

XIV. COMMENTARY ON: MESOAMERICAN TRADE AND ITS ROLE IN THE EMERGENCE OF CIVILIZATION

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I was asked to comment on Lee Parsons' and Barbara Price's paper, and have chosen to discuss three topics which this paper and some of the others have brought into focus:

1. A diachronic aspect of trade.
2. Primitive society and civilization with particular reference to trade.
3. Problems of method with respect to the use of models.

I.

I submit that trade, in the broad meaning of exchange of objects between or among groups, is a result of ecological differentiation, that man (except under circumstances of unusual strain as for example during natural calamities, or during migrations to new sites) was never able to exist exclusively in an "economic niche" and that he was always obliged to seek economic relationships outside of his own group - that is, outside of the group composed of face-to-face cooperating individuals. And this was so because his requirements for raw materials for tools was varied and made it imperative that he be "economically exogamic". That is, he had to go beyond his specific ecological niche to seek, through exchange with some other group or groups, a certain portion of "goods" indispensable for his existence. I propose that trade in some form has always been a factor of prime importance throughout human history, from paleolithic times to the present. I am not saying anything new here nor do I mean to imply that Dr. Parsons would be in disagreement. I simply wish to establish my understanding of the phenomenon of trade.

Referring now to the second point, it might be possible to consider all human societies, from earliest times to the present, as belonging to either one or the other of two great categories:

1) Primitive Society or Primitive Societies which may be characterized as egalitarian, based on some form of kin relationships (though not necessarily descent). These would be societies in equilibrium, and in this sense non-dynamic or static, though of course change does take place.

2) Civilization or Civilized Societies as non-egalitarian. They may or may not have kinship structures basic to the society. These are societies in disequilibrium - that is, they are dynamic societies.

Going back now to the first category, Primitive Society, here the sub-

sistence base is gathering, hunting and fishing, or a combination thereof, and semi-sedentary agriculture (though not all groups having such an economic base would fit this category). The important point here is that Primitive Societies are not sedentary. They move about in their quest for food or suitable terrains for planting, though under normal conditions this movement occurs within a given area. They cannot, therefore, easily store or accumulate food or goods.

Paul Kirchhoff, I believe, originally used the term "egalitarian clan" (unilateral and exogamic as well) in contrast to a non-egalitarian or "conical clan" (ambi- or bi-lateral and non-exogamic) in a multi-evolutionary context.¹ His concepts were later taken over by anthropologists at Columbia University, namely Morton Fried and his colleagues.

Egalitarian clan societies, as well as other types of egalitarian kin structures such as bands, sometimes lineages and moieties, etc. would be typical of societies composing this category.

Now I will bring in a concept of Claude Lévi Strauss which I think is also relevant here. He postulates two poles or extreme forms of societies. For Lévi-Strauss primitive egalitarian societies are "sociétés froides" - cold societies - meaning non-dynamic societies or societies in equilibrium.² And this is where I got the concept.³

Primitive Society would be non-dynamic both with respect to the social relations and to adaptation to the environment, though, and Lévi-Strauss makes this point, such societies are not completely static. Change does take place or else man would have remained at a paleolithic level. But change takes place without fundamentally disturbing the equilibrium, except in moments of crises due, for example, to natural calamities and except when, under certain conditions "Civilization emerged."

Now, on the specific point of trade or exchange my reference is, of course, to the late Karl Polanyi. In what Polanyi also calls Primitive Society, trade relationships are described as involving reciprocity, in his sense of reciprocity as a "form (or pattern) of integration."⁴ Trade was carried on through a network of reciprocal relationships, which he otherwise refers to as a structure of symmetrical institutions.

Goods (referring again to Lévi-Strauss) as well as women were exchanged along lines that involved behavior of a reciprocal nature, either directly or indirectly. The trade relations in this context, would, in Polanyi's terms, take the form of gift trade. That is, reciprocity as a form of integration would be, so to speak, typically implemented through gift trade. At the same time, and Polanyi emphasizes this, other types of exchange such as "redistribution" co-exist with the above, for instance among hunting groups and what he calls early tribal societies. I will return to this point in a minute.

