elements from the global culture consciously or unconsciously. In such a global context of human life, the study of syncretism and antisyncretism, at both the conscious and unconscious levels, requires greater scholarly attention. It is obvious that disciplinary inquiries into syncretic and antisyncretic processes of coherence and conflict will help us understand the cognitive, historical, and cultural processes of human life that generate coherence and conflict, and thus help in minimizing global conflicts and crises. An understanding of why or how people are “open” or “closed” to the idea and the reality of syncretism is a vital necessity, and I believe that the edited volume “Syncretism in Religion: A Reader” by Anita Maria Leopold and Jeppe Sinding Jensen is a good beginning to promote theoretical explorations and empirical research on this most important topic.

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Economic Systems of Foraging, Agricultural, and Industrial Societies

Norbert Dannhaeuser

In this new book¹ Frederic Pryor provides the reader with an empirical foundation for the study of economic systems encountered in foraging, agricultural, and industrial societies. This work does not break new theoretical grounds. Instead, it relates quantifiable data to theories and models that have been constructed by others. In that it is a decidedly inductive contribution to comparative economics.

The main unit of analysis is the economic system, those institutions that involve property rights and the distribution of resources. In this formulation, technology, natural resources, and human capital are external to the economic system, though part of its overall economy.

Pryor addresses the following issues. He hopes to discover whether there are distinct economic systems found in foraging, agricultural, and industrial societies; whether environmental and institutional contexts determine economic systems; whether economic performance is influenced by economic systems; whether there is a tendency for certain economic systems to evolve into others; finally, to determine whether specific economic systems are likely to cause societies to change from foraging to agriculture or from agriculture to industry.

Methodologically this work is quantitative and comparative in nature. The author relies on the Standard Cross Cultural Sample (SCCS) of George Murdock and Douglas White in the case of preindustrial societies; for industrial ones, the OECD serves as the source of data. To identify the various types of economic systems Pryor turns to the cluster analysis of property and distribution variables as they are found respectively in foraging, agricultural, and industrial societies. The author is very aware of the pitfalls such an approach can entail. He admits, for instance, that the samples themselves represent a bias because they are not randomly selected. Moreover, he realizes the difficulty resulting from preindustrial societies being contaminated through “contact with the West and by modern technologies and institutions…” (23) He therefore chooses societies in which the effect of these contacts when first studied were relatively minor. He is also cautious in deriving correlation from causation, always indicating that even a significant association between variables only suggests a causal linkage, it does not prove it.

On the basis of 44 foraging societies, Pryor identifies four institutions associated with distribution: the degree of wealth inequality, existence of food sharing, importance of trade, and the presence of taxation/tribute. With respect to property, he identifies six institutions: possession of land, private food stock, slavery, inheritance arrangements, marriage wealth transfers, and “ownership” of intangibles (such as of healing powers). A cluster analysis reveals that six economic systems can be identified among forager. One of them (consisting of six societies, such as the !Kung of Namibia and Sororino of Brazil) constitutes the classic foragers type in which sharing is emphasized. A transitional foragers type (e.g.,

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the Semang of Malaysia and Yahgan of South America) is similar to the classic one, though it is characterized by the more exclusive possession of land. Rather than considering these two types as a standard that define typical foraging societies, as many scholars do, Pryor shows that most of the foraging societies in his sample actually exhibit alternative types of economic systems. These he labels human-wealth-oriented societies (e.g., the Comanche; they stress wealth in human beings), intangible-wealth-oriented societies (e.g., Badjao of the Philippines; they have high inequality of wealth), politically oriented societies ( Ainu of Hokkaido; taxes and tribute to leaders are important), and physical-wealth-oriented societies (found mainly in the northern rim of the Pacific; characterized by capital intensive production). It is of interest that according to the Robert Carneiro's Guttman scale of economic development that emphasizes technology and division of labor, classic and transitional foragers exhibit the lowest average level of development, the last two - politically oriented and physical-wealth-oriented ones - show the highest level, while the human-wealth and intangible-wealth societies are between the others in their development. This does not mean, however, that these types of economic systems represent evolutionary stages and that the systems associated with the highest development stage were the most likely to transit into agriculture.

Can determinants of economic systems found among foragers be identified? The author discovered hardly any significant associations between social structural (e.g., family, marital form) and economic systems. And only in the case of the physical-wealth-oriented type does the environment seem to be important as most of these foragers are located in harsh environments needing considerable capital goods for survival. Consequently, there is little overall evidence that foraging economic systems are culturally and socially embedded, in contrast to (according to Pryor) what anthropologists and others influenced by Karl Polanyi usually assume.

