

Association for Heterodox Economics

*Postgraduate workshop on
advanced research methods*

*8th-9th July 2009
Kingston University*

Welcome and Introduction

Dear Participant,

On behalf of the Association for Heterodox Economics we would like to welcome you to this workshop. As well as finding the formal workshop sessions stimulating, we also hope that you will enjoy the opportunity of informally socialising with other members of the heterodox economics community in order to help with your research and to build up a network of contacts.

Prof Paul Downward
Prof Fred Lee
Dr Andrew Mearman
Dr Ioana Negru
Dr Wendy Olsen.

Some Background

The Association for Heterodox Economics

The Association for Heterodox Economics (AHE) was formed in 1999, largely through the organisational energy of Professor Fred Lee of the University of Missouri at Kansas City, then of De Montfort University in the UK, because of the Royal Economic Society's reluctance to allow sessions to be organised at their annual conference by outside organisations; much in the same manner as allowed at the ASSA meetings.¹ The main issue at stake was that the RES conference programme typically emphasised neoclassical economics which constrained intellectual diversity. As a result a successful one-day fringe conference was held at the 1999 RES venue which was the University of Nottingham. It was proposed to hold a further fringe conference the following year, at St Andrews University, which would be more formally linked to the RES, to promote dialogue and compromise. The response from the RES committee was outright rejection. As a result, a fully independent conference was held at the Open University Conference Centre in London. Since then there have been further conferences in London, Dublin and Nottingham, Leeds, the UWE, Anglia Ruskin and of course the current conference scheduled to take place at Kingston University.

The success of these conferences has meant that the AHE has evolved into an unincorporated, non-profit making body with the aim of promoting pluralist and policy relevant discourse in economic analysis. Details about the AHE are available on the website; www.hetecon.com.

The main aims of the AHE are captured in the organisation of the conference, where sessions are typically organised by theme rather than schools of thought. The conference organising committee is elected each year at the conference by participants. Its participants are typically UK based, though its substantive interests are global. Members are drawn from the International Association for Feminist Economics, the Post-Keynesian Economics Study Group, the Society for the

¹ For further details see Lee, F.S. (2002).

Advancement of Socio-Economics, the European Association for Evolutionary Political Economy, the International Association for Critical Realism and others such as the Post Autistic Economics Movement. Many of these associations are in turn all affiliated (along with AHE) to the International Confederation of Associations for Pluralism in Economics (ICAPE, recently renamed from its prior title of The International Conference of Associations for the Reform of Economics). International participation does take place though the Association is primarily UK based.

Post Graduate Training

As part of its aims the AHE wants to inform post graduate training as part of its mission to promote intellectual pluralism in economics. To this end the AHE has secured funding from the Economic and Social Research Council and the Cambridge Political Economy Society Trust for past post graduate training workshops. It is intended that the training will be advanced in the sense that it includes a rethinking of the ontological underpinnings of economic concepts and their measurement and application. In particular the training will embrace the fact that empirical work that underpins policy advice needs to be interpreted with explicit reference to philosophical categories and interdisciplinary concepts to capture the complexity of an organic social system. Excellent empirical work will thus include a degree of scepticism about formal models and statistical analysis. This is rooted in a desire for deeper understanding about economic processes.

There is an emergent need for this training for economists because currently economics training it tends to focus upon formal deductive models and advanced statistical methods. Economists are encouraged to develop research and analytical skills that emphasise highly deductive, and logical analysis in assumption-based models. In addition, economists are encouraged to develop numeracy, statistical and computing skills in which relationships are examined for the adequacy of their measurement as well as testing for their statistical significance in econometric analysis (For example see the Quality Assurance Agency Benchmarking statements for economics education in the UK).

Yet there are serious methodological criticisms with this approach as, for example, presented in Lawson (1997; 2003). As the ESRC, among others, including policy making bodies recognise the need for a more pluralist evidence base for policy discussion, economists need some opportunity to develop their training in this way. Currently, the AHE feels that such a methodological approach is under-represented or sometimes ignored by existing institutions in the UK economics discipline (Dow, 2000). Yet such an explicit methodological approach to economics is developing as a serious sub-division within economics, and new journals and book series are currently emerging. It is hoped thus that the workshop will offer participants an opportunity to become part of this emergent perspective in economics thereby making a real difference to the future of economic discourse. It should be emphasised that the AHE clearly recognises the importance of clear analytical reasoning and the use of mathematical and statistical analysis. However, it also argues that because of the complex organic structure of society economic analysis also needs to involve verbal

and hermeneutic skills as well as ability, for example in policy discussion, to engage in the synthesis and triangulation of insights from a variety of sources.

References and reading list

Berg-Schlusser, D., Gisele De Meur, Benoit Rihoux and Charles C. Ragin (2009), 'Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) as an approach' in the *Handbook of Case-Centred Research*, eds. David Byrne and Charles Ragin, London: Sage, ch. 1.

