



Critical Perspectives on the Emerging Forms of Global Solidarities

International Scientific
Conference

Invited keynote speakers

Prof. **Michael Wilkinson**, LSE
Prof. **Marina Simić**, FPN, UB

Institute of Criminological and Sociological
Research, Gračanička 18. Belgrade, Serbia
8 November 2024, Big Hall, 9 AM - 19 PM



BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

**CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE EMERGING
FORMS OF GLOBAL SOLIDARITIES**

Institute of Criminological and Sociological Research

8 November 2024

Belgrade, Serbia

Book of Abstracts - Critical Perspectives on the Emerging Forms of Global Solidarities

8 November 2024

Belgrade, Serbia

ISBN: 978-86-80756-71-4

Publisher:

Institute of Criminological and Sociological Research, Belgrade

For Publisher:

Ivana Stevanović, PhD

Director of Institute of Criminological and Sociological Research, Belgrade

Editors:

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Prepress:

Ana Paraušić Marinković, PhD

Cover design

Sanja Petkovska, PhD

Number of copies:

20

Copy:

Institute of Criminological and Sociological Research, Belgrade

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KEYNOTE LECTURERS

Reflections on the Material Constitution in Europe: Internationalism V Eurocentrism

Prof. Michael Wilkinson
London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom



The concept of the material constitution highlights the gap between formal constitutionalism and the concrete production and reproduction of political society. This gap signals both a certain hypocrisy in the prevailing liberal order and the relative autonomy of the political domain. It offers a space of critique and a space of action. This space is obscured in the worldviews of Eurocentrism and EU-centrism. To retrieve it, I suggest returning to the concept of the second modernity, outlined by Samir Amin, a modernity critical of itself. The antidote to Eurocentrism and EU-centrism is an internationalism based on a democratic politics of sovereignty and solidarity.

Biography

Michael Wilkinson (Mike), Professor of Law at London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), studied at University College London; the College of Europe, Bruges and the European University Institute, Florence. Prior to taking up his post at LSE, Mike was Lecturer at Manchester University, EU–US Fulbright Research Fellow at Columbia and NYU and was called to the Bar (Lincoln’s Inn) in 2000. He has also taught at Cornell University as Adjunct Professor of law and had visiting professorships at Université Panthéon-Assas (Paris II), National University of Singapore (NUS) and Keio University, Tokyo. His publications include *The Cambridge Handbook on the Material Constitution* (CUP 2023, ed with Marco Goldoni), *Authoritarian Liberalism and the Transformation of Modern Europe* (OUP, 2021) and *Questioning the Foundations of Public Law* (Hart 2018, ed. with Michael Dowdle).

Radical Alterity, Culture and Solidarity

Prof. Marina Simić

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In this talk, I want to address several issues which are important for the idea of solidarity, notably those of knowledge-objectivity, culture/ontology and otherness. I am an anthropologist by training, and all these questions are essential for the discipline, where the key question is how we can know the other. The answer to this question has traditionally been posed in terms of culture and has become part of our usual understanding of multiculturalism. However, multiculturalism is based on the idea of a singular world and multiple worldviews that leave the question of objectivity, truth and knowledge attached. Drawing from the works of authors of the ontological turn, such as Viveiros de Castro, but also Marilyn Strathern and Donna Haraway, I argue for the development of the theoretical strategies that aim at diverging from a Western-centric theory of culture. Instead of treating others as a source of various worldviews/cultures that should be analyzed through the usual theoretical concepts that *we* provided, I suggest that we treat the ideas of others in the same way we treat our own concepts. Only then is it possible for *our* concepts to be transformed by theirs. That should be the starting point for the long-term systemic decolonization of scientific – and any other – thought. The goal is to transform our assumptions by scrutinizing them through the lens of the theoretical perspectives of the ‘others’. Subjecting our knowledge to the authentic alterity intervention may open the channel for the new generation of solidarity, which takes others and their thought seriously. This means to sustain the thought of the other ‘indefinitely’, as Viveiros de Castro proposes, without ossification and divinization of certain paradigms (ours or theirs).

Biography

Marina Simić is a Professor of Cultural Theory and Cultural Studies at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade, and Professor of Ethnological and Anthropological Museology at the Department of Ethnology and Anthropology at the Faculty of Philosophy at the same university. She graduated from the University of Belgrade with a BA in Ethnology in Anthropology and a BA in Serbian and Comparative Literature with Serbian Language. She received her MA and PhD in Social Anthropology in 2004 and 2009, respectively, from the University of Manchester. She has been awarded several scholarships and awards, including the Radcliff–Brown Award by Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. She is also a Director of Master and Doctoral Program in Cultural Studies, as well as of the Centre for Cultural Studies at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade.

