

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

THE ECLECTIC ECONOMIST: A GUIDE FOR BECOMING A
RADICAL PLURALIST

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requirements of Anglia Ruskin University
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ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

LORD ASHCROFT INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS SCHOOL

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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IMKO MEYENBURG

MAY 2016

The aim of this thesis is to explore eclecticism, its relationship with pluralism and to achieve a suitable definition and justification for its adoption with regard to economic research. In this dissertation eclecticism shall be understood as a philosophical *leitmotif* for the individual researcher to be unprejudiced, to have no commitment to a particular school of thought but to treat them all as *a priori* valuable for the pursuit of one's research aspiration by deliberately choosing from the available range of historical and modern economic concepts, ideas, theories and practices.

To achieve this particular aim, this thesis i) investigates the history of eclecticism as a philosophical concept as well as its modern applications, ii) develops a differentiation between eclecticism and pluralism based on an inquiry into the pluralist literature, iii) formulates a suitable definition of eclecticism and iv) develops a justification for eclectic research in economics. The justification formulated in this thesis specifically focuses on the question of how eclectic choice of theory, methods and concepts from different schools of thought can be made without commitment to any reference framework that would define the criteria from which to choose from.

The result of the philosophical enquiry suggests that eclectic choice is justified, when choice is understood as migration between different cognitive aims and methodological norms (Laudan, 1978, 1987, 1996) on different levels of abstraction, and can become necessary when this migration is used to trigger epistemological crises (MacIntyre, 1977), which are events for a school of thought, or entire disciplines, to make any intellectual progress. The research further argues that migration on the level of schools of thought, and their respected cognitive aims and methodological norms, remains easy for the eclectic. On the other hand, migration between higher levels becomes increasingly difficult the further one moves to those higher levels. The thesis concludes that eclecticism is a recommendable research philosophy for the individual economists, who wishes to internalise pluralism.

Keywords: Eclecticism, Pluralism, Economics, Schools of Thought, Philosophy of Social Sciences, Philosophy of Economics, Rational Choice Theory, Ontology, Epistemology, Methodology

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23/05/2016

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CHAPTER 0: THE ECLECTIC ECONOMIST INTRODUCED

The success of your presentation will be judged not by the knowledge you send but by what the listener receives. –
Lilly Walters

0.1. THE MOTIVATION OF THE ECLECTIC ECONOMISTS

This dissertation is a study of eclecticism and, to some extent, pluralism, for now understood as the need of acceptance and use of the existing multiplicity of schools of thought, and their relationship in the context of economics. The choice of this topic is initially founded on a dichotomy in economics, where an ever present orthodoxy, often called mainstream or neoclassical economics, dominates over a heterodoxy, lesser known schools of thought of scholars who rebel against the mainstream and its conceptual and methodological choices. My exposure to the heterodox literature during my Masters lead to my self-commitment to the heterodoxy and reinforced the adoption of research interests beyond what is usually found in the mainstream. Yet, an additional dissatisfaction with contemporary economics teaching and practice, i.e. a feeling of inability of theory to connect with my experiences with the real world, started even earlier during my undergraduate years in Germany. The heterodox literature then helped me to formulate this feeling of discontent into a more rigorous criticism of theory and practice, mainly focusing on the inability of economics to deal with the real world (see, for instance, Lawson, 2001). This problem became particularly obvious in the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2007/2008, a crisis that showed that underlying contemporary economic equilibrium models could neither predict nor deal with the consequences of the crash of the financial system (Bezemer, 2009; Desai, 2015). The absence of predictive, or even explanatory, models in economics and the institutional reluctance to listen to warning voices from scholars, such as Keen (2006), who uses Minsky's (1994) models to partly predict the financial crisis, Baker (2006) or Roubini (2008), made the demand for a change and an increase of inclusiveness in economics more prominent among a wider audience of academics, students and members of the public; a wave I rode on as well. This event almost 10 years ago was, however, by no means the beginning of criticism of economics itself, as I found out during my studies.

The history of criticism of economics is almost as old as the discipline itself. It ranges, for instance, from Alfred Marshall's (1920) critical comments on the idea of equilibrium, over Keynes' (2008) distrust of an overuse of mathematical modelling, to Nobel Prize winner Douglas North's (North, 1993, section I, para. 2) assessment that “neo-classical theory is simply an inappropriate tool to analyze and prescribe policies that will induce development”. Neither as an undergraduate nor postgraduate student was I ever exposed to such ideas and in almost 6 years of being a university student I have learned nothing about the history of economic thought. Today, the criticism found in the literature addresses ontological, epistemological and methodological issues found in contemporary economic research and teaching. The “insistence on mathematical-deductive modelling” (Lawson, 2006, p.492) as the best methodology to conduct research in economics, in conjunction with the failure to formulate models which are appropriate representations of the nature they supposed to represent, created a strong resistance among some scholars to this particular procedure; a resistance that is shared by me and is used for a general motivation behind the research conducted here. Additionally, the limited appreciation of different schools of thought in economics and the lack of history of the discipline in university curricula emphasizes this critical position even further.

While the dissatisfaction with the current methodology in economics is a starting point for the motivation of this research, it is by no means the only reason this study on eclecticism has been conducted. The choice to study eclecticism is more substantially motivated, within the pluralist framework, by the absence of discussion about this topic as well as the generally perceived negative attitude towards it, which makes eclecticism a somewhat controversial choice of topic. Controversy is, of course, a less scholarly rigorous motivation, but it makes the pursuit of this research and the possible outcome more interesting. Additionally, the absence of discussion of eclecticism in the economic literature creates a rather substantive gap; a luxury or opportunity not many PhD research projects have these days. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the motivation of this research is closely related to the funding I received in the past three years. The awarded PhD scholarship, which allowed me to conduct this research and was provided by the Institute of International Management Practice and the Lord Ashcroft International Business School at Anglia Ruskin University, required the focus of the research to lie within the pluralist movement in economics. This scholarship

therefore provided not only a general, extrinsic financial, but more importantly a contextual motivation for the specific choice of eclecticism as topic.

Hence, the aim of this study is to explore eclecticism and achieve a suitable definition and justification for it with regards to economic research, rather than providing another criticism of the mainstream. Moreover, with the absence of comparative data, a standard discussion of methods and methodological approaches for qualitative and quantitative research regarding data collection, data processing and data interpretation, as found in mainstream economics and other general research does not apply for this thesis. Instead, the thesis places emphasis on the philosophical discussion of relevant concepts, ideas and theories on which the academic narrative on eclecticism will rest. To achieve this discussion appropriate analytical tools will be applied to explore eclecticism, where Toulmin's (2003) strategy for argumentation serves as the underlying framework for the formulation of the correct movements from prepositions to the conclusions.

Additionally, the arguments developed in this dissertation supports the pluralist movement in its attempt to change economics in practice and possibly teaching. In this dissertation eclecticism shall be understood as a philosophical *leitmotif* for the individual researcher to be unprejudiced, to have no commitment to a particular school of thought and to treat them as *a priori* valuable for the pursuit of one's research aspiration by deliberately choosing from the available range of historical and modern economic concepts, ideas, theories and practices, a definition arrived at from the substantive literature review conducted in chapter 2.

0.2. RESEARCH AIM OF THIS DISSERTATION

For the realisation of this goal, the following research objectives, with the third one considered most important, are formulated for the successful realisation of this goal:

1. Investigate the history of eclecticism as a philosophical concept as well as its modern applications.
2. Develop a differentiation between eclecticism and pluralism based on an inquiry into the pluralist literature.
3. The formulation of a suitable definition of eclecticism and the development of a justification for eclectic research in economics.

While the research aim and these objectives provide the focus of the following chapters, the central research question for this dissertation emerged from the completion of the investigation of the history of eclecticism and its modern application as stated in objective number 1. With the definition of eclecticism coming from the identification of the most important commonalities and themes within the eclectic literature, i.e. the choice from elements of philosophical sects, *schools of thought* or *paradigm-like groupings*¹ or *conceptual schemes*² as well as a strong anti-dogmatic stance, the central research question of this dissertation, which arose from these elements, is formulated as follows:

How can choices of theory, methods or concepts from different schools of thought, paradigm-like groupings and conceptual schemes be made if the eclectic does not commit to any reference framework that would define the criteria with which choice can be made?

It is this particular problem of choice, as I wish to call it for the remainder of this dissertation, that becomes the motivation behind chapter three, and ultimately the main contribution of this research. While the definition of eclecticism and the identification of the main philosophical arguments from the eclectic and pluralist literature are important, their investigation is relatively straight-forward. In contrast, the problem of choice is a much more serious and challenging issue. How can we, in the absence of objective, i.e. framework independent, criteria for choice, make choices and be eclectic? Is it not true that, under these assumptions, commitment must be given and that a commitment-free attitude will result in indecisiveness, absence of structure and rigour? One of the central sentiments eclecticism faces is exactly this. Some commitment to scientific principles or moral codes, or whatever, are necessary to make a judgement, to be discriminatory, to decide what is right or wrong, what is true or false, desired or undesired. If not held we may otherwise invite a relativistic world where 'everything goes' (Feyerabend, 1993). If we, however, believe that a minimum of commitment is necessary, then we can argue that eclecticism is futile. Yet, the argument developed in this dissertation claims that eclecticism, with its inherent denial of commitment as one

1 The term paradigm-like groupings is introduced in this dissertation, and further explained in chapter 3, to represent discursive groups of researchers that share specific characteristics, which are not limited to individual schools of thought. It is, however, argued in agreement with Kuhn (2012) that his phrase paradigm itself makes no sense in social sciences and therefore, for the lack of a better term, paradigm-like groupings are used.

2 Conceptual schemes shall be understood as essential, shared frameworks that allow us to make sense of raw sense data (Case, 1997; Rescher, 2008; Little, 2010).

of its central tenets, remains feasible. The conclusion presented here argues that eclectic choice is justified, when choice is understood as migration between different cognitive aims and methodological norms (Laudan, 1978, 1987, 1996) on different levels of abstraction, schools of thought, paradigm-like groupings and conceptual schemes, and can become necessary when this migration is used to trigger epistemological crises (MacIntyre, 1977), which are events for a school of thought, or disciplines, to make any intellectual progress.

This conceptualisation of choice further argues that migration between schools of thought, and their respected cognitive aims and methodological norms, remains easy for the eclectic, while migration between higher level paradigm-like groupings and conceptual schemes becomes increasingly difficult the further one moves to those higher levels. Secondly, the use of cognitive aims and methodological norms allows for a coherent definition of schools of thought in economics which considers the existence of some shared aims and norms across these schools. This is due to the existence of higher level aims and norms as well as their historic development. Finally, the rationale developed here does not claim that epistemological crises are the objective guiding principle whose existence is denied in the first place by the literature discussed in chapter 3. It is itself embedded in a framework and can be formulated in a hypothetical imperative, which is only acceptable when shared across different schools or paradigm-like groups. Eclecticism in this dissertation itself relies on specific aims and norms from a pluralist framework and it is argued that commitment to these is reasonable unless some better arguments are found or needed after one migrates. Lastly, it is important to clarify that sharing aims and norms does not make them neutral or objective, thus we avoid arguing that the underlying principles of the justification of eclecticism are themselves framework-independent.

0.3. WHAT THE ECLECTIC ECONOMISTS CONTRIBUTES

From this argument, there are certain areas where this dissertation specifically contributes to knowledge in philosophy of economic and social sciences. First of all, this dissertation critically outlines the historical, philosophical conceptualisation of eclecticism in conjunction with the comprehensive work by Donini (1988) and adds to it recent developments in the modern, social scientific literature, such as pedagogy, social science, law and economics, mixed method research and psychology, via in-depth

analyses. This inquiry provides us with a broad understanding of the concept of eclecticism and its meaning in the light of its historical development. Moreover, some aspects left out by Donini (1988) are explained, for instance the role of Immanuel Kant in the decline of eclecticism in the middle of the enlightenment, thus making a small contribution to the history of philosophy. Secondly, at the time of writing, this dissertation provides a comprehensive, original use of the literature about rational theory choice in chapter 3 to justify eclectic choice in economics. As such, it develops a new perspective on the rationality of theory, method and other framework choices, which is used to defend the defined eclectic choice. This contribution also complements the pluralist literature in economics, where the eclectic choice is partly a new argument in the literature specifically exploring the possibility of rational theory choice, while it further relies on existing arguments from the pluralist literature, thus making the link stronger.

Additionally, minor contributions are made in the area of ontological and epistemological pluralism. With the lack of a satisfying definition of ontological pluralism in the pluralist literature, a definition from contemporary meta-ontology, specifically from Kris McDaniel (2009, 2010a; b, 2013a; b, 2014) and Jason Turner (2010, 2012), is applied in this research to comprehensively conceptualise eclectic choice, while a more detailed inquiry into this topic will be done in a separate publication (Meyenburg, forthcoming). Likewise, this dissertation suggests a perspective on epistemological pluralism that, at the time of writing and to my knowledge, was not discussed in this particular way in the pluralist literature. Here, knowledge is considered an epistemic fundamental (Williamson, 2000) where several criteria can be applied to define specific, framework-dependent kinds of knowledge (Schurz, 2011). Finally, in order to fully formulate the justification for eclectic choice, this dissertation uses Larry Laudan's (1978, 1987, 1996) concept of cognitive aims and methodological norms to redefine schools of thought in economics, as well as paradigm-like groupings, which is an extension to an idea about the definition of schools of thought presented by Negru (2007).

0.4. OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

In order to achieve its contribution to knowledge, as well as to answer the research question, to fulfil the research objectives and arrive at the research aim, the remainder of

this dissertation is organised in the following four chapters. Chapter 1, the methodological preliminaries, outlines the pluralist literature in order to support the achievement of research objective number 2. Therefore, the chapter critically describes the major arguments for ontological, epistemological and methodological pluralism, whereat it is shown that the conceptualisations of ontological pluralism are intellectually unsatisfactory and I therefore supplement it with additional literature from contemporary philosophy. With regards to epistemological pluralism, the major point here is the uncertainty of knowledge, i.e. there is not one best answer to the question of what knowledge is (McCloskey, 1994; Dow, 1997). Thirdly, the literature on methodological pluralism is shown and the major argument of the non-existence of a single decisive method for research is presented. Here, methodological pluralism relies on the post-positivistic arguments supposedly first introduced into economics by Caldwell (1982), which is related, and therefore similar, to the argument for uncertain knowledge. From the lack of a single best method it is claimed that different methodologies and methods need to be respected and applied. Additionally, chapter 1 discusses the literature on pluralism relying on the need of academic freedom of discussion and tolerance of different approaches, which is different from the ontological, epistemic and methodological arguments by virtue of its ethical dimension. Lastly, the concept of schools of thought discussed in the heterodox literature and the differentiation between heterodox and orthodox economics are presented for the purpose of a general understanding of these themes and because they are used in later chapters.

The following chapter 2 is mainly concerned with achieving objective 1, the investigation into the history of eclecticism with the help of a key text from Donini (1988), and its modern application, as well as supporting objective 2. The chapter is organised thematically and historically, beginning with the identification of eclecticism as a philosophical concept in ancient Greece and Roman philosophy. Eclecticism of that time, however, is difficult to define, as it relies mostly on secondary interpretation in the absence of self-proclaimed eclectics of that time. The next time period covers the writings of philosophers in the early enlightenment, a time where eclecticism was most prominent. Additionally Moraux's (1984) concept of identifying eclecticism in historical writings is introduced. This specific conceptualisation is the most promising candidate for the identification of eclecticism among individuals who did not call themselves eclectic. Then, the modern eclectic literature found in educational research, psychology,

mixed method research and sociology and economics, is critically presented and the major arguments are outlined. It is shown how deliberate choice is a central aspect, as well as arguments about the inherent limitations of theories and methods to develop full narratives about research objects under investigation. The modern literature is followed by a discussion of so called idealistic eclecticism, i.e. philosophers who were not only describing, or trying to find, eclecticism among other historical figures but were outspoken eclectics themselves. According to them, eclecticism is a kind of ideal philosophy that one should strive for. At the end, the chapter looks at the critical literature which develops anti-eclectic arguments and provides a rationale for the possible reasons of the decline of eclecticism, which is associated with Immanuel Kant. The chapter closes with the definition of eclecticism, which is derived from the major common characteristics found in the literature and forms the basis for this dissertation.

The investigation in the history of eclecticism is followed by the third chapter, which is concerned with objectives 2 and 3 and is mainly aiming at answering the primary research question. The chapter begins with a comparison of the central arguments of the pluralist and eclectic literature, confirming the claim that eclecticism is an individual form of pluralism. After this, the problem of choice, i.e. rational theory, method or concept choice, is discussed with a review of pro and contra rational choice literature from philosophy of sciences. The possibility of choice is then defined with the help of MacIntyre's (1977, 1984, 1988) concept of epistemological crises and Laudan's (1978, 1987, 1996) cognitive aims and methodological norms, which are also used to redefine schools of thought and are applied to paradigm-like groupings and conceptual schemes. It is argued that in the absence of an objective rationality, i.e. no objective guiding principles, epistemological crises, which frustrate specific schools of thought's or paradigm like grouping's narratives, can assist to acknowledge the need for change or migration from within a relative framework, thus avoiding a possible accusation of objectivity, while migration remains limited by virtue of the framework from which one tries to migrate. This means that depending on the level where the framework is found, migration becomes more or less difficult, with migration between schools of thought arguably being the easiest while migration between cognitive schemes remains nearly impossible. This migration is then defined as eclectic choice. The chapter finishes with a short illustration of how eclectic choice on the levels of schools of thought, paradigm-like groupings and conceptual schemes can be made with the help of a few relevant examples in the heterodox economic context.

Finally, chapter 4 constitutes a discussion chapter that arose from critical questions I received from supervisors, peers and colleagues as result of presentations, supervision meetings or more general discussion of this research project, its aim and question. I decided to take the five most challenging comments to develop this chapter and provide elaborate answers to them, without assuming completeness of the list of criticism against eclecticism. The chapter begins with Sheila Dow's (1997, 2007) criticism of eclecticism, which is already discussed in chapter 2, and argues against her idea that eclecticism constitutes unstructured pluralism. Secondly, the argument that eclectic research is not practically feasible is discussed and partly dismissed. It is granted that eclectic research is difficult to impossible for short-term research projects with tight deadlines, while long-term research can be done eclectically. Thirdly, it is discussed whether eclecticism is just another way of doing mixed-method research. Since there is eclectic literature from the mixed-method research community, it appears that these concepts are interchangeable. It is argued, however, that both concepts are merely identical on the level of method, and possibly theory choice, but not on the level of paradigm-like grouping or even conceptual scheme choice. Fourthly, and similar to three, the chapter looks at the question of whether eclecticism is simply another word for pragmatism. Here, it is argued that the perceived commonalities of eclecticism and pragmatism is due to the general influence the latter had on the 20th century's philosophy of science and that pragmatic thought can be found almost everywhere in modern day philosophy of sciences literature, while it is also shown where both philosophies are different. Lastly, the concern about whether or not eclecticism ultimately leads to relativism is discussed. Just like in the previous discussion on pragmatism, it is shown that relativistic thoughts have entered and remained in the philosophy of sciences and are therefore present in the eclectic literature. For instance, it is shown that underdetermination of theories (Quine, 1951; Duhem, 1991) is an underlying, relativistic concept not only found in the eclectic literature, but observably discussed by many contemporary philosophers. Moreover, it is shown that relativism does not necessarily deserves its negative reputation and that it needs to be distinguished from subjectivism. This means that the question of this sub-chapter is answered positively, i.e. eclecticism leads to relativism, but that relativism is not inevitably an abominable philosophy.

What I hope to achieve with this dissertation is to support scholars in their research and maybe to become the “complete economist” George Shackle (1952, as cited in Steele, 2004) described, where

a man [sic!] need[s] only [to] be mathematician, a philosopher, a psychologists, an antropologhist, a historian, a geographer, and a student of politics; a master of prose exposition; a man of the world with the experience of practical business and finance, an understanding of the problem of administration and a good knowledge of four or five languages. All this in addition, of course, to familiarity with the economic literature itself.

CHAPTER 1: METHODOLOGICAL PRELIMINARIES

I affirm that the forces who regard pluralism as a virtue, “moderate” though that may make them sound, are far more profoundly revolutionary – Christopher Hitchens (2011, p.xvii).

Before the analysis of historical and contemporary eclecticism can be conducted and before the primary justification for it can be developed, it is necessary to investigate the constituents and themes of pluralism and other heterodox thoughts in economics. As the main argument will rely and refer to this area of the discipline quite often in the remainder of this dissertation, it seems necessary to begin by clarifying what is actually meant by the pluralist literature seems necessary. Hence, ideas of pluralism in the literature presented in this chapter as well as a conceptual clarification of the nature of economic schools of thought, although later adjusted for the purpose of this research, and the differences between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. The justification for eclecticism, formulated in chapter 3, will touch on all of these areas, specifically the new definition for schools of thought is in juxtaposition to previous ones, and therefore it is required to introduce them beforehand so that the reader will have no difficulty to understand the references made later. Furthermore, it is argued here that the comprehensibility of this research dissertation is supported by the clarifications of the central tenets of pluralism in the beginning, instead of explaining these tenets when mentioned in the later chapters.

This chapter will begin with the discussion of pluralism, further subdividing it into ontological, epistemological and methodological pluralism. This is followed by an additional, but short, exploration of pleas for tolerance with regards to pluralism. The chapter ends with a discussion of the literature on schools of thought in economics as well as the differences between heterodoxy and orthodoxy. The discussed literature is, for the purpose of clarification, not limited to contributions in economics, but involves other work in contemporary philosophy.

1.1 PLURALISM

Bruce Caldwell (1982) is generally credited with for introducing pluralism into the economic literature with his book *Beyond Positivism*. Herein, he refutes positivism and falsificationism, and declares that the quest for one best single method in social sciences is over. Soon after, other academics entered into the debate about pluralism and it became a vivid subcategory in the heterodox community. Not all heterodox economists are pluralists, or have written about pluralism. Therefore it is important not to confuse heterodoxy and pluralism with each other.

It appears that there are, broadly speaking, two positions on pluralism in the literature. The first one is of a rather practical nature informed by a specific ontological stance, whilst the other appears to be represented by a virtuous principle of tolerance (Eliassen, forthcoming). Other positions, related to the first one, deal with the questions of epistemological uncertainty and methodological pluralism. It will be shown, that these principles are also apparent in the eclectic literature and are important points for the justification of eclectic choice in chapter 3.

For further clarification, and as guide for the remainder of this dissertation, Fleetwood's (2005, p.197) summary of ontology, epistemology and methodology, and their relationship with each other, shall be used. He says that

[t]he way we think the world is (ontology), influences: what we think we can be known about it (epistemology); how we think it can be investigated (methodology and research techniques); the kinds of theories we think can be constructed about it; and the political and policy stances we are prepared to take.

From this definition we can understand that pluralism ranges over all three areas, as shown in the following sections. In chapter 3, we will also take another look at ontological positions and although they are explained with a slightly different vocabulary, Fleetwood's (2005) definitions shall serve as clarifying idea in the background.

1.1.1. PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE PLURALISM

1.1.1.1. ONTOLOGY

In philosophy of science, ontology concerns itself with the nature and structure of reality (Fleetwood, 2005). This philosophical concept finds its origin in ancient Greece, where Parmenides of Elea [5th century BC] is associated with being one of the first philosophers writing about the nature of existence. Negru (2007) summarises his philosophical thoughts as a logical dichotomy regarding the nature of existence and non-existence; in particular, anything existing cannot, by definition, not exist. And according to Russell (2013, p.56) the essence of Parmenides argument is the following:

When you think, you think of something; when you use a name, it must be the name of something. Therefore both thought and language require objects outside themselves. And since you can think of a thing or speak of it at one time as well as another, whatever can be thought of or spoken of must exist at all times. Consequently there can be no change, since change consists in things coming into being or ceasing to be³.

Aristotle is another prominent Greek philosopher concerning himself with ontological questions. In his earlier work, Aristotle introduced several Categories of being, e.g. substance, quality, quantity, relation and others. Substance has a special role as it exists independently, while other categories exist only in relation to substances (Cohen, 2012). Russell (2013) simplifies substances by referring to linguistic examples. Here, substances are things with proper names such as the Sun, the Moon, John or Michael. Aristotle's criterion of substance is that it is "neither in a subject nor said of a subject" (Cohen, 2012, p.no pagination). Contrary to substance are universals, categories or adjectives that encompass many substances, such as men or animals. Then, the sentence 'John is a man' consists of the substance 'John' and the universal 'man' (Russell, 2013).

Throughout the history of philosophy several different ontological positions have been developed. Classifying these ontological traditions in philosophy is, however, a difficult task. Negru (2007), for instance, identifies four major traditions investigating ontology. The materialist tradition holds that existing entities are composed of, or are the result of, the interaction of matter alone. Contrary to this position stands the idealist tradition,

3 At this point it shall not be discussed whether the specific claim at the end of this quote is justified or not.

arguing that reality is not independent but constructed by the minds of individuals. The dualist tradition arose from criticism of both materialist and idealist positions and argues for the existence of more than one ontological category, thing or principle, i.e. in materialism matter and in idealism mind. This position is most prominent in the philosophical debate about the relationship between the mind and the body. Concluding this list is the agnostic tradition, which argues that ontological categories are not rigorous enough to find exclusive definitions, e.g. does a magnetic field fall into materialistic category (Negru, 2007)? Within these four traditions exists a variety of sub-categories that present variations of the core principles of these traditions, for example realism, physicalism, post-modernism, positivism or interpretivism etc.

In social sciences, and especially in economics, ontological positions are far more localised inside the academic disciplines (Negru, 2007). In mainstream economics, however, ontology has no important role and questions about the nature of, for instance, money or markets are rarely addressed. Tony Lawson (e.g. 1997, 2003b, 2004) is a prominent member of a group of heterodox economist engaging with these questions and is acknowledged to be a driving force behind the discussion of ontological questions in economics. He applies a critical realist approach based upon the work of Roy Bhaskar (1998, 2008), and others, focusing on the question regarding the possibility of a scientific study of society against the background “to what extent” society can “be studied in the same way as nature”, which he ultimately rejects to some extent by virtue of the nature of economic entities. He proposes a social ontology that rest upon “the study of what is, or what exists, on the social domain; the study of social entities or social things; and the study of what all the social entities or things that are, have in common” (Lawson, 2004, p.2).

Although ontological questions are seldom discussed by mainstream economist, there is evidence that they subscribe to positions that would answer Bhaskar’s (1998) question with ‘yes’. These ontological positions can be traced back to the early days of economics, with Francis Edgeworth (1881, p.v) as prominent example arguing that there is no difference “between the Principles of Greatest Happiness (...) and those Principles of Maximum Energy (...) [in] which mathematical reasoning is applicable to physical phenomena quite as complex as human life”. Nowadays such positions are, of course, more sophisticated, but empirical economists still relate to economic facts in a way that clear event regularities can be derived from econometric techniques, that

economic actors share the same view in economic reality and that this reality exists independent of these actors (Negru, 2007).

On this, Friedman (1953) famously writes that economics, or in his words 'positive economics', can provide the same level of objectivity as natural sciences despite the existing social interrelations of human beings and the involvement of the subject in its research object. Although he does not refer to ontology per se, the ontological realist, and reductionist, position clearly stands out from his essay. Critical realists, on the other hand, put their emphasis on causal mechanism and not on such empirical event regularities, whereas they highlight the complexity and openness of the economy and the society, thus denying reductionism altogether. Furthermore, these causal mechanisms do not have to rely on existing entities as Fleetwood (2005) describes. According to him it is not important whether or not God exists. As long as the idea of God exists and has an impact on human behaviour it must be considered to be real.

Likewise, any kind of economic or social stimuli must be taken seriously when they are able to motivate economic actions. In his 1984 book *Simulacra and Simulation* Baudrillard (1984) develops a similar argument and introduces the simulacra that, in different stages, loses their reference to reality to a point where a 'thing' has no reality at all. A famous example is Disneyland, which is said to be a combination of reality and imagination. Baudrillard (1984) now argues that this distinction cannot be made because the reality, i.e. an ideology of the American way of life displayed in Disneyland, is itself an imagination. Nonetheless, it can be said that these simulacra have obviously strong influence on human actions, as thousands of visitors come and interact in these parks every day.

So, does ontology matter as Negru (2007) asks? According to Lawson (1997, 2003a; b, 2004, 2006) and Dow (1997, 2004) it does. Both scholars subscribe to open-system ontology⁴ that marks the important distinction between heterodox and orthodox economics, which will be discussed below in more detail. Especially in regard to the discussion of pluralism, Dow (1997, p.89) says it “is the philosophical position that the ultimate reality of the universe consists of a plurality of entities; it is an ontological position”. Lawson (2003a, 2004), on the other hand, does not only propose ontology in

4 Chick and Dow (2005, p.366) clarify that the necessary conditions for open-systems are that “the system is not atomistic (...) agents and their interactions may change (...) structures and agency are interdependent (...) boundaries around and within the social or economic system are mutable (...) [and] identifiable social structures are embedded in larger structures”.

terms of pluralism, but sees it as a device to bring clarity in any scientific debate, in the sense of a first philosophy understood in the Aristotelian sense of the metaphysical study of being. Hence, ontology is also indispensable for economics, especially for heterodox economists.

Contrary to this, Vromen (2004) and Guala (2008) are sceptical about the power of ontology in the debates on economics. Guala (2008, pp.631–632) remarks that ontology does matter but claims that some key issues, such as the “ontology of tendencies”, can be clarified “by empirical evidence, rather than a pre-scientific issue to be addressed by metaphysical speculations”. And Vromen (2004) provides arguments that ontological questions themselves are not as clear as, for instance, Lawson (1997, 2003a; b, 2004, 2006) suggests. In regard to evolutionary economics, Vromen (2004) points out that ontological debates among academics in that field are far from the clarity that ontology would bring according to Lawson (2003a). Instead, “not only do they bring their own favourite ontological views to the debate, they also disagree about what ontology is all about in the first place” (Vromen, 2004, p.214). Furthermore, he questions the role of ontology in evaluating the quality of theories and models in economics as suggested by Lawson (2003a). Instead, he observes that the value of ontology is ultimately defined “by the quality of the economic theories and models they give rise to” (Vromen, 2004, p.214). Hence, ontology cannot be treated as a first philosophy.

Nonetheless, it seems that ontology still matters in some way. Ontology might not always provide the helpful clarity in philosophical debates as Lawson (2003a) argues and it is thus not capable of unifying the discipline. However, this is not necessary. Instead, Vromen (2004) shows that there exist various ontological positions within the economic profession. Even positions such as Mäki’s (1997), who denies ontological pluralism based on the argument that a plurality of theories does not imply a plurality of worlds, can be counted to the existing variety of ontological positions. Hence, ontology matters in the way that its existing variety in economics needs to be recognised in order to understand the discipline. This recognition has direct implications for the eclectic economist, whose philosophical position of an acquisition of established positions, or parts of them, requires naturally a variety to choose from.

Ontological pluralism is rarely found in the heterodox economics literature, which otherwise discusses how economics should be done and why it is desirable to oppose the current mainstream. As shown below, the heterodoxy is, at least, united in its opposition to the mainstream. Lawson (2006, pp.492–493) specifies this in concluding that “the essence of the heterodox opposition [to the mainstream] is ontological in nature” simply because the nature of heterodox economics is a rejection of an emphasis of “mathematical-deductive method[s]” in the mainstream, which can only originate from a different ontological stance. This raises the question what ontological positions pluralists can take and what ontological pluralism, if existing, entails. Lawson (2009, p.118) identifies two ontological pluralist positions, without explicitly stating any commitment to either of them:

Ontological pluralism, on one conception, designates the claim that multiple non-overlapping worlds exist (...). A second notion of ontological pluralism has it that our one reality contains an (at least synchronically) irreducible multiplicity of constituents.

The first conception seems to be addressed when Negru (2009) explores the origin of ontological pluralism. She sees it as a form of opposition to an ontological monism in mainstream economics, which states that there exists only one economic reality. The opposing position would at least allow, if not claim, that multiple economic realities exist. Negru (2009) refers to Warren Samuels (1997a; b, 1998) as one of the few academics who holds such a position. And it seems that Caldwell (1997) comes to the same conclusion, that Samuels (Samuels, 1997a; b, 1998) tolerates ontological pluralism of the first category, alongside epistemological and methodological pluralism, as a result of his pluralistic position.

However, Davis (2012) suggests that Samuels (1998, p.306) does not deny the existence of a single social reality and rather sees the world as heterogeneous, while acknowledging that “the possibility that the world is not heterogeneous, and that the multiplicity of facets may be illusory, is not denied”. With this analysis it seems that Samuels (1998) is ontologically rather agnostic, or falls into Lawson’s (2009) second conception of ontological pluralism. Later, however, it will be shown that his position also falls in the tolerance category of pluralism. Hence, a clear locating of his ontological commitment seems rather difficult. First though, I will continue to explore the second conception of ontological pluralism.

From this account it becomes obvious that ontological monism is not only present in mainstream economics but can also be found in the writings of heterodox economists like Dow (1997), Mäki (1997) and Lawson (2003a)⁵. Dow's (1997, p.89) position becomes obvious with her definition of, interestingly, ontological pluralism as "the philosophical position that the ultimate reality of the universe consists of a plurality of entities", while she opposes a multiplicity of worlds at the same time. Likewise, Mäki (1997, p.40) concludes that a "plurality of theories does not imply a plurality of worlds". Instead, many theories can always refer to one world, introducing different aspects or perspectives on this one world. Both positions are clearly related to the second category of ontological pluralism and this also substantiate Caldwell's (1997) assessment of Mäki's (1997) ontological monism further.

Moreover, we also need to introduce two different concepts of ontological monism as opposed to ontological pluralism to avoid confusion. Negru's (2009) account of ontological pluralism and the opposing ontological monism are clearly related to Lawson's (2009) first category. Hence, ontological pluralism, understood as a multiplicity of worlds, stands in contrast to an ontological monism of one world. What about the second category, where ontological pluralism describes an irreducible multiplicity of constituents of one world? From above, it becomes clear that this kind of ontological pluralism is, at first glance, equal to the ontological monism just described. This means that Dow (1997) and Mäki (1997) are both ontological monist and pluralist at the same time depending on what category we would apply, while it is unclear what category Lawson (2003a) would fall into. The opposite position of the second category of ontological pluralism would be an ontological monism or reductionism that says reality, and its perceived variety of constituents and entities, to be, ultimately, reduced to one substance. This kind of reductionism is very attractive in the natural sciences, where, for instance, biological systems can be reduced to chemical systems which can be further reduced to physical systems. And to some extent, this kind of reductionism can also be found in the mainstream, where everything needs to be explained in the light of individual behaviour⁶.

⁵ Eliassen (forthcoming) and Caldwell (1997) come to the same conclusion.

⁶ This is the point where I think confusion can arise, because depending on the category we can be monist and pluralist at the same time. It might be necessary to redefine ontological pluralism. Two suggestions how to understand ontological pluralism will be discussed further below, where I will criticise Lawson's (2009) categories in more detail. A more detailed exploration of ontological pluralism can be found in Meyenburg (forthcoming).

While opposing a plurality of worlds, Dow (1997) promotes methodological pluralism based upon an open-system ontology (Chick and Dow, 2005). As a result of the plurality of entities the one reality exists of, it is necessary to have a plurality of methodologies and methods able to deal with these entities. Lawson (1997, 2003a, 2009) raises a similar point in his criticism of mainstream economics. According to him, the insistence of the mainstream to apply a mathematic-deductive methodology is based upon a closed-system ontology. He opposes this with his social ontology that, as open-system ontology, requires a plurality of methods to conduct adequate research. Hence, pluralism held by heterodox economist such as Dow (1985, 1997, 2004; Chick and Dow, 2005; 2007) and Lawson (1997, 2001, 2003a, 2004, 2006, 2009) is informed by an open-system ontology and definitely falls into the second conception of ontological pluralism described by Lawson (2009). What about the other form he identifies and does not further explain?

This other form of ontological pluralism could be brought into relation with the radical constructivist position of von Glasersfeld (1995) and others (see, for instance, Goodman, 1984). Although radical constructivism is epistemological in nature, the central claim that perception does not provide a picture of a mind-independent reality and its resulting rejection of objectivity constitutes the existence of multiple worlds created by individual experiences. Hence, it can be interpreted that this kind of constructivism is of the first category that Lawson (2009) introduces, and also, to some extent, what Mäki (1997) rejects. The issue with this interpretation, however, is that the worlds in radical constructivism are not necessarily non-overlapping. Hence, a different interpretation might work better.

Another candidate for this conception of ontological pluralism could be the all possible world idiom in modal logic, especially in David Lewis's (1986) modal realism. His interpretation of all possible worlds begins with the idea of an all-inclusive world that everything contains⁷. As a result, he concludes that

7 The idea of an all-inclusive world can be understood as follows:

Anne is working at her desk. While she is directly aware only of her immediate situation (...) she is quite certain that this situation is only part of a series of increasingly more inclusive, albeit less immediate, situations: the situation in her house as a whole, the one in her neighborhood, the city she lives in, the state, the North American continent, the Earth, the solar system, the galaxy, and so on. On the face of it, anyway, it seems quite reasonable to believe that this series has a limit, that is, that there is a maximally inclusive situation encompassing all others: things, as a whole or, more succinctly, the actual world. (...) Intuitively, then, the actual world of which Anne's immediate situation is a part is only one among many possible worlds. (Menzel, 2013, p.no pagination)

[t]here are countless other worlds, other very inclusive things. Our world consists of us and all our surroundings, however remote in time and space; just as it is one big thing having lesser things as parts, so likewise do other worlds have lesser other-worldly things as part. (Lewis, 1986, p.2)

In summary, modal realism proposes the existence of multiple non-overlapping worlds as a consequence of logical necessity. All worlds exist because of the possibility of different states of affairs, and the actual world does not enjoy any special attributes beside that it is our world we live in. However, at this point it is unclear whether modal realism ever found its way into the economic literature.

Two final conceptions of ontological pluralism, that do not fully fit into Lawson's (2009) two categories, are discussed by Matti Eklund (2009) and Kris McDaniel (2010b), and are explored in the following sections. For McDaniel (2010b, p.628) ontological pluralism, to which he subscribes, claims that "there is more to learn about an object's existential status than merely whether it is or is not: there is still the question of how that entity exists". Hence, ontological pluralism is the principle of different modes of being. This simply means that different entities can exist differently, for instance concrete physical objects exist differently than their shadows or holes they might have. The problematic opposite position, the ontological monist, "is committed to the unpleasant claim that holes [in cheese] are just as real as concretia, a claim that is apt to be met with incredulous stares by those not acquainted with contemporary metaphysics" (McDaniel, 2010b, p.628). There some major consequences from this position, which should not be underestimated.

1.1.1.3. MCDANIEL'S MODES OF BEING

McDaniel (2014, p.272) stresses that with his ontological pluralism "many metaphysical questions must be rethought", and ultimately this also means that ontological questions in economics are affected. In combination with Lawson's (2009) ontological pluralism, we not only ask whether or not the constituents of reality exist, and the reasons for their irreducibility, but also how they are different in their existence. This, however, does not mean that Lawson (2009) and McDaniel (2014) are coercively complementary, as for Lawson's (2009) ontological pluralism is also compatible with McDaniel's (2014) ontological monism. Why is that so? Imagine two constituents of social/economic reality, let us say individual agents and institutions. Following Lawson (2009),

institutions would be irreducible to individual behaviour, something that mainstream economics may assume on the other hand. With McDaniel's (2014) definition at hand, the ontological monist must say that both institutions and individuals enjoy the same kind of being, while the ontological pluralist makes a differentiation here. It is not said, however, that the investigation of irreducibility must ask for kinds of being. Therefore, we have no necessary complimentary connection between both ontological positions.

For the ontological pluralist there are two important questions; first of all what mode of being an entity enjoys and secondly in what sense the pluralist can differentiate between these modes (McDaniel, 2010b). The first questions seems intuitively justifiable in the sense that individuals, as entities of concrete matter, enjoy a different mode of being than non-material institutions. Let us illustrate this idea with the example of 'holes' given by McDaniel (2010b, p.628), as it makes this distinction even more striking:

We quantify over holes, and even count them: we say, for example, that there are some holes in the cheese, seven to be precise. We ascribe features to them and talk as though they stand in relations: that hole is three feet wide, much wider than that tire over there. Holes apparently persist through time, as evidenced by the fact that my sweater has the same hole in it as the last time you saw me wear it. We even talk as though holes are causally efficacious: my ankle was badly sprained because I stepped in that hole in the sidewalk. It seems then that we believe in holes. If our beliefs are true, holes must enjoy some kind of reality.

The example of holes in cheese and their mode of being is particularly striking, since holes are merely the absence of the cheese. They are, as McDaniel (2010b) calls them, 'almost nothing'. Going back to economics, it may make sense to ascribe different modes of being to different entities or concepts we deal with in our discipline.

This brings us to the second question; how can we justify such an intuitive difference? McDaniel (2010b, p.630, 2014) suggests to employ two concepts here, "the concept of semantically primitive restricted quantifier and the concept of a natural expression". In a natural language there are restricted and supposedly one unrestricted quantifier. This simply means that we find quantifier which quantify only over a limited amount of objects, therefore restricted, or over everything there is, therefore unrestricted⁸.

⁸ McDaniel (2010b) admits that ontological pluralism can be formulated without the need of unrestricted quantifiers. His full argument can be found in McDaniel (2009).

Restricted quantifiers are mostly context dependent and can easily be identified. For instance, if I say that ‘everything is on sale’ then the quantifier ‘everything’ only applies to the context of saleable objects. This naturally excludes celestial objects, such as our moon, since the moon cannot be on sale (Uzquiano, 2014)⁹. Now, semantically primitive restricted quantifiers are those which are restricted due to the general limitations of the language they are part of, i.e. the language does not allow to use them in every context or way. Secondly, natural expressions are those expressions which “carve nature at its joints” (McDaniel, 2010b, p.630), i.e. they allow us to formulate or create precise taxonomies. In combination with the restricted quantifiers, we can now say that some expressions are more natural than others. For instance, ‘X is human’ is more natural than ‘X is impressed by Y’, because it carves nature far better at its joints.

It has been said that restricted quantifiers are context dependent, this means it is possible to make a distinction between the ranges restricted quantifiers cover. In McDaniel’s (2010b) illustrative example, \exists_m , ranging over concrete, material objects, and \exists_a , ranging over abstract objects, are two restricted quantifiers and \exists is the unrestricted quantifier in ordinary English. If we assume that \exists_m and \exists_a are the only two modes of fundamental being, they are more natural than \exists , because \exists can be seen as a disjunction of \exists_m and \exists_a . However, as an unrestricted quantifier \exists ranges over everything there is and that does not necessarily mean it ranges only over \exists_m and \exists_a . If \exists ranges over more than just \exists_m and \exists_a , it must contain things that “enjoy no fundamental way of being”, instead they enjoy “a kind of mode of being that may be defined purely negatively, being-by-courtesy. Being-by-courtesy, represented by ‘ \exists_b ’, can be defined as follows: $\exists_b \Phi = df. \exists \Phi \wedge \neg(\exists_m \Phi \vee \exists_a \Phi)$ ” (McDaniel 2010, p.636).

The next suggestion says that almost nothings, the holes in the cheese, are beings-by-courtesy. This is intuitively easy to understand when referring back to the holes in the cheese mentioned above. Holes are intuitively existent, thus covered by \exists , but are also intuitively distinct in their existence the cheese, hence outside of \exists_m that quantifies over entities like cheese only. Moreover, the existence of holes is dependent on the existence of the cheese. If the cheese ceases to exist, so do the holes, therefore they enjoy a being-by-courtesy. If we allow being-by-courtesy as a realistic mode of being, we can say that McDaniel’s (2010b) almost nothings are beings-by-courtesy.

⁹ Given this context dependence, it seems rather difficult to identify unrestricted quantifier in any natural language. Indeed, the philosophical debate on this is rather long, as Uzquiano (2014) points out, and shall therefore not be pursued here.

For our purpose, the more interesting question is what being-by-courtesy ranges over. If it only ranges over almost nothings, it is not interesting for the existential questions of entities that are related to economics. Yet, if the class of beings-by-courtesy encompasses more than almost nothings, we can make a distinction modes of being enjoyed by different entities. In fact, some entities may enjoy fundamental modes of being and others are merely beings-by-courtesy and hence, some are more real than others. McDaniel (2010) refers to relations as another possibility of entities enjoying being-by-courtesy and not, as they were used to be considered, only mind-dependent entities. McDaniel (2010b, p.641) remarks that “necessarily, x is five feet from y if and only if x bears the being five feet from relation to y” is a being-by-courtesy kind of existence, as the relation is dependent of the existence of x and y and the distance between them, but not mind-dependent, because this relation could exist in a world without minds. This is a first indication that being-by-courtesy is not only enjoyed by almost nothings but other entities too. Moreover, if relations enjoy being-by-courtesy, “then perhaps objects that exist only when certain relations are exemplified are also beings by courtesy” (McDaniel, 2010b, p.641).

As a result, we are not only having different modes of being due to restricted quantification but also being-by-courtesy that ranges over almost nothings and, at least relations. This has important implications for our ontology. As McDaniel (2010b, p.644) concludes:

[I]f we accept a kind of ontological pluralism that recognizes being-by-courtesy, then we should also accept a kind of pluralism about these relations as well. Just as there are modes of being, some of which are degenerate, there are different ways of being identical, kinds of parthood, modes of spatiotemporal relatedness, and so forth.

For a further and more detailed discussion of McDaniel's (2009, 2010a; b, 2013a; b, 2014) ontological pluralism, please refer to Meyenburg (forthcoming). The importance of existential quantification for the remainder of this dissertation lies in the fact they play an important role for the distinction of conceptual schemes, which themselves will be required for the justification of eclectic choice in chapter 3. It is argued that different conceptual schemes have, at least, different and some less natural existential quantifiers at their disposal.

