



34th Conference of the Association for Social Economy

(Association d'Économie Sociale)

Social Innovations, Economic Innovations

Organized by the Grenoble Research Center for Economics

(Centre de recherche en économie de Grenoble, CREG, EA 4625)

On September 11th and 12th 2014

Call for papers

Since the beginning of the years 2000, the OECD countries and many emerging ones are adopting strategies to boost their competitiveness, technologically and economically in terms of innovation. In Europe, in a very explicit way, as stated in the Lisbon Conference's strategy in 2000 and again in 2001, the aim is to drive the European Union towards a strong "knowledge economy" based on a high degree of social cohesion. The objective is to invest in R&D, to facilitate the transition between research and innovation, to improve human capital and training throughout life, while developing actions against social exclusion. Despite the difficulties in implementing these measures in the years 2000, this concept was readopted and reformulated in 2010 within the objectives of Europe 2020, to obtain an "intelligent, sustainable and inclusive" growth. The question of innovation has become core within our economy. It is integrated into the national economic and social strategies with social models pushing for more flexibility, hand in hand with innovation and more security for people impacted by changes. In Europe, flexicurity models are developed in different ways.

When the OECD, and more specifically Europe, entered the crisis, many questions arose relative to society models in terms of knowledge based on innovation. These questions also concerned the emerging countries. Beyond the financial aspects of the crisis, often underlined, there is questioning concerning the flexicurity strategies. The focus on efforts concerning research, initial and continuous training are largely accepted. Others issues are more subject to discussion, such as the calling into question of social protection in a financial and ideological context unfavorable to State interventionism, reducing the labor cost accompanying competitiveness strategies, witnessing a rise in precarious situations induced by the search for

flexibility, or focusing on the workfare logic when struggling against social exclusion... All these orientations question the social model that could accompany an innovation economy.

During the great change that started in 2008, States sometimes took drastic decisions when reviewing their social policies, not to adapt to a new series of needs, but to face budgetary constraints. With limited or reduced means, social policies started shrinking, causing debates on how to manage budgetary and monetary policies. The financial constraint does not prevent the growth of normal or new needs, nor the emergence of new social practices announcing a mutation of social models.

The new demographic situation and the ageing of populations imply new social needs in the fields of health and dependency. It is a paradox to note that social innovations that convey new desires and enable practices to change, are developing in all social fields. Innovations are particularly significant when it comes to the social and solidarity economy. Associations create new models to answer social needs, cooperatives adopt a new alternative form to employment, social companies want their activities to be consistent with collective values. In France, social partners rephrase the question of flexicurity by investing the issues relative to career path securing, professional social security, supervision of transitions to embrace all changes in social practices and a new relationship with social evolution. One small change after the other, social innovations appear.

The symposium will thus focus on these innovation issues and their underlying duality: clearly looking for economic competitiveness (with its social entailment in terms of investment in human capital and control of social cohesion) but at the same time strongly focusing on new social dreams (new forms of solidarity and social patterns producing their own economic logic, managerial and financial consequences and sometimes financing systems).

These contributions based on social and economic innovations could give way to global, sectorial or monographic analyses, and translate into several work approaches.

Problems and issues

Economic and social innovations raise at least five topics to be examined in depth, all linked.

1) *New social practices, social-economic development, sustainability*

Technological and economic innovation generates social changes and results in its own social requirements: investment in initial and continuous training, fight against dropping out of school. Social innovation has its own dynamics and is based on its own logic: answering new social needs, new demographic realities, family evolution, the need for equality between men and women, the dream for a more “sustainable” economy...

Rich and poor countries alike question the conditions of their social development. Innovation is linked to working on the social conditions of development respectful of the needs of future generations. A new search to find a balance between the “three pillars” of sustainable development, economy, environment and the social dimension, encourages significant changes in social practices.

Innovations concerning financial practices are also numerous in order to face the issues of poverty or development. Around the theme of finance and social innovation, much research has been conducted on complementary social currencies, micro finance practices and the creation of an inclusive finance. Social partners also seek to find financing capacities that could answer the needs of companies working in the social field, in the widest sense.

This axis is thus open to papers focusing on observing and analyzing new social practices that could accompany or instigate concrete innovation.

2) *New economic and social models, flexicurity, securing career paths.*

The knowledge society in Europe calls for a new social compromise favorable to economic innovation. Indeed, liberalization of trade exchanges, externalization and technological progress go hand in hand with new risks on the job market, and increased needs for security (people faced with the necessity for mobility); more internal or external flexibility, social protection better adapted to mobility: the whole social field is open to question.

