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## THE PHENOMENON OF SOLIDARITY IN POST-POLITICAL CONSENSUS

The profound transformation of all aspects of society's existence, which began in the last quarter of the previous century and continues to this day, has changed almost the entire structure of social relations, both in its morphological and substantive plans. Social solidarity is presented as a dynamic and non-guaranteed state arising in the course of human interaction and requiring constant activity of all participants of the interactive process. The main integrative role is played by joint action and its interpretations, the proximity of which ensures the consolidation of society. The influence of solidarity on the reproduction function of the social system at all its hierarchical levels – from groups of primary social practices to the society as a whole – has been studied. It is substantiated that the state or level of social solidarity in society determines the degree of harmony of its functioning, and in general determines the life chances and prospects of this society. It is noted that the reduction of solidarity carries a threat of social disintegration. It is emphasized that in the normal functioning of society, solidarity is the object of unremitting attention, both on the part of the ruling group in society, whose actions are almost inseparable from the goals of reproduction of society and its power, and on the part of other social institutions, whose activities are directly conditioned by the level of consolidation and cooperation of their members. Accordingly, a state of social relations in which neither the authorities nor other institutions demonstrates adequate concern for the degree of consolidation of the social whole cannot be considered normal. It is shown that within the post-political consensus, class identity appears as the result of a specific political gesture – a political and discursive construction. Political-discursive analysis is defined as an independent and self-sufficient methodology that enables a new perspective on traditional objects of political inquiry, such as populist movements and ideologies, large-scale social conflicts, the absolutization of ideology, and the ideologization of the functioning of various societal discourses.

**Keywords:** *agonistic public space, cross-border alliances, dynamic democracy, neoliberal globalization, post-political world, forms of identification, non-alternativity of the existing order, transnational institutions, solidarity.*

The construction of models of development of the modern world is conducted through the prism of the globalization process, which implies a radical transformation or leveling of ethno-cultural forms and local cultures, urgently requiring the development of an organizing model of the whole as solidarity, taking into account differences, diversity, national and regional specificity. Are there alternatives to today's post-political world? If the current hegemonic form of neoliberal globalization were the only horizon, the hope of developing an agonistic democracy would have to be abandoned [Brown, 2015]. Of course, many politicians who are in the “rim” of the modern power system would be happy with such a prospect, since the current situation more than suits them. They consider the post-political consensus as a sign that with the disappearance of the antagonistic model of politics, democracy has become more mature, and the antagonisms themselves have been overcome.

But the normal functioning of representative democracy requires competition between different democratic positions. And if moderate parties favoring “consensus in the center” do not mobilize human passions, these passions tend to find an outlet in various fundamentalist movements and consolidation around particularist demands or moral dogmatism. When there is no vibrant, dynamic democracy with real competition of many relevant alternatives in a society, its place is taken by other forms of identification – ethnic, religious, nationalistic, which leads to the emergence of antagonisms that cannot be controlled in the format of the democratic process. The post-political consensus that characterizes the most developed liberal-democratic societies is the basis for the growing popularity of right-wing populist parties. Right-wing populists are often the only ones who challenge the dogma proclaimed by traditional parties that the existing order is

alternative-free and try to mobilize people's emotions against what they portray as an indifferent “establishment” consisting of elitist bureaucrats who are deaf to the voice of the people and ignore their real problems. These trends certainly pose a threat to democracy, creating the risks that post-politics brings with it and showing the need to revitalize democracy by expanding agonistic public spaces. In order to imagine the conditions under which agonistic democracy can emerge, it is necessary to understand the main challenge facing democratic politics today, and for this, it is necessary to have a correct understanding of the space in which to operate [White, 2023].

