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Albert O. Hirschman and the Origins of the Possibilist Economy

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to describe the origins of Possibilist Economics through a brief biographical account of the development of the ideas of Albert Otto Hirschman, the economist who was the founding father of this new branch of economics. The reader is also offered a description of the historical context in which Hirschman worked and developed his ideas.

Objective: Describe how Possibilist Economics came about and what the method of Possibilist Economics is.

Methods: The main method used for the development of this research is both deductive and inductive, i.e. a use of both classical research tools. The line followed is that of analysis made through the biographical path and historical context in which the economist of Possibilism. The research is based both on the analyses and study of the numerous books and articles written by A.O. Hirschman and on the direct experience of research and work that the authors of this article have carried out with Hirschman himself and with Luca Meldolesi (Italian economist and historian), the latter considered to be Hirschman's greatest collaborator and divulgator in the world.

Results and their significance: The research is an introduction to the fundamentals of the possibilist economics model

Keywords: Possibilist Economics, Albert Otto Hirschman, Development Economics, Business Development Economics.

Introduction

This research is on the origins of Possibilist economics, an analysis made through the biographical path and historical context in which the economist of Possibilism, Albert O. Hirschman, developed his ideas and method. The description of the model of possibilist economics is limited to its early developments. The analysis of the origins of possibilist thought is developed by following the course of Hirschman's life, from his youth until the 1970s, and the books he produced during this period and the development of his theses on possibilism.

Methods and materials

The biographical background to the development of the Ideas of the Economist of Possibilism. Otto Albert Hirschman was born in Berlin, Germany, on 7 April 1915 (died at the age of 97 on December 10, 2012 – Edwing Township, New Jersey, United States). His parents are Jewish, and his father is a well-known city surgeon, specialising in neurosurgery. The latter comes from an East German family that emigrated to the United States of America. He returned to Germany as a young man to study and remained there. He died a natural death in 1933. Both he and his sisters were not practising religious, and he accepted Protestant baptism at a very young age. His affluent economic circumstances – middle-class at the time – allowed him to attend the 'Französische GYMNASIUM' in Berlin for nine years, where Hirschman received a classical education that enabled him to appreciate important philosophers such as Hegel and the French philosophers as well as to study texts in French. In those years, together with his older sister, Ursula, he began to approach the thought and studies of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Kautsky. In 1931, he became involved in the socialist workers' youth in pre-Nazi Germany.

In 1933 Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany. Hirschman had a brief period of illegal political activity in the socialist movement, but the anti-Semitic and anti-democratic repression of the Nazis and the sudden death of his father after an operation (March 1933) led him to leave Germany at the age of 18 (April 1933) and emigrate to Paris in France. He immediately enrolled at the University of Paris, resumed the economic studies he had begun in Berlin, and returned to his political

commitment by meeting the environment of German, Italian and Menshevik political emigration. The political exigencies of the time led him to change his name to Albert, a name that gave him a less German appearance. In 1935 he moved to London, where he resumed his studies at the London School of Economics, and in 1936 he enlisted in the Spanish Republican Army. In 1937 he moved to Italy, to the city of Trieste, to join his sister Ursula, who had married Eugenio Colorni, an Italian high school teacher. After graduating in economics, he became a volunteer assistant at the Institute of Statistical Sciences, directed by Professor 'Paolo Luzzato Fegiz'. Hirschman's role at the Institute of Statistics was that of 'detective' of the Italian Fascist economy, as he was secretly commissioned by a French magazine to send reports on the Italian economy. The Italian dictatorship prevented any knowledge of the real statistical data, and so Hirschman had the arduous task of examining the official data on prices, wages, currency reserves, etc., and trying to extract as much as possible of the information that corresponded most closely to the real situation, discovering things that the Fascist authorities wanted to hide. He thus became a good expert on the Italian economy and managed to gain recognition as an economist because he was able to learn the trade in a short time without first having to judge the absolute soundness of Keynes's General Theory. But the young economist's passion for social justice was far from diminished, and he soon became a militant anti-fascist, albeit in a very peculiar position. In fact, he preferred to be at the disposal of anti-fascism 'in general' and used his German passport to make numerous journeys with double-bottomed suitcases full of documents useful to the fight against fascism.

