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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Economic Theory of the Craftsman Entrepreneur -Operational Concepts-

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Abstract

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The aim of this article is not to bring new concepts and new empirical data, but to articulate an abounding aspect. Our problem is as follows: knowing and contrary to widespread belief that the craft and the craftsman are not immutable economic and historical categories, how can we in terms of economic theory consider that the artisan as an entrepreneur today? What are the criteria in general to define the entrepreneur? Entrepreneurship? Innovation? The challenge? Personal enrichment?

In an attempt to provide a clear answer to this complex question, we proceed in two stages. A quick overview of the economy of the contractor, which leads us, in fact, to show that the contractor is not embodied by a particular individual however, the entrepreneur embodies a dynamic economy, the change and the innovation that characterize capitalism. Therefore, the scope of this paper is built on two fundamental aspects: firstly, we will identify the foundations of economic theory of entrepreneurship through a survey, and in a secondly, we will start from standard criteria on which the economists consensus to define the entrepreneur, we present the applicability of the theory of artisan contractor.

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Introduction

In the current state of knowledge on the subject of entrepreneurship and entrepreneur, it is not proposing a new figure of the entrepreneur to the economic and management sciences, but organizing the theories. For this study, we can identify three analytic theories:

• Elitist theory (**Cantillon - Knight - Schumpeter**) in which the entrepreneur is defined as a risk taker able to manage uncertainty and innovation.

• Theory (**Say-Mises - Kirzner**) that defines the entrepreneur as an ordinary man, warning profit and able to have a good judgment on business. Far from being opposed these two traditions are complementary. To innovate, indeed, must have identified a profit. Quality of awareness or alertness is in this sense a prerequisite for innovation and risk taking. Contemporary literature has, however, made a number of criticisms of this concept alertness.

• The Thomist theory of prudence allows them to stand up and unite on new bases, all these figures in economics and management according to this theory, to judge, must have imagined the world of possibilities. Must have projected into the future to make a fiction a reality. It is at this stage the figure of the innovative entrepreneur of the Schumpeterian theory.

I. Economic Theory of The entrepreneur

1. Elitist theory of Cantillon - Knight - Schumpeter: an almost genetic vision of the entrepreneur

The starting point of the economic theory of the entrepreneur goes back to the work of R. Cantillon (1998) published in 1755 in one of his rare books "Essay on the nature of the trade in general." Referring to his work, R. Cantillon (1998) was the contractor key figure in the economy; it was the first to define the profile of the contractor based on management based on uncertainty.

Adopting a purely economic and rigorous explanation Cantillon highlights the central role of the entrepreneur. The entrepreneur plays an active role in coordinating the process of production and exchange, channeling goods from production to the final consumer through market exchanges. It defines the entrepreneur as the person who buys factors of production and / or goods at a certain price to sell at an uncertain price. And insofar as the future sale price is uncertain, the contractor is designed as a risk taker (Boutilier, 2010). In other words, the contractor argues in an uncertain world, because it is confronted with prices that equalize supply and demand. It lies in the need to try to guess what happens in the markets, whose wages are uncertain.

We often hear that the entrepreneur is a risk taker (Cantillon), but in fact, it always tends to minimize, but especially the notion of risk is not necessarily related to the environment in which entrepreneurs act when they immerse themselves in an uncertain world, it is in this sense that Frank Knight (1921) uses the theory of Cantillon except that it has introduced a distinction between risk and uncertainty This theory is often seen as being the liaison between that of Adam Smith (the idea of risk) and that of John Maynard Keynes (concept of uncertainty).

Create a company that is willing to take financial risks, occupational hazards (no job security) risk or family (spend less time with his family) and the risk of psychic if project fails (stigma of failure) (Hernandez 1999, p. 34). But these risks are uninsurable because according to him, the profit earned by the contractor who makes decisions in an uncertain environment is his reward for taking an uninsurable risk.

