

# The epistemic failure

“Often, the physicist arrives at a better, more economical description of nature if he can formulate the laws he observes through a principle of maximization. Often, the economist can achieve a better, more economical description of economic behavior by using the same instrument.”

**Paul A. Samuelson**

As long as economic decision has determinants other than those offered by the theory, Economics will remain an exercise of vain rhetoric. Dissecting the human mechanism of decision making is, in general, difficult. The post-enlightenment theoretical experience strives to have rational relevance, even though in matters of economy, as in any other activity which includes man and his dilemmatic universe, it illustrates failure.

The key to this situation lies hidden in the reductionism intrinsic to the theoretical approach which legitimates itself only through the rational consistence of the assertions. That which does not correspond to a congruently empiric scheme is eliminated from the explicative field.

The fatal step was taken by abandoning the analytical effort for the rituals of mathematical logic. The status of science was bestowed on Economics only if it let itself prey to formal simplifications. For things to have a measurable coherence there was a need for eliminating man from any deductive algorithm. Cybernetics had already replaced in the field of conceptualization the hesitant and too marred-by-the-subjective vision of Economics.

The scissiparous methods of mathematics and the instruments of quantitative based calculus have banished from the universitarian Agora the descriptive constructions, the explicative models, the inductive analyses, the personalized presuppositions that Economics was guilty of. Success belonged to the method. There was no need anymore to search into reality looking for solutions. Doubt and approximation were misplaced in any case!

The triumph of formalization over the essence of the Economy was complete. The solutions to the problems of economic performance would undoubtedly arise from the solving of equations. Not even planning had any need anymore for the analysis of market evolutions, as the infallible cybernetics had facile remedies at hand.

Mathematics has eliminated uncertainty, cybernetics has tamed risk, technology has sublimated rarity, management has rationalized decision, marketing has instrumentalized the law of offer and demand. The Economy became a mechanic, repetitive, massified, programmed, certain and eminently objective activity.

The exceptions that strengthen the rule are almost inconsequential. Public discernments confirm the accuracy of the perception of a reality seen only in terms of progress, growth, optimization, maximization. What counts is rhythm, accumulation, physical production, rational allocation of resources. The social perspective is reified because the individual option is forbidden.

The conquer of Economics by formalization was followed by the transformation of Economy into social

mechanics. In one case, man has been replaced by method, in the other case he has been incorporated into the machine. The unavoidable result was that Economics no longer needs vision, and the economic activity has no time to rest.

The bad part is that these epistemic and empirical wanderings continue to produce mayhem. Economics is today considered a science only if it makes abstraction of man, and economic activity is justified only if it ignores the social. A non-human Economics and an asocial economy are the inevitable consequences of the Enlightenment's paradigm, in which science is absolute power, and life is pure reason.

The symptom of formalization without restraint has favored the fragmentation of knowledge. The fury of legitimizing methodological sufficiency has created the barren monsters or the hermaphrodite métis of university disciplines, in a manner which sustained the illusion of the progress of knowledge. Not even the path of the interdisciplinary could save the collapse of communication and the informational chaos.

Mimicking the profundities by giving autonomy to themes and methods as part of the curricula has amplified the Babylonian fragmentation. Economics, by losing perspective, has run aground in the alluvia of diving in sub-concepts prefabricated for partial solutions, of an engineering nature.

Economics has industrialized. It is at most innovative in the way of the medicine that alleviates symptoms but does not cure diseases. Consulting replaces research, phenomenological expertise renders doctrine and vision useless. Theory has retreated in encyclopedias, Economics is trapped in dictionary pages.

The most unexpected result of the dilution of the epistemic force of Economics is the invasion of uncritical adoptions of conceptualizations from all over. The lack of epistemological consistency is theorized as a redeeming openness. Unfortunately, the disaster is fueled by the explosive of simulating scientific relevance.

The mixture of concepts is not only revealed as an indigestion of reason, but it also perverts the conceptual rigor and makes the cognitive framework relative. The respect towards the specifics of the object of knowledge is abandoned with professionalized carelessness, in reality, displaying itself with de-cultivated haughtiness.

The unexpected stake is the missing of the specific synthesis of Economics. The language of Economics becomes gibberish and the only thing it seems to convey is the epistemic failure. Furthermore, it handicaps the judgment of an important part of the generations of intellectuals that Economics might benefit from.

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