When we talk about ontology, we tend to focus on the questions of what exists and how we construct our world view. Using Fleetwood's (2005, p.197) summary of ontology again: "[t]he way we think the world is", which in its simplicity is not mistaken but leaves out an important part; the question of what we say when we say what the world is. A linguistic turn in ontology, addressing ontological issues from a linguistic point, allows new perspectives on the question of ontological pluralism McDaniel's (2009, 2010a; b, 2013a; b, 2014). Such language sensitivity, however, does contain some dangers which are highlighted by Matti Eklund (2009, p.137). He critically summarises language sensitive conceptions of ontological pluralism as

[a] number of different languages we could speak, such that (a) different existence sentences come out true in these languages, due to the fact that ontological expressions (counterparts of 'there is', 'exists', etc.) in these languages express different concepts of existence, and (b) these languages can somehow describe the world's facts equally well and fully.

Generally, ontologists can be divided into two groups; those who see ontological disputes as genuine and those who see them as shallow, with the latter group being ontological pluralists standing in the tradition of Rudolf Carnap (1950). Two contemporary philosophers in this tradition are Eli Hirsch (2002, 2005, 2007, 2008) and Hilary Putnam (1981a, 1987a; b, 1995b) who argue that ontological disagreements are merely linguistic in nature¹⁰.

What does this mean? Hirsch (2002, 2005, 2007, 2008) develops the doctrine of quantifier variance (QV) to justify his position¹¹. According to the QV doctrine, existential quantifiers such as 'there is' or 'exists' have different meanings in different languages and existential but contradicting sentences can be formulated such that they come out true in their relative languages¹². Hence, we are facing ontological problems, or disputes, that are merely verbal in nature¹³. Hirsch (2007) refers to philosophers John

10 Eklund (2009, p.142) labels this group semanticists, defining semanticism as "the view that ontological disputes are merely verbal when the disputants talk past each other, using some of the expressions employed with different meanings".

11 Besides quantifier variance, Hirsch's (2002, 2005, 2007, 2008) position also rests on the rejection of referential correspondence theory of truth. This means that the truth condition of a sentence does not depend "on the referential relation between its (non-logical) word and objects that exist in the world" (Hirsch, 2008, p.230).

12 Putnam (1995b, p.305), on the other side, argues for quantifier relativism, saying that "there isn't just one single privileged sense of the word 'object' (...) only and inherently extendible notion of 'object'".

13 Elsewhere, Hirsch (2002, p.59) concludes that "the basic idea of quantifier variance can be nicely formulated by saying that the same (unstructured) facts can be expressed using different concepts of "the existence of a thing", that

Locke and Joseph Butler to illustrate the meaning of his QV. In this example, John Locke argues that a tree, which loses a branch, is still the same tree because of the relationship between tree and its constituents, while Butler would oppose such a view and argue we would face a new tree. Although both sides agree that there is some relationship between the constituents of the object and its identity, “the conflicting ontological assertions are true or false depending on whether we speak Lockean or Butlerian English” (Hirsch, 2007, p.370)¹⁴.

If QV is true, then it poses a real threat to heterodox economists because it may cause the heterodox critique of mainstream economics to become trivial. Any ontological disagreements, and if we believe Lawson (2006) the heterodox critique of the mainstream is in essence ontological, would be a simple case of economists talking past each other. Moreover, any dispute between heterodox economists will fall under the same fate. Take, for instance, two evolutionary economists A and B who are having a dispute about the existence of a Darwinian-like mechanism in social evolution. For A the sentence “a Darwinian selection mechanism exists” comes out true in her language while it is false for B. The reason for this conflict, according to QV, is that A’s claim has not been, or cannot be, translated properly in B’s language. On the other side, if it would be translated correctly the conflict would be resolved.

This case, however, also illustrates one of several problems ontological pluralists, following Eklund’s (2009) definition, must face. For a sentence of the form given above to come out true in the language of economist A but false in the language of economist B, both languages must have different truth conditions and consequently different meanings. This poses a problem for the pluralist, as her focus is not on truth or meaning difference but on existence-concepts. Eklund (2009, p.147) remarks that

[i]ntuitively, what she wants to say is that there are different languages, with different existence-like concepts, such that (say) numbers exist in one sense

statements involve different kinds of quantifiers can be equally true by virtue of the same (unstructured) facts in the world. (...) I am inclined to agree with Putnam that, once we’ve accepted quantifier variance, there is no point in trying to hold onto language-shaped facts that are in the world independent of language.” On the other side, Ted Sider (2003, 2009), among others, is aware of the QV argument but suggests that there are privileged quantifiers in different languages, which allow ontological disputes to be genuine.

14 To further understand the conflict here, it might be necessary to distinguish between conceptual schemes and natural languages. Case (1997, p.11) clarifies that, if speaking of languages, [they] need not be equated with natural languages. An example drawn from Putnam’s discussion of conceptual relativity will help convey the significance of this remark. To speak the language of the Polish Logician is to employ the conceptual scheme of mereological sums, but it is not to speak Polish. A speaker of Polish may employ the Polish Logician’s conceptual scheme on one occasion and Carnap’s on another.

of ‘exists’ and not the other. But if ‘number’ automatically means different things in the two languages she does not get to say this.

The pluralist is given a possible escape from this problem, but it seems to be an unattractive one according to Eklund (2009). One could argue that economists A and B express propositions with the same meaning, which is, however, relative to the truth conditions in their respective languages. This argument suggests that in “this reply propositions are not true or false absolutely but only relative to different concepts of truth” (Eklund, 2009, p.150), a valid but, due to its relativism, rather radical way out.

The question in the end is whether such ontological pluralism can be formulated in a way that does not lead to relativism and allows ontological disputes to be genuine. Eklund’s (2009) definition lacks precision, something he also admits, to make a final defence. In particular, the question must be raised what is meant by languages being capable of describing the facts of the world equally well. Are these languages all inclusive? If so, then we arrive at relativism! Can the pluralist make a claim similar to Mäki’s (1997), where many theories only describe only parts of the world adequately, then relativism can be avoided. However, is relativism actually such a threat¹⁵? In any case, however, Eklund’s (2009) definition for ontological pluralism needs adjustment too.

1.1.2. EPISTEMIC PLURALISM

With the ontological positions providing a concept of reality established, we can now ask “what we think can be known about it” (Fleetwood, 2005, p.197). In economics we are naturally facing the questions of what can be known about economic phenomena, once their reality has been accepted and formulated. Lawson (1997, 2003a; b, 2004, 2006) and Dow (1997, 2004) identify a dichotomy of closed-system and open-system ontologies in economics, with the latter, according to them, being necessary for the future, successful scientific endeavour of economics. This first distinction sets the stage for the epistemological inquiry of what counts as knowledge about these systems. Yet, there are more fundamental issues with the concept of knowledge itself, not only when it comes to the distinction between two different ontologies. In the following we will explore the meaning of these issues and how this leads to epistemological pluralism.

15 In chapter 4, it will be demonstrated that relativism is not necessarily a disadvantageous situation.

The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (Steup, 2005, p.no pagination) defines epistemology as “the study of knowledge and justified belief”, concerned with “the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge”, its limits and so forth. Hence, knowledge is traditionally defined as justified true belief. This means that subject can only know a proposition if it is (i) true, (ii) the subject believes in it and (iii) the subject can justify its belief. This definition, however, naturally raises questions about the truth conditions and the possibilities to justify one’s own belief (Audi, 2011). Gettier (1963) is famous for presenting counterarguments against this definition, which show how the three conditions of justified true belief are met, while the reader intuitively questions whether the subject truly knows the proposition. In short, the Gettier problem, or problems alike, develop cases in which individuals hold certain information that turn out to be true despite being based upon false premises. The classic case states that Smith has strong evidence for the two propositions a) Jones will get a job in a company and b) Jones has ten coins in his pocket¹⁶. From this, he infers that the man with ten coins in his pocket will get the job, he has a justified belief. However, Smith himself gets the job and has, unknown to him, ten coins in his pocket. His inference is now a justified, true belief, however it can barely count, intuitively, as knowledge (Gettier, 1963).

Philosophers have tried to implement additional conditions to circumvent the Gettier problems, especially solutions proposing safety, reliability, or independence from epistemic luck. These attempts were, however, very controversial which leads Zagzebski (1994), for instance, to argue that these problems can never be arried completely. This had immense impact on the discussion of the concept of knowledge itself. Richard Rorty (1979, p.171) rejects the notion of knowledge being representative and argues, instead, for the need to “see knowledge as a matter of conversation and social practice, rather than as an attempt to mirror nature”, while Williamson (2000) concludes that analysing knowledge is generally a futile effort. According to him, knowledge is epistemological so fundamental, that it is impossible to break it down to other fundamentals. This means now that justified true belief counts as knowledge and not the other way around.

As a result of the latter, we can have different justified beliefs that are true dependent on the underlying truth conditions, eventually all counting as knowledge. Therefore, epistemic pluralism means the diversity of such conditions and as such, we might need

¹⁶ For a) he might have been told by the CEO of the company and for b) he might have seen how much money Jones put in his pocket.

to advocate Rorty's (1979) demand to analyse the discursive fields where these conditions are set. Yet, we must pay attention to the representational aspect as well. As Knight (1940, p.6) remarks, knowledge in economics, or social sciences, and natural sciences are fundamentally different, yet "it is still knowledge about reality". While this first distinction seems reasonable, after all natural sciences and social sciences are concerned with different phenomena, we can make such distinctions of knowledge also within economics. Weintraub (1991, p.150) substantiate this point by writing "where Pigou saw an excess supply of labor, Keynes saw a particular level of employment associated with the point of effective demand. Where Solow sees a market failure, Lucas sees rational competitive activity". It is certainly difficult, if not impossible, to determine which of these positions are true and which are false¹⁷. Thus, McCloskey (1994) argues that this problem cannot be solved at all. It cannot be decided whether Keynes position is true knowledge or Pigou's. She concludes "that nothing can provide the "Knowledge" defined by epistemology. This "Knowledge" – as distinct from small-k knowledge – is "whatever it is that is in the mind of God"" (McCloskey, 1994, p.191). Economics, as any other scientific endeavour or social system, is therefore both product and producer of knowledge as Searle (1995) says¹⁸.

With the inability to find big K-knowledge and knowledge being an epistemic fundamental, as Williamson (2000) suggests, are we destined to fall into an epistemological anarchism (Feyerabend, 1993)? Is Caldwell (1982, 1991, 1997) correct when he realises "that the absence of a convincing set of criteria for choosing between scientific alternatives implies the impossibility of choosing among theories of truth" (Negru, 2009, p.14). Not necessarily, as it remains possible to apply a rather pragmatic approach and to ask what kind of knowledge suits us best in our scientific endeavour. Moscovici's (1998) distinction between social, or every day, knowledge and scientific knowledge may give us a first hint what to do. An illustrative example from his writings concerns the disease AIDS and the knowledge that is associated with it. While the sciences provide, for instance, virological and general medical knowledge about AIDS, Moscovici (1998, p.210) says that the social knowledge about the disease surpasses its medical definition and adds, for instance, the "punishment of God", the "retribution of nature", "degenerate behaviours" and "irresponsible sexuality," or arguments "that the

17 Here, the underdetermination of theories (Quine, 1951) may be able to explain why it is difficult to determine which one of these economists is right, a further explanation of this concept can be found in chapter 4.

18 Berger and Luckmann (1966) share a similar constructive argument.

virus was manufactured by the CIA for the extermination of undesirable population”, depending on the overall social settings. It can be argued that such social knowledge is inadequate or false. However, to justify such argument one needs to develop general criteria for knowledge, which have been denied to exist (Rorty, 1979; Williamson, 2000). The question then turns to what criteria are relevant and what are not, resulting in a situation where the issues regarding knowledge become a matter of legitimacy and discrimination. We face epistemic pluralism where we cannot have certainty what true knowledge is and is not. Nonetheless, the ability to choose epistemic criteria can be beneficial in any academic discourse, as it allows us to explore a wide range of research approaches that could not be explored with one fixed knowledge definition.

As example for such criteria for epistemologically sound scientific knowledge we may refer to Schurz (2011). He proposes a set of criteria for scientific knowledge without claiming that this is the only reasonable set. These criteria are fallibilism, minimal realism, intersubjective objectivity and minimal empiricism. The first principle is derived from Popper’s (2002) work on scientific endeavour and says that scientific statements must be fallible. Statements about the world that cannot be refuted or proven to be wrong cannot be counted as scientific knowledge. Secondly, the ontological position of minimal realism states that there must be a reality, of any kind whatsoever, independent of the human subjective perception. Yet, this does not qualify for the ability to identify every aspect of this reality and allows the generation of different theories of truth¹⁹. In this regard, Haack (1987, p.227) states that “it does not require that truth be conceived specifically as a relation between some truth bearing item and the world or some aspect of the world”. The third criterion of intersubjective objectivity demands that the statements about reality must be reproducible, allowing, in principle, every competent person, i.e. researcher, to assure oneself about the validity of the statement by investigating it. Intersubjective objectivity is closely linked to the ontological position of minimal realism and leads directly to the final condition minimal empiricism. The final criterion states that the subject matter of science must be accessible for experiences and observation, because only perceptive observation can generate reliable information about reality (Schurz, 2011; Heichele, 2010). In this sense we still have to refer to some kind of representationism, something that Rorty (1979) rejects. To further illustrate the meaning of these four criteria, we may refer to Russell’s

19 Such as the correspondence theory of truth, the redundancy theory of truth or the coherence theory of truth.

(1997) famous teapot as counter example. In his analogy, he presents a teapot orbiting between Earth and Mars. This teapot, however, is not detectable by current and future technology. The question now relates to the epistemological value, which is of course none. The teapot violates at least two of the four criteria, i.e. intersubjective objectivity and minimal empiricism. Therefore, we can see why demarcation criteria are important for scientific endeavour.

This is, of course, only one possible combination of criteria. The position of minimal realism, for instance, can be refined or changed, allowing strong realist positions on the one side or non-realist positions that can propose ‘realities’ that are mind-independent and ‘realities’ that are mind-dependent (Hoyningen-Huene, Oberheim and Andersen, 1996). On the other side of the scale, one could also apply a naïve realist position that supposes humans are capable of perceiving the real, external world without interference. The point, however, is not to discuss the criteria available and the consequences of their composition but the fact that such plurality exists. This plurality of epistemological criteria allows the eclectic to critically acquire the principles she thinks are suitable for her research.

1.1.3. METHODOLOGY PLURALISM

1.1.3.1. PLURALISM VS MONISM IN ECONOMICS

After the discussion of ontological and epistemological pluralism it is necessary to examine the last of the three Fleetwood (2005) describes; methodological pluralism as part of philosophy of science and economics. In general, methodology is understood as the philosophy or study of how research can be conducted scientifically and how research questions can be answered best (Panneerselvam, 2004). Generally, a methodology section in one’s work is required to justify/illuminate one’s research approach, while ontological and epistemological discussions seem to be less significant in everyday research. Nonetheless, it becomes self-evident that the methodology, our thoughts on how we answer our research questions, is very dependent on the way we conceptualise the world ontologically and what we allow to be knowledgeable about it (Dow, 2007). Hence, all three, methodology, ontology and epistemology, share a close and somewhat overlapping relationship.

Firstly, in economics we can roughly distinguish between heterodox and orthodox methodology. Orthodox methodology is usually characterised by its insistence of mathematic-deductive methods (Lawson, 2006), while the heterodoxy applies methodologies that are different and generally not accepted by the mainstream (Blaug, 1992)²⁰. Another remark on the methodology of the mainstream is that is based upon methodological individualism, i.e. “the claim that social phenomena must be explained by showing how they result from individual actions, which in turn must be explained through reference to the intentional states that motivate the individual actors” (Heath, 2010, p.no pagination). Methodological individualism, as term, finds its origin in the work of Schumpeter (1909, 1998) and was later developed as central guideline for social sciences by Weber (1972). This doctrine then found its way into the economics through the writings of Hayek (1942, 1943, 1944), thereby strengthening the tradition of neoclassical marginalism and the model of rational actors within the discipline (Heath, 2010). In contrast to the methodological individualism in the mainstream, heterodox economics methodologies can be much more holistic, i.e. highlighting the importance of reciprocal interdependencies between individual actions, or pluralistic. Institutional economics, for instance, applies such a methodology by looking at the level of social institutions and their implications for economic behaviour.

1.1.3.2. THE MEANING OF METHODOLOGICAL PLURALISM

The quintessence of the dichotomy of orthodox and heterodox economics and their related methodologies is the insight that, while the orthodoxy has a particular identifiable methodology according to Lawson (2006), heterodox economics has a plurality of methodologies mainly due to its heterogeneous nature. This causes heterodox scholars like Caldwell (1982), Dow (1985, 1997, 2004, 2007, 2014), Samuels (1998), Mäki (1997), Negru (2009) and Negru and Bigo (2008) to actively promote methodological pluralism. Dow (2014, p.1), for instance, defines methodological pluralism as

the acceptance of, and respect for, a range of methodological approaches on the grounds that no one approach can be demonstrated to be best given the nature of the subject matter.

²⁰ Colander, Holt and Rosser (2004, p.493) summarise this attitude to “[i]f it isn’t modeled, it isn’t economics, no matter how insightful”.

With reference to the nature of the subject matter, Dow's (2014) arguments makes use of the arguments put forward regarding epistemological uncertainty above. In fact, in her earlier work (2007) she justifies methodological pluralism by reference to, among other factors, the nature of knowledge, explained as the inability to discriminate against ways of constructing knowledge in the absence of a basis of identifying one best approach²¹. Additionally, Samuels (1998, p.302) outlines the existence of different methodologies in economics and highlights their meaning by writing that

[m]ethodological pluralism also affirms that an economist may properly do a priori theory, quantitative and/or non-quantitative empiricism, history and so on. Methodological pluralism affirms, too, that an economist may properly do static partial and/or general equilibrium theory or evolutionary economics. Within each of these modes of work there can be, and indeed are, varying methodological approaches – and there certainly are variances between them. It is also the case that no methodological procedure is or can be conducted in practice in absolute isolation from all others (for example, the choice is not between pure induction and pure deduction but between various procedural combinations of the two).

Similar to Dow's (2007, 2014) arguments, but more hidden, is Samuels (1998) underlying premise of the possibility to conduct research in economics with different methodologies. This premise implies again that the nature of the subject is so complex that it cannot be investigated with a single methodology alone. We can find this premise all over the literature on pluralism, as will be shown in the case of Caldwell (1982, 1997) in the following section. Finally, another underlying premise that stands out from these two examples, and can also be found elsewhere, is the need for tolerance of different methodologies available to the economists. This brings us to the final section of pluralism, the demand of tolerance.

21 A more detailed examination of her specific argument can be found in the next chapter under '2.4 Critical Reflections on Eclecticism'.

1.1.4. TOLERANCE PLURALISM

The final position found in the literature on pluralism is motivated by a principle of tolerance. Negru (2009, p.12) argues that this position on “[p]luralism [is] a response to developments within the philosophy of science’ and ‘the recognition of alternative economic traditions’”. She says that the first plea for tolerance originates from Schumpeter (1953) and was later put into the much more detailed context of methodological pluralism. As such, the pleas for tolerance and respect are mostly found in combination with other arguments, as evident from the quote by Dow (2014) above. Others have formulated the need for pluralism in similar ways, with Lee (2011a; b) being the only one who holds a pure tolerance position.

1.1.4.1. CALDWELL’S INSPIRATIONAL TOLERANCE

One of the first contributions to the tolerance view, and pluralism in general, comes, as said, from Bruce Caldwell (1982, pp.245–250). In criticising positivism and falsificationism, he says that “[m]ethodological pluralism begins with the assumption that no single optimal methodology is discoverable” and “it takes as a starting assumption that no universally applicable, logically compelling method of theory appraisal exists”. From this insight, Caldwell (1982) argues that the methodologists need to critically examine methodologies that are available. Because of the starting assumption, this examination, or the “rational reconstruction of the methodological content” (Caldwell, 1982, p.245), demands to include what is today known as heterodox schools of thought. The plea for tolerance lies here in the acceptance of the strengths and limitations of different methods from different schools of thought. Moreover, Negru (2009) argues that Caldwell (1982, 1991, 1997) saw the importance of pluralism in its ability to inspire dialogue in economics between diverse views. Such dialogue or conservation requires a mutual respect and tolerance for other people’s arguments.

1.1.4.2. SAMUELS’ ABSENCE OF A SINGLE PRINCIPLE

Like Caldwell (1982), Warren Samuels (1997a; b, 1998) is critical of a monist position in which a single approach to methodology can be identified as privileged or supreme to others. This results in two important conclusions on methodological pluralism. First, “[t]he case for methodological pluralism ultimately rests on the necessity of choice in the absence of a single conclusive final methodological or epistemological principle”

(Samuels, 1997a, p.67). This choice of methodology is a central focus in his work and in the light of an absence of meta-criteria one might think that the scientific endeavour would end up in being futile. However, Samuels (1997a) argues for the importance of the critical engagement with different methodologies and the strong scientific discourse established through pluralism to counter such worries (Eliassen, forthcoming). Secondly, Samuels (1998) further argues that methodologies are never isolated and that the economist will encounter a variety of somewhat interdependent methods which are all appropriate to research the economy. This dialogue, again, requires tolerance of different views. In conclusion, he clarifies that methodological pluralism allows the economist to be monist in her method choice, but that the practice of choice itself cannot be isolated from other methodological approaches.

1.1.4.3. GARNETT'S LIBERAL CONVERSATION

Other than Caldwell (1982) or Samuels (1997b, 1997a, 1998), Robert Garnett (2006, 2011) provides a reason for tolerating pluralism in economics based on a stronger emphasis on conversation. He starts off with the identification of a central problem, the foremost paradigmatic tendencies within academia. He thus summarises that

leading heterodox economists (including some who profess to be pluralists) are still committed to the paradigmist approach, viewing heterodox economics as primarily a search for demarcation criteria that would render heterodox economics distinct from and superior to orthodox (main-stream) economics. (Garnett, 2006, p.522)

To overcome this central problem, his aim is to re-define the understanding of science by combining McCloskey's (1983) rhetoric and Sen's (1999) "capability-centered view of human development" (Garnett, 2006, p.522). This means that economics should be considered as a critical and liberal conversation between economists with the aim to promote intellectual freedom. In accordance to McCloskey's (1983) view on economics is a market place for ideas, Garnett (2006) sees the necessity of pluralism in its ability to promote this critical and accountable exchange of intellectual content. This intellectual exchange is only possible and open if the participants in this exchange tolerate each other.

1.1.4.4. LEE'S LIVE AND LET LIVE APPROACH

Lastly, Frederic Lee's (2011a; b) account of pluralism in economics provides another perspective regarding tolerance. He builds his argument on the premise that, at least, the orthodox and heterodox theories are generally incommensurable and have nothing in common. Between orthodoxy and heterodoxy he draws the following strong dichotomy:

[N]eoclassical economists reject heterodox theory and focus on how asocial, ahistorical individuals choose among scarce resources to meet competing ends given unlimited wants, and explain it using fictitious concepts and a deductivist, closed system methodology. In contested contrast, heterodox economists reject mainstream theory; utilizing empirically grounded concepts and an open system, grounded theory methodology, they focus on human agency in a cultural context and social processes in historical time which affect resources, consumption patterns, production and reproduction, and the meaning (or ideology) of economic activities engaged in social provisioning. (Lee, 2011b, p.2)

Hence, Lee (2011a) seems sceptical about pluralism based on the promotion of diversity of approaches and instead defines pluralism of tolerance as core of an academic freedom that resembles religious freedom in the USA. In the same sense that members of different religious groups as well as non-religious individuals, despite all their differences, are Americans, all members of the orthodox and heterodox schools of thought should be tolerated and considered to be economists, whether they can have an intellectual exchange of their ideas or not. However, Lee (2011b) does not say that this tolerance also implies mutual respect. Although he agrees to some extent with the analysis by Caldwell (1982) or Samuels (1997a; b, 1998), i.e. that there is no single best method to conduct research, he also suggests "that a paradigm may be wholly false and thus not contribute to the discipline at all; in this case there is no need to be respectful of it" (Lee, 2011a, p.574). This becomes especially interesting since he considers the mainstream theories to be plainly wrong, hence orthodox economists do not deserve respect by heterodox economists.

1.1.4.5. TOLERANCE SUMMARISED

As we have seen, there are several ways to promote pluralism through the virtue of tolerance. We can distinguish between tolerance based upon the explanatory limitations of scientific theories and tolerance as part of the academic freedom and discourse within

a discipline. The former is also, to some extent, relatable to the second ontological pluralism defined by Lawson (2009). The similarities are somewhat obvious, while the one side ontologically argues for a pluralism of theories due to the fact of a complex and irreducible world, the other side argues for pluralism due to the limitations of existing theories. In my view these views are not necessarily exclusive but could be combined to some kind of meta-pluralism in the following sense: the ontological position of a complex and irreducible world fosters tolerance within an academic discourse that acknowledges the limitations of theoretical contributions to the discipline. Finally, I do not wish to discuss Lee's (2011a) assessment of the mainstream as being false. The list of incoherent aspects of mainstream theories²² is generally too long to outline the discussion at this point, even if it might be interesting.

1.2. SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT, HETERODOX AND ORTHODOX

It has been mentioned that there is a dichotomy between orthodox and heterodox economics. To understand this opposition further an investigation into the term schools of thought, which can be found quite often in the heterodox economic literature, is necessary. How schools of thought are exactly defined in the literature and how they are related to pluralism and eclecticism is the leading question here. First, we can loosely distinguish between orthodox and heterodox schools and secondly we can differentiate them from the term paradigm introduced by Thomas Kuhn (2012). Although paradigms and schools of thought are sometimes used interchangeably, Negru (2007) suggests to separate them. How can this be done? Kuhn (2012, pp.11–12) defines the paradigm as an “accepted examples of actual scientific practice (...) [which] provide models from which spring particular coherent traditions of scientific research”. It can be said, also deriving from this definition, that paradigms encompass ontology, epistemology and

²² To illustrate this, Lee (2011a, p.574) writes that

[f]or example, the objects of study, such as preferences-utility, marginal products, demand curves, rationality, relative scarcity, and homogeneous agents, are ill-defined, have no real world existence, and where relevant are non-quantifiable, non-measurable. Consequently, the issues and problems for which the objects are relevant, such as competitive markets, efficiency, and optimality, are either fictitious in that they are unrelated to the real world, or if the issues and problems are clearly located in the real world, such as prices or unemployment, the objects have no bearing on their existence. Moreover, the methods used to develop theoretical explanations addressing the issues and problems, such as deductive methodology and ontological and methodological individualism, generally include fictitious objects and utilize concepts that have no empirical grounding hence no meaning in the real world.

methodology into a, somewhat, consistent ‘whole’ framing acceptable research practise within a community²³. Hence, paradigms are a more global concept.

In contrast, Negru (2007, p.19) suggests to understand a school of thought as “a group of scientists whose work reflects different forms of commonalities”. These commonalities are not limited to ontological questions; they can have various meanings including a shared interest in a specific research object. Hence, schools of thought have a smaller scale and can live within a paradigm. Furthermore, Dow (2007, p.471) allocates these different interests also in the mainstream, where “it is possible to identify groupings, around endogenous growth theory, experimental economics, behavioural economics, complexity theory and so on”, all within the mainstream paradigm. This is further evidence that schools of thought should be separated from paradigms.

Gruchy (1947, p.18) provides yet another description about schools of thought as “common intellectual orientation”, where

their common orientation or world view is a fountainhead from which flows the unity that is to be found running through their economic thought. This unity which binds the members of a school of economists shows up in their framework of analysis, their psychological theory, and their scientific methodology. All three aspects of the school's work exhibit an underlying intellectual compatibility.

The three aspects with regards to the neoclassical school of thought are a static mode of analysis, in opposition to a more dynamic, evolutionary mode of, for instance, institutional economics, combined with the rationalistic psychology of individuals calculating their maximum utility. The third aspect, the scientific methodology in neoclassical economics is a mechanistic and atomistic approach, reflecting the static world it is embedded in (Gruchy, 1947).

This definition, however, remains superficial, as it does not allow a real distinction to paradigms. Moreover, individual economists can spread their work or interest across different schools (Dow, 2007). As said above, not all schools of thought are necessarily divided by ontological positions, i.e. their world views, or their methodological approach.

23 A similar conception was introduced by Lakatos (1970a) under the name research programme which is generally different to Kuhn's (2012) paradigms in several ways. A detailed description is given chapter 3.

Hence, differentiating schools of thought in economics comes down to the problem of classification as Colander (2000) suggests. Classifying schools of thought must, according to him, satisfy five specific criteria. The first one is the demand to organise thinking about the problems it refers to, so that even non-specialists can understand it. Secondly, a classification must be intuitive and natural so it becomes acceptable for the majority of economists. Third, it should work over time and fourth it should be focused on content and not ideological issues. Finally, it should have a consistent definition so that it does not have multiple meanings (Colander, 2000). It remains questionable whether all these conditions can always be adequately met when talking about schools of thought in economics. Negru (2007, p.20) thus speaks of “academic entities that have a certain degree of coherency” that can never fully satisfy the criteria Colander (2000) outlines. This coherency can have multiple appearances, ranging from methodological commonalities over commitments and development of theoretical works by specific scholars, Marxism for example, or a common interest in a specific research area as mentioned above.

Another distinction with regards to schools of thought relates to the difference between orthodox and heterodox economics. Often the neoclassical school of economic thought is mostly associated with orthodoxy, as it reflects a dominant mainstream. However, Colander (2000) rejects the idea that the neoclassical school is the current dominating mainstream. While neoclassical economics can be identified as a school of thought by specific characteristics, such as utility maximisation, perfect rationality, methodological individualism, general equilibrium approach and certain formalistic modelling techniques (Dow, 2007), the modern mainstream today is much more eclectic according to Colander (2000)²⁴. This fits well into the analysis from above, where schools of thought can be determined by specific interests. The dominance of the mainstream arises from the (political) power of those schools of thought able to determine research practices and curricula in the majority of universities and research institutes around the globe²⁵. By definition, heterodox economics stands then in opposition to this mainstream, encompassing a number of schools of thought not accepted by the mainstream.

24 It is true that the modern mainstream is more open in its methods etc. but as I will show the term eclectic does not necessarily fit into this context.

25 Lee, Xuang and Gyun (2013) provide a study of this process in the UK.

Dow (2000) and Lawson (1997, 2003b) draw the line between orthodox and heterodox economics in the mode of analysis, with the former as a closed-system approach and the latter as an open-system approach endorsing evolutionary processes in regarding to the relationship of important variables. As said earlier, Chick and Dow (2005, p.265) define an open system in accordance with the dictionary as “a material system in which the total mass or energy fluctuates; an incomplete or alterable system (of ideas, doctrines, things, etc.)”. And Lawson (e.g. 2001, p.169) generally characterises the differences between closed and open systems by an absence of event regularities, i.e. “whenever event (or state of affairs) x then event (or state of affairs) y”, in the latter. In summary, according to both scholars orthodox schools of thought are characterised by this closed-system ontology while heterodox schools of thought rely on the open-system ontology.

As a result of this ontological difference, Lawson (2006, p.493) allocates the core of heterodox economics in the rejection of the orthodoxy’s “insistence” of using “mathematical–deductive method[s]” and thus, “heterodox economics, in the first instance, is a rejection of a very specific form of methodological reductionism”. Hence and additionally, “the essence of the heterodox opposition is ontological in nature” (Lawson, 2006, p.492). Almost identical to this, Backhouse (2000, pp.149–150) provides his definition of heterodox schools of thought:

Heterodoxies are organized schools of thought that share core beliefs about the economy and identify themselves as standing apart from the prevailing orthodoxy. It makes being heterodox a matter of deliberate choice involving more than simply dissenting from orthodox beliefs.

In conclusion, the umbrella term heterodoxy consists of various schools of thought that have a) this rejection in common, but they might not be limited to it, and b) have practices that are not accepted by the mainstream. With regards to the former, however, it is not necessarily a positive occurrence as Van Dalen (2003) and Negru and Bigo (2008) observe. They see a danger in the tendency of schools of thought only to agree to disagree with the mainstream without real exchange and conversation between them.

For the cause of pluralism such conversation is necessary (Negru, 2010). It can be beneficial for scientific progress if different schools are in conversation and exchange insights and ideas, especially when we talk about schools of thought in the sense that they encompass different research objects. As a result, it becomes not only possible for individual academics to spread their work across schools of thought (Dow, 2007), doing

so will allow these economists to take various positions within debates. This is not only beneficial for the cause of pluralism, as it enables individual economists to provide and appreciate arguments beyond a single school of thought, but also creates another basis for the eclectic to choose from.

For the successful justification of eclecticism, a re-definition of schools of thought, which is similar to what Negru (2007) says about commonalities among groups of researchers, is introduced in chapter 3. This new definition is mainly based on Larry Laudan's (1987, 1978) earlier work and points out the cognitive and methodological commonalities schools of thoughts share. The advantages of the use of these cognitive and methodological commonalities over other definitions discussed here are specifically important for the general justification and appears novel in the context of heterodox economics, but it will also work with some other aspects discussed in the literature.

1.5. SYNOPSIS

In the current heterodox and pluralist literature, there are several key themes and arguments about the current state of economics that are important for the main thesis of this dissertation as well. Within the pluralist literature there are key arguments identifiable, which are either virtuous or presented on ontological, epistemological and methodological grounds. Moreover, we find a heterogeneity of the schools of thought in economics, different groups of scientists that share several interests from ontology over research objects to the rejection of the orthodoxy in economics (Lawson, 2006; Negru, 2007).

The ontological discussion of pluralism remains, however, rather underdeveloped in the economic literature. Hence, this chapter made the linguistic turn²⁶ and presented two contemporary discussions on ontological pluralism by Matti Eklund (2008, 2009) and Kris McDaniel (2009, 2010b, 2013a; b, 2014). The reason for this lies in the fact that linguistic concepts play a pivotal role in the later conceptualisation of the justification for eclecticism in chapter 3. Other than Eklund's (2008, 2009) examples of ontological

26 According to Williamson (2006) the term 'linguistic turn' describes the event in the 20th century philosophy after which language became the central theme for philosophers. Hence, this chapter did a linguistic turn by saying that we need to look at the nature of ontological questions, and by introducing McDaniel's (2009, 2010a; b, 2013b; a, 2014) ontological pluralism. In chapter 4, we will discuss the linguistic turn in more detail.

relativism resulting from such linguistic turns, the argument presented in chapter 3 does not arrive at the conclusion that ontological disputes are shallow.

With regards to epistemology, the central pluralistic arguments claim the existence of uncertainty of knowledge, i.e. there is not one best answer to the question of what knowledge is (McCloskey, 1994; Dow, 2007). In the absence of decisive factors determining what counts as knowledge and what not (Gettier, 1963), epistemological pluralism is characterised by the availability of criteria for knowledge creation and the need to agree on what to use (Schurz, 2011). This definition of epistemic pluralism, i.e. the existence of sets of criteria for knowledge, becomes relevant in the justification for eclecticism, as it is argued that such sets of criteria partly rely on the discursive groups one might enter.

Lastly, the literature on methodological pluralism is introduced, with its central argument for the absence of a decisive, best working method of research or, metaphorically speaking, that there is no one shoe fitting all sizes (Caldwell, 1982, 1997; Dow, 2014). From this insight, the literature develops strong arguments for the necessity and for tolerating such diversity of methodologies in economics and social sciences (Caldwell, 1982; Dow, 1985, 1997, 2004, 2007; Lawson, 2006; Mäki, 1997; Negru and Bigo, 2008; Negru, 2009). In the next chapter it will be shown that this particular argument is also found in the eclectic literature and thus, it is argued that pluralism and eclecticism, at least, share similar grounds.

Additionally, we find strong arguments for tolerance of plurality, which are not based on the limitations of methodologies, but are presented for more virtuous reasons. These reasons vary from the need of conversation (Caldwell, 1982; Garnett, 2006, 2011) over the absence of isolated methods (Samuels, 1997a; b, 1998) to an apologetic live and let live tolerance (Lee, 2011a; b). Despite the latter, arguments for tolerance are likewise found in the eclectic literature and the reasoning of, especially, Samuels (1997a; b, 1998), although not specifically referred to, is implied in the justification of eclecticism in chapter 3.

Finally, the differentiation between heterodoxy and orthodoxy, as well as the definitions for schools of thought have been presented. The former is a general dichotomy found in the literature, to which this dissertation is considered a part of. The term schools of thought will be central in the discussion and justification of eclecticism in chapter 3. The specific definition for schools of thought developed in chapter 3 is mostly related to

Negru's (2007) account and also incorporates, even if not referred to, Samuels' (1997a; b, 1998) absence of isolation.

To summarise; in order to understand the claim that eclecticism is pluralism within the individual and the general justification for eclecticism developed in this dissertation, it is necessary to understand the arguments made by pluralists. This allows the comparison of both pluralism and eclecticism. Hence, the following chapter will investigate the historic and contemporary literature of eclecticism, as well as its proponents and critics, to develop a comprehensive understanding of the topic. From this, the definition of eclecticism is developed and justified in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2: ECLECTICISM: PAST AND PRESENT

Study the past if you would define the future. - Confucius

The existing literature on eclecticism unveils the concept's long, diverse and most ambiguous, yet interesting history. Originating in philosophy and spreading out into theology and architecture, it found its way into more modern scientific disciplines such as pedagogy, social science, psychology and the mixed method research community. However, historically the importance of eclecticism faced a drastic decline in the enlightenment and, thus, the selection of literature nowadays is rather limited. Further below the reasons for this decline will be outlined in more detail when the critical responses in the philosophical literature are addressed.

The reviewed literature also exposes the difficulties in finding a common definition for eclecticism. In fact, it seems that each author favours his or her own definition, which makes it not only hard to find a common ground but also creates issues when it comes to the criticism of eclecticism. Here, it appears more that specific, self-defined positions are attacked rather than positions from the pro-eclectic literature. Overall, the criticism of eclecticism appears to be more polemic in nature, which makes it difficult take it serious and to discuss it effectively.

Despite the difficulties in finding a common definition in the literature, there are several similar themes appearing recurrently. These themes can be identified as *eclecticism in the history of philosophy*, *eclecticism in education*, *ontological and methodological eclecticism*, and *idealistic eclecticism*. These themes broadly cover and categorise the literature from the different disciplines and hence, also inform the remainder of this chapter. Within this order, the literature is further historically arranged and, as mentioned above, the summary of criticism is attached at the end.

Finally, eclecticism in the economic literature is incorporated in this chapter where appropriate, but due to the fact of its little coverage, there is not much to present. In the case of economics the concept is just barely mentioned and certainly not conceptualised, to my knowledge it can only be found in Richard Bronk (2009), Sheila Dow (1997, 2007) and Robert Solow (1988). This lack of conceptualisation means, however, that in economics there is a substantial gap in this topic.

2.1. ECLECTICISM IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

Two of the most important questions for historians and proponents of eclecticism are about its emergence and occurrence. This analysis becomes difficult in the case where seemingly eclectic philosophers never used this word or identified themselves with it. Richard Bronk (2009, p.58), for instance, lists Robert Malthus, John Stuart Mill, Alfred Marshall and John Maynard Keynes²⁷ as examples of economists who “have espoused an eclectic mix of both the standard ‘social physics’ (...) approaches and the more historically aware and holistic (...) approaches”. But neither label these economists themselves as being eclectic nor is it quite clear what Bronk’s (2009) criteria for this assessment actually are. In the following sections, the history of eclecticism will be discussed to identify common themes for the formulation of a definition and to find a framework that allows us to identify eclecticism in the works of historical individuals, especially economists. If we are able to identify eclecticism in the works of early economists, and others, it might be possible to add this to the justification for eclecticism developed here.

There are a number of attempts to examine ancient philosophical sects²⁸ and their possible eclecticism. According to Gaukroger (2001, p.29) two historical periods can be identified in which philosophical eclecticism was prominent, the *Hellenistic* and *Roman* period [ca. 400 BC – 400 AD] and a period between the 14th and 17th century when “Renaissance Platonism took over elements from the Neoplatonists, Stoics, Aristotelians, Neopythagoreans [and] Gnostics”. The *Hellenistic* and *Roman* period seem easily to be assessed as being eclectic in retro-perspective²⁹, depending on the interpretation of the works of philosophers of that time. Donini (1988), refers to Aristotle’s description of the composition of Plato’s philosophy from Parmenides, Heraclitus, Socrates and Pythagoreans as an indication of eclecticism, which is then a synonym of a sect informed by, or based upon, a plurality of earlier sects. The specific philosophical statements of Plato’s school are a combination of different ideas of other these other sects.

27 Additionally, Viner (1927) puts Adam Smith on the list of eclectic economists.

28 The literature talks about sects but I think we could equally apply the term schools of thought too.

29 Gibbon (1998, p.27) famously summarises the *Roman* period as a time where “the various modes of worship, which prevailed in the Roman world, were all considered by the people, as equally true; by the philosopher, as equally false; and by the magistrate, as equally useful”.

However, the term eclecticism itself can seldom be found in ancient writings (Donini, 1988). The most important hint, and most likely the first mentioning at all, is a short sentence at the end of the introduction of Diogenes Laertius' (1853, pp.12–13) *The lives and opinions of eminent philosophers*³⁰. Therein, he speaks of “a new Eclectic school” and Potamo of Alexandria “who picked out of the doctrines of each school what pleased him the most”. Another source, most likely also talking about the same person, can be found on an inscription in the city of Ephesus which speaks of “an “eclectic philosopher” from Alexandria” (Donini, 1988, p.16). Both sources lead to the conclusion that Potamo was an eclectic in the sense that he chose philosophical content from different sects based on his own judgement.

Similarly, Antiochus of Ascalon [ca. 125 – 68 BC] is listed by Dillon (1988) as being eclectic, insofar as this means a careful consideration of good arguments from rival schools of thought. Here we can also see how Dillon (1988) defines eclecticism. For him, like Laertius (1853) above, it is a careful collection of philosophical statements or arguments from different and rival philosophical sects. Based on this definition not only Antiochus, but “most of the great philosophers are eclectics, and eclecticism is a mark of acuteness and originality, as opposed to narrow-minded sectarianism” (Dillon, 1988, p.104). However, Dillon (1988) also admits that Antiochus would have been offended by such a labelling³¹. And Donini (1988) likewise describes Antiochus as being eclectic but very unique in his approach at the same time, because he tried to find common arguments among *Platonism*, *Aristotelianism* and *Stoicism* in order to form them into one single doctrine. What this approach distinguishes itself from syncretism is unfortunately left open.

Finally, Donini (1988) explains that Christian philosopher Clement of Alexandria [150 – 215] and the Roman philosopher and physician Galen of Pergamon [ca. 129 – 200 AD] are also associated with eclecticism, or at least mentioning it in their own writings. While it can be assumed from Clement's writings that he applied an eclectic method for his own philosophy³², the situation in Galen's case is an eclectic medical school (Donini, 1988) in which the members selected from a range of different medical sects

30 The original manuscript, written in Greek, originates presumably in the first half of the third century AD.

31 A third example is Xenophon [430 – 354 BC], who “makes Socrates speak of readings from the works of ancient wise men, ‘which we select [eklegometha] on the basis whatever we perceive good’ in them” (Donini, 1988, p.17).

32 “And philosophy – I do not mean the Stoic, or the Platonic, or the Epicurean, or the Aristotelian, but whatever has been well said by each of those sects, which teach righteousness along with a science of pervaded by piety, - this eclectic whole I call philosophy” (Alexandria, 2012, p.603), presumably first written between 200 and 205 AD.

those opinions and procedures that they perceived as most reasonable (Smith and Anthon, 1870).

At the end, Schneider (2002) and Donini (1988) both argue that there are only a few ancient philosophers who mentioned eclecticism in their philosophical works³³, whereas eclecticism itself became more prominent in early modern age philosophy. The reason for this, according to Schneider (2002), is the book *De philosophorum sectis liber*³⁴ by the Dutch theologian Gerrit Janszoon Vos [1577 – 1649] who reinterpreted the writings of Diogenes Laetius and included a final chapter on eclectic sects. The differentiation of philosophical sects³⁵ in a historical context not only defined the eclectic sect and put it at the end of the history of ancient philosophy, but also gave birth to the critical philosophical historiography in which those sects became a central object of investigation for modern age eclecticism. Thus, eclecticism became more than a polemic phrase or a historic category in the early enlightenment. Instead, the term stood for “the willingness within philosophy to adept an interpretive relationship with the philosophical past” (Schneider, 2002, p.208).

As we can see, the first framework that will guide us in interpreting the possibility of eclecticism of early philosophers is to look if they choose statements, arguments or content from a wide range of philosophical sects. In the following section we will critically discuss this interpretation approach in more detail. This will allow us to look at the works of economist that Bronk (2009) suggests to be eclectic. There are, however, some limitations. While it would be undoubtedly fascinating to examine the work of Mill, Keynes and others, a complete analysis of their works is simply beyond the scope of this dissertation to do so³⁶. Hence, the focus here lies on discussing frameworks and not on the application of such frameworks on selected historical scholars in economics.

33 The reference for this is Jakob Brucker’s work, which will be explained later in this chapter.

34 First published in 1657.

35 The term ‘philosophical sects’ means the different schools of thought such as Stoic, Platonic, Epicurean, Aristotelian and so on.

36 To indicate the magnitude such an analysis would require, it shall be noted that, for instance, Keynes’s collective writings consist of 30 volumes and Mill’s work comes in 33 volumes.