In his discussion of the transition from foraging to farming societies Pryor distinguishes between proto-plant-production (such as fire stick agriculture), which probably was practiced for tens of thousands of years by foragers, and the appearance of full-scale agriculture some 10,000 years ago. There probably was considerable continuity between societies engaged in proto-plant-production and those moving into agriculture. That is why Pryor rejects the notion of "agricultural revolution" (91). Because agriculture in the proto form seems to have increased labor productivity, while full-scale agriculture reduced it the question arises why agriculture appeared when and where it did. To answer this, Pryor takes a sample of 135 tribal and peasant societies from the SCCS sample and arranges them according to the importance of agriculture. He then measures the degree to which a wide range of conditions is associated with the differential reliance on agriculture. The conditions range from environmental/geographical factors, stress on resources, sedentarism, to sociocultural conditions such as status competition, social-ceremonial obligations, and religious specialization. The results are then related by Pryor to theories taken from the literature concerning the rise of agriculture. He found little support for preferring one above the others, although it does seem that increasing population density, sedentarism, and reduction in consumable biomass were sufficient (but not necessary) conditions for the appearance of agriculture.

For Pryor the important conclusion is that "no single cause underlay the spread of agriculture in different times, places, and environments" (90).

In the case of traditional agricultural societies (tribal and peasant) the criteria defining property are ownership of land, presence of tenancy, and the existence of slaves and serfs; the criteria for distribution, in turn, are the degree of product sharing, prevalence of market transactions, and wealth distribution. After clustering these variables with respect to 41 peasant and tribal agricultural communities (Thai village [1955], Ibo [1935], Yanomamo [1965] are examples), Pryor identifies four types of economic systems. The first type stands apart from the rest and is the herding-plus system (individual land ownership is unimportant and wealth inequalities are considerable). The other types are the egalitarian farming system (relatively low levels of economic/social inequalities), semimarkezed farming system (more wage labor and more trade than in the other types), and the individualistic farming systems (nearly all in Africa, having slavery together with little mutual aid among families). Pryor tries to identify determinants of these types of economic systems and finds only few -- again, contra to the "common assumption among many anthropologists that particular social structures were the key causal forces in determining how the economy functioned" (124). The few associations he does consider include the fact that higher population density is correlated with semimarkezed farming systems, and centralized political arrangements with individualistic economic systems. Interestingly, the semimarkezed...
tized farming system exhibits the highest level of development of all agrarian economic systems.

When considering the transition from agriculture to industry, Pryor turns to 20 of today's industrialized countries and their socioeconomic characteristics as they existed in 1850. He identifies an industrialization threshold which he places when a country's manufacturing has passed "the per capita level of manufacturing production in England in 1778" (130). Once that happened (e.g., New Zealand in 1913) a country was on its way toward full industrialization. He finds that early industrialization was encouraged by a relatively literate rural population, high market penetration of the rural sector, and conditions in which land was held by owners or secure tenants. Semi-marketized farming systems historically were the most likely to show characteristics favorable to early industrialization. Compared to the transition from foraging to agriculture, therefore, the move from agriculture to industry was associated mainly with one of the agricultural economic systems (semi-marketized farming system), it involved greater technological changes, it occurred mainly deliberately (for profit and/or national power), and it took place over a longer period of time. This is supported by evidence Pryor obtains from today's developing countries - those that are more market-oriented and economically open are moving more rapidly toward an industrial condition.