Albert Hirschman was Jewish, and Mussolini's racial laws of 1938 forced him to return to Paris, where he found work as a journalist and economic researcher in a credit institution. At the outbreak of the Second World War, he joined the French army as a volunteer and remained there until France's defeat (June 1940). He then resumed his militant anti-fascist activities, this time in an organisation run from the United States by 'Karl Frank'. He soon became the main aide to *Varian Fry*, the head of the New Beginning, an organisation that sought to save Jewish intellectuals and artists from extermination by the Nazis. Under the false name of Albert Herman, he helped them to leave Marseilles for the United States, providing them with false passports, black market money and so on [1].

This militant anti-fascist activity was short-lived, and he too was forced to flee to America in December 1940, avoiding arrest and the predictable consequences. Hirschman had long studied the Italian economy during the Fascist period and was given an important assignment in the US by *John B. Condliffe*, the New Zealand economist for the League of Nations. The latter was conducting research on European trade control regimes (the Trade Regulation Project) and asked Hirschman to edit the Italian section of the study. This work was of great importance for the economist, because in 1940 Condliffe was working as a professor of international economics at Berkley and was able to obtain a Rockefeller Fellowship for Hirschman, which enabled him to obtain a visa to enter the United States. This turning point in his career provided the impetus for his first book: *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade*, written in 1941/42.

Hirschman's move to America marks the end of an early phase in our character's life and thus an early phase in his intellectual formation. It is in this phase that the seeds of the birth of Possibilist thought are to be found, the foundations of which were laid by his youthful intellectual training in Italy. Also important for the development of 'Possibilism' in this historical phase were the cultural influences he had in a particular Italian milieu, that is the background of *Eugenio Colorni* and other anti-fascist intellectuals, where a completely new intellectual attitude was maturing in the debate of progressive thought, with entirely new intellectual foundations. It was in this Italian intellectual environment that the ideas of young intellectuals such as Ernesto Rossi and Altiero Spinelli, who had been imprisoned by Mussolini for being anti-fascists, circulated. And from them, from their reflections, particularly those of *Altiero Spinelli* and *Eugenio Colorni*, a new intellectual position in democratic and progressive thought began to mature, namely the detachment from traditional ideologies and the rejection of these in political and intellectual action, not because of the immaturity of the situation or tactical errors, "but because of the inefficiency of the general approach" (Colorni, 1944).

Hirschman's Possibilism was born in the world of development economics, from the cultural influences of other economists he encountered in the thirty years after the Second World War. But its roots are more distant, to be found in the environment in which he lived as a young graduate, in his European contacts with intellectuals of all kinds. We are also led to believe that his character, his passion for social and economic progress, his peculiar way of approaching problems, with his desire to

'do something now' without stopping at personal ideological and political obstacles, helped him to develop his ideas. The influence of Eugenio Colomi was to be felt by Hirschman for several years, as can be seen in his first book, *'National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade'*.

The new ideas of E. Colomi and A. Spinelli generally consisted, as Hirschman himself states, in the rejection of the need for a complete <<Weltanschauung>> (in contrast to the traditional German and Italian culture), and the following of an intellectual taste in which nothing was taken for granted except one's own doubts, capable of consolidating a spirit full of experimental curiosity, starting from the conviction that "doubt can strengthen action instead of weakening it".

Settling in Berkley, Hirschman married the Russian-born anthropologist Sarah Shapiro in 1941. Despite his new marital situation, he had no intention of giving up the fight for freedom against Nazi and fascist oppression. After obtaining American citizenship, he volunteered for the US Army in 1942 (under the name Hirschman) and fought in North Africa and Italy until the end of 1944. On his return, he struck up a fruitful intellectual friendship with the economist Alexander Gerschenkran, whom he had met in 1941 while working with him on the Condliffe project. It was at Gerschenkran's invitation that Hirschman accepted a position with the Federal Reserve Board as an economist for the Marshall Plan, the famous European economic recovery programme. It was then that the Hirschman economist began to develop, if one can say so, and the first dissertations on the models and schemes of the dominant economic theory began to emerge in him [2].

