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Sanders, K.; Flache, A.; Van der Vegt, G.S.; Van de Vliert, E.

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CHAPTER 9

Employees' Organizational Solidarity within Modern Organizations: A Framing Perspective on the Effects of Social Embeddedness

*Karin Sanders, Andreas Flache, Gerben van der Vegt,
and Evert van de Vliert*

Within modern organizations, hierarchical control by means of authority chains is often replaced by more horizontal organizational structures (Taplin, 1995). The basis for this development is the shift toward use of more flexible production technology by firms in reaction to less predictable markets, intensified global competition, and the micro-electronic revolution. One of the characteristics of modern organizations is that employees bear a much larger responsibility for attaining production goals than in the classical hierarchical firm. Within modern organizations, employees often work in teams or groups where they are themselves responsible for the coordination and organization of their work, such as in management teams, project groups, or self-managing teams (Cohen and Bailey, 1997; Goodman, 1986). Such teams may be responsible for a department within a hospital or for the saving of a ship and its cargo, or be a special unit of the police.

In modern teams, employees enjoy considerable autonomy and employers expect team members to show teamwork, voluntary participation, willingness to cooperate, and mutual informal control in order to keep the organization running (Appelbaum and Batt, 1994; Handy, 1995). Put differently, the employer needs solidary behavior from the employees. Accordingly, employees' vertical or organizational solidarity (i.e., the solidarity of the employees with their organization) is viewed as one of the most important success factors within modern organizations (Wickens, 1995). Indeed, research has shown that organizational solidarity is positively related to, for example, employees' performance (Sanders, Snijders, and Stokman, 1998), and negatively related to short-term absenteeism (Sanders, 2004; Sanders and Hoekstra, 1998; Sanders and Nauta, 2004).

In this chapter, we explore to what extent a framing perspective based on Lindenberg's framing theory (Lindenberg, this volume) can explain and identify determinants of employees' organizational solidarity both at the level of organizational rules (formal and informal) and at the level of employees' social relationships. Compared to previous research on solidarity within organizations, our focus on organizational solidarity is relatively new. Traditional research involved mainly the investigation of solidarity between employees in a conflict with the management or in the enforcement of local work group norms (Blau, 1955; Homans, 1974; Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939; Seashore, 1954). We address instead employees' solidary behavior in the employer-employee relationship, because in research into modern work organizations this aspect of solidarity at the workplace is seen as a key precondition for organizational performance. In a broader perspective, organizational solidarity can be seen as an element of the relationship between employee and employer, which involves in particular solidary behavior of the management or organization toward the employee. We do not address determinants of management's solidary behavior toward employees, but focus on effects of management behavior on employees' organizational solidarity. For the sake of brevity, we refer to employees' organizational solidarity also as organizational solidarity or solidary behavior.

Researchers in organizational and work psychology use many different labels to refer to organizational solidarity, such as organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1997; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, and Bachrach, 2000), willingness to cooperate (Katz, 1964), and extra-role or contextual performance (Motowidlo, Borman, and Schmitt, 1997; Motowidlo and Van Scotter, 1994; Organ, 1997; Organ and Lingl, 1995; Van Dyne, 1994; Van Dyne, Graham, and Richard, 1995). Probably the most frequently studied form of solidary behavior is organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Organ, 1997). This concerns employee behavior that has an overall positive effect on the functioning of the organization and that cannot be enforced by the employment contract. Adopting a more sociological perspective, but consistent with previous research, we conceive of solidary behavior as behavior that occurs if employees within organizations contribute to the success of the team or organization, are prepared to help others in need, resist the temptation to let other members do most of the work, share responsibilities, and are prepared to apologize for mistakes (Lindenberg, 1998; see also Lindenberg, Fetchenhauer, Flache, and Buunk, this volume). Examples of solidary behavior of the employee toward the employer are willingness to work overtime, to help colleagues with their jobs for the organization, and to engage in work efforts that go beyond obligations specified in the labor contract (Becker, 1993). A particularly important form of organizational solidarity is investment in firm-specific human capital by the employee. For example, an employee's willingness to learn a computer program that

is used solely within his or her organization can greatly benefit the company but has no immediate return for the employee.