Because economic data is far richer for market-based industrial societies than in the case of foraging and agricultural ones, Pryor is able to quantitatively isolate 40 economic characteristics to identify types of economic systems among them. These characteristics cover product and labor markets (e.g., barriers to foreign trade, legal worker protection) and business, government, and financial sectors (e.g., government share of investment, central bank independence). Taking 21 countries of the OECD as the sample, a cluster analysis reveals four types of economic systems: Southern European (such as Italy and Spain), Western European (France and Germany are examples), Nordic nations (for instance, Norway and Sweden), and the Anglo-Saxon-plus type (or AS+; UK, USA, Canada, and Japan are among them). The latter type is characterized by liberal market economies and weak organized labor, while the Nordic type has greater governmental role in the economy. The Southern European type affords less favorable legal environments for markets, while in the Western European economic system government transfers are very high in relation to the GDP. Again, in contrast to agricultural and foraging societies, available data allows Pryor to relate these respective economic systems to performance measures. For instance, AS+ countries have greater income inequalities than Nordic ones, while Southern European economic systems have lower rates of economic development. Other performance measures, such as class struggle, health status, pollution, and innovation do not show statistically significant differences between the system types. Among the causes that underlay the adoption of the respective economic systems, the most convincing are historical/geographic ones. Southern Europe has traditionally been characterized by a patrimonial political arrangement which contrasted with the less centralized feudal structure north of the Alps. English feudalism, in turn, allowed for more personal mobility, while in Nordic countries internal colonization encouraged greater emphasis on social equality than elsewhere. The geographic proximity of the countries belonging respectively to these types of economic systems no doubt reinforced their shared characteristics through contact and diffusion.

Pryor also discusses changes that advanced market economies are undergoing, some leading to convergence between them, others to parallel trajectories, and others again to divergence. As to future trends, an aging population will impact on the economic systems in the coming 40 years. Moreover, continued globalization in the form of international movements in trade, people and capital is likely to result in homogenization of government policies and economic institutions, converging levels of economic development between countries open to trade, and standardization of corporate practices. The future is likely to see some shifts in the relative power of capital, labor, and management. Labor probably will lose some influence, while high executive compensation especially in the US is likely to influence developments in a similar direction elsewhere in the developed world - though here Pryor becomes uncharacteristic speculative, himself admitting the "difficulties of prediction" (223).

The final substantive chapter in his book Pryor devotes to Marxist economic systems. He throws the net wide by including regimes in this category that combine the following characteristics: self-identification as Marxist by the party in power, an aim to establish a one-party rule, and an intention to gain control over the economy. Thirty-three regimes share these characteristics, which serve as the database for Pryor. Only six of them took over power by means of the "classical route" (234) of
revolution or civil war (e.g., China, Cuba, USSR). In the case of the remaining countries, power acquisition took place as a byproduct of resisting colonial control, a coup d'etat, subsequent to a major military defeat, or after an electoral victory of a communist party. Although Pryor was not able to undertake a cluster analysis, he informally distinguishes the core nations consisting of the Soviet Union, Eastern European regimes, China, Cuba, Vietnam, and North Korea from third-world Marxist regimes such as Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Nicaragua, and South Yemen. He shows that with respect to the nonmarket allocation of resources and regarding price controls, the Soviet Union adhered closest to the Marxist “canonical case” (237) while the other core nations did less so. In third-world Marxist countries the governments had only limited control over the economy because of their reliance on traditional agriculture and the weakness of the Marxist elite.

With respect to economic performance, Marxist regimes did not lag significantly behind market-based economies, and at least in the case of Eastern Europe equality of distribution was greater than in market economies. Yet, most Marxist regimes have had a relatively short life span, with the longest enjoyed by the Soviet Union. The main difficulty the latter encountered in the second half of the 20th century was the growing problem of managing the canonical Marxist economic system. This was compounded by loss of industrial discipline, and rising mistrust and discontent. Finally, there was the ideological shift represented by the “Gorbachev Factor” (259). Once the Soviet Union dissolved, so did the other Marxist regimes in Eastern Europe because in effect they were colonial extensions of the Soviet Union with which they shared similar problems. For third-world Marxist countries, the difference between promise and performance led to their termination, especially once external backing was discontinued. It is of interest that the surviving four Marxist regimes – China, Vietnam, Cuba, and North Korea – had gained power through revolution, national liberation movements, or civil wars, and that all have seen some military action against the US. Finally, the question of whether Marxist and market-based economic arrangement will over time converge, history has turned by and large moot. Perhaps, Pryor points out, China and Vietnam will show the way if they can construct a stable balance between “a centrally planned economy and a market economy with relatively little direct government interference in production and distribution” (263).

While truly grand in scope, this study offers only modest findings. Pryor found that each developmental stage of production contains a number of integrated economic systems that are defined by institutions of property and distribution. While the characteristics of economic systems seem not to have played much of a role in the transition from foraging to agriculture, they did so in the change from agriculture to industry. The author did not find evidence that the sociopolitical context and the environment have much to do with what economic systems have evolved and survived. That is, economic systems “appear as independent entities, worthy of study in their own right” (267). Finally, Pryor cannot say much about some areas of interest because of lack of data, such as economic performance in the case of foraging and agricultural economies. In many ways, therefore, this work leaves the reader with more questions than answers.