The new forms of employment often weaken the link to social protection. The quality of employment is often put at risk through the evolutions of the industry and service sectors; the wage relationship is often destabilized. Indeed, professional health and well-being issues together with the access to complementary health cover are major stakes at the heart of these changes. The support and security stake is notably a key factor for young people who are penalized three times over: unemployment, growing precarious situations and career outlooks that will negatively impact their rights to a pension.

The topic of securing professional careers proposes to integrate a lifelong approach, from initial training to coaching during working life (health, family policy, minimum wage, work) and also transition towards cessation of activity (pension systems, dependency issues). These actions that target social protection and compensation for transitions on the labor market, employment policies, professional training, regulation of the labor market, are enforced in various national contexts. According to these contexts, of liberal or social-democratic type, they grant a more or less important position to individuals and the market, to the social State and collective agreements.

This axis is therefore open to papers that analyze flexicurity practices, the evolution of rationalities and economic/social models. It is based on institutional approaches, international comparisons, analyses of national models, together with the input of knowledge relative to new forms of employment and socio-professional transitions through life (initial training, working life, cessation of activity, retirement...).

Analyses targeted on the implementation and impact of measures of security are also required, including initial training, coaching all through working life (health, family policy, minimum wage, work) and towards inactivity (retirement systems, dependency issues). There will be a special focus on the role of counseling and professional training while securing career paths.

3) *New forms of entrepreneurship, new forms of organization.*

The growth of a social and solidarity economy, the establishment of associations, cooperatives and the development of employment forms linked to this philosophy are the proof of the true evolution of a new “collective undertaking”.

The topic of corporate governance emerged when the social science field started analyzing it, while the logic of “shareholding” was widespread. Mistakes in company management, Enron being the symbol, have largely contributed to this evolution, and the 2008 crisis has further questioned the legitimacy of classical capitalist firms.

Innovations are multiform. They appear in the creation of new hybrid legal statuses such as “flexible purpose corporations” in California, or the various international variations in the form of “social companies”. The Social and Solidarity Economy’s organizations are at the heart of this diversification shift when it comes to company forms, notably cooperatives.

These innovations are now to be found at the heart of capitalist companies with the introduction of Corporate Social Responsibility in these companies’ essential values or proposals for a governance open to all stakeholders, or the arrival of employees in management. Evolutions that concern freelancer collective organizations (that appear in activity cooperatives or coworking structures, based on crowdfunding), are strongly linked to these changes.

The main stakes common to these institutional changes relate to the democratization of the power held by company managers, who represent the sole interest of owners, but also to the definition of wages and the breakdown of profits generated by productive organizations.

The work expected on this topic is the critical analysis of these new organizational forms, or these new models of governance, but also the analysis of the impact of these new solidarity entrepreneurship forms in terms of wage and management practices, employment, inter-company relationships, customer relationships...

4) *New institutional dynamics, social dialogue and governance.*

The objectives of social cohesion within an economy open to innovation question public policies and shake up institutional forms in the social field. Producing social change, securing mobility implies mobilizing institutions and managing their transformation. Social protection is more and more considered in terms of costs that could negatively impact the economy, instead of the logic of long-term social investment. These changes of viewpoint also imply the coordination of interventions at several territorial levels, in several fields of social protection, between several categories of social players.

More and more new rules and standards are required. This of course impacts the social dialogue, specifically at territorial level. It is made concrete while redefining public and collective action forms with public policies characterized by strong regional accountability, the development of multi-centered relationships and partnership forms coordinated with various players. A stronger appeal to citizens' or beneficiaries' participation is promoted to better take into account their situation and needs. This shift concerns employment policies, but also education and health policies (see the Hospital, Patients, Health & Territories Law), together with urban and sustainable development policies (Agendas 21).

At the same time, the New Public Management offers innovations for public organizations and institutions. New tools of performance management are introduced, with assessment methods, resource allocation... Center-suburb relationships are also renewed with the development of a government using outsourcing, the implementation of "quasi-markets", the development of agencies and the injunction for further cooperation.

To what extent do these renewed public actions redefine new standards and scopes of work? What can be expected from a systematization of outsourcing and networking of players intervening on a same territory? Can we define relevant practices in this field? The question of governance in terms of coordination between players is put forward, but also that of controlling the social change processes. The objective is to study how economies operate, in relation to the collective and social aims society would like to achieve, while orientating players' actions together with public incentive, assessment and control measures.