2.1.1 IDENTIFYING ANCIENT ECLECTICISM

We now have established that eclecticism of both historical periods described by Gaukroger (2001) is differently identified. This also means that we have, despite the two passages mentioned above, only secondary sources that analyse the workings of ancient philosophers. And it is further evident that different historiographical interpretations of these ancient texts are based on different conceptions of eclecticism. One of the first, comprehensive, and retro-perspective examinations of ancient, but also modern age, eclecticism can be found in Johann Jakob Brucker's [1696 – 1770] *Historia Critica Philosophiæ* (2010a; b), in which he draws upon the work of Diogenes Laertius. Hence, he also refers to Potamo of Alexandria as the origin of ancient eclecticism, yet admits that the eclectic sect is not known by ancient scholars by that name. The reason is, according to him, that philosophers who obviously appear to be eclectic understood themselves rather as Platonist, instead of being aware to have created a completely new sect. Central to the idea of an eclectic sect for Brucker (2010a; b) was the idea that it allowed the philosopher to free himself from the restraint of one single sect. He therefore defines

[t]he true Eclectic philosopher, renouncing every prejudice in favour of celebrated names or ancient sects, makes reason his sole guide, and diligently investigates the nature and properties of the objects which come under his observation, that he may from these deduce clear principles, and arrive at certain knowledge. (Brucker, 2010a, p.510)

For Brucker (2010a; b), however, ancient philosophers did not fully qualify as being eclectic according to this definition. In his eye, the ancient eclectics were rather syncretists who “instead of choosing the best doctrines and seeking the truth, they had, rather, aimed to *reconcile* widely different opinions” and thus, “philosophy, then, had produced the name rather than the practice of eclecticism” (Donini, 1988, p.21). As a result, Brucker's (2010a; b) opinion on ancient scholars seems to be that they are rather semi-eclectic, not fulfilling his ideal of an eclectic philosopher. Hence, he is highly critical about ancient eclecticism as compared to its modern age equivalent, which he praises.

Like Brucker (2010a; b), French philosopher Denis Diderot [1713 – 1784] also examined eclecticism and similarly praised modern, and condemns ancient eclecticism.

Diderot's (1779) judgement is equally harsh in his *Encyclopédie*³⁷ where "the syncretist instead do discuss nothing in itself (...) they are occupied only by the means of reconciling various assertions, without any regard to their falsehood, or to their truth" (Morrissey and Roe, 2013, p.no pagination)³⁸. Both Donini (1988) and Schneider (2002) argue that Diderot (1779) was very familiar with Brucker's (2010a; b) work, which explains the similarities between both. More importantly, however, is how he saw ancient eclecticism, despite the critical attitude, as something liberating. For Diderot (1779) considers especially the sectarian leaders as eclectics, or at least to some degree³⁹. Also looking back at Brucker's (2010a; b) definition, this element of self-emancipation from the doctrines of one sect is among the essential characteristics of eclecticism in the early literature. Diderot's (1779) closeness to this line of thought makes it clear that he saw those leaders predestined to be eclectics, because they freed themselves from the doctrines of a single sect and founded their own based on a selection of others and own philosophical thoughts.

Let us turn now to two philosophers who, like Brucker (2010a; b) and Diderot (1779), examine the eclecticism of ancient philosophers but are much more critical, if not even hostile, to it. The first prominent example here is German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel [1770 – 1831]. While he agrees with Brucker (2010a; b) about the origin of eclecticism in Alexandria, he says it is descendant of the philosophical schools of Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle and does not originate in the work of Potamo of Alexandria. Hegel (Reinicke, 1979) explains that Potamo was a mere teacher, for whom an eclectic approach is reasonable in the sense that for the purpose of teaching the sects are treated equal in his lectures. This, however, does not mean that Potamo was a founder of a sect. Moreover, Brucker (2010a; b) concludes from Potamo of Alexandria's existence that the whole Alexandrian school was eclectic, but Hegel interprets this seemingly eclectic characteristic of the Alexandrian philosophers as a specific self-understanding about their history (Reinicke, 1979). They saw themselves as disciples of *Platonism*, *Aristotelianism* and *Pythagoreanism* alike, where "all of the

37 Denis Diderot's *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, par une Société de Gens de lettres*, published in 17 volumes between 1751 and 1772.

38 In the original: "Les Synchrétistes au contraire ne discutoient rien en soi (...) mais ils s'occupoient seulement des moyens de concilier des assertions diverses, sans aucun égard ou à leur fausseté, ou à leur vérité" (Diderot, 1779, p.242).

39 "There is no leader of a sect who has not been more or less eclectic" (Diderot, as cited in Donini, 1988, p.19).

previous philosophies could find their place in theirs” (Reinicke, 1979, p.431)⁴⁰. This means that for Hegel (Reinicke, 1979) the eclectic character, that Brucker (2010a; b) saw, was in fact a much deeper reflection on how the Alexandrian sect came to be by combining elements from different sects.

According to Hegel (Reinicke, 1979) this combination is not the same as eclecticism, due to a deeper understanding of the ‘philosophical idea’. For him, eclecticism is something malicious and the “eclectic [philosophers] are to some extent the most uneducated people of all, in whose minds the most contradictory ideas find place next to each other, without ever bringing their thoughts together and having an awareness of their contradictions” (Reinicke, 1979, p.431)⁴¹. The other, rather educated side of eclectic philosophers who are more aware of this problem, yet still practising it for the sake of achieving truth, refused to see the consequences of their philosophising. As we can see, Hegel (Reinicke, 1979) develops a clear antipathy for eclectic philosophers, especially of the early enlightenment such as Brucker (2010a; b), and tries to keep ancient philosophers away from the evaluation that they were eclectic.

Eduard Zeller [1814 – 1908] provides yet another critical historical examination of eclecticism in his book *A History of Eclecticism in Greek Philosophy* (1883). His focus lies on a historical reconstruction of the true origin of eclecticism and not so much on finding a suitable definition for it. For Zeller (1883) eclecticism is a development, or an extrapolation, of scepticism at the transition of ancient to medieval philosophy. Scepticism, whose founder is considered to be Pyrrho of Elis [circa 360 BC], arose from a philosophical ‘standoff’ between the *Post-Aristotelian* schools, which Donini (1988) identifies as the three *Hellenistic* schools *Stoicism*, *Epicureanism* and *Academic Scepticism*. Ancient scepticism is mostly concerned with epistemology and especially with the criteria for truth. Its central question is whether there are evident things, which can be used as such epistemic criteria, so that only those statements are accepted to be true if they are in agreement with these evident things. Both Stoics and Epicureans formulated concepts that define such criteria for truth, which were critically debated by the sceptics (Vogt, 2014). Zeller (1883, p.1) now develops a historical theory in which

40 Original: “Die Alexandriner hatten den tieferen Standpunkt, daß sie ebensowohl Pythagoreer als Platoniker und Aristoteliker waren; alle früheren Philosophien konnten in der ihrigen ihre Stelle finden” (Reinicke, 1979, p.431).

41 Original: “Solche Eklektiker sind teils die ungebildeten Menschen überhaupt, in deren Kopf die widersprechendsten Vorstellungen nebeneinander Platz haben, ohne daß sie je ihre Gedanken zusammenbrächten und ein Bewußtsein über ihre Widersprüche hätten” (Reinicke, 1979, p.431).

the sceptic position on these “mutually exclusive tendencies” results in an eclectic acceptance. This transition from one to the other is explained as a movement from the sceptic “neither one nor another” to the eclectic “one as well as the other” (Zeller, 1883, p.4). Hence, scepticism is not only the cause but is an inherent characteristic of eclecticism, because “the eclectic vacillation between different systems is nothing else than the unrest of sceptical thought, a little moderated by belief in the original consciousness of truth” (Zeller, 1883, p.21). Here, Zeller’s (1883) view is contrary to that of Hegel (Reinicke, 1979), who saw the *Academic Scepticism* as much deeper than, and not as superficial as eclecticism. Eventually, Hegel (Reinicke, 1979) sees *Academic Scepticism* as the final and negative stage of philosophy in which only infinite subjectivity exists, without any objectivity, neither in truth nor in existence. As such, *Academic Scepticism* might resemble what the negativity is attributed to with the attitude towards claims of objective being, awareness and truth (Reinicke, 1979).

Although Zeller’s (1883) rationale makes sense to some extent, Donini (1988) criticises it as historically inaccurate. First, Zeller’s (1883) assumption that eclecticism is a result of the encounter of the three *Hellenistic* schools, mentioned above, fails from the fact that *Epicureanism* remained very isolated and had no influence on early philosophers associated with eclecticism. Furthermore, there is no evidence that those eclectic thinkers referred to these three schools only. The mixture is much more diverse, with Stoicism from the *Hellenistic* philosophies and the declining schools of *dogmatic Platonism*, *Aristotelianism* and *Pythagoreanism* influencing the eclectic philosophers (Donini, 1988). The second limitation is Zeller’s (1883) external influence, i.e. a Roman mind set for morality. Donini (1988, p.26) states that under this influence of that frame of mind, “eclecticism would necessarily have turned out to be a sort of moralizing Stoic-Skeptical-Epicurean *lingua franca*”⁴². In contrast, the philosophers of that time found their interests in metaphysics in combination with the “pre-Hellenistic ideal of pure speculation (theoria)” and “thus Zeller’s theory on the origin and nature of eclecticism is a typical example of *a priori* argument; it explains wonderfully what never happened” (Donini, 1988, p.26). At the end, Donini (1988) puts Zeller’s (1883, p.22) negative judgements of “the uncritical eclectic treatment of philosophy” in line with Brucker’s (2010a; b) definition of syncretism, hence he is not really talking about eclecticism all together.

42 That is: “language used as a means of communication between populations speaking vernaculars that are not mutually intelligible” (Mufwene, 2013, p. no pagination).

Finally, with regards to the historical perspective on eclecticism, Praechter, Ueberweg and Heinze (1920) introduce a new perspective on the topic, which encompasses a wider group of philosophers and is, in some way, much more nuanced. The difference from other approaches is that Praechter et al. (1920) interpret eclectic philosophers as being single-sect related with the willingness to introduce new ideas from their periphery. Hence, they distinguish between orthodox philosophers, who were “hostile to the intrusion of alien doctrines”, and philosophers, who “were open to extraneous influences” (Donini, 1988, p.28). The latter group of philosophers are then considered to be eclectics. Moreover, Praechter et al.'s (1920) interpretation also entails a gradual level of eclecticism among members of different sects. This means that some philosophers were more eclectic than others, or more orthodox, based on their level of acceptance of alien elements. Among the Platonists, for example, they identify Atticus [ca. 175 AD] and Taurus [ca. 105 AD] as rather orthodox, while Albinus [ca. 150 AD] and Apuleius [ca. 125 – 180 AD] were very much eclectic. And among the Stoics, they count Epictetus [ca. 55 – 135 AD] as orthodox and Marcus Aurelius [ca. 121 – 180 AD] as eclectic but not as much as Seneca [ca. 4 BC – 65 AD] (Praechter et al., 1920).

With regard to the latter two, Praechter et al. (1920) introduce two new eclectic philosophers and depart from, for instance, Brucker's (2010a; b) judgement. Although Brucker (2010a, p.127) recognises Seneca's “freedom of judgement”, he positions him within Stoicism due to the commitment to this sect expressed by Seneca himself. Likewise, Brucker (2010a) sees Marcus Aurelius' work based solely on Stoicism and does not refer to him as being eclectic. Also, Donini (1988) criticises Praechter et al.'s (1920) approach by referring to the historical evidence. In the case of Atticus, for example, Praechter et al. (1920) ignore in their assessment of his orthodoxy that later Platonists saw him as a philosopher who had abandoned the sect, hence it is difficult to say that he is an orthodox philosopher committed to Platonism. They further fail to appreciate influences from other sects on philosophers when labelling them orthodox as well as the conviction of labelled eclectics to be loyal followers of a specific sect. Therefore, Donini (1988, p.29) argues that their distinction between orthodox and eclectic philosophers “appears less and less convincing” in comparison with the self-portrayal of those philosophers.

2.1.2. IDENTIFYING ECLECTICISM IN THE ENLIGHTENMENT

As said above, Brucker (2010a; b) not only provides a historiographical interpretation of eclectics in ancient Greece and Rome, but also looks at philosophers of his own time. Here, it must be distinguished between two kinds of philosophers; those whose work is interpreted by Brucker (2010a; b) and those, who actively saw themselves in the tradition of eclecticism. The latter group will be examined later when talking about the idealism of eclecticism. For now the focus lies on two of those philosophers, Bacon and Leibniz, who are considered to be eclectic based on their contribution to various disciplines. It will be shown that the analysis of their work is not without difficulty, but it allows us to understand what led to the belief that their work is eclectic, how this belief is opposed and to what extent the formation of such beliefs might help to look at the works of early economists such as Adam Smith, David Hume, John Stuart Mill, David Ricardo or Thomas Malthus.

With Francis Bacon [1561 – 1626] Brucker (2010a) locates one of the most prominent Anglo-Saxon philosophers of the early enlightenment among the eclectic philosophers. In fact, he considers Bacon's comprehensive work on philosophy quite jubilantly as much more influential and impacting than any preceding philosopher before. Brucker (2010a, p.527) describes Bacon's 'brilliant' contribution to epistemology as most important, where he tried to overcome "the prejudices (...) arising from antient [sic!] authority" by introducing the inductive methods into physics⁴³. Brucker (2010a) specifically exemplifies Bacon's rejection of the syllogistic method of reasoning as the only instrument for the study of nature as characteristic of his general antipathy of ancient authorities. Furthermore, as a hint of Bacon's eclecticism, he mentions that Bacon himself not only focused on physics but also presents writings on moral philosophy, politics and history. Gaukroger (2001) adds to the discussion of Bacon's eclecticism the combination of inquiry and presentation of results in his writings by using a commonplace book. Like other seventeenth-century English philosophers, Bacon used these books to present his arguments and findings obtained by his application of different methods of inquiry. The use of such a book is a strong indication for them that the authors were eclectic, and since it is further known that commonplace books were also used by, at least, John Stuart Mill, David Hume and

43 The inductive methods were experiments, considered as the only ones to be epistemological valid.

David Ricardo⁴⁴ it can be suggested that they were likewise eclectic. The question remains to what extent a commonplace book is truly a sign for eclecticism.

Blair (1992, p.541) defines the commonplace book's origin in the Renaissance as an innovation by humanists of that time. They “adapted a concept with a glorious ancient pedigree to suit contemporary, in this case pedagogical, needs”. The reason why commonplace books can be understood as part of an eclectic philosophising is the following description:

One selects passages of interest for the rhetorical turns of phrase, the dialectical arguments, or the factual information they contain; one then copies them out in a note- book, the commonplace book, kept handy for the purpose, grouping them under appropriate headings to facilitate later retrieval and use, notably in composing prose of one's own. (Blair, 1992, p.541)

In addition, “it may record the origin of a fact (whether bookish or reported by a witness or an artisan) but treats each entry independently of its source, as potentially useful knowledge equivalent to every other entry” (Blair, 1992, p.547). With this description it seems evident that commonplace books show a high degree of eclecticism of their authors, hence supporting Gaukroger’s (2001, p.34) conclusion as reasonable. However, he carefully notes that the role of the commonplace book in Bacon’s writing remains “difficult to assess”. One of the few essays dealing with commonplaces is Bacon’s *Of the Colour of Good and Evil* (Wright, 1868, p.247), in which he discusses *colours* as “apparances of good and evill, and their degrees as places perswasion and disswasion; and their severall fallaxes, and the elenches of them [sic!]”. Skinner (1996) explains that in this work *colours* stand for common opinions and Bacon’s intention is to show that these common opinions can bring additional support to any debate, regardless of any intended or unintended actions that follow. The use of common opinions therefore enhances the persuasive power of the argument presented, which allows to conclude that this represents Bacon's eclecticism. Yet, he never called himself an eclectic, which makes the conclusion not as substantiated as one can hope.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz [1646 – 1716] is the second example of Brucker’s (2010a; b) list of eclectic philosophers in the early enlightenment. To substantiate this conclusion,

44 Unfortunately, I could not find out whether Adam Smith and Thomas Malthus used commonplace books.

he provides two essential reasons. First, Leibniz engaged in a wide range of disciplines; making important contributions in theology, mathematics, law and philosophy. Just like in the case of Bacon, this variety of fields Leibniz worked on gives reason to assume his eclecticism. The definition Brucker (2010a; b) uses to describe the eclectic philosophers does not only require a variety of sources for the philosopher to use, but also necessitates to engage with different objects or topics for one's investigation. In this case both Bacon and Leibniz qualify for being eclectic philosophers. What about the sources at Leibniz's disposal? Here, Leibniz also meets the condition set by Brucker (2010a), who praises his profound knowledge and application of ancient and modern philosophy in all the mentioned disciplines. He especially highlights Leibniz's knowledge of the teachings of Plato, Aristotle and Democritus, thus comparing him with Descartes' philosophical background.

Nonetheless, it is doubtful whether Leibniz was a true eclectic philosopher in the way Brucker (2010a; b) understood this concept. Not only does Leibniz never commit himself to eclecticism, he is actually critical of it in the correspondence between himself and the German theologian Gerhard Meier in 1694. Here, Leibniz says that

[w]e are not allowed to be eclectics as those, who compile platitudes with their opposites, or as those, who write a philosophical history and extract a doctrine, instead of turning it into flesh and blood. (Meier, as cited in Schneider, 2002, p.246)⁴⁵

With this criticism in mind, do we have to give up the idea that Leibniz was an eclectic philosopher? It appears that the conclusion that he was eclectic will remain doubtful (Schneider, 2002) and is very much dependent on the interpretation of his writings and comments. Although the above quote indicates Leibniz's opposition to eclecticism, in a letter to Nicolas-François Rémond [1638 – 1725] Duke of Orleans, dated January 10th 1714, he writes

I have found, that most sects are in a good part of what they positively claim, are right, but less in that, what they deny. (...) I flatter myself that I have entered into the harmony of the various kingdoms and recognize that both parties are right, provided that they are not mutually disturbing their

45 Original: "Wir dürfen keine Eklektiker sein wie diejenigen, die sogenannte Gemeinplätze mit ihrem Gegenteil zusammenstellen, oder wie diejenigen, die eine philosophische Geschichte schreiben und eine Lehre exzerpieren, statt sie in Fleisch und Blut zu verwandeln" (Schneider, 2002, p.246).

circles, so that everything in the natural phenomena happens in a mechanical and a metaphysical way, but that the source of the mechanics in metaphysics lies. It was not easy to discover this secret, because few take the trouble to combine these two types of studies together. (Leibniz, as cited in Schneider, 2002, p.247)⁴⁶⁴⁷

There are two ways how to interpret Leibniz's position here. First, we can say that he is rather pragmatic in his philosophical approach and that perceived his closeness to eclectic philosophers of his time lies in the application of different methods of inquiry. Another option would be to introduce a new definition for eclecticism, especially for Leibniz, as Nourrisson (1860) suggests.

He distinguishes two kinds of eclecticism, on the one hand the reliance of a variety of previous philosophies in the pursuit of knowledge and on the other an attitude of conciliation of existing philosophies. And here is where Nourrisson (1860) sees Leibniz's eclecticism, when he considers that it is possible to reconcile philosophical sects which are considered to be exclusive or even hostile. If we agree with this definition of eclecticism we are able to call Leibniz an eclectic philosopher. Schneider (2002), who was critical about Brucker's (2010a; b) argument, agrees with Nourrisson (1860) on this. Schneider (2002) also argues that Leibniz's eclecticism in the form of conciliation finds further evidence in his writings. As the quotation from above indicates, and the rest of this work substantiate, Leibniz is much more liberal towards a wide range of different philosophical sects, as compared to, for instance, Descartes. This openness, however, is simply due to his comprehensive education, where he learned to appreciate the wide variety of philosophical sects (Schneider, 2002). Yet, a problem with conciliation as criterion nowadays might be the difficulty to distinguish between pluralists and eclectics. Appreciation of and conciliation between different schools of thought in economics is a quality found in the pluralist literature, as shown in the

46 Translated from German to English, while Schneider's (2002) original source is in French.

47 Original:

J'ai trouvé que la plupart des Sectes ont raison dans une bonne partie de ce qu'elles avancent, mais non pas tant en ce qu'elles nient. (...) Je me flatte d'avoir pénétré l'Harmonie des différens régnes, et d'avoir vu que les deux partis ont raison, pourvu qu'ils ne se choquent point; que tout se fait mécaniquement et métaphysiquement en meme tems dans les phénomènes de la nature, mais que la source de la mécanique est dans la métaphysique. Il n'étoit pas aisé de découvrir ce mystère, parce qu'il y a peu de gens qui se donnent la peine de joindre ces deux sortes d'études" (Leibniz, 1714).

previous chapter. Although these qualities are necessary for eclecticism too, further criteria are needed to make a proper distinction.

2.1.3 MORAUX'S IDENTIFICATION OF ECLECTICISM

As we can see, the historical exegesis of eclecticism in the writings of philosophers of the past leaves us with some difficulties. If we cannot find a self-commitment in someone's writings, we need to find something that clearly characterises the philosopher as eclectic. From the example of Leibniz we can see how much this depends on our view of eclecticism itself. Different ways have been suggested to find eclecticism in the works of philosophers but they all have been subject to criticism. And, we are still left with the question whether famous economists have been eclectics as Bronk (2009) claims. Although we know that some of these classic economists he mentions used commonplace books, this does not necessarily mean they were eclectics. It becomes even more difficult if we look at economists who lived in a time when commonplace books were no longer in use, hence we cannot solely rely on these books as sole evidence. The other indicator put forward by Brucker (2010a; b) is the range of topics and disciplines the philosopher is engaged with. Such broad interest in several different areas is evidently occurring in the works of Smith, Hume and Mill, but again that does not mean they were eclectics as we see in the case of Leibniz. Is there another possible solution how we could identify eclecticism in the works of these classic, but also in modern economists?

The framework that Paul Moraux (1984) suggests offers a possible solution to identify eclecticism in the works of philosophers who were not committed to eclecticism or did not call themselves eclectics. Moraux's (1984) approach is similar to that already presented by Praechter et al. (1920) but has the advantage of overcoming their limitations (Donini, 1988). First of all, he objects to the traditional dichotomy between orthodoxy and eclecticism as historically inaccurate based on the historical evidence, i.e. the lack of written commitment to eclecticism, or even syncretism, of ancient philosophers. Instead, Moraux (1984) differentiates between 'de facto orthodoxy' on the one and 'intentional orthodoxy' on the other hand, which is here synonymous to eclecticism.

His use of orthodoxy in both cases is due to the fact that philosophers usually committed themselves to one specific sect and did not see themselves as free or

independent of them. Hence, the distinction made does not rely on the premise whether or not someone shows a commitment but to what degree the person is committed. De facto orthodoxy therefore means that the philosopher has a strong commitment to his sect while intentional orthodoxy allows an accidental or intentional inclusion of so called alien elements or doctrines in the philosopher's thoughts. In the accidental case one can say that these philosophers appear to be "sincerely convinced that they are representing the genuine version of their school's doctrine" (Donini, 1988, p.30)⁴⁸. The intentionality, on the other hand, is simply understood as the willing inclusion of those alien elements with the conviction that this is possible and will make one's philosophy better.

This distinction may shed a new light on, for instance, Diderot's (1779) observation of the more or less eclectic leaders of ancient philosophical sects (Donini, 1988; Morrissey and Roe, 2013). The intentional introduction of otherwise alien doctrines into the schools they were educated in, or belonged to, may have caused Diderot (1779) to conclude they were somewhat eclectic. Under Moraux's (1984) framework, such a conclusion makes more sense than under Diderot's (1779) own, rather idealistic definition of eclecticism. To further illustrate Moraux's (1984) conception, we can look at two examples. He himself refers to Alexander of Aphrodisias [around 200 AD] who commits himself to Aristotle in his writings, yet there are elements in his work which do not belong to Aristotelianism. For instance, he had a different understanding of the soul than Aristotle, but still believed he would not depart himself from Aristotelianism with it (Moraux, 1984). Another example may be Antiochus of Ascalon [ca. 125 – 68 BC] who was a member of the Platonist sect, but was opposed to the scepticism in the school at his time. Instead of agreeing with the scepticism of his fellow disciples he developed a retroactive dogmatism, especially in epistemology, which was essentially Stoic. This epistemological stance allows, in opposition to scepticism, to have certain knowledge with the help of 'cognitive impressions', i.e. in essence the perpetual, sensory impressions that Stoic's consider as their truth criterion (Frede, 1987). This could allow us to conclude Antiochus' intentional orthodoxy. Interestingly, Dillon (1988) argues that Antiochus might have seen no real differences between Platonism and Stoicism at all, only differences in their terminology. This would then allow him to combine their

48 Lodge (1944, p.434) gives a metaphorical example of such an intentional orthodoxy among realists, idealists and pragmatists as mining companies in his anecdotal paper and explains that at one point "the realist may invent a way to include in his system values which at the present we associate with idealist and pragmatic methods of working".

doctrines to oppose the Platonist sceptics. These first examples, among several others⁴⁹, give us an understanding how we can use Moraux's (1984) framework to identify eclectic philosophy.

There is, of course, one exception that does not really fit into Moraux's (1984) dichotomy of de facto and intentional orthodoxy. This exception is the Greek physician Galen of Pergamon [ca. 129 – 216 AD], who sympathises with Aristotelianism on the one hand but refuses to acknowledge any specific school as his own. Galen rather chooses hypotheses “which he views best because, independently of their origin, he considers them as scientifically proven or underpinned by unassailable conclusions”⁵⁰(Moraux, 1984, p.xxii). This means that Galen is driven by an early kind of scientism that guides him in his decision what doctrines or principles are best for his practices. Nonetheless, it is Galen's uniqueness among the ancient philosophers that allows us to keep Moraux's (1984) analytical tool.

There might be some adjustments needed in the light of the definition of eclecticism suggested here, especially in the light of a non-historical account of eclecticism. For now, we can constitute that the accidental, and even more the intentional, inclusion of doctrines from other sources than one's philosophical background or commitment could be understood as a form of eclecticism, whereas this dissertation focuses on the intentionality of inclusion for its definition. Eclecticism becomes then an extrapolation of pluralism in a similar way Zeller (1883) understands eclecticism as inevitable consequence of scepticism. We could further establish a gradual scale with moderate steps from pluralism to eclecticism, which allows allocating economists on a certain point depending on the range of their inclusion, but for the sake of justifying eclecticism the focus will not be on such a scale.

49 Dillon (1988), for example, also refers to s to Plutarch [ca. 46 – 120 AD] and Atticus to provide further evidence.

50 Original:

Über die Grenzen der Schulen hinweg will er sich für die Thesen entscheiden, die er als die besten betrachtet, und zwar weil er sie ganz unabhängig von ihrer Herkunft für naturwissenschaftlich für erwiesen oder durch unangreifbare Schlussfolgerungen für untermauert hält. (Moraux, 1984, p.xxii).

2.2. MODERN ECLECTICISM

While the literature discussed above is mostly concerned with the question whether or not certain historical philosophers were eclectic, and how it could be determined, the modern literature focuses more on the practical implications of eclecticism in its respective disciplines. Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin's (2011) and Køppe's (2012, p.15) explanations illustrate this emphasis best, when they say that eclecticism is concerned with "one of the most important defining characteristics of the scientific process—the selection of those elements, properties, characteristics which define the empirical object". Beside the clear methodological emphasis of this focus, there is also a certain ontological commitment emerging from the literature. The empirical object Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin's (2011) and Køppe's (2012), and others, talk about, seems to be always multifaceted in nature so that different research approaches must be applied. This is one of the strongest commonalities the otherwise diverse literature from pedagogy, psychology, mixed method research, sociology and economics share.

2.2.1. PEDAGOGICAL RESEARCH

The literature on educational research can roughly be divided into research into learning in general and research into pedagogical practices. For the latter, we can formulate a pedagogical eclecticism that is promoted by Taggart (1955). She critically discusses the evolution of pedagogical theories and concludes that the implementation of "new philosophies, new psychologies and new schools of educational thought as they are developed" is the central necessity for the future in teaching. Furthermore, "the eclectic viewpoint would enable the educator to extract the sound postulates from each school or system of the past and present" (Taggart, 1955, pp.155–156) to improve her own teaching. It seems, here, that Taggart (1955) promotes a kind of pedagogical eclecticism Hegel (Reinicke, 1979) attests to Potamo. This, however, does not mean that a generous selection from the wide range of teaching techniques generally qualifies as pedagogical eclecticism, as theory development is not covered here.

The former category in the literature is then concerned with the, for eclecticism more contemporary, theory development in education about how we learn, about learning environments and the wider social influences in relation to learning. Here, Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin (2011, p.32) emphasize the "heuristic value of eclecticism" for developing theories in this and other fields. The reasoning of this heuristic value is the

following: Theory development is especially important as each theory investigating an empirical object is usually based upon a pre-selection of characteristics of it, and therefore we can have a range of competing theories about the same empirical object⁵¹. Yet, the pre-selection also poses a limitation to the explanatory power of each theory. Eclecticism, i.e. the acceptance of different theories, can then overcome these limitations and increase the general understanding of the empirical object, but only if all theories are considered scientifically equally valuable (Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin, 2011). Hence,

eclecticism, then, will be an heuristic, productive and coherent move in the context of theory-building if contributors are considered as effectively complementary and valuable in terms of layer two (Data-defining and hypothesis-creating) and “authorized” by layers three (School of thought) and four (Ideology–conception of the world). (Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin, 2011, p.35)

To illustrate the meaning of this heuristic value, Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin (2011) refer to research into proportional reasoning among school children, an important research subject for the development of mathematical curricula in schools.

Lesh, Post and Behr (1988, p.93) define proportional reasoning as “a form of mathematical reasoning that involves a sense of co-variation and of multiple comparisons, and the ability to mentally store and process several pieces of information”. In addition, Clark (2008, p.6) describes it as the ability “to synthesize and connect the multiplicative and equivalent concepts of proportion” which then “requires an adequate knowledge of proportion in order to apply the concept in the appropriate situation”. A simple example of proportional reasoning presents two equally fast students running around a track, whereas the lap-count and time is given for one of them. Now, the student is required to calculate the time required by the other runner with a different number of laps (Heller et al., 1989)⁵². This phenomenon, the research object focused on (Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin, 2011), has been researched for some time and we can identify two theoretical approaches that try to explain proportional

51 In some way this reasoning is reminiscent of the underdetermination of theories (Quine, 1951) mentioned in the previous chapter, as well as being shortly discussed in chapter 4.

52 For instance, student A and B are equally fast. Student A took 15 minutes for 8 laps. How long did student B need for 12 laps?

reasoning; namely the *Piagetian* and the *Vygotskian* theories⁵³. The former theory is embedded in cognitive psychology and emphasises the development of the human brain and its relation to proportional reasoning. The latter, on the other side, examines proportional reasoning in networks of semiotic mediators in a social and cultural dependent context and is therefore part of a social psychological paradigm. Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin's (2011) claim now says that both theories together, even if incommensurable, hold a higher explanatory power than on their own. Selecting both the *Piagetian* and the *Vygotskian* approach to examine proportional reasoning provides a “a) better explanation of developmental ways and obstacles of mathematical knowing at school and in other social contexts” and “b) [an] enrichment of pedagogical hypothesis on the proposition of auxiliary cultural tools” (Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin, 2011, p.36).

An example of such applied research in education that qualifies for Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin's (2011) eclecticism can be found in Stinson (2004, 2009). In his 2004 dissertation, he investigates the experience of African-American students in schools, specifically in the subject mathematics (Stinson, 2004). His research aim is to identify the role of the socio-cultural influences on male African-American students, their schooling experiences in mathematics and beyond, and how they understand success in school. Motivated by a lack of literature on successful African-American students in school, most literature focuses on reasons of failure, and unsatisfied with the theoretical paradigms available to conduct the necessary qualitative research, Stinson (2004, 2009) chooses an eclectic approach to develop a broad understanding of these influences. To achieve this, he draws upon post-structural critical race theory⁵⁴ and critical theory as frameworks to inform his qualitative methodology. He explains his approach as following:

Theoretically, poststructural theory made available a different language to *re-define* terms such as person, agency, discourse, and power, as well as the theoretical concepts *subversive repetition*⁵⁵ and *deconstruction*⁵⁶. CRT⁵⁷

53 Referring to Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget [1896 – 1980] and Russian psychologist Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky [1896 – 1934]

54 Solórzano and Yosso (2002, p.25) define critical race theory in education as “a framework or set of basic insights, perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyse, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions”.

55 The “freedom to constitute oneself in an unexpected manner—to decode and recode one's identity” (Stinson, 2004, p.57).

offered a means of foregrounding race and racism throughout the study, as well as the theoretical concepts of *counter-storytelling*⁵⁸ and *double-consciousness*⁵⁹. Critical theory put forward the ideological foundation of socio-political critique, self-empowerment, and social transformation, as well as the theoretical concepts marginalized subjects and hegemony. (Stinson, 2009, p.510)

Within the meaning of Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin's (2011) eclecticism, all three theories used together provide Stinson (2004, 2009) with a broader understanding and the possibility to answer his research question than with one theory alone.

However, objections can be raised to this approach, especially in regard to the combination of critical theory and post-structuralism. This is, for instance, put forward by Lather (2006), who refers to the incommensurateness of both theories⁶⁰. Stinson (2009), however, argues that the boundaries between post-structuralism and critical theory are not as clear as they seem to be and, therefore, the argument of incommensurability might fail. Here, he specifically refers to the work by Kincheloe and McLaren (2000), who argue that postmodernism⁶¹ and critical theory can complement each other, especially that critical theory provides a normative underpinning for the postmodern critique of Western societies. Hence, this combination allows Stinson (2004, 2009) to obtain an understanding of the socially marginalised agency of African-American students, which becomes even more interesting against his own background and identity⁶².

56 Deconstruction means "to locate the promising marginal text, to disclose the undecidable moment, to pry it loose with the positive lever of the signifier; to reverse the resident hierarchy, only to displace it; to dismantle in order to reconstitute what is always already inscribed" (Derrida, 1998, p.lxxvii).

57 Critical Race Theory

58 Counter-storytelling includes "stories of "raced" people whose experiences are often not told; stories that expose, analyse, and challenge the majoritarian stories of racial privilege" (Stinson, 2009, p.505; Solórzano and Yosso, 2002).

59 Double-consciousness is the "sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Bois, 2008, p.12).

60 For example, the concept of self-empowerment in critical theory is the provision of skills and knowledge for an individual to articulate socio-political critiques about his or her environment and to decide how to deal with oppressive elements around him or her (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000). On the other side, the essence of post-structuralism is precisely the deconstruction of concepts such as self-empowerment (Derrida, 1982, 1992, 1998, 2000, 2004). This leads to ontological inconsistencies between critical theory and post-structuralism which one can use to argue against an eclectic approach as Stinson (2004, 2009) applies.

61 At this point there arises some confusion, as Stinson (2004, 2009) seems to use post-structuralism and postmodernism synonymously while Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) make, despite some commonalities, a distinction between postmodernism and post-structuralism. In regard to the critique, it is necessary to identify whether the commonalities are addressed or not. Hence, the argument of incommensurability between post-structuralism and critical theory can still be valid in the light of the commensurability of postmodernism and critical theory when the commonalities are not addressed.

62 He refers to the marginalisation of homosexuals in the US society, saying that

2.2.2. PSYCHOLOGY

Analogous to pedagogy, the psychology literature on eclecticism can also be divided into two categories. The first category is the formulation and development of theoretical content while the second category focuses on therapeutic approaches and methods.

With regard to the first category, it is Køppe (2012) who argues that the general scientific development is in itself inherently eclectic and that the evaluation of eclecticism is therefore connected to the successful or unsuccessful progress in science. Similar to the argument by Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin's (2011), he defines eclecticism as the choice of attributes of those objects under examination which determines the successful theory development. A theory is then, superficially spoken, the result of an examination of chosen characteristics of an object, under the assumption that such an object possesses multiple and complex attributes. Køppe (2012, p.15) writes here that such an object can "be said to be a concrete operationalizable measure which is operationalized differently depending upon the method of measurement". As an example in psychology he refers to the concepts of cognition as object, which has a long cross-disciplinary research history. Its history began with focus on the characteristics of cognition such as *perception*, *thought* and *memory* in early psychology and went through *learning* and *problem solving* in B.F. Skinner's behaviourism and Tolman's (1948) *cognitive mapping* over to "the direction of neuropsychology, clinical psychology (cognitive therapy), linguistics, and philosophy" (Køppe, 2012, p.16).

This current development of cross-disciplinary research is the result of three problems within cognitive psychology Køppe (2012) identifies. First, there is the concept of consciousness. While cognition certainly goes beyond consciousness, i.e. not all cognitive processes take place consciously, it remains "somewhat unclear as to what extent consciousness is the determining parameter of cognitive psychology" (Køppe, 2012, p.16). Here, attempts to bring phenomenology and cognitive psychology together might solve this problem, but since it is a quite new approach not much can be said for now. Secondly, the role of emotions has been of little interest in cognitive psychology for some time, but became more important through neuro-scientific research lately. Additionally, the role of social processes became included into the research agenda too

[b]eing gay excludes me from nearly all social institutions such as education, family, government, industry, religion, and so forth. Only small portions of these intuitions have acknowledged my existence and value as a contributing human to society and citizen of a democracy. (Stinson, 2004, p.70)

(Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin, 2011). Finally, linguistics also became increasingly interesting in cognitive psychological because of its general understanding of semiotics, phonology and syntax, and it is assumed to have an important influence on cognition too. On the other side, this eclectic integration bears several problems; as Køppe (2012, p.16) says:

[t]he point, then, is that if all these three areas are acknowledged as being an integrated part of cognitive psychology—what, then, is cognitive psychology not? (...) One can say that cognitive psychology, on the whole, is devoid of meaning due to its considerable [sic!] but also that it constitutes itself as a cross-disciplinary school of thought, but must have some definable feature (...)—and what is it then?

The concern here is that cognitive psychology, through integration, becomes undistinguishable from other disciplines and might become an equivalent to what has been coined as economic imperialism, i.e. the application of analytical methods of economics to non-economic problems. As Køppe (2012) observes, however, this tendency is not a particular problem of eclecticism itself but a general danger in theory development and cross-disciplinary research. As a result he concludes that eclecticism must be treated carefully, but neither as *a priori* positive or negative for scientific progress.

The second category in which eclecticism is discussed is concerned with therapy approaches in psychology, where the patient becomes the central object of inquiry or treatment. The reason for the rise of eclecticism in therapy, according to Slife, Reber and Gantt (2003, p.5), lies in the fact that there has been a growing dissatisfaction among therapists with single theory approaches, because “behaviorists may tend to overlook problems of thinking, just as cognitivists may tend to overlook problems of behavior”. Jensen, Bergin and Greaves (1990) provide empirical evidence for this conclusion. According to their study over 68% of participating psychologists identify themselves as eclectics due to their dissatisfaction. If we take earlier studies, it is evident that this number has increased over the past decades, from 50% in the 1970’s (Garfield and Kurtz, 1975) to 64% in 1980 (Patterson, 1986) to the figure given by Jensen, Bergin and Greaves (1990). Additionally, further literature can be found that supports the conclusion that therapists are dissatisfied with single theoretical approaches due to the wide range of needs they encounter with their patients (Goldfried, 1980;

Norcross, 1986; Prochaska and DiClemente, 1986; Lazarus, Beutler and Norcross, 1992).

Unfortunately, it was not possible to find figures for the 2000s, that would indicate whether the number of dissatisfied therapists increased, decreased or stagnated in relation to the 1990s. Nonetheless, the argument for an existing dissatisfaction, which results in eclecticism can still be found, as shown in the case of Slife, Reber and Gantt (2003). There are, however, two interesting observations from this dissatisfaction of single theoretical approaches to an otherwise wide variety of therapeutically needs of the patients, which can be interpreted as the complexity- or multiplicity-of-the-object argument mentioned by K ppe (2012). First of all, we can find early arguments for eclecticism that are strikingly similar to the once found in the literature of the early enlightenment. For instance, Lazarus, Beutler and Nocross (1992, p.11) argue that the solution of this tension between therapeutic need and available therapies lies in the selection of “what appears to be best from a variety of methods, approaches, or styles”. If we recall the definitions of eclecticism by, for instance, Brucker (2010a; b) we can see how the idea behind eclecticism, the choice of what is best, has little changed even though in psychology it seems more focused on actual methodological questions and less on a philosophical foundation. The second observation comes from Goldfried (1980, p.991), who identifies a “Kuhnian-type crisis” in the psychologists' paradigm due to the dissatisfaction of the current practices. But is the emergence of eclecticism truly this kind of crisis? Kuhn (2012, pp.74–75) summarises such a crisis by saying that “novel theory emerged only after a pronounced failure in the normal problem-solving activity”. In the present case in psychology the dissatisfaction described finds its origin on the failure of the problem-solving activity, but other than Kuhn (2012) describes there is not necessarily a novel theory emerging, since eclecticism is not about finding or developing one single new theory.

The question is what we can make out of this. There are several possible answers to the question of a paradigmatic crisis in psychology. First, one could say that it is half a “Kuhnian-type crisis” (Goldfried, 1980, p.991), or at least it was such a crisis at that time period and now this has been resolved into a new, cognitive paradigm. On the other hand, the whole idea of a crisis can be abandoned if we reject a Kuhnian paradigmatic structure in psychology completely. Staats (1981), for example, argues that psychology is in a pre-paradigmatic state, in which the psychological schools of the 20th century are still competing for the position as dominant paradigm. Hence, we

cannot assign a crisis in which an existing paradigm is replaced after a dissatisfaction of a current practice arose. Yet others reject Staats' (1981) assessment of psychology as being pre-paradigmatic and argue that psychology cannot at all be viewed in the way Kuhn (2012) understood science (Rychlak, 1975; Koch, 1981; Henley, 1989; Leahey, 1992; Koch, 1993)⁶³. Instead, psychology consists and has always consisted of several coexisting paradigms that make a Kuhnian revolution obsolete (Hergenhahn and Henley, 2013)⁶⁴.

Let us return to the question of eclecticism in psychology. A comprehensive analysis of eclectic practice can be found in the works of Slife (1987), Slife and Reber (2001) and Slife, Reber and Gantt (2003), which is to some extent building on previous work of Lazarus and Beutler (1992). All in common is the identification and differentiation of *technical integration*, *technical eclecticism* and *unsystematic eclecticism* as current trends in psychological therapy for the above outlined problem. Here, the purpose of *technical integration* is understood as to “increase comprehensiveness by combining theories and thereby multiplying the number of categories and techniques available to address [the] clients’ needs” (Slife and Reber, 2001, p.3)⁶⁵. From this definition we can see that *technical integration* is the direct answer to the realisation of the multiplicity of issues brought up by the patients and the problems associated with addressing these issues with a single theory-based therapy. We can also see how this is very close to the argument by Kjøppe (2012) that a single theoretical approach is inadequate to deal with a multifaceted research object, which in the case of therapy is the patient.

Then, we have *technical eclecticism*, which is described as the view that an “effective combination” of therapy approaches must be based on a “systematic” selection of procedures from a “decision-making system” built upon a strong empiricism and not just on an “integrating disparate view[s] of psychotherapy” (Lazarus and Beutler, 1993, p.383). This means that with *technical integration* we have actual activity, while *technical eclecticism* provides the heuristic or decision tool for how to act most effectively. Interestingly, empiricism here plays the role of a meta-theoretical restrictor for the psychologist to make his or her decision. This is not without complications, as

63 In fact, Kuhn (2012) was sceptical himself about the paradigmatic nature of social sciences etc. as shown in more detail in chapter 3. If psychology is not considered a natural science, then Kuhn (2012) might have agreed with the criticism.

64 Hergenhahn and Henley (2013) further refer to Mayr's (1994) description of biology as a science unlike Kuhn's (2012) version, with multiple, coexisting paradigms that are in a Darwinian kind of competition and conclude that psychology might be seen as similar.

65 See also Held (1995), Prochaska and DiClemente (1986) and Wachtel (1977, 1987).

Slife and Reber (2001) suggest. How is the application of this meta-theory not negating the aspired eclecticism? A closer look reveals the contradictory nature of both approaches which leads to a failure of their premises. Slife and Reber (2001, pp.4–5) conclude that

both approaches ultimately rely on precisely what they try to avoid – a single set of assumptions and thus a single theory. In the case of theoretical integration, multiple integrative theories are reduced to a single meta-theory that guides the integration of theories or the use of techniques (...) The only way to organize and bring coherence to practices, of course, is through some formal or informal theory or meta-theory.

It seems that *technical eclectic* or *technical integrative* therapists would only be superficially eclectic, or gradual intentional orthodox (Moraux, 1984). The coherent composition of different therapy approaches, for instance, requires a set of basic assumptions from a scientific paradigm, such as empiricism, rationalism or positivism (Slife and Reber, 2001). In the case of *technical eclecticism*, empiricism fulfils a vital role yet it constrains the approach to a single meta-theory or paradigm, hence a contradiction or limitation to eclecticism.

Can the latter category of *unsystematic eclecticism* solve this problem then? James and Gilliland (2003, p.294) describe *unsystematic eclecticism* as taking “bits and pieces from different theoretical systems”, so essentially it can be argued that this approach is not bound by an empirical meta-theory, even if this remains speculative. Furthermore, *unsystematic eclecticism* has received mainly criticism, simply because it is unsystematic and therefore considered unscientific (Norcross, 1986; Howard, Nance and Myers, 1987; Slife, 1987; Jensen, Bergin and Greaves, 1990; Lazarus, Beutler and Norcross, 1992; Lazarus and Beutler, 1993). However, in chapter 3, with the help of epistemic pluralism defined in chapter 2, it will be argued that such radical eclecticism is neither contradictory nor unsystematic and unscientific.

2.2.3. MIXED METHOD RESEARCH

The literature in the mixed method research community is mostly concerned with methodology and the justification of the application of different methods. Hence, it finds itself deep in the paradigmatic discourses that were discovered in the previous

section on psychology and expands them into social sciences and pedagogy⁶⁶. Central to these paradigmatic discourses is the question of Kuhn's (2012) incommensurability thesis. Some of the debates in this thesis will be outlined further in chapter 3, but first the question of eclecticism shall be addressed.

There is a line of argument that makes mixed method research predestined to eclecticism, because it is very similar to the ontological positions outlined in the previous sections. This line argues that mixed method research is best suited for research on complex issues or objects, and therefore, according to Rossman and Wilson (1994, p.315), it should be "shamelessly eclectic". Or more precisely, "mixed method research is (...) the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, approaches, concepts or language into a single study" and further it "legitimate[s] the use of multiple approaches in answering research questions, rather than restricting or constraining researchers' choices" (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.17). Just like eclecticism, whether historical or modern, mixed method research is rather anti-dogmatic in its core and the emphasis on the choice of different methods makes the comparison even more suggestive. Therefore, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2012) speak of methodological eclecticism as a core of mixed method research, in which the research chooses from a range of methods to conduct his or her research. As said above, the arguments for choice itself is partly based upon the denial of the incommensurability thesis and the incompatibility of methods thesis. The first thesis is mostly understood as the claim that it is impossible to combine qualitative and quantitative research methods due to their epistemological, ontological, or other paradigmatic differences. These differences, on the other side, inform far reaching criticism of mixed method research, from the concern of a watered down qualitative research as result of untrained researchers (Denzin, 2009a) to the demarcation of the opposing *compatibility thesis* (Gage, 1989; Howe, 2004; Lincoln, 2010)⁶⁷.

