

Political Economics and its Role in the System of the Sciences of Education

Eşi Marius-Costel¹

Abstract

The process of the market economy involves a perspective through which there are emphasized aspects which have to do with the training and development of a specific way of thinking and behaving. This modality of understanding the economic activity is evaluated in general through some rational thinking based on a capacity of analysis, foresight (anticipation) and decision. Moreover, the economic thinking has as an object of analysis the economic activity itself which represents a fundamental component of the human activity. In this context one can assert the idea that the training and the development of the economic science represents a complex and a dynamic process within which the economy in general is related to the quality of the human activity and implicitly to the economic one. That is why in the speciality treaties the economy is regarded as a science meant to help the knowing of the society's economic mobility. At the same time, certain components of the economic science must be taken into consideration as they make in fact the system of the education sciences.

JEL classification numbers: A12, A23, I29

Keywords: political economics, economic science, critical reasoning, historical method, human behaviour, socio-economic actors

1 Introduction

In this study we are interested in analyzing how the dimension of the economy in general can generate at the level of the social reality, strategies which justify the validity of a new paradigm which focuses on the interdisciplinary correlations. Thus, the approach that we have in mind from this point of view has to do rather with the taking into consideration of

¹Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava (Romania).
e-mail: mariusesi@yahoo.com

some eligibility criteria meant to emphasize the conceptual-theoretical and pragmatic link between the political economics and the sciences of education. Starting from the fact that the economy relates to purely rational action, policies we have in mind in this study, on the one hand an epistemological analysis of these correlations and on the other hand the role that the political economy has in the system of the sciences of education.

One first argument that we have in mind is constituted by the interdisciplinary nature itself which can be found at the level of such connections. Moreover, there are relevant in this context the values promoted through an economic culture. We have in mind the axiological criterion in a market economy according to which a new paradigm assumed at a social level emphasizes the complexity and the dynamism of the economic processes when they are analysed by relating to the social dimensions, purely behavioral (psycho-sociological) of the socio-economic actors.

A second argument is that an efficient economic thinking supposes a well-founded social policy which has to have in mind both the consensual strategies from the level of the educational reality and the substantiation of the informational resources within the conceptual-theoretical applications. From this point of view the economic reality is correlated with the educational reality and at the level of the reorganization of the social system the individual significances suppose utilitarian aspects which remind of evaluations of an axiological nature. Therefore the evaluation of the economic phenomena and processes generates a whole process of theorizing on the different levels of organization. The meanings of the term "political economics" are manifold and emphasize different senses. One first meaning that it emphasizes is the one of science of holdings that is everything which refers to production, exchange and division of goods.

A second meaning is the one that admits that the political economy studies the connections between the sphere of production, exchange, distribution and consumption. A third meaning is the one through which the political economics are seen from a socio-economic perspective that is one renders the passing from "the material economy" to the "human economy". Another meaning supposes the understanding of the political economics as a "marginal" analysis, a science which is oriented towards the future, the attention being drawn especially towards the human behaviour.

However, one cannot talk both at a theoretical and practical level about one single economic science within a scientific system. In other words, the system of the economic sciences supposes interdisciplines which have as a study object aspects of an economic type put in correlation with theories and concepts from other subjects (the economic cybernetics, socioeconomics, economic psychology, economic sociology etc.). Still, at the basis of these interdisciplinary approaches, one can find - from a theoretical and methodological point of view- a fundamental component of the economic science that is the *political economics*.

2 The Political Economics - A Dynamic and Complex Economic science

Taking into consideration the fact that the system of the economic sciences is considered to be dynamic and open, the political economics is perceived as playing an extremely important role in the system of the contemporary sciences. In fact, in the speciality literature, the political economics is ranked as one of the components of the economic

sciences [1], together with other components such as: functional economic sciences (management, marketing, accountancy, finances-banks, statistics), theoretical applicative economic sciences (branch in industry, agriculture, trade, commerce, transport), historical-economic sciences, border economic sciences (the previously mentioned subjects), economic sciences which put emphasis on the international relations (currency-financial relations).

