

FORMS OF SOLIDARITY IN THE CONTEXT OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS AND LECTURERS

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Introduction

➤ **Solidarity** :

- 1) an **agreement** between and **support** for the members of a group (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus, 2018);
- 2) **unity** of purpose, interest, or sympathy (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2016).

Problem of the research

- **Traditional paradigm of academic life:**

- faculty members are **part of** a particular academic **community** as the centre of their lives.



- **Post-modern “new academic culture”:**

- academia as a unique type of enterprise, which relies on **individual preferences** and “has generally effective legislative processes, less effective administrative processes, and virtually no effective judicial processes” (Kerr, 1994, p. 9 11).

Aim of the presentation

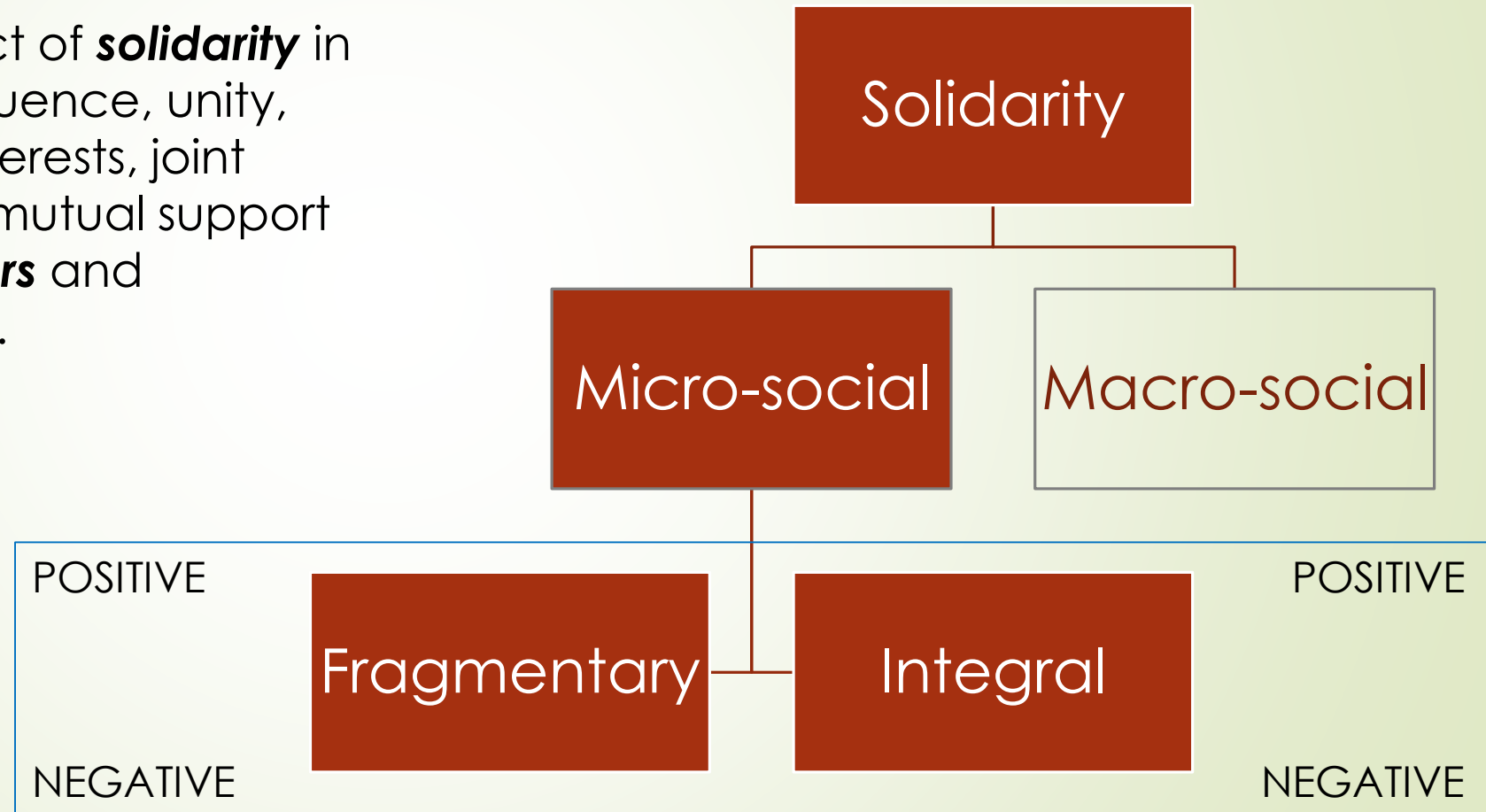
- Holistic scientific discourse on the impact of solidarity on academic integrity is still missing.
- Therefore, this presentation aims ***to reveal forms of solidarity in an academic community and their impact on the maintenance of academic integrity.***

Methodology

- Qualitative research
 - Theoretical model of solidarity
 - Purposive sampling ensuring diversity of the participants according faculties, study programmes, study levels and forms.
 - Common interview guide
 - Analysis of the transcripts focused on forms of solidarity among and between students and lecturers.
- Research participants and empirical data (November 2015-June 2016, including pilot):
 - 7 focus groups with 31 bachelor and master students in one of Lithuanian University
 - 15 individual semi-structured interviews with lecturers

Forms of solidarity

Micro-social aspect of **solidarity** in academia - congruence, unity, commonality of interests, joint responsibility, and mutual support of **students, lecturers** and **administrative staff**.



Perception of students

Group work

Equal responsibility for the task – actual inequality of the efforts.

Compensation mechanism as a form of maintaining the solidarity of working group: *“All want to be friendly”* (FG4).

Mutual evaluation

Efforts towards escaping open conflict within the group, in particular, seeking to avoid potential negative sanctions from colleague: *“...still, we do not want to fall out with the group”* (FG6).

Cheating

Duality: cheating as incompatible with academic ethics vs cheating is inevitable.

“[Students] have always, always cheated and will continue to cheat” (FG3); *“Let them cheat. What is the difference?”* (FG7).

Perception of students: reflection

- Students perceive academic integrity as a subject for all actors involved in the study process.
- They prefer initiatives of administrative staff and lecturers – those actors, who should be more principled, rigid, strict, but fair in order to prevent students from academic misconduct.
- Students tend to demonstrate integral solidarity with lecturers.

Perceptions of lecturers

- **Academic ethics** (as well as academic integrity) reveals itself in a *relationship* based on *mutual respect, equality, trust, empathy*.
- **Types of a relationship:**
 - (1) student – student;
 - (2) student – lecturer;
 - (3) lecturer – lecturer;
 - (4) lecturer – administration.
- **Main aspects:** (a) study process; (b) assessments; (c) papers and final thesis.

Perceptions of lecturers

- ▶ ***In a relationship with students***, lecturers:
 - ▶ observe negative fragmentary forms of student solidarity during tasks performance.
 - ▶ understand their significant impact on students' conduct and therefore, they tend to collaborate with students positive integral solidarity.
- ▶ ***In a relationship with colleagues***, lecturers:
 - ▶ stress an importance of consultations with colleagues and collaborative approach towards the development of students' integrity (positive integral solidarity).
 - ▶ observe unwillingness of colleagues to collaborate as well as negative forms of student – lecturer solidarity.

Conclusions

- The concept of solidarity helps us to understand better the process of modes of thinking leading to academic misconduct.
- This understanding provides a tool for creation policy measures towards academic ethics and strengthening of academic standards.

Thank you for your attention!

