Postures and practices of economists

Gaël Plumecocq

HAL Id: hal-02784937
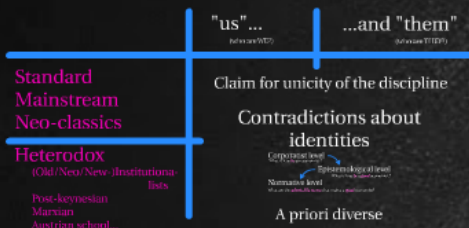
https://hal.inrae.fr/hal-02784937

Submitted on 4 Jun 2020

Postures and practices of economists:

Convergence or divorce?

Introduction

The French academic context is relativey tensed

Contradictions between:

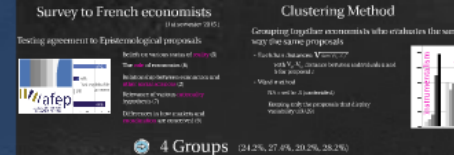"us"... *(referece WTP?)* ...and "them" *(reference TTTEP)*

Standard Mainstream Neo-classics

Heterodox (Old/Neo/New-)Institutiona- lists Post-keynesian Marxian Austrian school...

Claim for unicity of the discipline

Contradictions about identities

Corporatist level

Epistemological level *(Why is this question here?)*

Normative level *(What are the relation between norms & value-judgments?)*

A priori diverse

To what extent economists (which ones) share identity?

→ Question systems of thoughts and beliefs

Divorcio a la Italiana film poster — PIETRO GERMI, MARCELLO MASTROIANNI, DANIELA ROCCA, STEFANIA SANDRELLI, LEOPOLDO TRIESTE

Data and method

Survey to French economists *(1st semester 2015)*

Testing agreement to Epistemological proposals

Beliefs on various status of *reality (I)*

The *role of economists (II)*

Relevance of *various scientific practices (III)*

Difference in how a variety of *vocabularies* are conceived *(IV)*

4 Groups (24.2%, 27.4%, 20.2%, 28.2%)

Clustering Method

Grouping together economists who evaluates the same way the same proposals

Euclidian distances $\sqrt{\sum (V_k - V_l)^2}$ with V_k, V_l distance between individuals k and l for proposal i

Ward method

(VA = sort be A (sustainable))

Ranking scale the proposals that display variability (24-26)

Classification

Indentify these groups

For each proposal, how different is the evaluation within the group Vs. in the rest of the sample (Wilcoxon test)?

Proximity analysis

Which groups are closer (more distant)?

In terms of methodological practices

Conclusions: No definitive answer

Some shared foundations (instrumentalism)

Mainstream is as diverse as the heterodoxies

They dissemble more than they resemble

Improve the research design (eg. equivocal proposals)
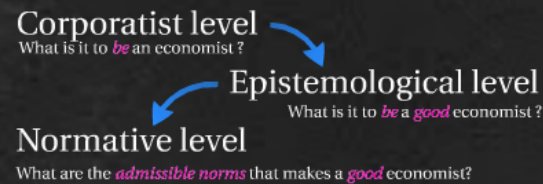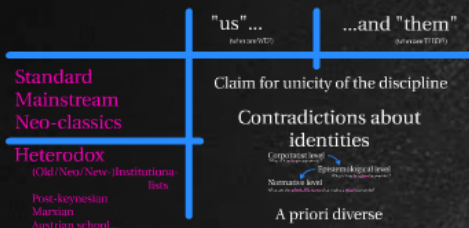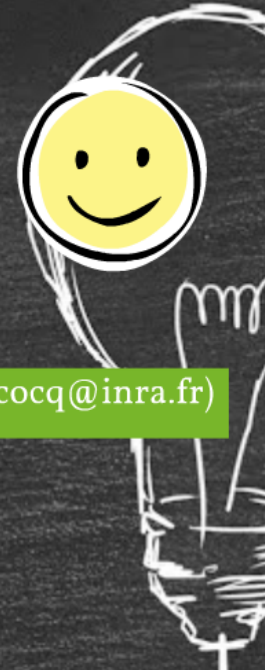
Contradictions between:

"us"...
(who are WE?)

...and "them"
(who are THEY?)

Standard
Mainstream
Neo-classics

Claim for unicity of the discipline

Contradictions about identities

Heterodox

(Old/Neo/New-)Institutiona-lists

Corporatist level
What is it to *be* an economist ?

