Grand (2003) argues that the policy makers who implemented the welfare programs in Britain and elsewhere must have operated under two assumptions. Firstly that the workers (doctors, teachers, social workers etc.) in the welfare programs would act altruistically towards either their charges or society as a whole. There is evidence that public sector workers are more altruistically motivated than their private sector counterparts, however this is not universal (Le Grand, 2003).



The second assumption is that the providers in the welfare system could, and would make better decisions about the service than the beneficiaries of the service, however this ignores the fact that the beneficiary is the most invested in the outcome of the intervention. From a social solidarity perspective this is related to the governance requirement of social solidarity. On an individual basis the beneficiary of the service is largely powerless to determine the nature of the service and their associated duties. However, since most Fordist societies were democratic there was some ability for beneficiaries to influence the welfare system on aggregate.

The welfare state did significantly reduce the level of poverty and inequality although neither was entirely eliminated (Esping-Andersen, 1990). For instance in the United States of America 29% of American pensioners were in poverty along with 24% of British pensioners and 11% of German pensioners (Esping-Andersen, 1990). The reason that there were still significant number of people in poverty despite the assistance of the state is because many of the programs required that individuals meet requirements other than need, such as length of time in the workforce. Also many benefits were based upon the income of the individual, the more money an individual made in the workforce the more they received out of the workforce. Of course the level of assistance was, in some instances, less than necessary and in others was undoubtedly more than necessary. This does not diminish the significant achievements of the welfare state in reducing poverty and inequality, along with the significant increase in social solidarity that followed from this fact.

The welfare state helped diminish the material constraints of those most in need in

society, however the welfare state was not completely beneficial in regards to social solidarity. My only criticism of the welfare state is the bureaucratic nature of its intervention. This was not unique to the welfare system, as we have seen technocratic control was a central feature of Fordist society. A welfare system is primarily tasked with categorising individuals and transferring resources to them based upon what category or categories they fall into. This system is inherently homogenising and dehumanising, leading to people being viewed as interchangeable (Smith, 1999). However like much else in Fordist society this negative aspect in regard to the governance of the welfare system does not undo the positive effects that the welfare system had on social solidarity.

### *Social Solidarity in Fordist Society*

We have described the origins and form of the key institutions of Fordist society we can turn to discussing some of the effects that these institutions had on social solidarity in Fordist society. It will be recalled that social solidarity is the force that keeps a society together, this force varies from society to society but I hypothesised that the strength of social solidarity can be inferred from the degree to which a society enables people to meet their material and psychological needs. In particular I look at five characteristics of societies which offer an indication of the ability of the people in society to meet their needs. These are the level of inequality in society, the level of poverty, the size of outsider groups, the presence of stable social institutions and the general method of governance in society.

With regards to poverty, the welfare state, high wages and full employment meant

that poverty was rare in the advanced capitalist countries. This is not to say that it was completely absent from Fordist societies, as we saw in the last section a high proportion of the elderly were in poverty in particular countries. However this is still a significant improvement over both the early industrial and feudal period. The comparative absence of poverty would have proved to have been a significant boost to social solidarity in Fordist society compared to the two earlier periods considered.

On the issue of material inequality Fordist society also performs better than the previous two periods. While there was still significant material inequality within Fordist society the level of inequality growth was, at worst stagnant over the Fordist decades and at some times and places decreasing (McNally, 2011). Full employment and high wages enabled many people to live a middle class lifestyle which was not available to most in the previous decades. The welfare system also helped improve the material equality of society by providing particular services universally, or at least to a large proportion of the population. Most notably these were education and healthcare which provided citizens with access to the same standard of care regardless of their social status or income, this is another significant change from the feudal and early industrial societies. This would have meant that Fordist society was more likely to have high levels of trust and empathy compared to the early industrial and feudal societies. Therefore the low levels of material inequality in Fordist society were a positive force for social solidarity.

The welfare state and other aspects of Fordist society helped to diminish the size of the economic underclass dramatically compared to early Industrial society.

However, this society was not without outsider groups, generally speaking Fordist society was divided along gender and ethnic lines. The family wage was particularly important for limiting the role of women in society as were the practices of many institutions, which also helped to limit the role of ethnic minorities in Fordist society. However, the limitations that society imposed on these populations were not all that comparable with the direct exclusion of many that occurred in the feudal society and was only matter of degree from that the occurred to these same populations in early industrial society.

When looking at social institutions in Fordist society it is apparent that these were generally much more stable than in the early industrial period. The workplace was the primary social institution in an instrumental sense, compared to early industrial society the workplace and the workers position in it was much more secure. Therefore the workplace was able to facilitate workers developing stable mutually caring relationships to a greater degree than in the early industrial period. The major drawback of the workplaces in Fordist societies was that women were generally disbarred to varying degrees. This was also common in early industrial society, however it became more prevalent in Fordist society than it had been in the preceding decades and centuries. Instead for many women the equivalent of the workplace was the nuclear family, which was unlikely to fulfil their need for belongingness at the instrumental level. Fordist society was likely better at enabling people to meet their needs for belongingness at the kinship, mating and friendship levels than the early industrial society. This is because the high incomes and comparatively low work hours of Fordist society allowed people more time and resources with which to fulfil these needs. At the macro level there does not appear

to be any evidence for any widespread change compared to the late nineteenth century. Overall then it seems apparent that Fordist society was much better at facilitating people to meet their need for belongingness than the early industrial society. This means that the collective consciousness of Fordist society was likely to be strong and reinforced often by the repeated interactions of people in these stable social institutions.

