

Columbia University
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DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

PLAN OF RESEARCH INTO THE ~~PROCESS OF~~ INSTITUTIONALIZATION

OF ECONOMIC BEHAVIOR IN SEVERAL SOCIETIES (Cultures).

Comparative

/ Interdisciplinary study of the economic behavior, processes, and institutions of an early society, ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{literate} ~~xxxxxx~~ and one or more ~~primitive~~ ^{preliterate} ones.

To study broadly the manner in which the economic process in man's behavior is institutionalized in society, ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{we wish to} design a program of comparative analysis of an ancient society, for which good historical records exist, one or several modern preliterate societies for which good ethnographic accounts exist and which might be visited again for further investigation. ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{Within} the techniques of institutional economics, linguistic analysis of the records, and social-anthropological description of the content, functions, and interconnections of the specific culture patterns and systems of interpersonal relationships traditionally functioning to effect the economic adjustment of the people of the society and to relate this adjustment in the economic ~~xxxx~~ process to other functional life-adjustments in their respective cultures. ⁹ The project would require collaboration and joint seminar work, together with detailed researches and reports on the part of students, among the three disciplines: institutional economics, Assyriology, and social anthropology (~~primitive economics~~). The results might be expected to contribute to sociological and anthropological understanding of the process of institutionalization in general in human culture, to a sharpening in ancient history of ~~comparative~~ ^{our} comparative understanding of the differences between primitive, archaic, and modern economic systems and of the evolutionary relationships among them, and, in economics itself, to provide a testing of methods of analysis and theory-building based on institutional ~~considerations~~ ^{principles} rather than upon ~~conventional~~ ^{contemporary} conventional scarcity and market concepts. ⁹ In detail the project would give opportunities for individual student training in the three disciplines; in entrusting to students of the sponsoring professors and their immediate colleagues particular problems within the project for their own investigation, and ² it would provide a joint seminar to serve as a forum for the wider dissemination and discussion of the detailed results, the theoretical ~~texts~~ ⁽⁶⁾ ~~and the~~ implications of the particular findings, and the contributions to the respective disciplines.

There follow three separate statements of the usefulness, promise, and possible theoretical contribution of the three-fold interdisciplinary collaboration projected.

tripartite

Comparative & evolutionary + historical

Contemporary institutional analysis in economics
 Transfer
 Cf: below

K.P.

of historical

institutional analysis

9) {
 9) {
 (6) {

Service

(cultural)

The place of social/anthropology in the plan.

cc: Process
Take up first
in this direction

economic matters

In anthropology, today, considerable interest surrounds ~~both the content~~ ^{economic matters} matter of economics and economic behavior both for its variations from culture to culture, and for its evolutionary history, and the question of institutional development, elaboration, and functioning in human cultures.

There is considerable feeling that economic institutions among ~~primitive~~ non-Western peoples are best to be understood in terms connecting their particular native cultural form and details ^{with} to their functional relationships to the other received native institutions of each people. A typology of economic institutions hardly exists, though many of the facts showing a very wide variation of economic systems have already been collected in part. What primitive and non-Western economic institutions are comparable or analogous to western ones and what are ~~not~~ ^{not} ~~are~~ is not yet clear. But it is already certain that the common institutional divisions ~~between economic and noneconomic~~ of the western world separating out in familiar terms governmental, productive, financial, or exchange functions and organs or customs of society from others, such as those of kinship, family, religion, magic, and so on, ~~is not to be taken~~ ^{do} ~~simply~~ not directly apply. Rather it seems necessary to build ~~functional~~ ^{substantive and functional} structural constructs around focal points of behavior and concern in each country that correspond better than do received Western terms and concepts ~~and~~ of institutional behavior to the regularities disclosed in native social and cultural organization and to the native terminology of legal, social, and interpersonal relationships.

Comparative

The detailed culturally-founded comparison of an archaic, several primitive, and modern economic systems planned here would be of very great theoretical importance to cultural anthropology ⁱⁿ

- (1) clearing up questions of functional relationship among parts of culture,
- (2) in providing a basis for a comparative typology of economic institutions,
- (3) and in illuminating problems of evolution, historical succession; and
- (4) present day acculturation ~~between~~, involving connections between complex modern western economic systems (and their associated culture patterns) and values and economic systems of other cultures.

Service

PLAN OF RESEARCH AND STUDY INTO THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF
THE INSTITUTIONS OF EARLY SOCIETIES

The broad purpose of this program is to explore the manner in which the economic process is institutionalized in society.

The immediate task should be the study of primitive and archaic societies thus ~~combining~~ the disciplines of anthropology and ancient languages with an institutional approach to the phenomena of economic life.

The disciplines which might have to combine their efforts - anthropology, ancient language, and economics - may appear on the face of it remote from one another. Yet these are but disjecta membra of a unit of discourse focal to the understanding of humanity, namely ~~that of~~ the totality of the social embodiments of material life. The question is: How do ^{those} ~~the~~ members fit together? And what can be done to restore the native wholeness of the interest that ultimately informs scholarship in these fields?

A sharply drawn map of the interdisciplinary situation is required for the purposes of integrative study planning.

Anthropological interest will be represented here by Primitive Economics . Interest in the economy of archaic society on the part of linguistics shall be represented by studies of the Babylonian economy. As to these two fields it is well known how keenly anthropologists are beginning to recognize the need for co-operation with the historian of antiquity whose information on archaic conditions is strictly complimentary to their own data on highly stratified primitive societies.

(4) The institutional approach to the substantive economy: Illustrated, applied, tested. Some results put on record.

(5) Growing points are indicated by four or five mimeographed papers.

K.P. : Early forms of trade in the Near East
Aristotle's economic thought

C.M.A.: Economic Anthropology

Walter Neale: Indian village (reciprocity and redistribution)

Harry Pearson: Economic development (surplus theorem criticized)

(6) Preferential subjects suggested for continuation:

The following proposals are premised on the assumption that the thesis of our Project concerning the non-market character of the Assyro-Babylonian economy has been established with a reasonable degree of certainty.

It is common knowledge that in regard to Babylonia the opposite assumption, namely, that of a type of mercantile society served as the axiomatic foundation of Greco-Roman economic history, ~~of Western European civilization in general~~ and, eventually, of the history of Western European civilization in general. Accordingly, one must expect that recognition to have far-reaching consequences for the traditional views on the civilization of classical Greece and Rome.

(a) Indeed, one might hope that the veil which hitherto prevented any clear understanding of economic life in classical Greece would now be lifted. The whole realm of trade, money and market institutions is still more or less obscure. In regard to business, ^{the} personnel, methods, ways of making profit, as well as the forms of investment in classical Greece are a mystery to us. We are unable to identify the business classes in terms of social origin; to explain the methods of risk bearing; of partnerships, forms of credit, mortgages, surety, the nature of banking transactions, state credit, and so on.

(b) Other problems arise in regard to the origins of economic transactions. The twofold roots of sale-purchase is an instance. The one is barter or exchange; the other -- no less certainly -- is distributive like auction, provisioning at the gates, sharing of booty, provisioning of armies, labor force, etc.