Introductory note. Enacting Solidarity

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Although the distinction is somewhat debatable, it is still usance among sociologists to discern three 'floors' within social reality, i.e. the micro-, meso- and macro-level. Whereas the micro-level consists of face-to-face interaction (prototypically in a situation of physical co-presence), the macro-level is synonymous with society. The latter may be conceived as a nation-state, which is still the common approach; alternatively, the macro-level is conceptualised in transnational terms (e.g. European society) or in the wake of the process of globalisation as a world society. The intermediate meso-level encompasses formal organisations, social movements and diverse sorts of rather informal groups or collectives such as loosely integrated religious associations, subcultures or lifestyle communities.

With these distinct levels of social reality correspond different modes of solidarity, which partly explains the concept's multidimensionality (compare Van Hoyweghen, Meyers & Pulignano this volume). The three contributions in this section aptly demonstrate that the micro-, meso- and macro-level indeed foreground one or more particular aspects of solidary relationships. The presented analyses of intergenerational solidarity between children and parents, of the differences in solidarity corresponding with two distinct modes of Protestantism, and of the framing of migration from Africa to Europe clearly address the micro-, meso- and macro-level respectively. In doing so, each article also highlights a dimension that more general concepts or theories regard as a constitutive component of solidary relationships (see for example Bayertz, 1999 and Smith & Sorrell, 2014).

Veerle Draulans and Wouter De Tavernier open this part with a discussion of 'Shifts in Intergenerational Solidarity'. Based on semi-structured interviews, they analyse emergent changes in the eldercare in the Turkish community of a Belgian city. Taking care for one's needy parents was within the Turkish community traditionally a strong moral duty for the children, particularly the oldest son and his wife. Hence children did not invoke legally facilitated professional services or bring their parents to a residential care centre. However, the adaption of norms of the host country regarding for instance physical and domestic privacy and, particularly, the increased participation of second-generation Turkish females in the labour market weaken the possibility to meet the traditional moral standards. There is indeed a crucial gender aspect to intergenerational solidarity. The traditional expectations presuppose that women are not employed outside the home and can therefore smoothly divide care taking between children and parents. Rising female labour participation corrodes this assumption.

In focusing on the micro-level of intergenerational caretaking within the family context, Draulans and De Tavernier emphasise the dimension of normative obligation in solidary relationships. They distinguish three levels of normative generalisation, i.e. juridical norms (e.g. both contributions to and benefits of social security arrangements), socially sanctioned norms, and internalised norms. With regard to the care obligation informing intergenerational solidarity in the studied Turkish community, Draulans and De Tavernier observe the emergence of a shift from community based social pressure to a more voluntary, individually motivated care provision on the one hand and a growing openness to professional care on the other. This suggests that second-generation migrants at least partly detraditionalise and start to adopt on the micro-level of the family the care norms that

dominate in the broader environment (on detraditionalisation, see for instance Heelas, Lash & Morris, 1996).

Notwithstanding the focus on the micro-level of solidarity, an important micro-macro link is at work in this specific case. For informal intergenerational care can only acquire a more voluntary and, related to this, a negotiated character because of the existing formal arrangements facilitating professional care. Moreover, a general macro-development, i.e. the growing feminisation of wage labour, is one of the prime drivers of the observed process of normative detraditionalisation.

Dick Houtman, Anneke Pons and Rudi Laermans move the focus to the meso-level in 'Religion and Solidarity: The Vicissitudes of Protestantism'. Both Emile Durkheim and Max Weber, the founders of the sociology of religion, stressed the individualistic nature of orthodox Protestantism. Houtman, Pons and Laermans argue that since the 1950s a different mode of Protestantism rapidly gained terrain. Alongside the orthodox understanding of the sacred, implying a drastic difference with the profane, a more liberal and less dualistic view became institutionalised. Comparable to the trend described by Draulans and De Tavernier, this renewal also comes down to a process of detraditionalisation.

In-depth interviews with Dutch orthodox and liberal Protestants allow the authors to fine-tune the differences in religious beliefs that distinguish both groups. Whereas the studied orthodox Protestants consider God as a transcendent, omnipotent person to whom the believer owes a strict obedience on the basis of a literal reading of the Bible, the liberal respondents regard God as an immanent, all-pervasive impersonal life force that may be experienced in various ways. The analysis underscores the performative social effects of these different approaches of the sacred. Orthodox Protestants form tight and exclusive congregations of like-minded believers, thus practicing a pronounced in-outgroup logic. However, these communities are everything but solid since the participants are genuine individualists who first and foremost aim at personal salvation through their individual relationship with God and their own interpretation of His teachings. On the contrary, liberal Protestants are open-minded and value encounters with various 'Others' since the sacred reveals itself in countless ways. Hence their network-like sociability, which may even include the participation is non-Protestant religious practices.

