

Values and Perceptions of the Economy in Argentina

The Economy is part of the activities of any civilization and culture. As some authors refer, economic instability in Argentina is tightly linked to society's difficulties to assimilate economic activities as legitimate and socially positive. When an activity as essential to a society's development such as the economy, along with the institutions, roles and agents that allow its functioning, has problems justifying its existence, there is consequently a partial, defective and conflictive deployment that echoes in the whole social dynamism.

Starting from the hypothesis that the sphere of economic activities in our country and in our region suffers from a high degree of instability—which includes both private business activity and the economic policy of the Government—in September 2016 we conducted the *III Conference on Philosophy of Economy* of UCA with the subject “Values and cultural perceptions of the economy in Argentina and Latin America”. The aim of this Conference was to explore the current state of affairs regarding social assessment and perception of economic activities in this region. Thus, their causes, historical origins, the main issues in conflict and their possible evolution towards the future were particularly studied.

The Conference was divided into four main panels—and two parallel sessions—: the historical-cultural and statistic sphere was held by Marita Carballo and Carlos Newland, with comments from Álvaro Perpere; then, the business perspective undertaken by María Marta Preziosa and Tristán Rodríguez Loredó, with comments by Renée Carrelo; an economic panel with Walter Sosa Escudero and Juan Carlos De Pablo with comments by Octavio Groppa; and at last the study of the political-institutional aspect comprised of Marcos Novaro and Gerardo Sanchis Muñoz, with comments by Carlos Hoevel. The articles we present in this 92nd issue of *Cultura Económica* arise from a selection of some of these papers.

The first paper by Carlos Newland seeks to compare and contrast the economy's perception within Hispanic American countries and Commonwealth nations. The *World Values Survey* represents the ground base of the work that shows the differences of perception and assesment of capitalist economy, economic freedom, internal and external competition, initiative and private business management and the concept of market as a wealth creator. To represent Latin America, the author has selected Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay, which are compared to the results of the survey in the United States, New Zealand and Australia. The collected information allows the author to conclude that the Anglo-Saxon countries show a greater acceptance and appreciation of market economy than its perception in Latin America, a phenomenon that seems to have increased even more in the first three decades of the new millennium.

In the second article of this issue, María Marta Preziosa presents the results of her research on the prevailing culture among the companies' employees in general and of Argentina in particular. Preciosa starts from the idea that every organization is a microcosm, whose members share the same vision from a collective experiential basis. Thus, the author utilizes a research method that collects the images and metaphors shared by the members of different organizations to analyze values and perceptions inherent to that organizational microcosm. This research is documented in the paper through group drawings made by employees of companies in Argentina, and in the

end, the semantic and moral connotations of employees' valuations in relation to their companies are explored.

Then, Tristán Rodríguez Loredo presents a paper on the perception of entrepreneurs in Argentine society, and explores the different conceptions regarding CEOs' social role in public opinion. Also, it analyzes the perception of the Government's role in economic administration. The study shows that there are asymmetries in the perception that population has of business leaders, which are perhaps too demanding. Finally, the author observes that there is a gap between what society judges to be right and the role that entrepreneurs should take to satisfy the demands that the same public asks of the economic system.

Later, Milan Jelic's article analyzes the relationship between corporate social responsibility and corporate performance using the theoretical framework of civil economy and common goods. These approaches firstly allow describing possible pro-social behaviors at a micro-economic level, and then presenting several cases of companies that show in a real way how CSR can be cost-effective. Despite additional short-term costs this different form of doing business may entail, the author presents its benefits and opportunities in terms of creativity and innovation in the long run.

Finally, we present the work of Andrea Serrano y Carlos Stella, members of the "Open Seminar in Civil Economy" held by the *Centro de Estudios en Economía y Cultura*, which revolves around the possibility of finding business initiatives that might be framed within the perspective of Civil Economy as an alternative to the current deficient economic models. The paper is a case-study of the social project "Hands at work" carried out after several months of research at the pharmaceutical retail *Farmacy* and it focuses on the analysis of the notion of reciprocity observed in the bounds developed by all the agents that take part in the project. The authors study also the impact of this programme in the company's core activities.

We would be glad if this issue gained the readers' interest and also if it is able to provide a new perspective on our country and our region's economic problems analysis.

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