Not Europe or the Nordic countries, but the Global South, and more specifically Latin America has nurtured an internationalism that disrupts the scale, scope and forms of coordination of a movement that nevertheless continues to expand without losing its strength and anchor. Internationalism challenges both geographic and organizational imaginations, and it is imbued with cross-border alliances. It is internationalism as such because it consists of alliances that challenge the boundaries of the geometry of the nation-state [Gago, 2020]. The perspective of cross-border alliances includes an analysis of counter-attack in the form of a wide range of reactionary responses to mass civil uprisings that transcend the nation-state as they focus on various transnational institutions.

Structural and institutional changes do not pass without a trace for what makes possible the existence of society as a system of consolidation principles and mechanisms of social solidarity, which fulfill the vital function of reproducing social existence at any hierarchical level – from groups of primary social practices to the society as a whole. Paolo Virno provides an original interpretation of the political, economic and social transformations that have taken place in Europe in recent decades in the forms of modern life. In his view, traditional concepts such as “people” or “class” no longer reflect the reality of contemporary societies; instead, he introduces the category of “multitude” to describe heterogeneous and dynamic groups in society that are constantly changing and have no single identity, but are characterized by qualities such as cynicism, opportunism, and empty verbosity, which can be productive ways of adapting in the modern world. These “multitudes” are characterized by flexibility and the ability to adapt to changing social and economic conditions. The level of social solidarity in society determines the degree of harmony of its functioning, and in general – life chances and prospects [Virno, 2004]. In the normal functioning of society, solidarity, as a rule, is an object of unremitting attention, both on the part of the ruling group in society, whose actions are almost inseparable from the goals of reproduction of society and its power, and on the part of other social institutions, whose activities are directly conditioned by the level of consolidation and cooperation of their members. Therefore, it cannot be considered normal for a state of social relations in which neither the authorities nor other institutions show sufficient concern about the degree of consolidation of the social whole or even about whether such consolidation exists at all. Given the problematic state of social integration, including its socio-cultural and socio-economic components, both the academic sphere and the spheres of public policy and public life should become the arena of critical and creative discourse on solidarity as the most important component of social relations. The relevance of this topic takes on additional facets in relation to the contemporary refugee problem and migrant struggles, which provide politically productive sites for problematizing existing and introducing transformative forms of solidarity. This article does not address the unacceptable ways in which the idea of solidarity is forcibly pressed into dominant discourses of social integration and cohesion, turning difference into sameness, thereby limiting solidarity to ethno-nationalist or communitarian frameworks, or political strategies of solidarity that call for solidarity with disaster survivors and propose to speak on their behalf.

*This article aims* to analyze the phenomenon of solidarity as attachments and ties that articulate the entanglements, nodes, movements, and communities that are side by side in the post-political consensus.

Modern nation-states resemble, by individual strokes the tribal organization of society, when groups of hunter-gatherers, which, according to paleontologists, could not include more than one and a half hundred members. Through the “imagined totality” of tribes and empires

and down to modern nation-states, there are “two members of the opposition ‘we’ and ‘they’” who are mutually “negatively defined”: “they” as ‘not-us’ and ‘we’ as ‘not-them’, where the ‘most dangerous form’ of intolerance is that which arises in the absence of any rationality, feeds on pre-existing elementary intolerance and capitalizes on it for political gain, thereby expanding its influence and exacerbating its morbidity. Modern nation-states are characterized by an increasingly ardent search for their – unmistakably recognizable and incurably hostile Alien, suitable for strengthening their own identity, establishing borders and building walls, when the stakes in such a political strategy are a confrontation of thought and feeling, a bet on “small but only mine”, when the political motto “forward” for these small states is reduced to “back to the tribes”.

