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Pragmatic Humanism as Positivist Synthesis by Neuroeconomics and Technology Assessment

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Abstract

Pragmatic Humanism (PH) rejects the idea of abstract core values! Human conclusions must be rooted in empirical science as claimed by British Empiricism since the 18. Century. A contemporary positivist synthesis must guide both individual and collective behavior. The positive message is that a cognitive synthesis can be based on Neuroeconomic Psychology (NeP) guiding individual behavior and prioritization of collective needs by Universal Technology Assessment (UTA) as reviewed in this study on NeP and UTA constitutes a positivist synthesis disseminated a contemporary PH:

- *NeP is based on the Neuroeconomic Model (NeM) between identifies and Open-mindedness correlating positively with risk-willingness, while Consciousness, Agreeableness and Neuroticism correlate negatively with risk-willingness.*
- *UTA expands the scope of Health Technology Assessment (HTA) to a Universal Technology Assessment including Ecology by this Formula on the 3P:*

Quality-Adjusted Life Years (QALY) = F(People, Planet and Prosperity)

The marginal global net effect of UTA becomes negative before 2050, wherefore the transition to a carbon neutral economy must be speeded up! An effective OS-means to accelerate the greening of the economy is in an internationalized economy to subsidize alternatives to fossil-energy (ES) such as renewables and nuclear fission.

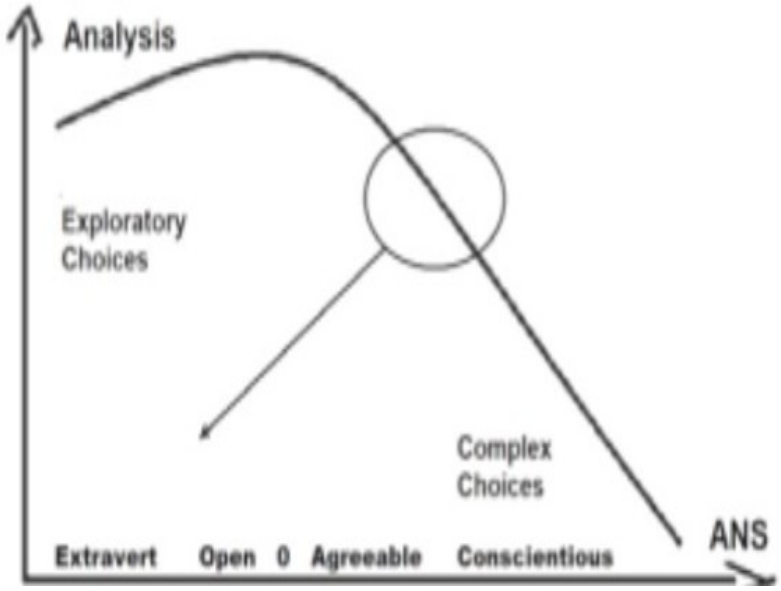
ES is discussed, because it contrasts mainstream economics recommending a tariff on fossil energy sources (ET). However, in an internalized economy ET has an internal contradiction, as it deteriorates the international competitiveness of the nation it aims to help. No positivist synthesis alternative to PH is found. Behavioral economists are the primary candidate to disseminate PH to the broad public.

Key words: Humanism, Pragmatism, Positivism, Synthesis, Logical empiricism, Hermeneutics, Neuroeconomics, Technology Assessment.

Introduction

British Empiricism (Bacon, Berkeley, Locke and Hume) recognized in the 18th Century that philosophy was based on prejudices by religion, tradition and personality[1]. To overcome prejudices, they recommended data-based falsification of theories before acceptance as a new positivist cognitive standard. This affected a peak of empirical specialism with explosive technological progress improving the broad conditions of life and Economics was formed to guide an optimal use of goods, services and economic solidarity[2]. A positivist synthesis must guide both individual and collective behavior. Individual economic behavior is by Neuroeconomic Psychology (NeP) in Fig. 1, ordering the Big5 by risk-willingness for guidance of individual economic behavior[3].

