

## CULTURAL AND POLITICAL ASPECTS OF DEVELOPING SOCIAL SOLIDARITY IN MODERN SOCIETY

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### ABSTRACT

*This article is dedicated to the issue of social solidarity at the present times. The authors analyze the main scientific works devoted to this issue in order to study the nature of this phenomenon. The work evaluates the main approaches to the notion of "social solidarity". In the article, the authors come to the conclusion that solidarity processes have different scales of manifestation and include both constructive communication between individuals and efficient functional interaction of separate social subsystems that aim at achieving common objectives. Depending on the scale of solidarity manifestation, its leading factors can be cultural processes and regulatory activities of the government. The nature of interaction between the leading factors of solidarity development indicates implementing the principles of functional complementarity of political and cultural processes. The combination of direct regulative activity and indirect influence on the social structure through culture and social consciousness is the most efficient strategy of political regulation.*

**Keywords:** solidarity, society, culture, political regulation, macro social processes, self-regulation

## ASPETTI CULTURALI E POLITICI DELLO SVILUPPO DELLA SOLIDARIETÀ SOCIALE NELLA SOCIETÀ CONTEMPORANEA

### SINTESI

*L'articolo s'incentra sulla questione della solidarietà sociale nell'età presente. Gli autori esaminano le principali opere scientifiche dedicate a questo tema per capire la natura di questo fenomeno. Il lavoro valuta i principali approcci alla nozione di "solidarietà sociale". Nell'articolo, gli autori giungono alla conclusione che i processi di solidarietà possiedono diversi gradi di manifestazione e comprendono sia una comunicazione costruttiva tra le singole persone sia un'efficiente interazione funzionale tra i singoli sottosistemi sociali volti a raggiungere obiettivi comuni. A seconda del grado manifestato, i fattori principali della solidarietà possono essere i processi culturali e le*

*attività regolatrici del governo. La natura dell'interazione tra i fattori principali dello sviluppo della solidarietà indica l'implementazione dei principi di complementarietà funzionale di processi politici e culturali. La combinazione tra l'attività regolatrice diretta e l'influsso indiretto sulla struttura sociale attraverso la cultura e la coscienza sociale risulta essere la più efficace strategia di regolamentazione politica.*

**Parole chiave:** solidarietà, società, cultura, regolamentazione politica, processi macro-sociali, autoregolamentazione

## INTRODUCTION

Over the 20th century, the topic of solidarity and the way to address it significantly changed in the research area; it is connected both with the development of social sciences and large-scale social changes that form new urgent requests to the sphere of humanitarian knowledge. These two processes are deeply interrelated, so it is not quite correct to study them separately. At the same time, it would not be absolutely correct to state the total dependence of the modern level of theoretical findings in the sphere of solidarity processes on the current state of social structure. Due to the fact that the topic of solidarity has not been among urgent issues of the sociological discourse for a long time, nowadays addressing this issue is a kind of combination of the results of studies on particular aspects of solidarity and the application of its theoretical grounds for studying urgent tendencies of the social development. In this sense, despite the central importance of this category in the social discourse, a current theory of solidarity can be considered as a developing sphere of knowledge, and its application for urgent modern issues has just begun. In particular, it gives rise to promising directions of theoretical studies, though only at an initial stage, including the issue

of solidarity levels in the society and of driving forces that determine social solidarity development at different levels of the social organization. The general review of the issue allows for accepting a hypothesis that the main factors determining the nature of solidarity processes in the society also include the state and orientation of the political power activity, as well as the nature of current cultural processes and the general content of culture.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The topic of solidarity has been studied for a long time. This category has been reflected in the social, philosophic, political, theological, juridical and sociological thought since the age of Enlightenment. The original interpretation of solidarity belongs to theology and reflects a general orientation of peoples' actions that depend on their religious attitude towards God; this interpretation can be found in the works of J. de Maistre (1995), H. F. R. de Lamennais (2017) and other religious philosophers. At the level of social and philosophic thought, V. Soloviev (2007) should be marked out separately, as he thoroughly developed the topic of solidarity in the framework of his religious and philosophic doctrine. At the same time, the

