

Giuliano Torrenco (University of Milan): Documentality and Institutional Externalism

Abstract. Many philosophers regard collective behaviour and attitudes as the ground of the whole of social reality. According to this popular view, society is composed basically of collective intentions and cooperative behaviours; this is so both for informal contexts involving small groups and for complex institutional structures. This view can be challenged on the ground that institutions (as opposed to more informal social contexts) are characterised by the tendency to defer to elements that are external to the content of collective intentions—such as laws, declarations, and contracts. According to a somewhat radical version of this view, the theory of documentality, documents are indeed the grounds of institutional statutes, rights and duties.