Consequently, the distinction risk - uncertainty and forces us to think a type of error that is not related to an error of assessment of the probabilities of occurrence of an event but an error on the world of possibilities. The entrepreneur knows that he is not able to imagine everything. He knows that the world is unpredictable. Distinguish risk - uncertainty prevents modeling entrepreneurship choice - wage as a probability calculation, because in an uncertain world, the world of possibilities is not given. It is not then possible to assign a probability to each scenario gain. It may be more risky for the individual to join the entrepreneurial project other than follow his own path. Factors influencing gains its choice being partly unpredictable. It is this distinction which attaches to the Knight Say tradition - Mises and Kirzner and more generally to the Thomist theory of action.

Specify our analysis Schumpeterian theory postulates that complements Indeed, the Schumpeterian entrepreneur is "one who introduced and led innovation" (C; Bruyat, 1997) may be the production of a new good, the introduction of a new production method, opening a new market, the conquest of a new source of raw materials or semi-finished products, and construction of a new organization, the contractor is not defined as a risk taker but an innovator as advocated Ebner (2006):

"The contractor is defined as a particular type of economic agent. The entrepreneur is a leader. It is primarily a dominant. He then distinguishes followers and dominated. It has a unique ability to combine new resources. It has the qualities of an innovator and moves in an individualistic and rationalistic atmosphere (Schumpeter 1926) "cited by Ebner 2006, p. 504).

Change the evolution cannot come from a quantitative change (increased production or capital), but the qualitative transformation of the production system. The Schumpeterian theory shows that the determinant of this evolution is the innovation: it is not only the heart of the growth process, but also larger structural changes contribute to wealth creation and economic development.

2. TRADITION-SAY-Mises -Kirzner heir to the FRENCH TRADITION

The French economist J-B. Say (1999), is intended as a continuation of the work of R. Cantillon defining the "business of the entrepreneur." According to the economist, the contractor is a production manager. In this context, the contractor main task of combining the best producers leased services in different markets (Steiner, 1997).

The author, in his conception of economic activity and industry, operates a division of labor and the distinguished scholar who studies the laws of nature, the contractor who takes advantage of the learned knowledge to create useful products, and workers working under their orders. This typology is established, for, through division operations, allowing increased products useful to society, the primary role of the entrepreneur in the economy consists of different tasks and requires essential qualities: The contractor is the principal agent of production. His work is productive in the sense of a scholar who produces knowledge and the worker who applies to the industry.

It must also have a "good judgment», that is to say, it must determine the needs and especially the means of satisfying them; it is a rather modern style stands out the key role in economic development.

Like Smith, Say (1972, p. 88-96.) Analyze of the merits of the division of labor just as Cantillon, it raises the question of uncertainty attached to the concept of entrepreneur, which will be developed later, including Knight.

Say (1972) puts the entrepreneur at the center of the economic process, it is a rational economic agent and dynamic, truly ensuring economic equilibrium.

He gives the following description: "(The contractor) is the intermediary between all classes of producers and between them and the consumer administers the work of production and is the center of several reports it take what others know and what they know, and all incidental benefits of production. "

Say (1972) makes a distinction difficult to do of his own point of view, between the contractor and the function of capital provider. Both functions can be combined in one and the same person, but that in no way corresponds to an obligation or something necessary. The contractor is not necessarily a member of a particular social class. He is responsible for completing an original economic function, which must be assumed regardless of the economic system.

In thinking Say, direct and organize the one hand, take risks, on the other hand, are the two most characteristic activities of the entrepreneur traits. We note, however, at least one weakness in the design of the author. Its central concern is the study of a contractor acting in a universe that is responsive to the pulses of the market that regularly tend to reach balance. He thinks that supply creates its own demand, which means in the words of Keynes (1996, p. 9 and 47), «in a suggestive but not clearly defined sense, the entire cost of production must necessarily in the whole community, to be spent directly or indirectly for the purchase of production. » It adds «a theory based on such a basis would not be suitable for the study of problems related to unemployment and the economic cycle. »

Say seems to forget or underestimate the disruptive role of the entrepreneur and its action on the environment. However, he writes that the well- being of a country depends on its labor force and dynamism of its entrepreneurs.

