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**Authors:**   
Dimitria Groutsis, (University of Sydney Business School), dimitria.groutsis@sydney.edu.au  
Professor Jock Collins (UTS Business School), [jock.collins@uts.edu.au](mailto:jock.collins@uts.edu.au)   
Professor Carol Reid (WSU School of Education), [c.reid@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:c.reid@westernsydney.edu.au)

**Presentation Title:   
Enacting Solidarity: An Inclusive and Sustainable Solution for the Refugee Crisis**

**Aims and Overview:**

Our aim in this exploratory paper is to open up a discussion on an experimental theoretical framework that draws on the insights of feminist scholars, governance literature and human geographers to build a framework for the analysis of solidarity, access and equity and integration. To this end, we draw on the case of the current refugee crisis gripping the world. Our empirical examination is informed by an extensive analysis of media material, policy documents and secondary source material.

To date, a universal and coordinated solution to the refugee crisis has been left wanting. Why this is so, raises questions around human rights, access and equity and solidarity. In 2015, we witnessed the largest movement of refugees since the 1950s (UNHCR, 2016). Negotiations among world leaders throughout 2015 and into 2016 have produced little by way of a solution to this crisis (Wintour for the Guardian, 2016; Smith for the Observer, 2016; Sydney Morning Herald, 2016). In fact, the political haggling, the rhetoric it has spawned and the outcomes we have borne witness to have been nothing short of ineffective. For instance, the calls by the European Union to pay Turkey $3.2 billion as a sweetener to stop the flow of refugees to Europe from the conflict in Syria is a perfect example of the ineffective negotiations. In the most crude and cruel of ways it places a price on the head of the 2.2 million refugees currently camped in Turkey seeking an exit into European shores. In spite of this the flow in to Europe has continued. The scenes of refugees trapped in Idomeni in Northern Greece suggest that setting boundaries around the free mobility of refugees will somehow contain the flow into Northern Europe and as a corollary will contain the refugee crisis (Helen Smith and Patrick Kingsley for The Guardian, 2016; ABC, 2016). In effect, this containment is creating a bottleneck in the processing and safe settlement of people at their most vulnerable, a situation which is set to take a new but similar turn given the policy solutions offered by the EU which involve returning the trapped refugees to Turkey (Kalimera Ellada, 2016; Lynch et al 2012; Ponomarev, 2016; Verhofstadt, 2016). The people swap deal is to be played out as follows: Greece will be tasked with sending back refugees to Turkey and ‘In return, EU countries are supposed to agree to relocate an equivalent number of Syrian asylum seekers who are in Turkey, and the Turkish government will receive €6 billion of EU aid to help deal with the humanitarian crisis.’ (Eder, 2016)

Australia’s approach to the refugee crisis also requires critical consideration. Australia is just beginning to receive the first arrivals of the 12,000 Syrian Refugees the Australian Government has agreed to accept in 2016 as part of Australia’s contribution to the European refugee crisis. Yet, the discourse surrounding the process of evaluation has been divisive: at times it has revolved around selecting those from particular religious groups; others have placed an emphasis on the positive net contribution (financial and human capital) that the families and individuals will make.  While a moot point, it is important to note that evidence throughout Australia’s history has shown that both migrants and refugees have made a positive net contribution to the Australian economy. There is therefore little dispute that there will be economic and social gains (Connaughton for The Vox, 2015; Australian Productivity Commission, 2015). Importantly, the dominant message from an Australian perspective has been one of engaging in a process of careful refugee selection and administration as a way of creating equal access, ‘avoiding queue jumpers’ and, protecting Australia’s borders (Doherty for the Guardian, 2015; Medhora for the Guardian, 2015; Brandis, 2016).

What is missing from this discussion is why these individuals need assistance, the practical, psycho-social and community assistance they need and the international conventions guiding our responsibilities to ensure the safety of people who must leave their country of residence. It is valuable at this point to consider the definition of a refugee which speaks to our responsibilities. Refugees are defined as: ‘…forced to leave their country because they are at risk of, or have experienced persecution. The concerns of refugees are human rights and safety, not economic advantage. They leave behind their homes, most or all of their belongings, family members and friends. Some are forced to flee with no warning and many have experienced significant trauma or been tortured or otherwise ill-treated. The journey to safety is fraught with hazard and many refugees risk their lives in search of protection. They cannot return unless the situation that forced them to leave improves’ (http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au).

