



REVUE FRANÇAISE  
DE SOCIO-ÉCONOMIE

## **Editorial vision (20-09-07)**

The *Revue française de socio-économie* is a new, multi-disciplinary journal. It seeks to publish articles that contribute to a better understanding of actual economic practices. The journal aims to provide a forum for debating the essential characteristics of socio-economics and is determined to be open to all the various empirical approaches adopted in the social sciences.

### **Editorial vision and policy**

The debate on the ins and outs of socio-economics is a well-worn issue in the social sciences. The position adopted by those involved in setting up the *RFSE* is a fairly pragmatic one. We take the view that there is no need to wait for a precise definition of socio-economics in order to launch the journal. Our intention, rather, is to draw on existing research strands, whether they have their origins in sociology, anthropology or economics (see below), in order to establish the journal as a permanent forum for investigating and defining the essential characteristics of socio-economics.

Journals with similar purposes and aspirations to those that underpin the *RFSE* already exist in France and, to an even greater extent, in the English-speaking world. Those that come to mind include such excellent journals as *Travail et emploi* or some of the thematic issues of *Economies et Sociétés*, and, of course, the *Journal of Socio-Economics*, the *Socio-Economic Review* and even the *Journal of Economics Issues*. Nevertheless, there is an empty theoretical space, which we hope to fill with a form of socio-economics that is multi-thematic and generalist, theoretical and applied and aims explicitly to define and structure a particular field of academic enquiry. From this perspective, the journal can only be a French-language publication, since the English-speaking world already has such journals and even specialist newsletters such as *Economic Sociology. The european electronic newsletter*, whereas such publications are sadly lacking in the French-speaking world.

Our new journal is cross-cutting, open-minded, generalist and non-partisan. This makes it a distinctive addition to the academic landscape, in which it will occupy a space that is very much its own.

In establishing the *RFSE*, we are putting our faith in an interdisciplinary approach based on an editorial policy that seeks to locate itself at the crossroads of the social science disciplines that investigate economic behaviour from a variety of different standpoints.

### **From a shifting definition of the scope of socio-economics to a pragmatic view of the *RFSE*'s field of enquiry**

The search for a definition obviously comes up against a problem of epistemological heterogeneity. Let us take the various disciplines one by one. Among sociologists, economic sociology constitutes an identifiable sub-discipline in the academic landscape, even though it is far from being theoretically homogeneous and the debates continue to rage. Economic anthropology, which is now making a tentative comeback after a prolonged period of decline, went through a similar development and even aspired to autonomy as a discipline in its own right. Nothing similar exists in economics. Nevertheless, even though it is not always presented as such, socio-economics currently constitutes a field of enquiry that brings together certain strands not only of heterodox economics (the conventionalist and regulationist schools, neo-Marxism, various institutional approaches) but also of mainstream economics in an attempt to loosen the constraints of abstraction that distort the representation of economic behaviour (non-standard theory). For the moment, however, it is unclear in what ways this notion of socio-economics links them. Furthermore, there is a suspicion that it may be a catchall concept, a meeting place for researchers without a solid attachment to any particular paradigm. Nevertheless, it can safely be said that the particular emphasis on rules and institutions and the ethical and political substance attributed to economic actors, who are never reducible to mere economic men, constitute common lines of enquiry and form the epistemological backbone of the socio-economic sensibility.

The question of definition is obviously easier to deal with from a methodological point of view. Economics is currently suffering from a drift into formalism that is reflected in a failure to root itself sufficiently strongly in empiricism or even to take actual economic practices as a point of reference. The 'socio-economic' approach seems to be one of the most effective ways of producing a realistic representation of modern capitalism and its workings.

Without saying anything further, we can agree to use the term 'socio-economics' to denote an academic approach whose principal objective is to generate knowledge pertaining to *actual economic practices*. From this perspective, economic research is intrinsically open to collaboration with the other social sciences, and in particular with anthropology, sociology and history, all of which assume that the economic sphere is not autonomous and that economic activity and institutions associated with it are socially and historically constructed.

### **A real journal**

In accordance with the theoretical and methodological principles that will govern the *RFSE*'s operations, the journal will welcome publications in a range of different formats. A

journal should reflect the various types of academic output that draw on and add to current research trends. The journal, which will be published biannually, will take the following form:

- an editorial (a short article intended to initiate or fuel debates). It can also be a platform for defending positions or, where appropriate, it could become a more extended sequence of the 'debates and controversies' type.
- the 'standard' publication regime: half of the articles published will focus on a specific topic or problem. The particular theme may be selected in advance and in that case there will be a general call for papers; alternatively, it could be decided ex-post. The other half will be a 'miscellany' of articles without any common thematic or methodological basis. The aim here is to provide an outlet for papers that might be submitted to the journal but which do not fall within the scope of the current topics.
- Reports on ongoing research or critical reviews (slightly more extended commentaries on one or more books). A lighter touch than that applied in the case of articles may be appropriate for the peer review process here.
- Book reviews.

**The first issue is to be issued during the 1<sup>st</sup> semester 2008.**

The editorial guidelines are published in a Guide for Authors available  
on the CLERSE website: [http://www.univ-lille1.fr/clerse/site\\_clerse/pages/revues/rfse.htm](http://www.univ-lille1.fr/clerse/site_clerse/pages/revues/rfse.htm)  
(a new website is currently under construction)  
or at the following e-mail address: [rf-socioeconomie@univ-lille1.fr](mailto:rf-socioeconomie@univ-lille1.fr)  
Editorial secretary: Guillaume Yvan