With their study of two different religious cultures, Houtman, Pons and Laermans accentuate the dimension of social identification that seems to be an essential ingredient of solidary relationships on the meso-level. Overall, they argue that this sense of belonging rests on a shared belief system or 'collective consciousness' (Durkheim) whose specific contours co-determine the corresponding form of collectivity. The authors indeed emphasise the performative function of beliefs, i.e. different views of the sacred, for group solidarity. This argument concurs with the stress on the active role that norms play in intergenerational solidarity on the micro-level as analysed by Draulans and De Tavernier.

With Jan Van Bavel's contribution on 'World Population Explosion, Migration and Solidarity' we definitely move to the macro-level, primarily identified as the European Union. Nevertheless, world society is also directly involved since the article discusses migration from Africa to Europe and the way media and official E.U. policies frame this phenomenon in relation to notions of solidarity. Hence the analytic lens seems to shift from social norms or lived group culture to rather specific discourses within the sphere of media and politics.

However, the studied discursive framings presuppose and re-articulate widely shared conceptions, not the least regarding the societal basis of solidarity and its legitimate manifestations.

Backed by solid empirical data, Van Bavel critically unpacks the idea that population growth in Africa equals a 'time bomb' that will explode in the near future and already causes a massive migration to Europe. The heightened number of migrants is often considered as endangering solidarity within Europe. This framing makes use of a culturalist argument that is foregrounded in communitarianism: a common culture is necessary for societal integration or mutual solidarity. The advent of 'ever more newcomers' with a different cultural background, often rooted in Islamic beliefs, is viewed as undermining European solidarity, including its institutional expressions such as welfare arrangements. Yet still another notion of solidarity is at stake in the framing of migration, particularly in E.U. policy discourse. Based on the Christian notion of 'solidarity with the poor', official migration discourse systematically differentiates between asylum seekers or refugees on the one hand and economic migrants on the other. Whereas the first are welcomed, be it on ever more strict conditions, the second are pushed back as much as possible. Van Bavel analyses the perverse effects of this dualist discourse and subsequently pleads for an active labour immigration policy on the European level that recognizes both the reality and possible positive effects of economic immigration.

Van Bavel's analysis also addresses a broader shift, this time on the macro-level of world society. One may again invoke the notion of detraditionalisation: Europe has to leave behind the still widely entrenched notion of a socio-cultural gulf separating 'the West' from 'the rest' (indeed a central topic in the academic discourse on postcolonialism). Comparable to the two other contributions making up this section, Van Bavel simultaneously underlines the performative role of shared ideas. However, he does not analyse how shared norms or beliefs help to reproduce specific solidary relationships. He rather demands attention for the 'enactive' function of this very axiom when it informs media reports or official policies addressing 'the treats of immigration'.

According to 'the double hermeneutic' as expounded by Anthony Giddens (1993), everyday notions and social-scientific concepts entertain a two-way relationship. Social scientists build on and refine lay ideas; their concepts in turn inform everyday insights via education, the media or professional and political discourses. The three contributions in this section partly illustrate, partly question this logic. Thus, both the analyses of Draulans and De Tavernier, and of Houtman, Pons and Laermans, fit broadly institutionalized conceptions of solidarity. More particularly, they tie in with the idea that solidarity entails the positive moral obligation to act or expresses the identification with a common culture respectively. Both approaches reflect widely entrenched lay concepts that were a first time sociologically officialised by Emile Durkheim (see the introduction and collected texts in Bellah, 1973; compare Gofman, 2014); Talcott Parsons subsequently elaborated Durkheim's insights and further articulated them from a systems-theoretical point of view (see Alexander, 2014).

Overall but rather implicitly, Van Bavel's critical contribution asks for a reflexive turn when it comes to the notion of solidarity. Thus, Van Bavel shows how the common notion of legitimate solidarity, i.e. caring for the badly-off, in fact underpins the EU policy differentiation between 'good' and 'bad migrants', including its everything but morally sound effect of obliging African migrants who try to reach Europe to take the very risky Mediterranean Sea-passage. Yet his analysis also suggests that the sociological textbook idea

that a common culture forms the cornerstone of societal integration is nowadays actively deployed to dispute multiculturalism and the phenomenon of immigration as such. The axiom of social integration through a shared culture, which is both an everyday idea and a theoretical insight, vastly informs media and political framings that depict migration in a negative way often lacking nuance. Hence a twofold conclusion seems appropriate. On the one hand, the culturalist definition of solidarity blocks a more reflexive approach of solidarity with the migrating badly-off who per definition do not originally belong to 'our culture'. On the other hand, the performative effects of the culturalist point of view should incite sociologists to give much more attention to socially integrative mechanisms and media – e.g. money, power, law or truth – that do not rely on shared norms or beliefs (compare Luhmann, 1997). Such a turn away from culturalism may even inspire a shift in the sociologically established approaches of solidarity (witness for instance Brunkhorst, 2005).

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