

Krugman's War for supporting a long festering populist Superficiality

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Dedicated to Marie-Louise Nykamp

Abstract

It is suggested that, unlike the long practiced traditional superficial approaches to human issues, like those pursued by Krugman among many others, one should give serious consideration to the frequent fact that individuals coming from the same family background, thus with the same racial, ethnic, cultural, economic and social initial conditions, often diverge immensely in their adult lives across ranges between honest work and crime, extremist and moderate politics, or atheism and religion, among others. Presently, no social, political or economics science deals in the least with that issue.

1. Long festering populist Superficiality

In his item "The War on Logic", January 16, 2011, International Herald Tribune, Krugman states as a conclusion that the modern Republican Party in the USA "has been taken over by an ideology in which the suffering of the unfortunate isnt a proper concern of government, and alleviating that suffering at taxpayer expense is immoral, never

mind how little it costs.”

Let us look at the above emotional terms “suffering”, “unfortunate” and “little it costs”. Such terms have for long been the rather sorry superficial means of the foundations of many a populist political movement ever since ancient Roman times. And superficial they are even more than they are emotional. Two instances below can clearly attest to their ineffectual and dangerous superficiality.

In the January 8, 2011, issue of *The Economist*, on page 76, in the section on Books and arts, in a review of the recent book “Not Quite Adults : Why 20-Somethings Are Choosing a Slower Path to Adulthood, and Why Its Good for Everyone”, by Richard Settersen and Barbara Ray, it is mentioned that nowadays in the USA, employment is divided into well-paid, highly-skilled jobs and the poorly paid, less secure service jobs. Further, it is recalled that on average, college graduates earn 54% more than the rest, and that only 25% of those between the ages of 25 and 34 have a college degree.

So much for “suffering”.

As for being “unfortunate”, it is mentioned that family mentality, more than material conditions, are determinant in obtaining a college education. And uneducated parents tend to have uneducated children, since they do not encourage their offspring to invest in themselves by education.

The question is how any of the past or present government measures have effectively, efficiently and significantly contributed to the alleviation of that kind of “suffering”, and above all, of being “unfortunate” ?

Of course, dealing with self-defeating mentalities is a far more subtle issue than allocating from taxes little, more than little, or even large amounts of money. And it is precisely here where the ages old superficiality in its emotional variants is once again supported, this time by Krugman.

And to further indicate the extent to which it is superficial, here is an

everyday widely seen story from the new South Africa.

At more important intersections in larger cities, one sees young black men selling newspapers or a variety of small items like sun glasses, hats, T-shirts, and so on. One can also see some black children begging, and here and there, a few whites doing the same. Many of those who sell can be seen at the same intersection for years on, and from early morning till later in the afternoon.

Now a crucially important fact to note, a fact Krugman and so many others seem unable to consider, is that those black men who sell things at intersections come typically from large families, and some of their brothers are involved in car hijackings which often end up with murder. Yet in such cases both types of young black men come from the same racial, ethnic, cultural, and even family background, and thus can equally be considered possible victims of apartheid or colonialism.

Is there at all any branch of social, political or economic science which deals with the causes, dynamics, and above all, proper treatment of such an incredible differentiation between humans who come from identical conditions ?

But of course, such a difference between humans is considerably more subtle than Krugman can ever deal with in his tired superficial approach ...

And to add to all of that, how about those black children who prefer to beg, or for that matter, about those whites who are far too proud to sell things at intersections, and find it less undignifying to beg ?

Is Krugman wise enough to try to take care about the truly deep issues of essential divisions among humans, divisions the various immensely different mentalities inevitably arise from ?

Or just like, for instance, the ANC in South Africa, he chooses to keep to the ever ongoing superficial and facile emotional interpretations which can only lead to solutions such as AA, that is, affirmative action, and BEE, that is, black economic empowerment, none of which brings

the slightest benefit to those who work hard by selling things at intersections, and in their consequent neglect by the government, are thus in fact identified with their brothers, the hijackers.

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