Binding the various threads that go to the safe transfer, settlement and integration into new communities is a multi-level and inclusive model of solidarity. A social movement ‘project’ that requires stakeholders located in international institutions all the way down to citizens of the destination country to create an oppositional social movement to the current selective and ad hoc process of solidarity defining countries around the world. Solidarity as a notion involves a collective oppositional stance, a collective which can enact and generate power and voice

(Chouliaraki, 2013). The current humanitarian crisis offers us the opportunity to construct a solidarity ‘project’ which is inclusive and collective in the truest sense. What we are faced with currently is a divisive approach to solidarity where multiple stakeholders take multiple stances in advocating their cause.

We thematise the solidarity activities that bind members and lead to positive outcomes for collective. We draw on Allen (1999) who unwraps the work of Arendt, Foucault and Butler to throw light on the various dimensions of solidarity which incorporates: (i) a dialectical interplay between identity (individual) and non-identity (the group); (ii) equality and distinction; spontaneous action (resistance) and normalisation (rule bound conformity); power in the collective which is dispersed when the collective ceases to exist.

As we see it divisions in the enactment of solidarity diminish the strength of the solidarity movement and therefore the impact for the groups which are set to benefit from the advocacy and lobbying.

For instance, if we divide the various spheres of analysis we see that when solidarity is enacted there are elements of selective and inclusive solidarity. Chouliaraki (2013) invites us to consider the performativity of solidarity, how solidarity is imagined. In doing so she asks us to consider the spectacle of solidarity and how it is represented in this spectacle – by both the collective seeking to facilitate a greater good and those who are to benefit from the social advocacy (in this case refugees). Importantly Chouliraraki states that: ‘…. by analyzing the spectacles of human vulnerability available in the theatrical structure of solidarity we may be able to say something important about transformations of solidarity in our times’ (2013: 27). This certainly resonates with the solidarity dimensions and movements, which have emerged around refugees. Choulirarki digs deeper to note the way that solidarity is communicated and breaks this into three component parts: first the instrumentalisation of humanitariansm; the impact of and retreat from grand narratives as vessels for explaining and understanding social movements and, the technological transformation in how solidarity is communicated.

Our focus is on the instrumentalisation of solidarity enactment. In focusing on this aspect we have devised a taxonomy of the various spheres in which solidarity is enacted.

1. Political Sphere – selective solidarity (eg. processing, administration of refugees; sovereign state border protection agencies)
2. Community/Societal Sphere – selective and inclusive solidarity (eg. inclusive - societal acceptance of refugees with visible and active programs to include refugees and locals, such as in Bendigo; #Right to Remain; Solidarity; MSF; IOM; Refugee Council)
3. Labour Market Sphere – selective and inclusive solidarity (eg. inclusive – refugee labour market programs; trade union activities)
4. Entrepreneurial Sphere – selective and inclusive solidarity (eg. inclusive – SSI programs)
5. Educational Sphere – selective and inclusive solidarity (eg. inclusive – SSI programs)
6. Virtual Sphere – selective and inclusive solidarity (eg. inclusive - #Right to Remain; # No Borders).

***Central proposition***

*How are we to construct a model of solidarity to challenge the conventional wisdom on the mobility and integration of Refugees while creating an inclusive and collective and pluralist approach to advocacy?*

**(i) International Solidarity: Internationally Coordinated Infrastructure**

Nationally determined arrangements along with guidance from international bodies have informed the process, administration and governance of migration and refugee mobility throughout the post WWII period. Since the late 1980s however we have witnessed a seismic shift in such arrangements, away from macro-level governance structures determining who is allowed in and who is denied entry with the rise of multiple stakeholders driving and determining the process of selection (Groutsis, Harvey and van den Broek, 2015). Several factors have underscored this transition with a ‘hollowing out’ and decentering of state mobilised services, support and infrastructure and a related devolution of services to private agents, local organisations and NGOs in a variety of different publicly administered areas (Goodin, et. al. 2006; Rhodes, 2007). The landscape of human mobility has changed and with it has emerged a largely commercially driven ‘industry’ at one end of the spectrum comprised of government agencies, recruitment and migration agents, employers and less legitimate facilitators of the migration process such as traffickers, among other intermediary arrangements; supported by local authorities and not for profits at the other end of the spectrum (Alexandraki, 1981; Marks, 1957; Rhodes, 2007, 1245; de Haas, 2010, 1590; Groutsis et. al. 2015).

As a consequence we are left wondering how we can address the current refugee crisis, overcoming the pecking order of refugee assessment and the reliance on human traffickers/people smugglers. This crisis calls for the establishment of an internationally sanctioned migration and refugee architecture similar to that which emerged in the post World War II period.

