

Call for papers

The gift and the State: interpersonal and social bond. An interdisciplinary dialogue

November 9th and 10th, 2012

L.U.M.S.A. University
Department of Law of Palermo

The first conference on the gift, entitled “The gift: its ambivalences and paradoxes. An interdisciplinary dialogue”, took place on September 18th and 19th, 2008 at Milano-Bicocca University. The second conference on the gift, entitled “The gift: bonding value and human values”, took place on September 16th and 17th, 2010 at Macerata University. Now we want to resume and develop the debate on the gift, to deepen the topic of the application of the gift paradigm to the State and the public sphere, once again using an interdisciplinary perspective.

The gift has been mostly intended as an anti-utilitarian tool, as capable of opposing the monotheism of the logic of the market thanks to its relational strength. At the same time it has been considered too weak to contribute to the construction of political models. Being an alternative only to the market, the sociality of the gift has been considered marginal compared to the exemplary architecture of political institutions. The provocation is obvious: the gift is able to bind, but not to build bonds that can be formalized and institutionalized. This happens mainly because the concept of the contemporary State is still deeply related to the ancient opposition between the public and the private sphere, between the State and the market, in a background of mutual distrust and suspicion.

Also because of the shadow in which the link between the gift and the State is wrapped, the gift is often between the extreme of the maximum of gratuitousness and the other extreme of the maximum of justice.

In the first case, the fact that the gift is oriented towards a logic of absolute gratuitousness seems to rule out any public application. The gift becomes a private affair far from any model of political justice, redistribution, and application of the guarantee rights. A theory of the gift in this sense is necessarily out of any theory of justice.

Also in the second case the gift does not seem to fully explain the relationship between citizens and the State: what the State redistributes it is not a manifestation of the gift, but of justice. Hence there is a radical critique of the misuse of the gift as an opportunity to address the deficiencies of the State, replacing the institutional Welfare (now unable to be guaranteed) with a network of informal relationships that hide the failures of the State (just think about the indispensability of the family Welfare, and the inequality that it creates between those who can and those who can not use it). They give as gifts what must be guaranteed by rights.

We have to think about this aporetic link and to challenge the crisis of imagination and political institutionalization through a fruitful and constructive dialogue between the gift paradigm and the urgent need to design integrated models. We will try to think together public and innovative translations of the gift paradigm, relying on its extraordinary heuristic ability that makes it a “total social fact” rather than a “mere private fact”.

The conference is addressed to scholars of different scientific fields, and aims to relaunch the debate and the research on a so crucial and wide topic, in order to deeply analyze the paradoxes, the ambivalences and the richness of the gift in its various applications.

The topics of the conference:

- **Gift and law**
- **Gift and administration of the State**
- **Gift and politics**
- **Gift and Welfare**
- **Gift and well-being**
- **Gift and justice**
- **Gift and innovation**

Keynote speakers:

Maurizio Ambrosini (Sociology - University of Milano)

Philippe Chanial (Sociology - University of Paris-Dauphine)

Francesco Conigliaro (Theology and political philosophy - University of Palermo)

Vittorio Pelligra (Economics - University of Cagliari)

Elena Pulcini (Philosophy - University of Firenze)

Francesco Zini (Philosophy of law - University of Verona)

Deadlines

June 1st, 2012: an abstract of 6.000 characters (including the spaces), with the title of the paper, the chosen theme, the aims of the research, the methodology, and the main references.

June 30th, 2012: notification of acceptance.

October 13th, 2012: full paper of 40.000 characters (including the spaces) maximum.

Abstract and Paper Submission

The authors have to send their abstracts and full papers to: convegnodono2012@gmail.com

Publication

A selection of the accepted papers will be considered for publication in a book published by Di Girolamo Editore in the series [Saperi e Polis](#).

Organizing Committee

Anna Cossetta (University of Genova)

Guglielmo Faldetta (University of Enna "Kore")

Sergio Labate (University of Macerata)

Carmelo Torcivia (Theological Faculty of Sicily and L.U.M.S.A. University)