Markets also occur in some societies of this type. For the present purpose a market may be defined as a form of trade of objects where the demand and supply groups meet and exchange is carried out by means of some form of barter or of money. I am aware that markets assume a variety of forms, and not all of course would fit this definition. I will return to this question later.

Now I wish to treat equally very briefly the second great category of human societies: that which I have called Civilization, though as you can see I give this term a much broader meaning than is customary. As mentioned before, this would be a category of society whose essential characteristics would be:

- non-egalitarian structure, that is ranked or stratified in some way and,
- dynamic. I will stress this especially because it has not been mentioned so far in our conference discussions.

As for the economic base, I think that the crucial point is that it permits sedentary life, at least for the elite, and hence accumulation and storage of food and goods. It involves a variety of patterns such as hamlet, village, town, ceremonial and urban centers. The subsistence is procured by plant cultivation usually, or at least often, by means of irrigation, though the food supply may be procured by fishing, as among the cultures of the Northwest coast of America or, "to take a big leap", by factory industry.⁵

So much for the general characteristics.

To go on, I propose that we think in terms of two fundamentally different types of Civilization and define them principally in terms of dynamics.

Type I. Societies which "move" in cycles. Once the "mechanism" gets underway they achieve a certain "acceleration", a certain "velocity", a certain intensity of activity, perhaps along all lines, perhaps only along certain lines. And then they "decline" and often a re-emergence takes place, although maybe in some other locality within a certain cultural area, as for example Mesoamerica, but always in relation to what has come before, in the previous cycle or cycles. A re-emergence takes place and in this sense we are dealing with cycles.

Type II. I will mention the second type very briefly and then return to the first. The second type of Civilization refers to societies whose dynamics can perhaps best be described as lineal. Our historical gestalt, wherein what we call progress occurs, involves this type of society. These are societies which move along a continuum, although they too accelerate at certain "moments" and go through periods of decline, yet in this type of society the movement is accumulative, knowledge is accumulated and new forms of social and economic structures are created or evolve.

I propose, but without claiming that this is an original idea, that these two types of Civilization are genetically related. That is, societies which are of the cyclical type give birth, under certain conditions, to societies of the lineal type.

To return to the first type of Civilization, some examples would be:

Mesoamerica but perhaps only up to a certain period.

Cultures of the northwest coast of America.

Typical Polynesian societies.

Archaic societies of the ancient Near East.

India of caste society.

Chinese archaic societies up to a certain period (Morton Fried and Wolfram Eberhard, for example, have made important contributions in terms which can be of use for this type of analysis.)

Andean "high cultures".

Returning now to the definition of this first type of Civilization in terms of social structure and again with reference to Kirchhoff. I should say that I don't believe that either he, nor Lévi-Strauss, nor Polanyi would necessarily agree with my presentation here. Kirchhoff's second type or form of clan is characterized by him as non-egalitarian (ambi- or bi-lateral and non-exogamic with a tendency toward endogamy), whose structure may be diagrammed as a cone, or rather a series of cones. He sometimes refers to them as conical clans.

Going on from Kirchhoff I suggest that societies having this type of clan pattern are, in terms of their dynamics, of the same nature as certain non-kin societies, for example the caste societies of India. This is to say that Kirchhoff's conical clan would represent only one of the possible forms of social structures for this type of Civilization and that these forms would sometimes, but not necessarily, be kin structures. The key point with reference to the social structure of this cyclical type society is that it be stratified and that the upper echelons of the society control but do not own the basic material means of production, whether this be mainly land, raw materials or both, plus a combination of elaborate know-how techniques. The control as against ownership is what distinguishes Type I Civilization on this level from Type II, the lineal type.

