

The Construction of a Global Profession: The Transnationalization of Economics¹

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This article relies on an analysis of the institutionalization of economics worldwide during the 20th century to argue that the logic of professional development in this particular field has come to be increasingly defined in global terms. Connections to (mainly) U.S.-based standards of work and professional practice are routinely used in the local competition whereby different professional segments and groups seek to assert their authority on particular jurisdictions (scientific, corporate, or political). In this process of professional construction (or reconstruction), economies are being transformed through complex transnational mechanisms which, ultimately, feed back into the identity and jurisdictional claims of the economics profession itself, both in the “core” and in the “periphery.”

In one of the most famous passages of the *Communist Manifesto*, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels described the logic of modern capitalism in the following terms:

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations in society. . . . All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is

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solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere. (Marx and Engels [1848] 1998, p. 54)

The inexorable search for profit prompts capitalism both to alter its technological base constantly *and* to globalize its activities. Its extraordinary transformative power, then, is both directed at itself and at the world. Like many living organisms, capitalism develops through a process of metamorphosis. It grows and expands only by destroying its old shells, leaving behind the chrysalides of antiquated structures, technologies, and ideas.

Marx's passage was written to describe economic modernity, yet its main insights apply remarkably more broadly. Since the late 1970s, not only economies but also technologies of government have *both revolutionized and internationalized*. Industrial planning, public investment in national industries, and import controls have been replaced by a new set of policy tools—privatization, trade opening, tax cuts, and capital account liberalization. Once formulated, these new model policies were reproduced far and wide, often carried by transnational technocrats trained in the latest received economic wisdom. There have certainly been numerous variations in the extent and manner in which these changes took place and were implemented, yet the broadly promarket outlook of the new policy consensus was unmistakable (Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb 2002).

Of course the story does not end there. Although still remarkably influential, the neoliberal creed itself has come to breed its own critique and negation, and came under sharp attack in the late 1990s as Russia, East Asia, and Argentina underwent spectacular economic crises, and third-world countries and movements became more outspoken in their opposition. Things, in short, are no more fast frozen today than they were before: new economic knowledge and tools are being devised; in some cases, old instruments (e.g., capital controls) are being refurbished, promoted by a new breed of nonaligned transnational experts and political activists (Stiglitz 2002).

The strength of Marx's picture is that it brings to light the dual character of the capitalist developmental logic—the intensification of exploitation through both technological upheaval (the vertical or temporal dimension) *and* worldwide expansion (the horizontal or geographical dimension). Just like the capitalist production process, economic ideas and technologies are never fixed—they work continuously at their own rev-

olution. And just like capitalism, they strive for international diffusion. Professionals—private consultants, public technocrats, and scientific experts, many of whom are trained economists—constitute the main vehicles of these transformations.

The fact that we rarely connect these two phenomena suggests that the fundamental role of economics as an agent of globalization is not very well understood by sociologists. Partly this is because we tend to see processes of global expansion as fairly homogeneous and unidirectional exports from the “core,” or the “world society,” to the “periphery.” But we are not very well equipped to see these processes as dynamically reshaping the nature of the economic knowledge diffused and the jurisdictional control of the economics profession, *both* in the core and the periphery. The present article seeks to respond to this analytical challenge by showing *how its very internationalism feeds into the intellectual and professional dynamics of economics*. More generally, it stresses the necessity for sociologists to look at globalization as a critical factor in the transformation of professions and professional dynamics in the modern era.

The next section proposes a generic typology of the mechanisms that may prompt the globalization of professions. I then draw on neoinstitutional theory, field theory, and the theory of professions to propose that we analyze processes of international diffusion in a dialectic and dynamic framework that takes into account changes in the object of diffusion itself. I suggest that economics offers a particularly fruitful way to illustrate this phenomenon, and I analyze the transnational mechanisms at work in this case in considerable empirical detail. In the final section, I discuss the consequences of these transnational processes for the construction and development of the science and profession of economics itself.

GLOBAL PROFESSIONS

Professionalization is traditionally understood as a local, geographically bound process. Typically, we consider that the nation-state sets the boundaries of the ecologies within which professions emerge, structure themselves, and interact with each other. The main reason is that professions’ rights of entry are typically regulated locally, either at the national or the state level (as is partly the case with law). As a result, the sociology of professions has been a particularly fertile ground for developing cross-national and comparative arguments (Rueschemeyer 1973; Sarfatti-Larson 1979; Abbott 1988; Burrage and Torstendahl 1990; Torstendahl and Burrage 1990; Krause 1996; Savelsberg and King 2005). For instance, the literature draws a sharp contrast between the state-regulated professions of continental Europe and the privately regulated professions of the Anglo-

Saxon world, even though finer distinctions have often been made within these categories.

The link between nation and profession holds in reverse as well: professionalization is often seen as one of the processes whereby nation building takes place historically. This is especially clear in the case of certain professions, such as the civil service or the military, that directly participate in the institutionalization of public authority (Silberman 1993; Skowronek 2002). Abbott (2005) even suggests that the argument applies more broadly—states, he argues, constructed and defined themselves partly in relation to the very effort made by the emerging professions to establish their own space.

Because of the “nationalist” disposition of the professions literature, the field is just now beginning to analyze what happens when a profession extends its influence beyond its national boundaries. The process may at first not seem so remarkable: by and large, how professions internationalize looks *analytically* similar to how they nationalized; that is, it is determined primarily by markets and politics (Sarfatti-Larson 1979). Yet how markets and politics interact at the international level to influence professional dynamics is a quite complex matter. No international state exists, and international markets are still far from being integrated at a level comparable to national markets. For the most part, national boundaries and regulations continue to limit the extent to which economic activities (including professional ones) can be transplanted from one country to another. With these limitations in mind, I identify below three mechanisms through which professionals may expand their activities beyond their country of origin.