There are three options that the literature suggests to deal with the incompatibility of methods thesis in regard to mixed method research. The first, and easiest one, is to accept it and to fully dismiss mixed method research. Despite being a valid option, it does not really allow the application of eclecticism and avoids some metaphysical

66 An overview of the paradigmatic discussion are presented, amongst others, by Lincoln (2010) and Koro-Ljungberg (2004).

67 This differences, namely "(1) quantitative and qualitative methods were fundamentally different, or incompatible (incommensurable), and (2) interpretive, or theoretical paradigms were also incompatible" (Denzin, 2009a, p.310), resulted in the so called 'paradigm wars' of the 1980's (Gage, 1989).

discussions for mixed method research. Such discussions are, however, important as Lincoln (2010, p.7) argues⁶⁸. She says that metaphysics “tell us something about what the researcher thinks *counts as knowledge*, and *who can deliver the most valuable slice of this knowledge*. They tell us how the researcher intends to *take account of multiple conflicting and contradictory values* she will encounter”⁶⁹. Hence and secondly, it is necessary and interesting to enter the philosophical discussion on incommensurability and maybe try to find an argument that dismisses this thesis, or at least allow some adjustments in favour for mixed method research. And thirdly, one can take a pragmatic stance as Morgan (2007) or Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) suggest, which also dismisses the incompatibility thesis.

With option number one dismissed, we can further distinguish the second option into two categories. The first category accepts the incompatibility in some way and tries to argue its way around it. Lincoln (2010), for instance, makes such a point and suggests that although, for instance, positivism and interpretivism have strong epistemological dissimilarities, they both together deliver valuable and useful insights about any researched object. Here, we can identify several aspects from the eclectic literature above. First of all, the tolerance of different paradigms or theoretical approaches as we have seen in the case of *Piagetian* and the *Vygotskian* theory of cognition and Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin’s (2011, p.32) emphasis the “heuristic value of eclecticism”. In both cases the limitations of theories or the theoretical pre-selection of characteristics of the object of inquiry consolidate the argument that the combination of several, possibly incommensurable, approaches provide wider insights than any single approach. Secondly, it is possible to adopt the ideas from psychology that mixed method research is either in a pre-paradigmatic state (Staats, 1981) or that the Kuhnian notion of a dominant paradigm does not apply (Rychlak, 1975; Koch, 1981; Henley, 1989; Leahey, 1992; Koch, 1993; Hergenhahn and Henley, 2013). At least the latter conclusion seems intuitive, as mixed method research, according to the definition above, borrows from different, in paradigms embedded, quantitative and qualitative methods. Hence, one could say that mixed method research portrays some kind of meta-methodology in the way empiricism portrays a meta-theory for the technical eclecticism in psychology

68 See also Guba and Lincoln (1992).

69 Likewise, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2012) stress out the importance of mixed method researchers to engage in philosophical discussions about the incompatibility thesis. This quote also bears resemblance with the definitions for ontology, epistemology and methodology by Fleetwood (2005) used in the previous chapter.

(Slife, 1987; Slife and Reber, 2001; Slife, Reber and Gantt, 2003). But then, following the criticism from above, mixed method research cannot be seen as being eclectic at all.

The second category, found in Koro-Ljungberg (2004), has a similar critique of the paradigm situation but dismisses the incompatibility thesis through a post-structural deconstruction of the scientific discourse⁷⁰. Koro-Ljungberg (2004), in reference to Foucault (2013) and Lather (2001), particularly looks into the meaning of validity and concludes that this concept can have different meanings across various scientific discourses⁷¹. Or as Lather (2001, p.244) puts it: “some [validity] practises [sic!] travel across paradigms and ontologies; some are less nomadic, less border crossers”. What does this insight imply for the problem of incompatibility of methods raised in the criticism for mixed method research? If shared, validity, i.e. the accurate correspondence to certain, only marginally different⁷², epistemological and methodological conditions, plays a meta-theoretical role in the sense empiricism plays for the technical eclecticism in psychology, but it remains doubtful whether it creates the same tautology as above, after it has been deconstructed. The reason for this will be discussed further below, first let us conclude the thoughts on validity and incompatibility.

Now, it cannot be argued for an incompatibility of methods when these methods, although coming from different paradigms, fulfil the same, or only marginally different validity conditions. Incompatibility does only apply among methods with different validity conditions under the constraint that the researcher considers only one set of validity conditions acceptable. To illustrate the meaning of this conclusion further, one may refer to D’Agostino's (2014) interpretation of Kuhn’s (2012) and Feyerabend’s

70 Deconstruction is a term introduced and used by Jacques Derrida (1982, 1992, 1998, 2000, 2004) and portrays an analytical procedure or tool to analyse literature or text in general, whereat everything is considered to be text in his philosophy, and therefore everything can be deconstructed. Derrida (2000, p.300) latest definition for deconstruction says that

each time that I say ‘deconstruction and X (regardless of the concept or the theme),’ this is the prelude to a very singular division that turns this X into, or rather makes appear in this X, an impossibility that becomes its proper and sole possibility, with the result that between the X as possible and the ‘same’ X as impossible, there is nothing but a relation of homonymy, a relation for which we have to provide an account.

71 Here we can see what Derrida (2000) means with the relations of homonymy between X, in this case validity. The deconstruction of validity shows us the difference between the final significance of validity, the intentional meaning whose existence is dismissed by the deconstructivist, and the underlying, unintentional expression of the concept. Consequently, there is no stable meaning of validity but a contextual account for it and the relation of homonymy of in this concept.

72 The reason why I speak of a marginal difference will be explained with the help of a conclusive quote from Koro-Ljungberg (2004) further below.

(1993) arguments on incommensurability⁷³. In the style of his syllogism on incommensurability, the following argument against the generalisability of the incompatibility of methods is suggested:

P1. Deconstruction shows that there are different conceptions of validity in scientific discourses (Lather, 2001; Koro-Ljungberg, 2004).

P2. It is assumed, at least, that a successful combination of paradigmatic-different methods depends on a shared conception of validity, i.e. the accurate correspondence to only marginally different epistemological and methodological conditions.

P3. There are instantiation of methods from paradigms with different validity conceptions, as deconstruction shows (Lather, 2001; Koro-Ljungberg, 2004).

∴ Only these particular methods are incompatible under the terms assumed in P2.

∴ Incompatibility of paradigmatic-different methods is not generalisable.

Of course, there is always the possibility to dismiss this rationale and retreat to a position that holds the incompatibility of methods thesis valid. Premise one can be dismissed in a number of ways but most simply by rejecting the underlying post-structural philosophy here. For this dismissal one could, for instance, refer to Sokal and Bricmont (1999) and their criticism of post-structural philosophies. However, the deconstruction of validity by Koro-Ljungberg (2004) and Lather (2001) is a straight forward, critical analysis of a specific concept, and how it is used, in scientific practice and not the misuse of scientific terminology and the production of incomprehensible writings in post-structuralism criticised by Sokal and Bricmont (1999). Premise two represents the conclusion by Koro-Ljungberg (2004) and Lather (2001) about validity in scientific discourse. It is automatically dismissed when premise one is dismissed but could also be refuted on its own. The easiest way would be to present an argument that shows that successful research based on a combination of different methods does not rely on a shared concept of validity. Finally, premise three can only be dismissed if deconstruction is dismissed, because it follows from it. Yet, premises two and three are

⁷³ D'Agostino (2014) interprets incommensurability between theories but I think his syllogism can also be applied, if modified, to methods.

supported by evidence from the history of science. Koro-Ljungberg (2004, pp.609–610) refers to feminist ethnography as an example of this development, which arose from “ethnography methods of studying cultures” and critical ethnography, which studies the “empowered and disempowered groups of people”. So naturally, feminist ethnography shares the ontological, epistemological and methodological positions and hence, there is at least one example of sharing ontological, epistemological and methodological positions. Similar arguments can be made about the ontological and epistemological sharing of schools of thought in economics. For instance, in chapter 4 the historical, and thus shared, ‘footprints’ of pragmatism in contemporary philosophy are identified, as well as Marxist historical relativism and its possible importance for modern economic Marxists.

Realising that there are different conceptions of validity, and in consequence mixed method research does not fail due to an incompatibility of methods, further opens the way to eclecticism. Other than empiricism as guide for the selection of therapeutic approaches in psychology, validity would not be the same a meta-theoretical guide because it does not exist as a single concept. If there is not one concept of validity but many, as deconstruction suggests, then it allows eclectic choice to take place⁷⁴. This is, however, mostly overlooked and the prevailing discursive fields in science keep the notion of incompatibility alive. Koro-Ljungberg (2004, p.616) concludes from this that

[i]n this ideal world of the hegemonic community, ontological, epistemological, and methodological diversities and accompanying theoretical challenges are more easily overlooked and often dismissed as invalid and non-scientific only because knowledge is produced differently.

Furthermore, she argues that mixed method research is best suited to promote a critical dialogue between different scientific discourses with the help of constellation (see also Bernstein, 1992). As she explains:

Constellations are formed by placing two or more perspectives within the same formation, not in a unified fashion but as interrelated entities. For example, Critical and deconstructive ethnography are both variations of the same theme, simultaneously having their epistemological identities and

74 If we can deconstruct empiricism in the same way as validity, we might be able to solve the tautology of its meta-theoretical appearance for therapy selection. The argument of different concepts is further developed in chapter 3 and is one of the major points in the justification of eclecticism.

methodological constructions. (...) Constellation implies interference and the simultaneous presence of multiple theoretical perspectives. Therefore, the complete separation of perspectives becomes impossible, as well as any sharing of theoretical or epistemological identity. (Koro-Ljungberg, 2004, pp.616–617)

The final remark in Koro-Ljungberg's (2004) conclusion clarifies why the notion of 'marginally identical validity' concepts is used above. She acknowledges that in the diversity of scientific discourses it is impossible to have perfect identical epistemological and methodological conditions. Between some scientific discourses these differences might just be nuances, but that still means we have not a perfectly shared philosophical identity. Then, of course, the question arises when these differences become so important that leads to, in regard to validity, a situation described in premise three.

The fourth option is a pragmatists' approach to the incompatibility thesis and the underlying paradigm structure. Some of the main arguments for a pragmatic approach to mixed method research are similar to the eclectic arguments, see for instance Kjøppe (2012). The pragmatists argue that the choice of method should exclusively be guided by the research question and not by one's own paradigm (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2012). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) further argue that paradigmatic differences, especially ontological ones, have little meaning for pragmatists and how they conduct their research. This makes pragmatists less eclectic, as the eclectic literature so far shows how much aware eclectic researcher are, or must be, about ontological or epistemological differences. Moreover, dismissing the importance of these differences from the pragmatist also means to dismiss the implications of the incompatibility of methods, or even the incommensurability of paradigms (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2012). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p.21) summarise the modern, pragmatic research programme in regard to mixed method approaches in the following points:

- (1) determine the research question; (2) determine whether a mixed design is appropriate; (3) select the mixed-method or mixed-model research design; (4) collect the data; (5) analyse the data; (6) interpret the data; (7) legitimate the data; and (8) draw conclusions.

Here, it is reasonable to focus on the first point first, because it is legitimate to ask where the research question comes from or what actually determines the

appropriateness of the question. One could argue that determining the question is implicitly paradigm driven and hence, the pragmatic researcher cannot argue that paradigmatic differences do not matter for his or her research.

In contrast to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie's (2004) claim that for pragmatists these paradigmatic differences do not play an important role, Morgan (2007) looks at the paradigmatic influence on the researcher and argues that paradigms are not as one-dimensional as one might think. His approach is to differentiate, or deconstruct, the term into four different kinds of paradigms. The first interpretation sets paradigms in the realm of a worldview, encompassing everything from morals, aesthetics and experiencing the world. The second kind of paradigms are the epistemological stances which influence the definition of research questions and their answers. These stances, Morgan (2007) mentions realism and constructivism as two examples, are, according to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2012), the source of the incommensurability discussion. Thirdly, we encounter the Kuhnian paradigm as shared beliefs among members of research communities and fourth "paradigms as model of examples of research" (Morgan, 2007, p.53) which present a best solution to a given problem within one field. Based on this, Morgan (2007, p.54) concludes that

[t]he model examples researchers use to demonstrate the key content of their field reflect a set of shared beliefs about both the research questions they should ask and the methods they should use to answer them. Shared beliefs about research topics and methods are, in turn, based on epistemological stances that summarize researchers' assumptions about what can be known and how to go about such knowing. And at the broadest level, assumptions about the nature of knowledge and reality are an important component of each researcher's worldview.

Here we can see that all four kinds of paradigms are interwoven and therefore there exists no straight forward top-down hierarchy⁷⁵ from paradigms to method choice. This conclusion implies that rejecting a paradigm or a particular set of methods has

75 Here:

Different assumptions about the nature of reality imposed limits on assumptions about the nature of knowledge and what could be known. These assumptions, in turn, limited the range of methodological assumptions about generating knowledge (with the understanding that this topic concerned general issues in producing knowledge, rather than mechanical concerns about the use of methods themselves). (Morgan, 2007, p.56)

see also Lincoln (1985) and Guba and Lincoln (1992).

substantial implication on each other. But Morgan (2007) is not much concerned with these possible issues simply because “workaday scientists rarely have either the time or the inclination to assess what they do in philosophical terms” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.117). In Morgan’s (2007, p.69) eyes the whole research process, working through all four kinds of paradigms, is much more abductive and complex, where the research questions are not inherently “important”, and methods are not automatically “appropriate”. Furthermore, he argues that Kuhn’s (2012) incompatibility thesis of paradigms would rather cause communication barriers, which do not exist based on daily observations⁷⁶. So instead of searching for differences, a pragmatic approach would emphasise shared meanings while issues of language and meaning are constantly considered.

2.2.4. SOCIOLOGY AND ECONOMICS

This final section on eclectic literature looks into contributions in sociology and economics. The reason why both fields are combined in one section is their disciplinary affinity, in contrast to those economists who rather see economics as a natural science, and secondly for the practical reason where the lack of literature in economics could not fill its own sub-section in this chapter. And just like in the sections above, we will encounter similar arguments for an eclectic research approach in both disciplines.

According to Sanderson (1987) the topic of eclecticism became more popular in the literature of sociology in the mid half of the last century, about the same time it started in psychology. Especially with the disappearance of functionalism in sociology, and to some extent anthropology, during the 1960’s, an evident rise of pro-eclectic positions in the literature can be identified⁷⁷. Within this literature the preferred topic is social evolution, i.e. the question how societies have changed over time and what are the driving factors behind it. This topic itself is, of course, not limited to the eclectic literature, but it is naturally suited well in this area because of the following arguments. As said, questions of social evolution are concerned with the way of how societies developed over time and what factors play an important role in it. Early it was clear that

⁷⁶ He describes a conference where a realist and a constructivist talk to an applauding audience as evidence for the inexistence of an, at least, strong incommensurability.

⁷⁷ See, for instance, Dahrendorf (1959), Goody (1973, 1976), Harris (2001), Klaas (1998), Blau and Merton (1981), Service (1968), Stinchcombe (1987), or Turner (2003).

the development of a single theory or the identification of a singular prime-mover must be futile due to the complexity of societies. Instead

[t]here is no single magical formula that will predict the evolution of every society. The actual evolution of the culture of particular societies is an adaptive process whereby the society solves problems with respect to the natural and to the human-competitive environment. These environments are so diverse, the problems so numerous, and the solutions potentially so various that no single determinant can be equally powerful for all cases. (Service, 1968, p.406)

Hence, we can say that the common theme of complexity identified in the other disciplines above is also a central aspect of sociological eclecticism. Moreover, Sil (2000, 2004) and Sil and Katzenstein (2010a; b) argue for a problem-driven research agenda in social sciences, with a special focus on international relations and political sciences, in a similar way the research question centred argument in psychology and elsewhere is constructed (Køppe, 2012).

Similarly to psychology, sociologists also argue that eclecticism is a necessary condition of scientific progress or theory development (Dahrendorf, 1959; Turner, 2003). Dahrendorf (1959, p.118) explains that “[e]clecticism may be a sin in philosophy, but science is essentially eclectic. In fact, a scientist who is not as such an eclectic is no scientist or at least a bad one” and Turner (2003, p.vii) explains that “today, theory is more eclectic, and this is all to the good”. Additionally, Blau and Merton (1981, p.1) describe the eclectic openness under the term ‘theoretical pluralism’, which represents “the appropriate state of sociology at large”.

Naturally the question is how this eclectic openness manifests itself in sociology and if so, is it different from the other disciplines discussed above? Indeed, there are some differences in sociology, as Harris (2001) explains. He clarifies that eclecticism in sociology does not mean that all theories are equally treated but that the determinants of social evolution ‘might’ be considered equally under all conditions. Important for him is that the eclectic sociologist remains ‘agnostic’ to avoid the dogmatic stance of, for instance, cultural materialists, who argue that materialistic and behaviouristic processes, i.e. competition, politics, technology etc., are central determinant for social evolution. Instead, the eclectic sociologist only confirms that they might be probable, that none is *a priori* true but also not *a priori* false. This allows the eclectic sociologist to

hypothesise in a broader way, even when the considered determinants or even theories might be mutually exclusive, but also contains the risk to lead to theoretical inconsistencies (Harris, 2001).

Stinchcombe (1987, p.4) sheds light on this sociological eclecticism by explaining that the eclectic sociologist has “a firm conviction that some things are to be explained one way, some another (...) Some things are to be explained by personality dynamics, some things by their consequences, and some things by ecological causes” and so on. He refers to Max Weber, Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim as exemplary sociologists who had such an eclectic approach of combining a variety of methodological strategies to formulate theories about social phenomena. To speak of eclecticism in the case of Max Weber, however, seems confusing to say the least, as he is generally known for the formulation of methodological individualism, claiming that all social phenomena must be explained by individual actions or “the intentional states that motivate the individual actors” (Heath, 2010, p.no pagination). This prospect is hardly compatible with what has been described as eclecticism so far.

Going back to the theory based approach, and not so much the determinant based view just described, Sil (2000, 2004) and Sil and Katzenstein (2010a, p.10; b) offer yet another interpretation for eclecticism, or what they call ‘analytical eclecticism’. They define it as

[a]ny approach that seeks to extricate, translate, and selectively integrate analytical elements – concepts, logics, mechanisms, and interpretations – of theories or narratives that have been developed within separate paradigms but that address related aspects of substantive problems that have both scholarly and practical significance.

Other than Harris (2001), the emphasis here lies on the theoretical variety in social sciences that will allow us to choose and pick those elements that are considered to be significant for the problem at hand. Hence, Sil (2000, 2004) and Sil and Katzenstein (2010a; b) are closely related to the same arguments for eclecticism we already encountered in psychology and mixed method research. Moreover, the proposal of analytical eclecticism is informed by a critique of research practices in social sciences.

There are three specific points Sil (2000, 2004) and Sil and Katzenstein (2010a; b) highlight that can be considered their motivation for suggesting and developing an eclectic approach. First, there is Lindblom and Cohen’s (1979) observation of a

communication barrier between social scientists and policy makers. The general problem is that the former develop overly conceptualised knowledge while the latter require easy-to-understand insights and suggestions. Naturally, the latter group also expresses dissatisfaction with this overly conceptualised knowledge formulated by social scientists, especially if they themselves do not belong to this group. Although this is certainly an issue, not only in sociology, it remains unclear how analytical eclecticism can make a difference here. The use of different theories, methods or approaches does not guarantee a more understandable, less conceptualised research output.

Secondly, Sil (2000, 2004) and Sil and Katzenstein (2010a; b) refer to Hirschman's (1970) critique of paradigm-bound research. In reviewing two books, John Womack's (1970) *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* and James L. Payne's (1968) *Patterns of Conflict in Colombia*, Hirschman (1970) explains how Payne's (1968) own sociological paradigm leads him to make rather outrageous conclusions about politicians and the political order in Colombia. These conclusions say that politicians in Colombia, unlike US politicians to whom they are compared to, are mostly interested in pursuing and maintaining power and that this is the sole reason for the perceived misery of the country's population. As Hirschman (1970, pp.334–335) concludes,

Payne, from the first page to the last, breathes brash confidence that he has achieved complete understanding of his subject, whereas Womack draws conclusions with the utmost diffidence and circumspection. His respect for the autonomy of the actors whose deeds he recounts is what gives his book its special appeal and probably contributed to the spectacular accolade he received.

The complete understanding of the subject may sound more appealing and as a proof of Payne's (1968) scholarly achievements, but the critical point is that the paradigm forces Latin American, or all second and third world countries, into cycles of law-like behaviour, they define extreme limitations to the plausible moves of individuals and societies. Here, Hirschman (1970) refers to Marxism as a paradigm that develops such constraints. Under this paradigm, every capitalist society is, so to say, doomed to fail without giving much account to the uniqueness of these societies. This is where Hirschman's (1970, p.337) criticism is located, when he argues that "any theory or model or paradigm propounding that there are only two possibilities-disaster or one particular road to salvation-should be *prima facie* suspect". It is then of course

reasonable to assume that analytical eclecticism, as defined above, can overcome such limitations, as it is not bound by any single paradigm.

Finally, Sil (2000, 2004) and Sil and Katzenstein (2010a; b) prefer Larry Laudan's (1978, 1996) work on research traditions over Kuhn's (2012) paradigms and Lakatos' (1970a, 1976) research programs⁷⁸. Laudan (1996, p.83) defines research traditions as

(1) a set of beliefs about what sorts of entities and processes make up the domain of inquiry; and (2) a set of epistemic and methodological norms about how the domain is to be investigated, how theories are to be tested, how data are to be collected, and the like.

Other than Kuhn (2012) or Lakatos (1970a, 1976), Laudan's (1978, 1996) approach allows these research tradition to coexist and compete with each other over an extensive period of time, thus avoiding the Kuhnian crisis and single paradigm manifestation circle. They further overlap in the sense that they produce claims or insights about the same issues in social sciences. Sil and Katzenstein (2010a; b) even highlight that under Laudan (1978, 1996) a scholar can work within different traditions even if this is considered to be incommensurable by others.

So what is the overall lesson from these critiques? In summary, for Sil and Katzenstein (2010b, p.9) there is a constant threat for social sciences to become "a cluster of research activities addressing artificially segmented problems" that fail to address problems with a wider or more holistic perspective. Moreover, they argue that the embracement of intellectual pluralism, or the mere acknowledgement of multiple causations, is not enough. Instead, only their analytical eclecticism is suitable, which is an

intellectual stance a researcher can adopt when pursuing research that engages, but does not fit neatly within, established research traditions in a given discipline or field, [can provide] an alternative understanding of research practice that is coherent enough to be distinguishable from conventional scholarship and yet flexible enough to accommodate a wide range of problems, concepts, methods, and causal arguments. (Sil and Katzenstein, 2010a, p.412)

⁷⁸ The justification of eclecticism in chapter 3 likewise relies on aspects of Laudan's work as primary source for the argument.

Therefore, we can conclude that analytical eclecticism offers insights that would have never emerged from single-paradigmatic research alone, and thus may overcome some of the issues identified by Lindblom and Cohen (1979).

Despite the sophistication of its conceptualisation, analytical eclecticism does not really show how it will be able to overcome the dichotomy between social scientists and policy makers. Even eclectic social scientists, able to “accommodate a wide range of problems, concepts, methods, and causal arguments” (Sil and Katzenstein, 2010a, p.412) are not necessarily, by their own nature, able to communicate their findings in a way that laymen policy makers would not only understand it but could make good policies with it.

Finally, the contributions about eclecticism in the economic literature shall be examined. As said above, the research into this topic revealed only a limited number of such contributions in the economic literature⁷⁹. One of the early contributions can be found in Robert Solow’s (1988) *Comments from Inside Economics*, in which he explains why he considers himself to be an eclectic economist. This is not only interesting in terms of his rationale but also the fact that Robert Solow is usually considered to be a mainstream or orthodox economist, and not a heterodox proponent of pluralism, which in return means that it is hard to believe that he could be an eclectic economist when we agree upon the hypothesis that eclecticism must be seen in strong relation to pluralism in economics. The simple reason why he believes himself to be an eclectic is his own conception of eclecticism. Yet, his conception, although being somehow and intuitively appealing, remains vague and would lead, if applied honestly, to the situation where everybody is eclectic.

For the sake of promoting eclecticism, one has to give Solow (1988) credit for making the point that eclecticism is misunderstood by many scholars nowadays. This misconception, as he argues, says that eclectics lack protected values and clarity in their thinking, or as he rather poetically summarises it: “the wind bloweth where it listeth and the hopeless eclectic – like me – sayeth whatever he damn pleaseth” (Solow, 1988, p.31). In his contrary understanding the eclectic has a rather difficult position of constantly making decisions in the absence of ‘blind’ certainty, i.e. paradigmatic answers to questions of scientific importance. But this is how far we can agree with

79 Quite recently, Yanis Varoufakis (Yanis Varoufakis | Highlights | Cambridge Union, 2015, min. 7:18-7:23) mentioned the need for eclecticism, i.e. “pick and choose ideas that makes sense from those who come before”, in a speech at the Cambridge University Union to emphasize what he has learned from the Cambridge tradition.

Solow's (1988, p.31) judgement, because his interpretation of eclecticism makes it a position of accepting arguments as long as they do not “go too far” or accepting partly opposing arguments too. What does this mean?

Solow (1988) illustrates with two cases concerning what he means with accepting arguments 'as long as they are not going too far', or accepting partly opposing arguments. For the first example, he refers to a constructivist approach by Nelson Goodman (1984) and a subsequent critical book review by Fleisher, Feldman and Bruner (1986). On the one side, Solow (1988) agrees with Goodman's (1984) epistemic constructivist approach, which basically says that knowledge about the world is constructed as a result of cognitive interpretations of perceptual observation. The underlying point is that the world as it is and the world we perceive are not superimposable due to the limitations of our senses. On the other side, Solow (1988, p.32) agrees with the criticism of Fleisher, Feldman and Bruner (1986), saying that Goodman's (1984) rationale leads to the conclusion that “there is no real world at all”, only subjective perception⁸⁰. Although in agreement with the notion of construction via interpretation, Solow (1988) still believes that an ‘objective’ world exists. In the second example, Solow (1988) argues that McCloskey (1983) and Klammer and McCloskey (1988) also go too far in their argument about rhetoric and conversation in economics. Although he admits that there is a certain truth about the rhetoric strategies found in arguments of economists, Solow (1988, p.33) says that “some modes of argument lend themselves to sloppiness (...) some method of persuasion are more worthy than others. That is what I fear the analogy to conversation tends to bury”. This means that not only rhetoric as method guarantees persuasion in arguments but that, for instance, empirical evidence can be convincing too.

The dissatisfaction with Solow's (1988) eclecticism has already been mentioned above. It seems that his eclecticism is essentially making all of those with a minimum level of reflective thinking eclectics as well. It is in fact not only not uncommon, but obviously evident that people do agree with some parts of arguments, or to some degree with a line of reasoning. That he, in some way, agrees with the constructivist approach of Goodman (1984) or the rhetoric argument by McCloskey (1983) and Klammer and McCloskey (1988), but remains critical to some aspects of their arguments, is already intuitively reasonable, and likely a position found in various individuals, and would

⁸⁰ This is, arguably, a common and false interpretation of radical constructivism, which is not denying the existence of an objective reality but rather denies the existence of objective knowledge about this reality.

therefore make 'everybody' eclectic. There remains no criterion of demarcation to distinguish between eclecticism and non-eclecticism unless one is to accept a line of argument to its full logical consequences. It is questionable if this can take place with anything but one's own position. It can be assumed that McCloskey (1983) has a high degree of certainty for her own argument, but does this also apply to arguments made by others? Possibly not. Agreement and disagreement with certain positions and arguments can be found in McCloskey (1994), where interviewees Arjo Klammer and McCloskey both clarify their agreement on several occasions⁸¹. Does this make them eclectic economists? Most likely not. Therefore, it is doubtful to call Solow's (1988) idea eclecticism, even if he thinks so.

The next proponent of eclecticism in economics is Richard Bronk (2009), whose book *The Romantic Economists* has been mentioned a few times before. He calls for a disciplined eclecticism in economics, which combines, intentionally or unintentionally, several of the arguments that have also been presented in the literature above. The following three characteristics are important for Bronk's (2009, pp.288–289) disciplined eclecticism:

First, it is disciplined in the way it links the choice of theory in each case to the result of a multi-paradigm scan used to determine the nature of the situation studied in the working definition of the analytical or practical problem requiring a solution; secondly, it is disciplined in its use of experience and logic to define a set of criteria for theory selection that make clear the conditions in which certain paradigms, models, or sets of assumptions can be expected to work; and thirdly, it is disciplined by the virtue of keeping paradigms carefully discrete and not attempting the sort of general synthesis of different paradigms that is recipe for conceptual confusion.⁸²

The adjacency of this definition with what we have already encountered in the literature of, for instance, eclecticism in mixed method research or psychology, is the implication of the coexistence of several paradigms and different paradigmatic methods, and their

81 For example, Klammer and McCloskey (1988) remarks on John Romer and Jon Elster's support for methodological individualism that "I agree that methodological individualism does not have a one-to-one relationship with a particular ideology. I have some problems with the Romer-Elster approach – and so by the way other contributors to *Rethinking Marxism*" (McCloskey, 1994, p.353).

82 Similar arguments of a "problem-dependent methodology" can be found in Boland's (1982, p.302) and Caldwell (1991).

qualification in answering specific research questions. Here some seem to be better qualified than others depending on the inquired problem. Furthermore, this conclusion arose before, Bronk (2009) argues that disciplined eclecticism will foster inter-paradigm dialogue, a necessity for researchers to understand a complex world and to develop their theories further. Instead of synthesising, the researcher takes a sequence of different perspectives and applies them to the same research question. Thereby, the researcher makes sure to have a broader understanding of the issue compared to a single-paradigmatic approach. The familiarity with his reasoning shows that Bronk (2009), intentionally or unintentionally, brought existing arguments into economics.

While Bronk's (2009) definition of disciplined eclecticism provides an adequate formulation and justification for the need of eclecticism, the working definition in this dissertation does deviate from some of his core premises, i.e. the clear cut view on paradigmatic structure within economics. In the following chapter, a different, less structured and more fluid perspective of the structure economics, more following Negru's (2007) conceptualisation and being based on literature from the philosophy of science (Feyerabend, 1993; Kuhn, 2012; Lakatos, 1970a; b, 1976, 1978, Laudan, 1987, 1978, 1996, MacIntyre, 1977, 1984, 1988), is presented to justify eclecticism, which cannot fully use of Bronk's (2009) explanation.

Finally, the cross-disciplinary eclecticism in law and economics shall move into focus. Here, Kerkmeester (2000) says that most scholars are either pragmatic or eclectic, despite the existence of several strong schools of thought, such as the *Chicago Law and Economics*, *Public Choice Theory*, *Institutional Law and Economics* and *Neoinstitutional Law and Economics* (Mercuro and Medema, 1997). Arcuri (2008) lists Robert Ellickson⁸³, Robert Cooter and Eric Posner as prominent scholars in the discipline of law and economics who are seemingly eclectic. As reasons for eclecticism within the field she further argues “that the mainstream paradigm is inadequate for an interdisciplinary enterprise such as L&E, that eclecticism is superior, and that indeed it is already practiced to various extents” (Arcuri, 2008, p.80). The reason for the superiority of eclecticism, here defined as the selection of “what appears to be best in various doctrines, methods, or styles” (Arcuri, 2008, p.79), is allocated by her in the strength of empirical, behavioural research in comparison with, for example, classic rational choice theory. To illustrate this point, Arcuri (2008) describes that rational

83 See, for instance, Ellickson (1998).

choice theory predicts that drug related crimes would decrease when the punishments would outweigh the benefits of drug use. However, she refers to research showing that drug addicted criminals are seldom stopped by harsh punishments, hence the predictions of the classic rational choice theory fail. Therefore, so the argument goes, rational choice theory should only be applied where it is appropriate, and scholars need to accept irrational behaviour that will change the outcome of certain situations. Then, of course, one could ask whether the rational choice theory has any appropriate area of application with the amount of behavioural research showing how ‘irrational’ people actually act, but this shall not be the point of discussion here. Important is the emphasis that certain theoretical aspects, as well as methods, should only applied to specific problems and that the researcher needs to make a decision when, where, how and which of these different approaches are best applied to investigate the issues defined by the research questions.

2.3. IDEALISTIC ECLECTICISM

We have seen that, especially in the early writings, eclecticism entails the absence of commitment to specific philosophical sects, or in the recent writing to one specific paradigm or school of thought. This does not mean, however, that there is an absence of commitment to eclecticism itself. As said earlier, there are those eclectics whose work was interpreted to be eclectic by others and those who praised their own eclecticism. This latter group is the focus of this section, which discusses their idealistic eclecticism. Idealism here is not related to the philosophical movement that has been made famous by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Immanuel Kant, Thomas Hill Green, Bernard Bosanquet, Richard Lewis Nettleship, and others, (Dunham, Grant and Watson, 2014). Instead, in this context it should rather be understood simply as a person having high ideals, which may or may not be unrealisable (Wiktionary, 2013). Idealistic eclecticism then, as portrayed below, results in the belief of it having a superior position over the philosophical alternatives it is compared with.

Since it has been noticed that the ancient philosophers never related themselves to eclecticism, idealistic eclecticism finds its roots in the early enlightenment. We have already used Brucker’s (2010a; b) extensive analysis of eclecticism in ancient and early enlightenment writings and we know he was fond of eclecticism himself. Likewise, Denis Diderot (1779), presumably inspired by Brucker (2010a; b), develops a very

positive and inspiring view on eclecticism of his time in his *Encyclopédie* under the term *Eclectisme* he writes that

[t]he eclectic is a philosopher who, trampling underfoot prejudice, tradition, antiquity, general agreement, authority—in a word, everything that controls the minds of the common herd—dares to think for himself, returns to the clearest general principle, examines them, discusses them, admits nothing that is not based on the testimony of his experience and his reason; and from all the philosophies he has analyzed without respect and bias he makes for himself a particular and domestic one which belongs to him.... There is no leader of a sect who has not been more or less eclectic.... The Eclectics are among the philosophers who are the kings on the face of the earth, the only ones who have remained in the state of nature, where everything belonged to everyone. (Diderot, as cited in Donini, 1988, p.19)⁸⁴

Beside these two, there are several other philosophers who not only praised eclecticism but also made it to their own ideal of inquiry. With Victor Cousin [1792 – 1867] there is a second French philosopher who promoted eclecticism at a time when it had already disappeared from philosophical discourse, or was negatively assessed in many parts of Europe⁸⁵. His intellectual influence and popularity, however, made his eclecticism widely regarded as state philosophy in France and his work was translated and published throughout Europe (Kelley, 2001). According to Cousin (2006), eclecticism is a superior philosophy that, through combination of the true in the sects, surpasses their weaknesses (Kelley, 2001; Hatzimichali, 2011). He therefore recommends “an enlightened eclecticism, which, judging with equity, and even with benevolence, all schools, borrows from them what they possess of the true, and neglects what in them is false” (Cousin, 2006, p.33).

It is important to notice here that Cousin (2006, p.9) was fairly convinced about his ability to distinguish between what is true and what is false based on the “one true

84 In the original:

L'éclectique est un philosophe qui foulant aux piés le préjugé, la tradition, l'ancienneté, le consentement universel, l' autorité, en un mot tout ce qui subjugue la foule des esprits, ose penser de lui - même, remonter aux principes généraux les plus clairs, les examiner, les discuter, n'admettre rien que sur le témoignage de son expérience & de sa raison; & de toutes les philosophies, qu'il a analysées sans égard & sans partialité, s'en faire une particuliere & domestique qui lui appartienne ... il n'y a point de chef de secte qui n'ait été plus ou moins éclectique ... les Eclectiques sont parmi les philosophes ce que sont les souverains sur la surface de la terre, les seuls qui soient restés dans l'état de nature où tout étoit à tous. (Diderot, 1779, p.5:270; Morrissey and Roe, 2013, p.no pagination).

85 The reason for this negative assessment will follow in the next sub-chapter.

doctrine” of spiritualism. This is not without problem, as Cousin’s (2006) spiritualism works as a meta-guide or, as Hatzimichali (2011, p.12) describes it, an “ideological commitment” to a set of standards providing a means to identify truth in different philosophies. If we remember Slife and Reber’s (2001) criticism of empiricism as sole basis for eclecticism in therapy, we see what inconsistencies arise when a single doctrine is guiding the researcher or philosopher in his differentiation between truth and falsehood, especially when considering the variety of existing truth theories. For Cousin (2006), however, this would not have been an issue at all, since he believed this principles to be of divine origin.

Additionally, we can find three German individuals in the early enlightenment who share a similar appraisal of eclecticism as Cousin (2006), and are praised by Brucker (2010a; b) too. The first is the physicist Johann Christoph Sturm [1635 – 1703], whose eclecticism “was strongly guided by his academic practise, his teachings and experiments” (Albrecht, 2004, p.119), and his view that the move of his profession from Aristotelian philosophy to Cartesian philosophy, from one sect to the other, was a wrong step. He himself kept some concepts of Aristotelian philosophy for his own philosophy, experimental methodology and teaching practices, as he understood this eclectic approach to be superior than the commitment to a single sect (Gaab, 2004). In summary, Sturm’s eclecticism was, in a sense, a *philosophia novantiqua* and was used to justify experimental physics and chemistry (Schneider, 2002).

The second, and more prominent, member of the group is the lawyer Christian Thomasius [1655 – 1728], who appears to be most likely inspired by Sturm (Schneider, 2002). Thomasius (2001), who is considered to be one of the leading German thinkers of the early enlightenment (Kelley, 2001), shows an antipathy towards sectarian thought and values the historical freedom of judgement of eclecticism (Schneider, 2002). In his *Introduction to Court Philosophy* Thomasius (2001, p.50) expresses his aversion by saying that

I call an eclectic philosophy one which requires that one does not alone depend on the teachings of a single philosopher or should commit eventually to the words of a single master/teacher, but shall collect from the teachings and writings of all teachers, everything which is true and good, into the treasure chambers of his mind, and not just conduct reflexion upon

the authority of the teacher but whether this or that philosophy is well-grounded.⁸⁶

This quote makes it also clear that Thomasius (2001) is not very different in his view on eclecticism compared to others of his time. Especially the anti-sectarian sentiment was, as has been shown above, quite common among proponents of eclecticism in early enlightenment. Moreover, Brucker (2010b, pp.566–570) recognises Thomasius' (2001) influence, when he "introduced Eclectic freedom into German schools", but also notes critically that the "specimens of the philosophy of Thomas (...) contain too many hasty and ill-founded positions". Whether or not Thomasius' (2001) eclecticism was indeed unsubstantiated is not important at this point. What matters are his strong commitment to and his appraisal of eclecticism, which in his case is "about the intellectual autonomy, about the *iudicium* and the understanding of the finiteness of human insight" (Schneider, 2002, p.238)⁸⁷.

Finally, Arnold Wesenfeld [1664 – 1727] is a philosopher who recommended eclecticism based upon hermeneutical reasons (Wesenfeld, 1694) and who wrote, according to Schneider (1992), one of the most comprehensive but unrecognised works on eclectic philosophy of his time. In it, he argues that the hermeneutical power of eclecticism allows understanding different philosophical positions while simultaneously preserving the intellectual independence of the philosopher. This insight has, for Wesenfeld (1694), important consequences in terms of philosophical truths. As he writes, eclectic philosophers do not have a corpus of *a priori* truths. For them, truths are neither Aristotelian nor Platonian nor Christian, instead these sects are mere approximations to the underlying truths that the eclectic tries to uncover (Schneider, 2002). For that reason Wesenfeld (1694) also sees a strong importance in the

86 Another translation is provided by Kelley (2001, p.584):

I call eclectic philosophy (...) not what depends on the teaching of an individual or on the acceptance of the words of a master, but whatever can be known from the teaching and writing of any person on the basis not of authority but of convincing arguments.

Beside my own translation I used the translation in Kelley (2001) to indicate the content of the quote. The translation of 18th century German into modern English is not easy. The original says:

Ich nenne aber eine Eclectische Philosophie eine solche, welche es erfordert, daß man von dem Munde eines einzigen Philosophi allein nicht dependieren, oder denen Worten eines einzigen Lehr-Meisters sich mit einem Ende verpflichten soll, sondern aus dem Munde und Schrift aller Lehrer, alles und jedes was wahr und gut ist, in die Schatz-Kammer seines Verstandes sammeln müsse, und nicht so wohl auf die Autorität des Lehrers Reflexion mache sondern ob dieser und jener Lehr-Kunst wohl gegruendet sey. (Thomasius, 2001, p.50)

87 In the original: "(...) um intellektuelle Selbstständigkeit, um das *iudicium* und um Einsicht in die Endlichkeit menschlicher Einsicht" (Schneider, 2002, p.238).

combination of the observation of nature and the study of historical philosophical sects to reveal these underlying truths (Kelley, 2001).

Without going into further detail, the analysis of Wesenfeld's (1694) work makes it clear what idealistic role the eclectic philosopher takes here. She is able, unlike sectarian philosophers, to look behind the curtains of sects and doctrines to reveal the objective truths about nature. It seems that this conclusion reveals two essential elements in Wesenfeld's (1694) eclecticism; first an acknowledgement of the limitations of philosophical sects, similar to something we have encountered in the reasoning behind schools of thought or paradigms in the more modern eclectic, but also pluralist, literature, and an ontology and epistemology that appear to be more realist, i.e. that Wesenfeld (1694) claims that objective truths about nature exist and can be known. There is, of course, a wide range of criticism that can be brought to this claim of truth realism, but there shall be no attempt here to either discuss or refute this criticism. I wish, however, to remark that this criticism does not falsify eclecticism itself, since it is possible to focus on the first element, the acknowledgement of limitations, as it is done in the modern literature, to keep eclecticism viable.

2.4. CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON REASONS OF DECLINE

As indicated before, eclecticism has always attracted a good amount of criticism from various sources. Hegel's (Reinicke, 1979) antipathy of eclectics and Zeller's (1883) conclusion of eclecticism being a distorted, uncritical evolution of scepticism have already been discussed above, but these are just two examples of general criticism. Moreover, Leibniz's critical position of eclecticism, found in at least one occasion, has been discussed. It appears that the general criticism is as plentiful as the different conceptions of eclecticism itself, which may lead to the conclusion that some are mere attacks on straw men. Nonetheless, eclecticism almost disappeared in philosophy and has, until today, a rather negative reputation. Therefore, before the direct criticism of eclecticism is analysed, possible reasons of why eclecticism became negligible in philosophy at the time of the enlightenment are investigated.

Donini (1988) holds Immanuel Kant [1724 – 1804] responsible for the near disappearance of eclecticism in philosophy, but does not explain his conclusion. It seems therefore necessary to investigate Kant's influence, especially under the

consideration of Mensch's (2013) argument that Kant was in fact eclectic himself prior to the publication of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant, 1870)⁸⁸⁸⁹. With this argument in mind, it seems less obvious how he could have been responsible for the decline of eclecticism. Regarding the two decades from the 1750's onward, Kant's student Johann Gottfried von Herder [1744 – 1803] characterised this time as Kant's prospering period where he

[e]xamined Leibniz, Wolff, Baumgarten, Crusius, and Hume, and investigated the laws of nature of Newton, Kepler, and the physicists, he comprehended equally the newest works of Rousseau ... and the latest discovery in science. He weighted them all, and always came back to the unbiased knowledge of nature and to the moral worth of man. (Herder, as cited in Mensch, 2013, p.52)⁹⁰

This quote gives us a first hint of Kant's eclecticism, as it describes an investigative philosophical position equally to that of self-proclaimed eclectics and what Brucker (2010a; b) finds in others. And with Mensch's (2013) and Scarbi's (2010) analysis of Kant's educational background, it seems that his eclecticism arose as result of the academic culture during his studies at the University of Königsberg, where he not only studied but lived almost his entire life. Does this mean that Donini (1988) is wrong? Not necessarily, as there are two points that could have caused Kant to be responsible for the decline of eclecticism, and ultimately his own change of mind; his fame, or his impact on continental philosophy, and his *Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant, 1870), which Mensch (2013) sees as some kind of a turning point in his thoughts.

88 Published in the 1781 to 1790 period, considered as a time of his greatest achievements, it actually lies at the end of Kant's academic career.

89 Mensch (2013) emphasises Kant's broad interest in social discourse in the 1750's and 1760's and his avoidance of any dogmatic attachment to a specific school of thought unless a satisfying foundation of metaphysics were established, which he finally accomplished in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant, 1870). Whether or not he really established a solid foundation of metaphysics is open to discussion and shall not be part of this thesis.

90 The translation in Mensch (2013) has been written in modern English. The original says:

Mit ebendem Geist, mit dem er Leibniz, Wolff, Baumgarten, Crusius, Hume prüfte und die Naturgesetze Keplers, Newtons, der Physiker verfolgte, nahm er auch die damals erscheinenden Schriften Rousseaus (...) sowie jedem ihm bekannt gewordene Naturentdeckung auf, würdigte sie und kam immer zurück auf unbefangene *Kenntnis der Natur* und auf *moralische Werte des Menschen* (Herder, 2012, p.no pagination)

while Clewis (2015, pp.17-18) translate it as:

He examined with as much spirit Leibnitz, Wolff, Baumgarten, and Hume, as he followed the development of physics, the laws of nature as expounded by Kepler and Newton, and as he responded to the writings of Rousseau (...) and every new discovery he assessed, and he always returned to the genuine knowledge of nature and to the moral value of man.

