The "Ethos of Compassion" in Contemporary Social Intervention: The Janus Faces of Humanitarian Action Proposals

Cristina Pinto Albuquerque

University of Coimbra, Portugal

Abstract

In this communication we aim to discuss the social and political implications of an "ethos of compassion" that tends to emerge and to substantiate some of the current social and public action concerning social suffering. In fact, by considering mainly a moral of compassion as a political determinant element for the response to actual social suffering it is emphasized a linear conception of the human being which has implications with regard to its affirmation and recognition as a political agent. In this perspective the social and political categorization as a victim, combined with a mediatized focus in a sort of moral social responsibility nourished by the necessary distance between those that suffer and those that "observe" the suffering of others, are the main analytical axes of our reflection.

Keywords: social suffering, compassion, humaniarism, humanitarian action

Introduction

The action guided by humanitarian concerns about the relief of another's pain and death prevention, has deep and ancestral historical and philosophical-religious roots. However, today, humanitarianism acquires renewed features, either by assuming a greater politicization of its assumptions, or by re legitimizing itself in a sort of "moral economy of suffering" under the focus of an "ethos of compassion", to use the terminology of Didier Fassin (2005; 2012). This leads, on the one hand, to a new relationship with the current suffering and involved categorizations, and, in another, to a new way to regulate and manage it. Indeed, this seems to be the focal point in the current reflection with respect to a certain transmutation of action assumptions directed to "sufferers". In fact, from a defense of the idea that "everything is political" in the 1960s and 70s, today, it seems to be advocated the notion that "everything is humanitarian," leading to what we might call, in the sense of Hannah Arendt prospects, a "policy of pity".

The thesis that we advocate in the present article is that we are witnessing today, under the focus of a "humanitarian action" and of the compassion that underlies it, a form of governance of initiatives – with a more managerial and professionalized nature - and of "suffering" people aggregated under the homogenizing concept of "victims". This notion translates in fact a kind of "biopower" (Foucault) leading firstly to a separation between, on the one hand, the situation and the concrete and individualized expression of suffering and, on the other, the material condition that determines the help and that is substanciated in Abstract and collective narratives. Secondly, this "biopower" determines a compassional rhetoric that leads to the trial of situations to support in a humanitarian way. A trial based on rationality in some sorte unquestionable because anchored on an alleged "goodness" of humanitarism "good intentions".

In this regard, it is particularly relevant the understanding of the dimensions inherent to pity and compassion assumptions, also politically translated, as well as the comprehension of the moral and practical implications underlying the experience of some individuals' "remote witness" by reference to the suffering of others (Boltanski, 1993; Halpern, 2002; Kleinman, 2007; Ignatieff, 1999; Nussbaum, 2001).

Under these assumptions we emphasize the critics of many authors who believe that the actual concept of suffering translates, ultimately, an attempt to psychologize social reality, hiding, in the same way, the debate about social and economic inequalities. If we agree with Redecker (1994, p. 34) when he considers that the "humanitarian is profoundly nihilistic as it carries in itself the denial of the man as something else other than of a mortal animal", so, we must discuss critically the political and social action anchored mainly in humanitarian proposals. It is therefore pertinent to discuss the "status" of the suffering subject transformed, like this, in an "object of pity and not a subject of rights" (Guillebaud, 1994, p.84). The risks of what we might call "deferred citizenship" are, in this light, not negligible, and must necessarily be taken into account by all those who think and execute public policies and develop social intervention initiatives. If an action against

a shared suffering, evident and intolerable, is unquestionable, the assumptions underlying this action, particularly at the core of public policy and social intervention must be critically discussed.

In fact the questions about how to respond to actual forms of suffering are in a large extent saturated with moral connotations and categorizations requiring deeper sociological debates, decoupled from an activism sense, towards an understanding of how the categories of the "intolerable" and the categorization as "victim" are historically and politically produced. A debate focused immediately on questioning the idea that supposedly shared and perennial values are actually the result of a historical, cultural and political construction, so, a product of various forms of reconciliation of interests and analytical lenses.

In the present article we intend therefore to discuss the "Janus faces" of the current humanitarian action, that many authors describe as "new humanitarianism" (Barnett, 2011; Fassin & Pandolfi, 2010; Moyn, 2010), and reflect on the critical implications of a grammar of action anchored simultaneously in a compassional ethos - that values and justify the concrete and immediate action towards expressed suffering - and a logic of "governmentality" of suffering situations amalgamated into Abstract and collectivized categorizations of "victimization".