Tradition Mises-Kirzner is very close to the French tradition and the themes proposed by Say. She, however, is interested in updating the French tradition and generalizes its results immediately defining the entrepreneur as an actor. It joins in the same speech the three functions of the contractor. It manages uncertainty (Knight). It organizes production (Say) and innovatives (Schumpeter). It also extends Say and his theory of judgment in defining the contractor for its quality of care. The entrepreneur is an inherent feature in any action. It is based on whoever is (Mises 1985).

However, over time, economists have somehow tried to tame uncertainty by showing that it is precisely here lies the dynamics of capitalism. Thus, Mises (1881-1973) (Mises, 2004) considers that the contractor is the support of the changes occurring in the market. The contractor is based on the changes occurring in the marketplace. This means that the contractor is able to project into the future and imagine what it will hold up . It must also be able to anticipate the result of his action in time and be creative to adapt. Mises has a broader conception of the entrepreneur as Schumpeter considers that the contractor is not only an innovator, but that the contractor has the function to take advantage of change, particularly on consumer demand. It must therefore adapt production to the most urgent consumer orders.

In his book, Discovery, Capitalism, and Distributive Justice (Discovery, Capitalism and distributive justice) in 1989, Kirzner presents an aspect of the ethics of capitalism is when the contractor is open to opportunities for profit - "vigilant, "situations" alert "(alertness), he discovers new ways more advantageous at least for him to use certain resources.

Kirzner (1973.2005) pursues the idea that individuals act in a context of uncertainty: market opportunities arise from the imbalance, not balance. The contractor must be vigilant to detect and exploit profit opportunities that may arise. The Contractor shall obtain any profit from this discovery is justified by the fact that it was he who created this additional value regardless of the effort involved.

According to Kirzner "the entrepreneur is someone who makes decisions, and whose entire role arises from its vivacity to respond to opportunities that hitherto had not been noticed," in fact, the contractor described Kirzner its model is based on its liveliness to respond the quality of its vigilance to make a profit and the entrepreneur is vigilant three types of profit: profit innovation, arbitrage profits and profits of a speculation. Each profit and a corresponding figure of the entrepreneur: the figure of the innovative entrepreneur of Schumpeter, the figure of the entrepreneur risk taker Knight and the figure of the entrepreneur arbitrageur Kirzner.

In this wake, the contractor is the economic agent that explores the dark and reveals the information. But human action is not simply an optimization calculation. Kirzner drew a distinction between the ability of the contractor to identify new investment opportunities and also its ability to economic calculation.

This definition shows that Kirzner's theory is based on the ideas developed by Mises and Hayek. The author bases his analysis on the theory of human action, Mises and especially on the distinction between the computer behavior and entrepreneurial activity.

To use the terminology entrepreneurial alertness that is the outline of the theory of Kirzner, we can say that it is "defined as the ability of individuals to update profit opportunities hitherto undiscovered, implies the discovery a means-ends structure (ARNAUD PELLISSIER-TANON,2000); "However, this concept of vigilance does not take into account fully the creative nature of entrepreneurial action. He however, highlights the fact that the market process takes time, the outcome of this process is uncertain. Entrepreneurial activity appears as a separate function of other economic functions may be performed by individuals.

Following the method of imaginary models Mises, Kirzner distinguishes the entrepreneurial function "pure" entrepreneurial activity as it can be observed on the market. This method allows him to highlight the specific characteristics of the entrepreneurial function, but also to highlight the links that may exist between the various economic functions.

The second pillar on which rests Kirzner's analysis is the idea of Hayek that knowledge available to individuals to make decisions "according to Hayek, the knowledge concept is defined:

"Knowledge in this sense is more than what is usually described as skill, and the division of knowledge of which we here speak more than what is meant by the division of labor. To put it shortly, "skill" refers only to the knowledge of which a person makes use in his trade, whereas the further knowledge about which we must know something in order to be able to say anything about the processes in society, is the knowledge of alternative possibilities of action of which he makes no direct use. It may be added here that knowledge, in the sense in which the term is here used, is identical with foresight only in the sense in which all knowledge is capacity to predict." (cit. note 17, p. 50).