Those who have doubts about the validity of studies based on the SCCS and similar quantified cross-societal data sets will dismiss this book – as, for instance, Owen Lattimore did with respect to Pryor’s “The Origins of the Economy” (1977), a similar quantitative study. However, even without taking such extreme view, problems with this type of data exist. One question is whether much can be said about developments that took place thousands of years ago, such as the rise of agriculture, on the basis of a sample of contemporary traditional societies. Pryor replies that the results from his crosscultural data set are “plausible but not air-tight” (91), and rather cavalierly maintains that the burden of proof is with those who disagree; they need to show that data exist about the transition to agriculture of some 10,000 years ago which challenges his finding. A similar question exists with respect to foragers. His data is derived from contemporary foragers who in their economic and political structure probably are very different from those that used to exist in rich environments of, say, preagricultural Europe. This matter is not discussed by Pryor.

According to Pryor, some anthropologists have charged him “of having ‘evolutionist, materialist, and functional’ conceptions of preindustrial societies” (23, n. 22). This charge seems rather unfair. As Pryor points out, how can he be accused of this if his effort has been to test socioeconomic relations rather than to assume them? However, his emphasis throughout the book on the economic system – though standard among economists, it is less so among anthropologists – might lead some among the latter to charge him with func-

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tional bias. He uses the productive technology and resource elements economies are composed of to arrange societies along a development scale of production. Two other elements of economy, distribution and property, are subsumed by him under the concept of economic system. Economic systems are then related by him to each other, to the respective stages of production, and to noneconomic institutions. One is led, therefore, to believe that Pryor assumes (rather than tests) that there is a closer functional relation between property and distribution than between them and productive technology and resource.

Furthermore, the (to many anthropologists) unfamiliar notion of economic system might clarify a criticism that Pryor expresses about anthropological assumptions in several places of this book (e.g., 19, 47, 274); and that is the assumption that the economy is integrated into society and is a mere epiphenomenon of it. Though it is difficult to generalize even about ecological/economic anthropologists – by no means do all consider Polanyi as an unaided beacon illuminating our understanding of preindustrial economies – for most of them the key concept is not the economic system but the economy of a society. This includes physical resources and technology. When they deal with how the economy relates to the larger sociocultural context, they include these physical elements as well as property and distribution. Yes, anthropologists have a tendency to take the context of whatever they focus on into account. It turns out, however, that at least many ecological/economic anthropologists consider the economy (not the economic system), if anything, as a determinant of society and culture, not the opposite. In the special case of neo-Marxist anthropologists, a similar point can be made. As noted by Pryor, their notion of relations of production overlaps closely with that of the economic system. But in contrast to Pryor’s assumptions with respect to anthropologists, most neo-Marxist ones are convinced that the relations of production serve as the ultimate determinant of society rather than being determined by it.

However, justified Pryor is to focus on production – foraging, agriculture, and industry – within which to identify different economic systems, it leads him to overlook distinctions which might be significant and to miss types of societies which at least to the reviewer appear relevant to this kind of study. No systematic distinction is made by him between agrarian communities found in tribal societies and peasant communities that are part of preindustrial agrarian states. Since all pursue subsistence agriculture, they are discussed as one production type in chapter 4. Moreover, Pryor does not discuss formerly colonized agrarian societies as a subtype (e.g., British Malaysia, Dutch Indonesia), even though their colonial experience resulted in the creation of dual economies (extractive/export sector vs. the subsistence sector). Nor do contemporary market-based less development countries (LDCs) play much of a role in this study, a fact the reviewer finds particularly unfortunate. Pryor does refer to few of them when dealing with the transition from agricultural to industrial conditions, and also briefly when discussing systemic changes found in advanced industrial economies. In that context he mentions that he has identified a number of different economic systems among developing economies, but their characteristics are described only in the appendix which has to be accessed on the web. Actually, he gives more attention to Marxist third-world countries than market-based ones. I find this surprising, given that most countries today are LDCs and the vast majority of humanity are found in them. To have given them more attention might have deepened our understanding of the degree to which developing economies are moving through similar transformations as did countries during the first wave of industrialization; it might also have suggested the trajectory of future global development which certainly will not only be determined by current OECD countries.