"Social suffering": a polymorphous moral and political analytical lense

The consecration, mainly after the 1990s[1], of social suffering as an analytical category to understand contemporary socio-political contradictions and forms of distress raises significant issues associated with moral conventions underlying the current political and social orientations. In fact, the category of suffering allows capturing, under a single notion relatively imprecise, a set of polymorphous aspects associated with the "malaise" of several contemporary individual and collective experiences. Under a common anthropological foundation - a kind of "soul wound" shared (Fassin, 2004), felt, however, hardly translatable – it is possible to aggregate aspects as diverse as the psychopathological effects associated with the loss or deterioration of employment, until phenomena of exclusion, violence or domination in a collective plan.

In the construction and academic dissemination of the notion of social suffering stand out the works of Christophe Dejours (2007), Arthur Kleinman (1997), Pierre Bourdieu (1993) and Emmanuel Renault (2008), among others, anchored on different analytical fields and assumptions[2]. Dejours (2007), work psychologist, has contributed to the consecration of suffering as a comprehensive category of today's social contradictions and fractures, developing, from the late twentieth century, a relevant program of research concerning the relationship between mental health and labor conditions, particularly in the context of psychopathology and psychodynamics of work. The research of Kleinman and his collaborators (1997) integrate a broader perspective, related to a new "anthropology of subjectivity", perceiving social suffering as the product of the influences of the political, economic and institutional power in the "corrosion of the character" and in the life of humans. The "social pain" is thus explained by the author as part of a larger reflection on the mediation of social structures and sociopolitical contexts of advanced capitalism, as well as the moral demands and cognitive dispositions of the individuals in the reflection on "what really matters" (Kleinman, 2006). In turn, Bourdieu highlights, in the study published under the title *La Misère du Monde* (1993), the category of suffering as a basic element for understanding the situation, complex and unique, of the so-called "new poor". This work sheds light on the need to rethink the assumptions of making policies, highlighting the strong dissociation between those who govern and the great mass of the excluded, trapped in logics of "social death" and "intimate dramas", and, as such, lacking plausible spaces for affirmation and public recognition. Also Emmanuel Renault, in the book *Souffrances Sociales* (2008), positions the state of the art concerning the reflection about social suffering, but rather defines it in a complex way, seeking the integration of the biographical and the social. In other words, he defends the thesis that the complaint of social suffering tends to position the critic, not only political, but also moral, about the multiple demands of self-realization, dismantling justifications and clarifying what society seeks to hide. Thus, the political relevance of the concept emerges, according to the author's conception, in the heart of the social struggles and movements towards better life conditions, constituting thus as "an indictment" of capitalism and society itself (Renault, 2008; Dubet, 2008). It is possible thus to considerer, by this brief reference to some works and authors, that the

---

[1] In spite of the fact that since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there are references to the concept and its manifestations, especially regarding the impacts of some policies or the implications of physical disabilities or mental illnesses in the collective living and acceptance (Schilder, 1938).

[2] The explanation of suffering as a nosographic category in the influential American classification of mental disorders Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), reflects the relevance of the concept in very different fields. This reference is not negligible, considering the possible perverse effects (which we will refer to in the course of this article) due to a homogenization orientation and individualization of behaviors and situations under the conceptual umbrella of social suffering.

notion of "social suffering", although very ambiguous or maybe because of that, has acquired in the last decades a growing scientific and political centrality. So it seems that there is now much more than just a "suffering vogue", as evoked by Alain Ehrenberg in the final of the nineties (1998).

In fact, although we cannot say that social suffering is a particular phenomenon of the contemporary societies (it is sufficient to remember e.g. the conditions of work and life in the nineteenth century and in the Middle Ages) it is actually particularly relevant its consideration as an universal and cultural marker of the existence of some groups or individuals, stripped from their specificities and particular determinants. For example, putting in the foreground the suffering of victims of the so-called "humanitarian crisis" contribute, *primo*, to a logic of effacement of civilizational, ethnic and cultural distinctions under an argument of the equalization of the help assumptions - the protection of life and the minimizing of suffering – and *secundo*, to the theoretical guarantee of neutrality and impartiality as principles of the humanitarian action (UN General Assembly, 1991 and 2004, see Mackintosh, 2000).

