

INTRODUCTION

The first edition of *Theory of economic development* was published in 1911. It is a well known fact that after his death Joseph Alois Schumpeter – the most quoted economist after Keynes – experienced a purgatorial season from which he emerged at the time of the first petroleum shock, at the beginning of the 1970s, when the concept of Kondratiev’s waves regained a leading role.

Thereafter, Schumpeter was reevaluated once again, particularly during the years of the New economy, while new forms of entrepreneurship and innovation were arising, up until the second half of the 1990’s, when the financial logics bound to risk capital and the start-ups emerged.

The importance thus gained by innovation as an essential rule (if not the main rule) of the competitive and strategic game, and the aim of the newly introduced industrial policies (consider the Schumpeterian state¹) seem to highlight the perspicacity and the pertinence of Schumpeter’s vision of which *Theory of economic development* is the opening work.

This special issue focuses on the following questions:

Can Schumpeter’s vision be defined as anticipatory or predictive? In other words, do the forms, the role and the modalities of contemporary innovation arise from the analysis and the interpretive tools suggested by Schumpeter or do they need to be adapted and modified?

Moreover, can the analytical frameworks and issues raised by Schumpeter, and in particular those developed in his 1911 book, be still viewed as tools for analyzing contemporary capitalism?

Do contemporary terms of innovation financing, and especially the method of risk capital, fit into the framework which Schumpeter disclosed in *Theory of economic development*? This question also refers to the monetary and credit theory formulated by Schumpeter.

Moreover, what ought to be said about Schumpeter’s shift towards the study of innovation within the big enterprise (1928)? Is it correct to suggest the idea of two Schumpeters, as if a rupture occurred in his thought? Is it possible to assume that the phenomenon of innovation in, and of, the big enterprise was already visible at the end of the 19th century, namely before “Theory of economic development” was published?

1. The notion of Schumpeterian or entrepreneurial state has been recently reintroduced in the political debate by Marianna Mazzucato. Actually the state has played a central role in producing game-changing breakthroughs, and that its contribution to the success of technology-based businesses should not be underestimated. See Mazzucato M. (2013), *The Entrepreneurial State: Debunking Public vs. Private*, Anthem Press, London & New York.

What is Schumpeter's place in the history of economic thought? What are the origins and the circumstances in which « Theory of economic development » was developed? Which authors have been influenced by Schumpeterian theories, especially since the 1970s? What kind of connections can be established between Schumpeter and other economists of his time? More in detail, what kind of considerations can be made about Schumpeter's insistence in pointing out the differences between his own theory of interest rate and the theory of interest typical of the Austrian School?

Is Schumpeter's theory of economic cycles, that he proposed in *Theory of economic development* and subsequently examined in *Business Cycles* (1939), still relevant?

Schumpeter was above all an innovator in the field of economic thought. He grew up between 1883 and 1914 in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire which ceased to exist after World War I, and in 1919 he was appointed as finance minister within a socialist led government (the Renner government), despite having never concealed his conservative aristocratic culture. During this experience, he found himself working and debating with Marxists such as Otto Bauer and Rudolf Hilferding. From 1932 on, he worked at Harvard, in the United States, where he stayed for the rest of his life (until 1950), influencing various other economists of the kind of Paul Sweezy, Hyman P. Minsky e Paolo Sylos Labini. His seminars were followed also by two young researchers who later became valuable references for mainstream economy: Paul Samuelson and Robert Solow.

On the other hand, Schumpeter innovated while striving to prove the consistency of a vision which oscillated between two different analytical keys, both seducing in varying ways and for different reasons: Leon Walras on one side, a mathematical economist devoted to mechanical logic who centred his work on the conditions that enable the existence, the uniqueness and the stability of economic equilibrium, and Karl Marx on the other, a giant of dialectics, whose theory was the outcome of a scientific revolution that implied the overturn of German idealism principles.