After the publication of his book *'National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade'* in 1945, he worked intensively on the problems of economic reconstruction in Italy and France, as well as on the various schemes (proposed by many) for European economic integration. His work allowed him to be both a scholar of economic and political problems and an 'applied economist', basing his research not on abstract theories but on careful observation. During the years of economic reconstruction of the European countries that benefited from the Marshall Plan, Hirschman focused his attention on the economic problems of France and especially Italy, as well as on some European economic integration projects. There are several of his writings from this period (1946-1952); in some of them one can sense how important his role as "economic detective" was in Italy. This is work that he carries out with intensity and sometimes enthusiasm, but his studies on European 'reconstruction' are not lacking in originality, a characteristic of the author who is always looking for something new, something different in his economic analyses. We have just alluded to another characteristic of Hirschman's thought, that of being "transgressive" with regard to the rigid schemata of the various economic theories, which often puts him on a collision course (although this is not the case in the writings of the period mentioned above), sometimes not explicitly, with the usual ways of thinking in this discipline.

Hirschman became an economist in a working group which he divided into two sub-groups belonging to two different camps of economists:

a. the "conservatives", tied to orthodox economic theory, rigidly "pro-market", who wanted to impose their "prescriptions" for stopping inflation and straightening out the exchange rate, which Hirschman commented were socially explosive, politically naive and economically counterproductive.

b. the innovators, who proposed "creative remedies" included in the Marshall Plan and who promoted new doctrines such as "dollar scarcity", but who essentially sought to impose their theses by becoming "doctrinaires" themselves.

He was on the side of the innovators, with some reservations about their political positions, and always concerned about the interference in the policies of the recipient countries that his colleagues (in good faith, according to Hirschman) had adopted. During these years, he published more than 40 books, all dedicated to economic policies useful to Italy and France and to the prospects of economic unity among European countries, starting with the proposal of a European Payments Union. It was only in his last months on the board of the US central bank that he began to return to his studies on international trade, revising the themes already analysed in *National Power* on foreign trade and the industrialisation of backward countries. In June 1951, he participated in a conference on development at the University of Chicago (the 27th Institute of the 'Normann Wait Harris Memorial Foundation'), which Alexander Gerschenkron, and several anthropologists actively joined. On that occasion, Hirschman presented a small essay: *'Effect of industrialisation on the markets of industrial countries'*. In addition, he wrote an article for the Italian public: *Industrial nations and the industrialisation of underdeveloped countries*, published in *'Economia internazionale'* (August 1951). These works are the first steps in the author's turn to the problems of underdeveloped countries, to the problems of the development of backward countries. In these articles, he poses the problem of the industrial development of non-industrialised countries, starting from the hypothesis that we can call

"win-win", according to which industrialised countries have much to gain and nothing to fear by promoting the industrial development of other countries. These considerations indicated a change in his interests, and in 1952 he decided to move to an underdeveloped country with political tensions, Colombia. Hirschman left a prestigious (and lucrative) post and, on the recommendation of the World Bank, joined the Colombian government as an economic and financial adviser on national planning.

This is a new phase in Hirschman's intellectual journey. The impact of the new social reality, the type of work he was doing, were fundamental to the development of his thinking and led him to write perhaps his most famous book, *'The Strategy of Economic Development'*, in which the POSSIBILIST methodology begins to take on a more complete physiognomy. The decision to move with his family, to a little-known country, to a completely new reality, shows even more the character of our personality, intellectually and passionately engaged in the struggles for justice and economic and social development, as well as the cultural and intellectual need to always explore "new fields", always avoiding approaching problems in an "a priori and prejudiced" way. Hirschman's contractual position in the new country seemed to give him a free hand in terms of his work, as he was officially employed by the government in Bogotá, but by the World Bank. This situation deceived him, as he believed he could devote his working time to a variety of concrete economic policy issues, learning as much as possible about the Colombian economy and hoping to contribute, however marginally, to improving public decision-making. In fact, the World Bank government soon made it clear that it expected an initiative to formulate an ambitious economic development plan. He was asked to do a programming task against which he rebelled both because of its very uselessness and because it repeated what he had detested in the work of his 'innovative' collaborators, in the years of the Marshall Plan, as we mentioned earlier. This was the starting point of his revolt for the Colombian post in 1954, which marked the end of a first phase and the birth of a new period in the process of the formation of Possibilism [3].

National Power analysis. In this period of Hirschman's working life, certainly the most important work is the book *'National Power and the structure of foreign trade'* where the foundations of the future possibilist intellectual development and the new methodology of investigation that will characterise it are already being laid.

The book is about the power of some states to politically influence other states, a power inherent in international trade. The historical background of the book is therefore Germany's success in expanding its trade in Europe and the apparent extension of its political influence to other states. The author attempts to understand and explain how some powerful states manage to dominate weaker states through the weapon of international trade. Hirschman writes: 'in trying to explain what had happened, I was dwelling not so much on the diabolical cunning of the Nazis, or the technical innovations of Dr. Shackt... but on those structural features of international economic relations that make the pursuit of power a relatively easy task'.