Suffering appears thus as a widespread and intolerable human condition. In this context, a kind of moral grammar of suffering, structured around the sentimentality and compassion, tends to expand and serve as an analysis prism of different situations, aggregated, however, under the same concerns of humanistic nature. Questions as differentiated as the effects of natural disasters (Haiti, Venezuela, Maldives, Japan, among others), the consequences of political conflicts (Rwanda, Sudan, Kosovo, Syria, Palestine, among many others), or disseminated diseases (for instance, AIDS orphanhood in Africa), or even, the immigration and asylum policies, the assistance to the poor, or the support to situations of suffering, violence and trauma, are now analyzed from the prioritary, and often univocal, perspective of compassion, thereby producing obvious negative effects.

Paradoxes of an "ethos of compassion" as a political and actional category

Compassion is actually the expression of a feeling based on the awareness of the intolerable or inadmissible. It combines therefore a sentimental or emotional sense, simply reactive and not claiming any additional reason beyond *agape* (αγάπη), and a logic of indignation that needs efectively a "good reason" to support action, at least in a justificatory perspective. Given the "vision" of the suffering of others, the need for immediate action seems in fact to prevail over all other considerations, referring to a presupposition of shared "human essence" that needs more critical reflection. Therefore, the action would be mainly driven by a demand, in the first place moral, to preserve the life of another human being. The empirical and practical content of suffering legitimate, this way, an action rooted in an "ethos of love" for each other, which ultimately constitute the generic category of "humanitarian". But if in the point of view of moral individual and/or collective action, the affirmation of *agape* as the response basis to suffering does not pose any particular problems, *a contrario*, the transposition, to the political univers of the reference to compassion and pity, substantiating what Arendt (1970) called "pity policy", leads to relevant critical considerations because it connects clearly differentiated universes' of meaning.

Beyond its pragmatic dimension, such kind of compassionate actions, capable of overcoming the particular situations and inducing to a potential generalization, translate, as pointed out by the above author, the distinction between two classes of men: those who suffer and those that do not suffer. Pity, woven by emotional ties, is thus cultivated in the public opinion. But this sentimentality depoliticizes humanitarian crises. Weaknesses are transformed into public "entertainment", putting together the suffering people and the spectators; "emotional judgements" in which structural factors and systemic causes - political, social and economic – in the origin of humanitarian emergencies seem to be erased. The economy of proximity and distancing operates on the basis of the process of "revelation", of visualization and of "dramatization" of suffering. In other words, it is necessary that the one, who does not suffer, can "see" the suffering of the other, without experiencing it directly. It also requires that the individual expressions of suffering can lead to a universal dimension which would ensure its overcoming, in time and in space. The compassionate action would thus be based on the "de-skilling" or "re-qualification" of victims. In other words, on "exemplarities" emerging beyond individual experiences, but rooted in a moral dimension of shared humanity, to justify an assumption of collective responsibility.

The "moral imagination" is, in this way, cultivated as a pressure strategy of public opinion and political action. Aditionally compassion requires rapid action, direct and circumstantial. In this sense, compassion is a pre-political entity, anchored in a merely axiological dimension. It takes into account the singularity of concrete destinies and, as such, it can only be visible in specific situations of co-between of categories of beings, statutorily, morally and normatively differentiated: the sufferers and the non-sufferers, the lucky and the unlucky. Also, by not being guided by a widespread assumption - except by

reference to the theological domain of universal brotherhood - compassion is discursively silent. As Arendt (1970, p. 16) says "the decisive factor is that pleasure and pain, like everything instinctual, tend to muteness, and while they may well produce sound, they do not produce speech and certainly not dialogue". In other words, compassion is materialized in gestures and conjunctural involvement, therefore, with a low potential for public recognition.

In this sense, one of the paradoxes of humanitarian action is the association of its principles to a compassionate orientation, but, in the same way, as it will be argued, its connection to a perspective of generalization that tends to anulate the singularity of situations in order to privilege mainly the material conditions that justify the action.