With reference to the problem of the cyclical type society, the two-fold category of Lévi-Strauss, that is his "cold" and "hot" societies, does not dove-tail here, not only because he was contrasting two extreme types but also because another diagnostic trait of his dichotomy is the absence or presence of writing. So in this sense some but certainly not all of "my" cyclical civilizations could be considered "hot".

Polanyi dealt extensively with what he defined as another form of

integration which he labelled "redistribution", and which he proposed as characterizing the economies of the Ancient Near East, Peru before the Conquest, etc. This type of economy corresponds to what I have proposed here as the first type of Civilization, though not exclusively, for Polanyi also considered it typical of Feudal Europe, and in certain contexts of modern society as I will mention later. Polanyi of course did not pose the problem in the terms presented here. His redistribution form of integration involves collection, so to speak, of goods into a center and redistribution out from it and thus corresponds to institutions which he refers to as centralized or of centrality in contrast to the symmetry of the reciprocal form of integration mentioned before. But it should be pointed out, centrality does not necessarily imply hierarchy except when redistribution becomes a "form of integration."⁶ So in the context of cyclical societies goods would "flow" up to a center, they would be brought in and up the hierarchy and be "redistributed" within and sometimes down the hierarchy. In Polanyi's terms redistribution as a form of interaction involves typically administered trade. Trade was administered by a central power, by the top ranking group, clan or whatever non-kin form it might have. And it is here that we encounter the phenomenon of the Port of Trade.

Markets of course exist in such societies by they are (or usually are) separate from the administered trade, which is typically long-distance trade.

Again with reference to the second type of Civilization, whose dynamics are lineal. These are "progressive" societies though not necessarily moving sui generis toward an industrial economy; capitalistic or socialistic society. Of course the most obvious example is precisely our society. I have the impression that the cleavage took place between what I here call the first type of stratified society and the second or lineal society, in Greece, with the reforms of Solon in the sixth century B.C.

Another society of this type which gave birth to a long tradition, may have emerged in China, with the Shang dynasty, beginning 1450 B.C. At least so it seems to me from a recent re-reading of Eberhard (1950).

In Mesoamerica there is reason to postulate, as I will mention later, that during Aztec times, the society was beginning to show signs of developing from a cyclical, conical type clan society (Type I) to a lineal (Type II) Civilization.

As I suggested before, the crucial distinction between the two postulated types of Civilization is that in the first the elite controls the means of production, while in the second it owns them. On the other hand while the first may be structured along lines of kin, the second is not, for it is typically composed of hereditary feudal strata and more or less non-hereditary social classes in the Marxian sense. And although kin continues to be important

in this latter type, it is not basic to the over-all structure of the society, but rather it is reduced to various forms of the family.

Referring back to Lévi-Strauss' dichotomy our type Civilization is certainly "hot" meaning that it is in constant disequilibrium.

As with Kirchhoff's and Lévi-Strauss', again Polanyi's scheme does not fully dovetail with mine. Lineal Civilization would include, as dominant forms of integration, both redistribution, as with feudal societies for example, and "exchange" or more clearly, the price-making or self-regulating market system in Polanyi's terminology. The latter is, by and large, characteristic, as a form of integration, of capitalism since the event of the Enclosures, the Poor Laws Reform, etc., in the England of the eighteen thirties and forties.

Here perhaps I should recapitulate and explain more fully Polanyi's understanding of economics as an instituted process. As I mentioned before, his first "form of integration" is that of reciprocity, which manifests itself often as gift trade. Second is redistribution, which is typically instituted as administered trade, though certain kinds of markets co-exist in societies whose economies may be so characterized, as they might also under the sway of reciprocity. The latter form of integration takes place, so to speak, when the institutions are symmetrically patterned, while the former occurs in a context of centrality. And in both of these cases (that is in societies or communities wherein either of the two are dominant, or the main form of instituted economic processes) the economy is "embedded" in the cultural, or perhaps better, in the socio-cultural context. This is to say that, under these conditions, there is rarely behavior which is purely and exclusively economic, nor are the social processes in the large sense, dominated or determined by the economy. Consequently the economy, even for purposes of analysis, cannot be divorced from its socio-cultural "bed". But all this does happen when "exchange" becomes the dominant form of integration and the price-making, self-regulating market system emerges.