In the immediate post World War II period, a number of countries came together to form the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM), the first intergovernmental organisation tasked with the role of regulating migration flows. The newly established organisation commenced operations in February 1952 and by 1989 had been renamed the *International Organisation for Migration* (IOM). In its various guises, the IOM was tasked with the role of taking charge of the selection, recruitment, processing and transportation of migrants and refugees while not encroaching upon national sovereignty. As the coordinated transport of migrants and refugees out of Europe in the immediate Post WWII period became less pressing over time, the organisation became a policy lever of migration for sending and receiving countries and lost much of its coordinating role in processing and transporting migrants to receiving countries (Venturas and Groutsis, 2010).

The present day crisis calls for a reinvigoration of such a body: a neutral arbiter charged with the task of integrating three pillars: a social justice agenda which is at the heart of this humanitarian crisis; an economic agenda, drawing attention to the benefits of accepting refugees for the receiving country; and, a social integration agenda, creating a bridge between the refugees and the countries of settlement.

Ironically, while we are connected globally, countries outside of Europe are largely absolving themselves of responsibility in responding to the needs of refugees fleeing war and persecution.  It is time we came together to end the suffering, coordinating our efforts to firstly change the architecture governing refugee mobility and secondly to break the divisive discourse surrounding the ‘burden’ of accepting particular groups of refugees, while welcoming others.

**(ii) Community Solidarity: Post arrival Settlement and Integration**

We believe there are several key aspects of settlement and integration which must be considered: social adjustment, work adjustment and (within the labour market and as entrepreneurs) and education. As we see it, post-arrival adjustment includes three interacting dimensions: general adjustment, which incorporates living conditions in the destination country; interaction adjustment, which includes the social relations and interactions with the local community and local workers/local school; and, work-related/education-related adjustment, involving integration into the local workplace/education system. The model draws attention to the fact that workplace/educational integration, social integration (at the workplace and the broader society) and living conditions are complementary and intersecting facets of post-arrival adjustment and integration. Within this sphere are located government and non-government agencies (eg. Settlement services; MSF; IOM); ethno-specific community groups (eg. Syrian community groups); ethno-religious groups (Muslim or Christian groups); workplaces; communities (eg. Bendigo; Solidarity [Greece]) (see Smith for the Guardian, 2016; Collins 2013; Collins, 2015; Reid and Al Khalil 2013a; Reid and Mulas, 2013b).

**Our framework for analysis is displayed in figure 1:**

i)a dialectical interplay between identity (individual) and non-identity (the group);

ii) equality and distinction;

iii) spontaneous action (resistance) and normalisation (rule bound conformity);

iv) power in the collective which is dispersed when the collective ceases to exist.

**COMMUNITY/SOCIAL SOLIDARITY:**

INCLUSIVE and COLLECTIVE SOLIDARITY

NGOS

Broader society

Labour market

Entrepreneurs

Education

**INTERNATIONAL/NATIONAL POLITICAL SOLIDARITY:** Coordinated mobility

**Outcomes:**

Social/Community integration

Workplace/entrepreneurial integration

Educational integration

(Power, Engagement and Voice)

**Future research**

Using a refined model of multi-level/multi-stakeholder solidarity, In our future research we plan to examine:

1. The refugee’s *social experiences* in the communities/neighbourhoods into which they settle: the processes of solidarity, social integration, the initiatives of local community organisations and service providers to make their settlement experience a positive one; their experience in public spaces and with their neighbours.
2. The *educational experiences* of the adult refugees and their children in local schools and other education institutions with a particular focus on English language training, examining solidarity within educational institutions;
3. The *employment experiences* of refugees, including an understanding of the barriers that they face in gaining employment and successful strategies designed to overcome these employment barriers examining the voice pathways and inclusion in various social movements.
4. The *employment experiences* of the refugees as entrepreneurs and how entrepreneurship can act as a site of solidarity between, within and across community groups.

**Conclusion**

Our exploratory paper has sought to develop an understanding of the notion of solidarity and the divisive and inclusive elements of the enactment of solidarity. Through the lens of the current refugee crisis we find that the multiple levels at which solidarity is played out and the multiple stakeholders involved in lobbying and advocating for refugees sees the process of the ‘solidarity project’ rendered meaningless. In amongst this messy divisiveness is the continued humanitarian crisis. To overcome the gaps, we propose a model which brings together the various levels of solidaristic engagement along with the various stakeholders involved. It is such a connectedness that will overcome the exclusive and selective approach to solidarity that in practice makes a mockery of the notion of collective resistance. We seek to establish how solidarity is enacted in a more connected and meaningful way through our future research which will focus on the 12,000 Syrian refugees entering Australia.

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