Fig. 1. Neuroeconomic Psychology (NeP) [3]



Note

NeP is based on the McLeanian " Triune Conception of Brain and Behavior":

1) The risk-will function is in this model identified by neuroeconomic trials
2) Correlation is evidenced between risk-will and the Big5 Typology
3) Since 1970,Open-minded has tripled becoming a prototype of creative class in the first society in history to unfold natural human creativity

Method

The natural sciences have overcome the subjective aspect, but in behavioral disciplines, scientists are both observers and actors. Table 1 shows the positivist method as applied in behavioral economics (BE). BE must explicitly state the project target group it represents. Subjective preferences dominate the choice of research issues in BE. Extraverts are per definition inclined to Type 2 Errors, while "Conscientious" are inclined to Type 1 Errors.

Table 1. Subjective Positivist Biases in Behavioral Economics [3]

Value-of-Thesis	Sample Indication	
	Accept	Reject
True	POSITIVIST KNOWLEDGE	Type 1 Error Subjective CONSCIENTIOUSNESS
False	Type 2 Error Subjective EXTRAVERSION	INTEGRITY

International scientific databases like Econ Lit, Medline, PsychInfo are searched for options of extending NeP to a positivist synthesis including a prioritization of collective needs.

RESULTS

A study finds that fulfillment of the 17 UNSG can be reduced to the 3P (People, Planet and Prosperity) [4-5]. The prioritization of benefits to People and Prosperity are already systematically integrated by Health Technology Assessment (HTA). So, HTA can be expanded to universality (UTA) including the "Planet" (Environmental dimension). This constitutes the following Formula for universal collective prioritization:

UTA = F(People, Planet, Prosperity) QALY

A broad parameter of the welfare of People is epidemic stress becoming the most heavy burden of disease about 2030[6]. Epidemic stress with annual costs of 2% of GDP gives 3 million deaths and another million with disabilities. The loss of QALY is already 100 million p.a.[7] and is expected by exponential growth to triple to >300 million QALY in 2050.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) warns 2024 that intensified natural disasters by global heating by 2050 will cost $12.5 Trillion USD corresponding to losses >2 billion QALY p.a.[8] A recent macroeconomic study concludes that the climate damages are even worse, already accounting for 30% of the global GDP with an exponential growth[9].

Life-Expectancy has redoubled by 200 years of economic growth. 2% growth in GDP increases QALY by 3 months[10], wherefore the gain is actually 1.400 million QALY p.a[11]. Another important global threat to the Ecosystem is the special pollution of earth and water by fertilizers used by modern HiTec-agriculture. This implies that alternative forms of ecological agriculture should be considered, too. The share of Global GDP from agriculture, forestry and fishing amounts to 4.5% in 2024.

Conclusion

Findings 1-4 determine a reinforcing negative marginal global growth by global heating before 2050 as illustrated in Fig. 2, which is going to push a burden of debt on future generations. What to do about such overall prospects of a negative global net growth?