Z. Bauman specifies about the tribal organization of nation-states that on “the territory inhabited by tribes, the thesis of the inferiority of the other tribe is postulated, when members of different tribes, trapped in a loop of superiority/inferiority, are not talking to each other, but past each other. What, according to Bauman, turns out to be the result of the tribal organization of nation-states? That we feel “the control of our own lives slipping from our hands, reducing us to the status of pawns moved back and forth in a chess game played by unknown players who are indifferent to our needs, if not outright hostile and cruel, and even all too willing to sacrifice us to achieve their goals.” The main winners of nation-states, in his view, are extraterritorial financiers, investment funds and commodity traders of all shades of legality, while the main losers are economic and social equality and the principles of domestic and inter-state justice, when “the stakes of concerted, solidarity-based action in the common interest lose their value day by day and their potential consequences dim; the interest in joining forces and pursuing common interests is deprived of much of its privacy”. In Bauman's view, the most far-sighted are those who seek to learn from the experience of Walter Benjamin, with their irrepressible desire for the future and their willingness to ignore the horrors of the past and present, capable at best of pondering and fantasizing about their destiny. Bauman says the following on the subject: “we will arm our children with the weapons of dialogue if we teach them to wage the good fight of meeting and negotiation. In this way, we will bequeath them a culture capable of advising strategies of life rather than death, and inclusion rather than exclusion” [Geiselberg, 2017]. The careerist betting of political elites of individual states on nationalism and monoculture by their investments in militarism undermines that fragile notion of democracy, which often leads to a gap between the people of the country and the political elites and their cronies. This is when the question of how to protect democracy in such a state becomes relevant.

The ideology of nationalism as a policy direction based on the thesis of Ernesto Laclau's empty signifier of nation is empty because it can be filled with any meaning depending on the types of nationalist mobilization as the highest form of social unity dominating the state-forming process [Laclau & Mouffe, 2001], when the concept of nation articulates the criterion of ethnicity. It is the criterion of ethnicity (and thus the exclusion of other nationalities living on the territory that do not belong to the titular nation – the “derealization” of other ethnicities) that turned out to be dominant and recognized at the state level as “derealized” even as national minorities. At the same time, according to Ernesto Laclau, at the grassroots level, mobilization takes place with a disproportionate representation of national minorities, rather than at the expense of political ethnically marked elites. This allows us to speak of new types of social, ethnically labeled inequalities in contemporary society. As for the Western democracies of nation-states, we can recall that they emerged as political systems that exploited the mobilizing empty signifier “liberty, equality, fraternity,” implying only class rather than ethnic “derealization,” “chains of equivalences” and “difference” at the same time, in contrast to the unifying ethnocentric rhetoric. However, it is precisely this rhetoric that is being criticized in the leftist discourse of the critique of capitalism in the early twenty-first century. The nation appears as an empty signifier that introduces something new into the rank of the Other, that structures and places the Other in symbolic coordinates. The impossible fullness of the level of meaning (signifier) is supported by the emptiness (reduced dimension) at the level of signified. The

individual encounters “signifier without signified” when, about some concept, he feels enthusiastically that “this is it, the true thing, the true meaning,” although he can never explain what exactly this meaning is. Thus, in political discourse, the Lord's Signifier “Our Nation” functions as a kind of empty signifier of an impossible fullness of meaning; its meaning is political “imaginary” in the sense that its content cannot be positivized. If one asks a member of the Nation to define what exactly his/her national identity is, his/her final answer would be: “I can't explain it, you just have to feel it; it's what our whole life is really about” [Žižek, 2023]. What is important here is the distinction between the human and the nonhuman, or rather the posthuman, which Slavoj Žižek describes as “a mad posthuman playfulness coincides with a subjective lack ... Imagine that we discovered a video camera from one of the airplanes preserved among the ruins of the Twin Towers that recorded what was happening to the passengers minutes before the plane crashed into one of the towers. “In that case, we would really see things as they are 'in themselves'; outside of human coordinates, outside of our human reality – we would see the world through non-human eyes” [Žižek, 2023].