tendency of crystallizing social implication of solidarity is gradually traced. In the Russian social thought, a serious step in the understanding of solidarity is connected with the transition to sociopolitical studies on solidarity processes in the works of P. L. Lavrov (1965), M. A. Bakunin (1964), L. I. Mechnikov (2016), P. A. Kropotkin (1999). Their works cover an ethical aspect of solidarity, and it is referred not only to the issues of “solidarity for good” but also to the fact that solidarity in itself is closely related to the processes of evaluation and general value description of a certain social environment. The concept of solidarity was actively developed at the level of the French social thought in the works of A. Fouillee (2012), C. Renouvier (2015), and H. Marion (2000). From mid-19th century, the solidarity theory has turned into one of the leading theoretical models, formed for explaining a wide range of social issues: solidarism reflects at the level of economics, legal studies, political science, sociology and social philosophy (Gofman, 2012a; 2012b). In addition to the abovementioned authors, the solidarity theory was also theoretically developed by C. Gide (2010), M. Hauriou (1914), E. Durkheim (1996) and other researchers. Special attention should be paid to Durkheim (1996) who developed a detailed sociological theory of solidarity that was a kind of paradigm in sociology for a long time.

Despite high urgency of the solidarity issues, complications in its theoretical reflection, complexity of solidarism concept usage in the social knowledge and, as a consequence, polysemous character of the notion led to significant diversion of the sociological tradition from the issue of solidarity. While other fields of knowledge preserve the interest to the idea of solidarity, the discipline that correlates with the solidarity scope most of all demonstrates the shift to particular research of specific aspects of solidarity processes. In that period, the solidarity issues were latently developed, as there was a significant number of works dedicated to solidarity-related issues, though the issue of solidarity in itself was not addressed. This interrelation is mostly traced in addressing the structural functionalism theory, in particular in the works of T. Parsons (1998).

F. Hayek's (1992) works that revealed a set of theoretical and methodological problems related to applying Durkheim's interpretation of solidarity are of significant importance at the sociological thought level. In particular, it was Hayek who was the first to bring up a question about levels of social organization which the solidarism theory can be applied for.

At the present time, one can find an in-depth research of A. Gofman (2012a; 2012b), as well as theoretical findings of M. K. Zverev (2009) among latest social researches in the sphere of social solidarity. The present issue is brought up and addressed on the basis of the results of their works.

In order to cover the specified issues, it is necessary to apply a wide range of methodological approaches like

the comparative analysis method, abstracting, synthesis, structural and functional approach and phenomenological approach.

By applying all of them, it is possible to shed the light on specific features of solidarity at different levels of the social structure organization. The systematic approach should be specifically mentioned as it allows for developing a complex theoretical model on the basis of the obtained theoretical results.

#### THE PHENOMENON OF SOCIAL SOLIDARITY AND ITS IMPACT ON THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Solidarity is an integrative principle that determines the interaction between individual social actors and co-orientation of their interests. In terms of its manifestation scale, solidarity covers both the interaction at the level of individual communication of the society members and the sphere of institutional structures activity (from small social groups up to large structural social elements). In this regard, taking into account the division of the social structure organizational levels into the micro-level (local interaction between individual members of the society) and macro-level (interaction between the society structural components), it is possible to mark out four potential forms of solidarity manifestation. It is related to the fact that as a form of attitude, solidarity has vector orientation and can be determined by applying an object criterion. At the same time, a solidarity subject is of no small importance. As a result, it becomes obvious that solidarity manifests itself at the micro-level (interaction of individual members of the society and their consolidation), macro-level (formation of efficient functional relations between different social groups and institutions) and within the framework of inter-level interaction. The latter is expressed in cases when an individual member of the society joins in the interests of a specific social structure, as well as in the opposite cases when social structures have constructive orientation on pursuing interests of individual members of the society. The example for such a type of solidarity is the state policy on social protection that is quite targeting in certain cases.