The final discussion point I would like to cover is the form of governance in society and whether it enables people to meet their psychological need for autonomy. Generally speaking in Fordist society people had gained influence at the highest levels of decision making, but had lost power at the daily levels of decision making compared to the early industrial period. Fordist societies tended to be representative democracies that practised universal suffrage, which gave all people a degree of influence over political decision making. It is also important to note that the governments of the Fordist societies generally intervened in more issues than the laissez faire governments of the nineteenth century. This means that the political influence that a person had extended further through society than it would have in the previous century. In the workplace as well workers had gained a greater degree of influence over decision making as a result of the cooperation between unions and management that was common in this period. However, at the daily level of decision making the workers and citizens had lost a degree of power over their own actions, this was the result of scientific management and the increasing power of a technocratic decision making class. As Esping-Anderson (1990, p. 141) says

*'The welfare state is becoming deeply embedded in the everyday*

*experience of virtually every citizen. Our personal life is structured by the welfare state, and so is the entire political economy.'*

Of course the influence of the various institutions which aimed to structure people's lives was not limited to the welfare institutions of the state, nor even the state itself, but was prevalent throughout society via the bureaucratic institutions that had developed to manage society. However whether this technocratic decision making was perceived as running counter to a feeling of autonomy is a different question. Habermas (1976) has argued that many decisions within society and the personal lives of people were either directly organised or indirectly manipulated by the technocratic elite (Schuerman, 1999). While it easy to say that those decision that were organised by an elite came at the expense of autonomy this is less certain with those that were indirectly manipulated. It will be recalled that autonomous decision making requires only that people do not feel constrained into a decision, even when there are few real options available due to the constraint of others it is still possible for people to feel autonomous.

The question of the effect of the method of governance on social solidarity in Fordist society is overall fairly complex. Compared to early industrial society people gained high level influence but lost low level control. However the effect of this loss on social solidarity was likely muted due to the manipulation of decision making. Overall compared to early industrial society the effect of the changing forms of governance was likely neutral or near to it in regards to social solidarity. When compared to the feudal period people in the Fordist era had much less control over their everyday lives and economic management, but a higher level of influence

in political decision making. While neutral with regards to the early industrial period the Fordist period is inferior to feudal period regarding forms of governance that promote social solidarity.

### **Conclusion**

Social solidarity in Fordist society was very high compared with the early industrial era. This is because the Fordist society had much higher levels of material security, lower levels of inequality, more stable social institutions, small outsider groups and a system of governance that was comparable to the early industrial period in facilitating autonomy. However comparing the Fordist society with the feudal society is more difficult due to the lack of evidence of the interaction of the various physical and psychological needs and the influence of the collective consciousness on these interactions. Fordist society performed better than feudal society in terms poverty, outsider groups and possibly inequality, while feudal society performed better in terms of governance and stable social institutions. In short, Fordist society continued to support, and even enhance, the ability of individuals to meet their material needs, as did early industrial society, but improved the facilitation of individuals meeting their psychological needs.

## **Neo-Liberal Society**

Fordist society represented a significant shift from early industrial society, but it would only last a short time. After the trauma of the Great Depression and the Second World War citizens and governments around the world became focused on ensuring material security for their citizens. However in the 1970's the economic consensus that this society was based upon began to be undermined. Over the following decades a state led project of re-regulation in many countries led to significant changes in the relationship between people, the state and the economy. This project of re-regulation is known as neo-liberalism and was focused on expanding the role of the free market in society.

In regards to social solidarity the neo-liberal society is significantly weaker than the Fordist society. In the Fordist time period people had less day to day control over their own lives than in previous centuries, however they had a much higher level of material security, lower levels of inequality and more stable social institutions than in early industrial society. In neo-liberal society material insecurity and inequality have increased, and the common social institutions have become less stable. However, people have not gained more control over their lives, instead significant numbers of people in neo-liberal societies are engaged with a highly restrictive and punitive penal and welfare system. The political and union based power that ordinary people had has been diminished by the neo-liberal reforms. People are instead offered a form of consumption based power, which is a poor substitute.



This chapter will discuss the historical origins of neo-liberalism, followed by examining the key features of neo-liberal society before closing by looking in depth at how neo-liberal society has changed social solidarity.

### ***The Origins of Neo-Liberalism***

After the Second World War a society developed in the western world that was based upon a consensus around the Fordist production system, the welfare state and Keynesian economics. This consensus began to break down in the 1970's as oil shocks led to a recession in the West. The Arab – Israeli war of 1973 (the Yom Kippur war) led to a 400% increase in oil prices causing a recession.(Buchanan, 2006) During this recession stagflation occurred, rising unemployment at the same time as rising inflation, something which was not accounted for in Keynesian economic thought. With hindsight it is possible to see that the dramatically rising oil prices was leading to corporations raise prices while lowering staff costs leading to stagflation, however this phenomenon had not been experienced before and helped undermine the legitimacy of the economic management of the technocratic elite. A second oil shock occurred in 1979 at the start of the Iran-Iraq war again causing significant economic stress (Buchanan, 2006). During this same decade there was a growing dissatisfaction with the de-skilled nature of work in Fordist society which was a cause of a number of social conflicts (Lipietz, 1992). This economic tension along with a number of inherent contradictions in the Keynesian system ultimately led to the decline of the Keynesian system (Layton, 2010). Some countries, such as Britain, were already struggling to pay for their welfare state. With unemployment rising and the economy struggling many countries began to

turn to neo-liberal solutions to their economic problems (Fraser, 2006).