Moreover, Kirzner shows that entrepreneurial activity belongs to a learning process, since it allows the dissemination of knowledge profit opportunities among individuals regardless of the learning process that can be deliberately undertaken by individuals. The competitive market process, to paraphrase Kirzner (1979, p. 146), tends to transform omniscience in ignorance and is subject to errors that can make individuals. The contribution of our author is as well to show the role of advertising and sales efforts in the process of information dissemination. Unlike traditional analyzes in economics, Kirzner highlights the fact that advertising is not the prerogative of companies trying to establish a monopoly. We will see that this assumption of a «tendency to omniscience» implies the tendency to discover profit opportunities from the choice of the part of the economy "pure" market. However, such a representation of entrepreneurial activity could be challenged by taking into account the information that provides the entrepreneurial function of interaction with other economic functions.

Finally, the representation of Kirzner entrepreneurial activity appears to be a powerful force that tends to establish the coordination of individual actions, although errors and continuous changes constantly pushing toward a balance. We note that in this sense Kirzner opposes Schumpeter who is fundamentally destabilizing entrepreneurial activity

3. THOMISTIC THEORY OF PRUDENCE

This theory is to unify other theories of the entrepreneur; in fact, the prudent entrepreneur is one who deliberates well. Much deliberation imagines and innovates (Schumpeter). It considers (Say, Knight) in an uncertain world of opportunity projects imagined. She finally orders the appropriate action, and to mobilize resources to achieve profits actually earned. The imagination, judgment and leadership are the main qualities of the entrepreneur. The entrepreneur is the man who deliberates to act well.

The main quality of the entrepreneur is to identify untapped profits in the markets, but instead of reducing the quality of alertness (vigilance) it is better to define it as a form of economic prudence in this case, the identification of the opportunity to gain would be as the result of a prudent act.

As we said, the caution in Say not explicitly refer to the concept of prudence of Thomistic philosophy, but the essential role played by uncertainty in the theory of entrepreneurship and its impact on the knowledge that contractor must mobilize to approach the right decision for supposing that it is very close.

Thus, one can detect three important points:

Prudence and imagination: The first step is a good decision to invent or imagine ways in which to enrich themselves. Whoever discovers the appropriate means to trade is called a wise man. Here we find all the debates on uncertainty and the invention possible. The entrepreneur is an innovator. He is the actor who stands out by his imagination, his sense of possibilities.

If alertness is a prudent act, it must be said that imagination and innovation are the first step of this act. It is just in this sense, to emphasize the importance of imagination as did White when he commented Kirzner thesis from 1973.

"The contractor is not simply one who finds profits. It is also the one who imagines. He is the one who will make a fiction (project) a reality."

Prudence and judgment:

The Contractor shall not, however, a dreamer. It is an inventor. He is also a man with a sense of the concrete, the feasibility of its projects. The theory of good deliberation we also remember very clearly. The second step is a prudent act judgment on what was found (ST IIa, IIae, Q 47 art . 8, r). The prudent man imagines the world of economic potential and judges their chance to exist. The theme of judgment is treated as literature. It is covered by the theory of JB Say good judgment as well as the contribution of the Knight Decision theory (distinction risk - uncertainty).

In the Thomist theory of action, the man has the ability to deliberate well because he has the right to judge the appropriateness of its resources. It seeks to provide the circumstances of his action. This act of foresight requires knowledge of the future since we predict the effects of measures implemented to achieve its purpose. The contractor on the market seeks to assess the chances of success of the arbitration act, speculation and / or innovation.

This theory of judgment in uncertain universe has several implications for the theory of the entrepreneur. She recalls, first, that the prudent act presupposes the existence of a world neither deterministic nor contingent. This world in human orders only exists because the rules (institutions) the guarantee.

This means that in a deterministic world where everything is not some caution would be necessary. We can, therefore, be argued that in a world where men gain.

Prudence and command: Imagining and judging is not enough. It should also be controlled. Commander is the third act of a prudent man.