Critical features of a "new humanitarian action"

Humanitarian action and its philosophical and practical roots date back to ancient times and are derived from values and principles historical and culturally determined. In fact, the first root of humanitarism is religious. It is related to the Christian notion of charity (*caritas*), based on a "duty" of the "most favored" to devote on realizing the welfare of the most poor and disadvantaged. This liability, arising from the Christian doctrine, is thus framed - in a somewhat linear perspective that don't discuss the importance accorded to charity in the accomplishment of Christian universal fraternity - in a logic of differentiation between two classes of people: those who need support and those who can help and have even the "moral duty" to assure it. The conception of charity, based on this obligation of assuring the support to others, extends also to other religions such as the Jewish, with the obligatory religious practice of *tzedakah*, or the Islamic, with the practice of *zakat*[1], literally "that which purifies" (Ghandour, 2002; Krafess, 2005). This kind of "purification of wealth", by sharing between the "most and the least fortunate", anchors itself, just as in the Christian *caritas*, in a moral obligation associating people situated in different social positions. The second root, articulated also with the moral religious "obligations" but linked to live in society, is associated with "class privilege". The formula "*noblesse oblige*" is materialized in the modern face of philanthropy, which allows honoring dominant socioeconomic positions without putting them in question. The third root draws from the valuation of the public expression of certain emotional human nature manifestations. For example, the sympathy for the suffering situation of others in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* of Adam Smith, or the mercy related to suffering and cruelty to others in Rousseau. A fourth root can still be relied to understand what falls now under the generic name of "humanitarian action": the determination and recognition of the limits and the acceptable conduct in armed conflicts since the Greco Roman antiquity, passing by the art of war of Sun Tzu, in China, or to the Geneva Convention in 1949.

The brutality of the Solferino Battle exposed by Dunant in the book *A Memory of Solferino* (1862) and the creation (Geneva, 1863) of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), by Dunant, along with Gustave Moynier, President of the Geneva Public Welfare Society, and the General Dufour, dictate, for most authors the beginning of what we now identify as humanitarian action. Its origins are in fact associated with war and natural disasters experiences particularly during the 20th century. Currently humanitarian action reacts to conflict situations, supports displaced populations, contribute to peace-building and helps to reduce risk and to recover quickly.

The humanitarian movement was focused since its institutionalization in a conception of the world that allowed overcoming the nation states limits and the Western culture to respond to the suffering being as such, promoting like this a unified conception of humanity under the assumption that the differences (religious, ethnic, national, etc.) were likely to overcome in the name of a universal, and as so impartial, of relief to those who need help anywhere in the world. This kind of moral universalism focuses thus on the suffering victim as an Abstract person. The humanitarian gesture is anchored in an unconditional ethical demand translated either in a legal requirement (obligation to provide assistance to someone in danger), or in a compassionate perspective (the need to respond without appeal to the relief of the sufferings of others).

The so called classic humanitarianism is concerned with the protection of life and dignity of individuals affected by conflicts but that don't take part in it (civil or displaced persons). However, the changing of the current conditions of conflict and the post-conflict circumstances altered the assumptions of this classic paradigm for which the traditional objective of saving lives and alleviating suffering was merely temporary. Thus a "new humanitarianism", a "liberal humanitarianism", to use Barnett's (2011) designation of the third age of humanitarianism, emerges based on long-term objectives related to building

---

[1] Zakat without adequate translation in Western language, corresponds to the distribution of the goods of the Islamic nation (represented by the more affluent) to the same nation (represented by the less well-off) in line with what is enshrined in the Holy Quran (9:60) "the alms (Zakat) are just to the poor, for the needy, for the staff employed in its administration to those whose hearts are to be won, for the redemption of slaves, for indebted to the cause of God and for the traveler, it is a precept emanated from God, and Allah is Knowing, Wise".

peace, protecting human rights and promoting peace. As Moyn (2010) notes as progresses the generic argument to limit state powers, human rights take their maximum approach, as the explosive utopia of a secular world, the kind of anti policy that Barnett (2011) identifies in the core of humanitarianism itself. He is too much committed and by doing so he withdraws the real policy. In this "alchemical humanitarianism" (Barnett, 2011), the prerogatives of urgency began to articulate since the 90s with to the purposes of assistance for the development, then with broader objectives of peacebuilding. In this context it is vsible the existence of a whole army of abolitionists or development actors under the guidance "is necessary to provide more than a bed". The necessary lashing with the context that this perspective presupposes seeks to combine the immediate needs with the future development, as well as to enhance local services and facilities and promote and protect human rights. The "new humanitarianism" is thus far from its neutral perspective. He began to outline institutions and instruments that will lead to the reduction of violence and conflict rather than merely humanitarian assistance *tout court* (Duffield, 2001; Armiño, 2002). The financing of some projects has even become dependent on this association between humanitarian objectives and developmental and security objectives. In this context of change of the aid paradigm, the use of humanitarian rhetoric is now used as an instrument of international policy at the service of states, which reveals the increasing politicization of humanitarian aid. An example of the effects of politicization is the assistance during the Balkan war in the 90s. In this context various vulnerable groups were screened by political interests and conditions imposed. It was in this case visible the inability to distinguish the necessary humanitarian aid to Serbs in need from the underlying political situation promoted by the Serb authorities.

