

Anthropology and Business: Influence and Interests*

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Abstracts

The premise of this article is that the expansive domain of business, as expressed in its market-transaction based, organizational, and institutional forms, has influenced the development or “making” of anthropology as a discipline and a profession for the better part of a century (i.e., since the 1920s). The influences were reciprocal, in that making anthropology played a role in forming the industrial order of the early 20th century and established precedents for the interaction of anthropology and the business domain that continues into the contemporary era. Anthropologists acknowledge that the time has come for our discipline to attend to business and its corporate forms and engage them as legitimate subjects of inquiry (Fisher and Downey 2006; Cefkin 2009; Welker et. al. 2011), and this suggests that it would be prudent to examine the ways in which business is focusing upon anthropology, and the potential implications of such attention. Throughout this article, the term “business” will refer to private firms as members of an institutional field, meaning “organizations that in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life” (; i.e., the totality of relevant actors; Bourdieu 1971; DiMaggio and Powell 1983:148). Over time, this field has attracted prominent academic researchers (as will be discussed herein), who may become intellectual “suppliers” to businesses, and thus part of the field. Therefore, the term “business” may include any organization or individual that is part of the field, including academic suppliers (see also discussion section). To

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reflect the scope and complexity of the institutional field, the term “domain of business” may be used interchangeably with “business”.

Keywords

Business anthropology, industry, institutions, organizations

“Rules and rule-makers are necessary to order, and therefore to human freedom. Business as a rule-maker, accordingly, stands high in responsibility among human institutions, as a source of goods and services, to be sure, but also as source of order and of freedom.”

Beardsley Ruml, *Tomorrow's Business*, 1945¹

Introduction

The early period in which anthropologists engaged directly with the business domain in the United States (1920-1960) often is dismissed as a marginal or failed effort from which little can be learned (e.g., see discussion in Welker et. al, 2011:55). Yet, during this early period of high activity, anthropologists, both academics and practitioners, established the foundations for many of our contemporary engagements with (and dilemmas concerning) capitalist enterprise, including ethnographic practice in consumer research, anthropologically-informed consultancy in advertising and design, corporate ethnography, as well as critical reflections upon anthropology and business (Eddy and Partridge 1978; Easton 2001; Mills 2006). Further, during this early period, anthropological engagement with business interests and those of the State set in motion patterns of interaction that became institutionalized over the century and gradually defined anthropology as a discipline.

It is worthy of note that American business interests had an influence on European anthropologists and institutions during this same early period, especially the 1920s and 1930s, through philanthropic funding of ethnographic research in the colonies, a subject that has been explored in the mainstream disciplinary literature (Goody 1995; Stocking 1995; see also Mills 2002). It is seldom that the two streams of transatlantic business influence and interest with respect to anthropology – that in the United States and that in Europe, especially Great Britain – during this early period are examined in parallel and with respect to global intellectual networks in anthropology that formed

¹ Beardsley Ruml, PhD University of Chicago, was director of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial from 1922 to 1929, when this private foundation was redirected from its initial mission of social welfare toward a new purpose of establishing an empirical foundation for the social sciences.

both as a stimulus to such interest and as a consequence of it. Discussions of the early period often fragment history into particles that segregate business and industrial anthropology in the United States from colonial anthropology under the British.

It is curious that more attention has not been devoted to understanding the global patterns of institutional influence that led to early encounters between anthropology and business on both sides of the Atlantic, including interactions among corporations, private foundations, governments, academic institutions, and individuals during the early 20th century. This article will suggest that dynamic relationships among these actors reflected an effort to achieve the national and international agendas of early 20th century capitalist elites, with the “making” of anthropology² playing a significant role.

There are advantages to examining the early period of anthropology and business engagement in comparison to the more recent period of intensive involvement: i.e., circa 1980 to the present. Probably the most important advantage is temporal distance that permits placement of our subject in a larger historical and social context, and time for deeper understanding. There have been numerous studies by historians and members of ours and other disciplines on the business elites and academic disciplines of that era, including re-studies of archival and experimental records (e.g., Kohler 1978; Bulmer and Bulmer 1981; Kohler 1987; Gillespie 1991; Kuklick 1991; Goody 1995; Stocking 1995; Mills 2002, 2006). These provide multiple points of view on the context and role of anthropology and its relationship to business and other disciplines. Also, the fact that we are not as directly entangled in the specific issues and debates of the early period, provides us with a relatively less compromised vantage point from which to contemplate our forebears. History may gain for us the kind of cultural “distance” that enables juxtaposition and thereby makes the “familiar” just strange enough to lessen the risk that we will continue to reproduce that which we thought we had set aside.

In this article whose larger purpose is to introduce the new *Journal of Business Anthropology*, we will explore three themes related to the early period of business and anthropological engagement: first, the interrelationships among anthropological and business interests in the United States and Europe during the 1920s through 1940s as part of the “making” of anthropology as a social science discipline during that period; second, the contextual factors that shaped these relationships

² The construct “making” anthropology is understood to reflect the force of a selected set of influences shaping the discipline and related professions of socio-cultural anthropology during its formative years, not in some “totalizing” manner but in the sense of a significant set of factors among others.

and some of their consequences for various parties; and third, the implications of such patterns and relationships that continue to have relevance to our discipline in the present.

Business in its economic, organizational and institutional forms

For the purposes of this article, business is not conceived of as a singularity, but as a form of human endeavor that is richly diverse in representational dimensions, including the economic, organizational and institutional. Business in its economic form is conceptualized in the broadest sense as trade, commercial transactions or engagements (e.g., buying and selling of goods and services in the marketplace, and organized economic activities attendant to such practices [Oxford English Dictionary 2011 online version³]). Anthropologists have long-standing interests in economics to the extent of establishing a subfield of economic anthropology whose literature is fundamental to the anthropologies of business (Wilk and Cligger 2007). Since globally-integrated business systems have extended their reach to humanity in virtually every community around the world, anthropologists have acknowledged economic and market activity as specifically connected to the business and corporate realms which organize such endeavors, and the study of these phenomena is entering the mainstream of disciplinary anthropology (e.g., see Fisher and Downey 2006; Ong and Collier 2006; Welker et. al. 2011).

An important reason why globalization brings business and the corporate form to the foreground is that global market transactions are more likely to be pursued or conducted by formal organizations that are required to manage the complexity of trade integrated on a worldwide scale (theoretically, bringing transactions inside a firm reduces transaction costs [Williamson 2005])⁴. Firms (e.g., companies, corporations, partnerships) are embedded within and across societies, and during the late 20th century they emerged as powerful institutional actors, whose influence reaches beyond the marketplace and into virtually every aspect of modern life (Scott 2001). The increasing power of business in society stimulates diffusion of business-oriented rules, norms and constructs into society and academia (e.g., the “anthropology of finance”, “audit culture”, “consumption studies” - all find their origins in the worlds of business).

In recent years, organizational science has more or less abandoned the notion of studying organizations in isolation from other

³Accessed November 24, 2011

⁴ Such an arrangement requires the presence of a business firm to govern the internal agents conducting the transactions.

social phenomena, and has been examining them through the lens of new institutional (or, in economics, neo-institutional) theory (Menard and Shirley 2005; Scott 2008). While there is no consensus on new institutional theory across the social sciences, business organizations (along with individuals and nation-states) classically have been viewed as the principal institutional actors (a social actor with interests and agency); organizations may hold coercive power over individuals, while nation-states may compel organizations. Businesses as social actors often are significant forces in field sites that are of interest to anthropologists.

New institutional theory specifically is an approach which suggests that organizations such as businesses are socially constructed and “involved in an arena of social or cultural production and the dynamic relationships among them” (DiMaggio 1979:1463). Pierre Bourdieu (1971, 1984), an influential theorist in contemporary anthropology, contributed significantly to the foundational construct of the institutional field, one of the most important ideas in new institutional theory (Scott 2008:183). Viewing business from a new institutional perspective renders it a scholarly field of interest and inquiry that has brought about a shift in our disciplinary perspective, from that of business as an external and potentially hostile “other” with which anthropologists have had an arm’s length relationship, to that of business as part of a larger macro-social reality, and within which anthropologists may hold engaged positions (Cefkin 2009; Welker et. al. 2011). Due to this evolving situation, the domain of business now is being recognized as deserving of our understanding, interpretation, and critical assessment, yet this dawning awareness brings its own quandaries with respect to positionality and ethics, some of our discipline’s major issues at this time.

Each of these conceptions of business - economic transactions integrated across the globe; organizational actors endowed with governance systems; institutions engaged in an arena of social and cultural production – will be engaged to examine interactions with early and mid-20th century anthropologies. We will investigate how and why the interaction began, where it led, and what may be its significance for the present.

The construct “business anthropology”

Attention here is not focused on categorical definitions of “business anthropology” or “business anthropologist”.⁵ Just as there are many

⁵As a heuristic for the general reader, the term *business anthropology* may be considered to be inquiry or practice within the business domain that is

“anthropologies”, there are many “business anthropologies” or anthropologies of business. One point of our complicated history is that multiple forms of the phenomena glossed as business anthropology have emerged and are evolving over time, and their contours and edges may overlap or become blurred in a manner that makes separation of one genre from another difficult or counterproductive (although that does not mean that attempts to do so have ended). For example, the turn to critical anthropology over the past two decades, together with a surge of interest in capitalism within the discipline (Blim 2000), has engendered a literature of critical reflection upon anthropological engagement with business and corporations, including that by authors who currently practice or have practiced inside companies (e.g., see Fisher and Downey 2006; Cefkin 2009; Suchman forthcoming). Whether or not these writings represent “business anthropology” may not be the most salient question; rather, this literature must be included in any consideration of the field of anthropology and business.

Anthropology and business: our legacy of theory and practice

The received view of anthropology’s relationship with the domain of business usually begins with Western Electric’s Hawthorne Project (1927-1932) and the subsequent rise (and fall) of Elton Mayo’s Human Relations School, with numerous anthropologists and others contributing to this project (Eddy and Partridge 1978; Burawoy 1979; Holzberg and Giovannini 1981; Schwartzman 1993). These activities not only initiated studies of human and social behavior in corporations, but also launched anthropologically-oriented studies of consumption, branding and advertising through the successful spin-off of a consulting firm by anthropologists at the University of Chicago (i.e., Social Research, Inc.; see Eddy and Partridge; Easton 2001). The spin-off company was able to form and succeed when the center of empirical research in social science shifted from Harvard to the University of

grounded in anthropological epistemology, methodology and/or substantive knowledge. It is worthy of note that a cultural-cognitive category glossed as “business anthropology” probably was in use during the early period of business and anthropology engagement (1920-1960), since at least one occurrence of the term was identified in a search of five major journals in anthropology published between 1940 and 1960 (the Society for Applied Anthropology was created in 1941). The journals included *American Anthropologist*, *Annual Reviews in Anthropology*, *Anthropological Quarterly*, *The Applied Anthropologist* (later *Human Organization*), and *Current Anthropology*. At least one article was identified that contained the term “business and industrial applied anthropology” (see Nash, Manning. 1959. Applied and Action Anthropology in the Understanding of Man. *Anthropological Quarterly* 32(1):67-81.).

Chicago, attracting anthropologists including Radcliffe-Brown, Warner, Burleigh Gardner who started-up the firm, and others (Gillespie 1991:254).

