

# **GIURISPRUDENZA E AUTORITÀ INDEPENDENTI NELL'EPOCA DEL DIRITTO LIQUIDO**

**STUDI IN ONORE DI ROBERTO PARDOLESI**

A cura di F. Di Ciommo e O. Troiano

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# **Giurisprudenza e autorità indipendenti nell'epoca del diritto liquido**

## **Studi in onore di Roberto Pardolesi (A cura di F. Di Ciommo e O. Troiano)**

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# The Equivalence of Political and Economic Allocations

di Pier Giuseppe Monateri

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**Summary:** 1. Introduction. – 2. Definitions. – 3. The Theorem. – 4. Conclusions

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## 1. INTRODUCTION.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze what happens when “violence”, threats and self-help are introduced into the economic models.

This argument has been treated many times within the so-called “Blackmail” debate (Brown, 1993) but never in a way so straightforward as I try to do here, and often with a set of moral, or legal presuppositions that have nothing to do with pure economic models.

The real matter at stake here is *not* blackmail, which has long been a subject distracting the attention of scholars, but global allocation, as it is molded by international relations. The framework of these relations has, indeed, a strong correlation (Schelling, 1960, p. 13) with blackmail in the process of coercion and bargain, but I think it needs a different appraisal. States, and other kinds of political agents, live in an “anarchical” context largely based on self-help (Waltz, 1979, p. 106). This continues to be true under the current developments in International Law (Koskenniemi, 2001).

All this implies that the states must produce the means of their own protection. Therefore in international politics, self-help is a main issue, and, of course, self-help is nothing but the actual or threatened use of force – violence – to assert, protect and defend interests.

From this standpoint, an internal legal order requires force to ensure rights, including Human Rights, and performances of duties, and so it needs force – violence – to produce a given legal and economic outcome. As a consequence, the difference between internal politics and local economic allocations, and international politics and global allocations, rests only in a different organisation of violence. It is the peculiar transparency produced by the setting of state actions that renders more visible and then necessary to analyze violence in the production of allocations. Henceforth, the real subject matter of this paper is an economic appraisal of international politics as a structure of anarchy, where political agents must recur to self-help to reach a global allocation of lands, powers and goods. But my aim is to show that starting from these premises much more general conclusions can be derived.

The argument takes the following paths: the second section introduces a small number of simple definitions, standard assumptions about rationality, and *one further assumption* that can be called the “assumption of rational attack and defense”.

From this, the third section builds an elementary theory of violent allocations, in the form of a theorem, from which the major conclusions are derived. The conclusions are then stated in the fourth-section, and the claim is:

- a) Under standard assumptions there is no difference between a market allocation and a political allocation; and so that there is no inner superiority in a market allocation in comparison with a political one;
- b) If we move away from these standard assumptions, then the only real economic problem becomes a “political” problem, and there cannot be efficient conclusions which are *independent* from an initial allocation of force and resources.

## 2. DEFINITIONS.

Let be

[def1]  $SM = \text{a distributive social function producing pure "market allocations"}$

I.e., a social distribution of goods, which is the outcome of mere win-win transactions among parties exchanging their property rights to resources, in a way that if all the win-win transactions are allowed, then all resources will be allocated to their best social use, independently from any starting allocation, and the Net Social Gain will be positive.

[def2]  $SP = \text{a distributive social function producing pure "political allocations"}$ .

This social function does not represent the outcome of contracts on property rights; at the opposite, it represents a social function, where every allocation happens violently: the goods are distributed *not* on the basis of the willingness to pay for them, or preference for liquidity, but on the basis of the possibility to recur to violence by the involved parties in this society.

In this way a definition of “The Political” is adopted as the choice between friend or foe, and so as the decision between alliance or war, where everything is determined by the pure capacity of a party to mobilize a force (by its *MobilisierungsMacht*); i.e., on the pure possibility, or threat, of an actual use of violence.

This definition of the *Political* is selected because being the *strongest* definition ever given of it, if my theories hold for it, then they will also easily hold for weaker definitions.

In these terms the first definitions can be re-read as:

[def1b]  $SM = \text{non-violent allocation}$

[def2b]  $SP = \text{violent allocation}$

It is then clear enough that if  $SM$  is based on pure win-win transactions, then  $SP$  allows room for the possibility of win-lose transactions, *without* compensations: resources are simply at the disposition of the strongest, and, as such, there are not really *properties* but only *possessions*.