Most of the literature on organizational solidarity has focused on effects of individual characteristics, such as personality traits, of solidary behavior (Podsakoff et al., 2000; for a recent overview of research on personality and solidarity, cf. Van der Zee and Perugini, this volume). Other authors have argued, however, that social context variables, such as embeddedness in the social environment, are important predictors (Hodson, 1997; Koster, Sanders, and Van Emmerik, 2003; Raub and Weesie, 1990, 2000; Van Emmerik, Lambooi, and Sanders, 2002; Van Emmerik and Sanders, 2004).

In general, social context variables can be described in terms of three forms of embeddedness of employees within organizations: embeddedness in an institutional context, network embeddedness, and temporal embeddedness (Raub and Weesie, 1990, 2000). Institutional embeddedness refers to the formal and informal rules of an organization, such as career rules, performance systems, and the informal organizational rules. Individuals' network embeddedness refers to the network of social relations between employees, for example, friendships or status hierarchies. Temporal embeddedness, finally, is the duration and expected future duration of employment relationships (Axelrod, 1984; Raub and Weesie, 2000). Clearly, the three forms of embeddedness are related to each other. For instance, tenure or career systems are part of the institutional context, but also influence the temporal embeddedness of employees' behaviors. Also, the social networks of employees within an organization may influence temporal embeddedness by shaping employees' intentions to stay or leave (and vice versa).

The focus of our study is on how embeddedness affects the solidary behavior of employees with regard to their organization. We look at a range of available empirical studies and examine to what extent their results are consistent with the framing perspective on solidarity proposed in this book (cf. Lindenberg, 1998 and this volume; Lindenberg et al., this volume). Furthermore, we aim to determine whether relational framing provides better explanations or generates new fruitful research problems in comparison with competing approaches to organizational embeddedness. We pay particular attention to agency theory (Alchian and Demsetz, 1972; Petersen, 1993) as a prominent competing approach that excludes the cognitive and emotional mechanisms of framing.

Below, we give a brief outline of the core assumptions of both theories. The effects of institutional embeddedness on solidary behavior within an organization will then be discussed and attention will be paid to the relationships between employees' solidary behavior and network and temporal embeddedness. In the last section, we will summarize and present some ideas for future research.

Agency Theory and Framing Theory

In its most orthodox form, agency theory may be characterized by three core assumptions derived from neoclassical economics (cf. Petersen, 1993). First, the theory views members of organizations as rational agents who anticipate and calculate even complicated consequences of their actions. Second, agency theory assumes that actors have exclusively egoistic motives and, third, it assumes that they are solely interested in tangible material rewards such as maximization of payment and minimization of the effort that is needed to attain rewards. Clearly, within this perspective, it is difficult to address solidary behavior and social relationships at the workplace. Accordingly, contributions to agency theory include the assumption that actors may also strive for social incentives, such as prestige or status at the workplace (Flache 2002; Kandel and Lazear, 1992; Petersen, 1992; Spagnolo, 1999). Even within this recent line of work, however, authors retain the assumptions of egoistic preferences and largely rationally calculated action.

By contrast, framing theory assumes that individuals interpret and evaluate behavior differently depending on how they view the relationships to which this behavior pertains (Lindenberg, this volume; Mühlau, 2000; Wittek, Van Duijn, and Snijders, 2003). It is argued that cognitive selection processes “define” or “frame” the decision-making situations that occur within relationships. Unlike agency theory, framing theory implies that people may not under all circumstances rationally pursue personal material and social well-being. Instead, it is argued that the subjective framing of the situation may trigger mutual expectations and obligations that temper or even overrule narrow self-interest (Lindenberg, 1998 and this volume; Lindenberg et al., this volume).

Applications of framing theory to organizations mainly distinguish two frames: a gain frame and a normative frame (Lindenberg, 1998; Mühlau, 2000; Wittek et al., 2003). As a core motivation, the *gain* frame corresponds to rational egoism, the behavioral assumption of agency theory. Lindenberg (this volume) argues that there is also a so-called hedonic frame in which people are mainly motivated by short-term primary desires, such as getting food or having fun. We feel, however, that purely hedonic motives rarely play a prominent role within work organizations.

Framing theory argues that gain is virtually always the dominant motive in work organizations (e.g., Mühlau, 2000). However, gain maximization may be more or less restrained by normative concerns. In terms of framing theory, actors' behavior may be seen as weakly solidary when a *normative* frame in the background is sufficiently strong to temper egoistic motives. In a “pure” normative frame, individuals' primary goal is to act appropriately. For example, in a friendship relation, individuals do not focus on gains from exchange but on obligations appropriate to

friendship such as providing help in times of need. By contrast, in weak solidarity relations, pursuit of gain is considered legitimate by both parties, but at the same time actors are willing to comply with norms of fairness, reciprocity, or equity. Accordingly, to explain solidarity in work organizations from a framing theoretical perspective, we assume that the relative strength of the gain and normative frames of an employee are shaped by the situational context: more precisely, by the institutional, network, and temporal embeddedness of the employee.