Here, that is since the last century in our own society, the economy has become the dominant force, without however (still referring to Polanyi) determining in a Marxian sense, the social dynamics.

Even with our system, the other patterns of reciprocity and redistribution persist, not however usually as the "form of integration". And I should perhaps make a particular emphasis on this point: that Polanyi never conceived of any of the three "forms"⁷ as dominating an economy to the exclusion of the others, although one would dominate as a "form of integration." Nor did he propose these three forms as a continuum or a sequence of evolutionary stages, even though reciprocity (for primitive society) comes first and redistribution (for archaic and feudal societies) comes second. He invariably insisted that in any type of society you might find either or both of the two existing as simple patterns, and that only the third, the price-making

market, is exclusive of modern society. Nor did he contend that all economic phenomena could be included under these three headings, as is evident in his treatment of non-price-making markets, money uses, etc.

Polanyi was convinced that the self-regulating or price-making market, that is "exchange" as a form of integration, would not continue to prevail as the form of integration of our industrial society. He saw what to him were very relevant signs that we are moving toward a redistribution form of integration, and had partially already done so, not only in the U.S.S.R. but also under the New Deal. Nor, might I add, did he concern himself with dynamics in the terms I have presented here.

Given the differences of viewpoint, methods and philosophical premises among the three scholars so frequently cited, I do not think the coincidence is fortuitous concerning the correspondence which exists among them in terms of Polanyi's social frame for his institutional patterns and his forms of integration; Primitive -- symmetrical and reciprocal; Archaic -- centricity and redistributive; Kirchhoff's findings relative to the Primitive -- egalitarian clan and the stratified - conical clan; and Lévi-Strauss' insight with respect to societies "without history" as egalitarian and in equilibrium as contrasted to societies "with" history as hierarchial and in disequilibrium. I might add that it would have been impossible for me to conceive of this "whole" (see below) if any one of these "parts" had been missing.

Synopsis

I. Primitive Society

1. Nature: societies in equilibrium; static or non-dynamic in the sense that change occurs without fundamentally disturbing the equilibrium.
2. Basic structure: kin-egalitarian.
- 3-1. Economy: non-sedentary hunters, gatherers or fishers and combination thereof; may also be semi-sedentary agriculturists; crafts and trade.
- 3-2. Trade: through reciprocal relations based often on the kin structure and often taking the form of gift trade, though other kinds of trade co-exist such as "redistribution", and sometimes markets.

II. Civilization

1. Nature: dynamic. Societies in dis-equilibrium: two types - cyclical and lineal (cf. II-A, II-B below).
2. Basic structure: stratified; non-egalitarian. May or may not have kin structures; here the State is invented or evolves, though it does not exist among some such societies.

- 3-1. Economy; sedentary. Usually plant cultivation; crafts and trade: certain development of industry in some such societies and eventually great development of factory industry.
- 3-2. Trade; frequently of redistribution type. Though reciprocal patterns continue to exist, they are no longer of primary importance; markets nearly always present and become dominant in industrial society (cf. II-B below).

II-A Cyclical Society

- 1. Nature: change takes place as a phase of a cycle. Although the cycles repeat themselves within a given cultural area they never do so using identical cultural material.
- 2. Basic structure: "conical" clans. Other forms of stratified kin groups and other types of stratified segments not necessarily kin based, sometimes based on an assimilation of human to divine power, etc. In some such societies the basis of the structure ceases to be kin and becomes one of territory; in any event, the diagnostic trait on this level would be that the top hierarchies, be they kin based or not, control but do not own, the means of production. The State is invented or evolves among societies of this type.
- 3-1. Economy; often plant cultivation with some sort of irrigation; subsidiary animal husbandry; may also be fishing or pastoral-nomad economies; great importance of crafts and trade.
- 3-2. Trade: typically redistribution manifested as administered trade and sometimes instituted through the Port of Trade; other types of trade co-exist such as gift trade and markets of the non-price-making kind.