A related problem involves the social unit of analysis. Aside from foragers among which bands and small tribes are the social units in Pryor’s data set, when discussing industrial societies (and those becoming so) the typical unit is the country. In the case of agricultural societies, by contrast, Pryor uses the individual chieftain hamlet and peasant village as the relevant unit. There are problems when he does this especially with respect to peasant villages. Although Pryor refers to “Agricultural societies” in Table 4—1, in the case of states they are actually individual villages that are part of states. For instance, regarding China it is a Chinese village that has been studied, for Thailand it is a Thai village, and so on. Now, it is one thing to generalize from a group of !Kung about the !Kung San in general; it is another to do the same for China, Thailand, etc. Moreover, when comparing industrial societies and their economic systems with agricultural ones, this approach leads Pryor to compare these production types on different levels of organization – in the former, on the level of the state; in the latter, on that of the village within preindustrial states. Pryor is aware of this difficulty, but justifies the focus on single communities

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in agrarian societies in two ways. First, there is insufficient statewide information available about the production and distribution system for many of the agrarian states; second, in agrarian states political centralization did not significantly influence the organization of production. This latter argument, valid or not, of course begs the question of how representative of an entire state (say of Egypt) an individual village is. Might there not be a third reason? The data set used by Pryor for preindustrial societies is derived from the Standard Cross Cultural Sample which in the case of agricultural societies happens to consist of individual village studies.

Pryor cannot be faulted for not relating his data as best as he can to a large number of theories and propositions about production stages and economic systems. Nevertheless, some controversial, well-known theories and models close to the heart of anthropologists and others are not addressed. For instance, Ester Boserup’s model of agricultural intensification (via shortened fallow periods) and its relation to population density, property relations, and stratification does not receive attention, nor does the dependency/world systems assumption that socioeconomic core regions cause and/or maintain poverty in peripheral regions. It would have been of interest to learn what his data set tells us about these and other models. True, one cannot do all, and Pryor in this volume has done much. It is surprising, nevertheless, that no reference is made to Fernand Braudel, David Landes, and Eric Wolf among historians, economists, and anthropologists; nor (given his evolutionary approach) to Elman Service, Morton Fried, and Marvin Harris.

Much of the data on which this empirically oriented work is based appears in table form throughout the book. A considerable amount, however, is available in appendices that can only be found online. This is understandable given the size limitations of books. It becomes irritating, though, if crucial information is tucked away in the appendix, such as the nature of the various types of economic systems of developing economies that are mentioned in the text (146, 196 ff.), yet identified only in the appendix. It is also a leap of faith that the online information will still be available in one or two decades. Already now the reviewer could not find the appendices via the publisher’s web page as the reader is directed to do, though they could be accessed via the author’s home page.

Finally, a minor matter, but irritating all the same because it could so easily have been avoided: Despite the comparative nature of this work, which includes discussions and data presentations of a wide variety of societies, the index, while listing types of societies and countries, does not contain references to individual ones.

Despite these shortcomings, anthropologists and others interested in the comparative study of economies will find this truly scholarly work highly useful. It is refreshing to read a study that endeavors to use a quantifiable set of data to empirically answer a broad range of questions concerning the nature of economic systems, their relation to the environmental and social contexts, and their transformation over time — questions that all too often have encouraged imaginative speculations as answers. Pryor’s effort in this study reminds one of the scholars — anthropologists among them — who at the turn of the last century called for the need for more hard data rather than additional models of the evolution of culture. They would have agreed with Pryor’s point that “premature theorizing without [a] factual basis . . . will only divert attention from the real economic (and intellectual) problems” (281). The difficulty is that “armchair theorizing is a pleasant way to pass the time, especially while leaving the hard work of empirical validation to others” (279). Pryor attempts to provide such validation in this work, and by and large he has succeeded in doing so.

Drei neue Maya-Hieroglyphen Kataloge
Berthold Riese

1 Ausgangslage
Laufende Neufunde von Inschriften, Erstveröffentlichungen von Altbeständen aus privaten und öffentlichen Sammlungen und die damit einhergehende Zunahme von Entzifferungsversuchen machen eine systematische Bestandsaufnahme und Fortschreibung derselben sowohl auf der Ebene der Texte und der in ihnen vorkommenden Hieroglyphen und Zeichen als auch auf der Ebene der Entzifferungen zu einem immer wieder virulenter werdenden Desiderat der Maya-Schriftforschung.

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