The Professional “Common Market”

A first possible mechanism is the establishment of what we may call “professional free trade” through the transnationalization of the political regulations and controls applying to professions. Certainly, some professional segments function as free enterprises at the international level. Typically, being an elite member of many artistic professions allows, even demands, the transgression of national boundaries. A famous musician or opera singer will perform around the globe, and a celebrated architect may leave his or her mark on urban landscapes anywhere. Internationalism, in this case, is both a consequence and a sign of status—and beyond status, of artistic genius or exceptional skill.

Still, for those professions—or professionals—whose work remains bounded by national regulations, the opening of borders may signify a quite dramatic jurisdictional change. The main example here is the European Union, which has grown into a truly transnational administrative

institution with far-reaching regulatory powers over a unified regional market. Not surprisingly, today, professions in the European Union are going transnational as a result of (1) the free movement of workers and professionals (institutionalized in the Schengen treaty, which took practical effect in 1995), and (2) the transnationalization of political and economic regulations, particularly the fact that the European Commission now oversees the licensing systems of over 100 professions. Both developments have accelerated the federation of local (i.e., national) organizations into transnational professional bodies and a homogenization of training requirements across countries, particularly noticeable in the legal field (Todd and Neale 1992, p. 35; Evetts 1998; Evetts and Dingwall 2002). The Europeanization of regulatory power also means that less established occupational groups will now use Europe rather than national states to further their professionalizing claims, thereby defining themselves as transnational enterprises from the very beginning (Roach Anleu 1992). This suggests that Europeanized professions are becoming important players in the process of construction of Europe as a supranational political entity—just like national professions, in an earlier era, participated in the construction of national political institutions (Evetts and Dingwall 2002).

International Jurisdictions

Where the reach of transnational regulatory authorities is more limited, however, the internationalization process will look more decentralized and competitive. A second way professions may go transnational is when jurisdictions emerge directly at the international level—that is, when the object of jurisdictional control is by nature international. This process will typically involve a competition among different national professional styles, as in, for instance, the case of international commercial arbitration, which has oscillated between the continental European model of the *lex mercatoria* and the American litigation model (Dezalay and Garth 1996). Or it may entail a more creative bricolage of resources of various origins, particularly where a professional field is created *de novo* at the international level, as in international criminal law (Hagan and Levi 2004). Since the legal profession as a whole is still very much regulated at the national level—by licensing and training systems, legal codes, and practices—the development of international jurisdictions, particularly in the “new” areas where legal knowledge is unsettled, takes place amidst competitive struggles over which legal tradition(s) will prevail.² The outcome

² Of course part of the process of “Europeanization” involves some of the same mechanisms, as, for instance, a distinct body of “European law” emerges, partly autonomously and partly as a result of the harmonization of local regulations.

of such struggles in turn feeds back into the national fields, ushering local dynamics of transformation and change (Dezalay and Garth 1996).

Creative Destruction

The reconstruction of an existing jurisdiction through the diffusion of a particular set of norms and practices constitutes a third mechanism of internationalization, and it may be the most complex to understand and analyze. The international circulation of capital, whether public (aid) or private (foreign direct investment) is obviously a major vehicle for the internationalization of professional expertise: Western companies investing abroad, like governments or international financial institutions lending money, carry with them scores of lawyers and consultants, who then find themselves in a powerful position to penetrate the local markets, and in the process to impose their own definition of reality—their norms, concepts, language, tools, and so on—to eventually engage in a profound reconstruction of the local economic setting. This explains why the diffusion metaphor is often insufficient to describe the process of professional transnationalization: market penetration involves not only territorial expansion, but also forces a deep *transformation* of the local way to do business itself, which may reinforce the foreign professionals' advantage. For instance, if economic laws in East Asia, under International Monetary Fund (IMF) influence (or some other international economic influence, such as large foreign corporations), are being transformed in a way that is consistent with U.S. antitrust or bankruptcy law, American legal firms will obviously have the upper hand in the legal competition that opposes them to European firms for the capture of these local markets, and American law schools will become the natural place where lawyers from the region will look for training (Carruthers and Halliday 2006; Kelemen and Sibbitt 2004). In the example cited above, the American legal profession will have gained its local influence not by competing directly with entrenched local professional elites, but by engaging in what Schumpeter (1975, pp. 82–85), drawing on Marx, called “creative destruction,” that is, by “revolutionizing the structure from within” and engineering a reconstruction (and in some cases a construction) of the local law itself, which may ultimately force a (superficial or thorough) reconstruction of the local legal profession along its own professional model (Dezalay and Garth, manuscript).³

³ A good example is the recent and dramatic rise of the presence of U.S. law firms in foreign countries. In 1985, 80 U.S. law firms had offices overseas that employed 803 lawyers altogether. In 1999, the number of firms had grown to 245, and they employed 4,319 lawyers (Kelemen and Sibbitt 2004, p. 114). Some U.S. or British firms, such as

The Case of Economics

Intuitively, such creative destruction processes should be particularly exacerbated in the case of those professional entities, which lack both firm political control and clear jurisdictional boundaries, such as economics or consulting. What separates economists or consultants from doctors is indeed the (apparently) more fluid and “contestable” nature of their jurisdiction: while one cannot be a lawyer without passing a bar exam, or a doctor without a board certification, one *can* become a consultant or claim oneself as an “economist” without advanced training or licensing.⁴ As Freidson (1986, p. 71) has shown, however, institutional contexts typically make sure that such discrepancies are the exception rather than the norm: universities, for instance, normally will not hire “economists” without Ph.D.’s. Government agencies will act in a similar manner for high-level jobs. Formal organization and *a posteriori* recognition (in the form of positions reserved to credentialed economists) thus provide the basis for the formulation of a number of exclusive jurisdictional claims, such as the extensive formalization of economics positions within public administration and business.⁵ Institutional, not occupational, licensing is the real source of professional power.⁶ Moreover, there is little question that as a result of these mechanisms, economists regard themselves, and *are regarded by others*, as a well-bounded community—a feature Sarfatti-Larson (1979, pp. 220–32) long ago identified as a hallmark of professional ideology.