In this framework of humanitarianism politicization the orientation towards the ambiguous and sef legitimating human rights rethoric is particularly relevant. This politicization of humanitarianism ultimately triggered a process of counter-reform, enshrined in a kind of anti policy that by attempting to overcome the moral orientations is valuing increasingly the professional and the management procedures. But "[t]his machinery, built in the name of the victims, increasingly removed decision-making power from them", [as it] "swelled the power of those whose intentions were always good over those who could not be assumed to know any better or act in their own best interests" (Barnett, 2011, p. 196).

The "new humanitarianism" and the "governmentality" of people and actions

The suffering of the victims of the so-called "humanitarian crisis" appears as a universal and acultural marker, susceptible to override the particularities of groups and individuals and the different circumstances that characterize the situations. This translates a major paradox. In fact, the suffering, either in the features that it assumes, or in the way they are interpreted and experienced, is associated to cultural and individual contours that can not be overlooked. Suffering takes even different political connotations in different contexts allowing justifying categories historically and politically relevant.

We advocate the thesis, following Didier Fassin (2012), that the current humanitarianism is characterized by a moral economy of suffering, anchored on an "ethos of compassion" that not only determines a new relationship to suffering, but also the way to regulate and manage it. This way, actual humanitarian initiatives are not characterized primarily by a new way of "doing the good" by intervenors and well-meaning activists, but are mainly determined by a logic of action and people government that leads to the approaches advocated by Foucault in the 70s. An example that can be invoked in different European contexts, and that is referenced by Fassin (2012) in relation to the French context, is related to the procedures used to relieve and compensate the suffering of migrants through trial procedures determined by a "rationality" of compassion, molded in various institutional *locci* and resources. In fact, the very humanitarian rhetoric becomes a form of screening. By applying the label of "people in suffering" in the context of humanitarian intervention - a label in fact fragmented in many others, as "precarious lives", "disintegrated" or "vulnerable situations" -, it is paradoxically separated the concrete, individual and specific situation, from the material condition that determines help. For example, when the "victims" are classified by reference to their geographical or cultural ethnic origin, it is neglected the individual narratives in favor of a collective tale interpreted under more or less Abstract categories.

The categorization as "victim", in the origin a concept of the sacred lexicon[1], simultaneously underlies the "good reason" to act (even from a legal and political point of view), and determines the "derealization" of the concrete person, reduced to a

---

[1] Derived from the Latin victim meant a living creature offered to the gods as a sacrifice to appease their anger or thank your generosity. In the 17th century the term has acquired a moral and legal connotation. Since then it has been amplified with new conceptions and nuances. At present we are witnessing a certain vulgarization of this notion and that is the source of some confusion between "victimization" and feeling of victimization. For example confused frustration or discomfort arising from a situation that is not what is desired (for example, "being a victim" of a bad agreement in a divorce process) with the complex and multidimensional consequences of victimization. As such, "fall victim" tends to become a status and have not only a state. Some people and groups validate their social

biological body, amputated of the identity of subject and uprooted from their social contexts, beliefs and constraints. The humanitarian action, anchored in this perspective of universal and anonymous solicitude, stems in fact from a naturalistic kind of argument that by itself would justify not only the obligation to act, but also "the right to have rights".