Perhaps it is not by chance that the acceptance of the political economics as a science supposes on the one hand the knowing of the economic phenomena and processes, and on the other hand, the cause relations among them. Thus, the political economics is understood as a subject which deals with certain activities which involve exchange operations among different people. Moreover, the economics as a science analyses (rational or not) the behaviour of people and the modality in which the latter decide regarding the future of their own resources. In this sense, Paul Samuelson admits that the economic science does research on the way people and society decide, using or not currency, to allocate rare productive resources on the production of varied goods and services and distribute them to the present or future consumption among different individuals and collectivities; it analyses therefore the costs and profits which result from the best structures of using the resources. [2] Therefore, the economic sciences analyses the possibility of allocating resources through a assisted or not exchange between people who aim directly or indirectly at obtaining the profit. In effect, it has to do with the study of the real economic life within which certain phenomena and economic processes can be found. This way of thinking and acting based on some scientific thinking and well intentioned reasoning does nothing but emphasize the non-abstract character of the economy.

The predominance of economy at the level of other disciplines leads to a conceptual privilege, especially by relating to the human sciences. *Homo economicus* is the being that counts in the social environment by embracing a form of critical reasoning. This situation emphasizes an economic culture, where the knowledge is correlated to certain political and ideological interests. In other words, the knowledge specific to the political economy receives -more than any other- the impact of ideologies, because through the economic domination people think that they can satisfy their appetites and taste for power and through the economic organization, their desire for justice. [3] It is visible, thus, the problem meant to make the connection between different principles and rules met in the economic environment of a competitive type.

In this mode, taking into account certain activities which characterize the human behaviour, the economics relates to certain action policies conditioned by certain rational measures and means.

From this point of view, some economists talk about the fact that, in the economics, the individual behaviours end up converging towards a *social order*. [4]

One of the great discoveries has been that this social order is efficient, meaning that the resources available within a society are organized so that they should emphasize the production which should tend towards the maximum. Thus, the political economy reflects the conditions of the functioning of the economy by relating to a system of theories and scientific concepts. Nevertheless, the understanding of the *political economics* has concretized in time in different terms "depending on the age, the degree of the development of the economy and the progress of the economic sciences, the status of theory within them." [5]

Afterwards, this concept has been used by the economists to designate that science which

studies the economic process (acts, facts and people's economic behaviours). Later on, the economic liberalism tries to make a correlation between the economic science and the political decisions, situation which justifies to a certain extent the link between the two notions "economic" and "political".

Almost all trials to put the political economics into a certain theoretical frame remind of its subordination relationship towards the economic science. The political economics has as a study object the relationships existent between people who want to administer and use certain resources in accordance with the needs. In conclusion, the study-object of the political economy is the economic life itself in general.

The understanding of a reality which is analyzed from the perspective of the economic education must relate, we think, firstly to the attitude of the actor who participates in this approach. In fact the pragmatism of such an economic education at a social level is obvious in the context of a new paradigm as long as the cognitive dimension can only have a certain methodological value. Also, the importance of using some economic education at a socio-educational level emphasizes a reality which is in a process of continuous transformation. Therefore the general characteristics at a contextual level suppose from a value perspective (re)evaluations meant to rather suggest the involvement of the economic and educational actor at a social level.

This methodological substantiation of the political economics (dynamic and complex science) finds its complete justifications as long as the evaluation of the educational act supposes a certain relationship with the competences specific to the educational actors. Also, such an architectonics is determined at the level of the interaction of the economic variables (explainable through socio-educational principles) through the motivation itself of those involved in this approach to be efficient and performing. In these conditions a system of this type which proposes to be pragmatic, but many times does not succeed it and a system that constructs (itself) on a theory of well founded values can acquire a pragmatic character without proposing this as a main objective. The practical nature results exactly from this paradox that the education has. Therefore, accomplishing some fundamental purely economic objectives supposes a qualitative substantiation regarding the development of some (non)formal educational structures.

3 Axiological Criteria within the Political Economics

The economic process cannot subordinate only to theories and concepts themselves but this process has to capture certain norms of human behaviour. In other words, the acceptance and rejection of a subjective economic behaviour supposes the admittance of some value judgements within the same system. But these value judgements must subordinate to certain criteria of scientificity starting from certain axiological presuppositions. Even if the subjective appreciations cannot always be accepted as scientific, one should not give up on them only because they would represent certain ideals which cannot be argued necessarily or sufficiently.