II-B Lineal Society

- 1. Nature: cumulative processes wherein "progress" occurs. The movement is not necessarily wholly lineal, though it never reverts to the cyclical pattern.
- 2. Basic structure: ownership and non-ownership of the basic means of production determine the social structure insofar as it consists of feudal strata, classes or some other kind of hierarchy; usually some form of a State exists in such societies except in epochs of transition or revolution.
- 3-1. Economy: plant cultivation sometimes with irrigation; subsidiary animal husbandry; great importance of trade and craft. In one such type society craft finally develops into factory industry, thus reducing the importance of agriculture.
- 3-2. Trade: redistribution forms prevail in most such societies though

reciprocal patterns continue; markets and fairs are very important. Eventually the market took over an entire economy, thus inaugurating modern industrialized society in the last century, and such a market economy continues prevalent today, usually in capitalistic type of industrial society; redistribution is predominant in socialistic industrial society, though markets continue to exist.⁸

With reference now to the Parsons and Price paper which is under discussion. Can we agree with their statement:

"It is our view that the Postclassic pattern indeed represents continuity with the past, but that it does not crystallize until the Classic, following which it was maintained and probably expanded but without major change in principle."

"We postulate, however, the essential continuity of both state institutions and of trading networks from Teotihuacan times until the Spanish Conquest."

"We do feel it probable, on the basis of archaeological evidence . . . that Teotihuacan trading patterns, like Aztec ones, involved true *pochteca*, ports of trade, and the trade-precedes-tribute cycle of succession."

I don't believe we can assume that Aztec institutions were essentially identical to the Teotihuacan ones. Both are civilizations. Both Teotihuacan and Aztec societies may be characterized as dynamic, and while in all probability the former represents a cyclic type, there are some reasons to believe that the Aztec society was in process of being transformed, of transforming itself I should say, into a lineal type civilization.

I am sure you are all more or less acquainted with the debate which has been going on since the time of Bandelier. In his studies of Aztec social and military organization he postulated, and went to great length to demonstrate, that Aztec society was essentially democratic clan based, a Primitive Society. He saw it as comparable, or of the same type, as Iroquois society. He did this investigation in terms of L. H. Morgan's evolutionary typology and sequence.

Then Manuel Moreno came along. A lawyer by training, he wrote an important book on this subject in which he demonstrated the contrary: that Aztec society, far from being democratically clan based, already had social classes. He brought forth a certain evidence to substantiate his interpretation.

Later Paul Kirchhoff began working on this material and finally one of his students, Arturo Monzón, wrote what is probably the most significant work on the question. He refined the analysis to the effect that, while

Bandelier and Moreno were both incorrect, others had been also. Restricting his research to the nature of the clans he concluded that far from being the Iroquois democratic or egalitarian type, they were conical in Kirchhoff's terminology. With respect to Moreno's contention, Monzón esteemed that while there were no indications of social classes in the modern sense, he did see certain signs of what he calls "estamentos" (strata) in formation. And he postulated that had the Aztecs not been stopped short the society would have developed along oriental lines, comparable to societies of Egypt, India, and China.

There have been a few other works but I think these are the three principal ones concerning this problem.

Given the data brought to light by Moreno and Monzón, I don't think we can assume, without further investigation, that Aztec society was simply an extension of Teotihuacan.