Nonetheless, some consequences of weaker occupational control may be considered: first, economics will be more vulnerable to competitive challenges from other professions, which try to penetrate its jurisdictional space (Abbott 1988, p. 109). Second, as a highly “heteronomous” field, economics will be subject to external social and political pressure (Lebaron 2000a). Finally (and this has not been, to my knowledge, emphasized in the literature), we should also expect economics to be especially amenable to international expansion: not hampered by the barrier of national regulations and licensing systems, it should be allowed to operate more freely across national borders.

Baker and McKenzie, Clifford and Chance, or Freshfields, have a *majority* of their staff in overseas offices (Sassen 2001, p. 34).

⁴ I borrow the term “contestable” from the industrial economics literature. According to Baumol, Panzer, and Willig (1986) a market is *contestable* when barriers to entry (such as special licenses, patents, copyrights, high fixed costs, and marketing barriers) are low, and it is *perfectly contestable* when such barriers are nonexistent.

⁵ See, for instance, the existence of institutional quasi-monopolies such as the Council of Economic Advisers in the United States, the Sachverständigenrat in Germany, or the Conseil d’Analyse Économique in France.

⁶ I am very grateful to an *AJS* reviewer for reminding me of this distinction.

Such transnational expansion will not necessarily occur in a uniform manner, however. By and large it has been very asymmetrical, in economics as well as in other weakly bound professions, such as consulting. The latter, for instance, is dominated by a handful of American companies with subsidiaries all over the globe (Djelic 2004). Likewise, economists who have received their doctorates from U.S. or British institutions populate the world of economic advising, the main international economic institutions, as well as the leading economics departments and upper-level technocratic positions of many countries, particularly in the developing world. The *internationally* permeable nature of professional boundaries gives credentials acquired in the United States, and to a lesser extent in Europe, access to a geographically unspecific jurisdiction: they are not bound to the country or region that issued them but have virtually universal value. (By contrast, a U.S. medical degree does not [yet] give its bearer the right to practice medicine in Italy.) In theory, of course, this is true of *every* advanced economics degree, no matter its geographical origin. A Brazilian doctorate *could* suffice to make someone an economist in the United States. Yet in practice, such cases are more the exception than the rule. A specific segment of the economics profession, generally U.S. or U.K. educated, thus establishes its international power on the very basis of the contestability of national economics markets. In doing so, however, it makes the latter less contestable—that is, it creates new *implicit* barriers of entry and new stratification principles: everything is happening as if American graduate and professional schools (and to a lesser extent European ones) were functioning as elite licensing institutions for much of the rest of the world.

This inherently *professional* transformation is of enormous *practical* consequence. The end result of this process is indeed a form of institutional and intellectual convergence between the economics professions in peripheral countries and those at the center, as foreigners and foreign-trained professionals increasingly penetrate local institutions, and as these institutions try to emulate dominant foreign models.

While neoinstitutional theorists (see especially Strang and Meyer 1994) have extensively studied the broad dynamics of diffusion processes, we still know little about the practical mechanisms that drive these transformations over the long run. In particular, the necessary revolutionary element (the “creative destruction”) in the process is often overlooked in favor of the empirical fact of diffusion. It is indeed one thing to point to transnational institutions, communities, and actors and to show that they generate distinctive outcomes (e.g., the diffusion of norms about human rights or economic policies). It is quite another to show how their very existence relates to broader patterns of social and economic transformation. The next section proposes to build on insights from neoinstitutional

theory, field analysis, and the sociology of professions to make sense of the internationalization of professional development dynamics in economics. I then analyze these dynamics in considerable empirical detail. Finally, the last section describes the substantive reconstructions undergone by the economics profession as it diffuses and institutionalizes widely, and suggests that transnationalism is, in fact, a key mechanism by which economists establish jurisdictional control.

BEYOND DIFFUSION: THINKING ABOUT THE GLOBALIZATION OF ECONOMICS

We may begin with the observation that, as a professional practice, economics diffused in a way consistent with neoinstitutional theory. The theory suggests that relatively stable forms (e.g., specialized training curricula, certification procedures, professional organizations, specific work locations) institutionalize sequentially throughout the globe. Many such forms emerged in Western Europe or the United States in the late nineteenth century or early twentieth century and were progressively reproduced, with a number of variants that more or less followed colonial, neocolonial, or, more recently, international-institutional linkages, in Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia, and, lastly, Africa.

Figure 1, for instance, clearly identifies this type of pattern in the case of professional associations of economists. As expected, professional associations of economists were initially established in core countries during the nineteenth century. After World War II, such organizational patterns spread progressively to the periphery and closely followed the emergence of new nation-states. How should we, then, interpret the worldwide institutionalization of economics?

According to neoinstitutional theory, the key mechanism underlying diffusion processes is “isomorphism”—that is, the idea that distinct organizations come to structure themselves in very similar ways. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) identified three fundamental rationales for isomorphic diffusion—competitive pressure (competitive isomorphism), the compliance with external constraints (coercive isomorphism), or the normative agreement with an expert-legitimated order (normative isomorphism). Professions are part of the third category: they are among the “rationalized others” (Meyer 1994) that produce such legitimate worldviews, “modern myths” (Meyer and Rowan 1977, p. 344) that generate a large amount of highly rationalized formal structure and constitute, therefore, one of the main carriers of “normative isomorphism” (DiMaggio and Powell 1983, p. 152).

