

EQUIWELFARE AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

An European perspective

edited by Giovanni Bertin
and Stefano Campostrini



SOCIOLOGIA,
CAMBIAMENTO
E POLITICA SOCIALE

Collana diretta da
Pierpaolo Donati

FRANCOANGELI

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Introduction

Giovanni Bertin, Stefano Campostrini

In recent years there have been numerous studies, talks, conferences and meetings discussing the “welfare crisis”. Common ground uniting all of these discussions is the acknowledgment that the situation over the last few decades has substantially evolved on a global scale. In some countries this has occurred more rapidly (as a consequence of major political change), in others, less, and what was recognized as “typical” in the functioning of welfare regimes only twenty years ago, is simply no longer. The two major questions (among many) to be addressed by researchers in this evolving situation are: in order to study present welfare regimes do we need theoretical approaches that are different from those we have had in the past? And, similarly, how are welfare regimes evolving? And where to? This third question, perhaps even more relevant, is beyond the scope of this book, and would in fact follow on from the answers potentially given to the first two. That is, which of the welfare models could be capable of addressing the challenges of the present situation, taking advantage of social innovation to produce greater equity in our countries. In the last chapter we will briefly try to explain why this is now the ‘big question’ to address, and which tracks could successfully bring us to providing some answers, taking into consideration an analysis of several of the papers proposed in this volume.

The welfare systems to have strengthened over the second half of last century are manifesting various elements of criticality. This criticality is becoming ever more significant when analyzed from a European prospective. Against much attention being placed on economic unity, hardly anything to nothing has been done to construct welfare systems that can provide homogenous standards of social protection to European citizens. The systems developed in individual countries in fact present differing characteristics from various points of view: from that of the social risks faced (typical of modernity vs. characteristics of post- and neo-modern societies); of the type of solidarity (universalistic vs. residual); of

the role carried out by the various social actors (welfare state vs. welfare community); of the operational logic (institutional vs. territorial); and from that of the effects produced in terms of reducing social inequalities. Grafted onto this panorama is the current economic crisis, the effect of which is likely to be manifold on social inequalities and on the differences between welfare systems. The European community is well aware of the risks that an inadequate identification within the European social model and a crisis of mechanisms of social cohesiveness could produce. Indeed, the strategic design outlined in the 2020 strategy identifies social cohesiveness as being one of the principal issues to face, and regards social innovation as an approach capable of making significant progress towards establishing the European social model.

Inevitably, these considerations also have repercussions within research that focuses on analyzing welfare systems. In fact, the need to strengthen the European social model lays out even more evidently the need to develop the comparison of welfare systems. This necessity, however, is in conflict with the difficulties that are emerging in the mechanisms of comparison and evaluation of welfare regimes.

This book aims to develop a discussion between colleagues who are involved in studying this transformational process from a European perspective. The purpose of this discussion is to support research that assists in identifying points of similarity and difference in the various welfare configurations, so as to mark out a possible path towards a European welfare system. The hope is not to build the same system in each country, but to increase the ability of comparison and the possibility of building systems of social protection which are capable of dealing with the peculiar characteristics of the individual local welfare systems. With this in mind, the text is organized into two main sections: the debate on processes of welfare system comparison, and the potential and criticality involved in considering social innovation as a possible path for allowing Europe to make significant progress in this direction.

The first section is introduced with a chapter by Donati which reflects on the nature of the welfare system crisis, a nature which cannot be merely attributed to the crisis of economic resources. The crisis can be contextualized within the broader crisis of modernity and of the Fordian-industrial and Keynesian-Beveridge models. According to Donati, welfare systems must be rethought, starting with relational theory. The following three chapters discuss both the nature and the limits of the criteria for classifying and evaluating welfare regimes proposed by Esping-Andersen. Moro approaches the theme of defamilialization within this configuration, and carries out a thorough examination of the use of the familialization and

defamilialization concepts in policies concerning minors, pointing out several areas where for sustaining families and helping them to play a role in social wellbeing. Martignoni discusses de-commodification and the risks underlying the commodification of treatment processes. Finally, Bertin and Campostrini look at the issue of de-stratification. Their paper analyzes the difficulties faced by welfare systems when attempting to reduce social inequalities. Particular attention is placed on inequalities in income and health.