The ideology of neo-liberalism was developed during the Fordist era from the work of earlier thinkers. This development was centred around the Chicago school of economics and the Mount Pelerin society (Wapshott, 2011). Other than the similar ordoliberal program in post war West Germany there had been no practical experience of neo-liberal economics. Instead the neo-liberals had focused on founding think tanks and other institutions to disseminate their thought across society (Peck, 2010). Neo-liberals argued that the free market was the best method for distributing resources in society and that anything that undermined the market, such as the welfare system, government intervention or collective bargaining, would ultimately make the entire society poorer. Therefore government economic intervention should be decreased and the role of the market in society should be increased (Friedman, 1961, 1980).

In 1974 neo-liberal got their first chance to begin putting their thought into practice. This opportunity came via the military junta of Augusto Pinochet, he had taken power in a coup in 1973 during difficult economic times (Peck, 2010). The response of the Chilean government was to send for advisers from the Chicago school of economics in order to reform the Chilean economy, their solutions involved a dramatic re-regulation of economic relationships. The protections and guarantees that Chilean workers and businesses had were removed and they were expected to compete on the free (international) market. The result was a stagnant economy and rising poverty and unemployment. By 1982 unemployment in Chile was at 30% and half of Chileans were in poverty, the rate of reform was slowed down as a result

(Peck, 2010).

The poor social results of the neo-liberal reforms in Chile did not prevent their spread in the 1980's. In 1979 and 1980 Britain and the United States elected governments that implemented neo-liberal reforms, at the time these two countries made up a third of global GDP (Peck, 2010). Over the 1980's many other countries began to implement neo-liberal reforms, the exact nature of the reforms varied from country to country. This is because neo-liberalism attempts to make the market more central to society, the exact direction that this takes varied based upon local condition (Aalbers, 2013; Ferguson, 2010; Peck, 2010; N. Smith, 2008).

In the 1990's some policy solidification developed, this was known as the Washington consensus. Standing(2002) describes 12 points to the Washington consensus., These are: 1.Trade liberalization, 2. Financial market liberalization, 3. Privatization of production, 4. Deregulation, 5. Foreign investment liberalization, 6. Secure property rights, 7. Unified exchange rate, 8. Decreased public spending, 9. Public spending focused on core services. 10. Broader, less progressive tax regime. 11. less welfare, 12. Flexible labour markets. This consensus was enforced on many poorer nations who were desperate for loans or aid from the World Bank or more developed nations via structural adjustment programs that were requirements for the loans (Ferguson, 2010). Because of this neo-liberalism spread to most of the world it had not yet reached. Robinson (2004) argues that this spread was the result of the growing power of the transnational capitalist class and that the World Bank and other institutions acted as a basic transnational state that acted in the interests of transnational capital. This class is described as transnational because

it does not owe allegiance to any one state, although individual transnational capitalists and their wealth might be present in a country this is not permanent residence for them.

In the late 1990's and early 21<sup>st</sup> century there were a number of 'anti-globalisation' protests that generally opposed much of the consequences of neo-liberalism (McNally, 2011; N. Smith, 2008). This protest movement helped undermine the spread of neo-liberalism, however its spread did not stop until the beginning of the United States' War on Terror began in 2001. The protests around globalisation in the late 90's and the war on terror of the 21st century had effectively halted the advance of neo-liberalism. The idea and practice of neo-liberalism was still dominant but was no longer advancing (N. Smith, 2008).

This delay proved to be short lived, in 2008 a serious economic crisis developed due to the poor quality of a lot of debt in the developed countries. The response by governments was generally in line with neo-liberal orthodoxy (Aalbers, 2013; McNally, 2011; Peck, 2010; Vadolos, 2012). Generally, governments have responded to the 2008 crisis by instituting austerity programmes, these programmes involve governments reducing their spending usually by cutting non-core services and aspects of the welfare state (Aalbers, 2013). At the same time many governments have bailed out failing corporations, in particular large financial institutions have received significant government money. While these corporate hand-outs may seem contradictory to the tendency to austerity it has to be remembered that the primary focus of neo-liberalism is to increase the power of the market in society (McNally, 2011; Peck, 2010). These hand-outs are government

intervention and oppose the operation of the market forces that would drive the financial institutions to bankruptcy, both of which neo-liberalism generally opposes. However, these hand-outs are seen as giving the markets more time and resources to fix the failures of their operation, likewise cuts to welfare and other government services increase the power of markets over the lives of individuals. The consequence of the cuts to the welfare state and other programs is to increase the power of the labour market over people in society, while bailing out the large financial corporations has the effect of maintaining the functioning and dominance of the financial market in neo-liberal society (Aalbers, 2013; Vadolas, 2012).

