

Review of: "Economics Rationality in the World of Amartya Sen"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

In this paper Mariani did justice to a discussion of how Sen uncovers major problems in the broad way of thinking in economics today. The paper also presented the conception of rationality that Sen dismantled, and Sen's proposal to renew the conception of rationality. Mariani exhaustively considered different thoughts of economic rationality in the world of Amartya Sen ranging from his ethical concept to his rejection of two types of rationality in economics, namely: self-interest as a measure of rationality of action and the consistency of choice as a benchmark of rational action. Also, of note is the inclusion of welfare-economic considerations should be allowed to have some impact on actual behaviour.

Mariani's language of presentation is simple and devoid of economic jargons. The paper focuses on the critique of economic rationality that underlies Sen's thinking in many other ways. Furthermore, it uses a descriptive qualitative approach of phenomenology to gain understanding of beliefs and perception of others; and I believe this is appropriate for the focus of this paper. Diverse opinions in the paper lent credence to the objectivity of the presentation, examples are views of economists like Herbert Simon and Gary Becker, and epistemologist Hilary Putnam (to mention a few).

Mariani was critical of economics rationality in the world as portrayed by Sen and so disagreed with his definition. Mariani believes that Sen's opinion is not different from mere common sense, and that what is needed may be to prevent what is actually a way of thinking (epistemology) from slipping into a description of human nature (ontology). However, much as I agree with Mariani's position, ethical consideration seems to be gaining more ground in our modern world as values and sustainability are key economic considerations. This validates Sen's position as he introduced ethical concepts into economics with commitment as counter self-preference for his new concept of rationality.

Mariani identified a problem in the economic world, which is the attitude to receive the narrow definition of rationality uncritically, and has misled so many people. Consequently, selfishness is considered normal even self-interest maximization becomes a standard of rationality. The paper opines that this problem has similarities with the case of the bias definition of child abuse, and this issue was well analysed.

The paper pointed out Sen's position that the strict disconnection between economics and ethics has brought one of the major drawbacks of contemporary economic theory. I am also in agreement with Sen's proposal of a new concept that 'rationality (must be interpreted) as the discipline of subjecting one's choices - of actions as well as objectives, valued and priorities - to reasoned scrutiny.' This is expedient in our contemporary world.

Maybe Mariani could have explored economic rationality more in relation to means and the end. Contemporary world

reality cannot but consider both, as our economic world becomes more competitive and the reality of extinction of some resources is undeniable.

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