

The Pluralism of the Emergent-Order Paradigm

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Bio-sketch: David Emanuel Andersson is the Editor-in-chief of *Cosmos + Taxis*. David's more than 50 scholarly contributions have appeared in journals such as *Environment and Planning A*, *Journal of Economic Geography*, *Journal of Institutional Economics*, *Regional Science & Urban Economics*, *Technological Forecasting & Social Change* and *Urban Studies* and also include nine authored or edited books. His research focuses on the role of institutions and institutional change in urban and regional development.

The rationale for establishing *Cosmos + Taxis* is that we believe that emergent-order theorizing constitutes a promising unifying approach for understanding the social world. It can shed light on phenomena as different as market processes, political decision-making and religious worship. The articles in this issue not only show that the domain to which we can apply an emergent-order perspective is unusually expansive; they also show that this perspective allows for normative pluralism as well as pluralism of the subject matter.

Klein (2012), following Myrdal (1969), argues for self-disclosure about one's ideological commitments, the reason being that there is an unavoidable pre-analytic bias that influences individual social scientists in their choices of research topics. The authors in this issue of *Cosmos + Taxis* are exemplary in this respect; each makes absolutely clear that they are not neutral about societal outcomes. They have strong commitments to their respective visions of "the good society." Perhaps more surprising is the ideological diversity that is compatible with general adherence to the emergent-order paradigm, which has historically been associated with the classical liberalism of Friedrich Hayek and Michael Polanyi.

Steve Horwitz is perhaps closest to Hayek's version of classical liberalism. But he applies Hayekian theory in a novel context: childhood play. Austrian and institutional econo-

mists often draw attention to how informal norms reduce transaction costs and facilitate market exchange. But how these informal norms are transmitted and cultivated is for the most part treated as external to their analyses. Horwitz argues that transmission and learning of social norms are closely related to childhood play, and further that a particular type—unsupervised play—is more likely to develop the capabilities for effective adult participation in entrepreneurial markets as well as in non-coercive civil society contexts. He sees the increasing emphasis on adult supervision and "bubble-wrapped kids" as potentially detrimental to the classical liberal ideal of self-organization and self-regulation. The key dilemma for the classical liberal is whether the childhood experience of being closely supervised and protected by adults will translate into an increased reliance on government regulations and bailouts during adulthood.

Gus diZerega (1989) was the first scholar to introduce democracy as a political counterpart to the spontaneous market order, and later extended this reasoning (diZerega, 2013) to argue for the possibility of a Hayek-inspired defense of egalitarian left-liberalism. In the current issue, he makes the argument that a *taxis* is not simply an instrumental organization that unambiguously pursues its founder's goals, but a more complex entity that tends to develop emergent properties such as organizational survival as its overarching

aim, even at the expense of whatever motivated the founder. Breaking with the tradition of Austrian as well as mainstream economics, diZerega contends that we have to give up methodological individualism in favor of treating organizations as akin to an organism that shapes the values and preferences of its individual members. Taking his cue from Berger and Luckmann (1967), diZerega writes that “human beings are social creations, society is a human creation *and* society is an objective reality.” Because organizations have the ability to shape the human beings that constitute them, individual norms of behavior are sometimes suppressed so as to ensure organizational survival, with tragic consequences such as the Roman Catholic Church covering up sexual abuse or the US Army suppressing evidence of American soldiers murdering civilians in Vietnam.

The second part of this issue is a mini-symposium that addresses normative conceptions of property rights. Walter Block has long been associated with advocacy of an anarcho-capitalist version of the inviolability of private property rights, first propounded by the Austrian economist Murray Rothbard. In this issue, he attacks what he sees as the “utilitarian” approach of Gene Callahan. According to Block’s deontological vision, inviolable private property rights are not only just; they are the only safeguard against the slippery slope that leads to a thoroughly politicized economy. In his most controversial example, Block argues that trespassing should remain illegal even in the case where it is necessary to avoid death, as when clinging to a flagpole owned by someone else fifteen stories above the ground.

In his response, Callahan disagrees, arguing that deontologists and utilitarians are equally one-sided, which ultimately stems from similar attempts to adhere to “rationalism,” in its pejorative Oakeshottian sense. Against this, Callahan argues that it is often the case that different rights contradict one another, and that in those cases the role of any *reasonable* legal system is to weigh competing rights claims against each other (for example, the right to life versus the right to exclude others from privately owned property).

In the final article, Hudik makes the case that while there is no logical inconsistency in Block’s view of justice, it is nevertheless a particularly extreme special case of many possible libertarian “preference structures.” He labels Rothbard-Block libertarianism as either “single-value libertarianism” or “lexicographic libertarianism.” In either case, the implication is that it is inadmissible to trade off absolute private property rights against other desirable rights or goods. In contrast, Hudik contends that it is equally defensible to have a clear preference for “libertarian justice” (i.e., strong protection of

private property rights) and yet be prepared to trade off such justice against a “composite good” that represents the bundle of other (non-libertarian) attributes that an individual deems desirable. Hudik labels the moderate version with trade-offs (and convex indifference curves) “convex libertarianism.”

All in all, the present issue of *Cosmos + Taxis* is testament to the richness and pluralism of the analytical framework that treats civil society, politics and markets as multi-level processes of emergence rather than as static equilibria.

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