The answer to the question of why this work was a turning point is rather speculative, but within the relevant literature three possible and likely explanations can be found. The first argument from Scarbi (2010) takes Kant's general interest in metaphysics into the focus. Before the *Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant, 1870), metaphysics were usually associated with theology and not very famous among eclectic philosophers, this is particularly true for Christoph Thomasius. Kant's (1870) work, however, made metaphysics respectable in contemporary philosophy. The eclectic's unwillingness to engage in metaphysics therefore puts them into a corner where they are no longer respected or considered relevant by other philosophers.

The second argument from Kuehn (2001) informs us about some kind of 'illumination' Kant had somewhere between 1768 and 1770. This, so Kuehn (2001, p.179) says, "was the result of a sudden, decisive, and radical change in his philosophical outlook, not a fruit of a long, focused search" and finally resulted in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant, 1870). In this regard, Kuehn (2001) also speaks of a change in Kant's scepticism. It should be emphasised here that this scepticism is not really related to the Sceptic sect, which Kuehn (2001, p.180) calls 'global' scepticism, but rather means a 'local' form of scepticism, in which individual philosophers are simply "doubtful in some way and to some degree". This implies that Kant was not generally sceptic of the idea that a reasonable formulation of metaphysics cannot be achieved but rather that it has not been found yet. Hence, he remained neutral to the teachings of different philosophical sects until the publication of his *Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant, 1870), in which he believed to have found a reasonable, philosophical foundation of metaphysics. This neutrality then could be understood as eclecticism, although it seems to be more similar to Leibniz's rather pragmatic philosophising.

Finally, Hatzimichali (2011, pp.10–11) argues that Kant "opposed 'historical knowledge' (based on someone else's reason) to 'rational knowledge' that results from examination of the principles which have provided the ground and structure for philosophical opinion over the course of history". With this, Kant shifts away from a central aspect of eclecticism, i.e. the acceptance of historical, philosophical statements or teachings, which, due to his fame, could have had an important impact on the perception of eclecticism at his time (Hatzimichali, 2011). However, the real reason behind this observable change of mind remains speculative, as Mensch (2013) points out. Moreover, she argues that he actually kept some of his eclecticism in his post-*Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant, 1870) writings, but it remains unclear exactly where.

With a possible central reason for the disappearance of eclecticism discussed, the more un-speculative and direct criticism of eclecticism can be investigated, especially in regard to the modern literature. Here, Sanderson (1987) discusses a series of critical points and general misconceptions that he identifies in the eclectic literature in sociology. Although he focuses on sociological literature, his criticism is so general that it can be applied easily to all the other disciplines discussed above. The first issue he addresses is a dichotomy of “open-minded eclectics” and “rigid dogmatists” (Klaas, 1998, pp.7–8). On the one hand, eclectic sociologists fail to distinguish between dogmatism and simple commitment to one’s own research interests. On the other, he says, eclectics are likewise dogmatic. Sanderson (1987) arrives at this conclusion by referring to Rokeach’s (1960) definition of dogmatism, which says that dogmatism is rather a structure of thought and less content related. Therefore, if a researcher holds a specific viewpoint without digressing, even an eclectic one, she can be considered to be dogmatic. Secondly, Sanderson (1987) argues, in agreement with Harris (2001), that eclecticism’s weakness lies in the necessity of logical inconsistencies arising from the combination of different theories, especially from different paradigms. For him, logical consistency is the most important criteria of theory development. Thus, “theories that are logically inconsistent or contradictory cannot possibly hope to achieve empirical success, comprehensiveness, novelty of prediction, and so on” (Sanderson, 1987, p.321). This criticism, however, assumes that eclecticism means an inconsistent combination of different theories. Yet, eclecticism is, based on the reviewed literature, not necessarily associable with a simple combination of concepts and theories and it does not produce a new, inconsistent or illogical theory itself. If such illogical inconsistencies appear, they are already embedded in the theories used. His third critical point addresses the simplicity concept of theory development, a concept being a subject of discussion in philosophy for a long time and that basically states that, *ceteris paribus*, simpler theories are preferable to complicated ones. Kant (1870, p.303), to provide an example of a previously mentioned philosopher, refers here to a “well-known scholastic maxim, which forbids us unnecessarily to augment the number of entities or principles (*entia praeter necessitatem non esse multiplicanda*)”, nowadays also known under the name Occam’s razor⁹¹. Here, Sanderson (1987, p.323) makes a distinction between “simplicity as economy and simplicity as unification”, to illustrate his concerns.

91 Named after the 14th century scholastic philosopher and theologian William of Ockham [1287 – 1347].

The former described the desire of having a theory with the least numbers of concepts and principles, to which eclecticism is in opposition, as it enlarges the principles used for research, and the latter regards to the maximisation of phenomena a theory can explain. This is based upon Maxwell's (1974a; b, pp.140–141) concept of 'aim oriented empiricism', which he describes as follows:

According to the view to be advocated here—a view which may be called 'aim oriented empiricism'—the fundamental aim of pure science is to discover more and more about an underlying simplicity, coherence, unity, harmony, order, beauty, or intelligibility which we conjecture to be inherent in the universe (or inherent in the phenomena we are investigating). According to aim oriented empiricism there is, in other words, inherent in the basic aims of science a wild metaphysical conjecture—namely, that the world (or the domain of phenomena under investigation) is intelligible.

He then goes on and refers to the historical developments in science to proof his point:

Some of the greatest contributions to science are precisely contributions which "unify" apparently diverse phenomena (often against a background of entirely different metaphysical blueprints): there is, for example, Newton's unification of the motion of terrestrial and astronomical bodies by means of his laws of motion and law of gravitation; Maxwell's unification of electricity, magnetism and optics (further unified by the special theory of relativity); Einstein's unification of gravitation and geometry. (Maxwell, 1974b, p.266)

With this, Sanderson (1987, p.325) concludes that eclecticism “undermines the achievement of simplicity and unification” and that it “does not treat the world as simple and unified, but as complex and disjointed”. Moreover, his emphasis on the role of empiricism, or specifically Maxwell's (1974a; b) 'aim oriented empiricism', leads him to stress the importance of 'the strategy of comparative theory assessment', which he relates to Lakatos' (1970a) 'sophisticated falsificationism'⁹². Now, Sanderson (1987)

⁹² Herewith, Lakatos (1970a) argues that a comparative testing of theories is very much context depended and not, as Popper (2002) suggests, purely based on their contrasting juxtaposition with rigorous empirical facts. This context dependency is a theoretical dependency that relies on the accurateness of other theoretical works and is best explained by the Galileo example. In principle, Galileo's discovery of mountains on the moon falsifies the Aristotelian model and its assumptions that “celestial bodies are faultless crystal balls” (Lakatos, 1978, p.98), but the power of these observations rely on the accuracy of optical theories which determine that his telescope provides accurate magnifications of objects far away. Quine (1951, 1976), Duhem (1991) and others refer to this as the underdetermination of theories, as already mentioned earlier.

argues that since eclectics interpret all theories as equally valid, this comparative theory evaluation is impossible. For illustrative purposes he described a historic ‘thought experiment’ in which eclectic cosmologists “would have argued that the big bang theory explains some aspects of the universe, whereas the steady-state theory explains other aspects” (Sanderson, 1987, p.328)⁹³. Historically however, the big bang theory has replaced the steady-state theory in astronomy, because it has been ‘declared better’ based on a comparative testing.

Here, however, one may argue that Sanderson’s (1987) criticism fails to address, or consider, some essential points. First of all, his application of Occam’s razor remains vague. Occam’s razor can be divided into the ontological principle

other things being equal, if T1 is more ontologically parsimonious than T2 then it is rational to prefer T1 to T2.”, the epistemic principle “if theory T is simpler than theory T*, then it is rational (other things being equal) to believe T rather than T*” and the methodological principle “if T is simpler than T* then it is rational to adopt T as one’s working theory for scientific purposes. (Baker, 2010, p.no pagination)

Here, it is not quite clear to what Sanderson (1987) refers to, when he says eclecticism violates simplicity. The most obvious principle addressed seems to be the ontological one, when Sanderson (1987, p.325) criticises eclecticism of treating “the world as simple and unified, but as complex and disjointed”. First, we have an obvious ontological conflict here which the Occam’s razor cannot solve. Either we have a world that is reducible, and the ontological principle is true in the sense that a theory T* must be preferred over T if T* has less ontological commitments when, at the same time, it has the same theoretical virtues (Baker, 2010), or the world is complex and ontologically parsimonious theories may fail to describe this world. Sanderson (1987) fails to appreciate that eclectics argue for the latter⁹⁴ and, even more important, the ontological principle faces some serious practical limitations. Here, Holsinger (1981, pp.144–145) remarks that

⁹³ In short “in a steady state universe that had been around forever, there should be nothing special about looking back in time—you would expect to see young and old galaxies alike” (Fox, 2002, p.68) while the big bang theory explains the current universe in the light of the expanding universe, the right and predicted amount of helium observable and the background radiation. The contradiction here lies in the fact that one theory proposes a universe with and the other theory a universe without a beginning.

⁹⁴ One might even be tempted to say that Sanderson (1987) calls for what Dennett (1996, p.82) defines as greedy reductionism, where “scientists and philosophers underestimate the complexities, trying to skip whole layers or levels of theory in their rush to fasten everything securely and neatly to the foundation”.

since Occam's Razor ought to be invoked only when several hypotheses explain the same set of facts equally well, in practice its domain will be very limited... [C]ases where competing hypotheses explain a phenomenon equally well are comparatively rare.

This means that the more common situation in science is that a set of different theories overlap in some ontological postulates but also have other distinct postulates that are not shared. In these cases the application of Occam's razor cannot be successful (Baker, 2010).

Secondly, Maxwell's (1974a; b) account has a clear focus on science and it can be debated whether his ideas of simplicity and unification can be translated into social sciences at all. Moreover, it can be seen how his 'aim oriented empiricism' poses a meta-theoretical role that could lead to the same results as in the mixed method research case described above, where a single meta-theoretical position could lead to contradictions and incommensurability itself (D'Agostino, 2014).

Finally and to finish this section, the criticism of eclecticism from the economic literature will be discussed. This criticism, limited to a few paragraphs in Sheila Dow (1997, 2007, p.3), defines eclecticism simply as "unstructured pluralism" with "an absence of selection criteria". This absence makes her compare eclecticism with Feyerabend's (1993) radical pluralism of *anything goes*, which, in her eyes, is incompatible with the creation of knowledge. Moreover, she also argues that an eclecticism, she speaks of pluralism of method here, based on a problem-driven choice of method generally lacks a convincing ontological and epistemological support (Dow, 1997). Consequently, she rejects eclecticism altogether.

There are some issues with Dow's (1997, 2007) criticism that need to be discussed. First of all, Marques and Weisman (2009, p.81) argue that Dow has generally a Kuhnian approach to pluralism in relation to paradigms and "seems attracted by" Kuhn's (2012) incommensurability thesis, because it rules out epistemological meta-criteria, and alerts economists about serious communication issues and the implied necessity to intensify academic discourse. Marques and Weisman (2009) argue that many positions in the heterodox community about pluralism, with whom Dow seems to agree with, are in fact inconsistent with Kuhn (2012). The issues with a Kuhnian paradigm perspective have already been outlined, so a repetition is unnecessary here. Furthermore, chapter 4 will

provide another discussion of Dow's general criticism after the justification for eclecticism is formulated in chapter 3.

Quite interestingly, however, Dow (2007) apparently provides arguments that can be used to support eclecticism in her recent work, and a closer look shows how variations of them have been used in the pro-eclectic literature. The focus of her argument is epistemic in nature and rests upon insight that knowledge about reality can be differently constructed, without necessarily having the possibility of unifying these 'knowledges'. Hence, she develops an ethical argument which states that when knowledge is differently constructed and there are no possibilities to either unify them or to identify one best approach, then it is ethical to a) “develop sufficient awareness of difference” and b) “not to reject them simply because they are different” (Dow, 2007, p.11). In fact, this acknowledgement of different ways of knowledge creation and its acceptance is implicit, for instance, in the description of *Piagetian* and the *Vygotskian* explanations of proportional reasoning as described by Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin (2011).

Moreover, the idea of a plurality of ways to construct knowledge, pluralism in epistemology, is essential for the eclectic philosophers as the absence of such variety, not only epistemic but also ontological and methodological, would make it impossible to develop the argument for eclecticism at all. Here, Dow (2007) additionally refers to the nature of the subject matter of economics, the individual behaviour, to accent the need for pluralism. Yet her argument is almost equal to ones presented in the eclectic literature (see, for instance, Køppe, 2012). According to her, “the nature of individual behaviour (with its social and creative aspects) is too complex to be predictable (even stochastically)” (Dow, 2007, pp.15–16) and therefore there cannot be a single best approach, a theme that reoccurs frequently in the eclectic literature as well. Hence, the practical implications force Dow (2007, p.16) to conclude, quite eclectically, that “policy-makers are then better equipped to understand that behaviour, and its consequences, if knowledge is built up from a variety of approaches, and indeed a variety of questions asked”. Dow (2007) focuses on promoting pluralism but by doing so, she applies the same arguments that are also used by pro-eclectic scholars. Hence, it is not surprising that I propose that eclecticism and pluralism are closely related, because they apply the same arguments.

2.5. SYNOPSIS

Now that the literature on eclecticism, stretching over a time period of several centuries, has been briefly presented, the question may be asked what exactly eclecticism is, especially after so many different conceptualisations arose. With regard to the historical literature, Donini (1988) summarises six essential understandings that emerge from the writings. First and most common today, is the negative interpretation of eclecticism as an uncritical composition of diverse philosophical elements, something that Donini (1988) sees originating from Zeller (1883) and Hegel (Reinicke, 1979). Secondly, there is a value-free evaluation that defines eclecticism as a sect, in which philosophers combine elements from different heritages. Third, eclecticism defined in reference to Moraux's (1984) *intentional orthodoxy*, where philosophers commit themselves to a sect but include elements of others because they are convinced they are compatible and helpful. Fourth, the pedagogical approach of Potamo and Clement of Alexandria (2012) can be defined as eclecticism, where the focus lies on equality of philosophical sects for the purpose of teaching them. Fifth, philosophers who share a similar eclecticism as Potamo and Clement of Alexandria but also show a strong anti-dogmatic and anti-sectarian attitude, and sixth, Antiochus of Ascalon's and his attempt to prove a combination of Platonism, Aristotelianism and Stoicism is possible. Nonetheless, Donini (1988) argues that the first point is disappearing within scholarly discussion and with regard to point six, some academics argue that Antiochus has nothing to do with eclecticism at all. Points four and five are also criticised by him, because the assumed deliberation of choice is rarely found in antiquity. Thus, only points two and three remain for a proper and widely effective description of historic eclecticism (Donini, 1988).

Eclecticism in more recent literature is justified through some key ontological, epistemological and methodological issues raised in several different disciplines. The ontological starting point seems monist and argues for the acceptance of, in some way, complex objects of inquiry (Køppe, 2012) that, and here the epistemic and methodological arguments are applied, requires different strategies and approaches to fully comprehend them in terms of theory development, simply because a single-theory- or single-method-approach is by its own limitations not able to examine these objects thoroughly enough. This line of reasoning is, however, not much different from that found in the pluralist literature discussed in the previous chapter. In addition, we also find a partial or full rejection of Kuhn's (2012) incommensurability thesis and his view

of paradigmatic science and, in the case of mixed method research, a rejection of the incompatibility of methods thesis. Within the pluralist literature, at least Sheila Dow seems to prefer Kuhnian thoughts, while it remains questionable whether Kuhnian incommensurability and paradigmatic structure of science make sense in and for the pluralist movement in economics (Marques and Weisman, 2009).

There are only two noteworthy variations of these general arguments for eclecticism in psychology and sociology. In psychology eclecticism is not only found in theory development but also in therapy, where the same eclectic rationale occurs. Here, the 'complex patient' requires a unique and individual mix of therapeutic approaches to help with her conditions. These therapeutic techniques can be taken from different theoretical backgrounds that are usually not considered to be compatible, like behaviourism and cognitivism. In sociology, Harris (2001) shifts the eclectic focus from theories and methods to determinants of social evolution, which are *a priori* equally important and gain different significance only in a theoretical context. That means that we need to consider a set of determinants $\{x_1; \dots; x_n\}$ as *a priori* equally important, but when we wish to investigate social evolution the theories we use will only use a subset of these determinates in such a way that theory $A = \{x_1; \dots; x_g\}$ and theory $B = \{x_h; \dots; x_n\}$ and so on. To call this eclecticism is, on the other hand, somewhat problematic. Harris (2001) points out that this is a rather idealistic conception of theory identity; while it is true that different determinants for phenomena in sociology exist and that there are theories which cover different ones, in reality theoretical bodies are less clear cut. There remain theories in which determinants either overlap, or are even identical.

Finally, the critical literature of modern eclecticism (Sanderson, 1987; Dow, 1997; Harris, 2001; Dow, 2007) has been discussed, which generally argues that eclectics have a misconception of scientific practice and are themselves unscientific. Although the criticism has not been fully refuted, several issues have been identified with the arguments against eclecticism that would require the critics to rephrase or rethink their positions. Until this is done and new criticism has been presented, eclecticism itself can still be pursued. Before we continue to justify eclecticism for economics, it is worth spending time thinking about its general meaning, or in simple terms: how shall we understand eclecticism here?

It is argued that the existing definitions are not fully suitable for the purpose of this dissertation. Yet, aspects of these previous definitions can be used to conceptualise eclecticism. One of the central aspects of eclecticism is the anti-dogmatism, or anti-

sectarianism, of its proponents. Although it has been argued that this anti-dogmatic position is itself dogmatic (Sanderson, 1987), it seems unclear to what extent this dogmatism is fundamental, or whether this argument can essentially be applied all the time. For the economists, this view simply holds that one does not identify herself with one or another school of thought, which is perfectly fine to begin with. Moreover, this is also a first criterion of demarcation between eclectics and pluralists, whereas the latter can still be committed to one particular school of thought while acknowledging the existence and necessity of others.

Secondly, there is a constant notion of intentionality in the eclectic literature. Due to reasons described, i.e. the epistemological and methodological ones discussed in the previous two chapters, eclectics choose deliberately from the plurality of approaches. Here, reference can be made to Moraux's (1984) intentional orthodoxy as being synonymous with eclecticism, while the *de facto* orthodoxy, or the more accidental inclusion of alien elements in one's own sect. For the eclectic economist, this means to adopt aspects of different schools of thought etc. deliberately, while accidental inclusions cannot be called eclecticism.

That being said, eclecticism can be understood as a *leitmotif* for individual researchers to be unprejudiced, to have no commitment to a particular economic school of thought and treat them as *a priori* valuable for the pursuit of one's research aspirations by deliberately choosing from the available range of historical and modern economic concepts, ideas and practices. The applications of this range 'of what is there' allows to critically evaluate these concepts, ideas and practices and makes eclecticism therefore neither uncritical nor arbitrary. How this critical evaluation is achieved is central to the justification of eclecticism in the following chapters. The justification will build upon the arguments already presented in the previous two chapters and develops its arguments with the help of a variety of literature from the philosophy of social science to build the case. Moreover, this first definition will be extended by two more levels, i.e. paradigm-like groupings and conceptual schemes, to discuss lack of commitment and the way choice is further made beyond schools of thought.

The absence of school or paradigmatic commitment, and hence the absence of a set of guiding principles for conducting research, motivates the *problem of choice*, how can we make a reasonable choice in the absence of commitment to a particular framework that provides choice criteria. This *problem of choice* shall be the central issue of the

reminder of this dissertation and will be discussed along with the justification for eclecticism in the following chapter. Ultimately, it is rejected as being a severe problem.

CHAPTER 3: ECONOMIC ECLECTICISM

Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, and intelligent execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives - choice, not chance, determines your destiny. – Aristotle

Derived from the examination of past and present eclectic literature, conducted in the previous chapter, it is suggested to broadly define eclecticism as an individual philosophical position for the researcher that demands an unprejudiced but critical acceptance of and a deliberate choice from a range of available historical and modern scientific concepts, ideas and practices as guidance for one's own research. The definition is purposefully kept broad to cover most of the aspects from the literature discussed in the previous chapter, thus avoiding conceptual precision at this point. It is also broader in comparison to the two possible definitions of eclecticism Donini (1988) declares as feasible, and by excluding the notion of a predominant school of thought held by the individual researcher it tends to disagree with Moraux's (1984) 'intentional orthodoxy'.

The chosen definition transcends the historical, and allows the inclusion of the more recent literature found in disciplines like psychology, sociology, pedagogy and mixed method research. Moreover, it is based on central arguments found both in the eclectic and pluralist literature. There remain, however, some issues with this form of eclecticism; namely where eclecticism and pluralism are alike, what their differences are, and how eclectic choice can be justified.

In the following chapter, these questions will be addressed. First, the common ground will be explored. Then, the history and possibility of rational choices in the scientific context will be explored, as the problem of choice in the absence of a single set of guiding principles has been identified as a central issue for eclecticism at the end of the previous chapter. This discussion will lead to a conceptualisation of rational choices, which will allow to lay the foundation for eclectic choices. Here, a three layer concept of the relationship between schools of thought, what will be called paradigm-like groupings and conceptual schemes is developed. Based on this concept, it is illustrated what making choices mean in all three layers and where we might encounter difficulties.

Especially when moving towards the outer layer, the conceptual schemes, it is argued that choices become increasingly difficult due to the nature of conceptual schemes and the impact on the individual researcher. This creates a natural border against a kind of 'choice relativism', i.e. in the absence of guiding principles one can freely chose between everything there is.

3.1. ECLECTICS AND PLURALISTS: SHARING COMMON GROUND

There is a consistency in the arguments from both eclectics and pluralists that makes the conclusion that eclecticism and pluralism are close, at least, reasonable. Despite the fact that pluralists in economics have fewer disciplinary differences in their research object than the eclectics in the reviewed literature, they share some fundamental philosophical positions. It appears that some eclectics and some pluralists are so close to each other in their reasoning that one might be tempted to use the labels interchangeably. This is not to say that all pluralists are eclectics, or the other way around. The different positions one can find within the pluralists' literature does not allow to make this inference. Hence, it more seems that eclecticism is a subset of pluralism or, as we might say, all eclectics are pluralists while not all pluralists are necessarily eclectics.

3.1.1. PHILOSOPHICAL BASICS

One of the strongest commonalities is the 'one size does not fit all' or the 'no one best approach' argument that we encounter in both the pluralist and the eclectic literature. This argument, famously first used by Caldwell (1982, p.245) to dismiss positivism in economics, claims that "no universally applicable, logically compelling method of theory appraisal exists". A certain variety of this argument can be found elsewhere (see, for instance, Dow, 2014; Mäki, 1997; Samuels, 1998) and is usually used to distinguish heterodox economics from orthodoxy. Yet, there are also variations of this argument found in the eclectic literature despite the fact that the precise rationale might differ substantially here. Recall, for instance, the arguments presented above by Service (1968, p.406), "[t]here is no single magical formula that will predict the evolution of every society", or Stinchcombe (1987, p.4), the eclectic sociologists has "a firm conviction that some things are to be explained one way, some another". Despite their disciplinary differences we can see the core premise in all of these arguments. As shown

in chapter 2, the eclectic literature in all disciplines more or less rests upon this premise, even if it is differently outlined.

With regards to this first argument, there is an underlying point made by pluralists and eclectics alike. For theories or methods to be inadequate to 'fit all sizes', the object under investigations must have specific characteristics; it must be ontologically somewhat complicated, diverse, irreducible, even complex. It has been said before that in economics Lawson (1997, 2003b, 2004, 2009) and Dow (1997, 2007, 2008) are most prominent in this particular ontological position. Lawson's (2006, pp.496–497) concept of social ontology makes this point clear; he describes the social realm as "highly interconnected and organic" where "the social realm is emergent from human (inter)action, though with properties irreducible to, yet capable of causally affecting, the latter". Chick and Dow (2005) make, in principle, the same assertion about society as a whole and, although not necessarily agreeing with Lawson, they and other pluralists seem to hold a similar ontological notion of a complicated, if not complex, multifaceted reality (i.e. Mäki, 1997; Samuels, 1998).

Basically the same arguments are used by eclectics to justify their eclecticism. In the previous chapter, it has been shown how this is achieved. Eclecticism in psychology, for instance, is based upon the premise that the human mind, as object of their research or therapy is very much multifaceted and different theories offer different 'access points'. This is best illustrated with the example of proportional reasoning and the *Piagetian* and the *Vygotskian* approach to it, which has been outlined in the previous chapter. Therefore, and in general, there cannot be a single theory or a single therapy that can guarantee rich insights into or successful treatment of the human psychology (Slife, Reber and Gantt, 2003; Koppé, 2012; Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin, 2011). Likewise, the same reasoning is used in educational research (Stinson, 2004, 2009) and sociology (Stinchcombe, 1987; Sil, 2000, 2004, Sil and Katzenstein, 2010a; b). This specific perspective on the object of inquiry results in a second similarity between eclectics and pluralists, i.e. the role of knowledge one can gain about these objects of inquiry.

Since there are different theories or perspectives which might examine the same or different aspects of a complex object, the created knowledge is likewise fundamentally different. Both eclectics (Koro-Ljungberg, 2004) and pluralists (Dow, 2007) acknowledge that knowledge can be produced in different ways and that we do not possess objective criteria to perfectly discriminate one way from another. Dow (2007) and other pluralists, use this epistemological argument to lay a foundation for the

justification of methodological pluralism, i.e. these are the different ways to create knowledge and none of them is in any way better than the other⁹⁵. Eclectics like Lincoln (2010) emphasises not the plurality of ways to create knowledge so much but rather the epistemological deficiencies of different approaches. The *Piagetian* and the *Vygotskian* approaches, mentioned in the previous chapter, are not only different ways to create knowledge, but their very theoretical nature, the one being derived from a cognitive, neuro-scientific paradigm and the other from a social-psychological paradigm, does not allow them to create knowledge about their object of inquiry that is exactly captured by the other. Therefore, both approaches used together in an eclectic fashion, will provide a broader knowledge about the subject than one of them alone. Despite having different conclusions, although they are arguably rather close, both eclectics and pluralists start with the same epistemological premise in this respect.

3.1.2. PLURALIST AND ECLECTIC TOLERANCE

Finally, it has been mentioned in chapter 1 that there are pluralists who argue for pluralism from a more ethical point of view, which was named ‘tolerance pluralism’. Most notably, these arguments are brought forward by Bruce Caldwell (1982), Warren Samuels (1997a; b, 1998) Robert Garnett (2006, 2011) and Frederik Lee (2011a; b). Despite different justifications, all basically claim the need for tolerance as it allows and promotes the academic freedom and fruitful conversation among economists. The inclusion of different perspectives into the critical conversation among economists is thus necessary for the positive development of economics, as this conversation is seen as the general reason for scientific progress.

Among the eclectic literature, demand for tolerance is most evident in the earlier writings, although it is somewhat intrinsic in the modern literature as well, as the case of the *Piagetian* and the *Vygotskian* approaches demonstrates. As it has been shown in chapter 2, the core notion of eclecticism is the critical consideration of ideas and philosophies while, at the same time, there is a distrust in the belief in or following of leaders of philosophical sects which are attributed to the development of the otherwise investigated ideas. This core principle is specifically highlighted in Diderot’s (1779; as cited in Donini, 1988, p.19) definition, which says that the eclectic “dares to think for himself, returns to the clearest general principle, examines them, discusses them, admits

⁹⁵ Here, the discussion of epistemological pluralism in chapter 1 should be remembered.

nothing that is not based on the testimony of his experience and his reason”. In this, some sort of *a priori* tolerance of philosophical ideas can be identified, which are then scrutinised by the eclectic's own reason. This is, contrary to the critics, not a stance of accepting everything at face value, but rather comparable to the demand for tolerance as basis for fruitful and critical academic discussions in the pluralists' literature discussed above. One can say that eclecticism is, in some sense, taking the ‘pluralist dialogues’ and turns it into a ‘pluralist monologue’, what the pluralist seeks to establish between members of a research community will happen inside the mind of an eclectic.

Such an inner debate of different philosophies, or theoretical contributions to one's own field, is, of course, a difficult task but it is not unimportant as the eclectic literature suggests. Stinson (2004, 2009), for instance, successfully demonstrate how such an inner debate of different theoretical concepts lead to a significant contribution in his research area. Likewise, it should be possible for a pluralist economist not only to engage in fruitful discussions with members of different schools of thought, but to have her own productive thought processes of the contents of these schools, which can result in the implementation in her own research. This kind of reflection itself is, at the end of the day, an important aspect of critical thinking and the improvement of one's own academic skills.

3.1.3. PLURALISTS AND ECLECTICS: FIRST SYNOPSIS

In summary, the conclusion that eclecticism and pluralism are related is legitimate. Both eclectics and pluralists require a plurality of philosophies/theories/schools of thought to flourish, both argue from a post-positivistic stance and both promote the notion of tolerance towards these different philosophies/theories/schools of thought. The finer differences in the arguments cause eclecticism not to be equivalent with pluralism, an important observation that should not be unnoticed. Eclecticism has a stronger emphasis on the individual academic while pluralism, despite speaking to the individual, appears to be more of a community effort. Hence, eclecticism should be understood as a special kind of pluralism, which still promotes the use and acceptance of plurality of ideas but focuses more on how the individual can make use of this in her own research; one might say it is pluralism within the individual.

3.2. A PROBLEM OF CHOICE

When the eclectic is unprejudiced, i.e. she is not guided by a single paradigm or school of thought or, in the worst case, some authority in her discipline to choose her research question and methodology, then the question emerges how someone can choose from the plurality of theories etc.? Is there a rational methodology that is independent of such influences that allows the researcher to choose the right way to conduct her research, and if so, is that not contrary to the whole idea of eclecticism? In economics, Nancy Cartwright (1999) points out the lack of an existing methodology for method choice, and that this cannot be done by existing methodologies. She concludes that

our whole package of sophisticated techniques – mostly statistical – for testing regularity claims are of no help in the decisions about choice among models. How do we decide? As far as I see we have no articulated methodology, neither among philosophers nor among economists (though we may well have a variety of unarticulated methods). (Cartwright, 1999, p.149)

In the following this specific problem will be addressed and I will attempt to sketch out what choice means for an eclectic economist, and how such choice can be made.

3.2.1. A BRIEF HISTORY OF RATIONAL CHOICE

Rational choices are not only a subject in economic theory about how individuals make their consumption and saving decisions, but have been an immensely debated topic in the history of philosophy of sciences, especially with regards to scientific methodology. The criticism that has been raised by famous academics like Sir Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn, Paul Feyerabend, Imre Lakatos, W. V. O. Quine or Hilary Putnam over the previous decades has implied that there is only a very small prospect for a methodology that can offer rational grounds for method choices, and/or anything that can offer these choices for theories, very small (Laudan, 1987). This seems to be a problem for the eclectics, as they claim to make their choices based on their own rationality. This begs, at least, the question whether eclecticism is, at the very beginning, already futile or highly irrational. Yet, there are also some who defend rational choices of theories. The most notable proponents are Larry Laudan and Alasdair MacIntyre. They give us the possibility for, at least, some kind of rational choice for the eclectic economist.

3.2.1.1. AGAINST RATIONAL CHOICE

One of the first criticisms about the possibility to rationally choose between theories/methods is given by Karl Popper (2002, p.34) who treats methodological rules as mere conventions. He argues that, at the very end, methodological rules are not deduced but chosen based upon the scientist's "intuitive idea of the goal of his endeavours"⁹⁶. His interpretation tells us that the scientist is driven by pre-scientific ideals and/or ideologies and that there is no scientific, or philosophical, method to determine how to choose the best method or even what the best method is.

It is generally accepted that Thomas Kuhn (2012) argues for the inexistence of a method for choice in a similar fashion as Popper (2002) does. We must, however, be careful with such a hasty conclusion, as Kuhn (2012) does not deny the existence of good reasons to be persuaded for choosing one theory over the other. What he says is that

[t]here is no neutral algorithm for theory-choice, no systematic decision procedure which, properly applied, must lead each individual in the group to the same decision. In this sense it is the community of specialists rather than its individual members that makes the effective decision. (Kuhn, 2012, p.200).

The reason for this lies in the fact that the reasons for choices, such as simplicity, fruitfulness etc., can be differently valued by two groups, thus leading to a disagreement without one of them being wrong or unscientific. The problem then is a problem of persuasion and the application of words with different meaning, in the context of economics one might think again of McCloskey (1983, 1994). These different meanings are the essence of differences in paradigms and thus, there cannot be any scientific meta-methodology for paradigm choice⁹⁷. The reason is that as methodological rules are

⁹⁶ Additionally, he also argues that he does not

believe that it is possible to decide, by using the methods of an empirical science, such controversial questions as whether science actually uses a principle of induction or not. And my doubts increase when I remember that what is to be called a 'science' and who is to be called a 'scientist' must always remain a matter of convention or decision. (Popper, 2002, p. 31)

⁹⁷ Putnam (1991, p.128) summarises Kuhn's (2012) argument as following:

[D]ata, in the usual sense, cannot establish the superiority of one paradigm over another because data themselves are perceived through the spectacles of one paradigm or another. Changing from one paradigm to another requires a 'Gestalt switch'. The history and methodology of science get rewritten when there are major paradigm changes; so there are no 'neutral' historical and methodological canons to which to appeal.

always embedded within a paradigm and, thus, cannot transcend them to be used by the researcher for her paradigm choice⁹⁸. It is impossible for such methodologies to answer questions of what to value and how to value it, because they are already pre-supposed by these methodologies. Hence, any argument about paradigm choice put forward with the help of paradigm embedded methodologies is circular (Kuhn, 2012).

It is important to notice, however, that Kuhn (2012) defends himself against an interpretation of his work that says he is a relativist, who denies the existence of good reasons for theory choice altogether. In summary, this interpretation says that

the proponents of incommensurable theories cannot communicate with each other at all; as a result, in a debate over theory-choice there can be no recourse to good reasons; instead theory must be chosen for reasons that are ultimately personal and subjective; some sort of mystical apperception is responsible for the decision actually reached. (Kuhn, 2012, pp.198–199)

Kuhn (2012, p.199) clarifies here that “[m]ore than any other parts of the book, the passages on which these misconstructions rest have been responsible for charges of irrationality”. This means that he and Popper (2002) do not share the same opinion as commonly thought.

Another, less direct, argument is presented by Paul Feyerabend (1993), who claims to have shown, with the help of historical examples of scientific advancement, the inexistence of rational methodological rules for theory choice. According to him, rationalistic rules that determine the correct way science is supposed to be done cannot account for the development and change of preference of scientific theories, because these contradicted the methodological rules of the scientific communities at their time. As examples he refers to famous, historic changes in science like Galileo’s favour towards the heliocentric world-view or the discovery of Brownian motion to argue that these must be declared unscientific or pseudo-science since they broke with the existing methodological rules. Therefore, general rules, induction and deduction, the rule of consistency and even rules of rationality, have limitations and cannot guarantee best

98 Kuhn (2012, p. 94) specifically explains that

[I]like the choice between competing political institutions, that between competing paradigms proves to be a choice between incompatible modes of community life. Because it has that character, the choice is not and cannot be determined merely by the evaluative procedures characteristic of normal science, for these depend in part upon a particular paradigm, and that paradigm is at issue. When paradigms enter, as they must, into a debate about paradigm choice, their role is necessarily circular. Each group uses its own paradigm to argue in that paradigm’s defense.

practise or the best advancement of science. Scientists who claim to have such rules must either acknowledge their limitations or must declare the examples above to be pseudo-scientific.

Quite interestingly, Imre Lakatos (1970b) argues that a rational methodology for theory comparison, and therefore choice, might still be possible despite the criticism raised by Kuhn (2012) or Feyerabend (1993). If that is true, however, this begs the question of why he is considered to be against rational theory choice. The reason for this lies in Lakatos' (1970b) argument that only his methodology of research programmes provides a rational, historic reconstruction of scientific practise, reconstruction at which Popper's (2002) falsificationism fails, but that this does not mean that a rationale is achievable quickly, i.e. an instantaneous heuristic or meta-methodology that allows one to decide what theory or methodology is the best. The epistemological criteria for instant rationality set up by justificationism have, as he argues, "crumbled under the weight of epistemological and logical criticism" (Lakatos, 1970b, p.108) in the past. Popper (2002) tries to give some guidance with his falsificationism, a pragmatic-coventionalist meta-methodology, while Feyerabend (1993) declares science to be, historically, irrational.

While Lakatos (1970b) tries to defend the rational reconstruction, he also argues that falsificationism, if applied as meta-criterion, itself is falsified by history. The reason why it fails the test of history lies, according to Lakatos (1970b), in the fact that Popper (2002) never develops a history of science himself. While his main treatise makes reference to the falsifiability of leading scientific theories they are never fully discussed in detail. Lakatos (1970b, p.113) remarks that a poor rational reconstruction of scientific history, based on one's methodology, may make a historian "either misread history in such a way that it coincides with his rational reconstruction, or he will find that the history of science is highly irrational" and that "Popper's respect for great science made him choose the first option"⁹⁹. While Kuhn (2012) and Feyerabend (1993) fall into the second category and reject the rational reconstruction, Lakatos (1970b) points out that anomalies and inconsistencies should let us not abandon the idea of the possibility for such a universal methodology of rational theory choice and comparison.

⁹⁹ What Popper (2002) argues is that experiments must be used to falsify theories but he fails to see that grand theories in the history of science were, in Lakatos' (1970a, p.112) own words, were born and "progressed in an ocean of anomalies", exactly those anomalies which would have falsified them.

What he proposes is his *methodology of scientific research programmes*, which is supposed to make a rational comparison between theories, or research programmes, based upon historical “progressive and degenerate problemshifts” (Lakatos, 1970b, p.99)¹⁰⁰. Now, it is rational for a scientist to remain within a research programme, as long as it remains progressive, i.e. “as long as its theoretical growth anticipates its empirical growth, that is, as long as it keeps predicting novel facts with some success ('progressive problemshift')” (Lakatos, 1970b, p.100). In the case of two competing research programmes it is rational to change between the two of them when a 'degenerative problemshift', i.e. it provides merely “post-hoc explanations either of chance discoveries or of facts anticipated by, and discovered in, a rival programme” (Lakatos, 1970b, p.100), makes it rational to choose the superseding programme¹⁰¹. This is also the reason why instant rational choices are impossible, because choosing between research programmes is a long and complex process, there is a certain time factor eminent. Lakatos (1970b, p.104) even acknowledges that “[o]ne may rationally stick to a degenerating programme until it is overtaken by a rival and *even after*”. This is a response to Kuhn's (2012) and Feyerabend's (1970, p.215) critical remarks that “it is easy to see that standards have practical force only if they are combined with a time limit (what looks like a degenerating problemshift may be the beginning of a much longer period of advance)”. This is, for Lakatos (1970b, p.104), a request for a “firm heuristic advice about what to do”, i.e. instant rationality, and not what he indented to deliver. He later makes clear “that scientific research programmes do not offer instant rationality”, because it may take decades for one programme to supersede another and therefore, on a sidenote, “Kuhn is wrong in thinking that scientific revolutions are sudden, irrational changes in vision” (Lakatos, 1978, p.6).

100 Other than Popper's (2002) falsificationism, it is not a single theory which is falsified but complete research programmes. Single theories within a programme might still be rejected, but this is due to the introduction of a new theory with a broader empirical content and not due to falsification.

101 Blaug (1976) provides an insightful explanation of how the Keynesian revolution should be understood as Lakatosian research programme and not as Kuhnian paradigm shift. He argues that Keynes (2008) introduced a progressive research programme at a time where classical economics, specifically its full employment equilibrium concept, became increasingly degenerate, i.e. it no longer provided a rational for the economic situations it faced, in particular with regards to the Great Depression and its impact on unemployment etc.. At that time, many economists already held policy views that would be called Keynesian but they had not the theoretical means to support them adequately. Blaug (1976, p.163) concludes that

[t]here was, in other words, no lack of explanations for the failure of the slump to turn into a boom, but the point is that these explanations were all 'ad hoc', leaving intact the full-employment equilibrium implications of standard theory. The tendency of economists to join the rank of the Keynesians in increasing numbers after 1936 was therefore perfectly rational; it was a switch from a 'degenerating' to a 'progressive' research programme (...).

Similar to Kuhn and Popper, Hilary Putnam (1981a, 1982, 2002) argues for the impossibility of a rational choice of theories detached from personal ideals, or in his specific case values. In a pragmatist move¹⁰², Putnam (1981a, 1982, 2002) argues that epistemic standards, such as 'coherence', 'plausibility', 'reasonableness' and 'simplicity', must be understood as normative values; they determine what 'ought to be' in scientific reasoning. This argument is supported by Putnam's (1982, 2002) rejection of the Humean fact-value distinction. Instead he argues, like the classic pragmatists, for an entanglement of facts and values, where ethical judgements have a factual basis and scientific statements have a normative element. Although he rejects Kuhn's (2012) notion of subjectivity¹⁰³, he admits that a set of such epistemic standards does not allow us to judge the accuracy of an alternative set of epistemic standards in understanding the world, as we judge "*through the lenses of those very values*" (Putnam, 2002, p.33; Rasmussen, 2008). Reasoned theory choice cannot be detached from such values, because reasonableness itself is such an epistemic value. Even the attempt to detach oneself from these values must be futile, as Putnam (1981a, p.136) concludes, because "without the cognitive values of coherence, simplicity, and instrumental efficacy we have no world and no 'facts', not even facts about what is so relative to what"¹⁰⁴.

Finally, in his essay *Epistemology Naturalized* W. V. O. Quine (1969) presents arguments for a shift in the focus of epistemology towards a scientific enquiry of how knowledge is, cognitively, created by human beings¹⁰⁵. Kim's (1988, p.385) interpretation of naturalised epistemology (NE) suggests that "Quine's principal argument in this paper against traditional epistemology is based on the claim that the Cartesian foundationalist program has failed", i.e. that the central focus of traditional epistemology, the search for the conditions under which beliefs are justified to be held, is an ill-founded approach. Epistemology should inquire how we form beliefs and not state how we should form beliefs. As a consequence, so Kim's (1988, p.388) reading,

102 He refers to the classical pragmatists such as Charles S. Peirce, John Dewey and George Herbert Mead (Putnam, 2002).

103 See Putnam (1981a) for more details.

104 Elsewhere, Putnam (1987a, p.36) summarises this problem as follows:

To talk of "facts" without specifying the language to be used is to talk of nothing; the word "fact" no more has its use fixed by Reality Itself than does the word "exist" or the word "object".

However, Putnam (1987a) holds a position where some facts about the world are discoverable and not merely legislated, thus rejecting soliphism and allowing realism to remain viable.

105 Here,

the business of naturalized epistemology, for me, is an improved understanding of the chains of causation and implication that connect the bombardment of our surfaces, at one extreme, with our scientific output at the other. (Quine, 1995, p.349)

Quine “is asking us to set aside the entire framework of justification-centered epistemology” and “to put in its place a purely descriptive, causal-nomological science of human cognition”. This results in a similar rejection of a normative character for epistemology that will allow the methodologists to suggest a best practise as we have seen above, although here the reasoning is very different.

However, it must be said that Kim's (1988) reading is not without problems. Gibson (1995), for instance, agrees with the interpretation that NE breaks with the idea of the possibility for a philosophical, and thus scientific, justification of knowledge, yet he argues that NE itself sets normative standards by suggesting that scientific findings can be utilised against sceptical doubts¹⁰⁶. Likewise, in his critical interpretation Johnson (2005, pp.84–85) concludes that “Quine is clearly proposing that we study the way subjects construct their pictures of the world, not countless idiosyncratic ways in which individual subjects may do so”, but also highlights that “his proposal to naturalize epistemology does not involve abandoning the normative”. Instead, Quine generally suggests to discover the norms that regulate theorising with the help of psychology, which allows us to find the criterion that we conform to. Therefore, epistemology is not be surrendered to psychology but psychology must be employed to guide epistemology in its efforts to understand the normative standards scientists use when making the connections between experience and theory (Johnson, 2005)¹⁰⁷.

At the end it seems that there are overwhelming cases against a meta-methodology that allows us to rationally choose between different theories or methodologies, to properly exclude theories or methodologies based upon universally shared set of rational rules. Instead, when choosing our research approach we apply norms and values that are determined by an environment, which includes but is not limited to the research paradigm (Kuhn, 2012). The researcher is embedded in this environment and cannot free herself from this to pursue a value-free, objective research approach. Indeed, the sociology of science, or research, generates serious problems for a simplistic set of epistemological standards, but we might not have to give up the pursuit for guidance yet.

106 Gibson (1995) interprets from Quine (1969) that sceptical doubt presupposes accepted scientific claims and therefore, scepticism is located within the scientific domain.

107 Johnson (2005, p.88) summarises this point by concluding that “psychology will identify the norms we adhere to, and philosophy will tell us that, by virtue of their being the ones we adhere to, they are the ones we are to adhere to”.

3.2.1.2. PRO RATIONAL CHOICE

For Alasdair MacIntyre (1988) the criticism against the idea of a rational justification of theory choice, but also with regards to morality and justice, is a mere continuation of a discussion of rationality that began in the Enlightenment. The project of the enlightened thinkers, so MacIntyre (1988, p.6) argues, was the development of those “standards and methods of rational justification” that would “appeal to principles undeniable by any rational person”. The problem with this aspiration was, as it turned out, that “both the thinkers of the Enlightenment and their successors proved unable to agree as to what precisely those principles were which would be found undeniable by all rational persons” (MacIntyre, 1988, p.6). The fact that, historically, there is no agreement on such principles leads him to two important conclusions; first that there are no neutral, meta-philosophical principles allowing to make such rational choice and second, that it is still possible to make reasonable justifications in one's choices of research 'traditions'. How is this possible?