The second section deals with the problem of ongoing changes and of opportunities which arise from the community proposal to direct the change efforts towards social innovation. This part of the text is introduced with an essay by Harslo which examines the theoretical, political and normative debate within the European community. The other three papers included look at the complexity taken on by welfare systems. In particular, Robertson presents his article with a reflection on the hybrid nature of welfare systems. This essay highlights how single welfare policies within the same State can be built from various types of solidarity (residual vs. universalistic). Bode approaches an issue which is central to the definition of social innovation itself. The author focuses his attention on the evolution of mixed welfare systems, and on the role and the criticalities linked to the characteristics acquired by no-profit organizations. His analysis starts with the processes underway in the German system, which in itself has at its centre subsidiarity. Finally, Pavesi reshapes the concept of social innovation in light of the network dynamics which are becoming increasingly crucial in characterizing social work. These three works highlight how in all European states, despite belonging to differing welfare regimes, it will be necessary to face the complexity that these regimes are accumulating along their path of change. Any perspective whereby social innovation is the fulcrum of this process of redefinition of welfare systems must keep these criticalities in mind.

The reflections and discussion around these themes has involved numerous colleagues from a network of Universities which is developing common research projects on welfare system change. In particular thanks must go to: W. Arts (University of Tiburg), C. Vrooman (Netherland Institute for Social Research); M Garzia Cabeza (University of Barcellona), L. Popescu (University of Cluj); R. Sirotnika (University of Tartu), R. Knusell (University of Losanna, P. Di Nicola (University of Verona), A. Barrientos (University of Manchester), R. Prandini (University of Bologna).

1. Beyond the Welfare State: Trajectories Towards the Relational State

Pierpaolo Donati

1. The issue

The welfare state (WS henceforth) has embodied the political and ethical principles of Western society throughout the last century, both in Europe and, in a different form, in North America, in as much as it has represented the dream of the modern State as a national eudaimonistic project.

Is the current crisis of the WS merely a temporary, difficult phase among the many it has traversed, or rather, does the current crisis represent a profound and radical turning point? And if it does represent a turning point, how sharp and in what direction is the turn? The answer is neither clear nor simple. Too many contingent factors are involved. Nevertheless, to attempt an analysis is to deepen our comprehension of events, present and future. The signs, indicative of the success or failure of the WS, are ambivalent. From some perspectives the WS seems to have been successful, and from others to have failed.

On the one hand, its success is manifest by the fact that today every state in the world seeks to construct its own welfare system. All recognize that a political system is legitimate insofar, and only insofar, as it takes to heart the social problems of its citizens in view of their greater happiness. On the other hand, in comparison to the expectations of happiness that it raised, the design of the typical modern WS has undoubtedly, for the most part, failed. Faced with serious, self-generated, internal problems and with external challenges that it must confront, the WS no longer seems capable of expansion or of being sustained in the form which it has taken in the West. The crisis of the Scandinavian model has been, and continues to be, paradigmatic (Abrahamson, 1988; Baldwin, 1990).

The WS represents both the greatest political conquest and the structural limits of modernity. If one were to attempt to exceed those limits in the sense of further expanding the Fordian-industrial model of the Keynesian-Beveridge model of the WS beyond the boundaries that indicate the very possibilities of action, society would simply no longer be the same. In the first place, society could not sustain such an expansion because the *lib/lab* order of societal systems would be heavily modified, producing an excess of social control and limiting social freedoms¹ (Donati, 2004a). Secondly, such an attempted expansion would provoke a further dissolution of social ties. Once social relations are dissolved, the "societal" character of the WS disintegrates. The capacities inherent to the WS's associative nature to be and create "society" would be diminished beyond repair.