The recounting of these events may mention transatlantic ties between Hawthorne era researchers such as Elton Mayo and W. Lloyd Warner and British social anthropologists Bronislaw Malinowski and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (e.g., see Partridge and Eddy 1978; Schwartzman 1993). Gillespie's (1991) re-study of the Hawthorne Project is especially thorough in detailing connections between Hawthorne researchers and British social anthropologists.⁶ These scholars were linked together by intellectual interests in the empirical study of social phenomenon, which represented a new wave of social science contrasted with previous scholarship oriented toward archival records and philosophical arguments. They also shared a framework of ideas related to functionalist theory that may be traced to the French sociologist Emile Durkheim (Harris 1968; Goody 1995). Functionalism, the theoretical basis of social anthropology at that time, is one of the oldest ideas in social science, relying upon an organic analogy to understand relationships in society. Radcliffe-Brown's structural-functionalism drew from Durkheim's notion of "solidarity" to suggest that "social systems" display a sort of "unity" in which all parts "work together with a sufficient degree of harmony or internal consistency: i.e., without producing persistent conflicts which can neither be resolved nor regulated" (Radcliffe-Brown 1952:181; c.f., Harris:1968:515-16). Early studies by Malinowski did not differ much from the Durkheimian notion of function, while his later work was influenced by Freud, and he developed the idea that individual bio-physical needs were satisfied within the social organism via institutions and symbolic projections. These ideas were foundational in the theoretical work of Elton Mayo and W. Lloyd Warner (Gillespie 1991), and are reflected in the close

⁶ Malinowski established a personal friendship with Mayo on his way from Melbourne to the Trobriand Islands (Mayo was based at the University of Queensland in Brisbane). It may have been Malinowski who convinced Mayo to leave Queensland by cajoling him to visit Melbourne and write a book (Gillespie 1991:98). Radcliffe-Brown recruited Warner to doctoral studies in anthropology on a visit to Berkeley where Warner was a student, and R-B subsequently became Warner's adviser in Australia (the two men also overlapped at the University of Chicago, where R-B lectured between 1931 and 1937 [see for references Baba 2009b; see also Partridge and Eddy 1978]). Warner met Mayo when the former was appointed as an Instructor at Harvard following his fieldwork in Australia, and sought out Mayo in the Business School hoping to find funds to support a community study (Gillespie 1991:155). The role of Australia as a meeting point in the development of these networks has been noted in the history of the Hawthorne Project by Gillespie (1991).

relationships established among these four individuals, particularly between Radcliffe-Brown and Warner and between Malinowski and Mayo.

Anthropology and business: the financial nexus

What typically is not captured in historical narratives of our legacy is the full extent of the linkages among the aforementioned social actors on both sides of the Atlantic, and especially the social and economic context for these connections. If the framework of our early history is expanded to include its financing - where the funding came from, what motivated its trajectory, how funding policies emerged and what they signified intellectually - some interesting issues emerge that have bearing upon the present. The role of Rockefeller philanthropy in the history of anthropology has been discussed previously (Stocking 1995, Goody 1995, Mills 2002); however these accounts do not examine the background against which the Rockefeller Foundation made decisions as an organization, nor do they fully explore the implications of the funding patterns in anthropology, including their consequences for anthropological practice.

One of the interesting aspects of the four careers mentioned previously (i.e., Malinowski, Mayo, Radcliffe-Brown and Warner) was their shared experience with a specific funding source, including both the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial (hereafter referred to as the Memorial)⁷ and other branches of the Rockefeller philanthropies (e.g., the Division of Studies). In the literature, much attention has been given to the Memorial, and this is warranted considering the magnitude of its financial contributions. Under the directorship of Beardsley Ruml (1922-1929), \$21 million for social science research was disbursed by the Memorial. More than half of this amount went to just five institutions - Chicago, Columbia, the Brookings Institution, the London School of Economics (LSE), and Harvard (Bulmer and Bulmer 1981:386). Each of the principal figures in the early history of anthropology and business were affiliated to at least one of these institutions (Warner and Radcliffe-Brown at Chicago, Malinowski at LSE,

⁷ The Memorial was created in 1918 in memory of the wife of John D. Rockefeller. Sr. (Laura Spelman Rockefeller) following her death in 1915. It was initially capitalized with \$74 million, and expended \$50 million over the 11 years of its existence, after which its operations were consolidated into the Rockefeller Foundation proper. After this point, a further \$10 million were given by it to the Spelman Fund in New York to pursue specialized work in public administration; these efforts were separate from the Memorial (Bulmer and Bulmer 1981:351).

and Mayo at Harvard).⁸ However, it is also important to recognize that the Memorial was not the only Rockefeller entity supporting anthropology during the early period. The Rockefeller Foundation and its Division of Studies provided a five year grant to the Australian National Research Council for anthropological research in the region, to include both social and biological anthropology (Kohler 1987:156-58). This funding benefitted Radcliffe-Brown during his five year stint as Chair of Anthropology in Sydney between 1926 and 1930 (Stocking 1995:340-341). Overall, this funding record suggests that Rockefeller philanthropy provided significant financing associated with the early field research and academic appointments that in one way or another are connected to the historical roots of relationships between anthropology and the business domain, not only in the United States, but elsewhere around the world (i.e., Rockefeller funding supported fieldwork in Africa as well as Australia). This financial support is all the more significant because there were virtually no other substantial sources of funding for social science research available at that time (Goody 1995, Stocking 1995). Government funding for research was non-existent, universities were poorly equipped to support social science research, and other foundations did not support social science inquiry (with the exception of Russell Sage, which funded survey research [Bulmer and Bulmer 1981]).

In the 1920s, several forces converged toward creating a favorable climate for support of social science research (Bulmer and Bulmer 1981, Kohler 1987). Prior to the 1920s, private foundations had not shown much interest in funding university-based research, as academic scientists were viewed as individualistic in their interests and not oriented toward pursuit of the social goals that animated philanthropists (e.g., public health, education, social welfare [Kohler 1987]). At the same time, university researchers were wary of interference from private research sponsors. World War I had altered these perceptions, as academics and foundation personnel worked together and formed relationships that built trust. The National Research Council (NRC) emerged as an intermediary through which foundation funds could be provided to university researchers by a mutually agreeable model. The foundations' goal would be to develop the larger community of science, and academic researchers would be protected from interference by private sponsors (Kohler 1987:140-142).

These developments had an influence on social science disciplines. The rise of the natural sciences championed by the NRC

⁸ Gifts from the Rockefellers helped to establish the University of Chicago, the Harvard Business School (the base from which Mayo conducted his research) and the Brookings Institution (Bulmer and Bulmer 1981; Gillespie 1991).

created pressure for a similar pathway in social science, and some fields followed suit with efforts to take a more rigorous (positivist) approach (statistics, psychology, economics, sociology [for discussion on sociology see Ross 1991:247-256]). Some prominent scholars believed that social science would develop along the lines of natural science, ultimately enabling prediction and control of human and social phenomena. A more rigorous approach to social science also was more expensive. Funds were needed to support fieldwork, statistical documentation and analysis, equipment, and assistants to engage in the more routine tasks. However, neither universities nor governments offered funds to underwrite the cost.

The most important source of funding for social science research in the 1920s was the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, mentioned previously. Its strategy for funding social science was developed by Beardsley Rumel, a psychologist who received his PhD from the University of Chicago. During World War I he had been assigned to devise psychological tests for the military, one of the first instances of applied psychology in the United States. Rumel entered the scene when the Memorial's leadership determined that its record of accomplishment was not sufficiently distinguished, and the management began a search among their philanthropic networks for a suitable director.⁹ Rumel, who was then employed as an assistant to the President of the Carnegie Corporation in New York, was known as a bright and capable "idea man" who would be able to re-conceptualize the trajectory of the Memorial.¹⁰ He was appointed its Director in 1922.

Rumel had considerable autonomy in developing and implementing his ideas for re-directing the Memorial, provided that these ideas were approved by key Memorial trustees with the confidence of John D. Rockefeller Jr., who also was president of the Memorial but did not engage in day-to-day affairs. Two trustees in particular were critical – Arthur Woods, the acting president of the Memorial until 1929, who also was a vice-president of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (significance to be discussed below), and Raymond Fosdick, another trustee, one of Rockefeller, Jr.'s closest advisers. Fosdick was a Wilsonian democrat who was sympathetic to social

⁹ The Memorial was administered from the offices of John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

¹⁰ Rumel later became Dean of the newly reorganized Division of Social Sciences at the University of Chicago in the 1930s, and it was one of the faculty seminars devoted to problems in the social sciences held within this division that provided the basis for Radcliffe-Brown's lectures on social anthropology theory that ultimately were published posthumously as *A Natural Science of Society*; Eggan 1957.

science and backed most of Ruml's proposals (Bulmer and Bulmer 1981:359). Ruml ran the Memorial as a small, entrepreneurial organization in which he was closely involved in all of the major decisions. He retained highly centralized responsibility and control in management, and his influence with the key trustees endowed him with substantial power in directing the Memorial's resources. Ruml's early Report on scientific research for 1919-1922, written soon after his arrival in 1922, signaled the direction in which he intended to move (c.f., Bulmer and Bulmer 1981:361):

"Such research (i.e., scientific) has had rather immediate relations to measures of human welfare. The Memorial's interest in scientific research is essentially humanitarian, having as its foundation a belief that knowledge and understanding of the natural forces that are manifested in the behavior of people and of things will result concretely in the improvement of conditions of life."

This statement indicates that Ruml intended to honor the Memorial's standing commitment to humanitarian goals and human welfare, while at the same time suggesting that these goals could best be achieved if greater attention were given to scientific research as a foundation for understanding the forces underlying the behavior of people. This was a controversial argument, not only because Ruml's intention would divert funds from the direct support of social welfare (e.g., aid for the needy), but because he was aligning with other forces that envisioned the social sciences as developing in parallel with the natural sciences. As Bulmer and Bulmer (1981:363) note:

"The purpose of developing a body of fact and principle to be utilized in the solution of social problems would in no sense be an exclusively academic interest in the advancement of social theory and social philosophy. It would be a practical interest in human welfare, in the furtherance of which the development of the social sciences was an essential means to that end."

The Memorial's goals for the future of social science were to become significant in the later intellectual and practical development of anthropology, particularly as these relate to anthropology's relationships with business, as we will discuss shortly.

The context of the Ludlow incident

There was yet another aspect of controversy that created a delicate situation for Ruml. Previously, the Rockefeller Foundation had attempted to support a specific line of social science research that ended

in a political and public relations debacle, forcing the Foundation to withdraw from the project. To gain perspective on this latter situation requires a digression. The Ludlow incident, sometimes referred to as the “Ludlow Massacre” (the quotation marks suggesting that its status as a massacre is contested) took place during a highly compressed time of rapid industrialization in the United States (1880-1920) when fundamental areas such as steel, energy, automobiles, and other consumer durables manufacturing were experiencing expansion and complex changes in their organization and management, including the rise of a professional managerial class, both middle and upper management. In conjunction with these changes, the “scientific” management movement and its intellectual leader, Frederick W. Taylor, were on a mission to dismantle the “secret knowledge” of craft-based work through its reorganization in factories, mills and mines, based on efficiency principles and managerial controls (Taylor 1911, Braverman 1974, Gillespie 1991). The careful assignment of a specific worker to a specific production task on the basis of skills and/or temperament was supposed to end the craft-domination of production and also ensure that workers were more satisfied with their job roles and compensation, which was to be incentive-based (e.g., by the piece). Craft-based workers in companies (e.g., miners) resisted these changes, without much success.