First, it must be clarified that MacIntyre (1988) uses *tradition-constituted and tradition-constitutive enquiry* as central concepts to describe different historical approaches of philosophical and moral inquiry, which remain loosely defined but makes the impression to be similar to Lakatos' (1978) research programmes. Facing the problem of defining rational justification, or justice, he explains that those very concepts are embedded within such traditions and therefore are dependent on the historical context those tradition are set in. Understanding the historical context of these concepts gives rise to the title of his book where he asked, facing the claim that a person needs to be just, *Whose Justice?* (MacIntyre, 1988). Acknowledging the historical context further leads MacIntyre (1988, p.166) to admit “that there is no neutral way of characterizing either the subject matter about which they give rival accounts or the standards by which their claims are to be evaluated” if we are facing two rival traditions. Moreover, MacIntyre (1988, p.351) emphasis later that “there is no set of independent standards of rational justification by appeal to which the issues between contending traditions can be decided”, thus he is very much in agreement, as it seems, with Kuhn (2012), Feyerabend (1993) and others.

However, he does not agree with their conclusions, which he divides as being relativistic on the one hand, i.e. there is no rationality per se, or as perspectivist, i.e. there is no truth or falsity but only different perspectives on reality (Flett, 1999; MacIntyre, 1988; Snider, 1989). Instead, MacIntyre (1988) argues that it remains

possible to acknowledge the need to change a tradition from within its own rational justification framework. This is achieved via epistemological crises (MacIntyre, 1977), which occur once the set of current problems or issues handled results in an increasing decay of internally held certitudes¹⁰⁸. At such a point the members of the tradition realises that, by its own standards and the use of its own intellectual resources, it will no longer solve these issues (Flett, 1999; MacIntyre, 1988). The only solution, according to MacIntyre (1988, p.362), is “the invention or discovery of new concepts and the framing of some new types of theory” that will be able to meet three important criteria, namely

[f]irst (...) [it] must furnish a solution to the problems which had previously proved intractable in a systematic and coherent way. Second, it must also provide an explanation of just what it was which rendered the tradition, before it had acquired these new resources, sterile or incoherent or both. And third, these first two tasks must be carried out in a way which exhibits some fundamental continuity of the new conceptual and theoretical structures with the shared beliefs in terms of which the tradition of enquiry had been defined up to this point.

These three conditions are both applicable for a crisis that occurs within a tradition and between rival traditions, which allows to determine the superiority of one over the other by virtue of their ability to solve their own crisis. Here, I also see the point of departure from Lakatos' (1970b, p.99) “progressive and degenerate problemshifts” in his research programmes, which remain unclear on the ability to choose between different programmes. In summary, MacIntyre (1988) claims that one can reasonably choose between rival traditions, or identify the time for change, based upon their success, or failure, to deal with epistemological crises. This clearly differentiates him from Lakatos (1970b, 1978) who argues that a strong, guarded core within research programmes can prevent such an epistemological crisis to cause a rapid change. Moreover, it also appears that MacIntyre (1988) is very much in line with Kuhn (2012) with regards to the speed of change. Now with the similarities somewhat mentioned, one may ask the question what the particular differences between all three scholars are.

Miner (2011) argues that the major difference between Lakatos and MacIntyre is their understanding of the incommensurability thesis, which might also allow us to include

108 Which seems to be very similar to Kuhn's (2012) anomalies, which are responsible for paradigm shifts.

Kuhn here. Kuhn (2012, p.102) introduces the incommensurability thesis by arguing that shifts between paradigms also involves a changes of semantic meanings, for example he notes that “the physical referents of these Einsteinian concepts are by no means identical with those of the Newtonian concepts that bear the same name”. Shapere (1995, p.139) summarises this by saying that the new paradigm

introduces entirely new meanings, standards, methods, and goals, making any deductive relationship between the two impossible. Indeed, the argument continued, the differences are so profound that any sort of comparison is impossible.¹⁰⁹

Lakatos (1978) rejects this version of incommensurability entirely, firstly by pointing out that Newton was able to work simultaneously within two different paradigms¹¹⁰. The second objection is based upon his claim that rational theory choice remains possible, which, however, means that incommensurability must be rejected. Incommensurability, in his understanding, is absolutely incompatible with rational justification for theory choice¹¹¹ and since he claims to have shown the possibility for some kind of rational justification incommensurability must then be rejected (Miner, 2011). MacIntyre (1984) likewise rejects this strong definition of incommensurability but argues that initially incommensurable, rival theories, under a weaker conception, are not necessarily incompatible. Miner (2011), with reference to Shapere (1995), clarifies that the initial incommensurability thesis, as defined above, does in fact entail three kinds of incommensurability; one of meaning, one of standards and one of goals. With this in mind, MacIntyre (1984) rejects incommensurability of meaning, arguing for the comparability of rival theories based upon a shared meta-vocabulary. He points out that

in physical theory the concepts of *weight*, of *mass as defined by Newton* and of *mass as defined within quantum mechanics*, concepts embodied in incommensurable bodies of theory, have all to be understood as concepts of

¹⁰⁹ Below, I will pick up on this notion of incommensurability and substitute it with a different definition.

¹¹⁰ Lakatos (1978, p.112) specifically says that this “undermines Kuhn’s thesis of the psychological incommensurability of rival paradigms”.

¹¹¹ Miner (2011, p.227) summarises Lakatos’ (1978) second reason as follows:

If rival and ostensibly incommensurable theories are neither inconsistent with each other, nor comparable for content (see Lakatos, 1978, p.91), then it becomes impossible to say that allegiance to one research program is more rational than allegiance to another. If such comparative judgements are impossible, then it appears that while scientists may decide to switch from one large-scale theory to another, there are never any reasons that mandate or justify the switch. The conclusion is that incommensurability and rationality in theory-change are simply incompatible.

that property of bodies which determines their relative motion, if we are to be able to understand what makes those bodies of theory contending rivals. And it is this shared higher order vocabulary, this stock of senses and references provided at the level of *Weltanschauung*, which makes it possible for the adherents of rival incommensurable bodies of theory to recognize themselves as moving towards what can be specified at that level as the same goals. (MacIntyre, 1984, pp.42–43)

One might be tempted to object to the general reasoning. MacIntyre (1988) is arguing that there is no tradition independent meta-rationality offering guidance for theory choice or evaluation for arguments, yet he introduces a meta-criterion with the demand for traditions' success, or failure, to be determined by the conflict between their own standards and the problems they face, i.e. the epistemological crisis, which seems to represent that particular neutral “standing ground” whose existence MacIntyre (1988, p.350) denies altogether: a contradiction? Not according to Miner (2011, p.232), who clarifies that this meta-criterion may just be shared among many scientific traditions, it does not stand on neutral grounds and that “MacIntyre can easily deny that he is invoking a meta-criterion which hovers outside of the relevant traditions”. However, two other problems arise, of which the first is similar to the issues Kuhn (2012) and Feyerabend (1970) observe with Lakatos (1978).

Firstly, MacIntyre (1988, 1977) does not offer an explanation of how one can distinguish between a theory that has failed by the traditions standards or one that just shows temporary weakness due to some unforeseen anomalies. Like in the case of Lakatos (1978) it remains difficult, if not impossible, to decide when we should give up a theory. Secondly, even if this problem can be overcome and proper criteria can be formulated that allow us to decide about success and failure, it remains unclear whether success and failure should be the dominant criteria for a normative rationality. Miner (2011) argues that it is possible that two incommensurable theories A and B come from two different traditions with different standards. While theory A faces simple standards, which are easily met, theory B has much harsher criteria for success and might therefore fail. Given such a situation, it is questionable whether success and failure are adequate normative criteria, when traditional standards differ in such a way.

The final argument for the restoration of a rational methodology is provided by Larry Laudan (1987). Like MacIntyre (1988), he explains that the existence of rival methodologies and the inability of methodologists to agree on a set of standards that

warrant scientific endeavours gave rise to the criticism that has been outlined above. He further sees the criticism of modern methodologies founded in the failure of rational reconstruction of previous scientific actions. Methodology, so he goes on, ought to be a theory of rationality that provides meta-criteria to allow an independent judgement of paradigmatic actions, but by failing to do so methodology itself becomes inadequate for such a purpose. Laudan (1987, p.21) calls this the Meta-Methodological Thesis (MMT), which dictates that “a methodology of science is to be evaluated in terms of its ability to replicate the choices of past scientists as rational”. However, MMT proponents, he remarks, make a fundamental mistake by merging methodology and rationality¹¹².

Instead, Laudan (1987) argues that rationality and methodology must be kept apart, since rationality involves the judgement of actions based on one's aims and beliefs (cognitive aims) while methodologies provide strategies and frameworks to achieve these aims. Hence, to apply current methodologies “to assess the rationality of past scientists [is] only [appropriate] if their cognitive utilities were identical to ours, and only if their background beliefs were substantially the same as ours” (Laudan, 1987, p.21). Laudan (1987) seems to make an argument for bounded rationality (Simon, 1957) in the historical context here, and introduces a slightly different definition for methodologies than is usually used. The standard definition defines methodology as set of strict rules, or 'categorical imperatives', while Laudan (1987) wishes to see them as rather as 'hypothetical imperatives', context-dependent suggestions for best ways to achieve one's cognitive aims. By doing so, he believes to be able to reformulate methodological rules from “[o]ne ought to do x” to “[i]f one's goal is y, then one ought to do x” (Laudan, 1987, p.24), whereas y is determined by the context-dependent aims and beliefs of the researcher. Furthermore, the latter imperative is only warranted if, and only if, “[d]oing y is more likely than its alternatives to produce x” (Laudan, 1987, p.24).

Laudan (1987) admits that this reformulation does not circumvent the need for meta-methodological rules that allow us to test these new imperative rules, thus creating a logical regress when attempting to justify such rules. However, he argues that there might be some meta-methodological rules that are shared by all involved parties, thus

112 Laudan (1987, p.23) specifically highlights that

[r]ationality is one thing: methodological soundness is quite another. Since that is so, the historicists rejection of the methodological enterprise, like his rejection of specific methodologies, on the ground that they render the history of science irrational is a massive non sequitur.

serving as neutral ground. His first suggestion of such a meta-criterion, which might be shared by all paradigms, is formulated as follows:

If actions of a particular sort, *m*, have consistently promoted certain cognitive ends, *e*, in the past, and rival actions, *n*, have failed to do so, then assume that future actions following the rule “if your aim is *e*, you ought to do *m*” are more likely to promote those ends than actions based on the rule “if your aim is *e*, you ought to do *n*”. (Laudan, 1987, p.25)

At the first glance this criterion seems convincing, although vague, but there might be contestation by contemporary methodologists. However, without going into much detail here, Laudan (1987) seems certain that only Popperians would reject his proposal, therefore he is convinced his criteria will result in consensus among philosophers of science.

Given the meta-criteria and the reformulation of methodological rules as 'hypothetical imperatives', with the additional warrant, it is possible to formulate a meta-methodological question for a rational choice/rejection of methods/theories:

[G]iven any proposed methodological rule (couched in appropriate conditional declarative form), do we have – or can we find – evidence that the means proposed in the rule promotes its associated cognitive end better than its extant rivals? (Laudan, 1987, p.26)

If such evidence can be found, then choices between rival methodologies, and presumably theories, can be justified; but if such evidence cannot be found then the situation remains inconclusive (Laudan, 1987). This is, of course, not unproblematic, as it requires the general acceptance of the evidence by all involved parties. It is not sure whether such a consensus can always be achieved. This puts methodology on unstable grounds as there is no categorical meta-criteria that tell us precisely what to do. Laudan (1987, p.29) confirms this observation but argues that it is not really an issue at all, instead concluding that “[t]here are those who would like to make methodology more secure than physics; the challenge is rather to show that it is as secure as physics”.

There are, nonetheless, more serious issues with Laudan's (1987) separation of methodology and rationality, as Kaiser (1991) remarks. Specifically, he argues that Laudan (1987) has three major misunderstandings with rationality per se, with the idea of methodological norms and with scientific progress. Instead of taking methodological rules as 'hypothetical imperatives', Kaiser (1991, p.438) suggests to understand them as

“straight-forward imperatives” which “function much like social norms”. For instance, Kaiser (1991, p.440) illustrates the weight of these norms by remarking that if a “scientist's publication is to count as an acceptable addition to scientific knowledge, then the relevant norms pertaining the study should be (explicitly) obeyed” while “breaches of some of these norms may, at times, be permissible, but any such deviation requires extensive justification”. Scientific enterprise, for him, is therefore a social endeavour that, with the help of reward and sanction mechanisms, allows us to understand the meaning of each of these norms for the relevant scientific group or institutions. Thus, methodological norms are much stronger and precise in determining behaviour and not, as Laudan (1987) suggests, mere general suggestions of how to act or what to do when one wishes to achieve certain goals¹¹³.

Secondly, Kaiser (1991, p.445) criticises Laudan's (1987) conception of rationality as too simplistic, focusing too much on “actions, aims and beliefs” and having an over-reliance on self-confessions. While it is certainly important to consider the differences in aims and beliefs of previous scientists such as Newton, who, according to Laudan (1987), had a different idea of the aim of science than contemporary scientist have today¹¹⁴, it remains unclear to what extent these self-reported aims are clear to the individual researcher herself. It can either happen that actions are taken strategically or that, in some cases, individuals do “not necessarily have the best access to the true explanation of his actions, not even to his rationality” (Kaiser, 1991, p.445). This does not render Laudan's (1987) thoughts on rationality wrong but it shows they are missing important points. Kaiser (1991) notices that he neglects to distinguish between rationality of actions, beliefs and ends and values, and also the differentiation between individual and collective rationality¹¹⁵, with the latter being a candidate for the future consideration of rationality in science. Then, institutionalised rationality restricts cognitive acts and behaviours of individuals in such a way that it excludes some acts based upon given evidence. Methodology then becomes a device to interpret those scientific norms, and the emerging scientific knowledge, which are epistemologically

113 For example, methodological norms concerning experimental work that dictate the need for randomly chosen participants and control groups are not general but provide precise instructions for a scientist to work (Kaiser, 1991).

114 Laudan (1987, p.22) points out that “Newton, [...], saw it as one of the central aims of natural philosophy to show the hand of the Creator in the details of his creation” while modern scientists, or most of them, do not hold such a religious view for the aim of science anymore.

115 The difference here is that actions that are rational for the individual are irrational for a group, best example to illustrate such actions is the Prisoner's Dilemma (Kaiser, 1991).

prior to it rather than formulating those norms as hypothetical imperatives. What follows is a reinstatement of MMT, where

[a] methodology of science is to be evaluated in terms of its ability to replicate the choices of past scientists as *scientifically rational in the sense that the choices are in accordance with and defended with the awareness of the dominant norms of science*. (Kaiser, 1991, p.450).

In summary, it is clear that the proponents of rational justification for theory or methodology choice do not disagree with the fundamental insights raised within the 20th century philosophy of science, namely the inexistence of a meta-methodology that puts us into a super-position to judge scientific paradigms, or traditions or however one wishes to call them, independently. We are, so to say, stuck in context and unable to free ourselves from this. However, the proponents also remind us that this context-dependency involves rationality and other criteria, and values, so that saying science itself is an irrational endeavour (Feyerabend, 1993) is a premature conclusion. Instead, arguments are put forward that allow rational choices between rival paradigms/traditions/theories, either with rationality coming from within traditions (MacIntyre, 1988), or a separation of methodology and rationality (Laudan, 1987), or by reflecting on the normative power of methodological rules they have on the scientific communities (Kaiser, 1991).

These insights need to be considered carefully and may allow us to finally bring the eclectic economist to life! As said above, eclectics as well as pluralists rely on a set of post-positivist arguments to justify their position. These rational justifications are 'tradition-embedded' (MacIntyre, 1988) but they are sometimes formulated in a normative way, both in a hypothetical (Laudan, 1987) or a straight-forward (Kaiser, 1991) manner, depending on the author. Now, Laudan's (1987) and Kaiser's (1991) arguments for methodological norms and cognitive aims will be used for the remainder of this dissertation for two purposes. First, it serves in defining schools of thought, as well as paradigm-like groupings, and secondly it help us to understand how and the eclectic choice can be made in this environment.

3.2.2. LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR ECLECTIC CHOICE

It should be clear by now that we have a variety of different research approaches the eclectic can choose from. In chapter two it is shown that there are at least two paradigm-

like groupings, orthodox and, subsequently, heterodox economics, with each having a subset of 'schools of thought'. Chang (2014) lists a minimum of nine major schools of thoughts in economics, namely Austrian, Behaviourist, Classical, Developmentalist, Institutionalist, Keynesian, Marxist, Neoclassical and Schumpeterian, plus a number of sub-schools like Feminist, Neo- and New-Keynesian and New and Old Institutionalism and so on. However, it is shown in chapter two the current definitions of schools of thoughts are vague or problematic and for the remainder of this chapter, which will discuss eclectic choices in the light of schools of thoughts in economics, rather unsatisfactory.

With the help of the discussion on rational justification of choices by researchers above, we are able to redefine schools of thought in a way which will be helpful for the following discussion. It is suggested, by synthesising Lakatos (1978), Laudan (1987), MacIntyre (1988) and Kaiser (1991), that schools of thought provide a set of more or less coherent cognitive aims and methodological norms for a group of economists, which have strongly guarded core assumptions that are immunised with the help of nomological hypotheses (Albert, 1994b; Albert, Darell and Maier-Rigaud, 2012) and a set of auxiliary hypotheses, which are subject to more severe scrutiny. Some of the core assumptions, but also some of the cognitive aims, are shared with other schools of thought while others are not. Borrowing from Shweder (1986), these norms and cognitive aims can be categorised in universal and non-universal rational processes. Candidates for universal rational processes are, according to him, logical principles, “common patterns of hypothetical reasoning, means-ends analysis, causal analysis, and experimental reasoning” (Shweder, 1986, p.180). The non-universal rational processes are specific assumptions and concepts which a researcher uses to construct explanations. Candidates for such non-universal rational processes in economics are the rationality hypothesis, methodological instrumentalism, methodological individualism, marginalism or the equilibrium hypothesis¹¹⁶.

However, the Shweder's (1986) dichotomy can only be a first suggestion as it faces some problems. Specifically the above listed non-universal rational processes appear to be somewhat universal as they can be found in both orthodox and some heterodox schools of thought alike. The reason for this seems, to me, to be twofold. First, some of

116 I believe that this new conception of schools of thought fulfils at least two, and might satisfy another, of Colander's (2000) five criteria outlined in chapter 1. It certainly allows economist to spread their work across different schools of thought as demanded by Dow (2007).

the shared norms and cognitive aims might stem from a wider, paradigm-like grouping. It is said by Lawson (1997, 2003b) and Dow (2000) that the specific difference between orthodox and heterodox economics lies in the mode of analysis, with the former having a closed-system ontology and the latter, in the best case, an open-system ontology, while Lawson (2006, p.493) also points out the insistence on “mathematical–deductive method[s]” as common feature to the orthodoxy. This shows that some norms and aims are not limited to schools of thought but are found in a higher level position. Secondly, schools of thought might arise as a result of an epistemological crisis, as described by MacIntyre (1988), but due to the guarding nomological hypotheses, some of these norms might be taken over into the new school of thought. Keynesian economics reject Say's Law, which was an essential tenet in Classical economics, while both hold that, for example, “competition in supply and demand is the motive force which holds the economic system in equilibrium” (Hayes, 2006, p.9)¹¹⁷. Likewise, New Institutional Economics, developed by Ronald Coase, Douglas North and Oliver Williamson, retains the importance and causal efficacy of institutions from Old Institutional Economics, but they diverge “in their analytic foundations in terms of an open system analysis of an historical process and a closed-system analysis of equilibrium outcomes, respectively” (Potts, 2007, p.343).

As a result, we might need to introduce, at least, a third rational process beside the universal and non-universal, which only contains these paradigm-like group norms and cognitive aims. We then can create a structured order of norms and aims as shown in illustration 1, below¹¹⁸.

117 Keynes (2008, p.15) himself explains in chapter 2, section V, where he agrees with the postulates of the classical economists. He points out, for instance, that he is “not disputing this vital fact which the classical economists have (rightly) asserted as indefeasible. In a given state of organisation, equipment and technique, the real wage earned by a unit of labour has a unique (inverse) correlation with the volume of employment”.

118 Similar arguments of layering can be found in the eclectic and mixed method literature, for instance in Kørppe (2012), Morgan (2007) or Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin (2011).

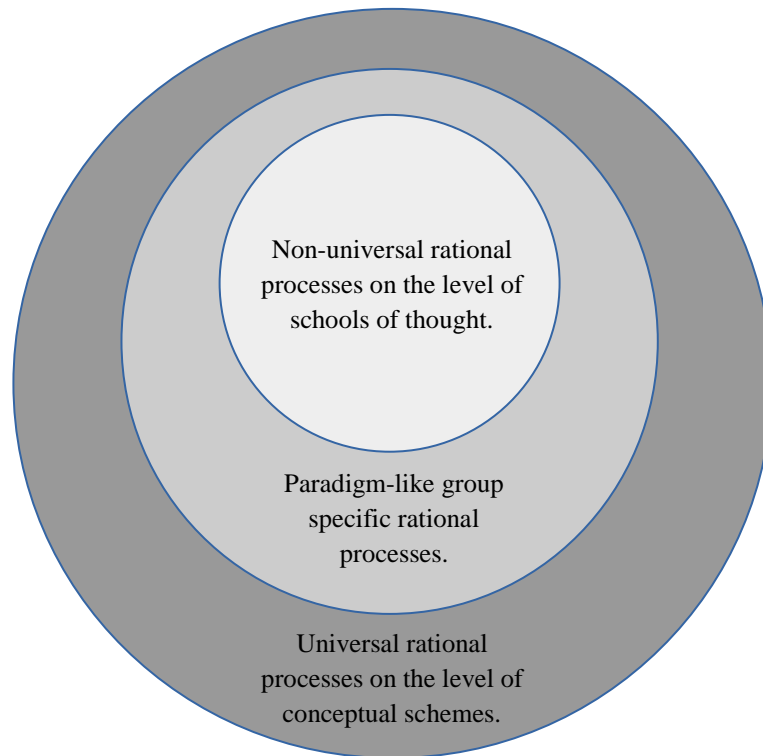


Figure 1: Layers of methodological norms and cognitive aims

This illustration is a clear departure from commonly accepted concept of paradigms, as it allows the existence of meta-norms and -aims that are shared among paradigms and therefore rejecting, at least, the incommensurability of meaning and, as one can argue, the incommensurability of goals as defined by Miner (2011) and Shapere (1995)¹¹⁹.

This does not mean, however, that we have to throw incommensurability out of the window. As said above, Shapere's (1995) interpretation of the incommensurability thesis is not without criticism. Remembering D'Agostino (2014, p.523), where he offers a syllogistic re-interpretation of the incommensurability thesis, that also reflects Kuhn's (2012) clarification against the charges of relativism described above, which says that

- (1) If you assume that theory-comparisons, e.g. between T and T*, depend on certain simple logical relations between the implications of these theories (e.g. that the implications of T are a sub- or super-set of those of T*), then
- (2) there are instantiations of T and T*, in the history of science, which stand in no such simple relations with one another and, therefore,
- (3) are incommensurable in the terms assumed,

¹¹⁹ For Schwerder's (1986) candidates for universal rational processes content the incommensurability of goals.

(4) which, since the scientific community does know how to compare in these cases,

(5) shows that the assumed preconditions of theory-comparability (premise 1) must be rejected.

Instead of proposing a clear relativist position, the incommensurability thesis now says that under a set of given conditions a theory comparison might be impossible but, when conditions are changed, can be conducted anyway. This also means that two schools of thought, or paradigm-like groups, are only completely incommensurable if they do not share any methodological norm or cognitive aim on any level. Considering what has been said about the universals, such a situation is then very unlikely. Furthermore, incommensurability now becomes a case-dependent inability of comparison for some methodological norms and cognitive aims. Looking again at institutional economics, the methodological norm of the “closed-system analysis of equilibrium outcomes” (Potts, 2007, p.343) in new institutional economics cause the “open system analysis of an historical process[es]” of old institutional economics to be incommensurable, but comparison between both schools of thought is still possible based upon other methodological norms or cognitive aims. Candidates for such norms could be the fruitfulness, simplicity, significance or validity on the paradigm-level or Shweder's (1986) universal rational processes on the next level¹²⁰. The next two questions then are: where do we make a choice and how do we rationalise choices of methodological norms and cognitive aims?

3.2.3. MAKING THE ECLECTIC CHOICE

For making a choice, the eclectic requires a guiding question she can ask herself which might help her to determine what to do. For this, let us consider Laudan's (1987) methodological question as guide. This question asks whether we can find good reasons that the methodological norms support their related cognitive aims better than their rivals, if such exist at all. There are two possible outcomes for this question; either we have a positive answer, i.e. we have the required evidence and can make a choice, or we have negative answer, i.e. we cannot find good reasons to make our choice. As a consequence of the negative answer we might search for another criterion to make a

¹²⁰ See the discussion on validity by Lather (2001) in chapter 2 for how different validity concepts can live across different research traditions or paradigm-like groupings.

final choice or become simply arbitrary in our choices. However, I believe that we will never arrive at this arbitrariness¹²¹ of choice, as demonstrated in the following sections.

Let us first look at the outer layer of illustration one, the universal methodological norms and cognitive aims, which Shweder (1986, p.180) lists as logical principles, “common patterns of hypothetical reasoning, means-ends analysis, causal analysis, and experimental reasoning”, and whether we can answer the methodological question negatively. Now we must ask ourselves if we can find a) alternative norms and aims and b) if we can come up with good reasons or evidence to accept the alternatives. At least in the case of the universal logical principles, for instance the law of identity, the law of non-contradiction or the law of the excluded middle, it seems that we do not have any alternatives available. We might, theoretically, say that the alternatives are simply their denial. However I would argue that any kind of world-view or conceptual scheme¹²² with such alternatives is not only inconsistent but simply inconceivable¹²³ and therefore cannot be used to generate a negative answer to the methodological question¹²⁴. For the other candidates, it might be possible to find alternatives in other conceptual schemes.

Laudan (1987) has already pointed out the historic difference in cognitive aims with Newton having a different understanding of the purpose of science than contemporary scientists, a first example of alternative aims coming from different conceptual schemes. We may also find conceptual schemes in which hypothetical and experimental reasoning have either totally different patterns to what 'we' are used to or are completely

121 Here, arbitrariness may be best understood as a strong form of global relativism, in which “all beliefs, regardless of their subject matter, are true only relative to a framework or parameter” (Baghrarian and Carter, 2015, p.no pagination) and thus, choice of belief has no rational basis. This is the situation where selection criteria are absent (Dow, 2007).

122 The idea of conceptual schemes holds that raw sense data is always interpreted by concepts, which themselves can differ substantially across different language, cultural or geographical groups. Conceptual schemes are interconnected sets of high-level, abstract concepts that allow us to allocate the empirical or historical reality into discrete sets of mental categories. Rescher (2008, p.324) summarises that

[d]ifferent cultures and different intellectual traditions [...] will [...] describe and explain their experience-their world as they conceive it-in terms of concepts and categories of understanding substantially different from ours. They may, accordingly, be said to operate with different conceptual schemes: with different conceptual tools used to “make sense” of experience-to characterize, describe, and explain the items that figure in the world as best one can form a view of it in terms of their features, kinds, modes of interrelationship and interaction.

However, it is important to note that conceptual schemes do not promote truth relativism, i.e. saying that what is true according to one scheme is false in another. Instead their meaning is about what is true, or false, in one scheme cannot be expressed in another. Furthermore, the inability of expressing expressions from one scheme in another does not entail the inability of interpretation. For instance, the famous German expression *Schadenfreude* cannot be expressed in the English language, there is no equivalent word for it, but it is still possible to interpret it in such a way that it makes sense for the native English.

123 Of course, there is always the possibility that I am not creative enough to think of a world-view in which something is not itself, where everything is and is not at the same time and nothing must either be or not be.

124 Strawson (2002) argues that there is, at least, a core of universal concepts shared by every conceptual scheme. Possible candidates for such universals are space and time (see also Kant, 1870).

missing. Similar schemes can be found in which causality is different from 'ours', thus changing the causal analysis altogether. There is evidence of schemes with a different concept of time expressed in the grammatical structure of the related languages (Bittner, 2005; Smith, 2008; Tonhauser, 2011) and different concepts of causality across different cultures (Norenzayan and Nisbett, 2000; Subbotsky and Quinteros, 2002), offering the eclectic alternative conceptual schemes and, consequently, different universal methodological norms and cognitive aims which cannot be expressed in another scheme. Yet, given the inability to translate while being able to interpret (Case, 1997; Rescher, 2008), interpreting different conceptual schemes is among the basic methodological strengths of ethnographic studies (Gabriel, 2008), the question must be asked whether it is feasible to change between different conceptual schemes in the same way one could change between schools of thought, especially when different conceptual schemes are incommensurate. Looking back at Laudan's (1987) example of Newton's cognitive aims for science, i.e. to discover God's hand in the creation, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for a contemporary scientist to adopt such an aim if she is not Christian, or at least monotheistic, herself. The first question is then whether one is able to migrate, quickly, completely and indefinitely from one to another scheme or if only temporal excursions and singular adoptions are possible. The latter means that, for instance, one can adopt a different concept of causality, thus changing the nature of casual analysis and, consequently, impacting every other methodological norm and cognitive aim that relies on the concept of causality. This move is not only possible but also justifiable, as such a change in concepts might hold new insights for the eclectic and ultimately causes an epistemological (micro)crisis. Movement is then not arbitrary but aimed. The issue with moving into a different set of universals are psychological limitations, for such quick migration would change one's world view and personality intensively¹²⁵, which seems infeasible. Instead, migration can only be subtle due to long exposure to new schemes and might never be fully complete. For both options, one's own socialisation might hinder either choice or a complete migration at all. While interpretation of different conceptual schemes is possible (Case, 1997; Rescher, 2008), adoption seems less likely the more alien schemes become to one's own.

An extreme example would be the culture of the Pirahã people in the Amazon jungle, who have no concept of history beyond personal experience and who make no

¹²⁵ I am aware that this presupposes that some conceptual schemes have identity creating power. I believe that this presupposition can be adequately justified by drawing on the work by, for instance, Lemke (2000, 2002a; b; c, 2008).

metaphysical distinctions of experience itself, i.e. experiences from being awake and dreaming are considered equally real (Everett, 2010). Although we are able to interpret and understand their culture, more or less, it seems impossible to adopt it. We will, socialised and habituated by our own schemes, never be able to overcome them and 'forget' the concept of history missing in Pirahã's scheme. This also indicates a situation where movement is not desirable because it may happen that conceptual schemes are not inherently able to lead to rational inquiry; in a similar fashion MacIntyre (1988) argues with regards to his tradition-constituted enquiry that some traditions cannot constitute rational inquiry at all. According to him, only "an apparent set of unresolved issues and difficulties [provide] a measure against which a tradition can evaluate its relative progress" (Flett, 1999, p.9), but if such a concept like history is missing in a scheme, then there cannot be an awareness of historically unresolved problems nor a strategy to resolve them. Yet again, choice becomes meaningless when it will not lead to any rational inquiry at all.

While migration is difficult, and sometimes impossible, adoption of some new concepts can be, *ceteris paribus*, beneficial in accordance to the eclectic rational justification. Someone's predominant concept of causality itself causes epistemological restrictions to the methodological norms and cognitive aims of underlying layers and, therefore, the acceptance of a different concept is justifiable as far as this does not frustrate the ability of rational inquiry *per se*¹²⁶. Secondly, the adoption of new concepts may also lead to an increase in situations of incommensurability, i.e. these concepts cause a decrease in cases or the ability of theory comparison while comparison is desired at the same time, then we are justified in not choosing them. However, other than the condition of rational inquiry this particular cognitive aim is, to my knowledge, not predominant across paradigm-like groups or schools of thought.

So far, the middle layer has been described as paradigm-like methodological norms and cognitive aims, simply because both Kuhnian paradigms and Lakatosian research programmes have good but still limited explanatory power¹²⁷. What we describe here

126 I am aware that the proposition for the ability to engage in rational inquiry as described by MacIntyre (1988) could be seen and criticised as meta-criteria, but again it is not my intention to argue that this criteria is independent of any paradigm, research programme or tradition, whatever one wishes to call them, but that it is ultimately shared across 'paradigms' and therefore enjoys legitimacy.

127 For criticism of Lakatosian research programmes see above, for Kuhnian paradigms see specifically Kuhn (2012) himself, who acknowledges in the preface that in the absence of theoretical consensus there are no paradigms in social science. Critical reflections on paradigms are also found in Dogan (1996) and, focusing on economics, Blaug (1976).

are those sets of methodological norms and cognitive aims which are not as universal as the ones in the outer layer but still are widely shared in one discipline. Possible candidates for such groups are materialism and idealism in social sciences, whereas the former “identifies a set of circumstances of the human organism (needs), the natural and built environment, and the forms of social activity that transform the environment as fundamental to social analysis” while the latter “takes states of consciousness -- ideas, ideologies, moralities, wants, preferences, modes of reasoning -- as fundamental to social analysis and undertakes to characterize social facts in these terms” (Little, 2010, p.no pagination). It should not take much to reformulate this definition into Laudan's (1987) form of methodological norms and cognitive aims, which tell the researcher what aims are desirable and what must be done to achieve such aims. However, at this point the reformulation shall not be pursued further, as there is a more relevant issue.

The more interesting question for this research is the identification of such paradigm-like groups in economics and their relevant methodological norms and cognitive aims. One of the first possible area of delineation are ontological cognitive aims whereas orthodox economics, according to Dow (1997, 2004) and Lawson (1997, 2003b, 2004, 2006), has a closed-system ontology, while heterodox economics has an open-system ontology. As such, orthodox economics must promote methodological norms that promote the ontological cognitive aims of closed-system analysis and heterodox economics must do the opposite. Furthermore, according to Lawson (2006, pp.490–491) the fundamental methodological norms, and related cognitive aims, for orthodox economics are the use of “formalistic-deductive” frameworks, which are so imprinted and accepted that “the mathematical framework (...) is considered so essential that worries about its usefulness, or dispensability, if they are raised at all, tend to be summarily dismissed rather than seriously addressed” and that “it is because mathematisation is understood as being so obviously desirable, indeed, that the project is rarely defined in such terms”¹²⁸. Lawson (2006) finds support for this conclusion in Kirman (1989, p.137), who insists that “it is difficult to believe that had a well-formulated new approach been suggested then we would not have adopted the appropriate mathematical tools”, and Leamer (1978), to whom “the idea that there may

128 In this regard, Weintraub's (2002) book *How Economics Became a Mathematical Science* shows, in a new interpretation, how mainstream economics heavily borrowed from the cognitive aims and methodological norms from mathematics and its evolution between the 1930's and 1950's.

be relevant non-mathematical theories of inference” (Lawson, 2006, p.491) never comes to his mind.

Further, contemporary orthodox methodological norms and cognitive aims are identified by Blaug (1976). Besides the “‘hard core’ or metaphysical part” of the orthodoxy, which consists of well-known assumptions such as “rational economic behaviour, constant tastes, independence of decision making, perfect knowledge, perfect certainty, perfect mobility of factors, et cetera”, or Alberts et al.’s (1994b; 2012) nomological hypotheses, Blaug (1976, p.161) identifies “‘positive heuristics’” that give “‘practical advice’” to the economists. According to him these heuristics, or as I wish to call them methodological norms, tell us to

- (i) divide markets into buyers and sellers, or producers and consumers; (ii) specify the market structure; (iii) create ‘ideal type’ definitions of the behavioural assumptions so as to get sharp results; (iv) set out the relevant *ceteris paribus* conditions; (v) translate the situation into an extreme problem and examine first- and second-order conditions; et cetera. (Blaug, 1976, p.161)

First, it is noticeable from this formulation that these methodological norms are less hypothetical imperative (Laudan, 1987) but more straight-forward (Kaiser, 1991). Secondly, in combination with the mathematical deductive frameworks mentioned by Lawson (2006), we can formulate the umbrella set of methodological norms and related cognitive aims for orthodox economics, from which further norms and aims of related schools of thought (labour economics, development economics) can be deduced. This is yet the first and easy step.

The more difficult task is to find the methodological norms and cognitive aims provided by heterodox economics. The first example has been mentioned previously as the open-system ontology of the heterodox community (Dow, 1997, 2004, Lawson, 1997, 2003b, 2004, 2006). However, chapter 1 also mentions the criticism about the assumed consent in ontological questions (Vromen, 2004; Guala, 2008), so the open-system ontology might fail as adequate candidate. Another option is the heterodox rejection of the orthodox methodology. As Lawson (2006, p.493) suggests “heterodox economics, in the first instance, is a rejection of a very specific form of methodological reductionism” and he finds, at least with regards to deliberate rejection, support in Backhouse (2000). Hence, the core methodological norm in heterodox economics could be formulated as

whatever cognitive aim one has, one should not solely rely on a single, mathematical deductive methodology that is present in mainstream economics. This does not imply that these methodologies should not be used altogether; in fact some heterodox schools such as the Post-Keynesians make use of such mathematical methodologies, but the norm implies openness to other methodologies.

Despite having a first candidate for a cognitive aim, it has been said before that this 'agreement to disagree' is not sufficient for the establishing of a proper criterion of demarcation for heterodox economics (Negru and Bigo, 2008). Hence, we need to find further general cognitive aims and methodological norms to form a somewhat coherent paradigm-like grouping. A second candidate could be derived from the ethical principle of tolerance discussed in chapter 1. Here, different methodologies must be tolerated in the light of "the absence of a single conclusive final methodological or epistemological principle" (Samuels, 1997a, p.67) and because it is necessary for the critical exchange of intellectual ideas (Garnett, 2006). However, these are merely pluralists' cognitive aims and not generally heterodox ones.

Just like the differentiation between eclectics and pluralists, not every heterodox economist is necessarily a pluralist. It remains possible that a heterodox economist, someone who is not submitting herself to the cognitive aims and methodological norms of the mainstream, fails to appreciate the diversity of methodologies, theories and ideas found in other schools of thought. Hence, it might not be possible to use the second candidate for general demarcation of heterodox economics. With the current debates and lack of agreement in the literature we might have to resort to the 'agreement to disagree' as the general aim, despite Negru and Bigo's (2008) objections. This is, however, not necessarily a negative situation but could rather be understood as appreciating the diversity of opinions and views within the heterodox community. What can be added is also another criterion for distinguishing between the orthodoxy and the heterodoxy. Here, the mainstream's general cognitive aims and methodological norms that form the paradigm-like grouping appears to be more substantial, more elaborate but also more narrow than its opposition.

Finally, we are facing the non-universal cognitive aims and methodological norms within the heterodox schools of thought that promote specific means-end relationships that are considered desired or adequate. Yet again specific cognitive aims or methodological norms can be shared across different schools of thought, explaining the difficulty of precise demarcation, while there are some core assumptions that remain

fundamental for the school's members. One might think, for instance, of the uncertainty principle in Keynesian economics and its offspring, or the causal efficacy of institutions in institutional economics and how they are translated into aims and norms. Hence, as suggested above, a school of thought is best defined as a discursive group of economists sharing, and in most cases agreeing upon, a set of coherent cognitive aims and methodological norms with strong guarded cores.

When it comes to migration between cognitive aims and methodological norms on the level of paradigm-like groupings and schools of thought, eclectics, and evidently others too, face less difficulties to do so. With regards to the former, for whatever reason one might disagree with the orthodoxy in economics it remains relatively easy to, at least temporally adopt those cognitive aims and methodological norms in order to take part in the mainstream discourse. In his empirical study on heterodox economists publishing in mainstream journals, Reardon (2008, p.189) finds that “[a] total of 95 percent of the mainstream papers [by heterodox economists] sent to mainstream journals were accepted”, which supports the claim of, at least temporal, migration into the mainstream cognitive aims and methodological norms, especially against the background where respondents to his questionnaire remarked that “heterodox economists and orthodox economists speak different languages, have different priors, have a different knowledge base, often work with different methodologies”. On the other hand, Reardon (2008, p.189) also notices that “no heterodox papers submitted to mainstream journals were accepted”, an indication of the partly incommensurable nature of cognitive aims and methodological norms of different paradigm-like groupings¹²⁹¹³⁰.

Yet, we shall not enter into the debate on how heterodox topics are discriminated by mainstream journals. The important point is to argue that migration in the middle layer of paradigm-like groupings is less difficult than in the outer layer, but reasons for migration remain the same. Changing between orthodox and heterodox economics allows the eclectic economists to gain access to both discursive fields and to benefit from what they have to offer epistemologically. Although it seems that heterodox economists prefer to remain in the heterodox discursive fields¹³¹, engaging in active and

129 Reardon (2008) and his participants speak here of ideological barriers but I think it is reasonable to say that cognitive aims and methodological norms can form ideological biases if we accept that they are, sometimes, less hypothetical, as Laudan (1987), but more straight-forward (Kaiser, 1991).

130 It shall be noted that eclectics must not necessarily all come from a heterodox background, although the pluralistic attitude seems mostly to occur within heterodox economics. Nonetheless, eclectic economist can also come from an orthodox background, trying to migrate into the heterodoxy.

131 Reardon (2008, p.189) summarises that his participants have a

critical discourses across groupings is beneficial and desirable for reasons outlined by, for instance, Garnett (2006)¹³². Secondly, a rather pragmatic and political reason for a temporal migration, i.e. a heterodox economist works on orthodox research for a period of time, lies in the fact that mainstream journals are highest ranked internationally, which might attract, especially young, economists to submit publications for the purpose of career development.

However, the eclecticism presented here shall not be concerned with such pragmatism¹³³. The general idea is to benefit from different cognitive aims and methodological norms to enrich one's own research epistemologically. One might sarcastically but substantially supported the argument that¹³⁴, of course, mainstream economics has nothing to offer epistemologically but I beg to differ here. Consider, for instance, the Real Business Cycle (RBC) model that has received substantive criticism even within the mainstream¹³⁵. Although this model does not serve well as an explanatory device to explain real world business cycles, it holds at least three epistemic benefits for the economists. Firstly, it incorporates many features of modern, advanced dynamic stochastic general equilibrium (DSGE) models used in macroeconomics. As such, the RBC model serves as a good training heuristic. Secondly, it is essential in understanding its own flaws, i.e. one cannot understand the limitations of the RBC model if one does not know the model itself and one must know these limitations to promote alternatives¹³⁶. Gregory Mankiw (1989) demands substantive knowledge of the matter in order to criticise it. Thirdly, even if the RBC model fails to explain the changes in productivity of modern economies, it might actually work for historical, primitive economies where the underlying model assumptions are better met (House, 2014). Hence, the model might remain useful, because it is applicable for such primitive economies and it has the advantage of simplicity over other, more advanced DSGE

[p]reference to communicate directly with heterodox economists, rather than mainstream economists. Respondent R.10 wrote, “I want to communicate [in] heterodox journals – I publish in journals that heterodox economists read and [these] economists read heterodox journals.” And respondent R.26, “I didn’t think it would be worth my time, while it would be communicating with the wrong people.”.

132 See chapter 1 for a summary of his arguments for a liberal conversation in economics.

133 Yet, it seems possible to formulate career advising hypothetical imperatives in the form suggested by Laudan (1987), where the cognitive aim *e* is once career development and the action *m* is publishing in high rated mainstream journals, then one 'ought to do *m* to achieve *e*', while *m*', i.e. publishing in middle or low rated but heterodox journals, might not lead to *e* in the same successful way than *m*.

134 For such support see, for instance, Leamer (1983), McCloskey (1985) or Summers (1991).

135 See, for instance, Mankiw (1989) or Summers (1986).

136 This argument can be linked to Feyerabend's (1981, 1999) pluralistic test-model, which states that theories are tested against one another.

models¹³⁷. From these three points we are able to formulate, at least, hypothetical imperatives for the RBC model in the form Laudan (1987)¹³⁸ advocates. Hence, we might find other orthodox, more sophisticated theories and methods that allow a formulation of similar pedagogical and historical or otherwise empirical and epistemological beneficial imperatives.

That being said, we can now concentrate again on the heterodox schools of thought. Since we are, as said above, in the situation where higher level cognitive aims and methodological norms are partially shared across schools of thought, migration between them seems less problematic. There remain only a certain number of non-universal cognitive aims and methodological norms that one needs to accept and adopt, which is, for reasons outlined above, beneficial. Issues with theory and method choice on the school of thought level comes down to different, underlying lower and level cognitive aims and methodological norms. This means that lower and higher level sets of aims and norms prohibit choice of theories and methods due to their embeddedness in different sets of aims and norms, which makes theories and methods appear to be incommensurable. This problem can only be solved by looking at higher level aims and norms and applying D'Agostino's (2014) syllogism as outlined in chapter 2. Two questions emerge from this conclusion: first one needs to know these norms and aims and; second what this application of different schools of thought looks like. With regards to the former it seems unavoidable to study the relevant heterodox literature to familiarise oneself with the existing cognitive aims and methodological norms of the existing schools of thought in economics. This is, without saying, a considerable task for the eclectic economist as there is a multiplicity of heterodox schools. As said, Chang (2014) lists nine major schools with the possibility of multiple sub-schools¹³⁹. It seems there is no way around this task at this moment.

With regards to the second question, we have already seen an example of eclectic research by Stinson (2004, 2009) in the previous chapter. This can be used as guidance

137 Here we can see how higher level cognitive aims and methodological norms, in this case simplicity, can make the choice of one method over another justified.

138 For instance: If the cognitive aim e_1 is formulated as the attempt to introduce students to the econometric basics of DSGE models and aim e_2 is to criticise these basics, action m , i.e. teaching the RBC model, has been consistently better in achieving e_1 and e_2 in comparison to m' , i.e. an alternative more complex and thus more complicated model for beginners, then one 'ought to do m to achieve e_1 and e_2 '. Hence, at least in pedagogy, the eclectic has no reason to discriminate certain methods or theories *a priori* as they serve as good heuristic devices. This is essentially the argument Hegel (Reinicke, 1979) used to explain and defend Potamo of Alexandria's eclecticism, as shown in chapter 2.