Professor Simić writes on the anthropological aspects of post-socialist transformation in Europe and various aspects of cultural and anthropological theory. Her book *Cosmopolitan longing: Ethnography of Serbian postsocialism* (*Kosmopolitska čežnja: etnografija srpskog postsocijalizma*) has been awarded by Ethnographic Institute of Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences as the best anthropological book in Serbian language for 2013 and 2014. Her last book *The Ontological turn: An introduction to the cultural theory of alterity* (*Ontološki obrt: uvod u kulturnu teoriju alteriteta*) deals with the most recent debates in anthropology and cultural studies about alterity, perspectivism, multinaturalism, knowledge and truth.

She is also a poet and a libretto writer. She has published two books of poetry, and the opera for which she wrote a libretto was played in Serbia, Netherlands and Indonesia.

ABSTRACTS

The United Nations Economic and Social Council as Fostering a Transnational Identity of Solidarity Among Its Members

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This study takes a conventional constructivist theoretical position to analyse how the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC) plays a vital role in promoting the norms of solidarity and cooperation among its members. We review the historically progressive agenda and positions of the majority of the council's members and their association with the non-aligned movement to posit that such discourse is carried out and promoted through this institution. This undermines the realist-individualist paradigm of international relations. Moreover, we seek to analyse this UN ECOSOC discourse, which undermines power relations and supports democratic international relations, to understand how progressive voices from the Global South affect international politics and challenge the dominant narratives of the power centres in the Global North. We posit that the identities of ECOSOC members, and therefore their interests, change due to emerging norms of economic and political solidarity, especially in the context of the conflicts and challenges seen in recent years. We hope to provide triangulation by combining historical, discourse and foreign policy analysis, and to do so from a constructivist perspective which prioritises the importance of ideas, norms and identities on the interests and policies of states.

Keywords: UN ECOSOC, transnational, solidarity, members, constructivism, realist-individualism

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Solidarity and the EU Migration Crisis: Rama–Meloni Pact through the Media Lens

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Solidarity is a complex, multidimensional and, sometimes, an evasive concept. Solidarity is deeply linked with the humanitarian crisis, like the one the European Union (EU) is facing since 2015: the refugee crisis. Waves of immigrants and asylum seekers have arrived in EU countries such as Italy and Greece, among others, thus creating some serious challenges for European institutions, citizens and politics, while also making the headlines in the European media. The importance of solidarity in a migration crisis has been institutionalised in the new European Pact on Migration and Asylum, approved by the EU Parliament in June 2024. This makes it crucial to study the correlation between solidarity, migration and media. Using critical theories on media and communication, studying the significance of any text, practice or communicative element of media content, I aim to highlight how the European and Albanian media have covered the collaboration between Italy and Albania, represented by the Rama–Meloni ‘Migration Pact’, in terms of solidarity and migration. This study aims to understand the role of solidarity in the EU migration crisis by focusing on studies of solidarity, migration and mediatisation, using statistics and global indexes, as well as European and Albanian media monitoring since November 2023.

Keywords: solidarity, migration, European Union, media, Rama–Meloni pact

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Reclaiming the Voices of Non-Aligned Movement Workers: Challenging the Elitist Framing for Global Solidarity in Present-Day Serbia

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This study employs critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine contemporary media portrayals of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Serbia. The study focuses on how these representations contribute to framing NAM as an initiative driven by political elites rather than a collective endeavour involving ordinary citizens. Analysing media coverage of key events such as the 50th and 60th anniversary commemorations of the NAM's first conference in Belgrade, films about Stevan Labudović ('Tito's Cameraman') by Mila Turajlić and exhibitions on figures like Zdravko Pečar (in Museum of African Art, Belgrade), the study explores how these narratives highlight the roles of prominent leaders and cultural figures, while sidelining the contributions of ordinary workers who were instrumental in the NAM's projects in countries like Ghana, Libya, and Iraq, among many others.

The analysis reveals how these representations perpetuate an elitist narrative and examines the implications for the historical understanding and current relevance of the NAM. The study argues for the need to democratise the historical narrative to include the experiences of ordinary Yugoslav workers, whose contributions have been marginalised. By reclaiming these overlooked voices, the study demonstrates their potential to inspire a renewed sense of global solidarity and democratic participation in contemporary Serbia. This critical discourse analysis challenges the dominant elitist framing of the NAM and advocates for a more inclusive and equitable understanding of its history and legacy, emphasising the importance of ordinary people's contributions to international cooperation and solidarity.