The man is wise because he thinks he can control, ie use by its action the existence of future contingents imagining ways in which it realizes purposes. This third dimension of prudent act also has several consequences. She recalls that it is not enough and judges the existence of an opportunity. We must believe that we can fit into the world to change it to his advantage. You have to be in favorable institutional psychological conditions.

The command assumes, as Thomas Aquinas reminds that man has the right to act, trade, ie concretely grasp profits identified.

The theory of prudence puts them on the path of economic freedom as an institutional condition of entrepreneurial activity. It is not enough, however, to have the right to act. It must also believe psychologically that this action can succeed. The passage to the act is not only a matter of judgment, arbitration between the pros and cons. This also is a psychological issue.

The contractor must believe that he controls his destiny. This psychological condition is very important. It has also been widely rediscovered by the work initiated by the social psychology theory of self-efficacy Bandura (2002). The application of this psychological theory to entrepreneurship research confirmed the idea that entrepreneurs generally have a sense of high self-efficacy (Gilad 1982).

Recalling the trilogy prudent act, imagine - judge - order, we show why the contractor is not a particular class of men or a capitalist or a manager able to manage, but an actor. A man who takes his destiny because he feels after deliberation affords. The theory of prudence and unified theories of the entrepreneur are about the imagination, judgment and command. Caution contractor is thus a response to the belief that the future is neither completely aligned on past events, "I know I can win tomorrow if I'm careful," neither wholly contingent, "I know that act modifies my chances of success, I'm not, in this sense, the toy of fate. »

Define the entrepreneur as a wise man reconciles on solid foundations High (judgment), White (imagination) and Kirzner (vigilance), unifies the figures of the discoverer and the innovator (Schumpeter - Kirzner) and said clearly being cautious is a virtue possessed by all and triggered by certain situations. All men possess this virtue. Just imagine they mobilize to the untapped mutually beneficial exchange, to judge risks and to engage the appropriate time to carry out their projects. The entrepreneur, the entrepreneur is therefore prudent and circumspect (Danziger, 1996, p. 123). This means that it is not bold but able to make a good decision despite and through contingency future. As we know from Cantillon and Say Indeed, the entrepreneur is uncertain and faces contingent events, such as unexpected government initiatives, climate hazards and / or decisions of entrepreneurs. It prohibits the risk then because it is held by the desire to succeed, ie to survive the company he leads. This constraint survival requires it to always imagine the future, to predict. Bankruptcy sanctions as a life project that misuse of funds of the contractor and its creditors. Prudence of the entrepreneur is thus constrained by the rules of market forces. The innovation from the world imagined possible for these reasons should be thought in its broadest sense to adapt to new situations that arise in the future. The contractor cannot therefore be passive vis-à-vis the future and see the solutions of the past. It must, however, prepare for the future by imagining future worlds, judging the likelihood of their occurrence and controlling the timing to do or not to do what was imagined and deemed sustainable.

II. Economic theory applied to the contractor craftsman

These are briefly outlined the main economic theories of the entrepreneur, in fact, we saw during economists, who placed the entrepreneur at the heart of their investigations have identified in this economic agent special qualities in terms of ability to innovate, risk taker, acting under uncertainty, prudent man, careful in this section we will try to give a theoretical analysis of artisanal and entrepreneurial activities according to economic theory the contractor based the three criteria we discussed in the previous section (a) act in a context of uncertainty and risk taking, (b) detect and seize investment opportunities and (c) innovation and secondly on assumptions of others who always put the craftsman in the heart of their concern.

Firstly, according to Cantillon "the farmer, the merchant, the artisan, whatever their activity, fall into the category of entrepreneurs" After reading this definition of Cantillon, while craftsman entrepreneur, it is therefore a possibility theoretical for the artisan to qualify for an entrepreneurial qualification. Historically, the entrepreneur plays an important role in improving techniques and the development of arts: it is then a master artisan way.

In addition, when the foundations of the theory of the entrepreneur are taken, economists (excluding Marx) explain entrepreneurial activity in the opposing capitalist activity and assimilate more easily artisan contractor rather than capitalist. We find the terms of the master or owner, as defined in donor work. The contractor Say is exemplary in this regard since it is between the "execution of the worker and research scholar," and describing the classic work of the artisan contractor who reports to the execution of a work, but also coordination and supervision of the work.

