

Does the expression "information society" have something to do with the scientific notion of information?

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Abstract

My objective is to draw a sketch of the epistemological and methodological impacts that the scientific notion of information had on sociology and economy.

I will recall that social sciences got a real methodological boost from last two historical events: the integration of the statistical calculus of probability in their methods and the generalization of the scientific notion of information. Both of these events occurred or became an accepted fact in the midst of the twentieth century, plus or minus 25 years.

From the point of view of epistemology, however, this encounter is only significant because, and this is my hypothesis, the formalization of this notion permitted the reconsideration of the social sciences' scientific relevance. By saying this, I mean two things:

- 1) It gave social scientists and philosophers a crucial argument as to how the social sciences were in fact, so they thought, possibly as formalizable as any other sciences: let's call this the *epistemic impact*;
- 2) It was also and therefore possible to assign to social sciences a new role as the theoretical matrix of social engineering: call this the *technological impact*.

But all of this was possible only because society and economy were represented as receptacles of quantity of information.

I will be considered here by the epistemic impact's analysis. I will show that when introduced into social sciences, the scientific notion of information produced not only a new type of science, but a science which could therefore stop trying to be demonstrable: this notion gave these sciences the formal argument to never have to prove anything because it was not epistemologically able to distinguish between model, facts and methods.