

The origins of meso economics Schumpeter's legacy and beyond

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Published online: 21 January 2011
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Abstract The paper starts from Schumpeter's proposition that entrepreneurs carry out innovations (the micro level), that swarms of followers imitate them (meso) and that, as a consequence, 'creative destruction' leads to economic development 'from within' (macro). It is argued that Schumpeter's approach can be developed into a new—more general—*micro-meso-macro* framework in economics. Center stage is *meso*. Its essential characteristic is bimodality, meaning that one idea (the generic rule) can be physically actualized by many agents (a population). Ideas can relate to others, and, in this way, meso constitutes a *structure component* of a 'deep' invisible macro structure. Equally, the rule actualization process unfolds over time—modelled in the paper as a meso trajectory with three phases of rule origination, selective adoption and retention—and here meso represents a *process component* of a visible 'surface' structure. The macro measure with a view to the appropriateness of meso components is generic correspondence. At the level of ideas, its measure is order; at that of actual relative adoption frequencies, it is generic equilibrium. Economic development occurs at the deep level as transition from one generic rule to another, inducing a change of order, and, at the surface level, as the new rule is adopted, destroying an old equilibrium and establishing a new one.

Keywords Micro-meso-macro-framework · Mesoeconomics · Neoclassical versus evolutionary economics · Schumpeterian economics · Evolutionary ontology · Knowledge · Unified rule theory · History of economic thought · Schumpeter · Hayek · Marshall

JEL Classification B12 · B31 · B41 · B52–53 · L26 · M13 · O30

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