
Preface

In the standard liberal understanding, democracy is a procedure for majority rule. And solidarity is, according to political persuasion, either superfluous or a supplementary social or socialist achievement of the general welfare. I would like to dispute that understanding and instead defend the thesis that, in modern societies, solidarity coincides with the concept of democracy (chapter 3). In this way, the modern understanding of a republic and of democracy differs from its premodern precursors, which identified solidarity with the bonds of friendship among an elite citizenry (chapter 1). For the form of democracy created in the constitutional revolutions of the eighteenth century, the egalitarian understanding of solidarity stemming from the Judeo-Christian tradition of Europe is fundamental (chapter 2). The ideas of 1789, to which no alternatives have emerged to this day, gave to the Christian postulate of brotherliness the political form of the active inclusion of all those subject to power in the exercise of power. In an entirely secularized context, brotherliness became self-legislation. Everything—general welfare, justice, brotherhood and sisterhood, solidarity—is to come from the one concept of freedom. It is the “last hinge, on which humanity turns” (G. W. F. Hegel).

While I sketch a normative concept of democratic solidarity in the first part, differentiating it from *and* following on the premodern self-understanding, in the second part, I highlight the historical problem-solving potential that could only be unleashed by the democratic self-constitution of a functionally differentiated society. Democracy proved itself through the solution of both of the inclusion problems that this form of society could not solve on

its own. The first is the problem of the “socially produced” (Marx) separation of individual and society, which has become undeniable ever since the civil wars of religion. Democracy is the single, practically proven response to the individualization of separate atoms of consciousness, which are socially constituted as individuals via the exclusion from the community [*Gemeinschaft*]*—*a process that is co-original with functional differentiation. The productive potential of individualism can only be recovered without massive repression and individualism permanently institutionalized by means of democracy.

But democracy proved itself again, normatively and functionally, with the solution of the second inclusion problem, which became undeniable with the so-called social question in the nineteenth century. Only through political inclusion (expanding, universal suffrage, etc.) could the problem of pauperization and proletarianization of the working classes, who were market-dependent but excluded from the wealth of the capitalist mode of production, be permanently resolved. This impressive achievement by egalitarian democracy remained, however, limited to Europe and North America, and was bound to the political form of the nation-state. Today, the functionally differentiated society has been completely globalized. There is no longer any “island of bliss,” and every culture must live with individualization, labor markets, and education systems that have massive exclusion effects, which are only further reinforced by means of autonomous science, autonomous law, autonomous world politics, and so forth.

Both inclusion problems of early European modernity have been globalized with the society of functional systems. The question that must then be raised, and is taken up in the third part, is quite simply whether the solidarity potential of modern democracy is also sufficient to resolve—at the level of global society—the return of the problems that it was once able to solve within the regional framework of European nation-states. The thesis by which I am guided is that there will be no solution without a globalization of democratic solidarity.

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