It might be worth restating here the theoretical boundaries of the con-

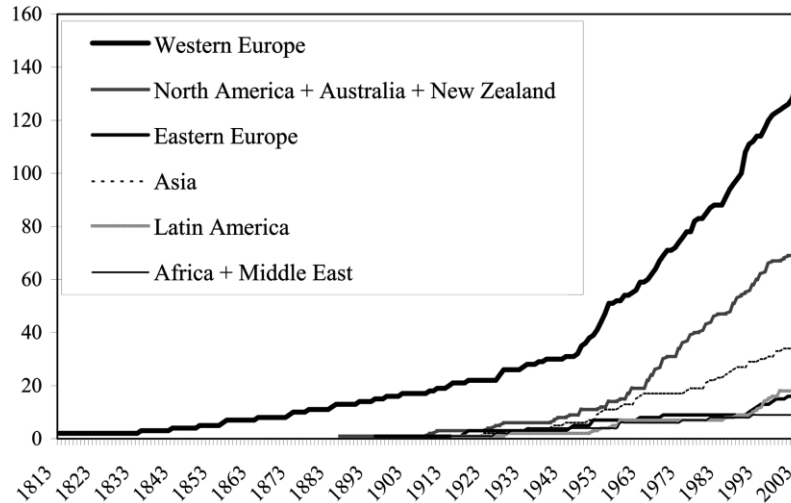


FIG. 1.—Associations of economists, by world region (cumulative findings, international associations not included). Source: *World Guide to Scientific Associations and Learned Societies*, Saur 2002, 1997 and 1983 eds.; additional data from “Economics Associations and Learned Societies,” on EDIRC (Economics Departments, Institutes and Research Centers in the World), 1995–2006, Christian Zimmermann, <http://edirc.repec.org/assocs.html>. Thanks to Daniel Buch for his help in collecting the data.

cept of isomorphism as defined by its initial sponsors. Indeed, the term has become so successful as an empirical tool that it serves as a near-universal metaphor for any process of widespread institutionalization. Yet it is easy to forget that the theory was designed to apply chiefly to the *formal* traits of organizational structures. Consequently, Meyer and Rowan (1977, 1978) represent diffusion largely as a process of “decoupling” where some external features are adopted ceremoniously but contents remain largely determined by local processes and institutions.

There is certainly substantial empirical evidence that outcomes of isomorphic processes are often quite disconnected from the formal models that initiated them in the first place (see, e.g., Ferguson [1994] on development policies). Yet by emphasizing the separation between form and content, the concept still obscures a key theoretical point: namely, that the very fact of diffusion participates in the construction of the diffused form itself—in other words, that “diffusability” constitutes one of the defining elements in processes of institutional or organizational change, not simply the other way around. For the case of professions, this idea suggests that the sheer “reproducibility” of certain knowledge or organizational forms is part of what constructs them as legitimate or desirable. Understanding which forms diffuse and which do not—pinning down the

substantive conditions that support “diffusability”—therefore, remains a question of considerable theoretical importance, which I address in the next section.

A second constraint of the isomorphism metaphor (which also follows from its focus on form rather than content) is that it treats processes of diffusion primarily as the result of scripting (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Neoinstitutionalist theory regards the object of diffusion as rather invariable and concentrates on the moment of its “adoption.” As some scholars have suggested (e.g., Abbott 1995, p. 876), this produces a discontinuous, rather than process-oriented, view of the very changes the theory seeks to understand.⁷ By isolating a “diffusing element” of interest (an organizational practice, a technical standard, a formal right), the concept of isomorphism thus overshadows the fact that diffusion is a multifaceted process, involving ideas, actors, and organizations *coevolving in the very process of diffusion*. Hence the example of bankruptcy law mentioned earlier suggests that the diffusion of a particular legal tool to East Asia cannot happen without triggering a whole set of institutional changes in the very structure of the legal profession itself. Similarly, when the practice of economics diffuses worldwide, it relies on certain organizational arrangements, worldviews, social relations, and policy tools, all of which diffuse at the same time and are being tested—and contested—simultaneously. It is thus the transformation of this entire ecology, beyond that of its constitutive elements, which has to be accounted for.

Furthermore, the dynamics of diffusion are very unsettled and constantly changing. Which knowledges, which forms of expertise will disseminate is driven in great part by intraprofessional struggles and by what Bourdieu calls *field dynamics*: economists, for instance, use international arenas to settle disciplinary and ideological conflicts, and to assert their control over a particular geographical, intellectual, or practical turf *from other economists* with whom they are competing. As suggested earlier, the main reason why economics is particularly susceptible to such struggles has to do with the contestability of its professional market and the heteronomous nature of its intellectual and material jurisdiction.

Finally, as pointed out by Abbott (1988, 2005), it may be relevant to analyze transformations in one particular professional ecology in relation to concomitant changes in other professional ecologies competing with it, or in other institutional ecologies, which are linked to it—that is, to focus not only on intraprofessional but also interprofessional conflicts. Although Abbott himself does not draw implications of his theory for the study of “international” professional enterprises, his focus on the interactions be-

⁷ As others have suggested (e.g., Fligstein 2001), the emphasis on scripting also makes a proper theory of action unnecessary, if not contradictory.

tween the work of professionals, its knowledge or discursive base, and the jurisdictional domain they claim control upon lends itself naturally to such an extension. In this perspective, the internationalization of jurisdictions may become one of the means whereby interprofessional competition is carried out. This process will, for instance, be reflected in the successful displacement, by economists with international capital (i.e., international credentials and experience), of locally bound lawyers and engineers from the state jurisdiction—a typical pattern in Latin America (Markoff and Montecinos 1993; Babb 2001; Dezalay and Garth 2002).

In other words, we ought to move from studying the *globalization* of the particular professional domain of economics to considering the *global logic* of its professional development as such—that is, to include in our study the interactions between economists and their jurisdictions, both local and global. Understanding the problem from the point of view of such a “global” logic does not mean, however, that “isomorphic” considerations should be abandoned. The approach outlined here, by contrast, aims to build isomorphic processes directly into a broader dynamic and ecological framework, which analyzes transnationalism as a fundamental element in the dialectical relationship between economics and the economy. In other words, we have to move beyond the concept of diffusion to show how economics (like capitalism) *constantly constructs and re-constructs itself* in the course of expanding its influence worldwide.

The remainder of this article is devoted to an in-depth empirical analysis of the mechanisms that sustain the transnationalization of economics. This strategy allows me to explore the complex global dynamics between the diffusion of knowledge, the diffusion of professional practices, the transformation of jurisdictions, and the changing occupational/social identity of economic professionals.