Epistemological level
What is it to *be* a *good* economist ?

Normative level
What are the *admissible norms* that makes a *good* economist?

Post-keynesian
Marxian
Austrian school...

A priori diverse

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(1st semester 2015)

Testing agreement to Epistemological proposals

Beliefs on various status of reality (5)

The role of economics (6)
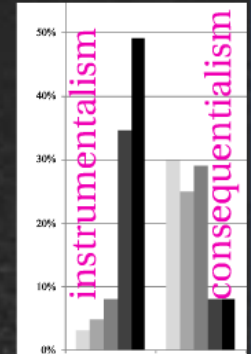
Relationship between economics and other social sciences (2)

Relevance of various rationality hypothesis (7)
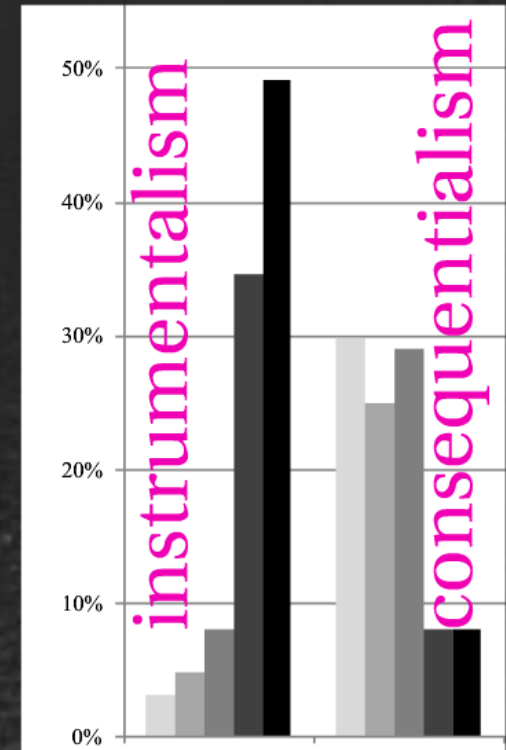
Differences in how markets and coordination are conceived (9)

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  with $V_{ai}-V_{bi}$ distance between individuals a and b for proposal i

- Ward method

  NA = set to 3 (undecided)

  Keeping only the proposals that display variability (19/29)

(→) 4 Groups (24.2%, 27.4%, 20.2%, 28.2%)

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AFSE
Association Française de Science Economique
French Economic Association

45%

9%

124 exploitable answers

2%

afep
ASSOCIATION FRANÇAISE D'ÉCONOMIE POLITIQUE

44%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%
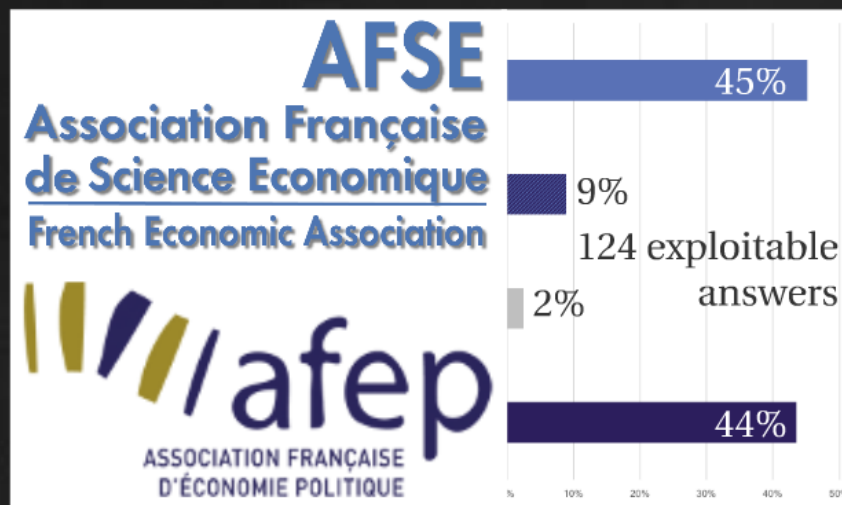
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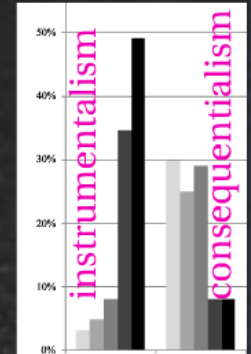Relationship between economics and other social sciences (2)