Institutional Embeddedness

Relationships in organizations are institutionally embedded. That is, they are influenced by institutions, which provide the formal and informal rules that govern the interactions between employers and employees (North, 1990), also called governance structures.

Formal Governance Structures

The formal content of an organization's governance structures is evident in the organization's human resource policies. Elements of formal governance structures are remuneration policies and monitoring and control systems. An example of modern formal governance is the project career, a career system used widely by Dutch banks (see, for instance, Sanders, Van Emmerik, and Raub, 2002). In a project career, employees have a permanent contract but they are placed in successive short-term projects in order to increase their flexibility and experience and thus their value for the employer.

Characteristics of governance structures in most modern organizations as compared to traditional firms are lower job security, a larger contingent workforce, the use of more performance-related pay and promotion systems, and the replacement of predictable career paths with more uncertain and competitive promotion systems. These characteristics not only increase incentives for competition between employees but also make promotion and pay rises more uncertain and less transparent.

It has been shown that differentiated and unpredictable reward systems may negatively affect employees' sense of fairness with respect to the employers' behavior (Van Emmerik, Hermkens, and Sanders, 1998). Denison and Mishra (1995) and Tyler (2001) found that a certain degree of predictability of resources and rewards is essential for meaning and satisfaction in work and thus for the establishment of trust between workers and management (Fox, 1974; Granovetter, 1985). The perception that the employer is fair, in turn, has a strong and robust

effect on employees' solidary behavior with regard to the firm (Sanders, Schyns, Koster, and Rotteveel, 2003). Mühlau (2000, chap. 15) discusses and compares competing hypotheses that agency theory and framing theory generate for this relationship. From an agency perspective, performance-related payment should impose stronger incentives to perform well and outcompete colleagues. Accordingly, it should increase employees' willingness to invest effort in the firm at the expense of cooperation with peers. In accordance with this view, one would expect that in firms with more career differentiation there is also more employee solidarity toward the employer, but less solidary behavior between employees. Mühlau contrasts this reasoning with framing theory. From that point of view, most workers perceive high career differentiation as a violation of the implicit solidarity expectation that every employee should get a fair share. In addition, the more differentiated career systems are, the more often employees might perceive promotion decisions as unfair, which may weaken their solidarity and strengthen their gain frame in the relationship with the employer. As a consequence, in firms with higher career differentiation, disappointed employees may tend to support each other against employer practices that are seen as unfair.

Mühlau (2000) shows that data from Japanese firms clearly support the expectation derived from relational framing and refute the predictions of agency theory. His analysis focused on organizational commitment, a concept that is closely related to intended solidary behavior toward the organization. Mühlau found that career differentiation has a clear negative effect on organizational commitment, but not on the perceived quality of co-worker relationships, despite increased pressure on employees to compete. We may tentatively conclude from this evidence that pay and promotion systems characterized by more uncertainty and less predictability (and following from this an increased focus on competition) put employees in a gain frame vis-à-vis the employer: individual goals and interests are in the foreground, and the goals and interests of the team and the organization are in the background. It can be expected that the more employers and managers within organizations make use of performance-related pay and promotions systems, the less solidary behavior employees will exhibit toward the organization. This expectation is consistent with research that showed negative effects of monetary rewards on "intrinsic motivation" (Frey, 1997).

Informal Governance Structures

Informal governance structures complement the formal rules of an organization. For instance, employers often make use of social networks and informal social control to develop and maintain cooperative

relations with and between their employees (Flap, Bulder, and Völker, 1998). Informal governance structures may, in turn, affect both the network and the temporal embeddedness of employees.