Then, let be

[def 3]  $NSG = \text{The Net Social Gain}$

[def 4]  $BU = \text{The Best User of a given resource for society}$

[def 5]  $WU = \text{The Worst User of a resource for society}$

[def 6]  $r = \text{any resource whatsoever}$

[def 7]  $v(r) = \text{the value of that resource in terms of the expected utility for its use by each party as represented by } u^1, \dots, u^n \text{ so that the } v(r)^n \text{ will always be the } u^n, \text{ i.e., the utility derived from its possession by its user; the optimal } v(r)^* \text{ for society will then be equivalent to the expected utility of its best user.}$

Now, let be

[def 8]  $Atk$  = the cost of attacking another to take its possessions, so that  $Atk=f(c^i)$ : an attack by  $i$  is a function of its cost of attacking, i.e., of producing violence;

[def 9]  $Def$  = the cost of resisting an unwanted taking by another, so that  $Def=f(c^j)$ : the defence of  $j$  is a function of  $j$ 's costs of organising the defence; i.e., of producing violence.

So I can define

[def 10]  $A$  = the initial allocation, whatever it is

[def 11]  $\Omega$  = the final outcome, the final allocation produced by a social distributive function  $SM$  or  $SP$ .

It follows immediately that NSG is positive if  $\Omega > A$ , and negative in the opposite situation.

Finally, let be

[def 12]  $PAR$  = a pure world of Pareto, where NSG is just the algebraic sum of the parties' pay-offs, in comparison with

[def 13]  $KH$  = a world of Kaldor-Hicks where NSG is to be calculated only after ex post compensations for unwanted transactions, where

[Def 14]  $COMP$  = is the ex post compensation paid to a losing party in a win-lose transaction in a  $KH$ -world.

Then let's retain all the usual assumptions that parties here are fully rational, with complete knowledge, because those are the strongest assumptions supporting neo-classical market theories, in a way that, again, if my theories held in this case, they can also hold in case of weaker assumptions.

Finally *further* assume that:

[Assumption 1] The Assumption of Rational Attack and Defense

Given the above definitions [6,8,9]

*if Atk = Def, then r will remain in its initial allocation*

I.e., one can assume that, if  $\Delta$  represents the difference between  $Atk$  and  $Def$ , then Assumption 1 becomes that:

*if  $\Delta = Atk^i - Def$ ,*

*if  $\Delta$  is positive, then i wil take r from j,*

*if  $\Delta$  is negative j will retain her possession.*

This assumption is equivalent to the assumption that parties win only if their attack, for whatever reason, is better than their foe's defense.

In these definitions, it is also patent to presume that possessions are already assigned in one way or another. In the case of a totally new world, where no possession is already allocated, evidently one would have to compare only  $Atk^i \dots Atk^n$ , because all resources are yet to be taken, so that there is no defending or attacking party, but all parties will be symmetrically attacking one another for the possession of goods.

This assumption implies also that a party's capacity to recur to violence is a cost. The problem of violence is reduced to their possibility of mobilizing their forces, and that this possibility depends purely on their costs of mobilization, as the costs of using force, and that, all parties being equally rational, *victory or defeat depend only on the parties' investments in the use of force*.

This is true even if by nature a party is much physically stronger than the other. First of all, because to remain strong, one has to train and invest in its own fitness, and in the model there are no limitations to technology, so that the other party can freely invest in weapons, training and martial arts, etc., to enhance its respective force. Secondly,  $Atk$  and  $Def$  as costs may include intelligence, or other uncanny qualities, whose use is *costly* and whose utility can be improved by investments. So, here,  $Atk$  and  $Def$  are not exclusively physical force, but also all the intellectual ability to use force in the most efficient way to defeat one's foe, given the fight's particular circumstances.

If one party is naturally born stronger or quicker than another, in a neo-classical model, this simply means that this party will enjoy cheaper recourse to force, but this consideration does not alter the fact that the use of force here is a mere cost of production, not different from other costs of production, as long as the control of resources is at stake.

The only assumption made is, then, that if a party wins it is only because it used in a more efficient way its *Atk* or *Def*, considered as investments necessary to take or maintain control of resources.

If a party that is not investing anything in *Atk* or *Def*, this simply means that for this party, *r* is valueless.

Of course, in a real world situation, victory and defeat can depend on external variables, such as weather, acts of God, earthquakes or similar contingencies happening during the fighting. These elements can be represented by a probabilistic distribution "*p*". But since, here, all parties are equally and perfectly rational, with a complete knowledge of the world, it is part of their investments in the use of force to take into account, and *discount*, these contingencies, and internalize them in their decisions about *Atk* or *Def*; so that adding "*p*" will only complicate the formulas, but not alter in any way the reasoning.