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AFEP/Heterodox = 0,07, and AFSE/Neither = 0,08
But, Neoclass/Neither = 0,31

	CRITICAL REALISTS	NEO-INSTITUTIONALISTS	INSTITUTIONALISTS
NEO-INSTITUTIONALISTS	0,99		
INSTITUTIONALISTS	0,48	0,65	
STANDARDS	0,70	0,53	0,62

Heterodox/Neoclass = 0,71, and AFSE/AFEP = 0,58

	Posture / conception	CRITICAL REALISTS 24,2%		NEO-INSTITUTIONALISTS 27,4%		INSTITUTIONALISTS 20,2%		STANDARDS 28,2%	
		Moy.	Diff. (test)	Moy.	Diff. (test)	Moy.	Diff. (test)	Moy.	Diff. (test)
Prop1.1	Realism	2,7	-0,8 (***)	3,5		3,8	0,6 (**)	3,3	
Prop1.2	Constructivism	2,9		2,9		2,7		2,4	-0,4 (*)
Prop1.3	Instrumentalism	4,2		4,1		4,1		4,4	
Prop1.4	Conséquentialism	2,4		2,6		2,7		2,0	-0,5 (*)
Prop1.5	Critical realism	4,2	1,1 (***)	3,2		3,2		2,9	-0,6 (***)
Prop2.1	Mecanistic	2,7	-0,7 (**)	3,9	1 (***)	3,2		2,9	
Prop2.2	Evolutionary	3,3		3,9	0,5 (**)	4,2	0,9 (***)	2,8	-1 (***)
Prop2.3	Forecasting	2,3	-0,7 (***)	3,6	1,1 (***)	2,8		2,5	-0,4 (*)
Prop2.4	Decision-making	3,7		4,1	0,3 (*)	4,0		3,9	
Prop2.5	Resource allocation	1,8	-0,6 (***)	2,9	0,8 (***)	2,5		2,0	
Prop2.6	Optimality	1,7	-1,2 (***)	3,5	1,3 (***)	1,8	-0,9 (***)	3,0	0,6 (**)
Prop3.1	Exclusive	4,7	0,3 (**)	4,1	-0,6 (***)	4,7		4,5	
Prop3.2	Inclusive	2,0	-1,2 (***)	3,4	0,8 (***)	2,2	-0,8 (***)	3,5	0,9 (***)
Prop4.1	Situated Rationality	3,8		3,7		3,8		3,5	
Prop4.2	Cognitive Rationality	2,2	-1,3 (***)	3,9	0,9 (***)	3,0		3,6	0,5 (**)
Prop4.3	Argumentative Rationality	3,3		4,1	1,1 (***)	3,8	0,6 (*)	2,3	-1,4 (***)
Prop4.4	Maximisation Rationality	1,6	-1,9 (***)	3,9	1,2 (***)	3,1		3,3	
Prop4.5	Calculator (perfect) Rationality	1,4	-1 (***)	2,9	0,9 (***)	2,3		2,1	
Prop4.6	Bounded Rationality	1,4	-1,4 (***)	3,8	1,7 (***)	2,8		2,1	-0,7 (**)
Prop4.7	Secondary hypothesis	3,1		2,5		2,7		2,6	
Prop5.1	Institutionalism	4,4		4,0	-0,3 (**)	4,7	0,6 (***)	4,0	
Prop5.2	Naturalism	1,6	-1 (***)	3,3	1,2 (***)	1,6	-1 (***)	2,8	0,5 (*)
Prop5.3	Contractualism	2,8	-0,8 (***)	4,2	1,1 (***)	2,9	-0,6 (**)	3,5	
Prop5.4	Negative	3,5		3,3		4,0	0,7 (***)	3,1	-0,5 (**)
Prop5.5	Perfect markets	1,9	-0,6 (**)	2,8	0,6 (**)	1,9	-0,6 (**)	2,7	0,4 (**)
Prop5.6	Fictional	4,3		4,2		4,4		4,1	
Prop5.7	How equilibrium is reached	1,7	-1,1 (***)	3,4	1,1 (***)	1,4	-1,4 (***)	3,3	1 (***)
Prop5.8	Political simulations	2,2	-1,2 (***)	3,9	1 (***)	3,0		3,4	
Prop5.9	Partial equilibrium	3,1		3,8	0,5 (**)	3,6		3,3	