Van Emmerik et al. (2002) argued that important elements of the informal governance structure are the prestige, pride, and self-esteem that employees can derive from working for a specific organization or at a specific position within an organization. In their work, prestige was defined in terms of the perceptions of individuals' standing in the hierarchy of a group based on criteria such as honor or deference. In this perspective, employees with high prestige judgments perceive themselves as important, meaningful, and worthwhile within their organization. To maintain positive self-esteem, employees have a strong incentive to exert effort, which, in turn, may increase job performance (Tyler, 2001). As Pfeffer (1982) asserts, acknowledgment of one's prestige by other organization members is one of the most important items of exchange within organizations. For example, perceived high prestige derived from working in a specific context may motivate employees to invest more effort. Such trade-offs of prestige, for example, helping behavior, have been documented in classic organization research (Blau, 1955) and are consistent with both framing theory and (modern) agency theory. In terms of agency theory, rational actors may maximize their utility through this exchange if the costs of extra investments in work effort are more than compensated by the social rewards received from the employer or from colleagues. As Coleman (1990) puts it, "an expression of encouragement or gratitude for an others action may . . . provide a great reward for the other" (p. 277).

From the perspective of framing theory (Lindenberg, this volume), it could be argued that employees' normative background frame in their relationship with the employer may be strengthened if the organization puts them in positions that give them prestige and pride. Van Emmerik and Sanders (2004) and Van Emmerik and her co-authors (2002) found support for this idea. They found a positive relationship between the team-linked status (perceived prestige) of employees in different faculties within a university and the solidary behavior of employees. A finding by Koster and his collaborators (2003) may also be interpreted as supporting this prestige effect. The authors found a positive relationship between the research orientedness of a department and the solidary behavior of Ph.D. students. Research orientedness is perceived in the Dutch university system as an indication of high status of a department. It should be noted, however, that the described evidence could also be explained from a social identity perspective (Hogg and Abrams, 1988; Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel and Turner, 1986), with the argument that employees are willing to make extra efforts that affirm their identity as members of a group with a high status.

Social Network Embeddedness

Network embeddedness pertains to the effects on employee behavior of the amount and quality of social relations (e.g., friendships or informal communication) between employees, as well as the structural characteristics of the networks these relations constitute (Granovetter, 1985). Networks provide information and serve as a means for the direct and indirect sanctioning of nonsolidary actions. In addition, social relations that have a defined duration and are part of a larger network of relations make it possible to gather information (Granovetter, 1985; Hechter, 1987). The longer social relationships between employees last, the more information will be gathered about the other person and the more likely it is that violations of solidarity norms may be detected and sanctioned by peers.

The findings of previous research from the agency theoretic perspective emphasize this control aspect of social relations (Buskens, 1999; Raub and Weesie, 2000). Unsolidary behavior toward colleagues may be tempered when actors fear peer monitoring and future reprisals from colleagues in their network. Moreover, a longer duration of relationships may also increase actors' dependence on peer rewards, which in turn gives additional possibilities to sanction opportunistic behavior of members of the social network.

The agency approach implies that enduring cohesive social networks within organizations may increase solidary behavior between employees (cf. Flache, 1996, 2002; Sanders, 2004). Numerous researchers have found empirical support for this hypothesis (Barker, 1993; Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939; Seashore, 1954). For instance, a study among bus drivers in a large city in the Netherlands showed that, in strongly cohesive working groups, members see leaving their colleagues alone as highly undesirable and will, because of this, avoid voluntary absenteeism (Van Yperen, Hagedoorn, and Geurts, 1994). This suggests that absenteeism that is seen as a form of unsolidary behavior toward both peers and the employer (Sanders, 2004; Sanders, Van Emmerik and Raub, 2002, *in press*; Van Dierendonck, Le Blanc, and Van Breukelen, 2002) is lower when employees within a team are informally related to each other. In addition, there is increasing evidence that group norms at work may play an important and independent role in fostering or hindering spells of absence. For example, Sanders and Hoekstra (1998; Sanders, 2004) show that a more intolerant group norm decreased the absenteeism of the group.

While an agency theoretic perspective seems to provide a straightforward explanation of the positive effects of network cohesion, recent research suggests that this explanation may also suffer from internal inconsistency. Flache and Macy (1996; Flache, 1996, 2002) argued that it may be fully in line with the notion of rational gain maximization

that cohesive networks may under certain conditions fail to foster or even undermine employees' solidarity with regard to the production goals of their work group. In a nutshell, the theoretical argument is that employees face a conflict between two motives, where one is to maintain privately beneficial social relations even with deviants, and the other is enforcement of a group norm to contribute to collective efforts. This conflict ensues because peer enforcement may put social relations between employees under pressure. Accordingly, Flache (1996, 2002) showed that under certain conditions it may be the utility-maximizing course of action for rational employees to neither contribute to group efforts nor enforce solidary behavior by colleagues, but to maintain instead mutually beneficial social ties even with colleagues who act unsolidarily toward the organization. Flache (2003) tested this prediction in a vignette study and found that employees of a Dutch university indicated—as expected—considerably less willingness to pull their weight in a group effort when the social relations in the group were described as more pleasant and friendly. In a similar vein, Sanders and Hoekstra (1998; Sanders, 2004; Sanders and Nauta, 2004) showed that in cohesive teams informal norms concerning illegal absenteeism may actually foster short-term absenteeism.

