

**XII CONGRESO INTERNACIONAL DE LA
ASOCIACIÓN ESPAÑOLA DE HISTORIA ECONÓMICA
(Salamanca 6-7 de septiembre de 2017)**

**An inequality based in different perceptiveness of agents.
The debate between the Austrian School of Economics
and the cooperative movement**

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In the Austrian School theory, the market process is driven by alertness, or entrepreneurial discovery, where the subjective perception of information is an essential element. According to Mises, this perception is unequal in different agents, as the entrepreneurs are especially talented individuals that need encouragement. But some other Austrian Economists defend cooperative arrangements, assuming that everybody has some entrepreneurial skills and may be owner and manager of the firm. This presentation poses the question of whether or not it is on the foundations of the Austrian School of Economics to defend an unequal psychology of agents that will preclude cooperative businesses from the market economy. It concludes that contact of Mises with the Spann circle in Vienna was a determinant feature for his elitist vision of the entrepreneur which is based in his hierarchical classification of agents on the Cantillon-Bentham tradition. However, other Austrian Economists give less importance than Mises to those special skills of the entrepreneurs. They argue that the spreading of information in a market oriented economy makes it impossible for an agent to foresee the future, be it the state or the entrepreneur. The comparison between the arguments in favour of cooperative firms and those posed by different Austrian Economists may clarify the definition of the agent presented by the Austrian Economists. And certainly, this assumed inequality by some of them affects their economic theory and the political arrangements assumed to be emerged in a free society.

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