

The 5th International Economic Philosophy Conference

Warsaw, June 24-26th

CULTURE AND ECONOMICS

Call for Papers

The 5th International Economic Philosophy Conference will be held in Warsaw on June 24-26. It is organized by the Faculty of Economic Sciences (University of Warsaw) and the Polish Economic Institute in collaboration with the International Conferences for Economics and Philosophy (ICPE), the Philosophy-Economics Network and the Polish Philosophy of Economics Network.

The focus of this year's conference is **Culture and Economics**. We welcome contributions from researchers working in various streams of economic philosophy, relevant to the conference theme.

Culture has always had an unclear and uneasy relationship with economics and economic philosophy. For a long time, the economics profession was insufficiently sensitive to the cultural dimension of the economy, markets, institutions, firms or households. At the same time, the economic philosophy profession used to reflect on the cultural dimension of the economic science and its key concepts only occasionally and in an unsystematic way.

This unsatisfactory state of affairs has recently started to undergo a gradual change which manifests itself in the work of:

- economists who attempt to incorporate the cultural factor into their models in order to analyse both, economic effects of exposure to culture, as well as impact of economic variables on culture;
- economic philosophers who investigate economic science in terms of symbolic and material culture;
- economic historians who explore to what degree cultural heritage has affected diverging patterns of economic development across the world;
- economic anthropologists and sociologists who study the cultural embeddedness of markets and the emergence of new traditional economies;

Unquestionably a growing number of such contributions supports the thesis that culture does matter.

Given the long period of lack of serious engagement of economics with culture the aim of the conference is two-fold:

- to clarify the vague relationship between economics and culture by distinguishing and exploring **six dimensions** in which the two areas intersect: culture *in* economics, culture *of* economics, culture *for* economics, economics *as* culture, economics *of* culture and economics *out of* culture;

- to facilitate the bridging of economics and culture by stimulating and reinforcing **intellectual exchanges** between epistemic communities of philosophers and economists, as well as other contributors working on economic philosophy who take the cultural thesis seriously.

The organisers will thus welcome contributions from representatives of the above mentioned fields which explore the six dimensions in which culture and economics intersect:

- (1) **culture in economics** – exploring this dimension may proceed by addressing questions of the following type: does economics benefit from introducing culturally-based explanations? How is culture represented in economics? How is the economy represented in economics? How is the market understood? What are the cultural consequences of markets? Does culture affect economic outcomes? How economists and economic historians integrate cultural factor and cultural heritage into their models and theories? What is the role of various types of cultural beliefs in economic development? To what extent does the World Value Survey database help economists to study changing values and their impact on economic, social and political life? How is the question of culture addressed by: rational choice theory (culture as mere entry in utility function), public choice theory (heterogeneity of cultural tastes), social choice theory (common cultural values) or behavioural economics (cultural variance of susceptibility to biases)? As the neo-institutional economics allows for a dual approach to institutions (institutions-as-rules and institutions-as-equilibria), is there still room for the cultural factor in economic analyses? In the institutions-as-rules approach, the main emphasis is put on formal institutions which are conceptualised and modelled in terms of rules of the game. Can we thus legitimately conceptualise informal institutions as culture, namely tacit or implicit norms and conventions? In the institutions-as-equilibria approach, the main emphasis is put on the institutionalisation which is conceptualised and modelled in terms of patterns of behaviour and reasons to behave in accordance with those patterns. Can we thus legitimately conceptualise cultural beliefs as different self-enforcing expectations of agents with respect to actions taken by others? How does economics analyse the cultural transmission of preferences across and within generations? How to analyse the way cultural values permeate economic research?
- (2) **culture of economics** – inquiry into this dimension may be carried out by addressing questions of the following type: does economic methodology gain by taking into account achievements of philosophy of culture? Does contemporary economics go beyond the traditional account of two cultures (science and humanities)? How to scientifically investigate the tacit cultural component of economic science? What are the dominant styles of thought or styles of reasoning in economics? What are the epistemic and non-epistemic norms that guide the design, analysis and reporting of economic research? What is the material and theoretical culture of economic modeling?
- (3) **culture for economics** – scrutinising this dimension may start by addressing questions of the following type: would the economics profession perform better by incorporating culturally-driven new epistemic and ethical virtues into its practice? Does the economics profession need ethical code of conduct? How can economics turn into a more humble discipline? Do aesthetic criteria of elegance and beauty play a role in economics? What does economics gain by heuristic use of metaphors borrowed from literature and art?

- (4) **economics as culture** – exploring this dimension includes addressing the questions of the following type: does the economics profession consist in two autonomous epistemic cultures of knowledge production, communication and utilisation – the scientific culture and the expertise culture? What determines the scientific credit in economics? What determines the confidence in economic expertise? Do the prestige and public trust in economics and economists exceed that of other social sciences and social researchers? Is the economics profession actively involved in symbolic rent-seeking in and outside the marketplace of ideas?
- (5) **economics of culture** – penetrating this dimension may be carried out by answering the questions of the following type: how is economic theory and analysis applied to arts (organisations supplying artistic services, the performing arts, the visual or plastic arts, the literary arts)? What are the main economic features of cultural goods? How to measure the economic value of cultural goods? What are the pros and cons of commodification, commercialisation and marketisation of cultural goods? Is the economics of the arts another example of economics imperialism?
- (6) **economics out of culture** – inquiry into this dimension may start by posing questions of the following type: is economics founded on cultural commonsensibles? To what extent is the economic practice a matter of refining folk intuitions? What is the role of social customs, morals, habits, routines and religious beliefs in modern developed economies? How does modern economics theoretically grasp traditional small-scale societies and their economies? Should the economists who design public development policies pay more attention to the indigenous knowledge of regional and local communities?

The list of questions is not exhaustive. Other questions and issues are welcome.

As the communities of economists and philosophers, as well as other contributors working in economic philosophy represent different ontological commitments, methodological approaches and axiological stances toward culture the conference will be an excellent opportunity for a multidisciplinary exchange of ideas, arguments and experiences in an open and pluralistic environment.