Hirschman attempts to establish a connection between economics and politics, focusing on the possibilities that strong sovereign states must exploit international trade for the purpose of influence and political domination over other states with which they engage in trade. The subject matter seems to touch on the problem of imperialism, but one might think that Hirschman wants to do a further reworking of the theories of economic imperialism. This is a question that does not interest our author. In the introduction, the author immediately tries to frame the problem by emphasising that international economic relations, together with the 'war of nerves', were the main feature of relations between states in the pre-war period. For Hirschman, it is the very nature of international trade that contains the necessary elements that can be used for the purposes of domination. This is an important problem that, according to Hirschman, had not yet received the attention it deserved and that does not concern a temporary aspect of the international situation, but has a much more solid and lasting basis. His research is not a re-examination of the various doctrines of imperialism, which have generally sought to show how the internal contradictions within the capitalist system inevitably lead to confrontation for the conquest of markets and sources of raw materials; but it does go beyond the new interpretations of the period in which he wrote, which take for granted a policy inclined towards power, whatever its origins, and direct research towards the use of economic instruments for such a policy, not towards the circumstances that facilitate it. Hirschman starts from this second interpretation; he takes a national power for granted and succeeds in analysing a problem that has always been neglected by other economic analyses, namely that of the nature of international trade, which inherently has the potential to be exploited for the purposes of domination and imperialism. We can already see an intellectual characteristic of our author, namely that of the search for and study of

something new that goes beyond the interpretation of reality within the framework of the pre-constituted schemes of the 'grand theories', typical of his *forma mentis* and methodology that will have a more complete development in the 1950s-60s, but which already finds an initial application in his youthful writing. First, he feels the need to show a brief history of economic thought on the relationship between foreign trade and national power, from mercantilism onwards. In it, Hirschman reconstructs some central stages in the economic theory and policy of international trade, from Machiavelli, advocate of the 'non-' connection between economics and politics, to A. Smith, Hume, etc., who, albeit in different ways, took for granted the connection between the enrichment of a state and the increase of its power at the expense of others. Economic thinking on the relationship between foreign trade and in particular the idea of identifying the power of a state as the primary purpose of economic policy has its origins in mercantilism throughout history. Hirschman points out that this relationship had not been considered in the scholarly debate because the pursuit of power was seen as a subordinate or exceptional aim of a state's economic policy and the latter had to have as its objective the pursuit of the country's welfare. Historically, the idea of a relationship between economic policy and a sovereign state's quest for national power had formed the basis of mercantilist thought. The author indicates how the Mercantilists advocated policies that had the dual objective of increasing the wealth and political power of one state at the expense of others. Indeed, the Mercantilists advocated the balance of trade doctrine, by which they assumed that a nation could achieve an increase in wealth at the expense of others through a balance of payments that produced a net inflow of gold and silver. This net increase in the stock of precious metals would have contributed to the increase in the power of the state (through the accumulation of treasure). Hirschman summarises this connection between national power and wealth, formulated by mercantilist doctrines, through the following syllogism: MAJOR PREMISE: an increase in a country's wealth represents an increase in its absolute power. MAJOR PREMISE: an increase in wealth, achieved through foreign trade, results in a loss of wealth for other countries. CONCLUSION: an increase in wealth is accompanied by an increase in political power; this is the goal of the Mercantilists [4].

Such a conception of wealth and the state's pursuit of it is thus closely linked to the aims of national power. Later, the relationship between wealth and state power was taken up first by Hume, who saw a harmonious relationship between the greatness of a state and the happiness of its subjects, and then by A. Smith, who argued that defence was more important than wealth. Smith argues for 'defence' and against 'opulence', but Hirschman argues that his view should not be misrepresented, as it tends to come closer to the mercantilist positions, while at the same time undermining some of their premises. On the one hand, A. Smith, in his famous work 'An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations', states that the great aim of the political economy of every state is to increase its wealth and power; and he also points out that in modern warfare, arms expenditures benefit the nations that can best support them, i.e. the rich and civilised, much more than the poor and barbaric.