Keywords: non-aligned movement, critical discourse analysis, global solidarity

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(Non-)Symbolic Global Solidarity in Times of War: Analysis of the Social Manifestations with the Support of Ukrainians

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Russia's war in Ukraine sparked a global reaction. Not only state leaders and international and non-governmental organisations but also individuals (often as part of informal groups, for example, protesters or demonstrators) wanted to express their solidarity with the victims of the conflict in their own way.

This study aims to analyse the symbolic dimension of global solidarity during the Russian war in Ukraine, that is, images and symbols created and used during organised demonstrations of support for victims and anti-war protests. Particular attention will also be paid to the symbolic and non-verbal layers because these 'silences' or 'understatements' are crucial narrative elements. The inspiration for broader research in this area at the global level remains the logo of the Polish *Solidarność*, which was created as a handwritten sign painted in August 1980 on the walls of shipyards, factories and houses. At that time, it was supposed to be a sign that the strikes were continuing, and it was an expression of social solidarity with the strikers. Therefore, importantly, this study analyses whether any signs, symbols and images were used globally to express solidarity with Ukrainians and Ukraine.

Keywords: solidarity, Poland, Ukraine, war, manifestations

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Radical Otherness and Global Solidarity: Integrating LGBTQ+ Experiences into Broader Struggles for Justice

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This study explores the intersection of radical otherness and global solidarity, focusing on the LGBTQ+ community's experiences. By examining the ways in which LGBTQ+ individuals and communities navigate marginalisation, outlawed identities and subaltern positions, we can better understand how global solidarity movements can incorporate and support diverse struggles for justice. Drawing on case studies and theoretical frameworks, this study aims to highlight the interconnectedness of various forms of oppression and the potential for unified resistance across different marginalised groups. Through such examination, the study aims to offer a more nuanced understanding of global solidarity, advocating for the recognition and integration of diverse marginalised voices. This work underscores the importance of continuous dialogue and collaboration among various disenfranchised communities to build a unified resistance against oppression and advance the cause of global justice and equality.

Keywords: lgbtq+ community, radical otherness, global solidarity, social justice movements, queer theory

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Entangled Histories of Solidarity: Post-Yugoslav Activist Alliances and Globalisation from Below

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Transcending pervasive Eurocentrism and neoliberal globalisation narratives (securitisation) requires a shift of gaze towards emerging (and ongoing) alternative transnational strategies. This assertion gains further momentum when coupled with a critical examination of how the history of the present is constructed, necessitating a radical approach: entangled global and plural histories must not only be decentralised but also decolonised. Real-life examples of such strategies are being pioneered by grassroots solidarity activists. Thus, I propose a shift towards political history ‘from below’: entangled histories of activist alliances as alternative political actors without access to the levers of official political power, but with a strong informal and cumulative influence on post-Yugoslav political landscape. Notable examples of the above were Zamir, ARK, CAA, alterglobalists, BAB. Contemporary examples can be found in regional networks (Transbalkan Solidarity), and broader East–East–South coalitions (E.A.S.T., TMC or the Permanent Assembly Against the War). Such collective initiatives contribute to developing or solidifying political ideas of solidarity beyond Eurocentric liberal narratives, thus constructing ‘globalisation from below’ in the post-Yugoslav political space. An analysis of their practices would detail the transformation of post-Yugoslav spaces of solidarity and politics from below. An activist for freedom of movement and autonomy of migration succinctly phrased its essence: ‘Our greatest achievement isn’t to integrate migrants into Slovenia. Our greatest achievement is to integrate young Slovenians into the world’. This study will illuminate how the aforementioned perspectives are contained in contemporary local migration activist efforts, effectively introducing ‘globalisation from below’ in the post-Yugoslav political space.

Keywords: entangled histories, solidarity, Post-Yugoslav, activists alliances, globalisation from below

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Exploring Beyond Identity Politics: Creating Space for New Forms of South-South Solidarity

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In this study, we explore the complexity of identity politics, critically analysing ways to preserve identities while simultaneously creating space for new connections with other marginalised social groups and non-human species. By critically problematising these issues, we examine the risks of fragmentation and isolation often associated with identity politics, which are most visible in nationalist policies that persist in the former Yugoslavia region. As an alternative to such exclusive tendencies of ‘tending one’s own garden’, we will analyse examples of feminist and LGBTIQ+ solidarity from countries of the former Yugoslavia region with Palestine, which has proliferated since October 2023. We will study which progressive groups have organised, what methods of solidarity they have employed and what their outcomes have been so far. Hence, the term South–South emerges as a line that demonstrates possible, concrete solidarity above and beyond identity movements in this context.