Different factors of solidarity formation, existence and development prevail at different levels of the social structure organization. It is related to the fact that a solidarity subject changes depending on the social processes level; the subject directly influences a set of main factors of solidarity development and, in particular, forms of its manifestation. In case of solidarity processes at the micro-level, the solidarity subject is an individual. Herein, as a type of attitude, solidarity is a form of individual's social orientation that is fixed in his/her worldview. This is due to the fact that at the individual level, both the evaluation of social reality and the understanding of one's own place in it are actualized through the construction of individual social

worldview. On the contrary, functionality of the social structure elements and coincidence of their interests is a crucial factor for the formation of solidarity tendencies at the macro-level (Zverev, 2009). Therefore, the micro-level solidarity is determined by individual orientation of the society members, while the macro-level solidarity primarily depends on external factors of existing social structures, i.e. their functional clearness, requests to external elements of the society structural organization, as well as a range of restrictions imposed by the government on different functional spheres of the society. It can be proved by the fact that if individual orientation of the society members is variable, the orientation of functional structures activity is mainly determined by their institutional type. In light of this, not so much the initial orientation of the social structure as the factors of pursuing its interests become urgent.

Different social institutions are deeply interrelated as they depend on the efficiency of related functional spheres (Parsons, 1998). The general level of the social structure efficiency and, in particular, the existence of functional balance is actualized through natural mechanisms of social self-regulation, as well as in the framework of direct regulatory activities of the authorities. The analysis of modern tendencies of the global transformation indicates that now natural development of certain institutional spheres leads to their isolation, resulting in functional imbalance in the society. It is partly related to the fact that the sphere of interests of the institutional structures is primarily connected with direct pursuing of their own interests in improving the efficiency in an occupied functional niche. Herein, the interaction between social structures that differ in their functional orientation is regulated in the course of political activities. It indicates that the formation of constructive orientation of social structures to their interaction (in other words, to the formation of solidarity between them) is carried out within the framework of the government activities.

At the level of interaction between individual members of the society, one can observe radically different principles of solidarity that are based on actualizing initial social guidelines of the society members. Here, the most important factor is the main features of individuals' social worldview that is determined by history (a set of factors that are actualized during individual's social development) and by context (that indicates the dependence of certain relations, evaluation and decisions of individuals on general features of the current information space). The tendencies of individual attitude development that have been formed throughout history are determined by efficiency of solidarity processes, personal experience of the society members and the culture content. Another crucial element of the current context of social guidelines formation is a current state of culture, its content and dynamics.

Therefore, the leading factor of forming solidarity at the individual level (that is directly related to the specific features of individual's worldview) is the nature, state and content of culture.

The studied aspects of social solidarity – political activities and the state of culture – are closely interrelated. Despite the fact that culture determines individual social guidelines of the society members, its influence is widespread and determines prospects, opportunities and orientation of political regulation. At the same time, governmental activities significantly influence both the level of culture in the society and current content of the information space. Therefore, the social integration level depends not only on direct influence of cultural and political processes on certain aspects of social life but also on the degree of their coherence.

#### KEY APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING THE PHENOMENON OF SOCIAL SOLIDARITY: HOW IS IT BEING FORMED?

One of the main issues related to the study on social solidarity features is defining social solidarity and, in particular, the sphere of its application as an organizing principle. In the original interpretation of E. Durkheim, solidarity is the feeling that unites individual participants of the social interaction; herein, a solidarity object can be both a person or a small social group and large social structures with which the society members associate their social life. F. Hayek strongly criticized Durkheim's theory for both insufficient development of Durkheim's idea of division into organic and mechanical solidarity and his thesis about possible solidarity attitude towards large social structures. The importance of this thesis is fundamental as it reflects the possibility of goal-oriented activities that are carried out by the social interaction subject and aims to optimize the solidarity object (Hayek, 1992). According to Hayek, solidarity is possible at the level of small social groups as a feeling of inclusion, while the interaction between individual members of the society and developed social structures (including the interaction with the authorities) is determined not so much by the society members' guidelines towards the self-identification object as by a set of external rules and social sanctions. As a result, the existence of such forms of solidarity as patriotism and cosmopolitanism is brought into question as their object exceeds the frames of small social groups with direct interaction (Gofman, 2012a; 2012b). It is obvious that this approach is one-sided to some extent because, in fact, it refuses a set of essential and currently existing social processes. At the same time, in his review, F. Hayek sets up an important problem – the issue of levels of applying solidarity as a social principle.

