

GOVERNORS OF ANTS OR GERMAN LOCOMOTIVE

Economy should be considered as a social phenomena, not a physical one. Once politicians and economists accepted that fact to their knowledge, they would have to be obliged to leave dreams about their own ability to influence positively on economical events.

In the dominating nowadays trend in economy theory – as well as in a popular, ordinary image of practical economy – economical events are being explained according to mechanical model. Following this term, the economy is understood as a set of cogwheels to be moved by a flywheel. More often one can meet a “railway” version of the model, where economy is presented as a chain of train carriages pulled by a locomotive. The locomotive of economy ... This role, depending on inclinations and interests, is attributed to well defined economy branches – e.g, to construction or shipyard industry – the phenomena so highly unspecified as domestic demand or, another time, as its foreign college, external demand.

Mechanical model of economy has two important advantages; the first – it explains in the simple way all complexity of economic reality, the second – it enables politicians and economists to believe, that economy could be steered quite easily. It is enough to point at a locomotive and then to fill it up with the fuel. The best fuel is – as it has been known so far – money. That’s why the public debate on economy issues will be driving around the monetary issues: interests, exchange rates, government’s expenses for infrastructure development – all of these properly fuelled will certainly put in motion each cogwheel and any kind of locomotives.

The point is, that the mechanical model except of the two unquestionable advantages has one fundamental disadvantage. It is in fact absolutely and utterly false. The economy has in fact the structure of an ant-hill, not this of a train. It should be regarded as a social phenomena, not a physical one. If however, politicians and economists accepted this truth, they would have to abandon the dreams about their own positive influence on economical events. Facing the human ant-hill they are found the same helpless as someone who accidentally coming up against an ant-hill in the forest, is caught by surprise while watching this extraordinary and not understandable bustle of insects, their determination to pursue and obtain unknown aims. Notorious inability to recognize the principles which organize and manage this hard-working ant’s society is the reason that impatient and disappointed observer may undertake the only action that in his mind could influence ants behaviour – he starts to disturb and distort their activities. He will put some objects on insect’s paths and when his victims will mark out the new ones, he will simply try to destroy an ant-hill with a stick.

So the intellectual helplessness while facing all complexity of the world is the reason why the very true model of working society – the model described by Adam Smith and by his successors, the model in which, seemingly chaotic and for sure spontaneous, behaviour of individual units are becoming the components of this fantastic and creative order that is characteristic for society of free people – it is found unacceptable by them. Since the state of helplessness can be barely tolerated, it is likely to appear an urgent need to simplify world image in order to make it understandable. Instead of the classic model a crude, ordinary mechanical model is being created. The model in which it is so easy to find a direct link between the

Krzysztof Dzierzawski

reason and the result. Obviously, that the inevitable consequence of such simplification and reduction of world's complexity is distortion of its nature. However, the disgusting triviality of the model is even worse than its forgery.

(Ants Governors or German Locomotive, "Życie", 11.07.2002;
section "Opinie").