In the next section I argue that three factors have been critical to the institutionalization of economics on a global scale: (1) the establishment of a broadly universalistic rhetoric within economic science, (2) the transformation of economic knowledge into a technology of political and bureaucratic power, and (3) the existence of transnational linkages dominated by the United States. The first point emphasizes the fact that the substantive nature of economic knowledge is not neutral vis-à-vis the process of internationalization. The neoclassical paradigm, evolved mainly in the West, was constructed historically as an abstract representation of the economy, which is not vested in specific local or historical experiences. Under this scientific form, then, economic knowledge appeared inherently transferable and “transformative,” both politically and institutionally, thereby authorizing easy replication and diffusion independently from the national context. The second point suggests that the worldwide rise of economics as a professional practice relied on a profound and global

transformation of the role of the state, whose ability to *act on the economy* came to be defined as a legitimate expression of national sovereignty. The third point documents the mechanisms of construction of these communities of experts that are entrusted with the authority to “act” upon the economy in many countries around the world. I show that these communities, particularly in the developing world, have had to rely extensively on outside sources of legitimation, both virtually through the uniformizing culture of the neoclassical paradigm, and materially through countless formal and informal linkages with international organizations and foreign scholarly and professional communities.

In the final section, I analyze the symbolic and material rewards that economics derives from its transnationalism. I suggest that their global linkages give economic professionals the authority to reconstruct societies according to the principles of the dominant economic ideology. However, the effects of these transformations are not only local, but also feed back into the professionalization and social definition of economists worldwide, sustaining a process of intellectual and professional “creative destruction” and thereby the continued economic vitality of the field. Economics, then, works on itself in part by continuously capturing and reinterpreting international arenas in order to formulate new intellectual and professional claims.

Before I move on to the more empirical part of the discussion, however, a few words of caution are warranted. First, my intention is neither to argue that the globalization of economics is a uniquely modern phenomenon nor to deny the validity of the considerable literature that documents the historical importance of cross-national intellectual transfers in economics (as well as in other sciences and disciplines).⁸ After all, local traditions are always complex cultural constructions involving positive and negative positioning toward, and appropriation of, foreign elements and references (Molnar 2004). The intensity and nature of these transnational processes vary historically, however, and my contention is that the current period is worthy of a specific treatment. As I show below, the twentieth century has witnessed the progressive legitimization of economics to provide not simply discourses about the world we live in but also systematic strategies, designs, and sophisticated tools that transform and even engineer or “perform” this world (Callon 1998; MacKenzie and Millo 2003; Ferraro, Pfeffer, and Sutton 2005). This dialectical relationship between economics and the economy, which is so characteristic of our mo-

⁸ See Wuthnow (1987, chap. 7) on science. On economics, see, for instance, Tribe (1988) on the influence of Smithianism in Germany, Herbst (1965) on the influence of historicism in the United States, or Turner (1989) on the postwar dialogues between Cambridge (U.K.) and Cambridge (Mass.).

dernity, means that we cannot treat the globalization of the economics profession independently from the economic transformations it produces and responds to.⁹

Second, my focus on the global dimensions of professionalization in economics should not override considerations about the persistent diversity of national experiences. To a large extent, all countries have followed their unique route to fill the emerging niches for economic expertise in science, policy, or business. In older polities (e.g., France, Germany, Japan), distinctive economics traditions got entrenched quite early in the educational and administrative systems, and continue to display original features stemming from their conditions of emergence and maintained, in some cases, by the relatively closed nature of their civil service and higher education systems (Fourcade, forthcoming).

The Universalism of Economic Knowledge

Economic knowledge has sought to formulate itself in general terms from the very beginning. In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French and British writings, such a quest was often represented by the search for “natural laws.” Certain policy principles (e.g., free trade) were then defended on the grounds that trying to bypass them would upset the natural order. During the nineteenth century, these universalistic aspirations became more explicitly cast in the discourse of science. Historians have repeatedly shown how scientific expansion profoundly affected intellectual developments in Victorian England and progressively replaced the authority of the “men of letters” by that of the “scientific experts.” Between the 1850s and the 1900s, most knowledge enterprises in search for legitimacy (e.g., the emerging disciplinary fields of sociology, economics, and even education, history, and theology) formulated claims to full scientific status (Heyck 1982, p. 121; Soffer 1978).

British economic writers cultivated the analogy with the natural sciences (physics in particular) in a very self-conscious manner (Mirowski 1994). Many were trained in mathematics, and indeed were often mathematicians turned economists (Weintraub 2002). The domination of a

⁹ The literature on this question is vast (see mainly Hall 1989; Campbell 1998, 2002). Studies tend to agree that “knowledge regimes” (in this case, the terms of the debate set by academic economics) play an important role in “regulating what sorts of arguments and evidence can be heard” (Breslau 1997, p. 894), but they tend to be suspicious of the specific argument that the presence of economists as top-level technocrats and politicians makes a large difference in economic policy. This is especially true of Western countries, which have witnessed dramatic changes in their policy regimes since the 1970s without any significant influx of economists in government (Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb 2002).

scientific imagery in economics established itself further during the twentieth century, especially in the Anglo-Saxon countries and in France among public engineers, leading to the strengthening of the neoclassical approach and the corresponding weakening of historical and institutional influences coming out of the German tradition. By the end of World War II, the latter had lost much of their original appeal among younger cohorts of economists (Yonay 1998). The methodology of the field was set in a positivist framework, which Friedman codified in a tremendously influential essay (Friedman 1953). The use of mathematics, both as applied technique (econometrics) and as theoretical medium (models), became legitimate practice—the accepted way to “do science” (Reder 1999; Mirowski 2002). Bibliometric analyses of academic publications in economics have, for instance, shown the rapid increase, between 1970 and 1990, of the relative impact of journals focused on mathematical and statistical techniques (Laband and Piette 1994).