The definition of innovation Schumpeter (new combinations of factors of production) tends to emphasize the relative nature of innovation. What matters first is that innovation (whatever its definition) strengthens the position of the company on the market and / or allow him to increase his sales. Innovation can take different forms (product, process, organization), but also it can be radical (make a new product) or incremental (an ongoing process due to continuous small adjustments). (Schumpeter, 1935, 1979) figure of a disembodied species as an engine of innovation and therefore the dynamics of capitalism.

For Collins (1964) : entrepreneur is an innovative artisan but with technical guidance , as their assumptions Smith N (1967) : based on education and training : the craftsman entrepreneur has limited education, uneducated , essentially technical training and experience , workshop man , few management skills , paternalistic wary of borrowing, working on his own account and owns a small business , Lauffer (1975), is an independent contractor craftsman professional, refusal the growth of non- traditional values , seeking independence and financial success , survival, often artisan son , Rather subcontracting innovation , the company must adapt to the needs of the family. Knight (1983) : inventor artisan driven by innovation , Etinger 1983 craftsman independent contractor , desire for autonomy , independence , Delegate little organizational weakness creates a pseudo company (BOUTILLIER S. and FOURNIER C , 2006).

From these characteristics, it appears that the craftsman entrepreneur is an individual who has a history (education, experience, technical and entrepreneurial management, relational fabric), skills (self-confidence, tenacity, leadership and competition, adaptability, attitude to risk and innovation, personal commitment) and needs (security, status, self-realization, power, etc.).

(c) Innovation

Innovation can take different forms (product, process, organization), but it also can be radical (make a new product) or incremental (continuous process is small continuous adaptations). The definition of innovation Schumpeter (new combinations of factors of production) tends to emphasize the relative nature of innovation. What matters first is that innovation (whatever its definition) strengthens the position of the company on the market and / or allow him to increase his sales.

Therefore, the question to be asked is the following: is the contractor craftsman the first engine, the ultimate or the less essential factor for economic development or should it be considered as a mechanical meeting of automatic and repetitive to the demands of its environment so?

The craftsman entrepreneur is one who gathers and combines the means of production (Say): This broad definition includes all entrepreneurs, owners or not, and broader organizational leaders;

- the craftsman entrepreneur is one who bears the risk of uncertainty (Cantillon): this excludes those who do not commit their own resources or, at least, those who have nothing to lose in (or win?) the company (management employees, nonprofit organizations)

- the craftsman entrepreneur is the one who introduced and led the innovation (Schumpeter): it eliminates the officers, owners or not, administering an existing stable organization,

The work of the ISM (2009) confirms this result highlighted by Richomme (2000). The study of the ISM (2009) reveals that creation ex nihilo is greater than the recovery. The courses are not only linear and there is a diversity of input modes in the trades: opportunity / necessity strain craft / new beginners / experienced artisans. ISM defines four main types of artisan entrepreneurs: entrepreneurs' traditional artisans' entrepreneur's managers who aim to grow their business, entrepreneur's are partisans satellites precarious, highly dependent on a small number of customers; artisans solo entrepreneurs looking independence.

Conclusion

In terms of conclusion, we can consider that the craft based entrepreneurial activity, since the latter creates value involving a change of status for the individual and / or the environment (innovation), and integrated into an organization created or resumed.

If we equate the contractor to an owner-manager, then all artisans are entrepreneurs starting, against by, all contractors are independent which are not positioned in the trades and do not have the status of craftsman.

If the contractor is a "social agent whose success is dependent on the mobilization of social capital triple facet: financial capital, knowledge capital and capital relations "(Boutillier and Uzundis, 1999: 147), then the craft activities will necessarily for entrepreneurial compared to other activities as they have a linear hierarchy of qualifications (Richomme, 2000; Zarca, 1986), a time wage for the accumulation of financial capital (Auvolat, 1985) and a strong presence in a territory (Julien and Marchesnay, 1996)

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