On the other hand, however, there is the Smithian demonstration of the postulate of mutual benefits in international trade, according to which the gain of one nation does not correspond to a loss for another but always brings mutual benefits to those involved. In this way, Hirschman emphasises how it is the mercantilists' minor premise that is denied by Smith. The latter sets the stage for the intellectual contrast between wealth and power that was an integral part of the confrontation of ideas between liberalist and protectionist economists. Although, Hirschman warns, it would be an oversimplification to view the contrast between liberalists and protectionists simply as a struggle between reasons of wealth or political/commercial power. The major protectionist arguments against liberalism were about the dangers of over-specialisation of a state and the inability to develop national resources with which to contribute to the economic and military might of the state, as well as the fear of being cut off from essential supplies in times of emergency. The dangers of one state's dependence on others, as well as accusations of lack of patriotism, were the non-economic arguments most often used by protectionists in their polemics with the liberalists. The protectionists argued that their policy led to social peace (the preservation of social reality) and prepared for an eventual war. Because of these accusations, the liberalists have attempted to play down the dangers of dependency pointed out by their opponents [5].

The British economist, Macaulay, argued that dependence always exists and is extensive, it is a dependence on each state and climate. International trade would therefore have the effect of reducing the dependence of economies on climate and thus on the dangers of famine. Obviously, as Hirschman himself points out, these arguments are valid for a country that at that time had a dominance of maritime trade routes, namely England, while for other countries it would not have been the right

policy. However, Macaulay had the merit of highlighting the possibility of decreasing the dependency created by foreign trade by changing its distribution. This idea could only have a good application once governments had the ability to influence the geographical pattern of trade. But in the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century, nations and their respective governments were only concerned with achieving a rough balance between the economic benefits and possible military advantages of foreign trade on the one hand and the dangers on the other. In a paper by Herbert Wergo, a German economist, the above is argued. According to Wergo, in promoting the power policy of a state, protectionism and liberalism are not mutually exclusive. A state should divide the national economy into two systems: one protected, considered essential and the other free, to ensure a convenient and abundant supply of non-essential goods. Not necessarily, according to Hirschman: liberalist, protectionist and eclectic policies will lead to an increase in the relative power of a given country vis-à-vis others, if it pursues the right policies. On the other hand, trade relations between two countries make them interdependent, but this relationship is also asymmetrical. This asymmetry was emphasised by J. Mill, who showed that the material benefit derived from international trade is not necessarily shared equally between the nations involved. Since Mill's time, there were several English economists who studied the possibilities of how the terms of trade could be to change conditions to a nation's advantage. But their attentions often focused only on the economic aspect of the question, certainly not on the 'obvious' implications of power, i.e. the political dependence arising from trade itself, as Hirschman argues. However, this latter issue was studied by German economists, including Max Sering, who argued that between nations with reciprocal economic relations, there are situations of exploitation and subjugation. This argument, Hirschman concludes, has barely been touched upon by the economists, while he, based on practical contributions, the German trade offensive in south-eastern Europe being a relevant example, wants to demonstrate why and how foreign trade can be used as an instrument of national power politics.

Another aspect of this literature review on international trade is also clear. Hirschman makes a point of confronting the most important studies and research on the subject under study, showing how his analysis has a completely new point of view, despite the fact that it has been 'touched upon' by very important scholars; thus showing the attentive reader that it does not set out to 'undermine' the internal coherence of the dominant theories in this field, but simply to demonstrate that by looking at the old problem, foreign trade, from a new point of view, power politics, the former takes on a new physiognomy, since the new angle of view brings with it an inversion of the relationship between economics and politics.

While economic theses were aimed at strengthening public power, Hirschman starts from the assumption of the existence of national power and sets out to analyse how foreign trade can be exploited by power politics. Foreign trade as an instrument of national powers is the title that introduces the second chapter of the book, in which the author intends to attempt a theoretical-systematic approach to this topic, as he states. First, Hirschman tries to clarify how the fundamental basis of foreign trade can be used for the purposes of national power politics. He divides the effects of foreign trade on national power into two: the first is the supply effect and the second is the influence effect. In fact, he starts from the existence, as mentioned above, of 'national power' in the sense of the power of coercion that a nation can bring to bear on other nations (both military and peaceful) which depends on many factors (economic, military, political, etc.), and moves on to the analysis of the 'trade' factor alone, trying to establish how the latter can strengthen a state's position as an 'imperial power'. In Hirschman, an idea of limiting national economic sovereignty is present when he addresses the problem of trade relations between poor and rich countries, since he believes, observing the case of Hitler's Germany, that there is tremendous potential for power in international economic relations, so he proposes the creation of a body that has the power to supervise and organise the mechanisms of world trade [6].

