Caring States: Solidarity in a Turbulent World

The book that I plan to write at the Wissenschaftskolleg will build upon my and colleagues’ work on solidarity, but expand it in significant ways. It is tentatively titled “Caring states: Solidarity in a turbulent world.”

For a Report for the Nuffield Council on Bioethics (NCOB) in 2011, I developed a working definition of solidarity that was intended to strengthen the analytical power of the concept and enhance its value for policy making. Drawing on practice epistemology, I proposed a framework that helps to understand where, why, and how solidaristic practices emerge and how they solidify into social, legal, and other institutions.

In the following years, together with colleagues from various disciplines, I have developed our conceptual approach to solidarity further and used it to think and work through regulatory and social problems in different areas, including data governance, epidemics, and the future of work – all against the backdrop of digital transformations. My book will draw upon insights from these projects, as well as on current work with colleagues on all continents who seek to foreground non-European traditions of solidarity scholarship and practice. Specifically, my monograph will explore what solidarity can do to tackle current transboundary problems such as health crises, climate change, and democratic backsliding. If we understand solidaristic institutions as those that people contribute to according to their abilities and receive support as they need it, can solidarity help us envisage a new welfare state, without the known bureaucratic problems and unintended consequences? Can it help to address the problem of climate change? Can it help to protect people’s rights and interests in the digital era more effectively? Finally, how can public institutions be inclusive beyond current limits of citizenship and other categories of exclusion? Can solidarity help to create “caring states”?

Recommended Reading

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