

**Call for Papers:** Subsidiarity, Freedom, and the Logic of Gift in Business.

**Guest Editors:**

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In general terms, according to the principle of subsidiarity, higher entities should not replace smaller entities in fulfilling their tasks unless the smaller entities are unable to do so. Each person and each group should be empowered to develop their own gifts in moral responsibility to their own calling and social relationships. As such, subsidiarity defends the personal freedom of individuals and of smaller groups against the power of collectives, while at the same time ensuring harmony and balance in society (Naughton, Buckeye, Goodpaster, & Maines, 2015). Under different names (e.g., self-determination, autonomy, and pro-socialness), the principle of subsidiarity has been the focus of scholarship in economics and the social sciences as well as business ethics and Catholic social thought. From a theoretical, practical, and critical perspective, studies have shown the importance of good organizational environments for human flourishing (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2017). The problems of decentralization and autonomy are very much studied in organizational science, and that of reciprocity is well-researched in economics (e.g., Ostrom, 2019). Inspired by Catholic social thought, Stefano Zamagni and Luigino Bruni, have given new meaning to the Italian school of Civil Economy (Bruni & Zamagni, 2016). Its main tenet is that we need to overcome the old liberal dichotomy of state (with its logic of imposition) and market (with its logic of contract and commutative justice) by rediscovering civil society (with its logic of gift, reciprocity, fraternity, and gratuitousness). This Special Issue provides an opportunity for cross-pollination of many ideas from disparate disciplines. Contributions that bridge these fields are welcome.

In the business literature, subsidiarity has been dealt with mainly in the field of business ethics (e.g., Kelley, 2010; Cremers, 2017; Martini & Spataro, 2018; Abländer, 2020; Frémeaux, 2020). Specifically, in the business ethics literature, there are three thematic focuses of subsidiarity: a) one group of publications considers subsidiarity as an essential element for the common good of society, the economy, and of the firm (Kelly, 2004; Kelley, 2010; Abländer, 2011; Sison & Fontrodona, 2012); b) another series of publications underscores the importance of subsidiarity for empowerment, freedom, and human flourishing of employees. (Naughton et al., 2015; Cremers, 2017); and c) a third group uses subsidiarity as a link to economists like Toniolo (Martini & Spataro, 2018) and Ostrom (Albareda & Sison, 2020) who share a vision of gratuitousness (gift) in business. In this third group, we place Frémeaux (2020) who uses the principle of subsidiarity in her analysis of diversity, equity, and inclusion as a way to foster the diverse gifts of all.

Despite these contributions, the literature does not offer a substantial monographic study

of the importance of subsidiarity nor does it sufficiently link the three concepts of subsidiarity, freedom, and logic of gift. In our special issue we recognize the origin of the principle of subsidiarity in the Bible and in Catholic social teaching. However, Islam, Chinese philosophy and religion, Stoic philosophy, and the Enlightenment know the principle too. Thus, there are myriad approaches, both religious and secular to them, which can deliver fruitful insights for social philosophy and the social sciences. This special issue therefore seeks to foster such a conversation and aims to extend and develop theoretical conceptualizations as well as explore new applications of subsidiarity to the dynamics of business and management. We encourage authors to challenge existing theories and discover new fields of application of subsidiarity in business and management in a globalized economy and in a world that is increasingly beset by problems that can only be solved by international cooperation. We are particularly interested in the origin and development of subsidiarity in non-Christian religions as well as in secular philosophy.

## **Potential Themes**

Contributions may address a wide range of questions related to subsidiarity, freedom, and the logic of gift in business including (but not limited to):

- New theoretical perspectives that deepen the conceptual understanding of subsidiarity for business and society.
- Subsidiarity as a middle ground between universalism and relativism.
- Innovative approaches to the connection between subsidiarity, freedom, and the logic of gift in the social sciences, social philosophy, and business ethics.
- Subsidiarity in the framework of virtue ethics.
- Origin and development of subsidiarity in religious traditions, particularly in non-Christian religions.
- Applications of subsidiarity to business and management, especially in organizational culture.
- Impact of subsidiarity on the conceptualization of top-down approaches to business responsibility.
- Perspectives opened by subsidiarity on thinking about localization in the expectations for responsible behavior.
- Role of subsidiarity in the creation of an organizational culture that fosters humanistic management.
- Organizational aspects of employee participation with view to the development of everybody's diverse gifts.
- Ways in which subsidiarity fosters the individual autonomy of employees and its limits.

## **Submission instructions**

Submissions are welcome from a variety of theoretical, methodological, and disciplinary perspectives, as long as they are closely in line with the topic of the Special Issue. Authors are

strongly encouraged to refer to the *BASR*'s submission guidelines for detailed instructions on submitting a paper to this Special Issue. Papers must be original and unpublished. They can have up to 10,000 words and must follow the editorial style of *Business and Society Review* which are found at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/14678594/homepage/forauthors.html>

All submissions must be made via *BASR*'s online submission platform <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/basr> by October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. Please be sure to indicate that the paper is for this Special Issue, during the submission process. The online submission system will start accepting submissions 60 days prior to the call for papers submission deadline.

A paper development conference will be held June 23-24, 2022 in Budapest at Public Service University – Ludovika University. Submitting a paper to this paper development conference is not a requirement for submitting or publishing a paper in this special issue. If you have any questions about the special issue or are interested in the paper development conference, please contact the guest editors through the contact details provided above.

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