The positive and the negative effects of informal relations on solidarity that follow from agency theory are consistent with framing theory. The added value of the framing approach, however, may be to highlight conditions under which network embeddedness may foster solidarity rather than undermine it. Fruitful directions for future empirical research may arise from this. For example, Van der Vegt and Flache (this volume) suggest that outcome interdependence in work teams may shift employees' attention toward the normative obligation to contribute a fair share to common production. Outcome interdependence refers to the extent to which employees are made aware of their common interests, for example, as a result of group payment or group feedback. Framing theory implies that higher outcome interdependence may increase the positive effects of cohesive networks on solidary behavior at the workplace. Conversely, low outcome interdependence may distract actors' attention from collective goals and strengthen their gain motive of obtaining social rewards from colleagues. In other words, framing theory implies that lower outcome interdependence may weaken or even reverse the effect of cohesive networks on solidary behavior.

The Temporal Context

Temporal embeddedness captures both the history and the (expected) future of relationships. To the extent that a relationship has a longer history, actors have had more opportunities to gain information

about the reliability of the other and to learn from previous behavior of the other. In addition, relationship-specific investments are an important result of a common history (Raub and Weesie, 1990, 2000). Relationship-specific investments can be described as investments that make the relationship more valuable for both partners, such as investments in firm-specific skills or in trust building with colleagues. These investments are lost if an employee decides to accept an offer from another organization.

An agency theoretic perspective clearly implies that both a longer history and a longer expected future of a relationship foster solidarity. Mutual relationship-specific investments reduce temptation for opportunistic behavior and stabilize the relationship (Williamson, 1975, 1996). Furthermore, a common future allows one to promise the partner future rewards or to threaten the partner with negative sanctions for undesired behavior. Consistent effects have indeed been found in research concerning negotiations within organizations. The more individual employees (Pruitt and Carnevale, 1993) or departments within an organization (Nauta and Sanders, 2000, 2001) are positively interdependent in that they have a common future, the more solidary behavior employees exhibit in terms of problem-solving behavior.

The above-mentioned research of Koster (2005) and his collaborators (2003), Sanders and Van Emmerik (2004) and Van Emmerik and Sanders (2004) confirms agency theoretic predictions about the effects of temporal embeddedness on nontenured employees, such as Ph.D. students, within a university. Koster et al. (2003) hypothesized and found a curvilinear effect of organizational tenure on solidarity in a sample of Ph.D. students. That is, at the beginning and at the end of the employment relationship, Ph.D. students showed less solidary behavior, measured as OCB, than in the years in between. The results confirm the notion that solidarity needs a shadow of the past: the longer employees are related to each other, the more solidary behavior can arise. The decline of OCB at the end of the employment relationship can be interpreted as an effect of a lighter shadow of the future. Also in the research of Van Emmerik and Sanders (2004), a positive relationship between the expected length of stay within the organization and OCB was found. The longer employees expected to stay within the organization, the more OCB they reported.

The positive effects of temporal embeddedness found in previous studies are consistent with agency theory's assumption that employees' solidary behavior is motivated solely by enlightened self-interest. The results are also in line with framing theory, when the assumption is made that employees frame their relationship with the organization mainly in terms of gain, but normative background motives are at least strong enough to preclude myopic opportunism in situations in which the relationship is sufficiently temporarily embedded. Mühlau (2000),

however, showed that, unlike agency theory, framing theory may also be capable of explaining negative effects of temporary embeddedness on organizational commitment. Mühlau found that, in a sample of Japanese industrial workers, employees indicated at the beginning of an employment relationship a relatively high level of organizational commitment, but commitment declined with the duration of the employment relationship. The data suggest a negative effect of the “shadow of the past” on intended solidary behavior toward the organization. Mühlau explains this result with the argument that employees initially perceive mainly the positive signals sent by seemingly attractive official employment practices of the firm, which triggers a strong normative frame tempering gain motivations. As time goes by, however, employees tend to perceive more and more situations in which they feel that the employer acts unfairly toward them or their colleagues. As a consequence, employees’ normative frame may gradually weaken and they may frame their relationship with the employer increasingly in terms of gain, which eventually results in lower levels of intended solidary behavior.