And even if we were ultimately to throw aside this evidence and come to the conclusion that the indications in the documents of strata or classes among the Aztecs were in reality so unimportant that the society was not in a state of transformation, even if we were to consider it entirely comparable typologically to Teotihuacan. Even so, we could hardly project Aztec institutions back to Teotihuacan simply because they share a similar archeological tradition. The institutions which make up this sort of society go through some sort of process of ascension or expansion and ultimate decline but there is always change from one "horizon" or "cycle" to another within a given cultural area. This is not to say that certain institutions did not perpetuate themselves more or less intact from one horizon to another, but whether they seemed to have or not done so should be posed as a problem from the outset.

This is what I wanted to say in this context concerning the question of using Aztec institutions as the model for Teotihuacan. The same criticism would apply more obviously to Michael Coe's taking the Aztec Pochtecas all the way back to the Olmec horizon. Parsons and Price carefully stipulate that they do not assume the Pochteca for the Olmecs, but they do assume this for Teotihuacan, as also the Aztec Port of Trade. This is reasonable in that the Aztecs certainly shared a great many more traits with Teotihuacan than they did with the Olmec but whether these specific Aztec institutions existed in Teotihuacan times is only a matter of conjecture, at least so far.

I will now turn to the third point and briefly refer to the question of method as it is employed in the Parsons and Price paper under discussion, with respect to the use of models.

On the level of method, models may be considered problem solving devices. For the present purpose I will deal with models in only two meanings:

A model may be a construct which employs all or most of the essential data of a given set.

Or, a model may be a construct used when only some of the necessary data appears to be available and/or when the problem is not seen clearly at the onset of the investigation and where, therefore, it is convenient to use a guide model. The purpose of models on this second level is to permit the researcher to "see" pertinent data which otherwise might escape his attention or be sub-esteemed and eventually to enable him to organize and handle the data for purposes of further analysis or comparisons.

Let me comment further on these two types of models. One, inspired by what Lévi-Strauss calls a mechanical model in this context could be called a descriptive model. It would be a construct which represents the essential characteristics of a "set", that is, a category, phenomenon, institution, pattern, complex, etc. You use it when you have reason to assume that all or most of the characteristic or essential data is given. No special attention is paid to the logic of the model because it is simply descriptive. In the case under discussion the Pochteca would be a descriptive model.

The other I propose to call a logical model. Lacking in what the investigator judges to be essential data, it compensates this lack by logical deductions, that is, it reconstructs the missing parts through logic. Or, it might be constructed of data from another cultural area which has logical consistency. That is to say that although it is descriptive, it is not purely descriptive. It is a logical construct and therefore it can be used as a guide model. In this sense the Port of Trade would be a logical model.

There may be any number of variants of either type of model, which may represent the same phenomenon in different, or historically or culturally unrelated contexts, as too it may represent phases in the historical development of a given phenomenon or institution, or again diffusion outward from a center, etc. Taking a descriptive model, a case in point would be the Pochteca with respect to the Tamkarum, the long distance trade of Mesopotamia.

With these two different types of models and Parsons and Price's paper in mind, I will enumerate some of the essential characteristics of the Pochteca:

They formed a hereditary status, perhaps a "conical clan" or perhaps a non-kin group. In any event the group was internally ranked from the lord Pochtecas to the "traveling salesmen", and the top ranks (which may have been an elder sub-group were closely associated with the so-called nobles, the pillis who, although they were not of full noble status, were certainly not "middle class."

The Pochteca inhabited special barrios or quarters of their own. Names of six or seven are known for eighteen different towns throughout the Aztec empire.

They had their own deity and hence special rituals and feast days. They also worshipped the state god, Huitzilopochtli.

They had a moral code of their own and courts to judge their own members.

The top ranking Pochteca also presided over the court in the great market place of Tlatelolco.

They were commissioned by the "king" to carry out their trading expeditions. Although they were mainly involved in state trade, at least on occasion the sovereign permitted them to trade on their own and for their private benefit.