Through these examples, we propose alternative ways of thinking about identity-based politics – indeed, ways to transcend them – through critical reflection and examples already existing in the post-Yugoslav space of queer, LGBTIQ+, leftist and environmental movements. This study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding and more effective implementation of identity politics within the context of global post-pandemic solidarity, in accordance with the frameworks of Marxism and intersectionality (Bohrer, 2019).¹

Keywords: identity politics, solidarity, LGBTIQ+, Left, South-South

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¹ Bohrer, Ashley J. 2019. *Marxism and Intersectionality: Race, Gender, Class and Sexuality under Contemporary Capitalism*. Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag.

Re-evaluating Solidarity: A Critical Analysis of the EU's Pact on Migration and Asylum

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The European Council adopted the European Union's (EU's) Pact on Migration and Asylum (the Pact) on 14 May 2024. The Pact aims to establish a set of five separate but intertwined pieces of legislation for screening and regulating arrivals in an orderly way, to create efficient and uniform procedures and to ensure fair burden sharing between member states. The latter introduces solidarity among member states, although it does not alter the long-standing Dublin principle, which lays the responsibility for an asylum application to the first country of arrival. The Pact's way of prompting solidarity among the member states through a set of mechanisms brings the concept of solidarity into question.

In this study, we seek to critically analyse the conceptualisation and implementation of solidarity according to the Pact, questioning its underlying theoretical assumptions. In the first part of the study, we analyse the concept of solidarity in the context of the EU's migration policies, relying on the theoretical frameworks developed within political theory and moral philosophy, with a special emphasis on the Pact. We argue that the Pact's operationalisation of solidarity lacks a robust moral grounding, as it fails to address humanitarian concerns adequately and perpetuates existing inequities among member states.

In the second part, drawing on the works of Foucault and Agamben, we examine the concept of solidarity in relation to the politics and practice of regulating migrant bodies, illustrating how the pact functions as a mechanism of governance that prioritises security and order over human rights.

In the concluding part, we incorporate a postcolonial critical analysis to expose how the Pact perpetuates legacies of exclusion and marginalisation, underscoring the need for a more equitable and humane approach to migration management.

Ultimately, this study aims to encourage a rethinking of solidarity within the EU's migration framework, advocating for policies that genuinely embody the principles of solidarity and human dignity.

Keywords: Pact on Migration and Asylum, ethics, solidarity, biopolitics, postcolonial analysis

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Towards Abolition Feminism in Praxis: The Case of the Novi Sad Feminist Abolition Summer School

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This study presents alternative frameworks and practices of transnational solidarity based on the example of an abolition feminism summer school held in Novi Sad, Serbia, in 2024. The school was established as a response to the local carceral feminisms, which are disengaged with the critique of the criminal punishment system and repressive state policies. Activists recognised a need to organise across borders from a position of radical otherness in their individual local contexts as a way of campaigning for change in their immediate surroundings. A non-hierarchical structure and ideological consensus comprised the alternative framework for organising the summer school. The learning environment was used to build transnational solidarity networks to challenge the local context, which is deeply invested in carceral logic. Carceral logic is informed by attachment to punishment delivered by punitive state institutions. We challenged this during the summer school by questioning the knowledge production process and building theory through practice: first, by employing the technique of collective notetaking and group reflexivity on carceral logic and punitive investments; second, by using creative methodologies such as cooking and reflective journaling; third, through impromptu organising to prevent traumatisation and harm without relying on the police, following a violent attack on several participants at a local park. In this study, we explore how school organisers and participants came together in radical otherness (class, ethnic, racial, sexual, gender, etc.) to explore community building and solidarity through an abolitionist lens.

Keywords: abolition feminism, carceral logic, community-building, solidarity

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Till Death Do Us Apart? Transnational Networks of Solidarity for the Burial of the Dead Migrants

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In this study, I examine the effects of the death and disappearance of migrants crossing the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas and facing insurmountable challenges even after their lives end. I examine the networks of civil initiatives to identify the bodies washing up to the shores of surrounding countries as well as the arrangement of burials. I also examine the transnational and global dimensions of solidarity as the platform for creating counter-publics and posing significant challenges to dominant discourses of statehood in Europe, marked by neoliberalism, methodological nationalism and Eurocentrism. I use the Levinasian model of recognition of the face as a major tenet of meaningful encounters with the Other, as well as Judith Butler's work on non-grievable lives. Further, I examine whether these alternative networks constitute the grounds for the subaltern voices to speak, albeit after their death.

