

The Socio-Economic Philosophy of Keynes: Lessons for the 21st Century

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Keynes is undoubtedly the most influential economic thinker of the 20th century. His economic analysis, while discredited by neo-classical economists during the ongoing neo-liberal period, remains perfectly relevant. Most of his ideas and policy recommendations are still of a peculiar importance, especially in times of crisis. Keynes main concerns, in the historical context of the first half of the twentieth century, are about how to manage the consequences of World War I, to correct monetary and financial imbalances, to fight against mass unemployment, or more generally to implement an international environment aiming to favour peace. If chapter 24 of the *General Theory* (1936) gives us central elements concerning the social philosophy of Keynes as regards unemployment, inequality, uncertainty, the role of the State or the place of economics, his *Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1919), together with the *General Theory* and other writings, gives us the key to understand the failure of the present neo-liberal prescriptions – whether to developed or developing countries – while giving a very interesting analysis of globalisation, economic crisis and their consequences.

Moreover, we can show that behind his economic revolution hides a model of society which appears to be compatible with sustainable development. Thus, if Keynes appears to be in advance on his time, one problem remains in his analysis, namely the missing role of power and his exaggerated emphasis put in ideas over vested interests.

Consequently, the paper could be organised as follow:

1. The socio-economic philosophy of Keynes
 - Unemployment and inequality
 - Investment and the role of the State
 - Debt and globalization (opposition to Washington consensus based approaches)
 - Economics as a secondary science which aim is to satisfy basic needs

2. Keynes and Sustainable Development: A Precursor that ignores himself?
 - The role of growth and demand
 - Uncertainty and precautionary principle
 - Environment and arts

3. The missing point: the role of power

- Ideas more important than vested interests
- Why not dealing with power?
- Correcting this lack of Keynes analysis by using Galbraith "Anatomy of power"