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Solidarity

Solidarity derives from the French word *solidarité*, which refers to a communion of interests and mutual responsibility. In this sense, "social solidarity is regarded as the glue that keeps people together, whether by mutually identifying and sharing certain norms and values, or by contributing to some common good, or both" (Komter 2004: 2). The questions of mutuality and communality, either as an accomplished fact or as an end towards which social action is required, are prevalent in the different definitions of solidarity provided over time and across disciplines and sectors. In his seminal work *The Division of Labor in Society*, first published in 1893, Émile Durkheim made the distinction between mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity. According to Durkheim, mechanical solidarity is characteristic of traditional, undifferentiated societies and is based on similarity and homogeneity between people, in terms of values and beliefs; whereas organic solidarity stems from diversification and the complex division of labor that characterizes modern societies. Therefore, solidarity in modern societies springs from functional interdependency and complementarity (Durkheim 1997 [1893]). Despite the limitations of Durkheim's functionalist theory and the emphasis on social cohesion, Durkheim's conceptualization of solidarity sheds light on the historical development of humanitarianism as a feeling of connectedness that is based on a common and shared identity. In particular, humanitarianism as a moral imperative and action that

programmatically seeks to alleviate the suffering of distant strangers was historically enabled by the solidification of shared humanity as a common and all-encompassing category during the Enlightenment. Solidarity among distant suffering strangers as fellow humans has thus been the underlying force of modern humanitarian sensibility and cosmopolitan humanitarianism.

In her work on humanitarian solidarity and communication, Lilie Chouliaraki (2013) traces the transformation from this other-oriented morality, which was grounded on the principle of a shared humanity, to a self-oriented morality. The changes in the aesthetics of humanitarian communication reflect changes in the very ethics of solidarity. The contemporary times of post-humanitarianism that Chouliaraki locates in the post-Cold War world are marked by the shift from a "solidarity as pity" to a "solidarity of irony." The "spectators" of distant suffering are motivated by a self-centered moral imperative to help (in order to feel good themselves) while they are dominated by a skepticism against the efficacy of any humanitarian solidarity action.

This egalitarian essence of solidarity brings to the fore the tensions between solidarity and humanitarianism, albeit from a different perspective. The depoliticizing effects of humanitarianism, criticized by much literature on humanitarian relief, show how humanitarianism is a particular form of intervention grounded on inequality between the "giver" and the "receiver" of aid (Fassin 2007; Feldman and Ticktin 2010). This tension between solidarity and hierarchy, control and care, domination and aid, is constitutive of humanitarianism as a particular form of government and reason (Fassin 2012).

Nevertheless, novel forms of humanitarianism that embrace a solidarity ethos overtly challenge the political foundations of Western humanitarianism. In the European context, the so called 2015 "migration/refugee crisis" formed the ground for the emergence of a disparate humanitarian field that apart from large-scale humanitarian organizations included grassroots groups and independent humanitarian volunteers. This vast arena has been described, for instance, as solidarity (Rozakou 2017), volunteer (Sandri 2018), or grassroots humanitarianism (McGee and Pelham 2018). These semantic inventions and the coinage of new terms illustrate the researchers' need to describe a humanitarian milieu that is exemplified by informal and often ad hoc groups and individuals. Moreover, the field of "solidarity humanitarianism" pushes us to critically reflect upon and revisit our perspective of humanitarianism and the relationship of humanitarianism with the state. In fact, very often it is the "independent volunteers" or "solidarians" themselves who powerfully contest the modus operandi, logics, and structure of traditional humanitarian organizations (Rozakou 2017), promoting an egalitarian ethos (Cantat and Feischmidt

2018; Millner 2011). Solidarity humanitarianism not only challenges established modalities of humanitarian action by endorsing a horizontal, anti-bureaucratic and political form of assistance, but it also sets coexistence and being with the refugees/asylum seekers/migrants at its core (Rozakou 2016). In that sense, solidarity humanitarianism has solidarity as its key formative feature, and it poses the question of connectedness under a new egalitarian light.

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