

In this Issue

Having delivered the initial issue of the Warsaw Forum of Economic Sociology (WFES), we are happy to present our sophomore effort. In this edition, we would like to turn the attention of our readers to two fields: mainstream economics and social, as well as civic, dialogue.

The issue contains eight articles, which have been divided into two main thematic blocks. The first block consists of three articles associated with mainstream economics.

Bogusław Czarny forwards questions which may seem trivial but eventually turn out to be challenging and inspirational: what is economics and what does it exactly mean that economics is an empirical science? The author discusses basic epistemological and methodological issues along with the problems of rhetorical nature encountered by economists, peculiarities of economics, and future directions for economic research.

Marek Garbicz adds another set of reflections on the crisis of mainstream economics, arguing that the discipline has reached its methodological turning point with the neoclassical paradigm being steadily challenged. The author argues the need for close interdisciplinary cooperation in studying subjects traditionally at the centre of economist interest.

Wojciech Pacheco confronts readers with another essential question asking whether we need a new methodology in macroeconomics. The author concludes that contemporary macroeconomics stands at a methodological crossroads, and focuses on the weaknesses of the Representative Agent Model.

The second block comprises of four articles that are related to social dialogue and civil society.

We begin with two previously published articles, by David Ost and by Juliusz Gardawski and Guglielmo Meardi, in order to present a broader context of ongoing

discussions concerning social dialogue and social partnership in Poland and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE).

David Ost's seminal article (which was first published in 2001) examines the nature of neo-corporatism introduced in CEE after 1989. The author dismisses the regional mutation of neo-corporatism as 'illusory'. The thesis presented in the article, conceived by some as controversial, sparked discussions on the true nature of relations between governments and "social partners" in the region (Ost objects to the assumption of equality implicit in the term). Although published 10 years ago, the article remains an important frame of reference, frequently employed in the debate on social dialogue in the region. We include the paper in order that it serve as a starting point for future discussions on tripartism and social partnership in the following issues of WFES.

Juliusz Gardawski and Guglielmo Meardi describe the meanderings of Polish social dialogue and analyze several attempts to conclude a national-level social pact. Acknowledging that the results of social pacting thus far have been moderate, the authors insist on the continued need for such an agreement. They combine a broad theoretical approach, introduced to the discussion concerning social dialogue by Ost, with specific empirical studies, in order to characterize the evolution of social partnership in Poland since 1994. They presented the outcomes of these studies in the international conference on "European Social Pacts and Social Partnership," organized by the Warsaw School of Economics in October 2010, and intend to examine further developments of social dialogue in Poland in subsequent issues of this journal.

Leszek Gilejko's contribution deals with sectoral interest groups in modern Poland and investigates how special interests pushed by various socio-occupational groups affected industrial restructuring in the 1990s and 2000s.

Joachim Osiński provides readers with an account of the Polish constitutional debate, which consumed a total of eight years before the adoption of the 1997 Constitution. The author explores the question of whether such a lengthy debate caused more harm than good to the young democracy.

This second issue of WFES expands the field of debate by discussing such issues as tripartite dialogue, social partnership, and civic society. These are important topics of academic study not only in the domain of economic sociology but also in other disciplines of social science, such as political economy and political science. In future issues we plan to spread the debate even further, beginning with a discussion on the forms of capitalism that have emerged in Central and Eastern Europe in recent decades. We welcome contributions related to these topics.