Bigo, V. and Ioana Negru (2008), 'From Fragmentation to Ontologically Reflexive Pluralism', *Journal of Philosophical Economics*, vol. 1 (2): 127-150;

Dow, S.C. (2000), 'Prospects for the Progress of Heterodox Economics', *Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, vol. 22 (2): 157-170;

Donward, P. and Ralston, R. (2006), 'The Sports Development Potential of Sports Event Volunteering: Insights from the XVII Manchester Commonwealth Games', *European Sport Management Quarterly*, vol. 6 (4): 333-351;

Donward, P. and Mearman A. (2006), 'Retroduction as Mixed-methods Triangulation in Economic Research: Reorienting Economics into Social Science', *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, pp. 1-23.

Donward, P. and Mearman A. (2008), 'Decision-making at the Bank of England: a Critical Appraisal', *Oxford Economic Papers*, vol. 60: 385-409;

Finch, J.H. (2002), 'The Role of Grounded Theory in Developing Economic Theory', *Journal of Economic Methodology*, 9:2: 213-234.

Lawson, T. (1997) *Economics and Reality*, London: Routledge;

Lawson, T. (2003) *Reorienting Economics*, London: Routledge;

Lee, F.S. (2002), 'Theory Creation and the Methodological Foundation of Post-Keynesian Economics', *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 26: 789-804;

Lee, F.S. (2009), 'A History of Heterodox Economics: Challenging the Mainstream in the Twentieth Century', London: Routledge;

Negru, I. (2006), 'On Homogeneity and Pluralism in Economic Schools of Thought: the Case of the Austrian School', working paper within The Political Economy Series, Nottingham Trent University;

Negru, I. (2009), 'Reflections on Pluralism in Economics', *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, vol.1 (1):1-15, forthcoming.

Olsen, W. (2009), 'Non-Nested and Nested cases in a Socio-Economic Village Study' in the *Handbook of Case-Centred Research*, eds. David Byrne and Charles Ragin, London: Sage, chapter.

Scheibl, F. and Wood, A. (2005), 'Investment Sequencing in the brick industry: an Application of Grounded Theory', *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 29: 223-247.

Aims and Learning outcomes of the current workshop:

There are three main aims, with related learning outcomes, of the current workshop:

Aim: To understand the ontological foundations of economic analysis.

- *Learning Outcome:* Participants will be able to evaluate the alternative ontological perspectives that underlie economic analysis in both the mainstream and heterodox contexts..

Aim: To show that applied, policy oriented and publishable research can be developed from heterodox economic and interdisciplinary analysis.

- *Learning Outcome:* Participants will be able to evaluate the potential of heterodox economic and interdisciplinary analysis for policy and practice.
- *Learning Outcome:* Participants will improve their ability to use heterodox economic and interdisciplinary analysis to develop research programmes that will have direct policy relevance.

Aim: To reassess quantitative and qualitative research methods and to show how triangulation can provide a strategy for producing applied interdisciplinary research. Triangulation is employed in education, management, health and sociological analysis but not economics. It will be shown how policy oriented results can be generated that link insights from heterodox schools of thought.

- *Learning Outcome:* Participants will understand underlying principles in triangulation and be able to apply these principles in designing their own research.
- *Learning Outcome:* Participants will be exposed to data analysis techniques which they would normally not see, such as factor and cluster analysis, and Qualitative Comparative Analysis.

AHE Postgraduate Research Methods Training Workshop 2009: Programme (Venue: Dorich House)

Room:	Activity	Leader	Reading
Day 1			
0900-1000	BREAKFAST AT VENUE	All participants	Lawson (1997, 2003); Fullbrook (2009); Downward and Mearman (2007)
1000-1100	Introductions Economics and ontology	Dr Andrew Mearman	
1100-1130	Break out and coffee	All participants	For conceptual and theoretical foundations see Negru (2006); Bigo and Negru (2008) and Negru (2009); for an application of the concept of pluralism see Downward and Mearman (2008)
1130-1230	Pluralism: what is it; and why bother	Dr Ioana Negru	
Day 2			
1230-1330	LUNCH		
1330-1500	Qualitative Comparative Analysis	Dr. Wendy Olsen	Olsen (2008); Berg-Schlosser et Al on Comparative Qualitative Analysis
1500-1530	Break out and coffee	All participants	
1530-1600	Discussion of QCA	All participants	
1600-1700	Data analysis and research; summary of day	Prof. Paul Downward	
1930	DINNER at venue		
Day 2			
0900-1000	BREAKFAST AT VENUE	Dr Paul Downward	Downward and Ralston (2006); Downward and Mearman (2006)
1000-1030	Cluster and factor analysis techniques	All participants	Lee (2002); Scheibl and Wood (2005); also Lee, ch. 6 – Methodology of Heterodox Econ.
1030-1200	Break out and coffee Grounding Theory in Historical Evidence	Prof. Fred Lee	
1200-1230	Discussion	All participants	
1230-1330	LUNCH		
1330-1430	Your research project – how might the material you've seen affect your own work?	All participants	
1430-1500	Summing up	All participants	