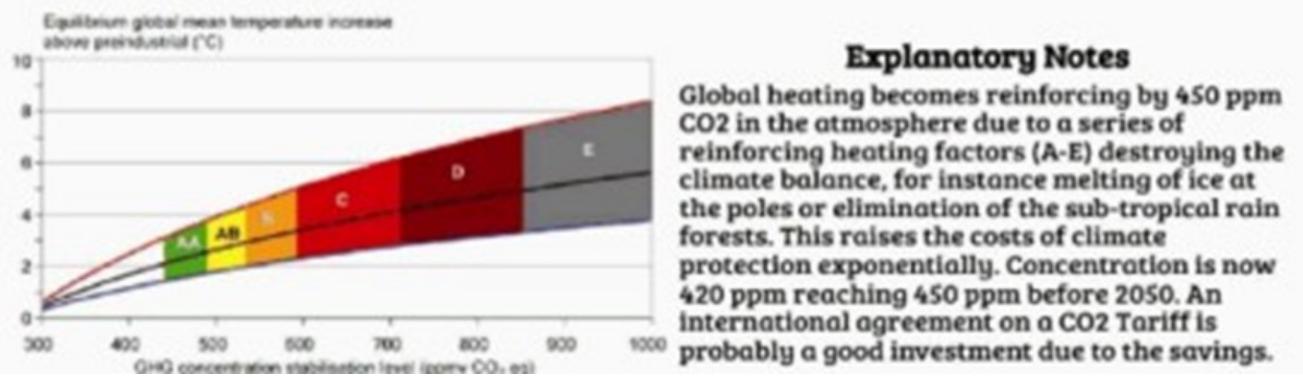


Fig. 2. Reinforcing Global Heating

Discussion

A CO2 Tariff (ET) has been recommended by economists towards pollutants like atmospheric CO2 since Pigou [12] and Norton [13] (both awarded the Nobel Prize).. Recent case studies confirm the effectiveness of ET [14]. Calculations by the International Energy Agency (IEA) show that an effective ET should be 150-200 USD per emitted ton CO2 [15], which has a global gross budget of about 3% of global GDP to reduce the level of atmospheric CO2 to that before industrialization. Although this would be a good investment to the global humanity [9-10], the problems of international collaboration on an international ET seem far beyond the capacity of the Paris Agreement 2015.

However, atmospheric heating by CO2 is a different case than the original Pigou-effect. CO2 knows no national borders, which makes global heating a common international problem! In a modern internationalized economy with free-trade, a national ET loads the national competitiveness by exporting national jobs to other countries. This is so far blocking international collaboration on ET! An alternative to ET - with at least the same incentive to green the economy - is a subsidy to alternatives to fossil energy at the same level (ES), but without loading national competitiveness. ES must primarily be financed by taxpayers, however, an ET on companies/ institutions is, too, going to be pushed-over on ordinary citizens. Further, the time profile of an ES is favourable to that of an ET, as the gross budget of an ES is starting from a low level and growing over time. To avoid ES becoming eternal, it must be limited to the expected life-time of the subsidized production facility. A broad international ET would have a chock peak budget from the beginning and decline over time.

A pioneer step towards the alternative economic thinking by ES was taken by the Biden Administration planning how to make the US carbon neutral 2050 [16], and China is already following the ES-line supporting a broad line of non-fossil energy products for instance electric cars. Also, ES is going to contribute to improving Western competition with China.

Since WW2, the Humanities have recognized the dichotomy from the natural sciences [17]. The Humanities aim to overcome this dichotomy, recognizing that theories on the common best are only heuristic and do not need to be optimal, but just good enough for the situation.

Theories on the common best only, that are good enough for a specific situation, centers the individual. However, our conclusion of a Socioeconomic Synthesis (PH) by NeP and UTA makes us in the near future face a situation with negative marginal global growth due to the international character of climate damages. Facing such a completely new situation, where the global perspective overrules ethnical/national historical relations, a comprehensive public enlightenment without precedence is required to preserve a democratic constitution.

Due to the complexity, the switching from ET to ES represents a core problem to switch the public understanding of overall socio-economics from ET to ES, because it's more difficult to understand for laymen - the focus group for public information in democracies. A first step of disseminating this change among professional peers has been tested by Guest-Lectures at Niels Brock Business School in Copenhagen. Both students

and teachers replied to a simple Questionnaire with these learnings:

- An effective intervention for a green economy has Top-priority to both teachers and students compared with alternative collective targets such as stress-management by relaxation exercises and Universal Basic Income (UBI). However, when participants are asked if they are willing to sacrifice 3% of their income for sustainable development, the enthusiasm becomes more moderate.
- The moderate preferences for Stress-management by meditation relates to a poor positivist understanding of the basal knowledge of Neurophysiology. Accelerated dissemination of relaxation procedures are more relevant to healthcare organizations as the International Conference on Integrated Care (ICIC).
- NeP gives both teachers and students an incentive to reflect on their own future professional development. NeP is, too, the top-target for visitors to my profile on Academia.edu.

The primary target group for the urgent dissemination of PH to laymen, appears to be the 80.000 behavioral economists organized in Behavioral Economists Group (BEG).

A study investigates the relationship between Hermeneutics and Positivism with a view on an overall synthesis [18]. The problem is stated as combining qualitative and quantitative findings like Oxygen and Hydrogen synthesizes as a brand new water molecule. PH solves this challenge by focusing on Quality-Adjusted Life Years (QALY) as the combined outcome of exploratory (qualitative) and explanatory (quantitative) positivist findings.

Acknowledgment

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