

Autonomy and the Net

I move from the fact that language has a constitutive role in social practices (Searle). For this reason, it is plausible to affirm that social change happens through the use of language. A good example is the fundamental role Habermas assigns to communication for the evolution of society namely in ordinary social praxis as well as in institutional arenas.

Communication is a process taking ever new shapes; the most visible phenomenon is the electronic interactive communication. According to the sociologist Manuel Castells, it emerges a new form of sociality based on the capacity to build personal nets of relationships in Internet and outside Internet, by mobile telephone and by direct physical contact, apart from the moment and the place in which we actually are.

The capacity to create new forms of relationships involves the reflection on a new concept of personal autonomy, which takes into consideration the necessity of cooperation. In this sense, autonomy becomes a social notion.

The classical concepts of freedom are obsolete and autonomy requires the *bootstrapping* from individual to sociality (Swindler).

My philosophical claim is to conceive the notion of personal autonomy in a “relational “ sense. The term relational could be intended in different senses depending of what kind of social relationships one takes into account.

I think that the term relational that is relevant for our concept of autonomy ought to be considered in linguistic term. According to this thesis, autonomy develops in the game of giving and asking for reasons (Sellars, Brandom), which possesses a deontic structure. If we use the *scorekeeping* model in the version proposed by Brandom we could underscore the importance of the analysis of deontic attitudes (attribution and acknowledgment of commitments) for the criticism of the content of reasons. The more we have the possibility to communicate (to realize a reciprocal exchange of reasons) the more we can develop autonomy in discursive situations.