IMMANUEL KANT AND THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD OF ECONOMICS

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„But although all our knowledge begins with experience, it does not follow that it arises from experience.“

Immanuel Kant (1781), Critique of Pure Reason, B1, 2.
„A priori – a posteriori“ and „analytic – synthetic“

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POLLEIT: IMMANUEL KANT AND THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD OF ECONOMICS

Ludwig von Mises
1881 – 1973
„Praxeology is a theoretical and systematic, not a historical science. … Its statements … are not derived from experience. They are, like those of logic and mathematics, a priori. They are not subject to verification or falsification on the ground of experience and facts.“

Economics thus consists of the elaboration of the logical implications of the concept of action:

(1) Assert $A$, the axiom of human action.

(2) If $A$, then $B$; if $B$ then $C$; if $C$, the $D$, etc.

(3) Therefore, we assert the truth of $B$, $C$, $D$, etc.

See Murray N. Rothbard (2009), Man, Economy, and State, p. 72.
The **axiom of human action**

**Some categories** of human action:
- Human action is **purposeful**
- **Individuals** act, not groups or collectives
- Human action pursues **ends** by employing **means**
- Means are **scarce**
- Human action implies **causality**
- Human action takes place under **uncertainty**
- **Time** is a category of human action
- **Time preference** is always positive, …
- … and so is the **originary interest**
- **Private property** is a category of human action
- …
„Mises, in addition to his great achievements as an economist, also contributed pathbreaking insights regarding the justification of the entire enterprise of rationalist philosophy.“

Thank you very much for your attention!
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