



ANTHROPOLOGICAL CHALLENGES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC THEORY

Dobrinka Zlateva

„St. Cyril and St. Methodius“ University of Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgarian

Abstract: The report justifies the interdependence between economic reality, man and economic theory. It proves that man is the centre of economic science and that economic studies are anthropological by nature. It shows that economic science will live only as a science of man, and that the ignoring of man kills economic science, deforms economic practice and questions man’s future.

Keywords: Man in economics, life-economics, economic theory, anthropo-economics

INTRODUCTION

Economic science¹ at the beginning of the XXI c. is in crisis. It is a bleak finding for its centuries-old development. A number of authors believe that to a large extent the same has lost respect and confidence because it finds it difficult to explain the processes taking place in economics and to prognosticate the future. A. Kaletsky is quite categorical in this relation: ‘Economics today is a discipline that must either die or undergo a paradigm shift—to make itself both more broadminded, and more modest. It must broaden its horizons to recognize the insights of other social sciences and historical studies and it must return to its roots (Kaletsky, 2013, p. 250). P. Lunn is also categorical: ‘Standard economics is so far away from truth that the whole discipline shall suffer nothing but a real scientific revolution. Old concepts will largely be replaced by entirely different principles’ (Lunn, 2013, p. 14.).

This situation in economic science T. Kuhn would define as a paradigmatic crisis requiring a revolutionary change, K. Popper – as a rethinking of theories and methodological approaches as a process of ‘permanent revolution’, I. Lakatos – as a continuous process of consecutive research programmes. No matter what methodological approach we choose, it is clear that economic science needs to change.

The aim in this report is to justify the interdependence between economic reality, man and economic theory. It proves that man is the centre of economic science and that economic studies are anthropological by nature. It shows that economic science will live only as a science of man, and that the ignoring of man kills economic science, deforms economic practice and questions man’s future.

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Life is an integral whole, but always separated. We have assumed that economics is a distinguished sphere in the entire and unified life and we have differentiated economic science in the integrity of science. We have closed economy in its narrow limits and we forget that it is a component in the integrity of life.

An epistemological approach in this report is the determination of economics as life. This is an approach, seeking to overcome the stifling distinctiveness of economic science. The conceptual term is ‘life-economics’².

We perceive life as a supreme value and as a set of activities of man and society, ensuring their existence. Economics is in its distinctiveness (perceived in a narrow sense) the material life of people and it

¹ By ‘economic science’ is meant General Economic Theory, Economics.

² In the report by the concept ‘economics’ is meant ‘life-economics’.

satisfies their material needs. It is a focused life. In this context it is the foundation of the whole human life. The economic life of people produces what man is self-preserving. In this process the economic life of people is fundamental because it is a set of activities, ensuring existence. A. Rand says that 'Life is a process of self-sustaining and self-generated action' (Rand, 2006, p. 20).

We prefer not to distinguish between economics and life and to perceive and regard economics as life. Life, life-economics and man are in interdependence. Life-economics is a component of life, and life is performed by man. Life, in this sense, and economics are human reality. Economics is a functioning structure, created by man. It is a vital human organization and it exists through human life. Man gives meaning to life-economics and by it to life in general. Economics is life and it is such through man. Economics is life and it exists thanks to man. Man is a subject of economics understood as life. Economics is a manifestation of life and it cannot be separated from its circumstances.

Economics as human life adds economic features to human characteristics. Thus the study of man in economics adds a certainty to human life in general. However, man in economics cannot be discussed, studied and realized outside life, moreover in the unity of human and economic. Economics realizes human nature, manifests it but does not change it. Man in economics has the characteristics of life and adds characteristics to it.

Life in economics is production, market, money, inflation, etc. Human life has acquired their form. We study them, not man. Man lives through them. The philosophical eloquence of Prof. N. Vasilev is impressive: 'On the stage of world history move and give solemn replies to the quasi-humans 'phantoms', who acquired flesh and blood in the process of destruction of the essential powers and abilities of their creator. These 'phantoms', possessing unconditional power, are money, possessions, authority. Those, who paradoxically and at the same time, are legally more of a person than a human being. Those – the actual creators and real destroyers of civilization' (Vasilev, 2011, p. 23). These words have emotional impact and they sober, because in economics profit is at the top of the pyramid, where man shall be. Doesn't economics help to lose the meaning of life at present?