The success-failure of the WS once again puts into question the political and ethical order of society. In order to properly understand the crisis of the WS and its possible alternatives it must be situated within the broader context of the crisis of modernity. Against the opinions of the neo-enlightenists, the neo-liberals, and the neo-socialists, for whom the crisis of welfare structures is only a question of re-definition within the modern model of the WS, I contend that the crisis is more radical, both in its current condition and in its probable outcome. I believe that the WS will be forced to change the fundamental political and ethical principles upon which it has been based from the early period of industrialization to today. The society of the 21st century, and the structure of the WS within it, will be an "after-modern" society in many respects². But in what respects? What will the post-welfare state be?

I will focus on the idea that what is emerging is what I call, since many years (Donati, 1999; 2004b), the *relational welfare state*. I will propose that, although the WS will not be dismantled, it must be completely redesigned according to a relational outline of what it means to "make society".

¹ The term "*lib-lab*" is used to express the dual structure inherent to postwar Western democratic society, which involves the continuous negotiation and compromise between, on the one hand, the freedom of market (*lib*) and, on the other hand, the state in its function of control exercised for the sake of social equality (*lab*). *Lib-lab* therefore represents a political-administrative system for the management of the whole society which combines the rival ideologies of libertarianism and liberalism on the one side and socialism (called "labour" in Great Britain) on the other side. The *lib-lab* combination appears, however, incapable of effecting the transition to post-modern society.

² The term 'after-modern' means a radical discontinuity with modernity, and not simply a radicalization of modernity as indicated by the term 'post-modern' (Donati, 2014a).

1.1 *The conceptual outline*

An apt sociological theory is needed to address the topic of society in the 21st century and the future of the WS. According to my relational theory, the issue of the WS configuration may be outlined in a scheme according to which the societal system ('society' at the macro level) is a complex interplay among four basic subsystems: the economic system (E), the political system (P), the societal community (S) and the cultural system (C) (see figure 1) (Donati, 2011a).

From the viewpoint of relational sociology, society does not 'include' social relations, but *is* (made up of) social relations. To speak of politics and ethics means to evoke the two referential dimensions of social relations (the C and P poles of the *refero* axis) or the dimensions of cultural and political legitimization. This in turn requires making reference to the other two dimensions of social relations which are the dimensions of economics and social integration (the E and S poles of the *religo* axis or the adaptive-instrumental dimensions). In other words, to speak of politics and ethics requires knowledge of the economy and of the extent of social integration (the latter in its regulatory and communicative aspects). Moreover, one must be aware that the social relations which come into existence will be an "emerging phenomenon" — in the technical, morphogenetic sense of the term (Archer, 2013) — of the joint operations of these diverse dimensions.

The WS may be analyzed as a sub-system of the entire society or as a system in itself. As a sub-system, the WS coincides with the political-administrative sub-system of society. As a system in itself, the WS may be considered a self-standing, relational structure according to the above scheme. Adopting the first point of view, we can see how the WS relates itself to and regulates the other sub-systems, that is, the economy, the welfare apparatuses, and the cultural system in which ethics is found. Adopting the second point of view, we can see that the WS is centered around its own political government, economy, apparatuses of social integration, and ethics.