With reference now to the Port of Trade, as a logical model. This institution was brought to light by Polanyi primarily through his research in the Ancient Near East and was subsequently found to exist, in variant forms, in Africa, India and Mesoamerica. Conceived as a logical model, using Ancient Near Eastern data, some of its main characteristics are:

It is an enclave in neutral, politically weak, territory, or unconquered territory. It is a "neutrality device" in Polanyi's terminology. Therefore it is beyond the frontiers of the trading "metropolitan centers." As a result it offers military security to both the trading powers and the local inhabitants. (This is true for the Aztecs except in the case of Xoconusco which continued as a port of trade after its incorporation into the Aztec empire. Although the Aztec and Maya "ports" were independent, in certain of these ports they had their "factors" or agents, who were apparently permanent inhabitants, and in some cases the traders ruled the "ports" rather than the Pochteca).

As the Port of Trade is an institution of a "function" of administered trade, it involves treaty trade between two or more metropolitan centers. (This is clearly implied for the Aztec and Maya.)

As it is treaty trade, transactions are carried out at given equivalents, or set prices if some form of money was used. (This is true in our case as far as the data goes, except that cacao was apparently not used in long distance transactions, but in the market place and by the Pochteca during their journeys).

Because it is administered trade the commodities are for elite or state-community consumption, the raw materials used in their manufacture and state monopoly "goods". (This is true especially for the Aztecs who also imported raw materials and exported articles manufactured of the same raw materials. The Maya and Aztecs both exported slaves whose commerce was state regulated. The Mayas however exported some everyday wares, at least cloth, flint subsistence items, salt, and honey).

There are warehouses in the ports because of the necessity for storing

goods until the arrival of the other party and/or for transactions over long terms. (This conforms to our data for many of the ports.)

Trade from the metropolitan centers is carried on by professionals in their function of official traders in the service of the ruling hierarchy. (This is certainly the case for the Pochteca but it is less apparent for the Maya long distance trade, the Ppolom who was a noble, probably higher rank than the Pochteca and perhaps less specialized though the Ppolom in all likelihood were constituted in a group, as they had their special deity and the organization and knowledge which their very specific tasks required.)

Given its role as an element of administrative trade and the specificity of its functions, the Port of Trade is independent of the market or market place. There is quite abundant testimony concerning Aztec and Maya transactions in the ports of trade but there is no mention of them trading in markets there; though the Pochteca did carry on certain transactions in home markets.

I should point out here that I am only referring to two institutions, as translated into models, of long distance trade and not to the phenomenon of long distance trade as a whole.

I feel that we cannot indiscriminately project Aztec "models" backwards in time. Thanks to the historical sources it has been possible to define these institutions with some precision. Blurring these "images" by calling for example anything which seems to indicate a long distance trade, a Pochteca, would seem to lessen our possibilities for correct understanding or interpretation of the archeological data. It would seem more exact to confine the use of the term Pochteca to its specific model and to use a neutral term such as "long distance trader" to refer to a context about which in reality, we know very little. As for the other model, the Port of Trade, we saw that it is defined as being located in a neutral, politically independent area, and involves trade between two centers (urban and ceremonial). I therefore don't see how it is possible to employ it for Kamin-aljuyu (pre-Esperanza-Amatle I). Long distance trade would not necessarily or always involve ports of trade and even if it did we are not free to assume on the basis of documents written almost a thousand years later and most especially when as is the case cited, the specific archeological data do not justify proposing it even as a working hypothesis. Historical-ethnographic research is difficult enough and when we are able to produce some concrete results in the reconstruction of institutions through the use of models, these results are in danger of being nullified when the terminology is not respected, when it is deprived of its specific meanings and reduced to everyday vernacular.

