

Argument to launch PEKEA

Main stream economic thought still claims heritage from classical political economy although it is distant and autonomous from other forms of thought and knowledge production about Mankind and Society. These dissidents from the social sciences and the humanities have come to assume that among the social activities it is possible to identify a category specific to the economic field. Economists seeing themselves as specialists of the study of this category, became convinced that economic behaviour, leading to produce these events, was only depending on economic facts. This shared belief led disciples to look for the "natural laws" of economic activity, searching for invariants that guide economic behaviour, whatever the circumstances of time and place.

Striving to develop a rigorous analysis autonomous from philosophy, moral philosophy, political science and various doctrines and ideologies, an economic thought has emerged, claiming to be scientific on the basis of its theoretical or axiomatic constitution of the functioning of economic activities. Axiomatic economics has gradually established itself as a rationale for action, attempting to impose its normative implications, summoning real society to adapt itself to scientific expert judgements that are drawn from theory. Although it has rejected the social outside its field of analysis, this economics also imposes its economic doctrine far beyond the stated economic field that it had believed when constituting itself, could have been delimited. Indeed, its theory of economic behaviour uses a methodology that is, first, indifferent to the object of the theorised individual behaviours which are all supposed to be rational utilitarian and, second, has been rapidly adopted by sociologists, political scientists, psychologists. None of the human and social behaviours seem able to escape to this methodology.

The 'raison d'être' of this research programme is neither to take stock of the various difficulties of interpretation faced by economics nor to try and question nature and relevance of the methods and tools used by this school of thought. Nor does it intend to survey the attempts at the edge of the dominant corpus, either from inside or from outside, to re-integrate neglected aspects. There is no time to lose either in criticising the inanity of economics regarding this or that real world problem, or in amending this hypothesis or that item of methodology. It is now time to rebuild a new knowledge on economic activities on the hypothesis that economic activity is a political matter: a relevant analysis of the wealth of nations, of the production and distribution of this wealth.

Coping with scarcity, effective production and equitable distribution to fulfil human material needs are both inseparable and linked to intricate behaviours. Production may not be organised ex ante by economics, politics taking charge ex post to make distribution equitable. Moreover the question of what to produce is crucial, facing the immensity of needs and tasks of human societies. The finality of economic activity remains embedded in moral philosophy and ethics: humans are thinking and their action has a meaning even before it gives birth to an artefact, thus behaviour depends on these meanings.

A political economy able to understand the nature and causes of the wealth and poverty of nations cannot be based on an economic corpus detached from other modes of knowledge about Man and Society: all the sciences classified under the label of social sciences and the humanities are responsible for rewriting the foundations of a political economy. This project is a first attempt to put at work altogether all specialists who are willing to go beyond hesitations or taboos that have prevented them from debating together the nature, causes and dynamics of wealth and poverty. In doing so, they are

invited to build a new knowledge on economic activities that can only be based on an ethical and political analysis.

A first draft was written in Penvern in 2001 by Philippe Béraud, Jean Louis Perrault, Pablo Diaz, (from left to right on photo 1) and Marc Humbert (apparently asking something on photo 2 face in front of Jean Louis Perrault).

Photo 1



Photo 2