The birth of possibilism. Possibilism for Hirschman is about entering into the complicated reality and dialectically observing all the possible relations that can be created. A few years after the release of his book 'National Power', Hirschman will point out how naive such a proposal for international sovereignty of trade is, and how, observing from the inside the relationship between rich and poor countries, the relationship between them is not unilaterally favourable to the former so much so that there is the possibility that poor countries can effectively oppose rich countries [7]. In his writings, Hirschman always enforces this dialectical logic, thus stating that any analysis must be approached from this premise. Returning to the question of centre and periphery countries, the fundamental problem posed by Albert Hirschman is the need to make poor countries overcome their

dependence on the rich, as well as trying to make the former develop and solve the problem of the misery of entire peoples. He believes in the postulate of Mutual Benefits, namely that the economic development of poor countries is a benefit to all others. Having been directly interested in the problem of the development of poor countries for years, he argues that there is a big gap between orthodox economic theories and reality. Economic theories are inadequate to solve the problems of development in poor countries, and direct observation of the problems leads to the realisation that social, political, psychological and cultural obstacles must be overcome for development to take place.

The attack is directed against mainstream economic science, against all those who believe they can solve development problems through it alone. It is believed, Hirschman argues, that it is enough to adapt the right integrated development programme, and poor countries would have progressed anyway. The needs of the population such as education, housing and others must be addressed, needs that differ from country to country and require the simultaneous work of experts in fields other than economics [8].

The working method he proposes is completely different from the traditional one: one must start from an internal analysis of the individual country covering all aspects, economic, political, cultural and so on, putting them all on an equal footing, i.e. without letting one of them prevail over the others. Thus the economics is formulated that rejects the logic of big changes, in favour of the logic of incremental changes. He starts from the assumption of the complexity of human reality and aims to create reasoning schemes, to formulate proposals, that consider the complexity of social and human reality. Hirschman places this problem in the context of his theoretical elaborations aimed at complicating the economy, and the conclusion he draws from this is the importance of 'direct observation' to be able to construct the grammar of perception of the change taking place, overcoming 'rigid and unidirectional' reasoning schemes that prevent one from understanding and dealing with reality [9].

Results and discussion

This study takes a brief biographical look at the development of the ideas of Albert Otto Hirschman, the economist of economic development, who was the founding father of this new branch of economics, POSSIBILISM.

The method that Hirschman wants to convey is useful for the discussion: avoid too one-sided and uniform diagnoses, imagine the unexpected, do not follow general principles and abstract prescriptions. The social world is highly variable, constantly changing, there are no permanent laws, while unexpected events happen all the time, while the economist must always question himself through self-subversion and multidisciplinary.

Conclusion

Albert Otto Hirschman had a cultural formation process that led him to overcome, as *Luca Meldolesi* argues, the generous but deceptive illusions of the culture of the European left, about the problem of change in a progressive sense of society. Of Jewish origin, he was educated, as we have said before, with authors such as Pascal and the French moralists, up to Marx and Lenin, thus with a strong passion for social justice. His passion for social change drove him to revolt against fascism and Nazism and to experience development in the economically backward countries of South America. Hirschman breaks away from utopias and identifies the need for change with the concrete possibilities offered by his own time. Identifying these possibilities and proposing concretely realisable solutions that can positively influence future political and social forces are the cornerstones of his 'passion for the possible'. In some of the essays collected in *'Essays in trespassing'*, the author confesses his propensity to transgress and trespass from the bounds of the economic discipline. Hirschman asserts that, in order to solve the puzzle of economic and political development, it is necessary to make "significant detours and incursions into other disciplines"; and there are numerous essays in which we can observe Hirschman's "incursions" into fields of analysis apparently far removed from those related to the problem under study, but which end up enriching the subsequent reflection on the same problems with new elements, according to the following rule: one research leads to another through an indirect circuit rich in analogies and associations. The most important transgressions he makes are with respect to traditional ways of thinking in economics. In fact, Hirschman seeks to overcome the problem raised by economists themselves, although not explicitly, namely that of the association of economics with mathematics, which leads economists to behave like natural scientists, looking for regularities in processes, stable relationships, to arrive at a synthetic and unique interpretation of reality. Hirschman points out that this is one of the causes of economists' inability to shed light on the

political consequences of economic development and the pernicious correlations between politics and economics.

