

Solidarity

Romana Pozniak

Although today it appears in different, sometimes even contradictory forms, solidarity primarily refers to a connection based on shared experiences, responsibilities and interests (Rozakou 2020: 197). One of the more prominent interpretations of solidarity is Durkheim's division into mechanical and organic solidarity, elaborated in *The Division of Labour in Society* from 1893: The former implies traditional forms of mutual support as found in religious communities, family, neighbor relationships, etc., while the latter relates to social cohesion resulting from the "diversification and the complex division of labor that characterizes modern societies" (Rozakou 2020: 197). In this regard, Aafke Komter (2005) points out three processes that determine the practices and meaning of the term in the contemporary context: individualization, diversification and globalization. According to the author, individualization occurs due to modernization, which encourages the weakening of influence and ties within the family, neighborhoods and church. Diversification, on the other hand, leads to the disintegration of stable, common identities and beliefs, people withdrawing into themselves and realizing their personal needs, and thus to increasing insecurity in the wider social context. Ultimately, globalization, due to its interwoven nature, opens up space for new ways of acting and forms of solidarity (Komter 2005: 170-171).

The interpretation offered by Helge Schwiertz and Helen Schwenken (2020) relies on this idea of the potential of globalization in achieving social change. As key problems in today's understanding of solidarity, they point out the association of this term with national, state and territorial entities, a current trend in public and political discourse, which excludes a number of social groups and models of social cohesiveness. Noting that it is currently clearer than ever that citizens and "noncitizens", people on the move and more-or-less static persons and groups "are connected through the division of labour in global capitalism" (2020: 413), Schwiertz and Schwenken find transformative social potential in civil initiatives that show solidarity with people on the move, people who do not fit into the nationally rooted perspectives of citizenship. This means that these initiatives operate beyond the institutional form of solidarity and practice what the authors call "inclusive solidarity" (2020: 406). It should be emphasized that in activist and academic circles, solidarity is often used with the aim of distinguishing organizations and actions that are primarily associated with **humanitarianism**, a system defined by hierarchical power relations between "recipients" and "providers" of aid, from organizations and actions that are based on mutual support, equality and civic activism. This distinctive imperative especially applies to groups and organizations that deal with **rescue operations** at sea and distributing aid to people on the move and undocumented migrants in spite of bans and legal obstacles, and who do not agree to the usual state and international funding schemes for non-governmental organizations (cf. Cuttitta 2018; Mezzadra 2020; Ambrosini 2022). However, it is well-known that, in the contemporary **border regime**, the difference between solidarity and humanitarianism is not entirely clear (Mezzadra 2020) and that certain interpretations of solidarity also risk the reproduction of hierarchical and exclusive discourses and policies (Schwiertz and Schwenken 2020: 406).

Bearing in mind the overlap between these two terms, different interpretations of solidarity, but also the warnings about the problem of its romanticization (Papataxiarchis 2016), we can recognize several ways in which solidarity appears and the ways it is used and co-opted in the migration context. The first among them is of a political-administrative nature, and relates to the use of solidarity as a mechanism for distributing responsibility in the scheme of managing migration movements in state and international frameworks. In the preamble of the Treaty on European Union "there is talk of 'solidarity' among the 'peoples' who are signatories" (Brunkhorst 2005: 1). In relation to security, and therefore migration policy, the Treaty states that "the Union shall conduct, define and implement a common foreign and security policy, based on the development of *mutual political solidarity* among Member States" (Article 24, paragraph 2, emphasis by author). While solidarity with migrants is rarely articulated at the level of the European Union, as this would mean that its citizens truly share social welfare and other state protection mechanisms with migrants, the focus is mainly on solidarity understood in the form of a relationship of reciprocity between national Member States, framed by the synergy of security and migration policies (Schwiertz and Schwenken 2020: 409). During the last few years, even decades, there have been more and more calls to "ease" the burden on the countries situated at the external borders of the EU, which are exposed to a large number of migrant arrivals and asylum requests due to their geographical position. While referring to the dispute between countries at the EU external borders with their "concerns [...] that migratory pressures will exceed their capacities" and other Member States with concerns that, if the procedures at the external borders are not adhered to, their asylum, integration or return systems will not be able to cope with a possible increase in the influx of migrants, the European Union proposes a mechanism of "effective solidarity" in its New Pact on Migration and Asylum. The emphasis on a coordinated approach to migration management and improving the system for

distinguishing “credible” from “non-credible” asylum seekers (cf. Bakalović 2013) – and thus also on the mechanism of effective “distribution of responsibility” – underscores the trends of securitization and “managerialisation” of migration policies (Andrijašević and Walters 2010), while the mentioned proposal, as warned by activists, “is dominated by giving priority to repatriation and deportation”. This technocratic, administrative solidarity among EU countries is often used as a mechanism for controlling, monitoring and restricting migration movements. By reducing solidarity to a mechanism of bureaucratic reciprocity, the migration policy of the European Union indirectly approves the practices of detention and expulsion of refugees and people on the move, as evidenced by the continued practice and intensification of pushbacks in recent years, as well as a series of appeals by human rights groups and reports of border violence.

Despite efforts to co-opt the term, it is still primarily associated with the work of solidarity groups and initiatives that can be interpreted in terms of “solidarity humanitarianism” – a term that Katerina Rozakou (2017) uses to describe the work of self-organized groups in Greece engaging in humanitarian work and who do not belong to the official humanitarian sector (cf. also Fechter and Schwittay 2019). Initiatives established during and after the mass refugee transit in Croatia were joined – or started – by citizens dissatisfied with the response of the state, international organizations, and the Croatian Red Cross, and who, in addition to providing assistance, tried to oppose the commodification of suffering and inertia of traditional humanitarian actors (cf. Pozniak 2022). The regime of humanitarianism generally creates an image of refugees as passive and helpless victims who do not have the capacity to take care of themselves, and autonomy and self-reliance are perceived as characteristics of “dangerous” and “fake” asylum seekers (Ticktin 2016). The humanitarian industry deftly relies on the idea of refugees as inferior subjects (Kuljić 2016) and uses it as a means to commodify suffering and, consequently, for its own financial gain. In contrast, solidarity implies an equal relationship that does not impose life decisions, behavior and other standards common in humanitarianism (Dadusc and Mudu 2022). If we take into account that during the Balkan corridor in 2015 and 2016, states failed to guarantee social rights to refugees and that humanitarian and legal mechanisms proved to be deficient, to say the least, “solidarity from below”, as a form of support provided by citizens and civil society organizations, served as a supplement or substitute for the state welfare system (Schwartz and Schwenken 2020: 410).

It is worth mentioning the role of solidarity in the organization of protest actions such as for Madina Hussiny, a six-year-old girl who died when a train hit her during a pushback from Croatia to Serbia (see counter-memorialization and grief activism), as well as the request of the Zagreb City-Refuge initiative to name a street, square or children’s playground in the public space of the city of Zagreb after her. This includes workshops for making banners Krojimo za noćni marš [Sewing for the Night March] and the Prijelaz/The Passage memorial canvases, which were designed and led by selma banich with the Women to Women collective, as well as a series of appeals by the Transbalkanska solidarnost [Transbalkan Solidarity] and Zagreb City-Refuge initiatives. In the latter cases, we can look at solidarity as the driving force behind civil actions that are not part of continuous programs of aid organizations and whose goal is to pave the way for political action and emancipation in which, in the words of the workshop organizer, nothing will be “politically presupposed”.

Finally, an indispensable part of the conceptual and empirical familiarization with the term solidarity is the problem of criminalization of solidarity.

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