

Principio di sussidiarietà e universalità dei bisogni: il riaccendersi “tecnologico” della fiducia

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The Subsidiarity Principle and the Universality of Needs: How Technology Is Rekindling Trust

Abstract: The present bottom-up proliferation of “caring communities”, both online and offline, can be considered a crucial element in the current reconstruction of our welfare system under the principle of subsidiarity. This phenomenon can be understood as the product of a match between the opportunities offered by the interactive web 2.0, and the needs arising out of the economic, social, and ecological crisis — all factors that push toward finding a solution in the local dimension (rather than waiting for institutional policy, which is often blind to that dimension), finding a sustainable way to exploit our resources and our world, and building social bonds. In fact, that technology has by now been “democratised”, and as will be argued in this paper, it is playing a key role in the process of building trust and favouring bonds among people. The paper begins by reconstructing the theoretical backdrop to this dynamic, in which we are witnessing a shift from the individualism of recent decades to a reevaluation of the concept (and practice) of solidarity. In analyzing this shift, I will explore the connection with the ethics of care, with Martha Nussbaum’s vulnerability approach, and with the we-rationality theory. I will then introduce some examples of best practices in this field, like time banks and social streets, focusing in particular on the role played in these contexts by the web 2.0 as a trust activator. Finally, I will consider the risk that by absorbing such communities within a bureaucratic and political-representative system, the subsidiarity principle may distort and betray many of these practices, which have sprung up on the basis of radically different theoretical premises.

Keywords: Subsidiarity, Welfare, Caring communities, Trust, Web 2.0.

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