Aid based on essentially humanitarian reasons does not cease to engage a form of "secondary citizenship" (Fassin, 2012) or "deferred citizenship". For example the waves of refugees entering at this moment in the European context are permitted, but people are not necessarily accepted or deemed necessary. The underlying rhetoric of humanitarian aid taking naturalistic and biologists outlines - at the heart of humanitarian solicitude, it is the injured body and the possibility of death that mobilizes action - and the trial processes that flow from it, puts in the front page a kind of "biopower", which in Foucault's conception takes life as its object or goal, not only inherent to humanitarian actions, but also derived from the production of moral economies relative to the suffering of others (Fassin, 2012). Effectively, the term "biopolitics" is used by Foucault to draw attention to a form of power, which works with the administration of life itself - meaning body, health (mental and physical), sexuality, procreation, etc. A government that also assumes continuity with the resolution of self-control problems by private acts of self-governance. By other words, it emphasizes that individuals are not only subjected to domination by external actors, but are also active in their self government.

Final considerations

Compassion and sympathy towards "the victims", by those who do not participate directly in this condition, feeds on a construction of emotional links greatly anchored in the iconographic representation of the suffering of others. Indeed, if we experiment the same fate of the suffering, we will not feel pity. Maybe solidarity, identification or even egoism, but, not pity.

The "humanization" of this "other" Abstract determines a type of contingent and delimited sense of responsibility (Hours 1999; Laqueur, 2001). In fact, pity requires that the pain is given to see to someone that does not suffer. In addition, the spectacle of suffering must be articulated with a speech. If there is not a speech about the "causes" of suffering, then the initial sympathy will evolve quickly into feelings of dread or even rejection or indifference. After all, the sufferer has perhaps deserved the situation...

In fact compassion obeys to a logic of proximity, a real proximity or a near real-constructed and disseminated, for example, by the media and social networks. Visualize suffer bother us, challenges us. The pressure of the doxa makes therefore tilt the political decision to the emotional registration. But the "vision" of suffering is by definition circumstantial, so compassion is fleeting and addictive – it must be continuously fed by images, through the creation of the reality "in suffering" for that the public opinion continues engaged. The images allow to say everything that is wanted to say, but don't explain nothing. Allow expliciting a representation corpus anchored in an alleged minimum common denominators - moral, political, social, cultural - that, in fact, are mere constructs of a pseudo "collective consciousness. First of all, image can help to trivialize perversely the suffering of others, giving body to a kind of social Manichaeism which in turn may legitimize an indifferent attitude and collective negative judgments. In the same way it can also produce a sort of "deferred citizenship" of the suffering through the filter of television or computer. The excessive media coverage of refugee flows in the European space is a paradigmatic case of the limitations of the compassionate protocol. If the reading is only that of compassion we may not identify, in the amalgam of displaced people, different situations; refugees because of wars, "economic" migrants, political asylum seekers, etc. are grouped under the generic term of "refugee". The singular categories transmute so, perversely, in a homogeneous moral category of "human beings who need help." The risk of inadequate interventions, under the umbrella of "good intentions", becomes thus important. Paradoxically it is the "victim status" of a "social pathology", the political and social classification that legitimates a humanitarian action. In this sense emerges a sort of "humanitarian citizenship," to use the expression of Nguyen (2008), a "biolegitimité" or "biocitoyenneté", thereby claiming rights, precisely because of not being a part of society, so for the simple biological and psychological existence.

---

existence through their victimization, projecting about other causes (near and faraway) from his evil being, therefore, legitimizes differential treatment claims.

References

[1] Arendt, H. (1970). Men in Dark Times. London : Lowe & Brydone.

[2] Barnett, M. (2011). Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

[3] Boltanski, L. (1993). La Souffrance à distance. Moral humanitaire, médias et politique. Paris : Métailié.

[4] Bourdieu, P. (ed) (1993). La Misère du Monde. Paris: Seuil.

[5] Dejours, C. (1998). La Souffrance en France. La banalisation de l'injustice sociale. Paris : Seuil.

[6] Dejours, C. (2000). Travail, Usure Mentale. Paris: Bayard.

[7] Dejours, C. (2007). Conjurer la Violence. Travail, violence, santé. Paris : Payot.

[8] Dubet, F. (2008). Théorie de la souffrance sociale [electronic version]. La Vie des Idées. Fr, 27 février.

[9] Ehrenberg, A. (2000). La fatigue d'être soi. Dépression et Société. Paris: Odile Jacob.

[10] Fassin D, & Pandolfi M. (2010). Contemporary States of Emergency: The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions. New York : Zone Books.

[11] Fassin, D. (2001), The biopolitics of otherness: undocumented immigrants and racial discrimination in the French public debate. Anthropology Today, 17 (1), 3-7.