An innovator must necessarily break with tradition, provided that he has acquired a thorough understanding of that same tradition. He can criticize and strive to develop another (theoretical) structure only because he has previously experienced tradition's limits and because he is able to endure the risk of change. Schumpeter chose to put at the heart of his analysis the function of rupture of routines carried out by the entrepreneur, but at the same time he took a harsh stance against psychologism, introspective analysis and theory of needs on which even today some insist on establishing economic science:

“From the relative intensity on the impulses of need of those who exchange, we can derive the relations of exchange and for this aim the laws of evaluation are founded upon psychological observations. For example, it is said that with the rise in satisfaction, any further need of nourishment decreases and that therefore a satisfied individual will be ready to pay a lower price for any additional quantity. We can

object to this reasoning: why is such an explanation given? What we see is only that the individual is ready to pay a lower price; why he does this is, at the moment, of no interest from an economic point of view and, furthermore, we infer from the fact that he so behaves is that he is satisfied. We are then facing the following alternative: either we admit that the only circumstance that allows us to infer the sensibility of the individual is his behaviour, or we have to recur to the result of introspection.”²

The opening article of this special issue by Carmelo Ferlito excellently outlines the fact that the Schumpeterian theory of entrepreneurship must be analyzed within the framework of a more global vision aspiring to understand the process of economic development.

The Schumpeterian entrepreneur does not weigh the likely results of his activity against the disutility of the effort. Hedonism is not at the origin of creative destruction. Instead, there is the dream and the will to lay down the foundations of a private empire, even of a dynasty. According to Schumpeter, in addition to this there is also the will to win, the will to fight and the will to achieve success as such and not the outcomes of success. Besides that, there is also the pleasure of creating something new.

As underlined in the contributions by Alan Freeman and Carlota Perez which accompany the unpublished lesson by Chris Freeman hereby presented, what makes the Schumpeterian vision of the economic development great is the macroeconomic dimension that sparks from creative destruction. Essentially, savings does not explain the formation of capital and profit is a phenomenon deriving from the process of development:

“We can conclude that the formation of patrimony is not a static process and, furthermore, cannot be explained via saving. The same can be maintained concerning the creation of capital intended as the ensemble of the produced means of production. The latter do not spring out of saving, this is a matter of fact. They are the result of the efforts that destroy the state of equilibrium of our system and that cannot be satisfactorily explained by economics as far as it will develop inside the static realm. Not only these efforts, but also their results are destined to change the entire ‘system’.” (*Ibid.*, p. 310-311).

Chris Freeman’s lecture represents an invaluable guide to Schumpeter’s theoretical framework. As Freeman argued, capitalism can only be understood as an evolutionary process of continuous innovation and Schumpeterian creative destruction is still not taken into the bosom of mainstream theory. By means of the creative destruction, it is possible to establish a series of causal relationships and contextual considerations which allow us to understand economic cycles, but also the role that credit, finance and politics play – for better or for worse – in face of the

2. Schumpeter J.A. (1934 [1911]), *The Theory of Economic Development*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, p. 64.

dynamic competition triggered by entrepreneurial activity. Concentration among enterprises, particularly, is a prospect of this process. This is well depicted, on a logical ground as well, in Andrea Fumagalli's contribution in which the author employs a theoretical context typical of the evolutionary theory of enterprise. In his 1939 book, Schumpeter himself described the systematic abuse of the financial apparatus which had led to the big enterprise mergers and to the 1907 crisis: the mergers, which were due to an excessive recourse to financing and self-financing, had triggered perturbations of a strictly financial nature and the operating mode of trusts had spread a banking activity defined as "wildcat" by Schumpeter:

"We have seen that one class of the innovations that carried that Kondratieff prosperity an in particular its first Juglar – mergers – tended more than others to induce disturbances of a purely financial nature. We also seen that banking system failed to function according to design. The practices of the trust companies in fact revived, in a modernized form, the wildcat banking of the thirties of the nineteenth century. ... Explanation is due because our diagnosis explains the occurrence of the crisis of 1907 by a disturbance of the normal working of the cyclical process of evolution, which was not attributable to an external factor but to a systematic abuse of the financial apparatus."³

If the credit system does not function as the "ephor of exchange economy", the phenomenon of economic development is bound to be disturbed and creative destruction leads neither to greater employment opportunities nor to the growth of the overall national income.

The aim of the following contributions is to make room for reflection. The point is not to focus on *Theory of economic development* as if this work could be isolated from the evolution of Schumpeter's thought on innovation and its different manifestations. All of the contributions, read as a whole, stress the persisting and contemporary nature of Joseph Alois Schumpeter's thought, thus contributing to display the fecundity of this author, who must not be demoted to a subject matter for historians of economic thought, as interesting as it may be to study him from this perspective⁴.