Fig. 1- Society according to the relational diagram

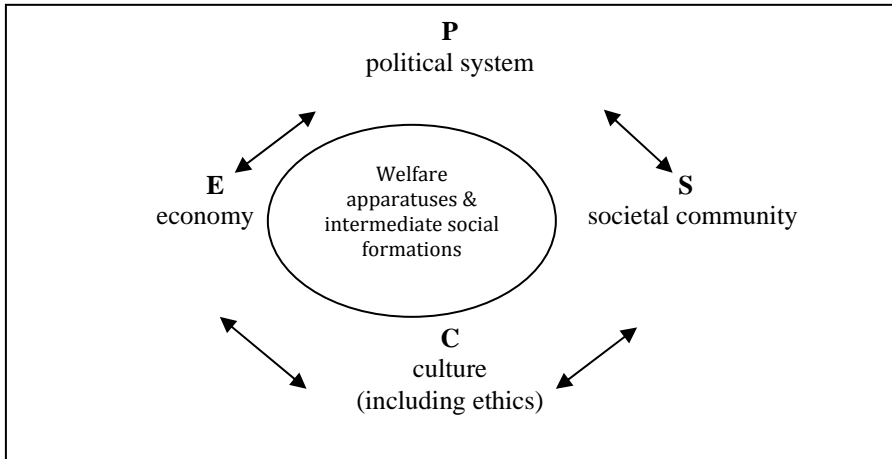


Figure 1 illustrates how the apparatuses of welfare have occupied an ambiguous position over the past two hundred years. This ambiguous position is due to their being located partially within the political-administrative system and partially outside of it. At times they have been confused with what are usually called intermediate social formations (private or third sector). To put it very briefly, the social institutions of welfare ambiguously straddle the state-market complex (E-P, where "politics" are done) and the life-worlds (S-C, the sources of ethics). The unresolved problem of the ambiguous location of the welfare apparatuses is one of the principle challenges of modernity. In contrast with the opinion held by many scholars, I believe that this ambiguous collection of social institutions is not salvageable, so long as we remain within the framework of modernity.

To fully characterize the current processes of change and future alternatives, one ought to thoroughly analyze: 1) the processes of differentiation among these various spheres (E,P,S,C); 2) the exchanges and interactions among these spheres; and 3) that which is produced by such processes.

1.2 The thesis

Modern society has been constructed through processes of differentiation that have augmented the complexity of society through the

systematic use of some basic distinctions. The two fundamental distinctions are the distinction between the individual and the State and the distinction between mass and particular social category. These two distinctions are at the basis of modern citizenship—which, although individualistic, is often called social—and of its entitlements. Although these entitlements are called universal, they have become more and more selective, that is, reserved to a particular social group. By constructing society ("making society") on the basis of these distinctions, modernity is dissolving the social fabric from which it draws its very lifeblood and which has been the foundation of the modern WS. The more that this type of WS expands, the more it erodes the very premises of its existence. In modernity, the more social relations are differentiated the more the social spheres are specialized into particular tasks. The increase in social differentiation and specialization augments the sustained need for an integrating, global solution. Today's society has inherited this continual process of differentiation and specialization from the modern order of society and its internal logic of WS development. To combat this dynamic, modern society's solution was to increase the omni-pervasive, integrating force of the State-nation, conceived as the Center and Vertex of society (Luhmann, 1970). But such a solution is today no longer feasible. With the end of the modern order, every societal system—and not just the state, the economy, or ethics—enters a state of crisis.

The fundamental guiding distinction of the process of social differentiation must change. The guiding distinction ought no longer be the dialectic *lib vs lab* (or market against politics), self/non-self—i.e., the privatization or subjectivization of society under the protective sponsorship of the WS—that has created a society of individuals. Other possible distinctions could emerge, for example, the distinction between social subjectivity and non-social subjectivity which is the basis of a possible "society of social formations" that mediates between the State and the individual. This reformulation of the principal distinction would entail a re-definition of the entire social order. In particular it would require new forms of government and social governance (Bertin e Fazzi, 2010), a new ethic and a new policy for the social formations that will "make" the society of the 21st century.

In order to outline the prospects of the coming welfare state within the next society, first I will briefly recall the current crisis and insurmountable limits of the traditional WS (section 2), then the current dilemmas and possible alternative solutions (section 3). In section 4, I will outline the future scenario and the concept of the "new" society. In section 5, I will focus on the great challenge of the 21st century: the "human society". In the

final part (sections 6-9), I will elaborate on the statement according to which the exclusively binary model of market-plus-State is corrosive of society, while economic forms based on solidarity, which find their natural home in civil society without being restricted to it, build up a new welfare society which requires a relational state (section 10).