[12] Fassin, D. (2004). Des maux indicibles: Sociologie des lieux d'écoute. Paris: La Decouverte.

[13] Fassin, D. (2005)."Compassion and repression: the moral economy of immigration policies. France", Cultural Anthropology, 20 (3), 362-387.

[14] Fassin, D. (2012). Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present. Berkeley:University of California Press.

[15] Guillebaud, J.C. (1994). La Trahison des Lumières. Paris : Seuil.

[16] Halpern, C. (2002). Suffering, Politics and Power: A Genealogy in Modern Political Theory. Albany: State University of New York Press.

[17] Hours, B. (1999). L'idéologie humanitaire. Journal des anthropologues [En ligne], 77-78 http://jda.revues.org/3084)

[18] Ignatieff, M.(1999). The Warrior's Honour: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience. London: Vintage

[19] Kleinman A. & Kleinman, J. (1997).The Appeal of Experience; The Dismay of Images: Cultural Appropriations of Suffering in Our Times. In Kleinman, A., Das, V. and Lock, M. (eds) (1997), Social Suffering, Berkeley:University of California Press.

[20] Kleinman, A. & Fitz-Henry, E. (2007). The Experiential Basis of Subjectivity:How Individuals Change in the Context of Societal Transformation. In J. Biehl,B. Good and A. Kleinman (eds), Rethinking Subjectivity: Ethnographic Investigations, Berkeley: University of California Press

[21] Mackintosh K. The principles of humanitarian action in international humanitarian law, HPG Report 5. Published March 2000. Available at: http://www.odi.org/uk/hpg/publications, Accessed August 30, 2016.

[22] Moyn S. (2010). The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press.

[23] Nguyen, V.-K. (2008). Antiretroviral globalism, biopolitics, and therapeutic citizenship. In Aihwa Ong e Stephen J. Collier (orgs.), Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems (pp. 124-144). Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.

[24] Nussbaum, M. C. (2001). Upheavals of Thought , Cambridge: Cambridge UniversityPress

[25] Redecker, R. (1994). Qu'est-ce que l'humanitaire de l'intérieur?, Nouveaux Repères.

ISSN 2414-8385 (Online)
ISSN 2414-8377 (Print)

European Journal of
Multidisciplinary Studies

May-August 2016
Volume 1, Issue 5

[26] Renault, E. (2008). Souffrances sociales. Philosophie, Psychologie et Politique. Paris: La Découverte.

[27] Schilder P. (1938). The Social Neurosis',The Psychoanalytic Review, 25,1-19

[28] Wilkinson, I. (2005). Suffering: A Sociological Introduction, Cambridge: Polity Press

Endnotes

In spite of the fact that since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there are references to the concept and its manifestations, especially regarding the impacts of some policies or the implications of physical disabilities or mental illnesses in the collective living and acceptance (Schilder, 1938).

The explanation of suffering as a nosographic category in the influential American classification of mental disorders Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), reflects the relevance of the concept in very different fields. This reference is not negligible, considering the possible perverse effects (which we will refer to in the course of this article) due to a homogenization orientation and individualization of behaviors and situations under the conceptual umbrella of social suffering.

Zakat without adequate translation in Western language, corresponds to the distribution of the goods of the Islamic nation (represented by the more affluent) to the same nation (represented by the less well-off) in line with what is enshrined in the Holy Quran (9:60) "the alms (Zakat) are just to the poor, for the needy, for the staff employed in its administration to those whose hearts are to be won, for the redemption of slaves, for indebted to the cause of God and for the traveler, it is a precept emanated from God, and Allah is Knowing, Wise".

Derived from the Latin victim meant a living creature offered to the gods as a sacrifice to appease their anger or thank your generosity. In the 17th century the term has acquired a moral and legal connotation. Since then it has been amplified with new conceptions and nuances. At present we are witnessing a certain vulgarization of this notion and that is the source of some confusion between "victimization" and feeling of victimization. For example confused frustration or discomfort arising from a situation that is not what is desired (for example, "being a victim" of a bad agreement in a divorce process) with the complex and multidimensional consequences of victimization. As such, "fall victim" tends to become a status and have not only a state. Some people and groups validate their social existence through their victimization, projecting about other causes (near and faraway) from his evil being, therefore, legitimizes differential treatment claims.