

Antonio Magliulo, *Gli economisti e la costruzione dell'Europa*, Apes Edizioni, Rome, 2019.

Antonio Magliulo's engaging book, as the title indicates, analyses the construction of Europe through the history of economic thought. Europe, indeed, is a transnational community that has been studied by multiple historical and non-historical disciplines. This pioneering research adds a further reflection, above and beyond the ultra-classical works on the political, social, philosophical, and religious history of Europe.

In this ambitious work, the author poses the problem of the lack of a comprehensive comparative study of the history of economic thought in Europe. Magliulo's research proposes a holistic European economic approach rather than exclusively national perspectives. The author seeks to answer this significant question: Why hasn't the history of economic thought, which is part of the historical disciplines, made a contribution to the understanding of European history and, generally, of our global and intercultural society?

The book is intended to place the history of economic thought within world history. The aim is to show how the great economic ideas influenced the construction of Europe over the long run. Thus the book combines two fields of history, political and economic, that tend to be treated separately by scholars and have seldom been interwoven. Further, at the same time, the history of economics often neglects Europe as a whole. Antonio Magliulo's book thus pioneers a discussion combining narrative and analytical elements.

The rise of a melting-pot society leads to the rediscovery of a comparative methodological approach in the social sciences as well as in world historiography. Comparative analysis is the cornerstone of the work. Magliulo sets up his research methodology by extending the tridimensional approach of the history of economic thought (theory-culture-politics) to the supranational, European dimension. Can the history of economics as a discipline contribute to the understanding of modern

European identities? In answering this question, the author traverses centuries of European history.

From ancient Rome to the medieval world, Magliulo's narrative highlights the building of Europe as a community of Christian nations, united by diversity.

The second chapter covers Reformation and Counter-Reformation in the sixteenth century, which split the continent into two religious spheres corresponding essentially to northern and southern Europe. This division resulted in the formation of two different models of capitalism. Mercantilism was a crucial constituent in the formation of despotic monarchy in Europe until the eighteenth century, when the thought of the Physiocrats contributed to the rise of enlightened despotism.

The third chapter elucidates the role of classical economics and the corresponding demise of the doctrine of mercantilism between 1776 and 1870. These thinkers also pointed to the social institutions that could make cooperation between sovereign states possible. Magliulo calls this the "harmony of national interests". Going by classical economic doctrine, free trade in goods and services itself is sufficient; accordingly international cooperation is possible and mutually advantageous.

The fourth chapter highlights the epochal passage from the liberal Europe of the nineteenth century to the war-torn Europe of the twentieth. Between the belle époque and the outbreak of World War I a battle of ideas was fought out between the new orthodoxy of neoclassical economics and the heresy of statalism. The neoclassicists prevailed in economics but not in society or politics, where statalism triumphed (with such doctrines as Marxism, socialism and historicist interventionism).

The fifth chapter traces the revolution in economic thought in the interwar period. At first the struggle was between a multifaceted neo-liberalism (Hayek, Keynes and Röpke) and a cryptic corporatism. With the Depression, classical economics suffered a setback and there was a

resurgence of the doctrine of national economic sovereignty. The State existed, and nations were no longer disposed to submit to automatic economic mechanisms that could undermine national sovereignty.

The sixth chapter covers the Bretton Woods period from 1944 to 1973. Europe was divided into two blocs. The West followed the model of liberal democracy and market economy, while the East pursued popular democracy and central planning.

The seventh chapter treats the transformation of the world economy: this is a landmark piece. From the rise of Hayek's economic ideas to the Great Recession that began in 2007, it analyses the functionalist line followed by the Europeans. The result was the institution of the Single European Market with free movement of goods, services, people and capital, paving the way to the Economic and Monetary Union (which guarantees price stability). The chapter describes the fall of Keynesianism, the rebirth of Austrian neoliberalism and monetarism, and the rise of German ordoliberalism, which inspired the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992.

The final chapter, on the policies pursued by the European Union in the last decade, analyses the limits to neoliberalism and functionalism. Europe has fallen into a political trilemma. It must decide whether to turn back to a new Bretton Woods regime restoring national sovereignty or press forward for the foundation of a federal union capable of governing the European market.

In conclusion, Magliulo finds that economic culture helped to direct Europe towards a certain idea of the common good. The final point is that the market alone cannot assure the common good of people and nations. Instead there is a need for a new, democratic supranational order that not only defends the market but also orients it.

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