In order to go beyond the present domination of the binomial Market-State, which destroys sociality, and social welfare with it, we need a societal configuration able to foster and enhance *relational goods*. Relational good is the name of the common welfare in a highly differentiated and globalised society.

2. The crisis of the welfare state signals the end of an epic project and an entire historical order

An immense amount of literature has described and discussed the crisis of the 20th century WS, without, however, clarifying the specific question of the connection between politics and ethics within the WS. This literature has given little attention to the relational conflicts which arise from the interactions of the various dimensions of the whole system of welfare. Much of the debate has limited itself to questions like the level of sustainable fiscal pressure, the level of contributions for the services of welfare, the cost of public health services, the selectivity of tax credits and other financial support for families, retirement age to get a pension, and so on. What governments has searched for are technical solutions by finding *min-max* counts. Meanwhile not enough light has been shed on the fundamental defect of the WS: the lifestyles which the WS sustains — lifestyles that destroy social ties and provoke solitude and social fragmentation which the WS is then not able to remedy. There is much debate about the extent of public consensus regarding the sustainable costs of the WS, but there is silence concerning the private and public moral responsibility for the increase or decrease of such costs. In fact, the WS continues to be thought of and acted upon according to the *lib/lab* configuration, that tries to manage the crisis by pulling the *lab* lever of state intervention when the markets fails and by pulling the *lib* lever of market deregulations when the state fails.

Ralph Dahrendorf's theory is emblematic of the paradigm which seeks compromise between liberalism and social-democracy. According to Dahrendorf, the WS is the practical politics of the enlightened elite that extends entitlements to groups of individuals previously excluded, thus allowing them to take advantage of the goods, or provisions, produced by

the free market (Dahrendorf, 1994). The expansion of the WS consists in giving benefits to a growing number of individuals and in recognizing the fundamental rights of the person and of the social formations in which personalities are actualized. Today the WS continues to move forward according to a liberal model intent on guaranteeing stable conditions and social order by means of a macro-institutional, regulative framework of the social-democratic sort. The strength of this order should not be underestimated. In the course of the last fifty years it has guaranteed the historic compromise between social democrats and supporters of a free market. In order to do this, it has assumed a cardinal ethical principle: assure the maximum individual freedom, without society intervening to give any ethical-normative orientation to the citizens to whom it is obliged to give equal and unconditional benefits (Jordan, 1987). The strength of this order is precisely in the neutralization of social relations, and of ethics together with them. The ethical and political profile of this paradigm produces that phenomenon which I call the "privatization of the private"; that is, a progressive liberation of the individual from the bonds (social relations) of social responsibility. In the end, this process erodes the very fabric of social solidarity, which ought to be the fundamental resource of the WS.

Few have observed that the *lib/lab* ethical order of the WS not only undermines the basis of social-democracy but is itself subject to the historical demise of liberalism which, in the WS and by means of the WS, "eats its own tail". The historic compromise between the state (democratic) and the market (liberal) (the *lib/lab* configuration) becomes more difficult to sustain in spite of the governments's efforts to maintain it. If the politics of welfare wishes to maintain levels of connectivity and social solidarity sufficient to keep the WS from ruin, it must radically change its ethical basis and, beginning from there, change its relations with the economy and the spheres of social relations. Welfare systems are rarely moral. Those that are moral deal with persons in relation to their individual choices and behaviors. That is, they take into account the moral responsibilities of single individuals but do not see the responsibilities inherent in social relations.

3. The difficulties of creating a new welfare state

To overcome the crisis of the WS Western societies must solve the dilemmas inherent to the following pairs of contrasting goals: