

Title Globalism, Ideology and the 'Satisfactory life'

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Abstract

This paper takes as one of its starting points the statement in AFEE's 'Tenets of Institutional Economics' that 'Social value judgements are a part of inquiry and must themselves be objects of inquiry; the normative/positive dichotomy is rejected'. As a theme in itself this has featured in the work of many leading institutionalists from Veblen to (especially) Galbraith. Despite the enlightened attempts by Joan Robinson and others to separate the 'scientific' from the 'ideological' in economics we share the view of Heilbroner that ideology is an inevitable part of economics (as a motivating force both inescapable and legitimate) and as such its social/historical roots, its content and influence must be self-consciously examined.

'Globalism' provides a powerful image of the morphology and operation of the contemporary world economy. It draws on a range of disciplinary sources to construct its narrative but has economics as its core element. We contend, however, that this 'globalist' formulation is in various ways 'ideological', serves particular interests whilst excluding or diminishing others, and that the promise of a 'satisfactory life' that it proffers is unlikely to be realised.

In pursuing these themes the paper will: consider the notion of 'ideology' and its relationship to 'knowledge'; apply these considerations to 'globalism'; and explore of exemplary areas of contemporary economic activity.

Finally, in very preliminary form, we float 'progressive conservatism' as a realist ideological alternative to neo-liberalism in the search to reshape the discourse surrounding issues of global political economy.