That is why some classic specialists mention that the individuality of a people is given by the economy of that people. The role of the state proves to be somehow important in a national economy. V. Madgearu mentions the fact that "the name of political economics indicates too much an influence of the State on the national economy regarding only the economic politics not the other branches of the economic sciences which just like the economic history and the economic theory researches the economic reality without being

interested in anything else besides this. [6]

However it seems that in economy the subjective appreciations remind not only of a national reception but of an affective one too. This situation is visible especially in moments when the interests among individuals manifest at the level of the human activity and implicitly of the economic activity. In other words, at the level of the economic investigation there are some value judgements meant to support and extend the economic theory and practice. Therefore the human society needs some broader knowledge of the social-economic reality. From this point of view the training and the development of the economic sciences concretized as a result of some stringent imperatives on the principle of reasoning in relationship with the value dimension needs-resources.

The axiological criterion within a market economy is given by the social-political system itself, where the former is part of. In other words, a system based on competition generates criteria according to which certain value judgements converge to a more or less rational economic conduct. That is why the acceptance of some moral criteria within an economic system solves more or less the problems which have appeared. Almost everything depends on how the economy of that system is thought, planned, but also on the way in which the political power is exerted on that system. This idea can also be found at Friedrich A. Hayek in his paper *The Road to Servitude*, where he analyses the social-economic planning. [7]

The basic idea that Friedrich A. Hayek promotes is that the special order (society) appears as a result of a process of selection within which there appear rules that force the individuals to have a specific behaviour so that the social life could be possible.[8] Even if the common laws (the conventional laws) are deliberated and not spontaneous, the social harmony manifests itself through some freedom which being planned generates a contradiction. In other words the planning of freedom determines opposite effects. That is why Friedrich A. Hayek asserts that the value of a social system is not the democracy but the freedom: not the collective one but the individual one. Hence there results those economic liberties of the individualism which define however through "some consideration towards the other". Based on this type of social order there are enough arguments which come to capture the role of a certain way of perceiving and understanding the economic mechanism.

However, the development and the transformation of the political economics have depended and still depend in the contemporary society on certain axiological criteria regarding its manifestation at a social level. The freedom of thought, the initiative spirit but also a well-meant reasoning made the field of the political economics acquire a pragmatic character within the system of the economic sciences. Therefore, the political economics ensures the possibility of communication between the sciences of education focusing especially on a permanent exchange of information which ensures a solid basis for the educational-economic theory.

The necessity of correlating the economic subject into the dimension of education justifies exactly through the existence of a conceptual-theoretical transfer from one disciplinary area to another. As a result, the socio-economic actors involved within this approach interact in accordance with certain conceptual-theoretical reglementations meant to support the educational activity and the economic one too. Furthermore, the existence of juridical relationships between the economic agents expresses the complexity and pragmatism of some special procedures within this field of scientific research.

Such special procedures can be found in the approaches of an interdisciplinary nature. We have in mind in this context the interdisciplinary correlation between the economic

dimension and the dimension of the applied logics. John Neville Keynes (1883-1946) dealt with this problem in his paper *Studies and exercises in Formal Logic* (1884), where he analyses and develops logical formalisms from a conceptual perspective. These formalisms were applied afterwards in the field of the economic methodology.[9] From this point of view, being preoccupied by the way in which the concepts can be applied in other fields than the ones in which they are born is a constructive dimension.

John Neville Keynes synthesises in a syncretic vision the disciplinary dimensions of the economics, logics, mathematics practically unifying them in an explicit model mentioning that through these one can understand the modality through which certain economic principles function [10]. The conclusion reached by John Neville Keynes is that through a coherent, logical attitude the economic theory can be organised and systematised at an optimum level of functioning according to an interdisciplinary settlement. The interdisciplinary connections and the social interactions result exactly from the pedagogical and social coherence of what some like to name a complex educational system. Of course, one has in mind especially the social reality within which the system of values assumed is not always of a consensual nature. In this context, in the name of a social-culturalism, the economic education does not only promote the values which are placed in a dimension of the pragmatism.

These aspects do nothing but remind of a basic requirement within the instructive process that is the necessity of an adequate educational-economic model which is in perfect correlation with the social-cultural values promoted within a social system. In other words the quality of education depends on the social-economic context itself where education develops. Consequently the development of the activities initiated at the level of the education process concentrates certain educational paradigms towards which the society must not remain indifferent.

Nevertheless, the substantiation of an economic-educational model at the level of the social reality depends on the modality in which there are understood at a private level some processes and relationships which do not always respect the criterion of validity. Such value structures employed within the educational instructive-educative system emphasizes in the axiological plan informational meanings specific to the social reality on its whole. It is exactly this educational paradigm which supports the activity of training-developing of the educational actors involved in the instructive-educative process.

