

## II. MAIN SCIENTIFIC SCHOOLS IN THE WROCLAW UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS

*Bożena Klimczak\**

### WHY A WROCLAW SCHOOL OF ECONOMIC THOUGHT HAS NOT EVOLVED

---

---

Economics is the oldest of disciplines in the group of economic science, and has experienced the influence of diverse systems of values, ideologies and politics. In the 19th century Robert Whately was the first to acknowledge the role of an economist as an advisor who evaluates an enterprise, its results and effectiveness, taking under consideration various non-economic criteria.

Such was the opinion of William Nassau Senior who suggested isolating a pure science of economics as an empirical science free of evaluation. That thought was further developed by John Stuart Mill, who presented a concept of economics as a spiritual science differing from the so-called 'art of economics' employing ethical principles. On the basis of 19th century aspirations to the positive practices of economics, John Neville Keynes introduced at the beginning of the 20th century the triple division of economics into positive science, dealing with explaining economic phenomena and processes; normative science, formulating principles and duties referring to economic activities; and lastly the art of economics, setting the praxiological principles of economic activity. This triad was reduced by Milton Freedman to the division of economics into positive and normative science. The task of positive economics is to formulate statements describing and explaining economic phenomena and processes which are verified on the basis of falsifying predictions.

Briefly presented here are the efforts of economists in dealing with the problem of the scientific character of their activities which still go on and even in conditions of freedom of expression out of which stems the right to free choice of both the subject of academic research and the choice of the basis for the concluding premises of evaluating quality. The problem of 19th century economists was selecting the criteria of choice and premises of reasoning from the point of view of the benefits drawn from their advice. Neither their work was censored, nor the fairness of their values, however they were anxious about the utilitarian approach to economics.

---

\* Head of the Department of Microeconomics, Wrocław University of Economics.

In the fifty years of the Wrocław Academy of Economics one can distinguish three periods of practising this science. The first short period lasting from 1947 to 1949 was connected with Professor Wincenty Styś, his didactic and academic work and his organizational activities. He was a scientist whose knowledge, creative passion and honesty in research marked him for the role of master and creator of Wrocław economic school of thought. However his way of practicing economics in a 'positive way' without ideological assumptions and based only on through empirical research resulted in his being banned from lecturing and publishing economic works. The ban lasted until 1956. In the conference materials prepared by the Institute of Political Economy for the twentieth anniversary of his death, one can clearly see the censor's intervention in the text referring to that period.

The second period from 1949 to 1989 were the years when Poland did not enjoy guaranteed freedom of thought and expression. Therefore legal publications were censored, as was the case of foreign publications and papers prepared for international conferences. Censorship also affected statistical data which could have been used for scientific purposes. In such a situation there was no ideological pressure except for two ways of practicing economics: firstly if a person identified his/her system of values with the officially acknowledged system and adhered to it because of internal need to his/her research and second, where the research was conducted in accordance with one's own system of values differing from the official one with the full knowledge that the results of such research will not be published in legal publications. Therefore for this period one can suggest the following division of economic accomplishments:

1. Publications of Marxist economy confirming the authentic convictions of the rightness of the accepted premises.
2. Publications independent of censorship, published usually in 'alternative circulation' and foreign publications.
3. Own research conducted using methods enabling objective cognizance of economic phenomena and processes, the results of which were not published or were published only in parts.

An attempt to encompass the achievements of the economics of 1949-1989 from the point of view of such a division constitutes the answer to the question contained in the title. In the Wrocław University of Economics there has not evolved an independent school of economic thought because there was no scientist of the stature of Professor Wincenty Styś and this gap has not been filled by any Marxist intellectuals. In this vacuum single people and then small teams tried at first to conduct their own theoretical and empirical research. The fundamental feature of such research was a tendency to select such fields of research and such methods which would allow them to be distanced from the official system of values. There were the theoretical works of Czesław Suł-

kowski on economic effectiveness published in an American magazine and the empirical research of: 1. old industrial regions (Jan Rymarczyk, Ludwik Skiba, Sylwester Gwizd, Adam Kubów); 2. regions being industrialized (Zofia Szapajtis, Tadeusz Listwan, Irena Kociszewska, Andrzej Oryński, Barbara Cwierz-Matysiak, Wanda Izyk); it is worth pointing out here that one of the initiators of the research of these regions was the then Director of the Institute of Political Economy, Józef Popkiewicz. 3. agriculture (Bożena Baborska, Bożena Klimczak); 4. functioning of the centrally managed state enterprises (the team led by Danuta Misińska).

The results of this research were unpublished doctoral dissertations and a small amount of publications in small circulation periodicals or in-house materials. They were used to expand the knowledge and academic aspirations of their authors rather than develop economics as a science, because the condition of development of science is publicizing the results of research. The significant part of the aforementioned empirical research was stopped after a few years, with the exception of the research of the functioning of state enterprises, which were run without interruption throughout the 70's and 80's, despite the compulsory transfer of Danuta Misińska to the Institute of Accounting in 1981. The results of the research was only partly published and critical analysis prepared by Danuta Misińska and Bożena Klimczak could not be published in Poland. It was used in two foreign publications dealing with the attempts of reform of the central planning system in Poland.

In the 1980's articles written by Bożena Baborska and Andrzej Oryński, of a more popular nature, were publicized through 'alternative circulation'. Andrzej Oryński was relegated from the Institute of Political Economics between 1982 and 1989.

The third period of economic activity at the Wrocław University of Economics started in the second half of 1989 alongside the abolition of censorship and the introduction of freedom of thought and expression, as well as the freedom of movement and access to information. Thanks to these changes, there were new possibilities for academic contacts, access to foreign libraries and Polish materials. An important role in the first part of this period was played by Bogusław Fiedor and his colleagues Stanisław Czaja, Zbigniew Jakubczyk and Jerzy Rymarczyk who, because of their earlier foreign contacts, published articles and monographs on the world development of economy.

We shall be able to discuss the achievements of this period after a few years, as the first years were mainly devoted to didactic activity and the preparation of textbooks and teaching materials. We have also seen the beginning of research work concentrating on specific phenomena and processes accompanying the transformation of the Polish economy, such as: environmental protection, the creation of the information market, the privatization of

state-run enterprises, and institutional aspects of the transformation. One can point to two main research teams, the first one dealing with the problems of environmental protection in Poland under the management of Bogusław Fiedor; and the team researching the process of privatization and institutional aspects of the transformation centred around Bożena Klimczak and Andrzej Matysiak. The 'ecologist' prepared reports on the state of the natural environment in Poland commissioned by the World Bank and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and other agencies of the United Nation (UNEP and UNDP), and also the highly praised in Poland publications on the economic theory of natural environment. One should point out that this research would be impossible without free access to information on the state of the natural environment in Poland.

The team dealing with privatization and institutional aspects of transformation continues a tradition initiated by Danuta Misińska. The knowledge of functioning of state enterprises gathered on the basis of research conducted in the 1970's and 80's became useful in organizing research concerning privatization and the functioning of state enterprises in the period of preparation for privatization. Their results, based on theoretical premises of certain statements or verification of hypotheses of new institutional economics. The team presented them in the collected works edited by Bożena Klimczak and Bożena Borkowska.

Apart from the team efforts, there is also conducted intensive individual research, mainly in macroeconomics and mathematical economics (Stefan Forlicz, Maciej Jasiński, Marian Noga, Maria Piotrowska). All of these augur well for the future development of economics in the Wrocław University of Economics and the creation of its school of economic thought.