For Alain Badiou, the pompous emblem, name, and value of modern power, which is forbidden to be encroached upon, is the name “democracy” as the instantaneous commodification of the imagined achievements of democracy – for example, the commodification of the so-called Arab Spring. To illustrate this idea, he analyzes Jean Genet's play *The Balcony*. J. Lacan, Badiou notes, believes that it is important to understand *The Balcony* as a comedy, which he defines as a way of extracting and enjoying a relationship with the effect of the emergence of the signifier. Tragedy is the majestic melancholy of fate: it communicates that Truth has remained in the Past. Comedy is always the opposite – it is the comedy of the present, because it makes possible the appearance of an authentic symbol of the present. If in tragedy we see the dark melancholy of power, in every comedy we see the farce of the phenomenon of power in the present, here and now. Therefore, the task of the philosopher today, according to Badiou, is to discover the dimension of the philosophical comedy of the present by naming the main speculative signifier of contemporary power. Badiou believes that the power of the comedy of the discourse of philosophy is to show naked power, unable to hide its atrocity or its emptiness behind a pompous emblem. And this is the main name of modern power that Badiou calls democracy [Badiou, 2013].

Now Hegel's “cunning of reason” is unfortunately unproductive in thinking about alliances in modern conditions: on the one hand, it recognizes history as violence governed by evil, injustice, and irrationality, and on the other hand, from the point of view of the Absolute Spirit, violence, evil, and irrationality are the expression of supreme rationality. Actually, later and Marx notes that class divisions and struggles end in the supreme positivity of the Absolute Spirit type. Alliances should be built on ontological difference as a form of antagonisms without false higher positivity.

It is obvious that in order to organize the maximum mass political mobilization to fight aggression, it is necessary to build solidarity (“heterogeneous assemblages” by J. Deleuze or “chains of equivalences” by E. Laclau and S. Mouffe) – in particular with all opponents of dictatorship and authoritarianism, regardless of their ethnic, racial and cultural affiliation. This requires abandoning the stakes of nationalist and right-wing ideology and returning to the practices of democracy and democratic freedoms that are disadvantageous to nationalist elites but necessary for the people.

The real victory must lie in the ability of the people to preserve and restore the remnants of not “radical democracy” (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001), but liberal democracy in their country and prevent it from turning into a dictatorship where all rights and civil liberties are destroyed. According to J. Butler, the main victory would not be the destruction of material objects, not the successful abolition of a particular culture around the world, but the preservation of “fragile democracy” with its attributes such as freedom of speech and religion, freedom of assembly and demonstration, the unconditional value of human life, pluralism of political opinions, which form solidarity as the basis of democratic society and prevent authoritarianism in the state [Butler,

2015]. This would be a victory achieved in the interests not only of those in power, but also of all citizens of the country.

The totalitarian mentality has not been eradicated from public consciousness. Moreover, the view that National Socialism is nothing, but a form of welfare state policy is becoming widespread. Modernizing properties are attributed to Nazism, and the fascist state is presented as one of the most effective systems of social welfare and solidarity. Fascist ideology was difficult to criticize at a certain stage because the discourse of fascism appeals not only to “roots” (and in fact to archaic, in particular to “tribal orders” of the social), but also to progressivist discourses containing a futurist dimension. For example, while the discourse of fascism rejects any rationalist notion of progress, it at the same time values the “instinct for action” that could destroy what has gone before; behind the fascist mythology of the archaic lies an attachment to modernity, an obsession with novelty and dynamism. Fascism therefore incorporates an air of radical Heideggerian “openness”; it is not merely a repressive model, it offers its followers an “intoxicating sense of autonomy,” refusing to assert a coherent or definite vision of the nation, as this would undermine the promise of limitless potential; fascism glorifies the future “while it remains undefined.”

Mary Chernat distinguishes between conflicts/disagreements on the criterion of distinguishing the political-ideological disagreements of liberal and radical feminism. Since Western liberal politicians, by her definition, are in favor of Western liberal democracy with its emphasis on gender equality and sexual minority rights, they fully support the struggle of the “democratic” (and especially LGBTQ+) strategy, so they promote the idea of the embattled subject, rejecting the anti-militarist discourse [Cernat, 2023].