Keywords: Mediterranean and Aegean seas, death, dispossession, counter-public, forced migration

Kurdish Revolutionary Affect and Politics of Friendship

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At a time when Kurdish mobilisation is on the global agenda, Kurds in the Middle East and beyond have not only struggled against oppressive regimes and ongoing wars in the region but have also self-organised to build their own networks of struggle, political institutions and autonomous rule that offer possibilities for a decolonial world of life. This powerful imagining of life demonstrates an alternative politics for gender, race and class struggles, challenging dominant liberal narratives of identity politics, community belonging and violence.

Focusing on everyday life, political mobilisation and conflict in Northern Kurdistan, this presentation draws attention to Kurdish affective politics, emotions, sentiments, feelings, losses and intimacies that are collectively experienced, expressed and shared, deeply informed by the ethical narratives of Kurdish struggle. This presentation will explore how Kurds create communities of belonging and make life liveable under the extreme forms of violence that seek to inscribe Kurdish life and death as disposable and undervalued.

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This presentation offers an ethnography of the construction of the militant Kurdish youth movement in the 1990s, when Kurdish mobilisation led by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) was at its height. Drawing on fieldwork, archival research and autoethnography, I examine the formation of revolutionary subjectivities against the Turkish state during Kurdish youth mobilisation in the 1990s, a period marked by extreme state violence. My analysis explores friendship as a human bond of joy, playfulness and love that provides a core ground for young revolutionaries to construct themselves as political subjects who believe in their power to change the prevailing order. I suggest the need to rethink friendship as a critical political concept in the collective formation of alternative subjectivities, while recognising the value and uniqueness of each individual.

Keywords: friendship, revolutionary subjectivity, affect, Kurds, social movements

Solidarity in the Time of Transforming Globalisation and Nationalism: Radical Possibilities of Global Compact for Migration and Global Compact on Refugees

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Migrants and refugees have become the central global political subjects, particularly with the COVID-19 global pandemic, the continuing global economic crisis that precipitated in 2008 and the wars of the 21st century, of which the Russia–Ukraine war and the brutalities of the Israel–Palestine conflict are the latest examples. The governing apparatuses and policymakers, which include corporates, international institutions and, above all, nation-states, have barely been able to contain these dual political subjects. In some ways, right when political and economic crises create migrants and refugees as a failure of the ability to govern, these political subjects challenge the very foundations of governance by their recalcitrant mobility, which challenges any settled legal definition of sovereign territories and borders. Migrants and refugees, therefore, while appearing as a figure of crisis for the government, also emerge as subjects of radical democracy and potential for economic and political transformation. This aporia in the government–refugee/migrant dialectics opens up a space for political innovation almost as a political inevitability which is inherently overdetermined.

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The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and The Global Compact on Refugees affirmed by the United Nation General Assembly and signed by a large number of member nation-states in 2018 is one such instance of an overdetermined political moment. The central figures of this political moment are refugees and migrants. This study is a critical reading of these compacts through the tools of political philosophy and theory to analyse both its conservative and radical potential. This study aims to retrieve the radical in the compacts and read them with concrete collective actions of refugees and migrants to explore specific policy recommendations in the context of the Global South.

Keywords: globalisation, nationalism, radical possibilities, Global Compact for Migration and Global Compact on Refugees

Antinomies of National Sovereignty in Post-Communist Slovakia

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In October 2023, Robert Fico was appointed Prime Minister of Slovakia for the fourth time, after leading his Left populist Smer party to election victory on a sovereigntist platform. However, one year into his mandate, Fico's government has been unable to assert Slovakia's national sovereignty in any meaningful way, nor has it been able to implement radical redistributive reforms. This study offers a diagnosis of the present interregnum in Slovak politics. It argues that the appeal of the politics of national sovereignty in Slovakia can be traced to the legacy of the post-communist period, when economic and political reforms were imposed in preparation for integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. As a result, class struggle was depoliticised and democracy hollowed out. This was part of a broader trend, described by the Irish political scientist Peter Mair, in which elected representatives retreated from the political arena, and effective power was transferred to counter-majoritarian institutions. For citizens of Eastern Europe, many of whom overthrew their communist governments in the name of democracy, this was a particularly traumatic experience. This study argues that while the process of hollowing out of democracy, identified by Mair, makes it impossible to reform the European Union towards international solidarity, it paradoxically also undermines attempts to reassert sovereignty and democracy at the national level. As the Slovak post-communist experience shows, populism, while good at winning power, ultimately lacks the organised social base necessary to sustain a challenge to the status quo. Drawing on the work of Arthur Borriello and Anton Jäger on populism, the study concludes that Smer remains a Left populist party rather than a genuine socialist party and, as such, is currently not well equipped to resolve the interregnum from which it has itself benefitted.

