

Towards discursive economic policy as a research programme – Combining structural and discursive power in light of rising disparities of income and wealth

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When power is explicitly considered in (Heterodox) economics, it is oftentimes done with a focus on the power of different economics actors to structure economic relations as well as their outcome in terms of production, distribution, and consumption. Not so much at the centre is the discursive dimension of structural power which is the construal of certain economic relations and social positions as justified and others as unfounded via public discourses.

In this contribution, I aim to bring both aspects (structural power and its discursive dimension) together and, thus, add to recent cultural turns (e.g. Maesse, 2015; Sum & Jessop, 2013) in heterodox economics and more explicitly critical political economy. I do so with a specific focus on economic policy as well as recent increases of income and wealth. Hence, I assess the underlying power dimension of rising disparities of income and wealth by explicitly considering discourses and legitimation strategies as part of ongoing work (Theine & Rieder, 2018; Grisold & Theine, 2018; Rieder & Theine, forthcoming). I end with a reflection on the merits, but also open questions of such a tentative research programme, which could be termed ‘discursive economic policy’.

Literature

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