The many forms of research remind of meanings and significances whose cognitive dimension illustrates methodological correspondences in the process of education. Thus, the values existent at a social level are related to a thorough analysis of the political economics through which a certain state of fact has pertinent interpretations. This situation emphasizes in the context of the new forms of education a typology of the training activities built on performance and pragmatism.

The dimension of the economic education illustrates in the communication process exactly these competences which have a deep social connotation. In this context some strategies of reasoning relate to a new scientific paradigm meant to outwit the previous one. Maybe one can talk about an increase of the scientific knowledge in this field of the economic competence. One has in mind a transformation of the scientific objectivity regarding the motivation of the social actor when taking and transforming the exclusive information.

Thus, we claim that it is possible to understand the economic education from the perspective of a social-educational model which in fact concretises in the contemporary

society. Thus, the analysis and interpretation of such a situation illustrates the fact that the dimension of the political economics subordinates however to some specific form of organisation through which the educational act acquires relevance. In these conditions, the social criteria do nothing but legitimise the ethical principles which are at the basis of the economic education.

4 Conclusion

The economic political research has as main objective an interdisciplinary systemic approach supported by the principle of the methodological pluralism. The new orientations in the economic science offer a modality of reevaluation of the political economy. In this new approach the political economy supposes a more and more diversified problematic in different socio-cultural contexts. The values promoted within this economic culture would rather have to do with the orientation type specifically human, but also the decisions promoted at an ontological level. Even if a certain metamorphosis of the way of understanding the political economy reminds of complex sometimes paradoxical reactions, the behavioural requirements can be compensated by establishing certain value criteria specific to the new type of economic thinking.

The usefulness of the scientific knowledge is supported by an educational, economic, social model characterized by concreteness built in fact on the true value competences the way they are perceived at the level of the society. In this mode, the instrumental value of the economic education depends on certain social criteria assumed by the actors involved in this instructive approach. This state of fact renders a social but also pragmatic perspective through which one captures the economic and educational reality of a system. Moreover, the organization in a structural way of a socio-educational system illustrates a potential system of values through which the development of the cognoscible structures legitimizes the pragmatic nature of an economic and educational reality. Therefore seen as a social phenomenon the educational reality represents a specific form of communication subordinated to a whole process of evolution. It has to do with, in this situation, the fact that the social reality is in close interdependence with the economic-educational reality. The involved economic resources aim at a major aspect of education in general, that is the one which reflects the necessity, at a social level, of this form of education. Such an approach of the political economics from an educational perspective supposes an implication of all socio-educational actors at all levels of organisation. In fact, the priority given to the application of the strategies of research referring to the economic education becomes exemplary as long as the architectonics of a new assumed paradigm emphasizes a situational context corresponding to the requirements of the social system where it is born.

References

- [1] Enache, C.; Mecu, C., *Political Economics (Economie politică)*, Bucharest: *România de Mâine* Foundation Publishing House (Editura Fundației România de Mâine), (2004), 23-24.
- [2] Samuelson, P. A., *L'économie*, Paris: Armand Colin, (1982), 8.
- [3] Granger, G. G., "Epistémologie économique", in *Encyclopédie économique*, vol.I, Paris: Economica, (1992), 22.
- [4] Perret, B., Ronstang, G., *L' Economie contre la société. Affronter la crise de l'intégration sociale et culturelle*, Seuil, Paris: Collection Esprit, (1993), 160.
- [5] Angelescu, C., Ciucur D., Dinu M., (2001), *Dictionary of Economics (Dicționar de economie)*, Bucharest: Economic Publishing House (Editura Economică), (2001), 180.
- [6] Madgearu, N. V., *Course of Political Economics (Curs de economie politică)*, The Economic Research Institute (Institutul de Cercetări Economice), (1994), 448.
- [7] Von Hayek, F. A., *The Road to Servitude (Drumul către servitute)*, Bucharest: Humanitas Publishing House (Editura Humanitas), (2006), 118-136.
- [8] Von Hayek, F. A., „Droit, législation et liberté”, Tome 1, in *Règles et ordre*, Paris: P.U.F., (1993), 116.
- [9] Keynes, J. N., *Studies and exercises in formal logic*, Fourth edition rewritten and enlarged, Macmillan and Co., Limited / London / New York: The Macmillan Company, (1906), 140.
- [10] Keynes, J. N., *The Scope and Method of Political Economy*, Batoche Books, Kitchener, (1999), 20.