
Micro, Macro, Maths: Is that all? An International Study on Economics Bachelor Curricula

Arthur Jatteau*¹

¹Centre Lillois d'Études et de Recherches Sociologiques et Économiques - UMR 8019 – Université de Lille, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique : UMR8019 – France

Résumé

For years now, many students raised voices to protest against the way economics is teaching in universities, in France, with "Autisme" and then PEPS-Economie (PEPS-Economie 2011), United Kingdom, with Rethinking Economics, which has branches in few countries, Germany with the Netzwerk Plurale Ökonomik, and others. All of them gathered in the International Student Initiative for Pluralism in Economics (ISIPE) in 2015. ISIPE aims to promote pluralism in teaching of economics, by producing researches about the lack of pluralism in economics and by proposing alternative way to teach it.

This communication presents the results of a global study on the course structure in economics bachelor degrees. Based on the methodology developed by PEPS-Economie (PEPS-Economie 2013, 2014), the idea was to look closely at the different courses taught in bachelor degrees. The survey represents the most comprehensive assessment of course structure in the economics bachelor so far, as to the knowledge of the authors. Beyond the studies of curricula, it gives interesting facts to understand of economists are skilled (Colander 2007, 2009; Colander and Klamer 1987; Lebaron 2000), as the lack of pluralism in economics in any generation is partly related to the way economics has been taught to this generation.

Program syllabi were reviewed for 13 countries worldwide including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Israel, Mexico City, Portugal, Spain, Turkey and Uruguay, with 421 Bachelors in total. Courses were classified to reach more meaningful, i.e. more aggregated, results. To find out more about the prioritization of certain subjects, courses were weighed based on the credits given for each course during the Bachelor.

The international survey attests a dominance of the MMM core, i.e. the relative importance of the courses microeconomics, macroeconomics and maths, as represented by calculus and statistical methods. According to the sample, the MMM core accounts for 40,4% of the study time on average. This characteristic is similar across different countries as represented by a low standard variance. On the other side, only a minimum amount of time is devoted to reflexive courses such as economic history or history of economic thought (4,2%).

The study thus confirms a high degree of similarity of the course structure of the economics bachelor degrees on a global scale and a lack of pluralism. Economics needs a more diversified body of knowledge if it is going to respond successfully to the multidimensional challenges of contemporary society.

Mots-Clés: pluralisme, enseignement de l'économie, sociologie des économistes

*Intervenant