This is currently the extent of neo-liberalism, aspects of the welfare state and a number of institutions that were founded in the Fordist era remain, but have generally been weakened. The institutions remaining vary from state to state, although healthcare and education are two areas which seem particularly resistant to neo-liberal designs. However even in these institutions the free market has come to play a greater role. For example the British National Health Service remains in government ownership, however an internal market has been implemented to promote competition between the various health providers (Fraser, 2006). In education Tienken (2013) discusses the neo-liberal roots of much recent education policy of the United States of America. Neo-liberalism and the market power that it promotes have reached into the core of many institutions that were founded primarily to oppose some of the consequences of the free market in early capitalist society. Now we shall look at the core features of neo-liberal society and how they relate to social solidarity.

### **Significant Features of Neo-Liberal Society**

Neo-liberalism aims to make the operation of market forces central to society but to date the implementation of this aim has been uneven and incomplete. However the reforms that have been implemented have been more than sufficient to radically alter the social solidarity of society compared to the Fordist and other eras. In this section we will discuss a number of the most important of the consequences of the neo-liberal reforms. A central feature of neo-liberal society is precariousness and uncertainty and I shall begin by discussing how this relates to employment in neo-liberal society. Related to precarious employment are the concepts of precarious freedoms and the risk society both of which are said to exist in neo-liberal society. After that we shall discuss the operation of the welfare and penal systems in neo-liberal society before looking at consumerism. Finally I shall briefly discuss the rise of peer to peer consumption in modern society which offers an alternative to the typical model of consumption in neo-liberal society.

#### **Precariousness and Uncertainty in Employment.**

In a neo-liberal society unemployment is no longer seen as an unfortunate chance event but as an ordinary part of a person's career (Ferguson, 2010). After the initial neo-liberal reforms unemployment rose rapidly, before eventually falling to levels nearer to the Fordist normal, however underemployment has remained high throughout the neo-liberal era (Standing, 2002). Underemployment is a situation where a person has some form of employment but it is either less than that person needs or would like, or the person has skills which the job does not utilise. The cause of the increase in both unemployment and underemployment is the

deregulated labour markets that are a feature of neo-liberal society. Employment law has generally been weakened, as have the unions which previously helped protect the workers. The result is that the workers are in more direct competition with each other for jobs and this competition keeps wages down. It is also easier for an employer to fire employees that they no longer wish to employ, even those with a job are often living with the threat of losing it. This fear is used to motivate the workforce and also helps keep wage demands low while increasing the average hours of work (Standing, 2002).

Part time work and short term contracts are also increasing in neo-liberal society, these forms of employment generally allow employers more legal power than they would have had in Fordist society when hiring full time employees (Standing, 2002). These are often known as flexible contracts, in practice they tend to be flexible for employers but employees often do not have the power, or confidence, to oppose the desires of the employers. There is however an issue with an employee becoming entirely committed to the employer as Sennet (2006, p. 171) says 'In institutions organised around flexible labour, getting involved deeply in something risks making the worker seem ingrown or narrowly focused.' This is one of the risks that workers in flexible employment have to manage, they risk angering their employer should they oppose the employers interests, however if they get deeply involved in a project or task their employability will decrease after that project ends.

This uncertainty and risk is justified within neo-liberal society through the mantra of individual responsibility. This holds that the life outcomes of individuals are the result of their own choices and efforts and minimises the role of historical or

structural factors in people's lives (Wacquant, 2010). This has multiple issues for individuals in neo-liberal society, primarily it places psychological stress on the individual when structural problems cause economic disorder. Vadolas (2012) describes how anxiety and depressive disorders have increased since the onset of the 2008 economic crisis and that the level of disorder is independent of the financial losses individuals have sustained, it is the uncertainty of the economic climate that was causing anxiety and depression. People are also finding their time outside of work is becoming more stressful. Hochschild (2003) describes how family life is becoming increasingly organised and taylorized as there is less time available to spend with the family. She argues that some adults are starting to find the work environment as being a relaxing escape from their home life. However this only applies to middle class adults, those who have a comparatively secure income.

This is important to note because under neo-liberalism the working class has become fragmented along multiple lines. Variance in income is more significant in neo-liberal society than it was in the Fordist society, alongside this job security also varies significantly, some occupations and individuals have secure employment and income while many have very precarious employment and income (Standing, 1997). This has meant that there is no single experience of employment in neo-liberal society with there instead being a range of employment experiences ranging from a Fordist style of secure and wealthy employment to an impoverished irregular income of some. There is also an increased proportion of the population that is living outside of formal income streams (Standing, 2002).