Keywords: national sovereignty, European Union, populism, socialism, internationalism

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Herbert Marcuse's Universal Solidarity

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Herbert Marcuse, a prominent figure in the Frankfurt School, profoundly explores the concept of solidarity within his critical theory, particularly in the context of societal transformation and resistance to oppressive structures. Marcuse argues that solidarity is a pivotal force in the struggle against advanced industrial societies, which he critiques for their capacity to integrate and neutralise dissent. In his view, true solidarity is not merely a superficial alignment of interests but a deep, collective commitment to liberating humanity from the repressive forces of capitalist and technological domination. Marcuse's analysis of solidarity is closely linked to his critique of one-dimensional thought and the way it limits human freedom and creativity. He posits that solidarity emerges from a shared recognition of these limitations and a collective desire to transcend them. According to Marcuse, this solidarity is revolutionary, as it unites individuals not only in opposition to the status quo but also in a common vision of a liberated society. This unity can drive radical social change, challenging the existing power structures and creating the conditions for true human freedom. Moreover, Marcuse's conception of solidarity is inherently inclusive, emphasising the need to unite diverse groups that are marginalised and oppressed by the dominant system. He calls for a coalition of different social movements, recognising that the liberation struggle must be multifaceted and addressing various forms of domination and exploitation. Thus, in Marcuse's works, solidarity is both a theoretical and practical imperative, essential for the realisation of a more just and humane world. It is through solidarity that individuals can transcend their isolation, forge meaningful connections and collectively work towards a society that prioritises human well-being over technological and economic imperatives.

Keywords: Herbert Marcuse, technological rationality, solidarity, humanity, instincts

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Research Justice Methodologies and Limits of Solidarity in Approaching Radical Identity Differences

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This study primarily aims to examine the limits and potentials of the concept of solidarity while approaching the radical differences among the participants and practitioners in social science research activities. My basic framework follows the ideas of politics of difference while also highlighting the necessary common framework agreed upon by all the participants in research situations for solidarity to be applicable and effective. My study will elaborate on the concept of mutual recognition, coming from liberal political thought. I also claim that solidarity among the researchers and participating interlocutors is impossible in case both sides do not act as politically equally powerful, contrary to decolonial theory. The decolonial approach claims that if actors belong to marginalised groups, they should claim the morally superior position that necessarily negates the position of others, assuming that it is as superior and subjugating because of the given identity markers of the researcher or some other reason.

To go beyond the mutual recognition paradigm, this study will build on the strategies of establishing mutuality and commonality between the subjects of diverse identities and social and academic positions by using both solidarity and mutuality. It will analyse the possibilities of enhancing knowledge even when belonging to radically opposite or different social identities, and of establishing solidarity and mutuality as more important than decolonising the given structure.

Keywords: research methodology, radical others, politics of difference, politics of representation, limits of solidarity

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“Does Anybody Have ...?” Online Biosolidarity of People with Diabetes in Serbia

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Among numerous changes in health care introduced by neoliberal transformations in post-socialist societies, this study will focus on the migration of medical services to the informal sector in the case of Serbia. Specifically, the study focuses on people with diabetes who partake in online biosolidarity by gifting or exchanging not only medicine but also advice and information in Facebook groups. A netnography was conducted during a three-month period in one Facebook group of 6200 members, where 127 posts and 659 comments were analysed. The research question is: how do social changes in the context of neoliberal transformations affect changing health systems and, consequently, changing the lives of individuals in the field of health? The findings suggest that the fields which need solidarity the most are those where the state has withdrawn. These include gift requests of insulin and test strips, and exchange of advice and information, showing that the services migrated to the informal sector are not only medical but social and psychological as well. Thus, my hypothesis is that the answer is in free labour and the gift economy, demonstrated through biosolidarity of biosocial groups. Biosolidarity has thus far not been researched from the viewpoint of diabetes as a chronic disease, although it is represented in a significant percentage of the population around the world. I believe that associations of people with diabetes offer an extraordinary insight into the entire process of the emergence of biosolidarity because, among other things, the diagnosis of diabetes, especially in children, can cause a great biographical disruption, a feeling of loneliness for the family and individual and misunderstanding among other people who often do not realise the extent to which the life of the entire community of people with diabetes is radically changed.