Despite the fact that a social structure that cannot be comprehended by an individual member of the society (i.e. when it is referred to the understanding of be-

longing to the country's multi-million population) may be a solidarity object, still there is an open question how social structures relate to each other. Here, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that in the course of their development, social structures gain a set of specific features that are typical for a subject of social relation: their level serves a basis for the formation of development intentions, a set of urgent needs, a sphere of direct functional interaction and also self-awareness that was formed collectively. The latter is proved by the fact that the understanding of social structures by those who are in charge of control activities is a required element of self-regulation of these structures. As a result, it can be stated that certain social groups and institutes interact with each other, form complex systems of relations from direct conflicts to large-scale cooperation, obtain interaction patterns and, in particular, correlate their existence with other elements of the social structure. It allows to say that solidarity processes can be formed at the macro-level as well. Herein, emerging solidarity can be focused both on other macro-objects of social organization and on individual members of the society. It explains (to some extent) difficulties in developing a theoretical definition of solidarity as it is referred to a social mechanism with several radically different forms of manifestation. This specificity of solidarity must be taken into account when raising and addressing specific issues, otherwise the theoretical aspect of social solidarity may be reduced to one of its forms of manifestation.

Traditionally, one of the tasks for the social knowledge is developing methodology to influence the social structure, thus making its optimization possible. Since solidarity is one of the most important integrative principles of the society that act at all levels of its organization, it is obvious that answering the question of solidarity factors is of practical importance. And here we realize that different sets of social factors can be relevant depending on the scales of solidarity manifestation. Moreover, it is of no small importance that the detailing of types of solidarity and respective aspects of the social being makes it possible to analyze the situation more thoroughly and influence it more efficiently.

One of the specific features of solidarity that marks it out from other integrative functions of the society is inner intentions for developing a solidarity object. According to E. Durkheim, solidarity can be based on both similarity and understanding of functional interests that are connected with the presence of another participant of social relations and his/her state. In fact, organic solidarity is based not simply on a functional interest in a specific result from another participant of the interaction but on the understanding of the relations system that is of a higher order than a solidarity subject. And if the interpersonal communication level admits elements of mechanical solidarity that is based on the understanding of similarity, for the macro-social inter-

action level it is essential to have functional efficiency and the possibility to improve its own performance in the system of interaction with other elements of the social structure. In this sense, one of the main factors that determine the possibility of forming solidarity at the macro-level is a principal possibility of harmonizing interests of macro-social structures (Stepin, 2010). Here, an important principle is discovered: the interaction of social structures with different functional orientation can be held under the principle of efficient cooperation, or it can be characterized by the presence of conflict tendencies related to converging interests or insufficient efficiency of social subsystems. The latter implies that a higher-order system (e.g. in case of social institutes it could be the society as a whole) functions incorrectly. At the social level, the supreme regulative mechanism for optimizing interaction between social subsystems and creating conditions for their constructive cooperation is the government.

At the individual level, the actors' original objectives remain unclear. In this sense, the regulation process implies, on the one hand, formation of limits to define acceptable forms of social activity and, on the other hand, setting general intentions for the society members' activities. It is a key difference between the sphere of individual social relations and the macro-level where the main set of development intentions is pre-determined. In this sense, it can be stated that the individual social interaction level actualize a considerably wider range of social factors (Parsons and Bales, 1956). At the same time, there are good grounds for believing that the culture as a leading factor of developing social guidelines is of paramount importance in forming solidarity in individual members of the society.

