

**Economic and philosophical views
of the environmental discourse**

**A paper anthology
of the Journal of Philosophical Economics**

Valentin Cojanu

Editor

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**Editura ASE
București
2024**



Academia de Studii Economice din București

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Editura ASE

Piața Romană nr. 6, sector 1, București, România

cod 010374

www.ase.ro

www.editura.ase.ro

editura@ase.ro

Descrierea CIP a Bibliotecii Naționale a României

**Economic and philosophical views of the environmental discourse :
a paper anthology of the Journal of Philosophical Economics /**

coord.: Valentin Cojanu. – București : Editura ASE, 2024

Conține bibliografie

Index

ISBN 978-606-34-0553-2

I. Cojanu, Valentin (coord.)

330

Editura ASE

Redactor: Silvia Răcaru

Tehnoredactor: Violeta Rogojan

Copertă: Violeta Rogojan

Autorul își asumă întreaga responsabilitate pentru: ideile exprimate, corectitudinea științifică, originalitatea materialului și sursele bibliografice menționate.

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Foreword

We launched the *Journal of Philosophical Economics* – J Philos Econ in 2007 with the mission of contributing to the reorientation of the economic science in the field of social sciences, that is, in search of an epistemology specific to human action. The diverse themes emerging from the Journal's published research highlight a substantial number of questions being explored to reframe economic science, which has seemingly drifted from its historical role of interpreting economic activities through the prisms of historical context, values, and institutional frameworks since the 1930s.

The ecological problem is part of these reflection themes. One of the foundations of orthodox economics is the fundamentally simplistic belief that nature is subordinate to human capability, rather than the reverse. On this basis, the idea of economic growth has taken shape, as well as solutions that are inevitably inappropriate, as they arise from an erroneous premise. The contributions in this volume open a field of reflection that helps to correct this epistemic error in economics, whereby reality is reduced to and, therefore, confused with the theory we have about it.

At the time of publication of this volume, we were sad to hear about Professor Peter Söderbaum's death on 13 October 2024.

The late professor was a pioneer of the ecological movement in economics in the 1980s and since then has enriched our discipline with common-sense and perceptive analysis. This volume begins with his essay on the re-defining of economic science as the multi-dimensional management of limited resources within a democratic society. This redefinition calls for moving away from technocratic decision-making (e.g. traditional cost-benefit analysis) toward methods like Positional Analysis, which embrace multiple ideological orientations and encourage a more pluralistic, democratic debate in policymaking. The following text complements this rather conceptual view with calls for greater transparency in acknowledging the ethical and philosophical foundations of ecological economics. Laurent Jodoin critically examines William Nordhaus's treatment of philosophy in climate change economics, focusing particularly on Nordhaus's 2007 review of the Stern Review. Jodoin asserts that proper integration of normative reasoning is essential, not only for resolving theoretical ambiguities but also to ensure that policy decisions adequately address the uncertainties and ethical dilemmas inherent in balancing present and future welfare.

The remaining contributions streamline the exploration of economic decisions, which are intricately tied to values, to a select few essential non-monetary elements. Frederic B. Jennings Jr.'s essay aims to outline an ethical framework for economics, formalising Simon's concept of bounded rationality.

Ethics involve aligning private with social incentives, supplanting conflicts with concerts of value when systems cohere. The paper by Molly Scott Cato explores the role of economists in society, focusing on their role as intermediaries between people and resources needed for survival. Cato suggests that key aspects of the economist include holding responsibility for the link between provisioning and the local natural environment and mediating the relationship between humans, nonhuman animals, and other species. Viktor Zinchenko and Mykhailo Boichenko argue for a fundamental revision of the basic principles of economic science which should study pragmatic reality rather than dogma. They find inspiration in Eastern religions, like Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism, which all have a more restrained and moderate strategy of peaceful coexistence with the nature. In the final essay, Diana-Eugenia Panait-Ioncică and Eva-Cristina Petrescu explore the connection between concepts like slow living, slow food, and slow writing and the green economy. It aims to discuss the possibilities of these concepts, which could increase the quality of life combined with an environmentally sustainable lifestyle.

We hope that this collection of works will provide readers with an analytical perspective that can inspire a realistic, profound and multidimensional understanding of the ecological problem. Our relationship with nature is probably neither irremediably degraded nor saved in the sense of a sustainable

society. But its complex character can only be discovered by appealing to such complex forms of understanding, in which historical argument and value controversies occupy the centre of social and economic debate.

Valentin Cojanu, Editor

Journal of Philosophical Economics

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