On a collision course, the skilled trade labor unions, especially the nationally organized American Federation of Labor (AFL), were on a drive to organize workers in trades across America, but their efforts were met with strong resistance from companies (Mills 1994). Members of trade unions regularly went on strike against their employers, and violence sometimes broke out. These strikes were not legal, and violence often occurred as union members clashed with private security guards, state militia, and even federal troops. Sometimes, people were killed in these struggles. Prior to the Great Depression of the 1930s, American workers did not have a federal law granting them the right to form a union, so employers could have workers arrested and charged with crimes such as conspiracy. The involvement of political radicals (e.g., socialists, communists, anarchists) in some unions heightened tensions with business managers and executives.

One of the most notorious and violent clashes involving an effort to organize workers into a union was the “Ludlow Massacre”. A strike for improved wages, better working conditions and union recognition erupted into violence on April 20, 1914 at the Rockefeller-controlled Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (C&FI) in southern Colorado when state militia and company police opened fire on the miners’ tent camp

(Gillespie 1991:23).¹¹ Several people were killed in the clash, including two women and eleven children who suffocated in a pit dug under their tent during a fire storm. John D. Rockefeller Jr. was publicly blamed for the deaths, a situation that appears to have haunted him for many years afterwards.

The public outrage that followed this incident and an investigation by the U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations are worthy of note for two reasons. First, they point toward a shift in public attitudes regarding large corporations and their relationships with other stakeholders in society; and second, they suggest a serious issue facing the Rockefellers and other public figures whose moves were scrutinized critically by the press, the public and politicians.

The first point illustrates one of the trends in the Progressive Era toward critiques of corporate excess (sometimes ignited by “muckraking” journalists) and reforms aimed at curbing the more egregious practices of bare-knuckled capitalist competition. This was the period during which Congress enacted the first anti-trust laws to ban certain forms of monopoly that were defined as illegal (i.e., the Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890). Business executives became aware of the negative consequences of public opinion, and began to court public favor, in part to avoid anti-trust action (Brody 1980:51). The Rockefellers’ Standard Oil Company did not escape an anti-trust break-up by the US Supreme Court in 1911. However the Rockefellers later endeavored to address the concerns of the public and Congress with respect to the Ludlow incident through various actions, some of which were accepted while others failed to win approval.

Among the failed attempts, the one that is central to our purposes in this article was an action taken through the newly formed Rockefeller Foundation (RF).¹² In the aftermath of the Ludlow incident, the economic research division of the RF called upon William L. McKenzie King, a Canadian politician and expert on industrial relations to formulate an industrial relations plan for CF&I and to conduct a detailed study of the entire field of industrial relations.¹³ This action by the RF was a failure, however, as labor leaders and Congressional

¹¹ Rockefeller interests owned a controlling share the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, which was managed by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. from his office in New York (Zinn 1990).

¹² The Rockefeller Foundation was established in 1913 in the state of New York as a means to accumulate the wealth of John D. Rockefeller, Sr.

¹³ Industrial relations was an emerging area of professional specialization that paralleled the rise of industrialization. It rationalized labor relations policy through the development of a professional group of managers whose careers were dedicated to labor-management relations, underpinned by research and publications, college-level courses, and professional organizations (Gillespie 1991:16-17, 28-30).

liberals reacted angrily, charging that the RF was a vehicle for the family's private interests (Bulmer and Bulmer 1981:350).¹⁴ The Rockefellers already had been unsuccessful four years earlier in their efforts to have their Foundation incorporated by the U. S. Congress due to charges that such foundations were "built on the ill-gotten gains of 'robber barons' and that philanthropic programs would be used to undermine the democratic process" (Gillespie 1991:23). The plan to work with W. L. McKenzie King only exacerbated Congressional suspicions, leading the US Commission on Industrial Relations to call in John Sr. and his son to answer questions about the independence of the Foundation. These events had a profound influence on the RF and John Jr., as they made clear that grants involving controversial subjects required judgment by competent and clearly independent bodies. It also chilled the atmosphere at the RF for further investigations in the area of social science, and all such investigations were discontinued by 1920 (Bulmer and Bulmer 1981).¹⁵

The context of industrial welfare

The prosperity of the 1920s encouraged more progressive business leaders to advocate for a regime of industrial welfare as a means to ameliorate workplace strife and achieve peace that would facilitate higher productivity and profits. This early form of "welfare capitalism" (i.e., a welfare regime that relies upon market forces [Esping-Andersen 1990:22]) engaged corporations in providing for the well-being of each

¹⁴ Ultimately, John Jr. brought Mackenzie King to CF&I to establish an "industrial democracy" plan with grievance mechanisms, employee representation, wage guarantees and fringe benefits (Burawoy 1979:234).

¹⁵ The Rockefellers were resilient in their efforts to respond to public opinion, and John Jr. especially appears to have been inspired to find a way to redress the grievances of Ludlow. He began to lecture around the country on the subject of an employee representation plan introduced at the CF&I Company in the aftermath of the bloody miners' strike. Such plans gave employees a voice in determining their working conditions and the adequacy of mechanisms for uncovering and adjudicating grievances within the company (although not allowing formation of a union [Brody 1980:55-56]). This was a capitalist form of "industrial democracy" which was widely praised as the United States moved onto a war footing in World War I and the Federal government urgently desired industrial peace for war production. The US government adopted a variant of this idea; in over 125 cases, the War Labor Board ordered companies to install shop committees along the lines described by Rockefeller Jr. A number of large companies voluntarily introduced such plans in 1918-19, and after the war crisis, 317 companies joined the movement by which working people elected their fellow workers to represent them to management (Brody 1980:55).

company's employees and their families. The enlightened self-interest of this ideology held that an employee whose immediate material needs and future family responsibilities were assured by the company would be more productive, more likely to be retained in the firm, and less likely to be swayed by union arguments (Brody 1980:52-53). The ideology also responded to adverse public opinion regarding "robber-barons" and greedy capitalists, and tried to persuade the public not only with words but with a visible transference of some portion of wealth to the working class.

John D. Rockefeller, Jr. was one of the leading proponents of industrial welfare policy. He espoused the belief that industrial strife was the result of a lack of understanding between the various parties to production, and espoused the philosophy that, instead of conflict, industry leadership should treat workers as human beings:

"It follows, therefore, that the relations of men engaged in industry are human relations. Men do not live merely to toil; they also live to play, to mingle with their fellows, to love, to worship. The test of success of our social organization is the extent to which every man is free to realize his highest and best self...If in the conduct of industry, therefore, the manager ever keeps in mind that in dealing with employees he is dealing with human beings, with flesh and blood, with hearts and souls; and if likewise the workmen realize that managers and investors are themselves also human beings, how much bitterness will be avoided).

Rockefeller (1916:21; cf Burawoy 1979:234)

Industrial welfare programs included not only employee representation as the most idealistic benefit (see for description footnote 19), but material enhancements such as stock purchasing plans, home-ownership plans, pensions, insurance against accidents, illness, old age and death, as well as improvements in plant conditions and safety, medical services and visiting nurses, sports teams and classes, land for gardening, and assistance to working people for various problems. The welfare programs of the 1920s were considered to be effective although expensive, as the drive toward unionization that had once been so compelling for trade skilled workers in the Progressive Era now seemed to stall, and union membership finally failed to make any headway during the 1920s. It seemed that management had discovered a means to draw workers closer to them, a means that granted management full authority over the terms of employment. This means was based on an emerging field of industrial psychology, pioneered by the "scientific" management of Frederick Taylor with his time and motion studies, and

carried on in practice by industrial relations professionals. Industrial welfare (or “welfare capitalism” as it came to be known later on) was at its height during the 1920s, when Beardsley Ruml was devising his strategy for funding the social sciences. Yet, there was no systematic empirical foundation for the welfare programs enacted by corporations, and therefore these programs tended to be designed and implemented on an ad hoc basis, with features that did not vary consistently with circumstances.

Ruml’s strategy to institutionalize social science research

The Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial’s project to support social science research did not follow strictly the model established by the National Research Council with its scientific advisory committees. Rather, the Memorial’s approach was modified by the entrepreneurial action of Beardsley Ruml, whose strategy was set forth in an important Memorandum to the Memorial trustees in 1922. In this policy document, Ruml proposed to allocate \$20 million over a ten year period to a program that would make a “substantial and permanent contribution to human welfare” and that would deal with fundamental social issues “*not for their own sake but to produce results*” (Bulmer and Bulmer 1981:362; emphasis added). The Memorandum stated:

“An examination of the operations of organizations in the field of social welfare shows as a primary need the development of the social sciences and the production of a body of substantiated and widely accepted generalizations as to human capabilities and motives and as to the behavior of human beings as individuals and groups. Under the term “social sciences” we may include sociology, ethnology, anthropology, and psychology, and certain aspects of economics, history, political science and biology...All those who work toward the general end of social welfare are embarrassed by the lack of that knowledge which the social sciences must provide. It is as though engineers were at work without an adequate development in the sciences of physics and chemistry, or as though physicians were practicing in the absence of the medical sciences.”

(Ruml, Memorandum 1922:9-10; cf Bulmer and Bulmer 1981:362).

Ruml’s Memorandum was clear in its intent to develop a body of social fact and principle not solely for academic interest, or the advancement

of social theory and philosophy, but because of a practical interest in human welfare and the need to further develop the social sciences as a means toward that end (Bulmer and Bulmer 1981:363). Providing major support for social science was a departure from the Memorial's purpose, and it could not be justified unless there was a long-term pay-off with respect to social welfare. Ruml noted that universities were not well positioned to support social science research in that their facilities, equipment and staffing for the collection and tabulation of data were small, and the demands of teaching left little time for research. Ruml still believed that universities provided the best auspices for social science research, but he wanted them to devise means through which to bring social scientists into more intimate contact with concrete social phenomena, and to be oriented toward the solution of practical problems (Bulmer and Bulmer 1981:364).¹⁶ One of his innovations was to propose the concentration of funding in "block grants" to selected institutions and permit the institutions and local advisory committees to make decisions about the allocation of resources to specific projects. Support of specific projects would not be undertaken by the Memorial, with the implication that academic institutions, not the Rockefeller entities, would have decision-making control over the use of funds. Yet, despite this novel structure, which gave the appearance of independence, Ruml continued to play a major role in decisions about funding specific individuals. This may have been possible because of his advanced training in social science and his role as an applied social scientist in World War I (which set him apart from other foundation officials [Kohler 1987]).

Following a survey to identify social science research being conducted by universities and non-university organizations and the appointment of an informal committee to advise on choice of problems, methods of organizing research, and selection of suitable individuals, Beardsley Ruml began to travel around the United States and Europe visiting major centers of social science and meeting with its leading thinkers and actors (Goody 1995). He was particularly interested in meeting social scientists who were proponents of methodologies that relied upon rigorous first-hand observation (copying schemes already

¹⁶ In consideration of these aims, some of the principles that would guide the allocation of funds included the ideas that research was to be conducted by organizations with continuity such as universities, combined with graduate and undergraduate teaching to encourage the production of more social scientists, and support for improvement of scientific publications (Bulmer and Bulmer 1981). Support for scholarships would help to level the playing field between social science and the other sciences and humanities.

effective in natural science and medicine), and those who had models for the practical role of the social scientist, given the disillusionment that many experienced with moralizing and simple political solutions common to the 19th century (Bulmer and Bulmer 1981:370-71).