## **The Risk Society and Self-Developed Narratives**

Alongside a more precarious workplace for many people society itself has become more uncertain. To a certain extent this results from a precarious employment status as so much of people's social role is dependent upon their income which is reliant upon their employment status. However Beck (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1999; Wilkinson, 2007) argues that contemporary neo-liberal society can best be characterised as a risk society. This is because in neo-liberal society the individual is supposed to make decisions for themselves, with comparatively little regulation of those decisions. Previously governments would regulate industries to ensure that they acted in a manner in line with public interest. This role now falls to the market, supposedly the decision making power of ordinary people. Failure is always a possibility in the risk society and there are relatively few guidelines on what means to take in order to succeed. For people living in this society anxiety is normal, as is a continuing re-evaluation of an individual's life narrative, what they have done and what they intend to do. Previously life narratives could be centred around social institutions, primarily the workplace, however these institutions are weaker and a person's relationship to them is no longer as certain as it had been. This means that there is more uncertainty over what a person bases their life narrative on, what is important to them, the significant things they have done and what they will do next. Without this, failure becomes increasingly likely as efforts to succeed, become failures as the ends and acceptable means shift around a person's intention. There is even a possibility that individuals may operate without a sustained sense of self, abandoning a continuous narrative and adopting shorter more temporary narratives (Sennett, 2006).

This means that in a neo-liberal society relationships are not stable, they are under re-evaluation as the presentation of the individuals life narrative emphasises different aspects of their life.

## **Welfare and Prisons**

The welfare system has undergone significant changes in the transition to neo-liberal society. In the Fordist society the welfare state was about providing a safety net for citizens, in neo-liberal society the purpose of the welfare system is to control and change the behaviour of the poorest members of society (Standing, 2002; Wacquant, 2010, 2012). Usually welfare recipients have to satisfy a number of behavioural criteria before being eligible for welfare assistance. Commonly this involves the individual actively taking steps to remove the need for welfare but can also include assisted budgeting and regular drug and alcohol screening. These criteria effectively work to increase the competition on the lower end of the labour market, while decreasing the welfare payments of governments.

The penal system has been expanded in all neo-liberal societies, this is because in some respects it is now fulfilling the functions that the welfare system did in Fordist society (Wacquant, 2010, 2012). Wacquant (2010) argues that prisons in a neo-liberal society are about warehousing the poor instead of changing their behaviour, while welfare now handles reforming the behaviour of the poor instead of warehousing them. The penal system has increased as neo-liberal society increases the potential for criminality by increasing the stresses on people, while the doctrine of individual responsibility tends to justify tougher punishments for the criminal choices of individuals as a deterrent. The result of these two factors has been in all

cases an increase in the prison population. The penal system in a number of countries has also been entered into the free market as a number of privately owned prisons compete for the business of warehousing prisoners.

While looking at Fordist society I was critical of the bureaucratic nature of many social institutions, in neo-liberal society these institutions have retained their bureaucratic nature. The welfare state is still homogenising and has become more intrusive into the lifestyles of those that become a part of it, beneficiaries can only receive the income they need provided that they meet the criteria set out by a technocrat. In neo-liberal society the penal system reaches a larger proportion of the population than in the Fordist society and those people also find themselves constrained by the bureaucracy of the penal system.

## **Consumerism**

People in neo-liberal society often live in anxiety and powerlessness, consumerism acts as a salve for this anxiety (D. Smith, 2007; Vadolas, 2012). In neo-liberal society consumption of resources is constantly promoted, well beyond the point of individual need or even comfort. Consumption has even been offered as a means of helping to combat terrorism or promote sustainable industry practices. Unfortunately consumerism only offers short term fulfilment, Vadolas (2012) describes it as a Lacanian *Jouissance* which ultimately generates increasing consumption as people try to consume more in an attempt at greater fulfilment. However the reality of the consumptive abilities of most people in neo-liberal society falls short of where the fantasy of consumption drives them. The result is

depression and a high level of debt based consumption, which contributed to the 2008 economic crisis.

Consumption acts as a marker of social status in neo-liberal society, the products that a person associate with and adorn themselves in act as a signifier of their identity. As a resulted of the massive advertisement of products these products and brands come to be associated with a particular way of life and emotional baggage. When people purchase these products they are purchasing the projection of the life style and emotions that these products signify (Merrin, 2007; Zepf, 2010). People are increasingly divided into categories that are consumption based and imaginary rather than the economic-occupational categories that were common under Fordist society (Vadolas, 2012). However these imaginary classifications and perceptions and emotions that are associated with the classification are not under the control of the consumer, they are determined by marketing strategy at the company that manufactures the product. People have the ability to choose which identity they can adopt out of a number available, but they cannot determine the content of that identity or the future direction of their identity.

Because neo-liberal society offers this limited choice of consumption identity it claims to offer freedom (Browning, 2000). However this freedom is illusory, while people have the ability to choose between a few pre formed consumption based identities they have little actual power in society with which to actually generate a life narrative free of constraint. In other words actual autonomy is quite limited in neo-liberal society (D. Smith, 1999).

With the rise of the internet new methods of consumption have developed (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Stan J. Liebowitz, 2006). These methods have been called collaborative consumption because they involve individuals redistributing or sharing products with each other. These methods of consumption allow the producers or the owners of goods to directly sell, swap or give the products to others without the mediation of third parties. While traditional methods of consumption rely on contract laws and regulation to function collaborative consumption builds trust between people through methods of feedback around a person's trustworthiness. This form of consumption is growing rapidly, in both legal and illegal spheres.

Compared to traditional methods of consumption this is better for social solidarity, collaborative consumption encourages engagement between individuals, leading to a multi-directional communication around the goods that people consume. However it does not counter the need that many people feel to consume new products, although it often makes this needs more affordable. It is likely that collaborative consumption is growing because a growing number of people prefer to produce, share and/or sell without the mediation of institutions, instead they want to engage with the users of the product. This engagement allows feedback between people and helps equalise the differences in power in creating a shared moral framework around what these products mean to others.