Keywords: biosolidarity, diabetes, netnography, health care, neoliberalism

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(Why There is No) Solidarity with Global Strangers: The Case of Antigypsyism

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Antigypsyism is a system of structural inequalities and prejudicial attitudes. It signifies a historical process created and recreated through practices aimed at Roma people today, as well as towards their ancestors during the last 1000 years. The appearance of these dark-skinned, unusually dressed strangers also reinforced the ideas about the 'East' as the home of wandering tribes, heathens and infidels and the enemies of Christendom/civilization. Today, there is a strong argument that Roma people have become (or still are) 'the marginal group extraordinaire, the quintessential strangers' (Barany 2001: 62–3)², and that antigypsyism has a high level of social acceptance, which makes it one of the most manifestly expressed forms of racism today, or the last accepted form of racism. However, antigypsyism was never, nor is now, directed only at ethnic Roma people who originate from India. It stigmatises all those who live a 'gypsy' way of life, regardless of their real or fictional origin, as well as those who are perceived racially different based on their physical appearance.

My idea is to present Norbert Elias' process of civilisation (Elias, 2000)³ as a process of creating solidarity among groups that recognise mutual respect for certain norms (uphold a 'normal behaviour'). The opposite phenomenon represents the process of barbarisation, in which normality is denied to a certain group, and thus, distance from it is created. That distance certainly has the function of maintaining self-awareness about the reputation of one's own group, because abnormal forms of behaviour are projected onto others – Roma. Attempts to build a nation must continually fight otherness from within and outside – what Kristeva (1991: 191)⁴ calls 'the stranger within us'. In that sense, racism really is an expression or activation of group power (Essed 1991: 36)⁵, and antigypsyism generates a mirror image of society, based on a reverse picture of its proclaimed values and norms.

Keywords: racism, antigypsyism, Roma people, process of civilization, solidarity

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² Barany, Z. (2001) *The East European Gypsies: Regime Change, Marginality, and Ethnopolitics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³ Elias, N. (2000) *The Civilizing Process. Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

⁴ Kristeva, J. (1991) *Strangers to Ourselves*: Columbia University Press.

⁵ Essed, F. (1991) *Understanding Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Theory*: SAGE Publications.

Identity Commodification and Global Solidarity: Semiotic Strategies to Bridge Division and Build Unity

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This study examines how commodifying identity contributes to social fragmentation and undermines global solidarity. The author proposes a communicative and semiotic approach to unite disjointed individuals and foster solidarity within a divided social landscape.

The first section conceptualises solidarity as a political tool for organising individuals into collective actors capable of advancing their interests. The study outlines empathy, fellowship and joint praxis as key conditions for building and sustaining solidarity.

The second section contextualises the challenges to solidarity by exploring how late capitalism drives social fragmentation through increasing structural differentiation and socioeconomic inequalities.

The third section analyses identity as a semiotic structure of symbolic assets (gender, ethnicity, class) within market relations. Individuals consume these assets as commodities and practice them through social interactions shaped and encoded by dominant power systems.

In late capitalism, workers in precarious labour markets, such as freelancers and influencers, are compelled to commodify their identities to compete for visibility and employment. Similarly, gig workers, like Uber drivers, must carefully curate aspects of their presentation – such as profile appearance, customer interactions, and cultural traits shaped by platform expectations and user biases – to secure higher ratings and bookings. Even war refugees find themselves navigating a form of identity commodification, leveraging their national backgrounds to access resources and survive in foreign societies. Driven by neoliberal hegemony, identity commodification creates an illusion of celebrated diversity while undermining individual subjectivity and deepening social fragmentation. This process hinders solidarity and upholds exploitative power dynamics, all the while reinforcing the status quo under the guise of inclusion and representation.

The author proposes participative strategies to bridge diverse identities, cultivate shared commonalities and foster global solidarity, offering a critical pathway towards overcoming social divisions.

Keywords: identity, commodification, solidarity, neoliberalism, late capitalism, semiotics

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Brothers in the South: Transnational Artists and their Ambivalent Strategies of BrOthering

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This study is based on the findings of a research project called ‘Brothers with Suitcases’, recently initiated at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague. While the research project generally deals with ‘Czech’ artists and scientists who participated in the Austro-Hungarian ‘civilising mission’ in Bosnia and Herzegovina, this study will closely examine the ideas of ‘Slavic Reciprocity’, which played an ambivalent role in this context.

To this end, the paintings of Jaroslav Čermák, a ‘Czech’ artist living in Paris, will first serve not only to introduce but also to be apt examples of the phenomenon of ambivalent reading of the artworks. Čermák’s paintings with themes from the life of ‘the South Slavs’ enjoyed great popularity not just at the time of their creation. Perceived in the West (the French Salons) primarily as an orientalist genre, these paintings allowed the local Czech audience to evoke ideas of ‘Slavic Reciprocity and Brotherhood’ or to work with mechanisms of co-victimisation in response to perceived cultural oppression.