It was during the search for institutions and individuals to fund that Ruml and his associates met three of the principals who are central to our narrative (i.e., Malinowski, Mayo, and Radcliffe-Brown), and decisions were made to provide them with substantial funding for their institutions and their research. The Rockefeller philanthropies interacted chronologically in parallel with Mayo et. al. and the British social anthropologists from 1922/23 up through the 1930s when Foundation funding for the social sciences ended and transitioned to other sources. It is of some interest to compare the Rockefeller interactions with each of these groups as a means to highlight their relationships.

Rockefeller philanthropy and the Human Relations School

The interaction between Rockefeller philanthropy and Elton Mayo began earliest, in 1922 when Beardsley Ruml met Elton Mayo in New York, just after the former had become head of the Memorial (Gillespie 1991:101). Mayo, aged 42, was on a one-year leave of absence from the University of Queensland where he was foundation professor of philosophy. His interdisciplinary teaching responsibilities at Queensland had provided an opportunity for him to think broadly about society and its current problems, and he had set forth his ideas in a short book entitled *Democracy and Freedom* (1919). This work was enticing to Beardsley Ruml and others in his circle, suggesting that the workplace was the key to social cohesion, thus focusing attention on the problems of industrial work (ibid:98). Mayo's hypothesis was that existing methods of industrial relations reproduced society-wide class relationships and hostility, reinforcing class warfare. He blamed management in part for failing to consult employees in decision-making, and saw a role for intellectuals such as social scientists in bringing knowledge-based guidance to the relationship. Mayo had spent time reading psychology and psychiatry, and had collaborated with a physician in the use of psychoanalytic techniques on patients in Australia. He believed that industrial unrest was a manifestation of a psychological disorder and that psychological and psychiatric knowledge would be required to treat it. Although the therapy was unspecified, Mayo's ideas paralleled those of other American proponents of industrial psychiatry that was being developed at the same time (ibid:99-100). Mayo had met Malinowski at this point and established a friendship with him, but was not yet reading anthropology.

Impressed with Mayo's thinking, Ruml subsequently found a placement for him at the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Industrial Research where he could pursue his ideas in companies around the Philadelphia area. Ruml provided Mayo with an initial grant of \$3,000, not from the Memorial, but from the personal funds of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who had taken an active interest in industrial relations since the Ludlow incident. Mayo made sufficient progress in Philadelphia that he continued to receive funds from John Jr.'s Committee on Benevolence in 1925 and 1926 - \$13,300 to cover his salary, expenses and personnel. The Memorial trustees were wary of Mayo's research and its political implications and wanted to maintain distance from him (ibid:103).¹⁷ While in Philadelphia, Mayo began to

¹⁷Because Mayo's grant was of limited duration, he was under pressure to show immediate results, while also pursuing his interest in development of an overarching theory. He adapted to this pressure by incorporating the idea of "psychopathology" that was diffusing through the American psychology, psychiatry and social work communities. It was during his time in Philadelphia

read anthropology, and to incorporate its literature into his theory, particularly writings on “primitive thought” (e.g., Levy-Bruhl), which Mayo believed might be reflected in the “psychopathology” of industrial workers. He began to refer to his work as “anthropological” and this new thread became part of his critique of society (ibid:113). He also sent copies of his research reports to Malinowski, Piaget and Janet. Psychology, psychiatry and anthropology were not all of the disciplines Mayo was integrating into his theory; he also incorporated ideas from human physiology as he studied the physical manifestations of worker fatigue (of particular interest to American industrialists).

Mayo became increasingly frustrated by the narrow scope of research required by company sponsors in Philadelphia, and he did not want to neglect the broader ramifications of his work, which he believed were related to the development of class consciousness and the failures of democracy. Thus Ruml sought a new placement for Mayo, and ultimately moved him to the Harvard Business School, with funding now shifting to the Memorial, at \$12,000 per year for five years.¹⁸ The Harvard Business School (founded in 1908 by a Rockefeller donation) was dedicated to raising business leadership above the taints of the era by introducing professional training for future executives. Research was needed to develop materials for teaching, and Mayo’s research would be ideal for this purpose. Mayo was appointed associate professor in industrial research by Harvard’s president (ibid:116).

Through John D. Rockefeller Jr.’s networks (i.e., a meeting of personnel executives from major corporations in 1927), Mayo met T. K. Stevenson, personnel director of Western Electric and learned that the company was conducting experiments on the effects of rest periods on worker fatigue (ibid:70). Shortly thereafter, Mayo was invited to visit the company’s Hawthorne plant in Cicero IL, and this was the beginning of Mayo’s involvement in the Hawthorne Project. Anthropology entered the picture when W. Lloyd Warner, then an instructor in anthropology

that Mayo successfully developed and tested a model of the relationship between working conditions and turnover in plants that included not only fatigue, but also a “psychopathology” variable (i.e., “reveries”, meaning bitter reflections) that he treated with various interventions. Mayo believed that he was pursuing an objective, scientific approach to understanding the problems of modern capitalism, in which he was favoring neither management nor workers, and this belief gave him confidence in his results (Gillespie 1991:110).¹⁸ Mayo subsequently joined forces with L. J. Henderson, a physiologist and biochemist at Harvard, to establish a joint laboratory for physiological research, which received combined funding from the Memorial of \$42,000 per year for five years, plus an additional \$35,000 to equip the laboratory. Mayo and Henderson hoped to conduct interdisciplinary research that combined physiology, biochemistry, psychiatry, psychology, and anthropology (Gillespie 1991:118).

at Harvard,¹⁹ sought out Mayo in hopes of securing funding for a community study. Mayo was looking for someone to begin such a study in Cicero, IL, since he recognized that his own research needed a deeper understanding of the lives of the workers involved in the Hawthorne experiments (for discussion see Baba 2009b). Mayo had realized in Philadelphia that psychological and psychiatric theory required that he gain a better understanding of his subjects' inner thoughts and lives, but he had been frustrated when workers would not or could not share their concerns and experiences with him (Gillespie 1991:105-109). For this purpose, Mayo employed a nurse in a factory as a "listening post" to gather information on workers' personal thoughts and lives and to refer interesting cases to him for psychiatric treatment. Now, Mayo thought he might be able to engage an anthropologist to study workers in their community.

Drawing upon the Memorial funds, Warner visited Hawthorne at Mayo's request and helped the company's researchers design the final stage of the experiments, the Bank Wiring Observation Room (BWOR). He declined to initiate his community study in Cicero because, in his view, the community was part of greater Chicago, a "total" study of which was beyond possibility and therefore unsatisfactory in yielding the research results he was seeking (i.e., social integration of a complex society [Warner 1988]). Warner also was concerned that the Cicero was too "disorganized" (e.g., crime-ridden) to become his ideal research site. However, in designing the BWOR, Warner established a methodology with requirements that approximated ethnography, even though he did not carry out this method himself. The BWOR design required one researcher to continuously observe and record the actions of workers on the job in conditions replicating the normal work environment, and a second researcher stationed outside the BWOR to systematically interview the same workers (Roethlisberger and Dickson 1939). The synchronized analysis of observational and interview data created a unique empirical record that became a core component of the Hawthorne Project and established a standard for future ethnographic studies of work and a model for contemporary ethnography in organizations (Schwartzman 1993).

Mayo and Warner differed in their interpretation of data emerging from the BWOR experiment. Warner favored a "native's point of view" interpretation that validated earlier Hawthorne research reports which indicated that workers deliberately restricted their output, even if such resulted in lower wages, based upon their distrust of management : in other words, if production increased, management

¹⁹ Warner was appointed first as a tutor and then as an assistant professor at Harvard in the late 1920s after returning from fieldwork in Australia (Neubauer 1999).

would cut the rate paid per piece of work. Mayo, on the other hand, insisted that workers were behaving illogically based upon a “psychopathological” maladjustment to the industrial work regimen. He believed that the informal organization of the workforce (i.e., workers’ spontaneous social relationships) could facilitate or impede management’s goals, depending upon how workers were treated by management (Schwartzman 1993). In the case of the BWOR, the informal organization was working against management. Mayo’s close relationships with Western Electric’s top leadership enabled him to gain control over the Hawthorne data (which he moved to Harvard), and ultimately, his analysis of the data prevailed (Gillespie 1991).

Mayo’s analysis of the “psychopathology” of the BWOR workers and his approach to ameliorate the situation launched a major intervention at Hawthorne involving installation of a counseling program with non-directive interviewing of employees (Schwartzman 1993). This approach to industrial relations problems became the basis for Mayo’s Human Relations School of management, which was in vogue until organized labor and collective bargaining were well established in the United States (circa 1950s). The Human Relations School provided a theoretical framework for the industrial welfare movement, bestowing legitimacy upon its proponents and their policies (Burawoy 1979:234). In developing his approach to the problems of industrial society, Mayo incorporated the leading work by anthropologists and psychologists on social integration, including the writings of Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown and Warner (Gillespie 1991:185). Mayo proposed an “administrative elite” that would engage in careful application of “scientific” knowledge related to social organization and control (Gillespie 1991:187). Mayo ultimately rejected the idea that workers had anything of value to contribute to the organization of work in a corporation.

Although their approach to “human relations” differed from that of Mayo, several anthropologists and sociologists who were at Harvard at the same time as Mayo found his general approach to industrial relations sufficiently interesting to become involved in the Human Relations School (e.g., Conrad Arensberg, Eliot Chapple, Burleigh Gardner, F. L. W. Richardson, W. Lloyd Warner and William Foote Whyte [Partridge and Eddy 1978]). The anthropologists’ approach was distinctive in that they placed more emphasis on social structure, systems relationships and human interactions than on psychology (Schwartzman 1993). This theoretical orientation was influenced by the emerging school of British social anthropology, one of whose leading proponents (Radcliffe-Brown) lectured on social anthropology and social systems at the University of Chicago from 1931 to 1937. In these lectures, Radcliffe-Brown outlined his theory of structural-

functionalism, which he viewed as a natural science of society (Eggan 1957).

While Radcliffe-Brown was lecturing at the University of Chicago, W. Lloyd Warner also moved to Chicago after completing fieldwork for his Yankee City Series in 1936. With this move, the center of empirical social science began to shift toward Chicago, pulling along some of the anthropologists who formerly were working with Warner. Warner's arrival at the Chicago Department of Anthropology along with other colleagues created a critical mass that enabled the group to conduct research and consult with industry from an anthropological and ethnographic perspective. At Chicago, Warner founded the Committee on Human Relations in Industry, which supported and encouraged the work of many business and industrial anthropologists and sociologists. The distinctive Human Relations brand of this group (e.g., direct observation in the organization, measurement of behavioral interactions, equivalent time spent with workers and managers [see Richardson 1978, Baba 2006]) would not have been possible without the conceptual contributions of British social anthropology, and the methodological framework developed by W. Lloyd Warner at Yankee City between 1931 and 1936 (to be discussed below).