### **Neo-Liberalism and Social Solidarity**

Now that we have described the key features of neo-liberal society we can turn to an examination of how these features effect social solidarity in this society. As before we shall examine poverty and inequality, the presence of stable social institutions and outsider groups, and the primary methods of governance of neo-liberal society in order to develop an idea of the social solidarity in this society compared to the others discussed.

We will begin with poverty and inequality both of which have increased in neo-liberal society. The precarious nature of employment, higher unemployment and less powerful unions in the advanced capitalist economies have combined to hold down wages, while the share of wealth going to business owners and senior managers has increased substantially. Compared with Fordist society it is obvious that the levels of poverty and inequality will have a negative effect on social solidarity. However comparisons with the early industrial period are more difficult. McNally (2011) demonstrates that wealth inequality in neo-liberal society is higher than in the early industrial period. However, looking at wealth inequality alone is simplistic and ignores the access that people have to public healthcare and education for example that were not available during the early industrial period.

When examining the stability of social institutions in neo-liberal society it is in many ways a return to the early industrial period. Work and income has become as precarious for many people in neo-liberal society as it was for their counterparts in early industrial society. This means that the workplace does not function as well as a site of instrumental belongingness as it did in the Fordist period. Of course this is

not true for all workplaces, a number still have the same job security as was common in Fordist society. Income insecurity also has consequences at other levels at which belongingness needs to be met. As insecurity increases people spend more time on maintaining or finding alternatives to their income, which takes away time and resources that could be spent on building relationships at other levels. This has been a significant factor in family life becoming taylorized as Hochschild (2003) describes it.

Like precarious labour there is another significant similarity between early industrial and neo-liberal society, this is a significant wave of migration. In the developing world this is a migration from the rural countryside to urban slums, as it was in the early industrial society. In the advanced capitalist countries this wave of migration is generally international, from the nearby developing countries. Like in early industrial society this migration causes the migrants to detach themselves from many of the social institutions of their own country and lifestyle. Many of these institutions either cannot be replicated or can only be done so through considerable struggle. At the same time these migrants are often excluded from the established advanced capitalist and urban institutions, this is because many of these migrants are classified as illegal. Having significant numbers of illegal immigrants maintains the precariousness of labour as these people provide a cheap and flexible labour market for employers in competition with legal workers. These migrants are not the only outsider group in neo-liberal society, the economic underclass has made a return with the increased pressure put on wages and employment.

The final indicator of social solidarity we shall examine is the method of

governance in neo-liberal society. It will be recalled that in Fordist society the average person had a fair degree of influence in high level decision making but a low level of everyday decision making as a result of bureaucracy and scientific management. In neo-liberal society the influence of ordinary people over high level decision making has decreased while the bureaucracy and scientific management has not decreased. As unions have been weakened in neo-liberal society workers no longer have the same degree of influence over their workplace as in Fordist society. At the same time governments have changed the focus of their regulation away from direct economic intervention to supporting business owners and their decision making power. This means that the workers in neo-liberal society have lost much of their political influence over their economic conditions. The growing power of the transnational state has also lead to a decrease in influence by the common people in neo-liberal society, the transnational institutions are unrepresentative and the ordinary people do not have any influence on who makes up these institutions. In the face of this decline in influence the ordinary people of neo-liberal society are instead offered a form of consumptive decision making. This form of decision making is however not conducive to meeting the need for autonomy. Schwartz (2000) argues that the increased choice given by heightened consumption actually causes anxiety and depression. I argued in an earlier chapter that the cause of this anxiety is not actually the result of the choices offered but is instead the result of the weakness of the collective consciousness regulating consumption decisions. Likewise the increased consumption power in neo-liberal society is the result of a decrease in strength of the collective consciousness in society rather than an increase in autonomy. This increase in consumerism has not led to an increase in autonomy but is instead the result of uncertainty. However from a whole society



perspective even if it were to increase autonomy it would not be sufficient to counteract the decline in power in the economic and political spheres.

## **Conclusion**

Compared to the Fordist era social solidarity has become significantly weaker in neo-liberal society, this is the crisis of solidarity that the authors I began this thesis with were discussing. This decline in social solidarity is the result of the decline in stable social institutions, increased poverty and inequality and the lesser degree of influence people have over decision making processes. However the comparison with the earlier periods examined is less simple than the comparison with Fordist society. Neo-liberal society shares many of the characteristics of early industrial society, but there are some remaining characteristics of Fordist society untouched. Because of these remaining characteristics neo-liberal society in advanced capitalist countries has a higher degree of social solidarity than early industrial society. However outside of the advanced capitalist countries neo-liberalism may be worse than early industrial society as more decision making power has been taken by the transnational state.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the changes in social solidarity in western civilization since the feudal era. This requires firstly that the concept of social solidarity be redeveloped so that meaningful comparisons can be made across very different societies. Once a framework that allows this comparison is developed we examine four historical western social forms to infer the changes in social solidarity over time. Generally speaking the transition from feudal society to capitalist society led to a significant decline in social solidarity, a trend which was significantly, but briefly, countered by Fordist society after the Second World War.