139 These are Austrian, Behaviourist, Classical, Developmentalist, Institutional, Keynesian, Marxist, Neoclassical and Schumpeterian (Chang, 2014).

for the development of an eclectic research approach in economics. Let us look at two prominent heterodox schools of thought; Marxist economics and Feminist economics¹⁴⁰. Marxist economics' fundamental tenet is the concept of class, from which all social and economic analysis starts, and its methodology is dialectics, or as Wolff and Resnick (1987, p.241) call it, "overdetermination"¹⁴¹. As such, Marxist economics offers a non-reductionist class knowledge of society and its cognitive aims and methodological norms can be formulated accordingly, for instance: 'if you aim is to study the capitalist society you ought to do a class analysis based on overdetermination'¹⁴². This analysis then produces specific and insightful class related narratives about the capitalist society, which cannot be produced by, for instance, orthodox economics with its underlying methodological individualism. One might contend that Marxian insights are without epistemological value compared what the orthodoxy produces, but that would require that one has the relevant criteria to discriminate the produced knowledge, something that, for instance, Dow (2007) and McCloskey (1994), among others, say is impossible.

With class as central concept in Marxist economics, and consequently the basis for the formulation of its non-universal cognitive aims and methodological norms, it does however ignore gender roles. On the other hand, the identification of androcentric or masculinist biases in economics theories (England, 1993; Nelson, 2002) is one of the major cognitive aims of feminist economists with methodological norms supporting a plurality of gender-aware qualitative and quantitative research methods. Thus, feminist economics can serve two purposes for the eclectic economist. First, it holds different cognitive aims and methodological norms than Marxist economics and can therefore enrich one's research. It not only provides a new perspective on a given topic, it provides even a new set of research questions and answers to which Marxist economics is inherently blind to. Secondly, with its central cognitive aim, Feminist economics also offers a critique of Marxist economics and its androcentric and/or masculinist biases.

As a result of this eclectic choice, the economist is now able to develop two narratives, one of classes and the other of gender, concerning a general, aspired social analysis¹⁴³ in

140 The latter is not part of Chang's (2014) list, yet feminist economists produced substantial literature on the topic of gender roles and the relevancy for economics.

141 Wolff and Resnick (1987, p.241) explain that

[i]n this approach, each concept of the theory is complexly linked, as both cause and effect, to all the other concepts of the theory. Thus, no concept of the theory can be reduced from or reduced to any other; no concept functions as an essence.

142 I am aware that this formulation is oversimplified but for the purpose of illustration it suffices.

143 The underlying, shared cognitive aim of both schools of thought is the aim to make such social analysis.

the same way Stinson (2004, 2009) was able to develop narratives on his subject with the use of post-structural theory, critical race theory and critical theory, which should be, as he suggests, understood as “complementary – that is, concerned with different aspects of the same phenomena” (Sfard, 2003, p.355; see also Stinson, 2009, p.501)¹⁴⁴. The eclectic choice on the level of schools of thought, where non-universal cognitive aims and methodological norms are the distinguishing factor, allows the economist to benefit from the specific epistemological advantages these schools offer due to the complementary nature of their application. In addition, the eclectic economist can migrate between different discourse groups, in this case Marxist and Feminist economics, to frustrate cognitive aims and methodological norms on different layers, as well as theories and methods themselves, against each other. Theory and method choice then becomes synonymous with migrating between different schools of thought. Eventually, this frustration will help the eclectic economist, the schools of thought and the discipline to develop by triggering small epistemological crises (MacIntyre, 1977) all the time¹⁴⁵. As discussed above, these crises can be used as benchmark for any school of thought, or in MacIntyre's (1977) wider traditions, to test their own resourcefulness to deal with such kind of problems.

The final thought on making choices by migrating between different sets of cognitive aims and methodological norms relates to the question of ontological and epistemological pluralism. Choice, here, is not only made on the level of method or theory, but involves ontology and epistemology as well. Cognitive aims in all layers have a, rather hidden, connection with ontological and epistemological pluralism outlined in chapter 1. If ontological pluralism is true, the eclectic must be aware that the cognitive aim and its methodological norm are uttered under specific restricted, existential quantifier. Referring back to Chalmers (2009), any cognitive aims and methodological norms with regards to numbers may be completely different when applying a nominalist ontology in comparison to a Platonist one. Moreover, if the cognitive aim focuses on an entities that enjoys two modes of being simultaneously, such as being possible and actual, then the methodological norm can be dependent on the relevant mode of being enjoyed. Likewise, the epistemological set of criteria for the determination of knowledge will influence both what set should be used and what aims

144 It has been mentioned before in chapter 2 that this complementarity is a reoccurring beneficial key aspect of eclecticism in the literature.

145 Eclecticism itself is not excluded from the need of epistemological crises, hence the eclectic does not only develop schools of thought or paradigm-like groupings but also her own *leitmotif*.

and norms will make sense. That means that cognitive aims will not be accepted if they are formulated in a way that is diametrically opposed to one or more of the epistemological criteria used, e.g. the intersubjective objectivity.

3.3. SYNOPSIS

Firstly, this chapter has argued that eclecticism and pluralism are closely related due to their shared arguments. It begins with the acknowledgement of a plurality of philosophies, theories, methods and schools of thought, which is supported by post-positivistic positions about the uncertainty of knowledge and the inherent limitations of theories, i.e. there is no one best method or theory for everything. Yet, eclecticism has a particular focus on the individual and her research, while pluralists can acknowledge the benefits of a pluralistic discipline yet remain monist in their own research. As a result, it is argued that eclecticism should be understood as a special form of pluralism, or a pluralism within the individual that allows the economist to be more inclusive in her own research.

This raises the questions of how the eclectic economist can justify this personal pluralism where one makes choices from a variety of different approaches etc., or whether they are simply relativistic and ultimately unscientific in their work. To answer this question the literature of rational theory choice is examined and despite the existing objections, i.e. where “[t]here is no neutral algorithm for theory-choice, no systematic decision procedure” (Kuhn, 2012, p.200) or where there is no value-free and thus unbiased rational methodology for theory choice (Putnam, 2002), it is argued that there is a basis for some kind of rational choice based on the work of MacIntyre (1977, 1984, 1988) and Laudan (1978, 1987, 1996).

Drawing from their work, with additional suggestions from Lakatos (1978), Shweder (1986) and Kaiser (1991), three arguments are proposed: First, even if there is no objective rationality and thus no objective rationale for choice but only some kind of bounded rationality, problems or epistemological crises that frustrate specific schools of thought's or paradigm-like grouping's narratives can still help to acknowledge the need for change and migration from within the rational framework (MacIntyre, 1977, 1984, 1988). Secondly, the bounded, rational frameworks shall be understood in the light of a means-end relation of cognitive aims and methodological norms (Laudan, 1978, 1987,

1996). These means-end relations can form hypothetical or straight-forward imperatives (Laudan, 1978, 1987, p.25, 1996; Kaiser, 1991) in the form of “if your [cognitive] aim is e, you ought to do m” under the assumption that m promotes e better than existing alternatives. Thirdly, there are different layers of cognitive aims and methodological norms, ranging from universal over paradigm-like to non-universal ones (Shweder, 1986). The universals are allocated within conceptual schemes and world views, paradigm-like cognitive aims and methodological norms are more specific in determining the rationality for scientific endeavour and non-universal aims and norms are found at the level of schools of thought, contributing to their defining, discursive nature. While migration between the universals seems the most difficult one to achieve, following the way down to the schools of thought, eclectic choice, or migration, seems more feasible and, based on the arguments from the eclectic literature, is epistemologically beneficial due to their ability to cause epistemological crises. Theory and method choice on the lowest level is becoming synonymous with migration between schools of thought, which helps the researcher to frustrate these theories and methods, and the consequent findings, with such crises as well. Hence, eclecticism tells the researcher why choosing from different schools of thought or paradigm-like groupings is justified and not, as some might suggest, totally arbitrary.

Finally, the use of epistemological crises, formulated as hypothetical imperative of the form ‘if your aim is to *progress your school of thought*, you ought to *cause an epistemological crisis*’ does not imply them to be the objective guiding principles whose existence is denied in the first place. Instead, it is dependent on the acceptance of these communities of researchers who themselves formulate the cognitive aims and methodological norms that define their very own school of thought. Acceptance, even across different communities, does not imply neutral objectivity (Miner, 2011). Likewise, the underlying philosophical arguments that support the justification of eclecticism, and which are also found in the literature review, make it possible to formulate specific eclectic cognitive aims and methodological norms to which the eclectic might need to commit herself. This seems to make eclecticism evidently not an objective rational choice principle, as it itself becomes highly irrational by implying commitment to non-commitment. Despite being true, it only shows that there are framework specific arguments used to explore eclecticism in this dissertation, while the possibility remains to have different philosophical frameworks justifying eclecticism, as indicated earlier with regards to pedagogical eclecticism which has a different rationale

behind it. Also, as said above, migration between such philosophical foundations on the paradigm-like or even conceptual level are more difficult and may not always be achieved. Pluralism provides imperatives for eclectics, i.e. uncertainty of knowledge, no best method, tolerance etc., which are considered to be the best reasons to make eclecticism reasonable, but the eclectic may replace them when needed. If this specific imperative is, however, incommensurate to existing ones in a specific research community, then a strategy of changing the imperative in the way presumptions are changed when facing incommensurability, as suggested by D'Agostino (2014), can be applied.

CHAPTER 4: ECLECTICISM: SHORT POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS

There is no philosophy without the art of ignoring
objections. - Joseph de Maistre

After we have conceptualised the eclectic choice and its justification with the help of the pro-rational theory choice literature, and specifically with Larry Laudan's (1987) concept of hypothetical imperatives built around cognitive aims and methodological norms, there are several possible objections that may arise and will be addressed in this chapter. The following list is, of course, not exhaustive but it serves as a first answer to critical thoughts about this topic that were brought forward by the existing literature, but also by friends, colleagues and peers. We begin with Dow's (2007) charge against eclecticism (see chapter 2 for more details) followed by the question of whether eclectic research is feasible at all. A possible contention that states that this thesis is merely promoting mixed-method research is considered third. Fourth, a possible charge of relativism is discussed and finally, the relationship and more importantly the differences between eclecticism and pragmatism are elaborated.

4.1. DOW'S UNSTRUCTURED PLURALISM

In her piece on the *variety of methodological approaches in economics*, Sheila Dow (2007, p.3) refers to eclecticism in a very critical way. As already remarked in chapter 2, she considers eclecticism to be “unstructured pluralism” with “an absence of selection criteria”, which must then be wholly rejected. Instead, she calls for structured pluralism, which “is the advocacy of a range of methodological approaches to economics which, like the range of social structures, is not infinite” (Dow, 2004, pp.287–288). This idea of structured pluralism is based on her appraisal of Kuhnian incommensurability and understanding of science. In chapter 3, however, it is shown that Kuhn (2012) himself has difficulties with applying paradigms to social sciences and, as mentioned in chapter 2, Marques and Weisman (2009) criticise Dow's use of Kuhnian thought to promote pluralism in economics. Additionally, D'Agostino's (2014) discussion of incommensurability itself, see chapter 3, shows that it possesses less of a problem for pluralists and eclectics than one might suggest.

Moreover, the conceptualisation and justification for the eclectic choice, as outlined in chapter 3, should be convincing enough to counter the argument for the “absence of selection criteria” (Dow, 2007, p.3). To the contrary, the eclectic position has a set of abstract selection criteria at its disposal, which allow the eclectic economist to justify her choice of school of thought or theory or method without someone being able to accuse her of arbitrariness. Specifically, the argument regarding epistemic uncertainty, i.e. the in-existence of one best answer to the question of what knowledge is or how it can be formed, something Dow (2007) herself puts forward, does not support but eventually frustrates any arbitrariness charge, unless relativism is meant which will be discussed further below. Since there might be more than one way to create scientific knowledge, migration between sets is not arbitrary but aimed at utilising these sets to create and/or overcome epistemological crises. These epistemological crises are the second argument against arbitrariness, as they can be used as benchmarks for change from within a rational framework (MacIntyre, 1977). They provide an aim or basis on which choices can be made.

At the end, eclecticism does not tell the economist what to choose from the wide range of schools of thought etc., but that would be against its own point. Instead, it provides a rationale for a structured pluralism on the individual level of research, helping the economist to aim at more inclusive and diverse research. It is argued that this individual pluralism is as beneficial as the disciplinary pluralism found in the literature (see chapters 1 and 2) for the arguments again. Thus, Dow's (2007) criticism seems unsubstantiated.

4.2. ECLECTIC RESEARCH IS NOT FEASIBLE

The argument against feasibility of eclecticism arises from the question of practicability. Facing occupational pressures from project deadlines, publication output, teaching load, supervision requirements, need for applicability of research and so on, it is questionable whether the economist has any time to pursue any eclectic research, which would not only require extensive knowledge of a wide range of literature from different schools of thought for the familiarisation of the existing cognitive aims and methodological norms, but also time to apply these aims and norms in depth in one's own research. In order to become literate on, for instance, Post-Keynesian economics, i.e. to have an understanding of the literature, might take the economist months or years, time she

might be unable spend on a single research project. In order to familiarise oneself with the existing cognitive aims and methodological norms of Post-Keynesian economics, the eclectic would be required to engage with a wide range of literature from scholars considered to be Post-Keynesian, or part of one of the sub-groups within this school. Looking at Marc Lavoie's (2014b, p.43) extensive list of members of the Post-Keynesian school of thought in figure 2, and their subsequent strands, the sheer size of it and, under the assumption of a considerable publication history of each member, the quantity of literature available should illustrate what it means to become proficiently familiar with Post-Keynesian economics. Figure 2 does not, of course, provide a reading list of the works which are essential for the understanding of Post-Keynesian Economics and according to the Post-Keynesian Economic Study Group there is no such list yet. However the group published two lists with major works which give insights into the previous and current debates and topics discussed in the school of thought (Hayes, 2014; Lavoie, 2014a). To become proficient enough to actually do Post-Keynesian research, not only to know broadly what the school is all about, requires extensive study.

Strand	Major themes	Inspiration	Current authors
Fundamentalist Keynesians	Fundamental uncertainty Monetized production economy Financial instability Methodology	J.M. Keynes Hyman Minsky older Joan Robinson G.L.S. Shackle Sidney Weintraub	Fernando Carvalho Victoria Chick Paul Davidson David Dequech Sheila Dow Giuseppe Fontana Mark Hayes Jan Kregel Edwin Le Heron Basil Moore
Kaleckians	Income and distribution models The traverse Effective demand Class conflict Pricing	Tom Asimakopulos Donald Harris Michal Kalecki younger Joan Robinson Joseph Steindl	Amit Bhaduri Robert Blecker Amitava Dutt Eckhard Hein Steve Fazzari Peter Kriesler Malcolm Sawyer Engelbert Stockhammer Lance Taylor Jan Toporowski
Sraffians	Relative prices Technical choice Multisectoral production systems Capital theory Joint production Long-run positions	Krishna Bharadwaj Pierangelo Garegnani Luigi Pasinetti Piero Sraffa	Roberto Ciccone Heinz Kurz Gary Mongiovi Carlo Panico Fabio Petri Massimo Pivetti Alessandro Roncaglia Neri Salvadori Bertram Schefold Franklin Serrano Ian Steedman
Institutionalists	Pricing Theory of the firm Monetary institutions Behavioural economics Labour economics	Philip Andrews Dudley Dillard Alfred Eichner John Kenneth Galbraith N. Georgescu-Roegen Abba Lerner Gardiner Means Thorstein Veblen	Stephen Dunn Peter Earl Scott Fullwiler James Galbraith John Harvey Frederic Lee André Orléan Charles Whalen Randall Wray
Kaldorians	Economic growth Productivity regimes Open economy constraints Real-financial nexus	John Cornwall Wynne Godley Richard Goodwin Roy Harrod Nicholas Kaldor	Robert Boyer John McCombie Ken Coutts Ro Naastepad Neville Norman Tom Palley Pascal Petit Mark Setterfield Peter Skott Servaas Storm Anthony Thirlwall

Figure 2: Strands, themes and authors of Post-Keynesian economics (Lavoie, 2014b, p.43)

The issue here is clear: if the economist is already fully occupied with the production of qualitatively excellent research in a single school of thought, the suggested migration between different sets of cognitive aims and methodological norms might simply be impossible due to practical time constraints. Secondly, to become an eclectic economist might take several years until one has familiarised herself with the extensive range of literature that is available in the existing schools of thought. At the end, the day only has 24 hours the argument goes.

For the eclectic to be able to utilise the Post-Keynesian cognitive aims and methodological norms she must, of course, know more than the general tenets of Post-

Keynesian economics. Likewise, substantial knowledge of other schools of thought is required for migration. To become an eclectic is certainly not an easy task but not impossible. Mixed method research already shows how researchers can become proficient enough to use the strengths, and be aware of the weaknesses, of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. When migration on methodological grounds is not only possible but increasingly desirable (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009), then there is no reason to believe that migration between schools of thought or paradigm-like groupings is generally futile.

Secondly, eclectic research does not prohibit the publication of preliminary findings. If a researcher decides to pursue eclectic research, i.e. migrating between different schools of thought or paradigm-like groupings to take advantage the benefits described above, she can still publish, i.e. enter into a specific discourse of one or two schools, with research outcomes gained from the application of the related set of cognitive aims and methodological norms. Publishing preliminary findings is a common practise in many disciplines, as they communicate to the relevant discursive group the current research in its preliminary stage. How such preliminary findings from eclectic research could be communicated shall be shortly illustrated with the help of a research paper by Brown, Charlwood, Forde and Spencer (2007) in which they assess pre-crisis job quality surveys in the light of New Labour policies in the UK from a political economy perspective.

The main focus of their paper is “to provide a theoretical as well as empirical assessment of the job quality debate in the context of the record in office of the New Labour government” (Brown et al., 2007, p.942). While the theoretical contribution aims to “critique [...] the ‘economics of happiness’ approach to job quality”, the empirical investigation uses

primarily subjective measures of job quality taken from the 1998 and 2004 Work and Employment Relations Surveys (WERS), supplemented by analysis of changing job satisfaction from the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) and changing occupational structure from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). (Brown et al., 2007, p.942)

The theoretical discussion draws on the limitations of mainstream economics' analysis of job quality and the subsequent rise of economics of happiness and its approach to

quantify happiness as a property of individuals via the use of sophisticated surveys. Hence, Brown et al. (2007, p.945) conclude that

[t]he belief in the existence and direct importance of cardinal utility, as a quantitative entity capable of being summed over different individuals, is, in our view, the key general characteristic of the new economics of happiness. While the latter differs from economic orthodoxy in its embrace of a cardinal concept of utility, it continues to employ, in common with orthodox economics, a formal and individualistic method.

This position that the human well-being is to such extent quantitatively fixed is now criticised and replaced by a perspective, coming from the political economy literature, of human well-being as qualitative and quantitative determined by a multiplicity of cultural and social impact factors, which are in flux. Hence, job quality is, understood as “well-being at work”, very much context dependent, yet it can still be formulated objectively (Brown et al., 2007, p.946). By introducing the political economics' concept of job quality that includes norms and expectations, Brown et al. (2007, p.948) frustrate the economics of happiness' proposal “that subjective survey data may reveal the direction of changes in facets of job quality over a medium-term period” to a point where it can be said that a small epistemological crisis for the economics of happiness is triggered.

The central findings by Brown et al. (2007) are threefold. First, between 1998 and 2004 the results from the WERS survey suggests, with the exception of one measure, that job satisfaction increased in the UK. Secondly, WERS data, in combination with BHPS data, shows a u-shape relationship between job satisfaction and income quantiles, meaning that workers at the lower end of the income and at the higher end are more satisfied than workers from the middle income range. Thirdly, looking at qualitative research about job satisfaction, Brown et al.'s (2007, p.959) premise that different expectations and norms play the important role for the explanation of the u-shaped relationship between income and satisfaction is supported, while the premise of economics of happiness, i.e. the “subjective measures of job satisfaction directly reflect the subjectively defined well-being (‘cardinal utility’) of workers”, is rather unsupported¹⁴⁶.

¹⁴⁶ They further argue with regards to the economics of happiness premise that

Under eclecticism Brown et al.'s (2007) use of a qualitative research findings regarding job satisfaction to frustrate the underlying methodological norm of the cardinal utility assumption of economics of happiness is a first, good and preliminary result, but the issue itself can and should be investigated further. For instance, they already look into job satisfaction and gender differences, concluding “that the overall u-shape is partly, but in no case entirely, gender related” (Brown et al., 2007), but this excursion into gender differences remains a short, statistical analysis over a paragraph only. In the future, they could make use of more Feminist economic research to explore the gender aspects of these surveys further. In addition, a Marxian perspective could also be used to develop a class narrative that sheds a different light on members of different income groups, a narrative that neither Feminist economics nor political economics or economics of happiness can develop. This example portrays how eclectic research can be conducted even within the constraints of daily academic life and consequent pressures and duties.

4.3. ECLECTICISM IS JUST MIXED-METHOD RESEARCH

The eclectic notion of combining, or making use of, different cognitive aims and methodological norms from schools of thought and paradigm-like groupings may lead to the belief that this is basically mixed method research. That eclecticism is found in the mixed method research literature, as shown in chapter 2, stresses this conclusion even further. Is eclecticism therefore just mixed method research or are there distinguishing characteristics for both?

The first problem we encounter when trying to discuss commonalities of and differences between eclecticism and mixed method research is, that there is no clear definition for mixed method research. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007, p.123) analyse 19 definitions gathered from leading scholars in the field for commonalities, which leads them to generally defining mixed method research as

for those who believe that purely subjective ‘cardinal utility’ exists, and that it can be simply read off from reported job satisfaction, then the observed u-shape means that the lowest earners have, together with the highest earners, gained the greatest utility from work. It seems, from this point of view, that the easiest route to ‘happiness’ at work is merely to find the lowest paid job available. (Brown, Charlwood, Forde and Spencer, 2007, p.959)

the type of research in which a researcher or a team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration. (...) A mixed methods study would involve mixing within a single study; a mixed method program would involve mixing within a program of research and the mixing might occur across a closely related set of studies.

This definition reflects the main justifications for mixed method research, which focus on the provision of understanding and depth and the advantages of triangulation of findings¹⁴⁷. With such definition, they divide mixed method research into three major paradigms, as shown in figure 3, where one is qualitative dominant, one is pure and the third one is quantitative dominant.

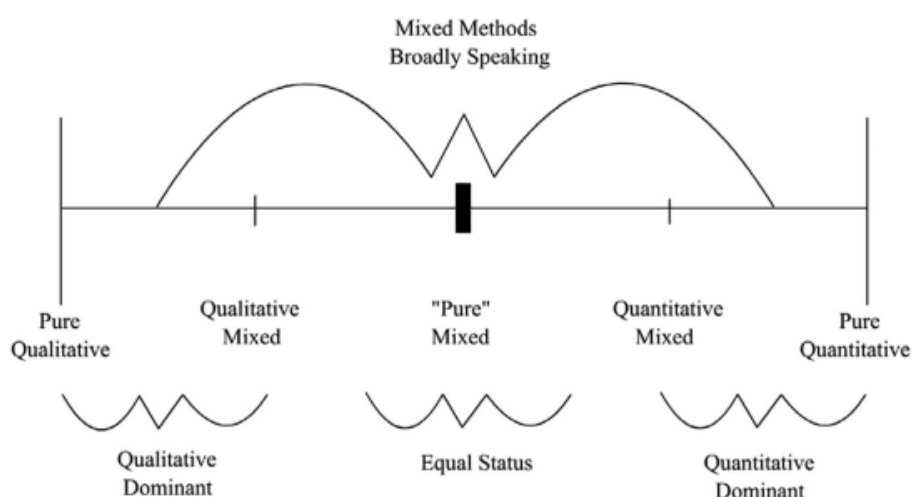


Figure 3: Johnson et. al.'s (2007, p.124) illustration of mixed method research types/paradigms.

From this perspective it seems evident that mixed method research and eclecticism share, at least, some similarities. Arguments for the need for depth and breadth, as well as triangulation, can be found in the eclectic literature, even if these concepts are not precisely labelled like this. However, Johnson et al. (2007, p.128), in agreement with Greene (2006), see mixed method research as a “methodological or research paradigm” with the following four areas:

147 Denzin (2009b, p.300) defines “triangulation (...) [as] a plan of action that will raise sociologists above the personalistic biases that stem from single methodologies. By combining methods and investigators in the same study, observers can partially overcome the deficiencies that flow from one investigator and/or one method”.

(a) philosophical assumptions and stances (i.e., what are the fundamental philosophical or epistemological assumptions of the methodology?), (b) inquiry logics (i.e., what traditionally is called “methodology” and refers to broad inquiry purposes and questions, logic, quality standards, writing forms that guide the researcher’s “gaze”), (c) guidelines for practice (i.e., specific procedures and tools used to conduct research; the “how to” part of research methodology), and (d) sociopolitical commitments (i.e., interests, commitments, and power relations surrounding the location in society in which an inquiry is situated).

As such, mixed method research must be allocated at the level of paradigm-like groupings as it defines a specific, albeit generous, set of cognitive aims and methodological norms for the researcher¹⁴⁸. Eclecticism, on the other hand, tries to transcend from this move and demands/justifies migration between sets where it is possible. Mixed method research cannot justify migration to such an extent as it would mean to contradict its own cognitive aims and methodological norms.

Secondly, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argue that the underlying philosophy of science for mixed method research must be pragmatism. In reference to Murphy and Rorty (1990), they state that “the pragmatic rule or maxim or method states that the current meaning or instrumental or provisional truth value (...) of an expression (...) is to be determined by the experiences or practical consequences of belief in or use of the expression on the world” (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, pp.16–17), to clarify, partially with regards to social sciences, that

if two ontological positions about the mind/body problem (e.g., monism versus dualism), for example, do not make a difference in how we conduct our research, then the distinction is, for practical purposes, not very meaningful (...) [However] in some situations the qualitative approach will be more appropriate; in other situations the quantitative approach will be more appropriate. In many situations, researchers can put together insights and procedures from both approaches to produce a superior product (i.e.,

148 Further reasons to think of mixed method research being somewhere in the mid-level is that there are still shared, universal cognitive aims and methodological norms, as described by Sechrest and Sidani (1995, p.78). They allocate the similarities of quantitative and qualitative researchers in the way they “describe their data, construct explanatory arguments from their data, and speculate about why the outcomes they observed happened as they did”.

often mixed method research provides a more workable solution and produces a superior product).

Pragmatism thus offers the best philosophical ground for mixed methods researchers to defend and justify their approach. The justification in the quote given shows similarities with the justification for eclecticism that has been developed above, yet there are some differences apparent.

The main difference here is that eclecticism does not argue that some situations prefer qualitative and others quantitative approaches. Instead, as indicated above, appropriateness is itself context-dependent and -determined. It results from the relationship of cognitive aims and methodological norms and therefore it arises from within these traditionally established sets on all three levels. The appropriateness of qualitative research is defined by the success of the approaches in the context they are applied, whereas success again is mostly measured by criteria within the sets of cognitive aims and methodological norms on all three levels. These criteria range from the specific use of data and its source to generally shared criteria of empirical soundness, validity and, in particular in the case of mainstream economics so it seems, elegance of models.

It is unclear to what extent Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) are aware of and how they implement this into their understanding of mixed method research. They appreciate the pragmatic tendency to acknowledge different, culturally determined values and ends but their working definition does not indicate to what extent mixed method research is self-aware of the context-dependent appropriateness. This is the second example where eclecticism and mixed method research diverge. Below, I will differentiate pragmatism and eclecticism, thus giving more reasons to distinguish mixed method research and eclecticism under the assumption that pragmatism should be the philosophical basis for mixed method research, as Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) suggest.

4.4. ECLECTICISM IS JUST PRAGMATISM IN DISGUISE

The fourth critical point I encountered was the question whether eclecticism, as described, is not simply pragmatic or, more precisely, the same as American

pragmatism¹⁴⁹. Just as in the previous chapter on mixed method research, it is argued that eclecticism is not the same as pragmatism and that the impression they are alike comes from the general influence pragmatism had on the philosophy of science and methodologies of different disciplines. Additionally, the somewhat unique aims and works of different, prominent pragmatists make a clear delimitation more difficult.

“Pragmatism is a philosophy of action” according to Hans Joas (1993, p.18), at whose core lies the pragmatist maxim. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) summarise, as shown above, that this maxim,

states that the current meaning or instrumental or provisional truth value (...) of an expression (...) is to be determined by the experiences or practical consequences of belief in or use of the expression in the world.

In summary, the mixed methodist would look at the quantitative and qualitative practices available and determine in which situation they are most appropriate; the reason why Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) consider pragmatism to be the best philosophical basis for mixed method research. Additionally, they argue, taking an ontological positions has no meaning if they do not impact how researchers do their research.

Nonetheless, they admit, there are metaphysical issues that can still be meaningful and/or be resolved by pragmatism. The early example of how pragmatism can solve metaphysical disputes is given by William James (1907), who describes a thought experiment in which a human tries to view a squirrel sitting on a tree-trunk. Despite the person's best effort to run around the tree to get a glimpse of the animal, it keeps moving around the tree itself so that it is always out of sight. The metaphysical question asks “does the man go round the squirrel or not” to which James' (1907, pp.43–44) pragmatic solution is to clarify “what you practically mean by 'going around' the squirrel”. If you understand 'going round' to mean that the person changes position from North to East to South to West back to North again, then James (1907) says the question must be answered with yes, while if you mean to go to the front, to the right side, the back, the left side, and back to the front again, then answer is no and the metaphysical dispute is settled. For James (1907, p.44) “you are both right and both wrong according as you conceive the verb 'to go round' in one practical fashion or the other”.

149 I must thank my third supervisor Dr. Alison Hirst and Dr. Sandra Selmanovic for raising this question independently.

The simplicity of James' (1907) application of the pragmatic maxim to a metaphysical problem makes it very intuitive and therefore it is safe to assume it is widely acceptable by eclectics, pluralists, and others. This bears, however, the impression that everybody is, in principle, a pragmatist, which then becomes a rather diluted stance similar to Solow's (1988) understanding of eclecticism. Secondly, the modern eclectic literature does rarely deal with such metaphysical problems; ontologically, eclectics take the world as “as complex and disjointed” (Sanderson, 1987, p.325). Hence, the literature focuses more on the 'practical consequences' for active research Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) refer to too. The justification of eclecticism proposed here, on the other hand, would include metaphysical problems and it, in principle, the same solution that recognises the context dependency of James' (1907) application of the pragmatic maxim, but that does not make eclecticism and pragmatism equal.

From the eclectic appreciation of context dependency does not follow James' (1907, p.45) aim “of settling metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable”. Instead, the mere acknowledgement of the context of traditional ontological disputes solves these issues just superficially. For instance, the classical ontological dispute over the existence of numbers, where to the questions “do numbers exist ... [t]he Platonist says yes, and the nominalist says no” (Chalmers, 2009, p.77), is not solve by pointing out that 'if you are Platonist the answer is yes but if you are a nominalist the answer is no'. One could, of course, argue that this kind of ontological issue is trivial as it has no effect on the way we conduct our research in, for instance, mathematics (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

This argument might be challenged by showing the effects of ontological disputes on specific epistemology and methodology. Platonists, by granting the existence of numbers as abstract objects, face the epistemological problem of how knowledge can be gained about them. While knowledge about material objects can be gained through experiencing them through the senses, abstract objects like numbers cannot perceived in that way. On the other hand, the nominalist faces the indispensability argument, i.e. the existence of numbers and other abstract objects cannot be rejected if they are used in science. Hilary Putnam (2014, p.57) summarises this argument as follows:

Quantification over mathematical entities is indispensable for science, both formal and physical; therefore we should accept such quantification; but this commits us to accepting the existence of the mathematical entities. This type of argument stems, of course, from Quine, who has for years stressed

both the indispensability of quantification over mathematical entities and the intellectual dishonesty of denying the existence of what one daily presupposes.

In summary, neither is this particular metaphysical dispute solved by referring to the context, like in the case with the squirrel nor is it trivial. It has been implied by the previous chapter that scientific practise always has underlying metaphysical assumptions; whether the scientist is aware of them or not. If we make fundamental claims about the existence of mathematical objects, we simultaneously make statements about the very nature of mathematics and its practice itself¹⁵⁰. Furthermore, if we are to accept the Platonist claim that mathematical objects exist as abstract ones, but reject its relevance for the mathematical practice, then we are applying an anti-realist position (Carnap, 1950; Chalmers, 2009).

The next question is, whether it is possible to induce this idea that metaphysical considerations are indeed impacting mathematical practice and are therefore non-trivial to other, more general or specifically economic, abstract objects? Tony Lawson (see for instance 1997, 2003b, 2004), a self-identified critical realist, makes clear that the social ontology is fundamentally important for the practice of economics. Others, who held similar views, have been discussed in the previous chapters too. Hence, abstract objects in economics, i.e. value, money, institutions, etc., and their related ontological disputes appear not only to be not solved by reference to context-dependency but also to be non-trivial for research. In addition, Lowe (2001, p.26) presents a general argument for the close relationship between metaphysics and empiricism, which “presents us with an opportunity to combine metaphysical argument with empirical scientific theory in order to reach a judgement as to whether or not a certain metaphysical view is plausibly true in actuality”. If the pursuit is, as he says, to “form rational judgement as to which of the various metaphysically possible alternatives”, i.e. metaphysics establishes the possibility of states of affairs, “do actually obtain” (Lowe, 2001, pp.22–23), is it not the case that every dispute must be non-trivial?

150 Here, Brouwer's (1913) *Intuitionism* is an example of how ontological statements about mathematical objects can have a significant impact on its practise. Intuitionism in mathematics is a form of constructivist philosophy, in which “[t]he question where mathematical exactness does exist, is answered differently by the two sides; the intuitionist says: in the human intellect, the formalist says: on paper” (Brouwer, 1913, p.82). Moreover, intuitionism also rejects the principle of excluded third from classic logic, which “leads to a revision of mathematical knowledge” (Horten, 2012, p.no pagination).

While James (1907) still grants metaphysics some importance, Richard Rorty (1979, 1998) more radically abandons metaphysics and replaces classic epistemology with what he calls *epistemological behaviourism*. Rorty (1979, p.170) uses the criticism of classic epistemology's aim for representations, mostly referring to Quine (1951), but also partly to Carnap (1950), to point out that “the crucial premise of this argument is that we understand knowledge when we understand the social justification of belief, and thus have no need to view it as accuracy of representation”. He goes on to argue that consequently the idea of the mind as “Mirror of Nature” must be given up and that “the notion of philosophy as the discipline which looks for privileged representations among those constituting the Mirror becomes unintelligible” (Rorty, 1979, p.170). That means that epistemology cannot transcend the practices of social interaction and conversation in determining what knowledge is; what has to be done is “to move everything over from epistemology and metaphysics into cultural politics” (Rorty, 1998, p.57).

Like Carnap (1950), Quine (1951) and others, Rorty (1979, 1998) employs the linguistic turn in philosophy¹⁵¹ to formulate his criticism. A first argument by Lowe (2001) against the idea that metaphysics is meaningless has been discussed above. Additionally, at least Carnap's (1950) critique of metaphysics can be dismissed by three points. First, Carnap's (1950) claim about the meaninglessness of metaphysical statements is built upon a verificationist theory for meaning, yet the inability to verify a metaphysical statement does not imply its meaninglessness. Secondly, Carnap (1950, p.26) argues that “an alleged statement of the reality of the system of entities is a pseudo-statement without cognitive content”, but in combination with his verificationism, i.e. that the meaning of statements lie in the way they are verified, it seems questionable that he can verify his own statements on the meaninglessness of metaphysics either analytically or synthetically. Thirdly, Quine (1951) shows successfully that two of Carnap's (1950) major assumptions used to criticise the meaningfulness of metaphysics fail, i.e. the distinction between analytical and synthetic statements and that all “meaningful claims can ultimately be reduced to claims about perpetual experience” (Ney, 2014, p.129).

In the case of Rorty (1979, 1998) these points are less applicable, especially as he employs Quine's (1951) *Two Dogmas of Empiricism* for his critique, thus escaping, at least, the dichotomy of analytical vs. synthetic statements. However, that does not mean

¹⁵¹ The linguistic turn is the name for the shift to language and its importance for philosophy, beginning in the 20th century.

it is impossible to formulate criticism of Rorty's (1979, 1998) strategy to abandon metaphysics and to redefine epistemology. On his radical claim that only that is true what is socially justified to be true, Susan Haack (2000, p.64) replies

[t]o be sure, if we agree that p, we agree that p is true. But we may agree that p when p is *not* true (and we may not agree that p when p is true). So “true” is not a word that truly applies to all or only statements about which we agree; and calling a statement “true” certainly doesn't mean that we agree about it.

Additionally, she accuses Rorty to generally conflate truth with justified belief, which is “a nasty muddle” (Haack, 2000, p.20) and to confuse two concepts of epistemic justification; contextualism and tribalism¹⁵², which is problematic because the former is relativistic and the latter isn't. At the end, Haack (2000, p.65) accuses Rorty of being intellectually irresponsible in his treatment of science, calling his philosophy of focusing on conversation “Rortyesque dilettantism”¹⁵³.

Independent of whether we believe ontological or metaphysical disputes to be relevant for our daily research practise, the main point is that neither the eclectic literature nor the eclectic justification propose to take an *a priori* stance in such a dispute. The justification merely says that using various positions, in the case of mathematics Platonism, nominalism or intuitionism, is possible, and possibly desirable, for the eclectic, whether she uses all, prefers one over the other or ignores them is totally up to her. Eclecticism does not ask James' (1907) metaphysical pragmatic question 'what we practically mean by numbers exist'. The eclectic may use this question in the same way she uses other methodological norms to analyse this problem, turning James' (1907) metaphysical pragmatic question into a methodological norm on the paradigm-like grouping level, but the eclectic may approach this question with a different perspective. Other than pragmatism, eclecticism does not try to solve metaphysical disputes in the same way but makes use, if possible, of the tensions they generate.

Leaving the ontological and metaphysical discussion aside, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) emphasis the methodological implications of pragmatism, something that is

152 Contextualism: “A is justified in believing that p if and only if, with respect to his belief that p, A satisfies the epistemic criteria of *his* community”. Tribalism: “A is justified in believing that p if and only if, with respect to his belief that p, A satisfies the epistemic criteria of our community” (Haack, 2000, p.151).

153 Haack (2000) is not alone in her criticism though, as Ramberg (2007) notices; Richard Rorty has received substantial criticism for his conversationalist pragmatism.

apparent in Joas' (1993) and, ultimately, Peirce's (1931, 1934, 1974) writings too. Peirce (1931, 1934, 1974) sees the pragmatist maxim as important part of the scientific method, as it allows to clarify the meaning of scientific hypotheses before they are subjected to experimental verification. Consequently, if the metaphysical hypothesis does not bear any practical consequences of this kind, i.e. it cannot be tested experimentally, then it has no meaning. With probability as example, Peirce (1974, p.169) explains how the pragmatic interpretation of the meaning of a concept makes probability practically useful; "we begin by asking, what is the use of calculations of probabilities; and the answer is that the great business of insurance rests upon such calculations". Hence, "[a] probability, therefore, is the known ratio of frequency of a specific future event to a generic future event which includes it". No other meaning can generate the practical consequences and importance of probability for the businesses. This does not mean that the exploration of different consequences is, per se, forbidden. Peirce (1934, p.6) generally defines his pragmatic maxim as follows:

In order to ascertain the meaning of an intellectual conception one should consider what practical consequences might conceivably result by necessity from the truth of that conception; and the sum of these consequences will constitute the entire meaning of the conception.

Here Peirce's (1931, 1934, 1974) pragmatic maxim comes closest to how eclecticism has been described so far. While eclecticism does not focus on the practical consequences as Peirce (1931, 1934, 1974) does, the underlying, one could say, 'epistemological consequences', i.e. what can a specific theory or school of thought explain, reveals the closest connection between eclecticism and pragmatism. However, it is hard to argue that this particular interpretation of the pragmatic maxim, especially when considering concepts such as probability or others, is unique to pragmatism. Conceptual clarity seems generally desirable in any discipline, and, therefore, also in economics. The eclectic economist can use the cognitive aim and methodological norms of Peirce's (1931, 1934, 1974) pragmatism in order to conduct her research and clarify the meaning of concepts in economics in a way described above, something that McCloskey (1983) seems to imply too, in order to conduct experimental tests. In economics, concepts like 'selfishness' or 'utility maximisation' certainly require the application of the pragmatic maxim, as these concepts have been diluted beyond meaninglessness, i.e. they are no longer subject to experimental verification or

falsification and are rather considered *a priori* true¹⁵⁴. Hence, pragmatism can be useful for the eclectic economist, but eclecticism, again, transcends Peirce's (1931, 1934, 1974) maxim by allowing the eclectic to make a choice. No matter how intuitively appealing the maxim is, it remains a mere option to clarify concepts in such a way that their practical consequences are tested.

Finally, when it comes to pragmatism and the question what is meant with the practical consequences of hypothesis or metaphysical statements it is unavoidable to discuss the underlying truth theories. So far, the concept of truth has not been addressed in this thesis, as a development of a comprehensive eclectic truth theory is a PhD topic on its own, if not generally impossible to formulate. Nonetheless, a short examination is necessary to compare eclecticism with pragmatism with regards to truth.

From the literature review it becomes evident that the early eclectics had a realist correspondence conception of truth, one that acknowledges the existence of an objective, mind-independent reality in which the eclectic is capable of identifying those teachings of philosophical sects which are corresponding best with the facts of nature (Mulsow, 1997; Kelley, 2001). This position is, nowadays, of course difficult because it presupposes that the eclectic has an ability that allows her to, objectively, decide what teachings or statements are corresponding to the nature and what not. Claiming to have such an ability is to say that one has a specific access to the world, something others might not have. Such a claim can be criticised in various ways, but the central idea is, nowadays, that we might not have any access to a capital T truth in the same way we have no access to capital K knowledge (McCloskey, 1994), if it actually exists.

The modern eclectic literature is less focused on truth but acknowledges the developments of philosophy of science in the recent centuries. As said before, eclectics, like pluralists, frequently cite the 'there is no one best way' principle, which finds its translation into the existence of truth. Hence, they imply that truth, in a Kuhnian (2012) or Feyerabendian (1993) sense, as system-dependent, or as multiplicity (Lodge, 1944; Slife, 1987; Slife and Reber, 2001; Stinson, 2004; K ppe, 2012), to a point where Lazarus, Beutler and Norcross (1992, p.11) say with regards to psychoanalysis that these eclectics "promote flexibility and a relativistic approach to truth". It is, of course, debatable whether the eclectic concept of truth must be relativistic, in the absolute sense

154 Sen (1977, p.322) points this out, by arguing that "it is possible to define a person's interests in such a way that no matter what he does he can be seen to be furthering his own interests in every isolated act of choice".

that “all beliefs, regardless of their subject matter, are true only relative to a framework or parameter” (Baghramian and Carter, 2015, p.no pagination), or if eclecticism might be based on different truth theory or if eclecticism is rather uncommitted to any truth theory. This, however, is not the focus here, but rather the comparison with truth in pragmatism¹⁵⁵.

On the topic of truth, James (1907) and Peirce (1878, 1931, 1934, 1974) diverge from each other the most. Early on, Peirce (1878) shows a similar realist, correspondence theory of truth as the early eclectics had, yet it is only superficially the same. For him, the central concept for the scientific inquiry, and thus to the application of his pragmatist maxim, is reality. Peirce (1878, p.299) begins with observing that “we may define the real as that whose characters are independent of what anybody may think them to be”, the realist stance, but noticing that “it would be a great mistake to suppose that it makes the idea of reality perfectly clear”. Truth now enters the discussion when he applies his pragmatist maxim to the concept of truth by asking for the practical consequences, which in this case are the formation of beliefs about what is real (Hookway, 2013). The subsequent question to Peirce (1878) is how it is possible to differentiate between true and false beliefs, and for him only the scientific inquiry can answer it¹⁵⁶. At the end, Peirce (1878, p.300) concludes that

different minds may set out with the most antagonistic views, but the progress of investigation carries them by a force outside of themselves to one and the same conclusion. This activity of thought by which we are carried, not where we wish, but to a fore-ordained goal, is like the operation of destiny. No modification of the point of view taken, no selection of other facts for study, no natural bent of mind even, can enable a man to escape the predestinate opinion. This great hope is embodied in the conception of truth and reality. The opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate, is what we mean by the truth, and the object represented in this opinion is the real.

155 If there is to be an eclectic commitment to a truth theory then a good candidate could be a pluralist theory of truth, which holds “that there is more than one way of being true” (Pedersen and Wright, 2013, p.no pagination). This is not to be confused with relativism, as the latter position could consistently hold that there is only one way of being true in every possible context. Compatibilism, for instance, is also a pluralist theory of truth, which says that there are absolute and relative truths. In this sense, the eclectic could be a pluralist with regards to truth analogous to ontological pluralism by to McDaniel (2009, 2010a; b, 2013b; a, 2014), see chapter 2, where there are different kinds of being.

156 He argues that “the ideas of truth and falsehood, in their full development, appertain exclusively to the experiential method of settling opinion” (Peirce, 1878, p.299).

The early eclectics themselves never apply anything like a pragmatic maxim as defined by Peirce (1878, 1931, 1934, 1974) or others, they never seem to question the clearness of truth or reality as concepts. This is the fundamental difference between them and pragmatists ala Peirce (1878, 1931, 1934, 1974). With regards to the modern eclectics, the contrast is even bigger as they seemingly do not subscribe to a correspondence theory of truth (Lazarus, Beutler and Norcross, 1992). Moreover, modern eclectics have a different concept of reality from Peirce (1878, 1931, 1934, 1974). Social reality is both constructed and complex and thus theories only give a limited access to this reality (Sil and Katzenstein, 2010a). Hence, Peircian (1878, 1931, 1934, 1974) agreement cannot be achieved all the time, due to the fact that inquiry does not cover the same aspects of the social reality.

William James (1907), on the other hand, makes different claims about truth, going even so far as arguing that pragmatism itself is a theory of truth. The pragmatic answer to the question of truth is that

true ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify. False ideas are those we can not. (...) The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth happens to an idea. It becomes true, is made true by events. Its verity is in fact an event, a process: the process namely of its verifying itself. (James, 1907, p.201)

James' (1907) pragmatic approach to truth asks for the practical value or relevance of ideas for human beings. Hence, sometimes ideas have no practical value as the objects they refer to are irrelevant to us. James (1907) explains this by referring to a person lost in the woods who happens to find a path. She now acts upon the idea that this path leads to a human settlement, which means rescue, hence "[t]he true thought is useful here because the house which is its object is useful" (James, 1907, p.203). James' (1907) pragmatic theory of truth is action related, as pragmatism is in general according to Joas (1993), where true beliefs lead to desirable, positive behaviours, while false beliefs can be harmful. That being said, it seems obvious that early eclectics, for reasons described above, are not in agreement with James (1907). The question now is whether the modern eclectics' 'truth relativism', as far as it exists, is the same as James' (1907) pragmatic theory of truth.