Regardless of brand, all four social scientists who are central to our narrative (Malinowski, Mayo, Radcliffe-Brown and Warner) embraced a functionalist theory of society in which an equilibrium state (i.e., all parts in smooth interaction to support the whole) was considered normal and conflict was seen as pathological or abnormal. This theory was well known and accepted in Rockefeller circles, and also supported by industrialists and colonialists alike. Through the Human Relations School they sought to re-make the bonds of Durkheimian solidarity among workers and managers by fine-tuning labor-management relationships or making other socio-structural adjustments. For example, the interactional studies of Eliot Chapple (Schwartzman 1993) were aimed at (re)establishing control when "disturbing situations" arose:

"If we look upon organization, therefore, as a system of relations of individuals in which the actual contacts imposed by particular technical processes provide the framework within which people have to reach an *equilibrium*, it can be seen that the frequency and extent of *disturbing situations* will determine the kind of teamwork which will result. Thus by making a detailed study of the frequency of these contacts, the degree to which adjustment takes place between the individuals, and the amount of change which takes place as a result of the

operation of the organization, we can set up a *system of control* by which an organization's problems can be dealt with objectively"

(Chapple 1941:6; cf Schwartzman 1993:19; emphasis added)

The careful, quantitatively-based studies in corporations (e.g., Chapple 1941, Richardson 1978) and recommendations for improvements in organizations carried out by Human Relations School anthropologists and sociologists were perceived by them as advancing a science of society, and as contributing to the national welfare (i.e., promoting industrial peace and productivity; Eddy and Partridge 1978). These also were the goals of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial and its chief architect, Beardsley Ruml.

Admittedly, this branch of anthropology was not considered mainstream in the discipline at the time, but it was central to the early development of applied anthropology in America (Eddy and Partridge 1978), which was to become an important movement in the United States and established part of the platform for a resurgence of business anthropology during the 1980s (Baba 1986; to be discussed further below).

Rockefeller philanthropy and British social anthropology

The connection between Rockefeller philanthropy and British social anthropology may be traced to September 1923, when Beardsley Ruml visited the London School of Economics (LSE) in his search for worthy targets of funding for the Memorial. The School was part of London University, and in 1920 it was a leading center for the advanced study of economics, political science and sociology, attracting postgraduate students from all over the British Empire and elsewhere. Ruml was impressed by Director William Beveridge's ideas concerning the development of the social sciences, which were harmonious with his own (Bulmer and Bulmer 1981:394), and with Beveridge's interest in "social biology" as part of the "natural basis" for social science. The two men established a cordial personal relationship (Stocking 1995:396).

Ruml found that the LSE was poorly endowed, lacked adequate facilities to house increased numbers of students after World War I, and many staff were part-time appointees. Subsequently, Ruml arranged for grants that provided the major portion of the funding received by the School during the 1920s. Until the Memorial was consolidated into the RF in 1929, the LSE received \$1.25 million from the it (\$115,000 in 1924, \$155,000 in 1925, \$875,000 in 1927, and \$100,000 in 1928; Bulmer and Bulmer 1981:395). Of this total, \$340,000 was for building extensions and improvements for the library, \$200,000 for international

studies, and \$500,000 for the general endowment. The value of these funds may be compared to the total from all sources received in 1923 – £50,000.

Some of the funds received by the LSE benefitted Malinowski. A number of his research assistants were funded through the Memorial's grant to LSE, as was his promotion to a Full Professorship. The establishment of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures at LSE in 1926 was supported by funds from the Memorial, with the colonialist proponent Lord Lugard appointed as Chairman. The African Institute also received funds from the Carnegie Corporation, commercial interests, and various British African colonies, and it awarded funds in consultation with these governments, which preferred useful projects and did not recommend those that were perceived to disturb State control over subject peoples (Kuklick 1991:56).

Malinowski decided that he wanted direct support from the Rockefeller Foundation, rather than only the indirect support that he received through the LSE and the African Institute. Joining forces with Joseph Oldham, a former Protestant missionary and organizational entrepreneur, Malinowski developed a formal proposal to the RF that was oriented toward carrying out systematic fieldwork in Africa for the study of the tribal context of modern economic activities such as native mining labor (such a study already was underway in Rhodesia by Malinowski's student Audrey Richards [Stocking 1995:400]). The proposal sought to gain a "more enlightened understanding of African cultural values" and also to contribute to the training of administrators and missionaries. Malinowski's approach was based upon a functionalist²⁰ conception of society and an interest in the study of cultural contact and change (ideas that now may appear contradictory), as well as the "mutual unification of knowledge by practical interests and vice versa" (Stocking 1995:399), a hallmark of Rockefeller support for the social sciences. This proposal was successful; the Rockefeller Foundation voted in 1931 to allocate \$250,000 in matching funds to the

²⁰ The functionalism of British social anthropology has been linked with colonialism, and critics have suggested that the "function of functionalism" was to "establish and routinize colonial order by clarifying the principles of traditional native systems through which 'indirect rule' could be carried on" (Stocking 1995:368). The main point of indirect rule was to facilitate gradual evolution of colonial peoples from their own institutions to a form of rule "best suited to them" and one that involved them in "productive and profitable economic activity" (Stocking 1995:384). Malinowski was explicit in his statements and actions concerning the potential efficacy of functional theory, indicating that "the practical value of such a theory (functionalism) is that it teaches us the relative importance of various customs, how they dovetail into each other, how they have to be handled by missionaries, colonial authorities, and those who economically have to exploit savage trade and savage labor" (Malinowski 1927:40-41; c.f. Harris 1968:558).

African Institute over the next five years for the purposes set forth by Malinowski (Stocking 1995:401).²¹ By the 1930s, the colonies had become a suitable focus for funding, when an increasing number of intellectuals began to write about the “colonial question,” and the colonies were viewed as a whole upon which more interventionist and generally applicable policies might evolve (Mills 2002:163). Another point in Malinowski’s favor was the mounting impatience of Rockefeller Foundation executives with a perceived “lack of cooperation” from anthropologists in the United States, and an attraction to Malinowski’s functionalist fieldwork, which provided for direct observation of actual situations versus the antiquarian interests of some other anthropologists (Goody 1995:20).

Meanwhile, Radcliffe-Brown had been in Sydney, where his research on kinship systems also was supported by the Rockefeller Foundation through the Australian National Research Council (NRC). The initial request for a Chair of Anthropology at Sydney came from the Australian NRC after several influential persons in the region (including Malinowski’s father-in-law) decided that anthropology might be of use to the colonial administration. The first request for funding to the British Commonwealth was scuttled after a British colonial officer sent to advise the Commonwealth strongly urged that a “man of character” be appointed to the post (i.e., someone with a public school background rather than a university education [Stocking 1995:339-40]). By a coincidence, however, the Rockefeller Foundation had initiated a new Division of Studies under Edwin Embree, the purpose of which was to develop the sciences underlying human behavior and to address related social issues such as race relations, ethnic conflict, crime, mental hygiene, and eugenics. In a survey of scientific institutions around the Pacific Basin that might be suitable as funding sites for this program, the RF signaled to the Australian NRC that its anthropology program could be funded (Kohler 1987:156-58). A new Chair of Anthropology at Sydney thus was established in the mid-1920s, again through American sponsorship. The three electors for the new position chose Radcliffe-Brown; he was the only applicant qualified for the post. The role was to focus on training in anthropology for new cadets and senior officers in New Guinea and Papua, training research workers among Australian aborigines, and offering degree courses.

Radcliffe-Brown was more or less unknown to the Rockefeller Foundation at this point, and to introduce him to Foundation members and other Americans, he was invited by the RF to stop off in the United States on his way to Sydney. On this visit, Radcliffe-Brown toured American anthropology departments and met Malinowski and Warner.

²¹ At this point, the Memorial had been consolidated into the Rockefeller Foundation.

During his five year stint in Sydney (1926-31), Radcliffe-Brown developed both a strategy and a means of gathering empirical data for supporting his structural-functional schema. Stocking (1995:342-345) describes in some detail the process by which R-B developed his approach: collating and indexing the existing anthropological and ethnographic data of the region; ordering a series of connected institutions, beginning with kinship; identifying gaps in the record; sending out fieldworkers to fill in the missing data; defining and classifying elements of Australian kinship systems; establishing principles underlying these systems. He concluded that there was a close correlation between the kinship terminology of a people and their social institutions, and this was not a survival from the past but an aspect of the social organization as it existed in the present (Stocking 1995:342-343). While this work later was criticized as idealistic, it became the standard framework for studying Australian social structure.

Radcliffe-Brown's functionalism became well known in Rockefeller circles and viewed approvingly. Eventually, however, his critical statements regarding the implementation of colonial policy and his personal life style that emulated the British elite irritated the Australian establishment. A pending review by Australian officials of the "conditions" of award and the "methods" for administration of grants led R-B to attempt to by-pass the Australian NRC and appeal directly to the RF for funding an independent institute of anthropology (Stocking 1995:349). When this action became known by the Australian NRC, a crisis in public relations ensued, leading home states to withdraw their subsidies. Radcliffe-Brown decided that his work in Australia was complete, and accepted an offer from the University of Chicago (discussed above).

The Rockefeller Foundation declined to fund R-B's proposal to undertake investigations of native peoples "area by area and tribe by tribe" (Stocking 1995:401). Their reasons for so doing may have included bickering among British and American anthropologists about the appropriate institution(s) to carry out such an ambitious scheme, and the timing of the proposal (early 1930s) when reduced income due to the Great Depression forced the RF to reconsider its social science program (for discussion see Stocking 1995:403). In 1934, the RF's Social Science Division decided to terminate its anthropology program, although certain institutions, such as the African Institute, continued to receive funding via previous and terminal grants until the end of the 1930s. By that time, the Rockefeller philanthropies (including the Memorial plus other entities) had contributed more than \$2 million in support to the LSE (Goody 1995:13).

Of special note was an increase in tension between Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown with respect to their views regarding the relationship between anthropological research and policy. This issue is significant to the relationship between anthropology and business because it may have influenced the relationship between mainstream anthropology and applied anthropology, especially in the United States, with applied anthropology in America directly allied to business and industrial anthropology in its early days. Malinowski aggressively promoted the practical value of anthropology and believed that “practical anthropology” could address contemporary problems, even to the extent of attempting to “control” change in other societies. Radcliffe-Brown, on the other hand, had a more complex view which suggested that social anthropology might provide a “scientific basis for control and education of native peoples” if the British empire would make provision for scientific study rather than relying upon American interests to provide financial support (Stocking 1995:351-52). He espoused this view in 1931, immediately after completing his term in Sydney, where he was enmeshed in the practice of anthropology. Earlier, however, he had insisted that pure science must develop prior to the application of knowledge, and that anthropologists should not be involved in policy interventions. Illustrating these differences are comments by Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski regarding a policy document attached to a proposal from the African Institute:

Radcliffe-Brown stated the then-contemporary position regarding “pure” anthropology, and his belief concerning the need for anthropologists to refrain from becoming involved in practical problems involving the utilization of knowledge:

“I think it would be better if the Institute’s investigations all dealt with the subject in a purely scientific way, confining themselves to the precise observation that is taking place and not concerning themselves with what is good and bad in the original society or in the changes that it is undergoing, nor with the practical problems. The task of the anthropologist should be to obtain exact knowledge, impartially presented, in such a form that it can be immediately utilized by those who are actually concerned with native government and education.”

(c.f., Goody 1995:21)

Malinowski, on the other hand, commenting on the same proposal, did not agree with Radcliffe-Brown regarding the relationship of the anthropologist to questions of social change and “control”:

“There is no doubt we are all aiming at the same thing, that is, a thoroughgoing study of several tribes from the point

of view of contact with European culture, the ensuing changes and the possibility of controlling these changes...I think the Institute's investigators should be as fully aware of practical problems and of the "good" and "bad" in the original society and in the changes, as is possible."