The analysis allows for marking out several factors of forming solidarity at the individual level:

- similarity by certain social features (mechanical solidarity);
- involvement into functional group activities (a type of organic solidarity);
- positive communication experience;
- existence of initial constructive guidelines of interaction.

However, each factor (including the attitude towards experience of communication with a participant of social relations) can be positively evaluated only if there are constructive guidelines of social worldview. In other words, current existence of favourable external conditions for forming constructive correlation between the society members is not sufficient for its emergence. Social experience that is gained by a person is interpreted in his/her worldview system, is evaluated at different stages and correlated with the general system of priorities. Here, the importance of culture as a key factor for determining the nature of the society

members' worldview is also actualized. It is referred both to long-term interaction that aims at forming and cultivating constructive guidelines and to urgent information messages. Another important fact is that there are disintegrative social principles that are actualized at the cultural level equally with constructive guidelines of the worldview. The understanding of how any cultural element influences integrative features of the society is one of the main aspects of developing timely and efficient measures for optimizing the situation.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Political activities and cultural influence mechanisms are the most important social mechanisms that determine the society integrity through the formation of

grounds for constructive interaction between the social activity subjects. The level of individual interaction between the society members is a prevailing sphere of cultural influence on the social environment. One of the main objects of political activities is the social macrostructure. At the same time, the study identified that specific features of the macro-level social structures indirectly influence particular social and communication processes and determine general features of positive or negative experience gained by the society members. Though culture influences individual guidelines of the society members, its influence is often large-scale due to the culture representativeness. Due to this reason, apart from direct influence of the abovementioned factors of solidarity development, it is also necessary to take into account effects of their indirect and joint impact.

KULTURNI IN POLITIČNI ASPEKTI RAZVOJA DRUŽBENE SOLIDARNOSTI  
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## POVZETEK

Članek prinaša teoretični pregled korelacije med različnimi tipi družbene solidarnosti v sodobnih razmerah. Ozadje nastanka tega prispevka je povratek koncepta solidarnosti, ki je zelo obetavno sredstvo za identifikacijo tendenc družbenih procesov proti teoretskim osnovam sodobnega družbenega znanja. Raziskava prinaša kompleksen prikaz vodilnih družbenih tendenc z vidika različnih integracijskih načel. Identifikacija narave solidarnosti v družbi zahteva širok nabor metodoloških pristopov, saj je predmet obravnave zelo kompleksen in večdimenzionalen. V skladu s cilji raziskave je obravnava teoretskih in metodoloških smernic strukturnega funkcionalizma in socialne fenomenologije temeljnega pomena. Zaradi potrebe po pokrivanju sistematične interakcije specifik družbenih strukturnih elementov so bili nekateri aspekti preučeni z uporabo metode sinergijske teorije. Prav tako so bile uporabljene metode analize, sinteze, abstrakcije in historičnega pristopa. V družbi imajo procesi solidarnosti različne oblike manifestacije ter vključujejo konstruktivno komunikacijo med posamezniki ter učinkovito funkcionalno interakcijo med različnimi družbenimi podsistemi, ki so usmerjeni k doseganju skupnih ciljev. Odvisno od obsega manifestacije solidarnosti, so lahko njeni vodilni dejavniki kulturni procesi in regulativne dejavnosti vlade. Narava interakcije med vodilnimi dejavniki razvoja solidarnosti kaže na izvajanje načel funkcionalne komplementarnosti političnih in kulturnih procesov. Z obzirom na to, da ti procesi ne samo izvajajo podobne funkcije, temveč so tudi odvisni drug od drugih, je učinkovitost politične regulacije neposredno odvisna od usklajenosti s sočasnimi tendencami v kulturnem razvoju. Kombinacija neposrednih regulativnih aktivnosti in posrednega vpliva na družbeno strukturo preko kulture in družbene zavesti je najbolj učinkovita strategija politične regulacije.

**Ključne besede:** solidarnost, družba, kultura, politična regulacija, makro družbeni procesi, samoregulacija

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