Both agency theory and relational framing emphasize potential dangers of decreasing temporal embeddedness in modern work organizations that may point to fruitful avenues to explore in future research, especially with regard to the effects of declining temporal embeddedness on trust (e.g., Coleman, 1990; Luhmann, 1979; Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman, 1995). In order to satisfy the demands of a rapidly changing environment and increasingly competitive markets, growing numbers of employers are turning to flexible, short-lived employment relations (Pfeffer, 1982). External flexibility (e.g., employees have temporary jobs and work only when necessary) especially reduces the long-term perspective in the employer-employee relationship, which in turn may put solidarity with the organization under pressure.

In addition, as a result of the absence of a long-term perspective, the positive effects of social networks on workplace solidarity may decline. In a short-term labor relationship, positive and negative sanctioning among employees may come under pressure, because employees may have little interest in investing in the future quality of peer relationships. As a consequence, the chances of opportunistic behavior occurring may increase, and the chances of solidary behavior occurring may decrease, even when employees are embedded in informal peer networks.

Conclusions and Future Research

In this chapter, we discussed solidary behavior within modern organizations and its relationships with institutional, network, and temporal embeddedness. It was argued that although employees enjoy autonomy within modern organizations, the disadvantage of this

autonomy is that employers expect team members to work together, participate voluntarily, cooperate willingly, and submit to the mutual informal control needed to keep the organization running (Appelbaum and Batt, 1994; Handy, 1995; Wickens, 1995). This can be summarized as the employers' "demand" for solidary behavior.

Employee solidarity with the organization is both needed and precarious. This makes it particularly important to have appropriate theoretical tools to investigate the conditions that shape solidarity at the workplace. Accordingly, our main theoretical interest in this chapter was to determine to what extent effects of the three forms of embeddedness on employee solidarity can be explained from a framing perspective (Lindenberg 1998, this volume) and whether this approach adds new insights into organizational solidarity and improves upon the prominent competing approach of agency theory (Alchian and Demsetz, 1972; Petersen, 1993), which explicitly neglects framing effects.

In sum, we tentatively conclude that a large body of the available empirical evidence on effects of embeddedness is consistent with both approaches. Employees often tend to show more solidarity with the organization when the governance structures reward solidary behavior, when employees are embedded in more and stronger informal relationships with colleagues, and when they expect a longer future and have had a longer past in the organization. This is in line with both theories.

There are also a number of notable effects of embeddedness that seem to contradict the view of agency theory but can be explained by framing. Framing theory suggests explanations for findings that show that the differentiation of career systems, cohesive networks within work groups, or the duration of the employment relationship sometimes have negative rather than positive effects on employees' solidarity. While this can tentatively be regarded as support for a framing perspective on employment relations, we wish to emphasize that a more systematic theory comparison than ours would be required to arrive at a conclusive assessment of the relative strengths and weaknesses of framing and agency theories. In particular, we did not systematically search for empirical results that contradict a framing interpretation, nor did we take the relative parsimony of the theories into consideration.

An important theme in future research may be that the effects of institutional, network, and temporal embeddedness are interrelated. For example, when relationships between employees have more time to develop, there will be more interpersonal contact and more possibilities to build informal networks. This implies that employees' network embeddedness can be influenced by their temporal embeddedness. Similarly, changing institutional embeddedness in terms of more short-term, external flexible contracts leads to diminishing long-term perspectives. This may suggest that within modern organizations there is

not enough time to build the close and informal relationships between employees and with the employer that are the seedbed of solidary behavior. Growing time pressure within dual-earner households also puts voluntary participation in informal activities under pressure, which further undermines solidary behavior. Empirical research designed explicitly to test these ideas is needed to describe more clearly how the three elements of social embeddedness are interrelated in their consequences for solidarity.

We also believe that research into the effects of social embeddedness might identify manageable factors to improve solidarity within organizations. Employers can choose between governance structures that constitute the settings in which employees weigh alternatives and choose the duration and timing of their efforts for the organization. An important question for future research, therefore, is how employers can design formal and informal governance such that they strengthen normative motives and weaken employees' gain frames in their relationships with the organization.

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