

# Shared economic thought and the neglect of social costs. Why progressive economists often stick to conventional wisdom

*P. Ramazzotti*

## **Abstract**

The paper deals with the lack of attention that many socially-minded economists pay to social issues, with social costs being a special case. It argues that while these economists acknowledge that social costs exist and are rooted in the way the economy functions, they do not frame their economic inquiries accordingly because they believe that scientific dialogue is possible only by accepting a commonly shared ground for scientific inquiry, which focuses on restricted but generally accepted goals. This behavior obscures a major implication of systemic openness, i.e. that the choice of goals and the way scientific inquiry is carried out do not depend on once and for all criteria but require the explicit formulation of a range of value judgments. The conclusion of the paper is that it is possible to deal with social issues and to carry out a scientific dialogue but this requires a two tier dialogue: one relates to the shared grounds of inquiry; the other to the specific issues to be investigated.

*Paolo Ramazzotti*, Università degli Studi di Macerata.  
E-mail: ramazzotti@unimc.it.