This disciplinary evolution of economics is not without important organizational consequences. A specific language is a fundamental element in the establishment of a coherent jurisdictional monopoly. Bourdieu argues that rational, formalist language fulfills a specific purpose by granting a “symbolic effectiveness” to whoever commands it (Bourdieu 1987, 1993). In a similar vein, Abbott suggests that professions use abstract knowledge (mainly in the sense of positive formalism) in order to strengthen their jurisdiction: abstraction authorizes the creative redefinition of the professional domain, makes the seizing of new problems and new tasks possible, and thereby enables survival in the competitive system of professions (Abbott 1988, pp. 8, 102–4).

We can regard international expansion as a key aspect of jurisdictional strengthening and point to the rhetorical qualities of abstract knowledge in authorizing such a process. As many authors have noticed, the purity of form produced by economics’ “rhetoric of quantification” is in part the source of its rhetorical appeal (McCloskey 1985). First, mathematical formalism acts as an effective agent of disciplinary homogenization, and not simply because any mathematical language is, in essence, a universalistic device. By providing a medium of communication that overcomes linguistic barriers, it served historically (and still does) as a powerful element for the integration of foreign scholars and for the construction of an international community of practitioners.¹⁰ Today, Williamson remarks,

¹⁰ For example, many European emigrants (and, among them, many mathematically inclined members of the Austrian school) entered the American academia during the interwar period and World War II (see Krohn 1993; Dezalay and Garth 1998a). These studies, however, rightly point out that the mathematization of economics during the interwar period is as much the result of the integration of these European-born foreigners as it is the cause of their easy incorporation.

“an economist’s nationality (does) not contribute significantly to explaining the techniques that he or she uses and the beliefs that he or she holds” (Williamson 1996, p. 365; also see Reay [2004] on the uniformity of beliefs within American economics).

Second, the intellectual and methodological universalism of neoclassical economics means that, both as an academic corpus and as a source for policy design, it is more amenable to diffusion. Academic economics relies on abstract, universal reasoning in terms of “representative agents” and “representative economy,” with an essentially metaphorical connection to real-life situations. Economic problems are detached from their local (historical and geographical) context, and are generally understood to be instances of some universal phenomena. The prosperity of the “mic-mac-metrics” (microeconomics, macroeconomics, econometrics) regime at the core of American graduate programs, and the concomitant weakening of area studies, economic history, and the history of economic thought since the 1960s, as well as the disappearance of foreign language requirements, epitomize the ideal of a “monoeconomics,” tool-centered knowledge relatively insensitive to historical and geographical variations (Hirschman 1981; Hodgson 1996; though the recent wave of neoinstitutional scholarship tends to make this point more relative). The collapse of specificity-oriented paradigms (most notably development economics), attests to the widespread conviction among mainstream economics practitioners that countries do not fundamentally differ from one another, and allows for a similar treatment of the rich and the poor, the agricultural and the industrial, the open and the closed economies, and so on.¹¹ It is, for instance, quite remarkable that economists routinely locate their claims to expertise in certain technical areas, like monetary or fiscal policy, and much more rarely in particular geographical contexts, like individual countries or regions, which are preferably left to the less “scientific” enterprises of sociologists or political scientists.

Third, the production of theories in which social units appear comparable (Meyer 1994; Strang and Meyer 1994), or of organizational designs and policies that hold “universal” validity, has a neutralizing effect that helps rationalize a *post-hoc* consensus among economists and makes it appear as the outcome of the cumulative progress of science—hence legitimating isomorphic diffusion as a positive, rather than normative phenomenon and concealing its hegemonic origins (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1998).

¹¹ “Are the Poor Different?” *The Economist*, April 27, 1996.

The Worldwide Institutionalization of Economics

Admittedly, the universalism of economic knowledge and the *relative* consensus it produces on basic economic policy prescriptions (e.g., the virtues of competition, the mobility of goods and factors of production, the flexibility of prices, free trade, the emphasis on efficiency as opposed to equity, the emphasis on market mechanisms as opposed to public management, etc.) both constitute powerful arguments for its practical implementation. Yet why modern nation-states have become so preoccupied with the production of economic knowledge and receptive to the arguments of economists is not, at first, completely obvious. In this section, I argue that economics institutionalized worldwide because it was closely tied to the emergence and consolidation of the nation-state. In that sense, the international “diffusion” of economics is partly a by-product of the “diffusion” of the nation-state project itself—and more specifically the rise of the university and public bureaucracy as central components of a sovereign polity.

The Rise of Economics

Scholars have long recognized that the international diffusion, from the end of the nineteenth century, of universities and public bureaucracies as core elements of the nation served as a powerful vehicle for the expansion of the social sciences in general, and of economics in particular (Wagner, Weiss, et al. 1991; Wagner, Wittrock, et al. 1991). First, as secular substitutes for religion, social scientific subjects were increasingly seen as a central element in the broader societal purpose of higher education: to “construct” the nation by providing a moral education to the masses and a technocratic training to the elite. Second, economic knowledge was an integral part of the construction of national bureaucratic capabilities in the twentieth century.

Continental European countries such as Sweden and Germany were first to institutionalize the study of political economy within universities in the eighteenth century. As higher education systems expanded and consolidated during the second half of the nineteenth century, the study of economics established its place across the rest of Europe, as well as in North America and Japan. Some Latin American nations created economics faculties during the interwar period: for instance, in Chile, the Catholic University opened a School of Economics and Business Administration in 1924, “largely devoted to training in accounting and commerce” (Montecinos and Markoff 2000, p. 114). Mexico established an “economics section” at the national university (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, or UNAM) in 1929, whose purpose was chiefly to

train experts for the state bureaucracy (Babb 2001). The majority of the world, however, had to wait until after World War II to follow suit, with Africa being the most delayed (often until the 1970s–80s).