Much research has directly or implicitly been focusing on these questions since 2008 - the topic of social control or regulation of economic activities for a fairer and more equitable society. This can be described as auto-regulation supported by civil society (involving the central public power as little as possible) while other approaches want more intervention from public or collective authorities outside the market. The question of the institutional dynamics and social governance forms is at the heart of this issue.

This axis is open to papers relative to governance forms, social dialogue, notably in the territories, and to new institutional dynamics linked to the acceleration of innovation.

5) *New methodologies, concepts and measures.*

Innovation is also epistemological. Since the beginning of the years 2000, we can see a questioning of monetary indicators to measure wealth, such as the GDP, which encourages the importance of "what counts" and not what we can count. At the same time, studying poverty forms and precarious situations leads to going beyond an approach too focused on monetary demonstrations, to better take into account all concrete implementation opportunities and capacities offered to people in their material existence.

The focus is on non-monetary wealth. It largely depends on the resources a person can mobilize, for himself or for somebody else, thanks to his various formal social networks (belonging to more or less institutionalized collectives) or non formal ones. We then assess the social capital, inherited or acquired, in which a person can find material or non-material resources (information, support, listening...), and more broadly question the notion of well-being.

These new methodologies, adapted to different levels of social observation (from local to international, but also national) question the actions and concepts from which socio-economic realities are calculated: what is observed and measured? On what scale? How to analyze the creation of the standards which supervise the calculation of the realities observed, together with their possible spatio-temporal circulation? How to understand the power relationships involved?

There follows a series of questions linked to the final objective of building indicators: do we want to comply with reality or configure possibilities? To produce knowledge on what really matters for citizens and inform policy makers or negotiate in a authoritative way the integration of an economy (local, regional or national) in an established world? In fine, we want to question the capacity of new socio-economic indicators to feed a reflexive governance, taking into account the core dimensions that found the ‘living together’ (from individual values to shared collective imagination).

This axis is open to papers that focus on methodological innovations within the social observation studies linked to the creation of alternative indicators.

If the AES’ Scientific Committee is looking forward to inputs mainly linked to the central topic of the symposium, like every year the AES Days are also open to contributions relative to classical economic fields such as health, education, social protection, non-market economy, accommodation, poverty, social exclusion, culture economy. Papers non specific to the core theme may thus be submitted to the AES Scientific Committee’s assessment.

Conditions to answer the call for papers

Papers should be presented according to the following plan type (2/3 pages maximum).

On the first page, indicate the title of the paper, the author(s)’ name(s), details and electronic address [in case of co-authors, underline the contact’s name], the organization to which the author(s) belongs.

The paper should deal with the following points:

- Brief presentation of the issue and its stake;
- For papers concerning the central theme of the symposium, mention the theme number and the link with the issue presented;
- The originality of the paper, with references to any existing literature;
- The nature of the communication: theoretical, empirical;
- The methodological approach: sources and tools;
- The status of the work;

- A selective bibliography (5 to 10 references).

The papers should be exclusively submitted by email before November 2nd 2013 on the CREG's Web site at the following address (where you will also find all useful information together with a link to contact the organizers directly):

aes2014@upmf-grenoble.fr ; <http://creg.upmf-grenoble.fr>

Agenda

Closing date for papers: November 2nd 2013.

The Scientific Committee's reply to the authors: December 20th 2013.

Closing date to receive the definitive texts in order to publish them in the proceedings: April 18th 2014.

Publication of proceedings

The accepted contributions, dealing with the central topic or not, will be published in the Days proceedings at the Presses Universitaires de Louvain. In May 2014, the Scientific Committee will select the best papers. Will be eligible for publication all papers received before April 30th 2014 and respecting the presentation standards (communicated after the selection procedure of projects). The texts of the papers not accepted for publication in the proceedings and the papers received after April 18th 2014 will nevertheless be downloadable from the CREG's Web site.

The promotion of publications may be extended to special issues of peer reviewed journals. The Days' Organization Committee is in contact with the journal *Formation Emploi* and the series *AB Socio-économie du Travail* of the journal *Economies et Sociétés* in order to promote the publication of papers or write articles in these journals, once the proceedings are published. The Local Organization Committee undertakes to take all necessary action to promote in this way part of the submitted texts.

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