### 3. THE THEOREM.

Given the previous definitions and assumptions, the discussion starts from the standard situation in neo-classical models.

Then assume that the whole of society is composed by just two individuals, *i* and *j*, and that victory or defeat are simply a variable of the actual investment by each of them in their use of force, including intelligence, so that:

*If Atk = Def, then r remains where it is;*

*i.e., SP (above [def2: a distributive social function producing pure "political allocations"] does not change the initial allocation A), or, in other terms,*

*given SP, then A = Ω.*

In this way, remember [Assumption 1] that

$\Delta = Atk^i - Def^i$ ,

*so that if Δ is positive then i will take r from j,*

*and if Δ is negative j will retain its possession.*

All this assumes the parties are rational, then it follows that:

- any *Atk* by *i* will occur if  $v(r)^i > Atk^i$ , i.e. if  $u^i > Atk^i$

- any *Def* will occur if  $Def^j \leq v(r)^j$ , i.e. if  $Def^j \leq u^j$

Since, according to the above [def 10] and [def 11]:

$Atk^i = f(c^i)$ , and  $Def^j = f(c^j)$

it is clear that

$Atk^i$  must be  $< u^i$ ;

and that, as discussed,

$Def^j$  must be  $\leq u^j$ ,

it follows that:

*i will take r from j if i = BU*

where BU [def 4] is the Best Social User of the resource at stake.

i.e.,

*SP will change A, if i = BU,*

*and so by definition*

$$SP \rightarrow \sigma [\Omega > A]$$

Therefore a political (violent) allocation will produce a state of the world ( $\sigma$ ) with a distribution that is superior to the initial allocation, and consequently  $NSG > 0$ , the Net Social Gain will be positive.

The simple conclusion is that  $i$  will attack only if its expected return will be higher than its actual costs, given that the reversal is true for  $j$ , who will defend its control of the resources up to the limit of its expected utility, so it is clear that the winner is the Best User of  $r$ , and henceforth that in the case of a violent allocation, under the above stated assumptions, the Net Social Gain will be positive, *and that the resources gravitate to their best possible social uses.*

This plainly means that in a violent world, which is also rational, as defined above, where violence is allowed, and there are no properties but just possessions, resources are allocated to their best uses.

Then, given these premises, there is no difference between a violent and a market allocation, i.e., *NSG is indifferent if society selects SP or SM as a Distributive Social Function.*

The result is that, for the purposes of society and efficiency,

$$SP \approx SM$$

i.e., a political allocation is as efficient as a market allocation, and there is no inner superiority in a market allocation in respect to a political allocation, from the standpoint of the efficient uses of resources, and of the Net Social Gain.

The objection that a party can have a cheaper recourse to violence, as to impose an allocation, which depends heavily on this fact, does not alter the result: *as long as violence becomes a cost of one of the factors of production* (i.e., the cost of controlling the resources is internalised within the model), the winner will anyway always be the best social user. This happens because this party minimises the costs of production of its expected utility, so that, all things being equal,  $u^i > u^j$  precisely because  $c(Atk)^i < c(Def)^j$ .

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS.

My conclusion at this point is that given the definitions and the assumptions made in the second section, there is no difference between an *SM* and an *SP*; i.e., there is no difference between a pure economic allocation and a pure political allocation. And especially, there is no theoretical possibility to maintain that there is any inner superiority, in respect of efficiency, between a market and a political allocation.

Moreover, if there is at least the cost of access to force, then the only real problem is the allocation of this cost, i.e. of power, defined as the cost of the actual or possible recourse to violence, and especially as the capacity of an efficient mobilisation and use of force against potential foes.

It seems trivial that if we do not allow violence, all of the resources invested in producing violence will be released for other purposes (Coase, 1988, 673) and the value of production will be increased, but *this is not* theoretically true, because the costs of avoiding violence still exist and it consists precisely in an actual or threatened use of violence against all parties willing to use it. The problem then becomes whether it is better to concentrate force or to allow force dispersed in society to work out

the possible allocations. The matter becomes considering “force” as part of the initial allocation of resources, and so to consider its re-allocation within society.

The mere shift from an anarchical system based on self-help and a “constituted” order based on a Leviathan (benign or evil) does not resolve in itself the problem of the social cost of the production of violence. In other terms the most important real economic problem becomes “political”.

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