There is no universal solidarity outside of ideology. The events of war contribute to temporary unity, but do not mean, nevertheless, a reduction to the common, which can lead to the leveling of organic nationalism. Criminal elements in war, who are often released from prisons as those capable of raising the degree of brutality, are good because, lacking identifying marks, they are unable to discern in each other the basic dichotomy of militarism friend-enemy, forming the phenomenon of *pharmakon* as a temporary unity of becoming. But after their demise, organic ethnoses, rather than non-essentialist assemblages of becoming (J. Deleuze and F. Guattari), begin to fight.

S. Žižek announces a kind of diagnosis of “our time” by deconstructing the discourse of postcolonialism/decoloniality. Representatives of this discourse rely on Heidegger's “house of being” as a search for and acquisition of a language of always unique life experience that reveals reality to the individual in a historically specific way – as opposed to the abstract universal languages of science and bureaucracy. According to Žižek, there are various reasons to embrace Marxism because the discourse of Marxism, unlike the discourse of post- and decoloniality, appeals not to Heideggerian language but to the lower classes of society, calling for their liberation, but to the paradox of Marxist discourse that these reasons arise only after the self/subject has already made its choice. The discourse of religion, according to Žižek, appeals to the category of “miracle”, while, in Kierkegaard's terms, the “I”/subject does not accept faith in Christ and the “leap of faith” because these reasons arise only after the “I”/subject – by analogy with the Marxist-marked subject – has already made this “leap of faith”, and this religious component recalls E. Levinas's thought “I choose truly only by being chosen in the religious sense of the term” [Levinas, 1969].

The anthropological paradox of power is that the more power is “humanized”, the more it distances itself from those it rules, the less it is able to be in the processes of social exchange. As a result, the power is afraid of the immediate political and social environment and continuously changes the personnel around itself, and thus, it ceases to be legitimate, becoming, according to K. Schmitt's definition, legal [Schmitt, 2004], violating the basic articles of the social contract, for which the fighters against absolute monarchy once fought. The paradox is that the more charisma a leader possesses, the stronger the so-called Byzantine style of government is established in the state. The more publicly the popular consciousness imputes to the leader the

blame for all problems, the more it demands patronage from him, and here the role of official image providers – news channels and other mass media – is significant. These paradoxes are more or less clear to every thinking person whose role becomes significant in the service of the new socio-political/nationalist order. There is little criticism in this context, and even the slightest criticism manifests itself in the form of cultural and material inconveniences solely as a competition, moreover as a competition with each other personally.

The main subject of this not for life but for death struggle, which sustains the new nationalist orthodoxy, is the phantasm of whose nationalism is “better”? In attempting to answer this question, the next question inevitably arises – what specific material and cultural benefits, compared to other nationalisms, is it capable of providing us with? M. Foucault calls a “monster” a political figure that lawlessly tramples the legal order, deviates from social, legal and political norms, transforming the mechanisms of power and control [Schmitt, 2004]. The more charming the new nationalist orthodoxy that comes to power, the more it rejects the civil partnership of its subjects, any possibilities of free and diverse realization of the will and aspirations of its people that can surpass its own charm or beauty. Such a logical paradox may be reassuring, since the appeal of the nationalist, built on the priority of one nation over others, in any human society inevitably fades away.

Today, the call for global/international solidarity is caused by the objective need to find a way out of the global military-political and socio-economic crisis that has affected many countries. Instead of local solidarity in the era of “wars of extermination” (E. Balibar), global cooperation is necessary. Honora O’Neil distinguishes between two main forms of solidarity: “solidarity with the oppressed” (“intergroup”) and “solidarity among the oppressed”, arguing that while the former defines the solidarity of the fortunate with the less fortunate (charity, volunteering), the latter refers to mutual support and care among members of the oppressed group (“intragroup”) [O’Neill, 1996]. Another type of solidarity arises when the bonds and sense of unity between people are not the result of hardship or injustice as such, but of cooperation and joint action. But the main thing that creates and strengthens solidarity is the “We” of global/international solidarity. Albeit on different grounds, it leads us to mutual responsibility in a global context. The focus is on the importance of international – rather than nationalist – collective action in tackling the political and economic challenges of today's world.