(in Goody 1995:21-22; quotation marks in the original)

These differences sharpened during the 1940s, when funding for fieldwork in British social anthropology shifted from the Rockefeller Foundation and other private interests (e.g., Carnegie) to the British Colonial Social Science Research Council (CSSRC), a government body that was patterned after the Social Science Research Council in the United States, an institution that also had been founded and supported by the Rockefeller Foundation (Bulmer and Bulmer 1981, Goody 1995).

During the 1940s, anthropologists at the London School of Economics, particularly protégés of Malinowski such as Raymond Firth and Audrey Richards, were most closely associated with the research supported by the CSSRC, with the dual agenda of promoting social science and addressing practical problems (a continuation of the Rockefeller strategy, and quite similar to the goals of the American Society for Applied Anthropology [Baba and Hill 2006]). The British government was under increasing pressure from the United States to demonstrate that its colonies were developing economically, and the CSSRC intended to direct its research agenda toward a framework to further efforts in this area (Mills 2002). Anthropologists at the London School of Economics (e.g., Firth and Richards) were reformers who believed that they could work in cooperation with colonial bureaucrats to improve the situation in the colonies for subject peoples. Other anthropologists, such as Max Gluckman at Oxford,²² did not approve of anthropological involvement in colonial policy or pragmatic problems of the state, and later on this non-involvement stance would extend to encompass British corporations as well (Mills 2006).

The Oxford anthropologists (including Radcliffe-Brown) wanted to gain control over CSSRC funding, and to determine its uses themselves; ultimately, they were successful in gaining greater influence over CSSRC funding decisions, through the intermediation of the Association for Social Anthropology (with Radcliffe-Brown as Honorary President). The position taken by the Oxford anthropologists appeared reasonable to them at the time, although in retrospect it seems that regardless of whether or not they agreed to work on colonial

²² Gluckman, who founded the Manchester school of anthropology, developed his own dialectical integration of Marxian thought and Durkheimian structuralism, and was an open political activist who supported radical causes related to social justice (Firth 1975).²²

“problems”, they would have been complicit in the agenda of the British colonial State by accepting its funding, conducting research in the colonial arena, and thereby legitimizing State structures through the development of anthropological theory (Macdonald 2001, Mills 2002).

The point of the narrative is that the Rockefeller philanthropies had an important influence on the development of British social anthropology during its formative years. The Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial was significant in selecting the LSE as one of its centers for the establishment of social science and providing a block grant that contributed an initial \$1.2 million during the 1920s to the research of numerous scholars, including Malinowski. This followed the formal guidelines of the Memorial. The Memorial also courted Malinowski as an individual, inviting him to visit the United States in 1926, during which visit Malinowski established his own relationships with Foundation personnel (Goody 1995:13). Malinowski’s views regarding the conduct of social science with respect to empiricism and the relationship to policy were closely aligned with those of Ruml and his foundation colleagues, and they contrasted with the perspectives of other leading anthropologists at the time, including those in Britain and the United States (e.g., Radcliffe-Brown and other anthropologists involved in the American Anthropological Association [Goody 1995, Stocking 1995, Mills 2002]). The convergence of Malinowski’s energetic pursuit of Rockefeller funding for his own research and the timing of the Memorial’s consolidation into the Rockefeller Foundation made it possible for the Foundation to fund Malinowski’s proposal as a matching grant to the African Institute (Stocking 1995:398-401), not as part of the LSE block grant.

Malinowski managed to achieve a privileged position with respect to the Rockefeller Foundation, not only due to superior maneuvering but as a result of a closer alignment of perspectives, as Stocking makes clear (1995). Thus, when the RF terminated its funding to anthropology at the end of the 1930s and the British CSSRC was launched in the 1940s, the most likely organization to receive British government funding for colonial research was the African Institute, led by Malinowski’s protégés, as it was already well funded and staffed, and known to be the most dynamic research organization of its kind (Kuklick 1991). As the case has been made cogently by Mills (2002), the fieldwork and scholarship supported by the CSSRC were an important component in the process of legitimizing social anthropology as an academic discipline in Britain, which was requisite to the expansion of university posts (see also Baba 2009a). Thus, even though Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown diverged on anthropology and policy, both contributed to British social anthropology, and the Rockefeller Foundation was an institutional force in the “making” of this

foundational theory, which itself was instrumental in shaping the Human Relations School.

The Rockefeller Foundation also was instrumental in the career and intellectual influence of Radcliffe-Brown. R-B's Chair in Anthropology at Sydney was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, and his research in Australian kinship systems was underwritten by the Foundation as well (although not by the LSRM). It was during the Sydney period that R-B developed evidence for the theory of structural-functionalism, which was more closely aligned with an emerging positivist perspective on society as a "natural system" than the psychologically-oriented functionalism of Malinowski; i.e., society was a "system" reflecting underlying principles, with social structure a primary explanatory variable with respect to similarities and differences across societies (see Harris 1968:522). A positivist orientation for the social sciences – to enable these fields to develop general principles or law-like generalizations and even the possibility of "controls" – was a long term goal of the Rockefeller Foundation. Radcliffe-Brown was a proponent of these aims, and his intellectual achievements were nurtured and supported by the Foundation and its allies.

The invitation to Radcliffe-Brown to join the faculty at the University of Chicago in 1931 was especially significant because it provided an opportunity for him to develop a more general scientific presentation of his findings and link them to ideas concerning natural systems. The Chicago period also engaged Radcliffe-Brown in the debate between history and science within American anthropology. It was at Chicago that Radcliffe-Brown wrote his article on "Patrilineal and Matrilineal Succession", which sets forth a systematic, "social structural" approach to kinship. This approach emphasizes the "jural" aspects of kin relations as "systems of socially recognized rights and duties attributed to categories of persons and enforced by legal or moral 'sanctions'" (Stocking 1995:357).²³ This work played a role in orienting American anthropology toward the scientific side of the debate and away from history. The earlier emphasis on historical reconstruction gave way to studies of people within the contexts of the cultures in which they lived (Partridge and Eddy 1978:19). Anthropology's reputation as a social science was established, and the next generation of American anthropologists was subtly influenced.

Radcliffe-Brown's contributions at the University of Chicago took place during a time when Beardsley Rummler held the position of Dean of

²³Radcliffe-Brown also "broke a taboo" by revising the definition of culture from the omnibus form it had taken under Tylor to a more theoretical construction as a set of rules of behavior, common symbols and attached meanings, and common ways of feeling and thinking (Stocking 1995:359).

the Division of Social Science. Thus, although Ruml did not fund Radcliffe-Brown directly through the LSRM, he was in a position to advance R-B's intellectual agenda once it was developed, and to promote it within the United States where it had a serious influence on American anthropology in the mid-20th century (Stocking 1995:359; see also Harris 1968:518-534).

W. Lloyd Warner: The *Tertius*

Among the quartet of principals discussed in this article, there was one who was linked to the others in a way that bridged the transatlantic division between studies of modern industry and those of colonial society in a way that the others did not. W. Lloyd Warner, student of both Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski, and colleague of Mayo, linked the intellectual networks in a deliberate manner that was intended to discover whether the techniques of ethnography could be engaged in a complex society. According to Mildred Warner, in her biography of Warner (1988:41):

“Lloyd wanted to use his knowledge of Murngin social organization to obtain a better understanding of how men in all groups, regardless of place or time, solve the problems confronting them. His investigations of a simple society, he hoped, would equip him to analyze more complex forms of social organization. He also wanted to use it as a kind of screen through which to pass American contemporary industrialized society to ascertain what, if anything, he could find that would be analogous to the primitive, or what had been observed in the primitive, the detail of which might be discernible in the American society.”

Warner was the first to demonstrate that anthropological and ethnographic techniques could be translated to modern contexts, not only in communities (the Lynd's qualitative study of Middletown preceded him; Lynd and Lynd 1929), but in a large corporation, with proof of concept (Roethlisberger and Dickson 1939; Schwartzman 1993).²⁴

²⁴Although Warner was theoretically and methodologically-oriented, and denied being motivated by the practical uses of anthropology, his statements on this subject must be qualified given his lengthy and substantive involvement with the Human Relations School and Social Research, Inc. There was something about practical problems that drew Warner's attention; Charles Baldwin, the roommate of Radcliffe-Brown and Warner in Sydney suggested

Warner's position, with intellectual ties to Malinowski (who taught him at Berkeley while Warner was a graduate student [Partridge and Eddy 1978:15]), Radcliffe Brown, and Mayo in the early days of the discipline may have placed him in a position to become a *tertius*, an idea taken from the work of Georg Simmel meaning "the third". In Burt's (1992) work on "structural holes", the *tertius gaudens* takes advantage of an insularity or buffer that exists between non-redundant contacts in different social networks (the hole) where each set of actors within a given network could benefit through connection with the other. However, as we have seen, in the 1920s and 1930s, it could be argued that there was no significant insularity or buffer (no "structural hole") to fill among prominent anthropologists on either side of the Atlantic, unless that hole were a conceptual one related to ideas about policy and these were not divided by the Atlantic. Instead, Warner could have played the role of a *tertius iungens* (Obstfeld 2005) - an innovator connecting people by facilitating new forms of coordination among those who otherwise would be disconnected. If Warner's "fundamental purpose in studying primitive man was to know modern man better", as he claimed in the Yankee City Series (Warner and Lunt 1941:3), then perhaps he might have bridged the distance between the theoretically and methodologically-oriented British social anthropologists and Americans studying corporations, such as those involved in research at Hawthorne, leveraging different knowledge(s) held by one to benefit the other.

Warner began to act as a *tertius iungens* when he consulted with Hawthorne researchers in the design of the BWOR. In this role, his field experience in Australia enabled him to guide the project in setting up the experimental procedures for gathering and analyzing data in the plant (Roethlisberger and Dickson 1939, Gillespie 1991, Schwartzman 1993). There had never before been a study that combined a methodology developed in anthropology (i.e., systematic behavioral observation and interviewing, and detailed recording of social interactions within the BWOR and between the BWOR and other groups) together with research goals and objectives established by industry (e.g., correlating the structures and practices of informal groups with production output). The result was part of the invention of business anthropology (the first hybridization of anthropology and business), but it did not accomplish the goal that Warner set for himself, which was to translate anthropological methods to the scope and scale of a modern community.

that it was Warner's American background (e.g., pragmatism), although Warner himself denied it (Warner 1988:41).

Warner's more significant act as a *tertius iungens* was performed through the Yankee City Study (1931-1936), a landmark research project also funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, at first through Mayo's Rockefeller grant at Harvard (Gillespie 1991:156). Yankee City adapted the methods developed for study of small-scale society within colonized nations for the study of complex society in colonizer nations.²⁵ In this project, Warner devised a sophisticated ethnographic methodology for studying the institutions that integrated a complex society, particularly social class and rank order, which Warner discovered were not determined by economic factors as initially thought, but by a complex array of social and economic influences. Warner's methodology (including interviews and observations) enabled him to see Yankee City as a "total system of interdependent, interrelated statuses" that would represent the social system of the "total community", much as the map of a good cartographer might reflect the physical reality of land or sea (Warner 1941:796). Important insights emerged from Warner's approach to the study of class, rank and status – findings that would not have been possible without the theoretical framework and methodological rigor that Warner brought to the project. For example, one of his findings was that shoe operatives in Yankee City factories were more likely to orient their associations downward in the overall class hierarchy compared with the general adult population of their social class (Warner and Low 1947:159). Warner concluded from this that the factory workers were losing status as a group, and that they were finding solidarity among themselves, because it did not appear that they could rise any higher. Such findings drew attention to his work and made it controversial (Baba 2009b). Warner also had devised an approach to the study of companies from a macro-societal perspective, without the necessity of becoming embedded inside the organization.

