The Self, the I, and the We
Solidarity from the Perspective of Rational Action

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Motivation

- Resurgence of Solidarity
  - Scepticism towards the compatibility of solidarity and rational choice theory
    - Understanding the *We* as an association of self-interested utility maximizers
  - RC Theorists claim their model has been *socialized*
    - There is more to the rational *Self* than the *I*

How can we approach solidarity from the perspective of rational choice?
Motivation

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How can we approach solidarity from the perspective of rational choice?

1. The Outdated Critique of Self-Interested Solidarity
2. A Typology of Solidarity Norms
3. Solidarity and ‘Homo Oeconomicus’ / Solidarity and ‘Homo Rationalis’
1. The Critique of Self-Interested Solidarity

- Solidarity is regarded as a set of social norms that prescribe transfers of private resources to others even if this comes at private costs
  (Durkheim 1893, Lindenberg 2014, Prainsack & Buyx 2017, Tranow 2013)

**Self-Interested Solidarity**: A rational agent complies with a solidarity norm if
- the benefits to the agent exceed the private costs of solidarity (opportunistic)
- social control prevents free-riding (particularistic)
  (Hechter 1987, Kapeller & Wolkenstein 2013, Mau 2007)
1. The Critique of Self-Interested Solidarity

**Homo Oeconomicus:**

- **Realist Turn:** From a formalized and analytical model to a realistic and psychologized description of action
- **Social Turn:** From material self-interest to bounded self-interest and ‘homo socialis’


**Homo Rationalis:**

- General tendency towards thick versions (instead of thin versions)
- Sociality results from the integration of social norms and rational choice

2. A Typology of Solidarity Norms

- **Particularistic**
- **Opportunistic**

**Norm Target**
- ×

**Norm Beneficiary**
- ○ ○
  (actual/potential)

**Self-Interested Solidarity**
2. A Typology of Solidarity Norms

- **Norm Target**
- **Norm Beneficiary (actual/potential)**

- **Particularistic**
  - Self-Interested Solidarity

- **Universalistic**
  - Enlightened Solidarity

- **Opportunistic**
2. A Typology of Solidarity Norms

- **Particularistic**
  - Self-Interested Solidarity
  - Opportunistic
  - Uncompensated

- **Universalistic**
  - Enlightened Solidarity
  - Charitable Solidarity
2. A Typology of Solidarity Norms

- **Particularistic**
  - Self-Interested Solidarity
  - Bonding Solidarity

- **Universalistic**
  - Enlightened Solidarity
  - Charitable Solidarity

- Norm Target
- Norm Beneficiary (actual/potential)
3. Solidarity and Homo Oeconomicus

- Particularistic
  - Self-Interested Solidarity
    - Self-Interest
- Universalistic
  - Enlightened Solidarity
    - Farsighted Self-Interest

- Opportunistic
- Uncompensated
3. Solidarity and Homo Oeconomicus

- **Particularistic**
  - Self-Interested Solidarity
  - Self-Interest

- **Universalistic**
  - Enlightened Solidarity
  - Farsighted Self-Interest

- **Opportunistic**
  - Charitable Solidarity
  - Social Preferences

- **Uncompensated**
3. Solidarity and Homo Oeconomicus

- **Particularistic**
  - Self-Interested Solidarity
  - Self-Interest

- **Universalistic**
  - Enlightened Solidarity
  - Farsighted Self-Interest

- **Opportunistic**
  - Bonding Solidarity
  - Identity Preferences

- **Uncompensated**
  - Charitable Solidarity
  - Social Preferences
3. Solidarity and Homo Oeconomicus

Homo Oeconomicus:

- *We* is reduced to an argument of the individual utility function
- *We* is embedded into the *I*, but the *I* is not embedded into the *We*

→ Homo Oeconomicus squeezes the *We* into the *I*
3. Solidarity and Homo Rationalis

- Particularistic
  - Self-Interested Solidarity
  - Self-Interest

- Universalistic
  - Enlightened Solidarity
  - Kantian Optimization

- Opportunistic

- Uncompensated
3. Solidarity and Homo Rationalis

- Particularistic
  - Self-Interested Solidarity
    - Self-Interest
  - Opportunistic

- Universalistic
  - Enlightened Solidarity
    - Kantian Optimization
  - Uncompensated

- Charitable Solidarity
  - Conditional Preferences
3. Solidarity and Homo Rationalis

- **Particularistic**
  - Self-Interested Solidarity
  - Self-Interest

- **Universalistic**
  - Enlightened Solidarity
  - Kantian Optimization

- **Opportunistic**
  - Bonding Solidarity
  - Team Reasoning

- **Uncompensated**
  - Charitable Solidarity
  - Conditional Preferences
Homo Oeconomicus:

- *We* is reduced to an argument of the individual utility function
- *We* is embedded into the *I*, but the *I* is not embedded into the *We*

→ Homo Oeconomicus squeezes the *We* into the *I*

Homo Rationalis:

- *We* as an independent mode of utility maximization
- *I* is embedded into the others’ payoff structure, beliefs and expectations, social relations

→ Homo Rationalis treats the *We* and the *I* on equal footing
Rational choice offers a perspective on solidarity which transcends its understanding as an association of self-interested utility maximizers.

Homo Rationalis is better equipped to explain solidarity than Homo Oeconomicus.
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