His point of view is that of complexity. It is necessary, he argues, to develop reasoning schemes that take account of the complexity of social processes and to use analytical tools such as direct observation, rather than relying exclusively on the deductive analysis typical of economists. Moreover, since the 'social world' is too complicated to be imprisoned within unique and general laws, this leads to the point that 'uniqueness' and 'unrepeatability' live in that world, so that finding general laws of change in history is completely arbitrary; indeed, the opposite is true, since history teaches us that the possibility of encountering genuine novelty cannot be excluded. Its position with respect to traditional economics is that of overcoming all rigid and unidirectional schemes that arbitrarily, due to the fragility of assumptions and disinterest in the analysis of side effects, become an obstacle to the perception of reality.

Hirschman distances himself from Marginalist, orthodox Marxist, functionalist theories; but it is not a clear-cut detachment as he basically never questions the internal coherence of such theories; his is a critique from the outside against certain premises and conclusions. To complicate economics, Hirschman wants to explore the political dimensions implicit in economic phenomena, thus placing politics and economics on the same plane, making one permeate the other. At the same time, his reasoning schemes include both economic and non-economic forces in general: all of which allows him to create a systematic economic policy, a way of thinking 'open to the possible'. He wants to construct a mental attitude that is both 'dialectical' and 'possibilistic'. Instead of following the traditional paths of the social sciences, concerning the search for regularities, stable relations and uniform sequences, it is necessary to analyse multiplicities, the creative disorder of the human adventure, to bring out the specificities of a given event. Possibilism is the search for the individual of the unexpected, the possible rather than the general, the expected, the probable. Possibilism is also the 'philosophy' of what to do in practice, it is the strategy of incremental rather than global changes; the broadening of the spectrum of possibilities of the change process.

From some of his research he developed new economic concepts such as those of hidden rationalities, hidden blessings, cognitive dissonance, unbalanced growth, induction mechanisms, and others that are now well known in the world of development economics and practical economics.

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Альберт О. Хиршман және мүмкін экономика бастаулары

Бұл мақаланың мақсаты осы жаңа экономика саласының негізін қалаушы әкесі болған экономист Альберт Отто Хиршманның идеяларының дамуының қысқаша өмірбаяндық есебі арқылы POSSIBILISTSKAYA экономика компаниясының шығу тегін сипаттау болып табылады. Сондай-ақ оқырманға Хиршман жұмыс істеген және өз идеяларын дамытқан тарихи контексттің сипаттамасы ұсынылады

Мүмкіншіл экономика қалай болғанын және «POSSIBILISTSKAYA экономика» әдісі қандай екенін сипаттаңыз.

Зерттеулер А.О. Хиршман жазған көптеген кітаптар мен мақалаларды зерттеуге де, осы мақала авторлары Хиршманның өзімен және Лука Мельтолесимен (итальян экономисі және тарихшысы) жүргізген зерттеулер мен жұмыстардың тікелей тәжірибесіне де негізделген, соңғысы Хиршманның әлемдегі ең ұлы коллабораторы және дивульгері болып есептелді.

Зерттеулер - POSSIBILISTSKAYA экономика мүмкіндіктер моделінің негіздеріне кіріспе.

Түйінді сөздер: POSSIBILISTSKAYA экономика, Альберт Отто Хиршман, экономика развития, экономика развития бизнеса

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Альберт О. Хиршман и истоки POSSIBILISTSKOY экономики

Цель данной статьи – описать истоки POSSIBILISTSKOY экономики с помощью краткого биографического отчета о развитии идей Альберта Отто Хиршмана, экономиста, который был отцом-основателем этой новой отрасли экономики. Читателю также предлагается описание исторического контекста, в котором Хиршман работал и развивал свои идеи.

В статье отражено возникновение POSSIBILISTSKOY экономики, а также ее основные методы.

Исследование основано как на изучении многочисленных книг и статей А.О. Хиршмана, так и на непосредственном опыте исследований и работ, которые авторы данной статьи проводили как с самим Хиршманом, так и с Лукой Мельдолези (итальянским экономистом и историком), который считается величайшим соратником и распространителем Хиршмана в мире.

Исследование является введением в основы модели POSSIBILISTSKOY экономики

Ключевые слова: POSSIBILISTSKAYA экономика, Альберт Отто Хиршман, экономика развития, экономика развития бизнеса.

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