

# The Spontaneous Order

“The problem is that the dynamic that defines capitalism, that of unforgiving market competition, clashes with the human desire for stability and certainty.”

**Alan Greenspan**

Economic visions are still torn by the partisanship of the two classical orders: the natural one and the constructed one; the order of the inherited tradition and the projected order. The political right and left (deriving from this dichotomist way of looking at things) have confiscated the manner of understanding and realizing the economy.

It is still vague the way out from the irreducible takes on the means used and the pursued goals. Against the evidence that another order is the functional one – the spontaneous order – Economics' path into policies is through leftist or rightist ideological channels. Even when exceptions occur, re-centering the economy on the guidelines of order through pluralism (or spontaneous order) is perverted by the rules of the natural or the artificial orders. The recent case of the US economy (marked by the concepts of the neoconservatives) or the case of the Chinese economy, both tempted to believe in the spontaneous order, reveal the conditioned reflex of the visions of the natural and artificial order respectively.

Paradoxically, a science wrought in the philosophy of progress is proven to be – at almost three centuries of existence – still dominated by the visions of Romanticism and Utopianism that the Rationalism of the Enlightenment, the source of economic theory, tried to dissolve.

The endurance of the options for the classical orders and the political stamping of economic concepts in their perspective has created adverse phenomenologies, permanently caught in a dispute for preeminence. In a situation where the societal systems separate, the economy has fallen ill with the malady of split personality, of parting into opposing regulating mechanisms – one belonging to the market, the other to the planning. The battle for preeminence has lasted centuries at the theoretical level and decades at the practical level.

Has the economy gotten to base itself on the spontaneous order? It seems credible when the ideology retreats at least in a marginal sense. The great expectation resides in the possibility of converting the culture based on the natural order to a culture erected on the spontaneous order. The key lies in the chance that the adepts of the natural order will emerge from the shackles of fundamentalist ideology and develop practices of the option for the order through plurality (or the spontaneous matrix of the order for the behaviors of self-regulating and self-organizing complex systems). There is no doubt that nature does not to leaps; self-regulation and self-organization are – to the human society – faces of the extremely slow and eminently linear learning process.

The empirically observed type of change is one of a mixture of options between the natural and spontaneous orders, on one side, and the artificial and spontaneous orders, on the other side. The goal is one of political adaptation to evolutions, though it cannot be spoken of as progress in the true sense of the word. The result of the first hybridization is an intermediary order torn between the idealized pattern of the past and the functional pattern of the present, while the expression of the second hybridization is an order caught between the utopian

pattern of the future and the functional one of the present. The results – unilateral capitalism and market socialism – invariably develop the same historic neuroses. History seems to repeat itself!

The eccentric take on accepting the value of the order through plurality (as a model for the coexistence of unidimensional capitalism with market socialism) resuscitates the assumption of the convergence of the opposing ideological systems. It is in essence a double refusal: that of coming out from the vicious circle of comfortable ideas and entering the virtuous circle and that of functional order specific to self-regulating and self-organizing complex systems (order whose behavioral principle lies in the propensity for spontaneous equilibrium).

In Economics, the concept of creative destruction applies most accurately to the spontaneous order. In society, political pluralism dictates the self-regulation and self-organization of the dynamic and complex system. The market economy (with the positive feedback of learning by trial and error) does not steer evolution toward the market society, just as the democratic society (built on political pluralism and the public testing of exercising the right to manage power) does not push the economy toward a human functions and non-individual formulas.

It should be evident the evolution toward the spontaneous order by shielding behaviors from the trappings of ideologized dichotomies of the private versus collective property type, capitalist economy versus socialist economy a.s.o. There should be a parting with the tension (sufficient to itself as in the end it is compensational) between the natural order and the artificial order of the last century and a half.

The spontaneous order opens up another horizon of positioning, such as the one marked by the options around the Wittgensteinian idea of private non-property in a dynamic correlation with private property. In this new field of meaning emerge solutions also to the complicated problems with which the economy and the society of the second modernity are confronted, and to the problems of defining the right to intellectual property in another manner than that of clear-cutting the preeminence among the natural order and the artificial order.

The spontaneous order is pluralistic both politically (the political being civically controlled, thus there are more centers of power which limit each others' propensities towards prevalence) as well as economically (the economic is the expression of performance tested by the market, the market is made functional through competition, competition is regulated by institutions in orders for it not to become Hobbesian, the institutions are fallible a.s.o.). Order through pluralism generates structures and rules of behavior through which power is being transacted on consensual criteria and which no actor can discretionally manipulate. Spontaneous order contradicts the meritocratic absolutism of the natural order and the millenarian fundamentalism of the constructed order.

The spontaneous order is the order which life constructs from the chaos of nature and which man subtracts from the future in the form of the continuous present.

Marin Dinu

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