Warner's students and colleagues began to adopt his approach to community studies in their own research (e.g., Arensberg and Kimball 1938, Dollard 1937, Davis et. al., 1941, Whyte 1943). The methodological and conceptual advances of these efforts helped to ground and legitimize what was to become applied anthropology in the United States (Partridge and Eddy 1978:19, Singer 2008), enabling this movement to emerge under its own banner when British anthropology largely disassociated itself from applied endeavors after the demise of colonialism following World War II (Baba and Hill 2006).

²⁵ In the Yankee City Series, published in five volumes between 1941 and 1959, Warner and his colleagues explain how a group of anthropologists-in-residence may engage in a comprehensive socio-structural analysis of a small town, and in the process explain what appeared to be improbable events (e.g., a community-wide strike, the formation of an industrial union in a "stable" town) through the lens of social anthropology and economic history (Warner and Lunt 1941; Warner and Low 1947 [see Baba 2009b]).

At about the same time that Warner published the first volume of the Yankee City Series (Volume 1, 1941), the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA) was formed at Harvard (1941). This event took place after the American Anthropological Association (AAA) declined a proposal from second generation anthropologists to recognize anthropology as a profession and establish a section devoted to applied anthropology (Trencher 2002:451). The SfAA was initiated by anthropologists who were among the leaders of their time, including Conrad Arensberg, Gregory Bateson, Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, George Murdoch, and Julian Steward, among several others. They believed that anthropological (and other sources of) knowledge should be directed toward social problems, as they made clear in their mission statement:

“to promote scientific investigation of the principles
controlling the relations of human beings to one another
and to encourage the wide application of these principles
to practical problems”

(Arensberg 1947)

This mission was realized in Warner’s leading edge work at Yankee City,²⁶ which offered a systematic social science framework for advancing the understanding of a complex society, while at the same time exploring the underlying reasons for contemporary social problems and issues. This was not only the mission of the SfAA, but also what the Rockefeller Foundation had been striving to accomplish. The applied movement flourished in the United States after World War II, during which anthropologists demonstrated their practical value to the nation (Singer 2008).

Despite Warner’s contributions to application, he was not a proponent of applied anthropology. Like his mentor, Radcliffe-Brown, Warner maintained a strong interest in theoretical inquiry throughout his career, and he believed in the priority of theory (see Baba 2009b). Yet, he also retained an affiliation with colleagues who pursued more practical interests (e.g., he collaborated with the Human Relations School; he consulted with other anthropologists at Social Research, Inc. [Easton 2001]). As a member of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Chicago, this “dual identity” was possible for Warner; a theory-practice relationship was an element of the university’s foundation.

At the time that the SfAA was created, the majority of anthropologists did not embrace the idea of applying anthropological

²⁶ The Yankee City Series was published by Yale University Press; Malinowski was a faculty member at Yale.

knowledge outside the boundaries of the discipline (see Mills 2002, Trencher 2002). Early anthropologists gave priority to the pursuit of theoretical questions and assigned applied matters to their graduate students or others whom they believed were less qualified (Kuper 1983), even though policy advice to colonial administrators was central to their arguments about the value of anthropology (Stocking 1995). Likewise, the anthropologists of the mid-20th century continued to view applied anthropology as a secondary or derivative endeavor whose status was not equivalent to that of “pure” theory (Bennett 1996). This schismatic dualism reflected a two-tiered structure in which more elite or prestigious members of the discipline chose theoretical pursuits if they could, and had “right of first refusal” to applied projects, otherwise, such endeavors were assigned to those of lower rank. A product of colonialism, this “class structure” came to resemble a sort of “apartheid” situation in the United States, in which certain elite academic departments specialized in “pure” theory and other departments offered degrees in applied anthropology (Baba and Hill 2006). The separation of theory and practice that materialized within anthropology was not envisioned by the Rockefeller Foundation when they planned the “science of society”.

Within anthropology, there appears to have been a particular aversion to applying knowledge in the domain of business, both in the United States and in Great Britain. That is, even within applied anthropology in the United States, the application of anthropological knowledge within corporations or the marketplace was not considered a standard “domain of application” after the collapse of the Human Relations School (i.e., circa the 1950s [see Baba 2006]). This situation remained the status quo until well after 1980. Large corporations sometimes were conceived of as “harm industries”, even beyond the technical definition of this term (e.g., Benson and Kirsch 2010) whose products or processes could damage anthropologists’ research participants, especially in developing nations where multinational companies crossed paths with anthropologists (Sherry 1983). Anthropological portrayals of business management have been critical of managerial interactions with workers, the latter sometimes represented as targets of actual or potential schemes such as deskilling (e.g. Lamphere 1979; see also Baba 2006). The Human Relations School itself was part of the problem. Critics of this school have remarked negatively on its proponents’ failure to acknowledge the unequal power relationships within the corporations they studied, and their willingness to support these relations through manipulative activities (this included not only Mayo, the intellectual leader of the school, but also the anthropologists who were part of it [Burawoy 1979]). A strong Marxian inflexion in American anthropology after the 1960s (Ortner 1984), together with a Vietnam-era AAA ethical code that forbade research that

could not be disclosed publicly (i.e., proprietary research) may have exacerbated what was already a chilly attitude toward businesses and studies of business after World War II (e.g., Mills 2006; see also Baba 2006).

Nevertheless, despite these strong headwinds (some generated, ironically, from resistance to projects supported by the Rockefeller Foundation), there emerged after the middle 20th-century several forces that altered the disciplinary orientation toward the business domain. One of the most prominent was change within the discipline itself, most notably the postmodernist and critical movements that brought about a “crisis of representation” with significant consequences (Marcus and Fischer 1986, Clifford 1988). While there is insufficient space for a full discussion, two developments may be mentioned briefly: a diaspora of anthropologists from traditional field sites moving into new venues in which they hybridized anthropological theories and methods with those of other disciplines (i.e., the institutional anthropologies such as medical, education, legal; Bennett 1996, Baba and Hill 2006); and a loosening of the relationship between anthropology and ethnography, permitting experimentation and hybrid approaches (Marcus and Fischer 1986).

At the same time, we have witnessed a continuing flow of PhD graduates from American academia with a steady erosion of academic appointments available to them (Baba 1994, 2009a). The hybridization of anthropology has resulted in part from the entrepreneurial engagement of some of these graduates seeking new career niches beyond the academy. Some hybrids have formed in the business domain, creating new areas of practice such as design ethnography or marketing and advertising anthropology (e.g., Squires and Byrne 2002, Malefyt and Moeran 2003). These areas of engagement exist not only because of changes in anthropology, but also as a result of developments in capitalism toward a globally-integrated form that more readily incorporates anthropological knowledge(s) and techniques (Baba 2006, Cefkin 2009). As anthropologists have taken up engaged positions within businesses, the applied and practicing movement in the United States has expanded to encompass business anthropology (e.g., Baba 2005a), while at the same time the entire discipline has become more inclusive of the institutional anthropologies. These shifts reflect new realities confronting professional associations and their memberships, as well as those of academic institutions and their constituencies (Brondo and Bennett forthcoming).

As the discipline changes, the bright lines dividing “pure” theory and “applied” anthropology are blurring. Increasingly, anthropologists are concerned with the public interest and urgent social problems (Brondo 2010), and it is questionable that socio-cultural anthropology

has a “purely” theoretical mission in the 21st century. At the same time, the numerous institutional anthropologies and their links to the mainstream of the discipline are proliferating as anthropology engages in more interdisciplinary discourse. This is a tendency that is developing across the social sciences and humanities (see National Science Foundation 2011). The schismatic dualism that has separated theory and practice in socio-cultural anthropology since its origins may be capable of rapprochement (Schweizer 1998); such may already be underway in medical anthropology (Singer 2008).

Discussion

This article has considered the intersection of one specific dimension of the domain of business and the discipline of anthropology during the early decades of the 20th century. The focus has been on Rockefeller philanthropy as a representation of larger interests in the United States and Great Britain, and the rise of three academic subfields: the Human Relations School, British social anthropology, and applied anthropology. The connection of anthropology and the business domain in the first and third of these subfields has been well recognized (Roethlisberger and Dickson 1939, Partridge and Eddy 1978, Schwartzman 1993, Baba 2006, Cefkin 2009). The relationship of British social anthropology to our discipline’s engagement with business has been somewhat more obscure (although not invisible [Partridge and Eddy 1978]). The parallels between the Human Relations School and British social anthropology are apparent, and the role of applied anthropology is implicit: both theoretical frameworks operated inside hierarchical social systems, under pressure to solve problems of elites during times of high turbulence, developed translational and interventionist approaches that were supposed to enhance order and management, and cooperated with regimes that failed due to uprising from below and subsequently were criticized for it. Applied anthropology was created in the context of the first subfield as a means to negotiate the complex relationships among institutional actors implied by the context, and it carried the mark of this circumstance when it moved across the Atlantic later in the century. This article has elaborated upon the interactions among these subfields through discussion of mutual influences among four principal actors and the institutions to which they were attached.

The influences and interests that brought anthropology and the business domain together emerged from the contexts of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in which American industry was struggling with national expansion and aspirations toward internationalism, and British colonialism was facing demands for change. They cannot be understood apart from the social and political dynamics of serious labor-

management conflict in the United States and mounting pressure on Great Britain to foster more vigorous economic activity within its colonies. An intention of this article has been to suggest that our relations with businesses or any other institutional actor(s) should be reflected upon critically within a larger macro-societal framework and a long-term time horizon.

The project of the Memorial to establish a “science of society” was an innovative idea intended to address the vexing problems of the era, harnessing the best thinking available at the time. The Memorial was not the only move that the Rockefeller Foundation made in the direction of the social sciences. The Social Science Research Council (SSRC) also was established in 1923, funded through the Memorial - a more explicit alliance between professional academic social scientists and members of the elite (Fisher 1993). The SSRC brought together representatives of different disciplines to deliberate on advancing social science through cooperative research. This body was central in the shift from pure and purposive science to more multi-disciplinary, problem-oriented research (Fisher 1993:9).

The formation of the Memorial at the same time as the SSRC is an indication of the rise of an *institutional field* dedicated to the funding of social science research. The institutional field has become a key construct in the literature of organizational and institutional theory (Scott 2008). Initially conceived by Bourdieu (1971, 1984), an institutional field suggests a diverse array of social actors working together within a specific domain or arena, including financiers, producers, suppliers, intermediaries, regulators, and competitors (or other opposition) – all of the actors engaged within the domain and especially those competing for the same resources (Scott 2008:182). Bourdieu employed the analogy of a game with players, rules, competition and contest, as well as stakes. As the organizational theorist Richard Scott (2008:183) has written:

“...fields are not placid and settled social spaces, but arenas of conflict in which all players seek to advance their interests; some are able, for longer or shorter periods, to impose their conception of ‘the rules of the game’ on others.”

Fields not only develop around markets, technologies, and policy domains, but also in the context of central disputes and issues.