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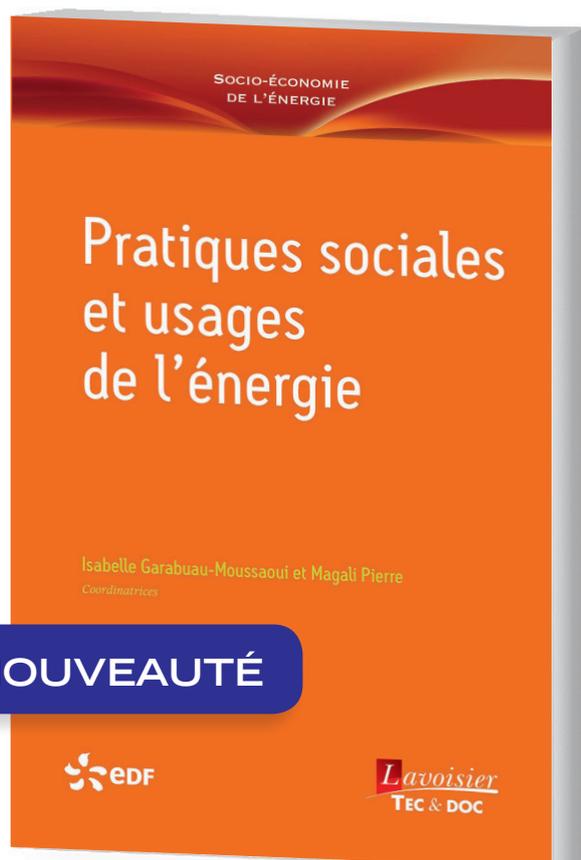
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3. Schumpeter J.A. (1989 [1964 abridged edition, 1939]), *Business Cycles*, Porcupine Press, Philadelphia, p. 272-273 and 276.

4. We most sincerely address our thanks to the referees who did not shy to accompany the authors along several rounds of revision. We are very grateful to Hervé Baron and Alfonso Giuliani for their comments. The usual disclaimer applies. Thank you to Andrea Olivieri for his attentive final linguistic revision.

Pratiques sociales et usages de l'énergie

Coordonné par **Isabelle Garabuau-Moussaoui et Magali Pierre**



NOUVEAUTÉ

272 pages – Juillet 2016 – broché
ISBN : 978-2-7430-2021-7 • **49 €**

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Des crises pétrolières à la loi de transition énergétique, en passant par les différents événements nationaux et mondiaux concernant l'environnement et l'énergie, différents acteurs ont appelé à un changement de comportements des utilisateurs finaux d'énergie, appuyés par des analyses de l'*homo œconomicus* (agent mu par sa rationalité économique) et de l'*homo ecologicus* (agent mu par ses valeurs environnementales). Cette démarche, qui n'a pas porté tous les fruits attendus, considère les comportements comme points d'aboutissement des politiques publiques, des dispositifs techniques ou des offres.

Cet ouvrage propose de renverser cette perspective. Posant les pratiques sociales comme point de départ, notre démarche consiste à appréhender leur diversité et leur ancrage quotidien et à saisir leurs logiques propres, pour analyser ensuite comment les outils et dispositifs sont mobilisés dans ces pratiques.

Dans un premier temps, les pratiques sociales et activités qui produisent une consommation d'énergie sont étudiées, afin de montrer comment les usagers jouent avec les systèmes, les équipements, les expérimentations, les catégories, les prescriptions. Dans un second temps, l'analyse se décale vers les acteurs intermédiaires, afin de prendre en compte les dispositifs socio-techniques, les acteurs et les instruments. C'est ainsi le « façonnement social » des technologies et la « fabrique des pratiques » qui sont explorés. Enfin, le rapport entre normes et pratiques (imbrication ou décalage) est examiné, en s'attachant aux discours portés par les ménages et les médias sur les consommations d'énergie et en analysant ce que chacun en raconte, dans ses actes langagiers.

Les contributions alternent entre restitutions d'enquêtes empiriques originales et travaux de synthèse faisant le point sur une notion. L'acteur de terrain comme le chercheur académique et l'étudiant pourront ainsi tirer profit de plusieurs niveaux de lecture correspondant à des formats de papier qui se complètent.



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