This thesis has argued that social solidarity is an attitude of common interest and a sense of mutuality that unites people for a known and consented common purpose, that is underpinned by institutions and social structures that facilitate this understanding and meet people's material and psychological needs. This argument was based upon a critical dialogue with the work of Emile Durkheim. While rejecting his concepts of mechanical and organic solidarity as being problematic the general thrust of his argument was kept. Emile Durkheim's concepts were connected to human material and psychological needs to provide a basis for the conditions that will cause social solidarity to flourish. These needs were developed from the self-determination theory of psychology, it posits three basic psychological needs, relatedness, autonomy and competency. This thesis argues that the first two psychological needs in particular are linked to the creation, growth and reinforcement of social solidarity. In brief institutions that meet the individuals need for relatedness will generate a common interest and sense of mutuality, while

institutions that meet an individual's need for autonomy will centre this interest around a known and consented common purpose. Meeting the material needs of people is also of great importance as when these are not met this undermines the mutuality, empathy and trust that is central to social solidarity.

In order to infer the level of social solidarity in different historical societies this thesis develops a number of different observable social characteristics that can be observed in different societies. These social characteristics are stable social institutions, the common methods of governance, the levels of poverty and inequality and the size of outsider groups in society. These concepts are each linked to one of the core aspects of social solidarity, outsider groups and stable social institutions are linked to relatedness, the common methods of governance are linked with autonomy, while the levels of poverty and inequality are linked to the material needs of people. From observing these social characteristics it is possible to infer the changes in social solidarity over time.

This thesis has examined four historical societies, the feudal, early industrial, Fordist and neo-liberal societies. Working through these societies it is apparent that social solidarity has decreased since the feudal period. In fact the feudal period is the method of social organisation that provides the most social solidarity in all the societies examined in this thesis. Feudal society has one major drawback when it comes to social solidarity and that is a significant number of outsider groups, notably a large economic underclass. The shift to early industrial society led to a significant decline in social solidarity as the social institutions that had been at the core of social life broke down and the capitalist wage labour system came to

dominate social relations. Fordist society developed as a significant counter to the underlying mechanics of capitalist society after the traumas of the first half of the twentieth century. This society expanded war time institutions to create a stable base for people to build relationships upon while the role of democratic governments and trade unions in society expanded giving ordinary people more influence over society. However the advent of neo-liberalism removed many of these institutions, although not all of them while shifting more power to a growing transnational state which is beyond the influence of ordinary people. Neo-liberal society has a higher level of social solidarity than early industrial society because many of the institutions of the Fordist era remain, although with much less power than they had in that era. However if it were not for these institutions than the neo-liberal era would be worse as the transnational state has shifted power further away from people.

There is a question which has not been answered up until this point, is social solidarity a good thing for a society to have? Social solidarity is the force that holds a society together in spite of all the centrifugal forces that would split society apart. If the force of social solidarity becomes lower than the centrifugal forces in society than either the society would dissolve or the shortfall would have to be made up by repression or other means of keeping the society together without social solidarity. To my mind there is no question that a society maintained by social solidarity is better than a society maintained through forced solidarity, as Durkheim termed it. However is it possible for there to be too much social solidarity, a situation in which the forces of social solidarity are much stronger than centrifugal forces in society? Durkheim (1951) would likely have argued that this is possible, in his work on

suicide he argued that suicide could result from a high collective consciousness. In this he details a number of societies in which people commit suicide because this is their duty in society. This is undoubtedly a situation which most would wish to avoid.

However I disagreed with Durkheim's formulation of social solidarity and instead based my conception of social solidarity upon the human material and psychological needs. From this perspective we could propose that the examples that Durkheim described were situations in which there was a strong collective consciousness resulting from the need for relatedness being met but instead the need for autonomy was lacking. However this position is also likely to be simplistic as it is possible for people to feel that they are making a decision even when there is little real choice. However if this and similar situations of self-sacrifice are the price to pay for over high social solidarity then it is safe to argue that the societies studied in this thesis have not approached this level of social solidarity.

The transition from feudalism to early industrial society was a shift in the nature of social solidarity. However, that from early industrial to Fordism was an increase in the level of social solidarity, while that from Fordism to neo-liberalism was a decrease in social solidarity. I shall discuss these transitions and what they suggest in the paragraphs below.

The transition from feudalism to Fordism corresponds with a shift in social solidarity. Durkheim described this as a shift from mechanical to organic solidarity, instead I view it as a shift from a psychological needs based solidarity to a material

needs based solidarity. This transition resulted in a significant decline in the stability of social institutions and in the autonomy of the majority of the population. On the other hand poverty did decrease after the initial increase of early industrial society. This points to a fundamental difference between feudal and capitalist society. In the first the majority of relationships are based on duty and family, in other words they are direct relationships with other people. In capitalist society these relationships have declined in importance and instead relationships centred or mediated by money have increased in importance. These relationships are dominant throughout all the capitalist societies discussed in this thesis and are less personable than direct relationships with others, obviously this makes it more difficult for mutually caring relationships to develop. The everyday need for autonomy was also sacrificed in the search for higher productivity although this was partly compensated for by the increasing influence given to common people over societal affairs. However, the advantage of industrialism for social solidarity was that it made it possible for a society to exist which could meet the material needs of all. This only became apparent in the Fordist period but remains the great potential of the industrial production system for social solidarity.