Table 1 reports the expansion of economics faculties worldwide during the second half of the twentieth century. Two points are worth commenting upon. First is the obvious prevalence of economics in educational and research systems worldwide.¹² Today virtually every country in the world organizes higher education in the discipline, and has often instituted compulsory economics courses in lower grade levels as well. By 1959, about 49% of the world's universities included faculties of economics; by 1971, however, this percentage reached almost 61% (it has slightly declined since then, to 57% in 1991). Additional data from Frank and Gabler (2006) show that economics also grew as a relative proportion of university faculty, from 1.7% of world university faculty in 1915–35 to nearly 4% in 1976–95, again reaching a plateau toward the mid-1970s.¹³ A second important point is the distinctiveness of the commonwealth countries, which have inherited the greater emphasis of their colonial power on the core status of economics as a discipline. Finally, a closer look at the data suggests that everywhere economics has undergone a process of academic autonomization (from either the “social sciences,” law, or commerce) in addition to growth. Therefore, beyond the empirical fact of the worldwide institutionalization of economics in practically every nation's higher education system, we also need to account for the field's *growing centrality* in it—until the 1970s at least.

I argue below that *economics has become more central to the nation* (as evidenced by its growing place in the university curriculum) *because the nation itself has become more economic*: over the course of the twentieth century, acting upon the economy became an increasingly legitimate practice, carried out by ever more specialized experts. Indeed, the worldwide expansion of economics relied first and foremost on the idea, institutionalized broadly in the postwar period, that economic development and growth can be engineered, or that poorly performing economies can

¹² The trends in academic research are similar to those in higher education; for instance, the number of specialized economic reviews worldwide increased five times between 1959 and 1993, from about 500 to over 2,500 (source: UNESCO, *International Bibliography of Economics*, [1955] 2005, vols. 1–52).

¹³ Frank and Gabler's data show that although the social sciences generally increased their share of university faculty worldwide, from about 10% in 1915–35 to 30% in 1976–95, the paths of the different disciplines can be quite varied, from rapid growth in sociology (but of course sociology was barely institutionalized before World War II), solid growth in economics and political science, to the flatter profiles of psychology and the “boom and bust” pattern in anthropology, which mirrors the rise and fall of colonial empires.

TABLE 1
UNIVERSITIES AND ECONOMICS FACULTIES WORLDWIDE, 1959–1991

	1959			1971			1991		
	NCW	CW	Total	NCW	CW	Total	NCW	CW	Total
Universities, total	391	87	478	877	244	1,121	1,762	435	2,197
Economics faculties, total	177	59	236	466	214	680	959	297	1,256
% econom- ics	45.2	67.8	49.3	53.1	87.7	60.6	54.4	68.2	57.1

SOURCE.—*International Handbook of Universities* (1st ed., 1959, 1971, 1991) and *Commonwealth Universities Yearbook* (1959, 1971, 1991).

NOTE.—CW = commonwealth; NCW = noncommonwealth. The United States was excluded because of sheer size. Japan was excluded on the basis of the complexity of the information recorded in the *International Handbook of Universities*, which made it difficult to adjudicate between different institutional forms (universities, specialized vocational schools, research institutes). In most cases, I counted as “economics faculties” all faculties including “economics” in their title (e.g., “faculty of law and economics” or “faculty of commerce and economics”). I also recorded as “economics faculties” certain faculties with different titles (e.g., “faculty of social sciences”) that nonetheless offered specialized graduate degrees in economics. Data exist for the most recent period (e.g., 2001); however, the changing logic of inclusion in the *International Handbook of Universities* and the broadening of the definition of “university” to include all specialized schools risks making the coding inconsistent with earlier periods. (The *Commonwealth* database, on the other hand, has remained quite consistent.)

be fixed. In this process of institutionalization of an intellectual object called “the economy” (Polanyi 1944; Hirschman 1977), the latter was socially constructed so that “experts” could claim analytical and tutelary power over it.

The Ongoing Reconstruction of National Societies as Economies

In a certain sense, “individual economies” would not “exist” without the regulation, intervention, and representation operated by economic science, acting on behalf of the nation-state (Callon 1998; Mitchell 1998). The concept of “economy”—understood as the “totality of relations of production, distribution and consumption of goods and services within a given country or region” (Mitchell 1998, p. 84; also see Breslau 2003), is itself very recent: it emerged some time between the Great Depression and the Second World War, in the wake of the national accounts and econometric revolutions, on the one hand, and the emergence of new discourses about government, on the other. It is only since then that nations have come to “imagine” themselves as “economic communities,” to paraphrase Anderson’s (1983) felicitous formula.

As they organized around the political model of a sovereign state (Meyer et al. 1997), new countries sought to reconstruct their societies as “legit-

imate” economies, turning their territories into distinct and self-contained economic spaces by creating separate economic instruments (currencies, tariffs, exchange controls, a fiscal system, etc.) and institutions (central banks, stock exchanges, ministries of economics and finance, development and planning agencies, etc.). These designs, in turn, helped construct the idea that the national economy is a “real thing” that should be acted upon.

Figure 2 reports the timing of founding of the world’s central banks. The movement of establishing a central, nationwide banking institution started in Europe between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries. Many of these institutions then established issue monopoly during the second half of the nineteenth century. The United States founded the Federal Reserve Board in 1913. In 1920 the League of Nations unanimously passed the resolution that “in countries where there is no central bank of issue, one should be established” (Helleiner 2003, p. 146). British and U.S. policy makers, who held considerable power over these institutions, actively promoted the central bank with monopoly note issue as a desirable and necessary component of a modern nation-state. These officials strongly believed that by insulating monetary management from government control, central banks would become a fundamental pillar of stability in the gold standard system (Helleiner 2003, p. 148). The main Latin American and Eastern European central banks were created during the 1920s, with tacit U.S. support.¹⁴ In other countries, the founding of central banks followed quite closely the timing of decolonization, usually taking place within five to ten years of independence.