The temporal and contextual shift of the whole discourse will be captured by selected examples of works by another Czech Parisian, Alfons Mucha, a key actor of the Austro-Hungarian ‘exhibitionary complex’. I will focus specifically on this artist’s realisations in the Bosnian Pavilion presented at the 1900 World Exhibition in Paris, pointing out their ideological background and their reception in the contemporary press.

To conclude, I would like to situate these works of art, which tackle the ideas of pan-Slavic reciprocity, in a broader context, and focus on the dynamics between the field of culture and knowledge production and the network of geopolitical and economic relations gravitating in the space between inter-imperiality and the colonial matrix.

Keywords: transnational, otherness, cultural identities, Slavic reciprocity, 19th century art

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The Rise of the ‘Cooperation Thesis’ in the Social Sciences: Epistemological Challenges for Global Solidarity in the Wake of Ulrich Beck

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It is timely to consider whether the various interpretations of Ulrich Beck’s cosmopolitan sociology accurately reflect his theoretical and empirical project: how the reflexive forces of second modernity bring about transnational forms of solidarity.

For many social scientists, global crises like the COVID-19 pandemic or the global hunger crisis highlight interdependence among national and transnational actors such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international governance institutions. As such, legally binding duties and responsibilities among actors arise from forced conditions of interdependence that stem from these mega-risk events. This presentation challenges that perspective. I argue that a minimalist perspective on Beck’s (2009)⁶ concept of ‘transnational solidarity’ is necessary, especially considering the emerging ‘cooperation thesis paradigm’ (Smith, 2020).⁷ This paradigm draws on evolutionary and cultural development theories of human beings and groups’ pro-social behaviours and has recently gained traction in political science and global governance (Messner and Weinlich, 2016).⁸ If the design and implementation of ‘cooperative systems’ are based on the belief that ‘a majority of human beings are more willing to be cooperative, trustworthy, and generous’ (Benkler, 2011)⁹, the question of whether transnational actors should seek to establish duties and rights to advance global solidarity loses its significance.

To explore ways to strengthen Beck’s notion of transnational solidarity, the final section of this presentation will revisit Karl Polanyi’s anthropologically informed principle of reciprocity. Polanyi shifts away from evolutionary theories while emphasising the institutionalised forms of reciprocity in complex societies (1944)¹⁰. Such an approach may enable us to disentangle the concept of solidarity from that of cooperation intrinsic to human beings and groups, which is gaining increasing epistemological authority as a new transnational frame of reference in global governance.

Keywords: transnational solidarity, Ulrich Beck, intrinsic cooperation thesis, reciprocity

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⁶ Beck U 2009. *World at Risk*. Cambridge: Polity.

⁷ Smith D. 2020. ‘Cultural group selection and human cooperation: a conceptual and empirical review.’ *Evolutionary Human Sciences*, 2(e2): 1–29.

⁸ Messner, D., and S. Weinlich. 2016. ‘The evolution of human cooperation: Lessons learned for the future of global governance.’ In D. Messner and S. Weinlich (eds.) *Global cooperation and the human factor in international relations* (pp. 3–46). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

⁹ Benkler, Y. 2011. ‘The Unselfish Gene.’ *Harvard Business Review* July–August 2011. <https://hbr.org/2011/07/the-unselfish-gene>

¹⁰ Polanyi K. 2001. [1944] *The Great Transformation*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Notes:

CIP - Каталогизација у публикацији
Народна библиотека Србије, Београд

17.026.2(048)(0.034.2)

17.03(048)(0.034.2)

316.72(048)(0.034.2)

INTERNATIONAL scientific conference critical perspectives on the emerging forms of global solidarities (2024 ; Beograd)

Book of abstracts [Elektronski izvor] / International scientific conference critical perspectives on the emerging forms of global solidarities, Institute of criminological and sociological research 8 November 2024, Belgrade ; [editors Sanja Petkovska, Ana Paraušić Marinković, Teodora Gojković]. - Belgrade : Institute of criminological and sociological research, 2024 (Beograd : Institute of criminological and sociological research). - 1 elektronski optički disk (CD-ROM) : tekst ; 12 cm

Sistemski zahtevi: Nisu navedeni. - Tiraž 20. - Napomene i bibliografske reference uz tekst. - Bibliografija uz svaki rad.

ISBN 978-86-80756-71-4

а) Солидарност -- Етички аспект -- Апстракти б) Мултикултурализам -- Апстракти в) Интеркултуралност -- Апстракти

COBISS.SR-ID 155981833