In the case study presented in this article, we observed some of the actors involved in shaping the emergence of an institutional field around the funding of social science research, as it was conceived by an elite segment of society. The set of actors involved in establishing this field included individuals such as John D. Rockefeller Jr., Memorial board

trustees such as Arthur Woods and Raymond Fosdick, a network of philanthropic foundation officials at other agencies, and industry actors such as corporate personnel executives. The members of this set were faced by a number of collective action problems (e.g., industrial strife and unionization drives, absence of an empirical science to validate or legitimize their approach to problems, the need for research to ground collegiate courses in management). Some of the most powerful members of the network (i.e., those in the office of John D. Rockefeller Jr. – the staff of the Memorial) took action by bringing into their midst an institutional entrepreneur, Beardsley Ruml. Such entrepreneurs have an interest in particular types of institutional arrangements and are able to leverage resources to create new institutions or transform existing ones (Maguire, Hardy and Lawrence 2004:657; Garud et. al., 2007:957). They tie together the workings of otherwise divergent interests to “create a whole new system of meaning” which can become the basis for institutional change (Garud et. al., 2007:957). Ruml addressed several of the collective action problems within his network, proposing a “new system of meaning” whereby a social welfare charity would provide financing for a “science of society” to be legitimized by block grants, but with considerable discretion reserved for Ruml and his staff. This “new system” would be supported not only by the Memorial, but by the larger field – John Jr. and the Rockefeller Foundation, the networked corporations and their executives, administrators of universities that received Memorial funding, and eventually the social scientists that wanted to be funded themselves. Even agencies of the British government became part of this field with the rise of the CSSRC (the counterpart of the SSRC). The institutional field that emerged was defined by the mutually supportive relationships among actors that gave rise to a new “science of society”, but it also depended upon the movement of other institutions in the same general direction (e.g., the NRC).

Especially important in conceptualizing institutional fields are inter-organizational structures of dominance and patterns of coalition, and the centrality of power and processes of control that take shape within the field (Fligstein 1991). A given organization, or set of organizational actors will endeavor to direct the actions of an institutional field, with more or less powerful or prestigious actors working to shape the direction of a field’s development. During the 1920s, the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial and Beardsley Ruml, with his positioning close to the advisors of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., were among the key actors shaping the basic direction and institutional logic (i.e., the symbolic constructions and material practices that constitute the organizing principles [Friedland and Alford 1991:248; Scott 2008]) of the new “science of society”. Ruml’s Memorandum and his practices defined the formal and informal rules for grant-making, the requirement

for grantees to propose relevant research and “deliver” results, and the relative valuation and monetization of social science projects. This institutional logic was specific to the policy domain of the social sciences, which was intended to be problem-oriented and not driven by the quest for pure knowledge (Fisher 1993). Within anthropology, the institutional logic was accompanied by a pattern of competition for funding, tinged with political overtones, and a shifting network of alliances that seemed to play individuals against one another (Goody 1995, Mills 2002). Fisher’s (1993:12) commentary on the politics of the SSRC is relevant:

“During the 1920s and 1930s ‘social studies’ experienced what with hindsight can only be described as a revolution. An unprecedented amount of resources and the social crises during these years combined to catapult these disciplines toward respectability within the academy and society. Much of the impetus came from the belief common to many social scientists, foundation officials and government officials that the social sciences could solve social problems. Social control based on scientific research was a dominant theme. By the end of the 1930s, social scientists had struck a new bargain with society. The majority had agreed to become technocrats serving an alliance of class and corporate State interests. Others became more vociferous and more strident in their opposition to applied research and retreated further into their respective disciplines.”

From our vantage point in the 21st century we may recognize some of those oppositional “others” within the anthropological mainstream. The arena of contestation over the “rules of the game” in anthropology gave rise to tensions that morphed into a disjuncture between the theoretical and practical dimensions of the discipline that is still sorting itself out (Mills 2002, Baba 2005b). In that sense, the legacy of Rockefeller philanthropy has had significant and lasting consequences.

The article suggests that the consequences of Rockefeller philanthropy were both subtle and profound, largely through the process of selectively supporting, encouraging and promoting the work of some anthropologists and not others. The result was to influence intellectual interests, whether intentionally or not (Kohler 1978:513, Bulmer and Bulmer 1981:400-401), and regardless of whether or not the time was auspicious. Those who were granted funds became more influential than those who did not have them. For example, Malinowski’s influence and that of his students through funding of the African Institute and RF-modeled CSSRC are well known (Stocking 1995, Goody 1995, Mills 2002). Funding for the African Institute weakened support for other

areas of anthropology, while African Institute fellowship recipients became leaders of the next generation of anthropologists (Kuklick 2008:71). Radcliffe-Brown became a gatekeeper of field research directions in the Pacific through his role in site selection as Chair of the Committee of Anthropological Research of the Australian NRC (Stocking 1995:340-41). Later he was supported and encouraged to disseminate his ideas about society as a natural science. The RF appeared to be disinterested in helping academics do what they wanted to do. However, academics could not do much without financial support, and what academics wanted to do was carefully vetted to align with RF's long range goals (Bulmer and Bulmer 1981:402).

Influence upon academic research by interests outside the academy, especially if those interests appear to represent elite or capitalist classes, has been criticized from various perspectives (Bulmer and Bulmer 1981:400-401). Harold Laski of the LSE was one of the first, raising concerns about hopes that would remain unfulfilled and fears about increasing predispositions toward pragmatic work (Laski 1930). Some years later, E. C. Lindeman (1936) worried about small and unrepresentative groups, unanswerable to anyone, exercising power over cultural institutions by virtue of their wealth. Marxist critics also have been active in viewing agencies such as the RF as "means by which private capitalistic business enterprises and entrepreneurs exercised domination over intellectual life" (1979; cf Bulmer and Bulmer 1981:401). In retrospect, these concerns seem to resonate with some of what has been written in this article. At the same time, however, the critics may have underestimated the capabilities of the contra players to resist the influence of the mighty, as well as the intricate consequences of cultural competition.

This article has discussed the complexity of the processes by which anthropology was influenced through Rockefeller philanthropy, and some of the reasons why the Rockefeller vision was not fulfilled in anthropology. While non-anthropologists such as Mayo were actively maneuvered toward supportive venues, and readily met the criteria established by Ruml, the three anthropologists had more complex interactions with Rockefeller. Malinowski was the closest parallel to Mayo with respect to his embrace of the Rockefeller vision. But according to Stocking's account (1995), Malinowski and his students eventually became disillusioned and frustrated with the difficulty of the policy agenda. His propensities for successful entrepreneurial action invited institutional competitors with quite different political and ideological commitments. Malinowski was criticized for his position regarding applied anthropology by the elite of the discipline, because at the time, practical application was considered antithetical to a true science (Kuklick 2008:74). In this debate lies the heart of a schism

within anthropology that has lasted for nearly a century, and has been one of the discipline's distinguishing features.

The dispute between Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown over policy anthropology widened a rift between "pure" theory and applied anthropology that was produced under colonialism. This rift was not on the Rockefeller agenda, and it worked against anthropology as a social science, in the sense that a positivist approach rests upon minimal standards which are dependent upon some means of empirical testing and logical proofs toward which application could contribute (Schweizer 1998:45; Baba 2000).

Warner, the *tertius iungens*, is perhaps most emblematic of the complexity and ambiguity surrounding the relationship between the Rockefeller interests and anthropology. Warner played a major role in establishing anthropology as a discipline that could legitimately investigate the urgent issues of contemporary society. Yet, he expressed a divided allegiance with respect to theory and practice, espousing the priority of theory on the one hand while collaborating with practitioners on the other, and never explicitly articulating a vision beyond their separation. Such a dualism might seem to conform to the two-tier model of British social anthropology, but Warner also was able to innovate in his praxis by bringing together new approaches to the fundamental study of society while focusing upon and explaining social problems (e.g., Warner and Lunt 1941; Warner and Low 1947; Baba 2009b). The intricacies and apparent contradictions of Warner's relationship with the emerging institutional field of social science research represents a particularly interesting case study of the way in which private interests may influence an academic discipline, and how the members of such a discipline may respond and resist simultaneously. At this point, the co-evolution of anthropology, society, and economy has taken us to a contemporary era in which we acknowledge anthropology's re-engagement with business organizations (Cefkin 2009; Welker et. al. 2011). On this occasion, it is appropriate to reflect upon our positionality with respect to the institutions of the private sector, and to gaze through the lenses of history as another means to do so. Are we, as Fisher (1993:11) suggests, merely technocrats who stand as intermediaries between societal elites and society at large? Do we believe as some members of our field continue to insist that we are independent and have the capacity to define our own relationship to other sectors, on our own terms? Or are there other perspectives which may suggest more variegated positions that in the long term could be more fruitful for all of the actors if we could only connect them?

We should at least consider the ways in which others view us, not only the ways in which we view ourselves (e.g., as critics, interpreters, ethnographers, culture-brokers, or whatever), since

eventually our collective efforts will be examined, perhaps re-studied, and written about by social historians of the future and they will interpret our position for us. As anthropologists involved in a re-engagement with business, whether practitioners or not, we should place our position within the long view and gain others' perspectives as we consider our positionality. The case study presented in this article suggests that anthropologists and other social scientists are not always in a position to view all of the influences and interests that move around us. Institutional fields are likely to be directed by actors that we do not control and may not even be aware of, although members of our discipline have become more sophisticated and self-conscious than we were decades ago when we began such ventures (e.g., see Malefyt and Moeran 2001; Cefkin 2009; Suchman forthcoming).

The question may not be whether we know the "rules of the game" or whether we can play by them. Clearly, we do know (some of) the rules. A more important question may be do we understand the direction of a field's powerful players and the institutional logic of the field over the long-term? Do we know the nature of the game that the elites are playing and the stakes in the game? The answers to these questions may not be entirely visible from our position on the game board, just as it is often not possible to readily "study up".

If anthropology (of/and/in) business has an interest in addressing such questions, we should consider new and emerging institutional theories and methods that transcend the "glocal" and dependency upon specific business domains, and engage in the analysis of businesses as social institutions. This is the direction that Warner and Low (1947) attempted when they re-studied Yankee City following C. Wright Mills' critique of Warner's first Yankee City volumes (Mills 1942), and it is the approach of some 21st century anthropologists – understanding businesses as integral to society, interpenetrated by cultural-cognitive frames of meaning, constituting normative orders, and refracting the regulatory regimes of their sectors, thereby viewing businesses as intertwined in social and economic transformations (e.g., see Downey and Fisher 2006, Zaloom 2006, Ho 2009, Fisher forthcoming). These approaches offer a view from "up" – beyond business – that enable anthropologists to respond to questions about the workings of business within institutional fields. Triangulation among and across their frames of reference is a point of access to institutional fields that anthropologists of the past may not have recognized, but is relevant now to all of us. As we begin to take businesses seriously as dominant institutional actors then we become more serious players ourselves.

Conclusion

In this article, a perspective from the history of anthropology has been taken as a vantage point from which to view the relationship between anthropology and business, during a time of duress in the development of American industry and the global economy. This point of view has illustrated connections among diverse schools of thought in anthropology and cognate fields that point toward the common influences and interests underpinning them, and it has highlighted some of the ways in which elite sectors of society attempt to shape institutional fields to address collective action problems. Anthropology's recent re-engagement with business should be viewed as another entry into the realm of institutional fields influenced by business elites, where our understanding of the "rules of the game" may be limited, and our best hope for the future may lie in re-framing our thinking about business and ourselves.

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