I might say something about other models which are used in the paper under discussion and which M. Coe also uses and which I think are not too

clear either. I refer to what M. Coe calls "organic" and Parsons and Price "urban", and what Coe calls "unilateral" and Sanders and Price "non-urban." I won't define them because you are all much more familiar with this terminology than I. I simply thought to comment on, for example, the assumption that in the unilateral or non-urban type of society which is found in a lowland ecology by definition and carries the assumption of "weak markets" given ecological considerations, homogenous environment and so forth. With reference to the historical documents I don't feel that we can assume for instance that the Yucatan Mayas had weak markets. It seems that the institution of "long distance traders" was not as fully developed among them as it was among the Aztecs, but as we have mentioned, long distance trade is not related to the prevalence or the importance of local markets in the home territory. It is however also true that for the Conquest period there apparently did not exist markets of the importance in terms of quantity and variety of goods, etc. as in Central Mexico. Nevertheless markets did exist in Yucatan. The chroniclers called Ecab the Great Cairo and two other towns, Katochi and Cahuacha on the East coast were mentioned as having large markets. Another point which may be commented upon with reference to this lowland model, is highland Kaminaljuyu. It seems to me that such exceptions should be explained.

I am still on the subject of method. In terms of the manipulation of models, it seems to me that Parsons and Price introduce the models too early in their analysis. They wrap up the package too soon. They assume or imply the existence of a number of factors and determining ecological situations which may or may not stand up to closer examination, but which are tempting because they appear to make sense.

I want to say too that I am not making a blanket criticism of the article. I entirely agree with the fruitfulness of attempting to reconstruct trade routes in detail and in seeking concrete explanations for pan-Mesoamerican horizons or influences between contemporary centers. I also think with them that Flannery's insistence on extra-Olmec centers very much to the point. For these and other reasons I found the paper extremely stimulating.⁸

End Notes

- 1 Kirchhoff (1959) stipulates that there are also other forms of types of clans, for example that of the Australian groups, but he does not describe or analyze them in the article cited.
- 2 Kirchhoff (op. cit., p. 264) in different terms expresses an analogous idea with reference to the egalitarian clan: "This type of clan makes possible a kind of economic and general cultural cooperation which in its way seems perfect..."

- 3 I should make it clear that I am not summarizing Lévi-Strauss' concept on this subject and that he is not proposing a typology for all societies. He does however suggest that a "cleavage" between these extreme forms occurred during the IV or III millenium B.C. with the advent of the invention of writing. In this context "cold societies" are societies without writing and in a certain sense "without history."
- 4 Polanyi (1968, p. 255): "Dominance of a form of integration is here identified with the degree to which it comprises land and labor in society."
- 5 Theoretically I would have to include in this category certain pastoral-nomad groups of the Old World. They pose a particular problem which may have to do with the semantics of the word sedentary. In the sense that they move with their means of subsistence, relatively speaking, they are sedentary.
- 6 Fundamental to Polanyi's framework is his notion of form or pattern of integration as contrasted to a pattern not involving integration. Sometimes his vocabulary is not very explicit with respect to reciprocity and redistribution. With the market phenomenon the distinction is very clear for when it is only a pattern or an institution among others, it is of the non-price making type and when it becomes a "form of integration" the market becomes the price-making market.
- 7 I did not refer to Polanyi's treatment of the "self sufficient household" which in his terms, makes use of the pattern of autarchy, sometimes referred to as another "form of integration", because it is not too clear to me as a concept. It seems to me that here he shifted to another level and was dealing more with phenomena of exchange within the face-to-face group and of the sexual division of labor.
- 8 I should perhaps add that this evolutionary sequence does not imply a process from simple to complex, except in the domain of accumulated technical-scientific knowledge. My understanding is that Primitive Society is otherwise as complex (or as simple) as Modern Society. The latter gives the impression of being more complex because of its disequilibrium, its incomparably greater density of population, etc., and because we are participants in it. This entire section will be taken up again from the point of view of social structure in an article being written for the volume in honor of Paul Kirchhoff to be published in Mexico.
- 9 This version of my commentary was revised after the conference. I arrived at Burg Wartenstein just after returning to Paris from an extended period of fieldwork in Tierra del Fuego and did not have time to think out my commentary fully in the time available.

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