Exploring economics as life means creating economic theory of life in general. Thus economic science is included in the explanation of human existence.

Exploring economics as 'life' allows the use of transdisciplinary approach and suggests complex thinking. In such methodological logic man in economics is studied contextually, in the set of knowledge beyond economics and complex knowledge is built. At the same time it is a look at life in economic discourse and interest towards man as form of economic life. The peculiarities of economic life are a basic factor for characterization of man and building of human characteristics.

What is the usefulness of such a conceptual logic?

The aim is to 'revive' economics. The understanding of economics as 'life' allows emphasis on man. From anthropological point of view man is a basic acting person in economics.

Man is to be placed in the centre of economics and economic theory. Without man economics loses sense. Maybe this emphasis will be perceived as unnecessary. Man has built economics for thousands of years to guarantee his life, hasn't he? Economics exists for people, not vice versa, doesn't it? However, nowadays it is a compulsive feeling that man exists in order to develop economics (guarantee growth and profits). Man is not in the centre, but behind economics. His aim is to develop economics. This is realized as a means. We support this position with the eloquence of Prof. D. Poryazov: 'It is so that man has come to this world in order to serve economics, not economics to serve him. Everything is done in such a way that economics, not man, to go forward. Man is left behind. Its figure is somewhere off the periphery. Human spirit as the highest creation of nature requires economics to be placed in its service. Economics to be for man, not man for economics' (Poryazov, 2012, p. 122). In the context of dialectic logic man in economics is a means and aim. As a means man self-realizes himself as an aim. By Hegel's terminology it can be said that as a means man is an underdeveloped result, while as an aim – man is a developed beginning.

The subject of economic science has different definitions depending on the different schools and trends. In the context of this conceptual approach, man is a centre that can unite everyone and be defined ***as a subject of economic theory***. The latter studies man as an intersubject, as an interdependent economic person, because human integrity, particularly the whole human subject, is realized in economics. This position can be seen as a return to the Renaissance, and economic science as ***anthropo-economics***. It can be defined as a reply to the

crisis of the meaning of modern economic science. We find the formulated in this way subject for universal, containing the whole variety of research in economics. Human study in economics may be a pathway in the development of economic theory.

We do not seek for a beautiful expression with the statement that economics is an existence of life, while economic theory – a life-writer. Analyzing economics and man in it, economic theory explores life, describes man's characteristics and peculiarities, and prognosticates man's future.

CONCLUSION

Built for thousands of years as a human activity, economics and economic theory shall place man in the centre. The multiconstitutional man, eternal in economics, shall be in the centre of economic theory and an aim of economic reality. Ortega and Gasset's paraphrase should not sound rude: economists are 'knowing ignorant people' – people, who know a lot about a bit, avoiding the overall picture of economic life, focusing on the narrowly limited problems of economics.

Such an approach contributes to the building of a humanistic and anthropocentric economics as a theory, scientific discipline and practice. We realize the necessity to change the thought of economics, of man in it, and to help to change his thinking for himself. To improve reason in order to realize the value-ethical priorities in economics. To form a will to build 'human economics' (as Laville, Hart and Cattani call it) and to protect it from anthropological failure.

We should not forget that man is the eternal and dignified purpose of economics. Today to have it tomorrow. It is necessary for economic theory, in its proper studies, to recognize the central place of man with its diversity. Economic education shall build this worldview, to find man in the aims of economics as practice as well.

It is time to understand that economics has the power to reform and make man better, economic science as a spiritual force to inspire for that, and economic education to build a will to humanize economics.

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Contacts:

Dobrinka Zlateva, Prof., Dr
"St. Cyril and St. Methodius" University of
Veliko Tarnovo, Faculty of Economics
1 'Architect Georgi Kozarov' Str., Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgarian
E-mail: d.zlateva@uni-vt.bg