The transition into and out of Fordism is also thought provoking. The shift from early industrial to Fordist society caused a dramatic increase in social solidarity in society. However, this did not last very long and ultimately neo-liberalism reduced the social solidarity nearer to what it had been before the Fordist era. To me this suggests that capitalist societies operate at a low level of social solidarity and that while a particular project such as Fordism may mask this for a time the basic logic of capitalism will reassert itself. It has to be remembered that capitalism is based of

exploiting the labour of others to maximise the profits for oneself. Mutually caring relationships and autonomy, poverty and material equality are not significant factors in this central economic relationship. Because of this it seems plausible to me that the underlying economic logic of capitalist economies will be tending towards a low state of social solidarity every time the social solidarity is raised. Perhaps this means that the only stable industrial society that has social solidarity is one which is industrial while not being capitalistic, although for such a society to match the social solidarity of a feudal village would likely require more than simply removing capitalism from the production process.

There is also a question of whether the societies that I have examined actually have true social solidarity or whether this falls so low that it falls into one of the aberrant categories that Durkheim described, anomic, forced or negative solidarity. All the societies examined have a number of social relationships that are unnecessary for social functioning so negative solidarity is not an appropriate term for any of these societies. However, an argument could be made that all the societies except for Fordist society are forced. In the feudal society this argument would have to ignore the common belief that social positions were divinely ordained and reciprocal so it cannot really be considered forced. In neo-liberal and early industrial society this argument is more solid, these societies rely on the threat of material deprivation to 'motivate' the workforce. Durkheim himself argued that early industrial society was forced and there is no real case to argue against his logic. The question of anomic solidarity is a more interesting one to consider, this is are the people working towards collective goals aware of these goals? In the feudal society there is no question that people were aware of the collective goal to meet their feudal

obligations and provide for their own survival, however in the other three societies examined this is less certain. Fordist society is unlikely to have experienced anomic solidarity as these societies often put forward goals like full employment and high wages which were publicly debated and decided. However in the other two societies this was and is much rarer, instead societies may briefly unite behind a particular goal but in practice these societies seem to spend much of the time operating without any particular goal. This provides some evidence that the solidarity of these societies may be anomic in nature, that is these societies do not exist for a reason known to most people.

There is still a lot more work that can be done to develop the argument that I have presented in this work. When looking at social solidarity I argued that it was ultimately dependent upon the degree to which human needs were being met. However when I examined this in society I did so unevenly. Poverty and inequality are an acceptable approximation of peoples material needs, however when looking for social evidence of the psychological needs there is still much work to do. Examining the stability of social institutions is an indirect method of looking at the presence of long term mutually caring relationships. Likewise looking at governance in society is not exactly the same as looking at the autonomy of individuals and my treatment of autonomy in this work necessarily pushes the concept beyond its individualistic origins. However this means that my development of the need for autonomy is not as empirically supported as psychological individualistic autonomy. When looking at social solidarity I did not develop a measure of the degree to which competency is being met, this was simply because it is difficult to compare between societies with any degree of accuracy.



Future work should try to develop more comprehensive and accurate measures of the degree to which psychological needs are met than I have in this work. I realised that in this work and so have maintained a fairly loose definition of all the characteristics that I have examined, treating them more as discussion points rather than empirical measurements. This was because it was easier to keep the end result in mind when examining the societies in this manner. However some empirical examination of this topic would be very useful in the future.

Another important area in which more research needs to be undertaken is in the area of the relationship between the various needs presented here. There is some evidence that suggests that the psychological needs are not mediated by each other, that is they are independent and all of importance for an individual's mental health. But does this carry over to social health or would a society with a high degree of belongingness, for example, be sufficient to generate social solidarity with the other psychological needs being absent. The relationship between the psychological needs and the material needs is also significant, will sufficient material goods make up for psychological disorder in society? Or vice versa? If these needs are all equally important do they all need to be balance with each other or can some lag behind or be in front of the others without negative consequences?

There is a final point of discussion which needs further research, this is the relationship between the collective consciousness and human needs. I have argued in this work that the collective consciousness results from the presence of long term mutually caring relationships. However I have also argued that the collective

consciousness can act to mitigate the degree to which some of these needs are felt by the population in a society. I have primarily argued that this is related to the justification of inequality of society but it could conceivably apply to any of the factors I have examined given a strong enough collective consciousness. The cross cultural evidence of the psychological needs provides an argument against this argument by suggesting that these needs are still felt across all the cultural groups examined. However, all the cultures examined have been found in neo-liberal societies, so it is possible that an underlying neo-liberal collective consciousness is actually found in all these cultures. If it were found that the strength of the collective consciousness could moderate the needs of individuals than this would make the task that I set out to accomplish in this work much more difficult, and perhaps impossible given the historical evidence available for some societies.

However given these limitations, I have made a significant step forward in achieving my stated goal of developing a method for examining the differences in social solidarity between societies. By examining the degree to which the needs of individual people are being met we can infer both the degree of social solidarity in that society, and the health of that society.

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