Thus, we can see the Earth as a place where there are lines of natural and sociocultural demarcation that can be leveled through solidarity, formed at supranational and supra-confessional levels and forming a new post-political consensus. In contemporary society, transnational solidarity seems to be impossible. Today, there is a so-called liberal solidarity that functions within a liberal discourse. The purpose of liberal solidarity is to normalize power relations that are based on primary essentialistically understood social groups (whether kinship, community, ethnicity, nationality, or class). These groups enter into social contract relations among themselves in order to guarantee their own security and increase their own social welfare, without extending the guarantees of security and welfare to those who do not fall under the protection of existing power relations. In other words, essentialistically understood and actually atomized social groups delegate power to social institutions that act violently to “protect” themselves as supposedly “suffering” individuals in complex social conditions from all those who are suppressed by the system, or live under the constant threat of such suppression, so they are forced to keep silent for fear of publicly expressing their disagreement with the policies of the existing authorities.

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## ФЕНОМЕН СОЛІДАРНОСТІ В ПОСТПОЛІТИЧНОМУ КОНСЕНСУСІ

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### **АНОТАЦІЯ**

Глибока трансформація всіх аспектів буття суспільства, що розпочалася в останній чверті минулого століття і триває донині, змінила практично всю структуру суспільних відносин, як у її морфологічному, так і змістовному планах. Соціальна солідарність представлена як динамічний і негарантований стан, що виникає в перебігу людської взаємодії та потребує постійної активності всіх учасників інтеракційного процесу. Основну інтегративну роль відіграють спільна дія та її інтерпретації, близькість яких забезпечує консолідацію соціуму. Досліджено вплив солідарності на функцію відтворення соціальної системи на всіх її ієрархічних рівнях – від груп первинних соціальних практик до соціуму в цілому. Обґрунтовано, що стан або рівень соціальної солідарності в суспільстві визначає ступінь гармонійності його функціонування, і загалом визначає життєві шанси та перспективи цього суспільства. Зазначається, що редукція солідарності несе в собі загрозу соціальної дезінтеграції. Наголошується, що за нормального функціонування соціуму солідарність виступає об'єктом неослабної уваги, як з боку правлячої в суспільстві групи, в чийх діях майже нероздільно присутні цілі відтворення суспільства і своєї влади, так і з боку інших соціальних інститутів, чия діяльність безпосередньо зумовлена рівнем консолідації та кооперації їхніх членів. З огляду на це, не можна вважати нормальним той стан суспільних відносин, за якого ані влада, ані інші інститути не виявляють достатньої заклопотаності стосовно ступеня консолідації соціального цілого. Показано, що в постполітичному консенсусі класова ідентичність постає як результат певного політичного жесту, політико-дискурсивного конструювання. Політико-дискурсивний аналіз визначається як незалежна, самостійна методологія, що дає змогу побачити в новому світлі такі традиційні об'єкти політичних досліджень, як популістські рухи та ідеології, масштабні соціальні конфлікти, абсолютизацію ідеології та ідеологізацію функціонування різних мов у суспільстві.

**Ключові слова:** *агоністичний публічний простір, трансформонні альянси, динамічна демократія, неолиберальна глобалізація, постполітичний світ, форми ідентифікації, безальтернативність наявного порядку, транснаціональні інститути, солідарність.*

**Внесок авторів:** всі автори зробили рівний внесок у цю роботу

**Конфлікт інтересів:** автори повідомляють про відсутність конфлікту інтересів

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