Instrum
politica

Econom
rationa
coordin

Econom

👎 C

Rejection
define op

Skeptical
· economi
· economi
  phenom

Skeptical
· markets
· markets

Rejection

| | 80% are "heterodox" | | 20% are "heterodox" | | 76% are "heterodox" | | 20% are "heterodox" |

| | CRITICAL REALISTS | | NEO-INSTITUTIONALISTS | | INSTITUTIONALISTS | | STANDARDS | |

80% are
"heterodox"

20% are
"heterodox"

(44% of the "neoclass")

76% are
"heterodox"

20% are
"heterodox"

56% of the "neoclass")

73% are AFEP
members

65% are AFSE
members

72% are AFEP
members

74% are AFEP
members

Women, Insecure
employment,
Youngests

Elders, (and non-HDR)

CRITICAL REALISTS

NEO-INSTITUTIONALISTS

INSTITUTIONALISTS

STANDARDS

CRITICAL REALISTS		NEO-INSTITUTIONALISTS		INSTITUTIONALISTS		STANDARDS	
24,2%		27,4%		20,2%		28,2%	
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4,2		4,1		4,1		4,4	
2,4		2,6		2,7		2,0	-0,5 (*)
4,2	1,1 (***)	3,2		3,2		2,9	-0,6 (***)
2,7	-0,7 (**)	3,9	1 (***)	3,2		2,9	
3,3		3,9	0,5 (**)	4,2	0,9 (***)	2,8	-1 (***)
2,3	-0,7 (***)	3,6	1,1 (***)	2,8		2,5	-0,4 (*)
3,7		4,1	0,3 (*)	4,0		3,9	
1,8	-0,6 (***)	2,9	0,8 (***)	2,5		2,0	
1,7	-1,2 (***)	3,5	1,3 (***)	1,8	-0,9 (***)	3,0	0,6 (**)
4,7	0,3 (**)	4,1	-0,6 (***)	4,7		4,5	
2,0	-1,2 (***)	3,4	0,8 (***)	2,7	-0,8 (***)	3,5	0,9 (***)
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3,1		3,8	0,5 (**)	3,6		3,3	

👍 General agreements

Instrumental posture (scientifically and politically)

Economic reality is defined by (i) situated rationality, and (ii) the importance of rules in coordination settings

Economics deals with social phenomenons

👎 Characteristics of heterodoxies

Rejection of "optimality": neither markets nor economics define optimal society's functioning

Skeptical as regard to economics:
- economics cannot and sould not define optimal society's functioning
- economics concepts and tools are not fit to understand social phenomenon)

Skeptical as regard to social role of markets
- markets do not enables reaching equilibrium and optimum
- markets sould not function in reality as in theory (pure and perfect)

Rejection of Naturalism (markets are not "natural")

Classification

① **Indentify these groups**

For each proposal, how different is the evaluation within the group vs. in the rest of the sample (Wilcoxon test)?

② **Proximity analysis**

Which groups are closer (more distant) ?

In terms of methodological practices

Average of absolute difference for each proposal ($\frac{\text{Sum } |v_i^g - v^I|}{n}$)

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methodological

51% of the economists in the sample use econometrics (37% uses modeling)

Only 11% use experiment as a method

CRITICAL REALISTS	NEO- INSTITUTIONALISTS	INSTITUTIONALISTS	STANDARDS
Monography (48%) History (58%)	Econometrics (38%) Modeling (35%)	Interviews (40%)	Econometrics (30%) Modeling(33%) Interview (3%)
2.9	2.2	2.8	1.7

Nb method declared (2.3 in gen. pop.)

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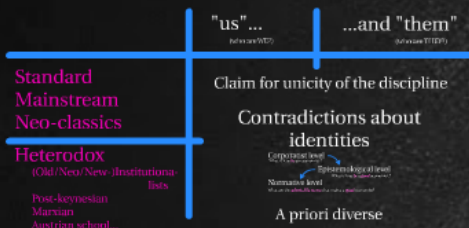
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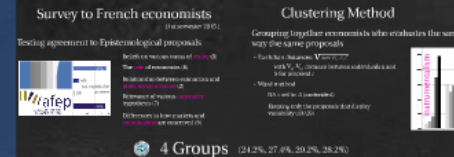The French academic context is relativey tensed

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