

Introduction. Penser la solidarité : un défi à relever dans l'urgence

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Volume 14, Number 1-2, 2020–2021

Penser la solidarité : un défi à relever dans l'urgence

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1113650ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1113650ar>

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Publisher(s)

Le Centre canadien d'études allemandes et européennes

ISSN

1718-8946 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this document

Boursier, T. & Duclos, M. (2020). Introduction. Penser la solidarité : un défi à relever dans l'urgence. *Eurostudia*, 14(1-2), xii–xv.

<https://doi.org/10.7202/1113650ar>

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While the COVID-19 pandemic thrust solidarity into the forefront of global consciousness, the attention of researchers has seemingly shifted elsewhere in the aftermath. Despite its profound relevance during the crisis, interest in the subject seems to have ebbed when we examine recent publications in political sciences. It becomes imperative not only to ponder what enduring aspects of solidarity persist as a research issue but also how we can transcend its relegation to a mere crisis response tool or political rhetoric. In other words, the academic challenge now extends beyond understanding solidarity within the context of crisis—instead, it beckons researchers to explore avenues for sustaining its relevance beyond episodic upheavals.

The pandemic laid bare the stark inequalities etched across class, gender, and race, urging a critical examination of solidarity's role in mitigating, or subverting such disparities. Solidarity, as a concept, also appears notably fragile in the present day. In an era marked by various societal challenges and divisions (neoliberalism, identitarian closure ...), we believe that the academic field can play a crucial role in fortifying the notion that organizing mutual aid and fostering solidarity are imperative political and social endeavors. By dedicating scholarly attention to these issues, we aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics at play and, in turn, advocate for the sustained importance of solidarity in navigating the complexities of our contemporary world.

This Eurostudia dossier seeks to reignite scholarly curiosity around solidarity by delving into the nuanced intersections of solidarity with justice, democracy, and equality. The thematic questions posed to contributors aim not only to dissect the essence, shapes, and functions of solidarity but also to envision it as a dynamic force capable of shaping societies in times of calm as well as chaos. Solidarity is not only a reactive mechanism, but it can also be a proactive force that permeates the fabric of societal structures.

The dossier aims to kindle a transatlantic dialogue that extends beyond disciplinary boundaries, fostering an interdisciplinary exploration of solidarity's enduring relevance. It brings together a diverse array of perspectives and scholarly insights that collectively delve into the multifaceted dimensions of solidarity. From virtue ethics to political engagement, from ecological concerns to the tension with individual liberty, the articles featured in this special issue offer a comprehensive exploration of solidarity in its various forms.

The contributions in this special issue raise fundamental concerns that illuminate the complexity of solidarity in varied contexts. They tirelessly question: What is solidarity, and what should be its fundamental nature? How does it manifest itself in contemporary political dynamics and what tensions run through it? One observation emerges unanimously: each contribution engages in a political theory approach, mobilizing influential thinkers or highlighting conceptual tensions. This theoretical choice unintentionally leads to a sidelining of empirical questions.

Philip Schwarz initiates our exploration by navigating the ethical landscape of public health, particularly amidst the Covid pandemic. Drawing on Alasdair MacIntyre's concept of Acknowledged Dependence, Schwarz establishes a virtue-ethical foundation for understanding solidarity as a response to mutual dependence. Within this framework, acts of solidarity are framed as uncalculating giving, fostering a community where each individual owes this giving to one another.

Milan Bernard and Pascale Devette challenge the traditional socio-legal conception of solidarity, proposing a politicized approach rooted in Hannah Arendt's concepts of action and story and Hartmut Rosa's ideas on resonance. Their exploration emphasizes the difficult, unstable, and precarious measure of solidarity between

conflicting demands, rooted in a radically plural idea of political community and democratic commitment. This contribution echoes that of Mathilde Duclos by emphasizing the political dimension of conflict in the conceptualization of solidarity.

Quentin Messerschmidt-Mariet expands the scope of solidarity by revisiting Léon Bourgeois' solidarist theory from the end of the nineteenth century. Demonstrating the utility of this ancient literature, which is presently underutilized, this elucidation underscores its potential in addressing contemporary challenges. Focusing on the concept of "cosmic solidarity," the article argues for ecological solidarism and total solidarity, utilizing solidarist tools such as the law of reciprocal interdependence, social debt, and quasi-contract to respond to the current environmental crisis.

Tristan Boursier delves into the complexities of employing the concept of solidarity at the state level in contemporary political science. Exploring the tension between solidarity and individual liberty, Boursier contends that the avoidance of solidarity in political discourse is rooted in its perceived conflict with liberal values. The article particularly scrutinizes the binding dimension of solidarity within the context of the centrality of individual liberty in liberalism.

Mathilde Duclos explores the contours of radical solidarity as articulated by critical pedagogues Paulo Freire and bell hooks. This highly political version of solidarity, rooted in social struggle and humanization, serves as a critical normative framework for Duclos' examination of universal basic income. She contends that radicalizing this form of solidarity requires a re-politicization, recognizing its emancipatory function at both individual and collective levels.

As we weave these insights together, it becomes evident that solidarity transcends the realm of mere rhetoric, offering a powerful lens through which to scrutinize, challenge, and transform political landscapes. This special issue seeks to contribute to the ongoing dialogue surrounding solidarity, inviting readers to critically engage with its ethical, political, and ecological implications. Each article offers a unique lens through which to view and understand solidarity, enriching our collective understanding of this complex and vital concept.

In the face of social inequalities, political challenges, and the ongoing quest for justice, democracy, and equality, these contributions empower the political perspective of solidarity. As scholars and activists, our collective responsibility lies in cultivating a sustained dialogue that keeps the flame of solidarity alive, illuminating pathways toward a more just, inclusive, and equitable future.