

## The economic antinomy

*“The strategy of considering that there is an academic science, meant for teaching, interested in the discourse, respectable but out of touch with reality, on the one hand, and a living science, centred on fact and practiced by way of an expertise which is sensitive to ideological preferences, on the other hand, opens a conceptual rift and produces the proof for the epistemological immaturity of Economics.”*

Economics builds its credibility in an improper manner: it is forced to answer to challenges from outside its field of relevance, and the solutions forwarded for specific problems are applied through political programs.

If we admit that Economics has fixed its methodological universe within the human action's perimeter of rationality, it seems clear that its cognitive performance does not support its practical one. For things to be in their right place, Economics would have to be able to limit itself to its sphere of meaning, while the solutions to problems of rationality should not be intermediated by political means.

The mix-up is somehow more complicated because the presence in practice of economic ideas takes the composite form of economic policies, especially at a macroeconomic level. The scientific constitution claimed by Economics remains murky, in any way different from that of any other social science, not just the natural sciences.

The split between the condition assumed by Economics – somewhat attested by its journey throughout the history of science – and the way in which economic solutions become reality through their employment by the political practice is explained by ideologies. Out of all the social sciences, Economics has the strongest predisposition for the ideological distortion of the process of implementation of its ideas in reality.

In fact, standard Economics is Political Economics: meaning a complex of theoretical perspectives with ideological propensities which insure the practical fundamentals sought by Politics with regard to development objectives. As a paradox, Economics tends to be more of a package of ideas destined for political purposes. In practice the goal is to administer resources made available by fiscal means and to politically distribute them towards sources circumscribed to interests filtered by ideologically restrictive criteria. In this situation, efficiency becomes a value structured by guidelines from outside of Economics. Proven efficient is only that which cannot interfere with political objectives.

The overturn of meaning is an epistemic defiance. The maximal extension of this perspective, which came to be the usual state for the understanding of Economics' position as Political Economics, makes even more evident the split between what Economics pretends to be and its pragmatic phenomenology. The strategy of considering that there is an academic science, meant for teaching, interested in the discourse, respectable but out of touch with reality, on the one hand, and a living science, centred on fact and practiced by

way of an expertise which is sensitive to ideological preferences, on the other hand, further enhances the epistemic rift.

The splitting of Economics is a proof of its epistemological immaturity, despite the call for the righteousness of imitating the model of experimental sciences, which have an elevated level of theory and a dynamic level of technology. It must be noted that on both these levels the experimental sciences keep their epistemic unity, while in the case of Economics the criteria are disjunctive. On the academic, pure-science level, there's rationality in an environment of consistency between hypotheses and conclusions, while on the level of factual reality the inconsistency between causes and effects is an ideological condition. Economic policies grow from the pool of ideologically defined interests and, in the end, not from the one of economic rationality.

Thus we can talk on a practical level about some economic ideas mixed with political ideas in a proportion which favours the latter. The delicate problem is to what extent can the contribution of Economics still be considered as representative.

There is no doubt that we find ourselves in a situation without an answer, even embarrassing for a theoretician, as long as the ingredient provided by Economics to solve real-life problems is seldom present.

What we can say is that we find ourselves in the dilemmatic situation of the existence of two Economics, rather similar to the existence of a Theoretical Physics and of an engineering, Experimental Physics. However, in the case of Economics the two perspectives are almost fully separated, both from the point of view of the object, as well as from a methodological standpoint.

Practically, we can speak about two economic sciences: one in accordance with the theoretical principles and another one consistent with ideological rules. The first is recognised as Economics, while the other as Political Economics. Economics asserts rationality as the space of economicity, while Political Economics focuses on the means necessary for managing the resources used in attaining certain social objectives defined by ideological terms.

Economics explains rationality with logic, while Political Economics describes pragmatically, in terms of possible rationality in the public space, the political action. Economics is science, Political Economics is action. The economic science has a large dose of ideal hypotheses; Political Science has a large dependency on political practice.

Economics has normative pre-eminence; Political Economics has positive prevalence.

Accepting the antinomy would correctly place in the equation of knowledge both the understanding and the explanation of ideas about rationality in the economy, as well as the possibility and the necessity of the presence of genuine economic ideas in the social action.

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