

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

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General Comments

I much enjoyed this article as it was orientated towards extending ideas – a much needed activity in a world where we are educated to regurgitate facts rather than creatively and critically think! It was interesting to examine rationality using the lens of Amartya Sen, the famous economist. The ideas proposed by Sen broaden the concept rather than provide an alternative.

Specific Comments

Personally, I would have liked the article to start with the common definition view of the rationality principle~~s~~ (as below) to provide a context to the discussion.

"The economic rationality principle claims that people behave rationally and consider choices and decisions logically, rather than involving emotional, moral, or psychological aspects. Rationality, for economists, just means you will choose the thing best liked, which is different from thinking about it as "sensible or reasonable". Although no one rationality view exists in all economic theories, the neoclassical concept provides a core idea - maximising subjective utility—the boosting of personal desires. Subjective utility may be assumed to equal self-interest (meeting wants & needs without regarding effects on others). However, they are not identical, as subjective utility allows that one might have preferences not only driven by self-interest. The neoclassical concept has critics. Some say that in not providing ethical criteria for choice, it fails to differentiate legitimate/illegitimate pursuits. Without principles, the theory is incomplete but not necessarily false. Others view it as a normative concept (applied to varied people and situations). Economically rational people would be required to maximise individual interests or utility, which might violate those of others. However, not all support this view. Defenders of the neoclassical concept argue that drive to maximise individual interests often leads to cooperation with others and, through the "invisible hand" of the market (idea that self-interested acts drive social welfare), to the common good".

This would give the background for Sen's view that self-interest is inadequate as we do act beyond our own welfare and

the idea of individual choice is not the same as preference with discipline an important aspect of rationality.

The discussion of Ian Hacking's work "*The Making and Molding of Child Abuse*" was useful in pointing out that the object of knowledge and language to express it requires options to make progress. The language experts use to define *child abuse* play a vital role in determining facts. Hacking holds that how we label people/events determines our view. This is important, as labels limit our perception and narrow thinking and possibilities. The conclusion states how we need to win back humanity areas usurped and narrowed by rationality demands. This is a key notion in our present world of identity politics and cancel culture.

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