The similarities between the eclectic treatment of truth and that of James (1907) are striking, to say the least. With the eclectic acknowledgement of truth as being dependent

on the context, i.e. theories about the complex social reality are true due to conditions set out by the schools of thought, or paradigm-like groupings, or, if one wants to use a Habermasian (1987, 1990) term 'discourse groups', they give, knowingly or not, credit to James' (1907) idea that truth is not an inherent property of ideas but is given to them. However, that does not necessarily mean the eclectics are Jamesian (1907) pragmatists, but rather that they are following either aspects of the linguistic turn, *a* or even *the* significant move undertaken in the 20st century analytical philosophy, or, possibly more precisely, what Williamson (2006, p.108) calls “the representational turn”, the contemporary philosophical focus which resulted from the earlier linguistic turn.

The linguistic turn, the shift of focus in philosophy away from naturalism, i.e. the analysis of physical properties of things, towards language, has experienced widespread support from philosophers of different *couleur*. For Ayer (2012), for instance, “the propositions of philosophy are not factual, but linguistic in character—that is, they do not describe the behaviour of physical, or even mental, objects; they express definitions, or the formal consequences of definitions”, thus concluding that philosophical analysis is, other than scientific analysis, fundamentally independent of empirical assumptions. Michael Dummett (1978, 2014) lists the works by Gottlob Frege, G.E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, Rudolf Carnap and ultimately Ludwig Wittgenstein¹⁵⁷ as central contributors to the linguistic turn and thus the birth of analytical philosophy¹⁵⁸. Pragmatist Richard Rorty can be added to the list here too, since he not only edited the book *The Linguistic Turn* (Rorty, 1992)¹⁵⁹, but he wrote extensively on the topic of language.

In his book *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, Rorty (1989, pp.4–5) early clarifies that “we need to make a distinction between the claim that the world is out there and the claim that truth is out there”, and emphasises that only “descriptions of the world” can

157 Russell Goodman (2002) writes an extensive documentary of Wittgenstein's own, somewhat ambiguous relationship with pragmatism, and specifically his agreement and criticism with the work of William James, while Rorty (1989) points out the, for him at least, pragmatic nature of Wittgenstein's thought on vocabularies as tools.

158 For Dummett (1978, p.485) the central tenets of analytical philosophy are

first, that the goal of philosophy is the analysis of the structure of thought; secondly, that the study of thought is to be sharply distinguished from the study of the psychological process of thinking; and, finally, that the only proper method for analysing thought consists in the analysis of language.

Yet, Williamson (2006) argues that neither all analytical philosophers would subscribe to all three points while non-analytical philosophers, i.e. continental philosophers such as post-modernists, would agree with them.

159 In it, he writes that

the purpose of the present volume is to provide materials for reflection on the most recent philosophical revolution, that of linguistic philosophy. I shall mean by “linguistic philosophy” the view that philosophical problems are problems which may be solved (or dissolved) either by reforming language, or by understanding more about the language we presently use. (Rorty, 1992, p.2)

be true” whereas “the world on its own – unaided by the describing activities of human beings – cannot”. The distinction here is between the existence of a mind-independent world, which he does not necessarily deny, and the existence of mind-independent truth, which he denies. Earlier, he explains that pragmatism, for him, is anti-essentialism, which is specifically applied to the philosophical concept of truth, but also to morality or knowledge. Ultimately, as he argues, “there is no epistemological difference between truth about what ought to be and truth about what is, nor any metaphysical difference between facts and values” (Rorty, 1980, p.723), denying truth to be corresponding with reality or being a term for the accurate, linguistic representation for the world.

It is without saying that there are similarities between pragmatism and eclecticism, but the notion that eclecticism is simply pragmatism in disguise is, to say the least, a superficial observation. Rather, we find common grounds due to 'trends' in contemporary philosophy, in which pragmatism took an active as well as adoptive role. Where pragmatism had its influence is, as said, observable in the writings of Wittgenstein (Goodman, 2002) or Hillary Putnam, who has been introduced and discussed in the first chapter. Putnam (1995a) has written somewhat favourably about pragmatism, and also shows that Wittgenstein and pragmatists share some practices¹⁶⁰. Elsewhere, he explains, and clarifies about himself, that with regards to

James and the Pragmatists, I like their holistic view of inquiry, and their rejection of the fact/value dichotomy, but I have never subscribed to their theory (or theories) of truth. Still, one can learn much from James and Dewey. (Putnam and Peruzzo, 1992, p.215)

With these two final examples, it should be clear that similarities with pragmatic thought does not make one a pragmatist. Likewise, I have shown above where the thoughts of eclectics coincide with that of pragmatists and that this is not due to the former being the latter in disguise but general trends in philosophy.

¹⁶⁰ He concludes that “Wittgenstein was not in the strict sense either a ‘pragmatist’ nor a neo-Kantian he shares with pragmatism a certain Kantian heritage (which William James, too, was extremely loathe to acknowledge)” (Putnam, 1995a, p.52). Additionally, Judy Hensley (2012) further discusses the relationship between Wittgenstein's philosophy and that of several pragmatists and indicates similarities and differences, concluding, here in agreement with Putnam (1995a), that the question of Wittgenstein's pragmatism cannot easily be answered with yes or no.

4.5. ECLECTICISM LEADS TO RELATIVISM

The final question raised by my peers is whether eclecticism ultimately leads to some kind of relativism. Here again, just like in the previous sub-chapter on the relationship between eclecticism and pragmatism, a comparison between eclecticism and the literature on relativism is required to find an answer. Above, we also have dismissed the charge of relativistic arbitrariness, i.e. the “absence of selection criteria”, against eclecticism raised by Dow (2007, p.3). It goes without saying that the lack of a coherent definition for relativism makes answering the question rather difficult. However, there are features of eclecticism, but also of its justification and more generally pluralism, that are relativistic in their nature.

Generally speaking we can say that “relativism claims that truth, goodness, or beauty is relative to a reference frame¹⁶¹, and no *absolute* overarching standards to *adjudicate* between competing reference frames exist” (Krausz, 2010, p.13). However, there are several variances in the strength of such claim. Krausz (2010), for instance, distinguishes between global and local relativists, where the former denies the existence of adjudicating standards for all reference frames altogether while the latter allow the existence for some frames. Given the eclectic justification developed in the previous chapter, it is apparent that the argument is, at least, locally relativistic following these two definitions. The idea of non-universal methodological norms and cognitive aims in inner and middle layers, as well as the existence of different conceptual schemes in the outer layer, is relativistic according to Krausz's (2010) first definition, but it shows also that it is not globally relativistic, as it is argued that migration is still possible and relatively easy between frameworks in the inner and middle layer, while more difficult in the outer layer.

Moreover, we can acknowledge that Krausz's (2010) definition, if applied to knowledge, agrees with Dow's (2007) and McCloskey (1994) assessment that there are no overarching standards which allows us to decide what knowledge is and is not. According to Krausz (2010, p.17) “relativism requires that, with the respect to the *same*

¹⁶¹ Krausz (2010, p.18) summarises that

[r]eference frames come in many varieties (...) [t]hey may include conceptual schemes, conceptual frameworks, paradigms, symbolic systems, systems of thought, systems of beliefs, practices, world-visions, languages, discourses, linguistic frameworks, point of views, perspectives, standpoints, worldviews, horizons, forms of life, codes, or norms (...) cultures, tribes, communities, countries, civilisations, societies, traditions, historical periods, religions, races, or genders (...) [and that] some of these varieties of reference frames may overlap; others do not.

subject matter, *competing* reference frames exist”. Hence, the pluralist arguments with regards to knowledge creation seem to be relativistic in this sense. Likewise, eclectics such as Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin (2011), who use the *Piagetian* and the *Vygotskian* explanations of proportional reasoning to justify their eclecticism, must be seen as being relativistic too.

Finally, Krausz (2010) clarifies that relativism is not synonymous with subjectivism, or the view that every single individual has its own reference frame. Although the latter is classified as relativistic, it remains only one of many kinds of relativistic positions. Others, that resemble arguments presented above to justify eclectic choices, allow that such reference frames can be shared among several individuals and groups. Hence, migration between different schools of thought, paradigm like groups and, where possible, conceptual schemes, does not mean that eclecticism leads to such subjectivism, in which every individual researcher 'lives in her own world', so to say, but that the eclectic migrates between different reference frames of groups, in this case the schools of thought or paradigm-like groupings.

In her *Brief History of Relativism* Maria Baghramian (2010) outlines the historical roots of relativism and how it influenced contemporary philosophical traditions, similar to the pragmatists' impact described in the previous section. Hence, it is less surprising to find the pragmatist influence on relativism too. Here, Baghramian (2010) makes reference to pragmatist's scheme-content dualism, and especially William James' (1979) take on the Kantian notion of conceptual organisation of raw experience, which, as she argues, leads him to foreshadow Quine's ontological relativism¹⁶². Eventually, Quine's ontological relativism lead to the formulation of the Duhem-Quine thesis of underdetermination of scientific theories (see, for instance, Quine, 1951; Duhem, 1991), which states that a set of empirical data can give support to different, plausible theories and justifiable hypotheses. The thesis itself not only represents one of the strongest arguments against scientific realism, but also influenced later contemporary philosophers of science such as Paul Feyerabend (1993), Thomas Kuhn (2012), Imre

162 Baghramian (2010) draws the connection between James (1979) and Quine (1970) with the following citations of their work: James (1979, p.66) writes

[t]here is nothing improbable in the supposition that analysis of the world may yield a number of formulae, all consistent with the facts. In physical science different formulae may explain the phenomena equally well-the one-flued and the two-fluid theories of electricity, for example,

while Quine (1970, p.179) similarly argues that “[p]hysical theories can be at odds with each other and yet compatible with all the possible data even in the broadest sense. In a word, they can be logically incompatible and empirically equivalent”.

Lakatos (1970a; b, 1976, 1978) or Hilary Putnam (1981b, 1982, 1987a, 2002). That being said, it is reasonable to assume, just like in the case of pragmatism, that the similarities between relativism and eclecticism arise from the historical impact relativism had on contemporary philosophy of science.

It is thus no coincidence that one of the central arguments for eclecticism is underdetermination in disguise. As seen in the example of the *Piagetian* and the *Vygotskian* explanations for proportional reasoning in the psychological literature (Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin, 2011), the argument for the heuristic value of both approaches is essentially an argument from underdetermination, in which both theories offer insightful conclusions from the same data, while being otherwise different. Likewise we find the same argumentation elsewhere, for instance sociology (Sil, 2000, 2004, Sil and Katzenstein, 2010a; b) where different theories play an important role in explaining given circumstances. Therefore, when it comes to the Duhem-Quinian underdetermination of scientific theories, eclecticism is very well relativistic. On the other hand, other relativistic interpretations are less like to be found in the eclectic literature. One of them is the impossibility of translation, something Donald Davidson (2001) criticises in conceptual relativism, and that has been argued against in the previous chapter too. In fact, as Davidson (2001) argues, conceptual schemes and languages are not identical. Instead, schemes can be shared across languages and translatability is possible, at least in some cases. Moreover, it has been argued that translatability and/or migration is even more likely when it comes to paradigm-like groupings and schools of thought. Moreover, there is no instance in the eclectic literature where translatability is questioned. Although Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin (2011) describe the differences between *Piagetian* and *Vygotskian* theories, it is not implied that these theories are generally incommensurable. As shown in chapter 2, mixed method research eclectics even opposed the idea of incommensurability altogether (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Morgan, 2007), indicating that conceptual relativism that denies translatability and proposes incommensurability are not among the eclectic positions.

Kant's (1870, p.90) claim that “what objects may be in themselves, and apart from all this receptivity of our sensibility, remains completely unknown to us”¹⁶³ did not only

163 Translated into English by Kemp Smith (1929, p.82; see also Baghramian, 2010, p.44), in the original: “Was es für eine Bewandtniss mit den Gegenständen an sich und abgesondert von aller dieser Receptivität unserer Sinnlichkeit haben möge, bleibt uns gänzlich unbekannt” (Kant, 1870, p.90).

lead to a pragmatist and neo-pragmatist reinterpretation by James or Quine, but is the basis for other forms of relativism (Baghramian, 2010). The above mentioned conceptual relativism finds its extreme form in the already referenced Goodman (1984) who developed a radical constructivism, which “suggests that our categories and conceptual schemes not only carve up the world, but also, in an important sense, create or construct the world” (Baghramian, 2010, p.47). Moreover, in Latour and Woolgar's (2013) interpretation reality in science is “constructed via interactive norm-governed processes and practices such as negotiations, interpretations and manipulations of data” (Baghramian, 2010, p.48), rather than being out there to be discovered. Furthermore, Baghramian (2010) concludes that relativism found its way through Nietzsche into postmodernism and through Hegel and Marx into modern social constructivism, cultural and historical relativism. In conclusion, relativism found its way into branches of contemporary philosophical thought, just as pragmatism did, despite its controversial nature.

Stinson (2004, 2009) is, at least, one eclectic who used post-modernist theory in his work, eventually implementing some of the inherent relativistic positions Baghramian (2010) allocates within postmodernism. Likewise, we have Robert Solow (1988) agreeing to some extent with Goodman's (1984) arguments about the construction of the world, and although Solow's (1988) interpretation of eclecticism has been dismissed for the purpose of this dissertation, it shows that some relativistic thoughts seem reasonable even for orthodox economists. Moreover, with Baghramian's (2010) identification of Marxist relativism, although mostly related to truth and falsity, ethics and history, modern Marxist economists may also embrace relativistic positions. Consequently, eclectics would pick these positions up when they use Marxist theories to conduct economic analyses.

To answer the question of my peers: Yes, eclecticism can lead to relativistic positions, but not necessarily in the sense implied. Relativism is not the logical consequence of eclecticism, but rather eclecticism can use relativistic positions already apparent in some contemporary philosophical and economic schools of thought. Relativistic positions are still controversial, but some arguments are worth considering. One might, for instance, not agree with Quine's ontological relativism or the underdetermination of scientific theories, but the relevance of his work for contemporary philosophy can hardly be denied. Lawson (2004), yet again the representative example of a heterodox economist being aware of the importance, critically discusses Quine's ontological positions, does

not agree with all of them but at least accepts the relevance of Quine's contributions. Moreover, there are reasons to believe that underdetermination plays a role in economics too (Sawyer, Beed and Sankey, 1997; McMaster and Watkins, 2006), and must therefore be taken seriously. At the end, to fully embrace eclecticism the eclectic must not be afraid to explore the relativistic positions that are still existent in the literature.

4.6. SYNOPSIS

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss, and to argue with, five criticisms which were presented, mostly, by peers and colleagues in various discussions and/or presentations held about this research project. This first debate of these objections is not only a necessary, but also a welcome opportunity to further clarify eclecticism and help to establish and strengthen its position within the pluralist movement and philosophy of economics.

To begin with, Sheila Dow's (2007) argument that eclecticism is simply incoherent pluralism without structure or criteria for the selection of theories, hypotheses etc. is discussed. It is argued that the justification for eclecticism developed in chapter 3 shows that these charges are untenable. Instead, selection criteria are available, although abstract, and the need for and the benefits of epistemological crises are a central point for eclectic choices in the justification developed in this dissertation. However, since selection criteria are said to not be objective, i.e. independent of a reference framework provided by the school of thought, the paradigm-like groupings or conceptual schemes, this might support Dow (2007), but her work on epistemology, and other discussions on pluralism, suggests that she does not argue for such objective criteria anyway.

Secondly, the argument against the feasibility of eclectic research is discussed. The idea that a research project or a research question is addressed by different approaches stemming from different schools of thought, or even paradigm-level groupings, means that the researcher must devote time and resources to learn and use these different approaches for her research. In practice, however, these resources might not be available for the researcher, so pursuing an eclectic research might simply be impossible for anyone in a modern research environment, with administrative and teaching duties and tight deadlines. However, it is argued that despite these realities of everyday

academic life, eclectic research is still possible in the long run. Since it is possible for the researcher to publish preliminary findings, which is already a common practice, without cessation of the research project, eclecticism would likewise allow the publication of provisional results from a single-approach applications and the continuation of such project with other approaches later. This, of course, means that not every research project can be conducted eclectically, but the impossibility of universal eclectic research does not imply the universal impossibility of eclectic research.

Thirdly, the question has been raised whether eclecticism is just another argument for mixed-method research. Indeed, there are several overlapping themes between eclecticism and mixed-method research and the fact that there is mixed-method research literature arguing for eclecticism makes the assumption even more plausible. However, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie's (2004), themselves favouring eclecticism, in-depth analysis of mixed method research shows the differences with eclecticism on the level of paradigm-like groupings and universal methodological norms and cognitive aims. Here, it seems as mixed method research uses fixed frameworks of higher concepts without the need or willingness to change these. Apparently, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argue for pragmatism to be the underlying philosophical stance for mixed-method research, while the eclectic justification outlined in chapter 3 demands the transcending movement away from such a singular, philosophical framework and the inclusion of other reference frames, such as post-structuralism, critical realism or others. While eclecticism and mixed-method research seem to agree on the level of method choice, choices of philosophical frameworks are points of departure between both concepts.

Fourthly, the eclectic justification raised doubts whether eclecticism is not simply a new form, or a new argument for, pragmatism. This objection arose with regards to several arguments made not only for eclecticism, but also when pluralists' positions were outlined. The issue is that if eclecticism is basically pragmatism in disguise, the novelty of this position would be diminished or even disappear. The analysis of pragmatism revealed, however, that it not only spans over heterogeneous philosophical positions, but that the similarities between pragmatism and eclecticism, and likewise pluralism, rather arises from the influences of pragmatist philosophers on contemporary philosophical thought. Hence, pragmatic concepts, ideas, hypotheses etc. can not only be found in the justification for eclecticism or pluralism, but also in several other philosophical and non-philosophical disciplines. The overlap between eclectic and pragmatist thoughts, ideas and concepts does not, as argued above, mean they are

identical, as this is also true for every other intersection of pragmatism and other schools of thought or paradigm-like groupings.

Finally, concerns were raised that eclecticism ultimately would lead to an 'everything goes' kind of relativism, where there are neither selection criteria (Dow, 2007), truth criteria or any other certainties. After an analysis of relativism, its history and its place in philosophy, the, somewhat surprising answer to the question is in some way positive. However, the analysis reveals the diverse nature of relativistic positions, just like in the case of pragmatism, and how some of these positions are found across different philosophical, and ultimately also economic schools of thought¹⁶⁴. We have found ontological relativism in Quine (see, for instance, 1951) and James (1979), also indicating the relationship between pragmatism and relativism. Quine's (1951), and Duhem's (1991), underdetermination of theories has become a relevant topic in contemporary philosophy of science and became known as the Duhem-Quine thesis. Paul Feyerabend (1993), Thomas Kuhn (2012), Imre Lakatos (1970a; b, 1976, 1978) and Hilary Putnam (1981b, 1982, 1987a, 2002) have likewise supported relativistic positions, and following the explanation of Krausz (2010) pluralist and eclectic arguments found in the literature are likewise relativistic to some extent. Hence, when eclecticism means to choose from the variety of approaches offered in economics, and at least some of them have relativistic tendencies, or philosophical underpinnings, then ultimately eclecticism will lead to the choice of relativistic positions. Yet, with regards to truth theories, eclecticism can, as mentioned, either be pluralistic or agnostic and does not need to be relativistic. Moreover, following Krausz's (2010) analysis of relativism, and more important what it is not, relativistic positions are not to be confused with extreme versions of subjectivism, in which every person's own, unique perspective of the world prevents the establishment of common grounds in any question regarding the representation of the world. Instead, relativism can also be used to describe different, but shared and comparable reference frameworks, something that is used in this dissertation with the distinction between methodological norms and cognitive aims on the three levels of schools of thought, paradigm-like groupings and conceptual schemes, where migration is possible and, thus, full incommensurability and incompatibility are denied. Lastly, Krausz (2010, p.22) also distinguishes between global and local relativism, where "a local relativist at the ontic level affirms that only *some* objects" and

164 Here, one could think, at least, of Marxist economics, since Baghramian (2010) identifies relativistic arguments in Marxism.

“at the epistemic level affirms that our knowledge of only some objects is frame-dependent”, whereas the global relativist ascribes frame-dependency to all objects. That being said, it seems reasonable to assume that eclecticism would maximally lead to local relativism, where only some objects, and the knowledge about such objects, are dependent on schools of thought and paradigm-like groupings, while others are not. This, however, would require further argumentation and research for clarification.

In conclusion, this chapter established a first defence against objections that were brought to my attention by peers and colleagues. As said before, there is plenty of room for further criticism, but for now these are the major and most interesting objections raised. They also gave the opportunity to further flush out the meaning and applicability of eclecticism in economics, and to provide some practical advice or consequences for economists and their research. Hence, it is believed that eclecticism can have a future in economic research and should be taken seriously by both heterodox and orthodox economists.

CHAPTER 5: THE ECLECTIC ECONOMIST CONCLUDED

Life is the art of drawing sufficient conclusions from insufficient premises. - Samuel Butler

This PhD research project, which resulted in this monograph, began with the aim of understanding eclecticism and asking whether it can be useful for pluralist economists, and ultimately, as it is the central aim of the heterodoxy I identify myself with, help in the advancement of the economic discipline. Over the past three years, the aim changed only slightly as to what the understanding of eclecticism, but also pluralism in economics, actually implies. The biggest change came with a shift from a mere understanding and application of eclecticism to a coherent justification for it, which was not only considered necessary but proved to be a gap in the eclectic literature that needed to be explored.

5.1. A SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGICAL PRELIMINARIES

In chapter 1, the pluralist literature in economics is briefly introduced in order to support the understanding of eclecticism, its possible role in economics, and its relationship with the heterodoxy and, in particular, pluralism. Hence, the first chapter lays the groundwork for the argument put forward in chapter 3 that eclecticism stands in close, sub-categorical relationship with pluralism. The support for this argument comes from the identification of key themes and positions held within the pluralist literature, which is shown to be similar with the eclectic arguments in chapter 2.

The key themes identified are ontological, epistemological, methodological and virtue pluralists' arguments. Beginning with the ontological discussion, it is shown that, although there is generally a significant discussion of ontology in economics, the question of ontological pluralism remains untouched. For this reason, literature conceptualising ontological pluralism from outside economics is consulted for clarification (Eklund, 2008, 2009, McDaniel, 2009, 2010a; b, 2013a; b, 2014). This conceptualisation suggests that there are different ways of being, expressed by different, restricted existential quantifiers in any given language (McDaniel, 2009, 2010a; b,

2013a; b, 2014). The underlying focus on the philosophy of language for the definition of ontological pluralism is important for reasons outlined in chapter 3, where the justification of eclecticism, and eclectic choice, builds, among other elements, on different ontological utterances.

While ontologically in some way vague, although, at the same time, sophisticated enough for argumenta ad complexity, the pluralist central conclusion in epistemology claims uncertainty of knowledge, i.e. the absence of decisive factors determining what counts as (scientific) knowledge and what does not (Gettier, 1963; McCloskey, 1994; Dow, 2007). Instead of one best way to create or define knowledge, certain sets of criteria can be formulated to establish what we would call scientific knowledge, whereas Schurz (2011) names minimal realism, minimal empiricism, fallibilism and intersubjective objectivity as a good set of candidates. Despite the argument that this is a very good set for defining scientific knowledge, Schurz (2011) remains open to different or further criteria. Finally, these sets are used to define epistemological pluralism in this dissertation, which is used again in chapter 3 to conceptualise the eclectic choice.

A similar theme to the epistemological uncertainty can be found in the literature regarding methodological pluralism, where there is no best, single method to conduct (economic) research (Caldwell, 1982, 1997; Dow, 2014). This insight is in contrast to a positivist understanding of science and is closely related to the uncertainty of knowledge, which ultimately leads the proponents of such a post-positivistic philosophy in economics to argue that as a result of this absence of a single method, a diversity of methods and methodologies must not only be tolerated but applied for the improvement of the discipline itself (Caldwell, 1982; Dow, 1985, 1997, 2004, 2007; Lawson, 2006; Mäki, 1997; Negru and Bigo, 2008; Negru, 2009). Methodological pluralism is also the most developed and covered of all three areas of pluralism, ontological, epistemological and methodological, in the heterodox literature.

Lastly, the pluralist literature contains contributions less focused on ontological, epistemological or methodological arguments, which make their case for pluralism based on the virtue of tolerance. The claims for tolerating other schools of thought in economics range from the need for intellectual conversation among different groups to make any advancement (Caldwell, 1982; Garnett, 2006, 2011) over the absence of isolated methods in science and therefore the need to accept the contextual environment they are situated in (Samuels, 1997a; b, 1998) to an apologetic 'live and let live'

tolerance, which is based on the idea of isolated and incommensurate schools of thought (Lee, 2011a; b). Although this literature is, in its arguments, slightly separated from the previously discussed claims for pluralism, it is obvious that the virtue of tolerance is an essential characteristic of the pluralist and the eclectic, as it guarantees a mind-set for the acceptance of different schools of thought and their potential value for the discipline, and prohibits a strong discriminatory tendency otherwise said to be found among monists.

Finally, the chapter concludes with how heterodoxy and orthodoxy have been differentiated and what is meant by schools of thought in economics, as these are reoccurring themes in the heterodox and pluralist literature, and are also important for this dissertation. The dichotomy between heterodoxy and orthodoxy, and their respective schools of thought, is difficult to draw. A common way to distinguish them is to argue that the orthodoxy is monist in its methodology. However, this argument does not hold as even the current mainstream is more open to incorporating different methodological approaches (Colander, 2000). Another way is to argue that the ontology of the orthodoxy is particularly closed-system, while the heterodoxy has an open-system ontology (Dow, 2000; Chick and Dow, 2005; Lawson, 1997, 2003b). As a result of this difference, Lawson (2006) argues that the core of the heterodox rejection of the orthodoxy is ontological in nature. The problem here is, however, that the heterodox economists have no coherent definition for schools of thought and that this rejection might be the only commonality heterodox schools of thought have, and therefore there is little to no room for intellectual exchange (Negru and Bigo, 2008). These problems have led to a new conceptualisation of schools of thought in chapter 3 and, in some way, the orthodoxy and heterodoxy in economics. This is loosely inspired by Negru's (2007) argument to understand schools of thought as communities of academics with shared beliefs, interests and ontological, epistemological and methodological stances.

5.2. A SUMMARY OF ECLECTICISM: PAST AND PRESENT

After the positions of pluralism are outlined in chapter 1, chapter 2 explores the philosophical concept of eclecticism. This investigation is roughly divided into three chronologically ordered periods, namely ancient, early enlightenment and modern eclecticism, as well as additional thematic concepts of idealistic eclecticism and criticism of eclecticism, in order to extrapolate the meanings of and develop a working

definition for eclecticism. The latter is required, as argued, because there is no suitable definition of eclecticism in the literature that acknowledges the rich history of this concept and satisfies the needs of this research.

Historically, Donini (1988) summarises six understandings of eclecticism in the mostly enlightenment literature. Firstly, and still prominent today, is a negative interpretation of eclecticism as an uncritical mixture of philosophical elements, thoughts and theories, which Donini (1988) sees originating from Zeller (1883) and Hegel (Reinicke, 1979). Secondly, there is a rather value-free evaluation of eclecticism defining it as a sect, in which philosophers combine elements from different sources. Thirdly, eclecticism as defined by Moraux (1984) as an *intentional orthodoxy* where philosophers commit themselves to a specific sect but include elements of others, because they are convinced these elements are compatible and helpful for their work. Fourth, pedagogical eclecticism that does not discriminate philosophical sects when taught in the classroom. Instead, they are presented as equals and the students are given the choice which of these sect to prefer. Fifth, eclecticism as treatment of philosophical sects as equal and an additional anti-dogmatic and anti-sectarian stance, and finally the specific attempt by Antiochus of Ascalon to combine Platonism, Aristotelianism and Stoicism into one sect. From these six conceptualisations Donini (1988) dismisses all but two and three for reasons outlined in chapter 2, while the proposed definition in this dissertation makes reference to the anti-dogmatic attitude that was apparent in the eclectic literature.

Eclecticism in the latest period, in the modern research literature of psychology, pedagogy, mixed method research, sociology and economics and law, distinguishes itself from the historical texts by means of developments of 20th century philosophy of science, and therefore adopts specific ontological, epistemological and methodological arguments which, eventually, makes this eclecticism and pluralism quite similar. Ontologically, the notion of a rather complicated, or even complex, object of inquiry can be found across the literature (see, for instance, Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin, 2011; Køppe, 2012). The nature of the objects of inquiry, for instance the ability of proportional reasoning among children, generates the epistemological and methodological arguments that state that different strategies and approaches are required to investigate, i.e. proportional reasoning can be explained, partially, by the cognitive development of the human brain and the social environment the child is situated in (Da Rocha Falcão and Hazin, 2011). In conclusion, theories, or single methods, are on their own, due to their own limitations (see also, with regards to economics and social

sciences, Albert, 1994a; b; Albert, Darell and Maier-Rigaud, 2012), not able to examine an object of inquiry thoroughly enough. Moreover, the eclectic literature, especially from the mixed method research community, rejects partially, or fully, Kuhn's (2012) incommensurability thesis and his paradigmatic view of science.

From this wide range of historical and modern literature a suitable definition of eclecticism is synthesised by taking some of the aspects of previous definitions. One of the central aspects of eclecticism seems to be an anti-sectarianism. Despite Donini's (1988) rejection of it, and Sanderson's (1987) claim that this anti-dogmatism is itself dogmatic, this aspect is included, as it appears to have a pivotal role in the modern eclectic literature and will be translated respectively into the context of economics. Secondly, in relation to Moraux (1984) the notion of intentionality is likewise highlighted as important. The reason for this lies in the dismissal of accidental eclecticism, i.e. eclecticism as conceptualised in this dissertation always implies intentional behaviour. As a result of the review of the literature, eclecticism shall be understood as a philosophical *leitmotif* for the individual researcher to be unprejudiced, to have no commitment to a particular school of thought and to treat them as *a priori* valuable for the pursuit of one's research aspiration by deliberately choosing from the available range of historical and modern economic concepts, ideas, theories and practices.

The implications of this definition are important for the understanding of the following chapter in which the justification of eclecticism is developed. Most important is the exploration of choice in the context of eclecticism. The eclectic intentionally chooses from, for instance, different schools of thought without commitment to one of them. This leads to the question of how choice can be made, especially in the absence of guiding principles, or where some of them are originating from these schools of thought. The relationship of guiding principles for choice and schools of thoughts, among other group-oriented concepts/discussions, is further explored in chapter 3 with the help of contemporary philosophy of social science literature. Secondly, this definition also hints at the relationship between pluralism and eclecticism, which is likewise finally explained in chapter 3.

5.3. A SUMMARY OF ECONOMIC ECLECTICISM

The main chapter, which develops the justification for the eclectic choice, the principal question derived from definitions based on the historical and modern eclectic literature, begins with a comparison of elements of pluralism and eclecticism outlined in the previous two chapters. Especially modern eclectics and pluralists, due to the influence of contemporary philosophy of science literature, make their case for the absence of 'one size fits all' methods/theories, which also implies somewhat shared ontological positions of the nature of the object of inquiry. Both pluralists and eclectics use this insight to call for a plurality of methods to investigate such complicated, or even complex, objects. Secondly, both pluralists (Dow, 2007) and eclectics (Koro-Ljungberg, 2004) acknowledge that knowledge can be produced differently and that there is no best way to discriminate one way over another. Finally, tolerating different theoretical approaches, or schools of thought, is inherent in both the eclectic and the pluralist literature, with the latter having it promoted even more strongly by some pluralists as shown in chapter 1 (Caldwell, 1982; Samuels, 1997a; b, 1998, Garnett, 2006, 2011, Lee, 2011a; b). As a result of these similarities, while acknowledging some differences, it is argued that eclecticism, with a focus on the individual researcher, is sub-categorical to pluralism, understood as a community effort. It is argued that one can be a pluralist without being an eclectic, i.e. approving different schools of thoughts etc. but committing oneself to one school only, while eclectics must be pluralists; eclecticism is pluralism within the individual.

With the relationship between pluralism and eclecticism clarified, the remainder of the chapter shifts its focus to the question of how eclectic choice can be explained, made and justified. For this, the 20th century literature from philosophy of science with regards to rational theory choices is discussed, divided into pro and contra rational choice. Both sides essentially agree with, for instance, Kuhn (2012, p.200), who concludes that "[t]here is no neutral algorithm for theory-choice, no systematic decision procedure". However, following MacIntyre (1977, 1984, 1988), Laudan (1978, 1987, 1996) as well as Lakatos (1978), Shweder (1986) and Kaiser (1991), choice can be justified even if those 'algorithms', or guiding principles, are non-neutral. Hence, the following three arguments pro-choice are made: in the absence of an objective rationality, i.e. no objective guiding principles, epistemological crises, which frustrate specific schools of thought's or paradigm-like grouping's narratives, can assist to acknowledge the need for change or migration from within a relative framework

(MacIntyre, 1977, 1984, 1988). Secondly, it is suggested to understand these rational frameworks as means-end relations of cognitive aims and methodological norms (Laudan, 1978, 1987, p.25, 1996; Kaiser, 1991) with them being formulated either in hypothetical or straight-forward imperatives of the form “if your [cognitive] aim is e, you ought [or have] to do m”. Thirdly, these cognitive aims and methodological norms range from universal over paradigm-like groupings to non-universal (Shweder, 1986). The universal cognitive aims and methodological norms are allocated within general conceptual schemes and world views, defining interpretive behaviour and conceptualisations, while paradigm-like aims and norms, as they suggest, determine more specific rationalities for scientific endeavour. The way eclecticism in this dissertation is rationalised, makes use specific aims and norms from a pluralist framework. It is argued that commitment to these is reasonable unless some better arguments are found or needed after one migrates. This is to say that even eclecticism itself, as rationalised in this dissertation, must be subject to epistemological crises in order to develop. Finally, non-universal cognitive aims and methodological norms are found at the level of schools of thought, thus defining their discursive, communal nature (Negru, 2007).

With these three arguments in mind, eclectic choice is now understood as migrating movements between these different cognitive aims and methodological norms. While the migration between the non-universal aims and norms of schools of thought is said, and demonstrated, to be feasible, eclectic choice between higher level aims and norms, paradigm-like groupings and conceptual schemes, becomes increasingly difficult, with the latter assumed to be almost impossible. Moreover, with MacIntyre's (1977, 1984, 1988) notion of epistemological crises, migration is not only possible but also beneficial, as eclecticism thus creates constant tension by frustrating the ideas, practices, methods, theories etc. from different schools of thought and paradigm-like groupings. This tension created by eclecticism's use of epistemological crises resembles to some extent Feyerabend's (1993) epistemological anarchism, which likewise concludes the inexistence of invariable methodological rules governing the advancement of science and is specifically referred to in the discussion about rational theory choices. Nonetheless, other than his methodological anarchism eclecticism does not attest schools of thought or paradigm-level groupings to be strongly ideological in their nature.

This is not to say that epistemological crises are the objective guiding principle whose existence is denied in the first place. These crises are themselves embedded in a framework and can be formulated in a hypothetical imperative like 'if your aim is to *progress your school of thought*, you ought to *cause an epistemological crisis*'. Moreover, if this imperative is shared across research traditions, it still is not neutral. Being shared by several communities does not imply neutral objectivity (Miner, 2011). The acceptance of this imperative is dependent on the community of researchers who themselves formulate the cognitive aims and methodological norms that define their very own school of thought. If it is incommensurate to the cognitive aims and methodological norms of the relevant community, then a strategy of changing the presumption as shown by D'Agostino (2014) can be applied to solve any issue.

5.4. A SUMMARY OF POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS

The final chapter discusses five criticism, namely Sheila Dow's (2007) argument that eclecticism is incoherent pluralism, that eclecticism is not feasible, eclecticism provides just another argument for mixed-method research, that eclecticism is pragmatism in disguise and that eclecticism leads to relativism. All of these criticisms have been raised by peers and colleagues in several discussions and presentations in the past three years, with the exception of the first one. With regards to the first, it is argued that Dow's (2007) point, that eclecticism is merely unstructured pluralism, is refuted by the justification of eclecticism outlined in chapter 3. This chapter shows that eclectics have selection criteria and that the epistemological crises used for the justification give eclecticism a reasonable structure. What is, however, rejected is the existence of objective, i.e. independent of any reference framework, criteria for choice, which includes those outlined for eclecticism itself.

The second criticism about the feasibility of eclectic research stems from the argument that the application of various methods, theories, cognitive aims and methodological norms or even concepts from different schools of thought, paradigm-like groupings and even conceptual schemes requires the researcher to devote quite a lot of time and resources to learn and conduct her research. In modern academic life, however, the researcher might not have this time and these resources available to her, due to limitations by administrative and teaching duties as well as deadlines. These practical limitations would make eclectic research extremely difficult, if not impossible.

Although it is true that these realities of everyday research limit the possibility of eclectic research, it remains, as argued, possible to conduct such research in the long run. Then, eclectic research can be conducted over several years with the prospect of publishing preliminary findings. This is already a common practise in the sciences, where preliminary findings are published in projects with more generous or no deadlines to indicate the progress of that project. On the other hand, this means that eclectic research is not applicable for short-term research projects with definitive deadlines, but this only limits the range of possible eclectic research for the economist. At the end, it appears that eclectic research is more suitable for the fundamental, grand questions in the discipline.

The third critical point that is raised is the question of whether eclecticism is just another way of promoting mixed method research. It is true that there are several, overlapping themes between eclecticism and mixed-method research, and as chapter 2 shows there are arguments for eclecticism in the mixed-method research literature. It is, however, argued that there are differences in the cognitive aims and methodological norms of mixed-method research and eclecticism and that mixed-method research is situated somewhere between schools of thoughts and paradigm-like groupings with a fixed framework of concepts without the need or willingness to migrate. In fact, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) specifically argue that mixed-method research works best under pragmatism as a philosophical framework, while eclecticism, as developed in chapter 3, clearly includes migration in higher levels of paradigm-like groupings. Hence, while eclecticism and mixed-method research appear to be equal on the level of method or even theory choice, they differ when it comes to higher level frameworks with different cognitive aims and methodological norms.

Fourthly, the question was brought to my attention whether the argument developed for eclecticism is not simply a new way to promote (American) Pragmatism. This question was raised when both arguments for eclecticism and pluralism were presented to peers and colleagues and would mean, if true, that the novelty of eclecticism would diminish or even disappear. It is argued, however, that the similarities between eclecticism and pragmatism do not arise because they are identical, but rather through the influence pragmatic thinkers had on contemporary philosophy of science. Therefore, the influx of pragmatic ideas and concepts found their way through philosophy of science not only into eclectic and pluralist literature, but other modern philosophical schools of thought. Moreover, it is also shown that pragmatic thinkers differ from each other in their own

conceptualisation of pragmatism and thus, there is no real homogeneous pragmatic school itself. The only overarching characteristic of pragmatism is an identity giving 'us', as found in other schools of thought, that could be used to delimit the members from others. One of the important contributions to contemporary philosophy, i.e. the shift in focus towards the importance of language, seems to come from pragmatist Richard Rorty (1979, 1980, 1989, 1992, 1998), among others. It is thus natural that these pragmatic influences occur in this research dissertation, and its justification for eclecticism, where the importance of linguistics also plays a certain role. Yet, this does not imply that eclecticism is just another form of pragmatism, as this argument could then be made for other philosophical positions with pragmatic influences while non-pragmatic influences must logically lead to the conflation of eclecticism and those non-pragmatic philosophical positions.

Finally, the concern that eclecticism leads to a relativistic position was raised, in the sense that we will arrive at some kind of 'everything goes' mentality with no theory or method selection criteria, truth criteria or any other certainties for the researcher. As a result of this critical point, it is shown that relativism has, just like pragmatism, influenced contemporary philosophy to some extent, that it is no surprise to find arguments resembling relativistic positions that support eclecticism, and pluralism for that matter. It is shown that some kinds of relativism are apparent in writings of Quine (1951), James (1979), Feyerabend (1993), Kuhn (2012), Lakatos (1970a; b, 1976, 1978) and Putnam (1981a, 1982, 1987a, 2002), indicating the range of different philosophers who had relativistic ideas. Moreover, it is shown that relativistic positions should not be confused with extreme versions of subjectivism, in which individuals' own unique perspective or experience of the world prevents the formation of common grounds regarding the representation of the world (Krausz, 2010). Additionally, we can distinguish between local and global relativism, in which "a local relativist at the ontic level affirms that only some objects" and "at the epistemic level that our knowledge of some objects [are] frame-dependent" (Krausz, 2010, p.22), i.e. our understanding of some objects is independent of our schools of thought, while the global relativism ascribe frame-dependency to everything. Although frame-dependency plays an important role for the justification of eclecticism, the rationale in this dissertation itself remains agnostic to whether this is locally or globally relativistic and it is argued that eclecticism would maximally lead to local relativism. Eclecticism is thus relativistic as it uses arguments for the existence of different but comparable reference frameworks.

5.5. WHAT THE FUTURE MIGHT BRING

Like in every PhD research, there are things unmentioned, things undone, things underdeveloped. This is likewise true for this dissertation. Therefore I wish to outline three aspects or issues with regards to eclecticism in economics, which have, purposefully, not been discussed here, mostly due to restrictions in scope and length of this dissertation. At the time of writing, four major issues with regards to eclecticism are left open for future exploration. Firstly, identifying eclecticism in the historic economic literature. Secondly, intentionality and agency of the eclectic economist. Thirdly, eclecticism and its pedagogical meaning for curriculum development. Fourth, the relationship between eclecticism and truth theories.

The literature review has shown that the identification of eclecticisms in the writings of historical figures is, due to the lack of decisive criteria, rather difficult. This is even more amplified with intentionality as the defining characteristic of eclecticism used in this dissertation, as an absence of intentionality strictly means an absence of eclecticism. However, when it comes to interpretation, rather than application, of eclecticism, different criteria might have to be applied and Moraux's (1984) conceptualisation of intentional and de facto orthodoxy might be the best candidate for such interpretation. With the tool for interpretation set out, the next step is to find sources of interpretation. Bronk (2009) and Viner (1927) list Robert Malthus, John Stuart Mill, Alfred Marshall, Adam Smith and John Maynard Keynes as possible eclectic candidates, whose work would have to be analysed and interpreted with Moraux's (1984) conceptualisation of intentional and de facto orthodoxy. Although such analysis yields, most likely, very interesting insights, the needed scope of such interpretative work requires, as argued, a PhD research project in the history of economic thought itself and, therefore, does not fit into this dissertation.

Secondly, the presupposed intentionality in the definition of eclecticism is suffice to distinguish eclectic choice from accidental adoption of elements from outside schools of thought or paradigm-like groupings in this thesis. However, it might be necessary for the future to draw upon works of Anscombe (2000), Searle (1983) and Dennett (1989), to name a few, on intentionality to explore its relationship with eclectic choice and the cognitive aims and methodological norms on all described levels. Especially Anscombe's (2000) analysis of intentionality and human action appears to be promising

for the analysis of these aspects of eclecticism and may further help to understand overall agency of eclectic economists.

Thirdly, eclecticism in pedagogy, especially with regards to Hegel's (Reinicke, 1979) interpretation of Potamo of Alexandria or in the way Taggart (1955) promotes it, may help to justify curriculum change in economics, and a greater inclusion of different schools of thoughts, as well as the history of economic thought, and the application of different pedagogical tools by the teacher. Although teaching is an aspect of modern academic life that is as important as research, I made the decision to develop the justification for eclectic choice purely with regards to economic research. The focus on research is, I would suggest, much more challenging, while arguments for eclectic teaching may not only require a slightly different justification, but may also be more straight-forward. Hence, a slightly less lengthy research project may lead to some insights or arguments about where eclecticism can be used in the classroom and may support the wider push for curricula change.

Finally, the relationship between eclecticism and truth has remained mostly untouched in this dissertation. The reason for this is, again, the scope of this dissertation. Although the linguistic aspects discussed in this dissertation, such as framework-dependent conceptualisations, imply some kind of relativity with regards to truth, i.e. sentences about conceptualisations come out true in the relevant framework but false in others, the relationship between truth and eclecticism, and more specific truth theories, is not explored in much detail. It is hinted that eclectics could be either truth relativists, pluralists or totally agnostic towards truth. However, a detailed examination of truth theories for the development of a conceptualisation of eclectic truth would mean extensive research that, with the already conducted justification of eclectic choice, would certainly go beyond the scope of a PhD dissertation. The potential importance of an eclectic theory of truth, on the other hand, justifies and motivates future research that will build upon the arguments brought forward in this research.

5.6. FINALLY SOME FINAL WORDS

In summary, I have achieved my aims to develop an understanding of eclecticism in this dissertation and to present a reasonable justification for the use of eclecticism in economics, and possibly other social sciences. The central question, which emerged

from the reviewed literature on eclecticism, which spans over several centuries in human history, about the possibility to justify eclectic choice on the levels of method, theory, paradigm-like groups or even conceptual schemes, as defined by cognitive aims and methodological norms, can be and has been formulated successfully in this dissertation. Eclecticism therefore allows the individual researcher to conduct her research in a new way, a way in which migration between cognitive aims and methodological norms is possible in these various levels. Migration is not only possible and desirable for its own sake, but also helps in producing advancements in, at least, the schools of thought in economics, and the discipline itself, by frustrating them with induced epistemological crises. Hence, the eclectic economist is free to migrate, uncommitted to a single school of thought and refrains from being dismissive *a priori* towards any of them. At the end, to paraphrase Diderot (see Donini, 1988, p.19), the eclectic economists may become those economists “who are the kings on the face of the earth”, or the eclectic economist may realise what George Shackle (1952, as cited in Steele, 2004) had in mind when talking about the 'complete economist'.

6. REFERENCES

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