Why nations come to see such institutional designs as desirable is not necessarily a simple matter. Certainly technological requirements to produce a viable economic space in a complex environment play their part, yet the definition of what constitutes “appropriate” economic behavior, and what the “right” economic institutions and policies are for implementing it, are also very much the result of a process of normative construction dominated by powerful actors and countries, as is clear from the above example. From an external point of view, the setting up of certain economic infrastructures and the reliance on specialized economic expertise to manage them come to be seen by local elites as a vital step to acquire—or maintain—a place in the worldwide community of national economic actors and to look like responsible states, legitimate trading partners, sound international borrowers, or attractive locations for foreign direct investment (Schneider 1998; Polillo and Guillén 2005; Brune, Garrett, and Kogut 2004). From an internal point of view, these institutions

¹⁴ Edwin Kemmerer, a professor at Princeton University, thus helped establish central banks in Chile (1925), Columbia (1923), Ecuador (1927), Bolivia (1928–29), Peru (1923), and Guatemala (1929; Helleiner 2003, p. 147).

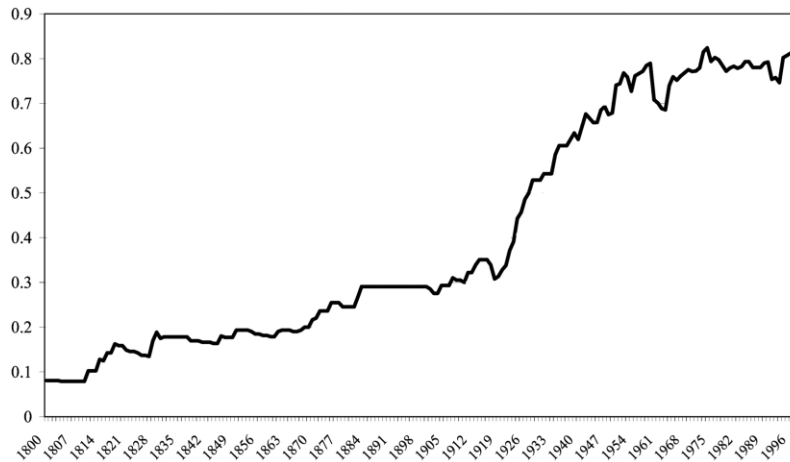


FIG. 2.—Central banks of the world (density), 1880–1998. Source: Data on central banks compiled from Alan J. Day, ed., 1986, *Government Economic Agencies of the World: An International Directory of Governmental Organizations Concerned with Economic Development and Planning*; completed with information from individual world central banks (accessed through the directory Central Banks of the World, New York University School of Law, <http://www.law.nyu.edu/centralbankscenter/banks/index.html>, accessed on 3/13/2006). Data on independent nation-states graciously provided by Evan Schofer (see Schofer 2003).

serve to establish and reinforce national political sovereignty (Helleiner 2003).

The Reconstruction of States around Economics

The ongoing reconstruction of economies is thus inextricably linked to the ongoing reconstruction and rationalization of states as economic actors. As national states started to assume increasingly complex tasks in macroeconomic management and social reform after World War II, “acting” upon the economy was redefined as a normal and desirable expression of state power. And as politics was redefined as the pursuit of growth, economic specialists secured an area of legitimacy by linking their expert capabilities to various “public goods”: fiscal capacity, full employment, development, industrialization, and monetary stability, among others. In many cases (e.g., in continental Europe, Latin America, and Japan), public authorities sponsored directly the foundation or expansion of economics training programs as part of their processes of bureaucratic consolidation. Large contingents of economic specialists entered the world’s public bureaucracies in the 1960s and 1970s, a rising class of technocrats with sophisticated technical skills. The worldwide institutionalization of the

economics jurisdiction, then, was first and foremost carried out in the universities and public bureaucracies of emerging or consolidating nation-states. In short, it was set in motion by processes of *national* construction.

Ironically, of course, the rise of economic technocracies would ultimately undermine one of the very institutions they originated from—the national state itself. With the return of economic liberalism, national economic institutions have been progressively emptied of their politically transformative meaning and redefined as objects for efficient management rather than as means toward the realization of loftier ideals. The decline and universal disparagement of interventionist schemes like national planning on the one hand (Scott 1998; Easterly 2002), and the growing assertiveness of the neoliberal technology of government (Eyal 2000)—which rejects both national boundaries and public management as sources of economic inefficiency—on the other, have made this transformation more complete.¹⁵

The advent of grave economic crises and subsequent paradigmatic changes in policy have pushed these transformations of the state structure further, by making the claimed ability to identify problems and anomalies in the economy and, consequently, the ability to govern the reform or transition processes that necessarily ensue from these diagnoses a critical *political*, not simply bureaucratic, asset. Thus the reconstruction of the world economies along freer market lines was accompanied by the increased political prominence of economic management institutions (such as central banks, ministries of finance) and their leaders. As Markoff and Montecinos (1993) demonstrated in a landmark article, economic experts themselves have gained access to political leadership in their countries' party and cabinet systems, where they often disturbed the traditional supremacy of lawyers (also see Dezalay and Garth 2002). In 1993, the *Economist* noted that "finance ministers in nine of twelve large third-world or former communist countries have an economic degree, and all but one of the central-bank governors are economists."¹⁶ Centeno has shown that the proportion of Mexican cabinet members with a degree in economics in this country rose from less than 10% to about 50% between the 1950s and the early 1980s (Centeno 1994, p. 121). Several of the contenders in recent Chilean presidential elections were trained Ph.D. economists (Montecinos 1998), as were Argentina's finance minister and

¹⁵ This shift is particularly obvious in the redefinition of the purpose of economic development from an older, "political economy" model where economic expertise is embedded in broad, often transformative goals, toward a more "managerial" model (Santiso 2002) particularly noticeable in the peripheral states after the 1980s debt crisis. This "governmentalization" of the state (Foucault 1979) is, however, no less transformative of people's lives.

¹⁶ "Economists (Should) Rule, OK." *The Economist*, April 14, 1993.

presidential candidate Domingo Cavallo (a Harvard economics graduate and certainly Latin America's highest-profile economic consultant throughout the 1990s) and former Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo (1994–2000). In Central and Eastern Europe (e.g., Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Russia, to a lesser extent) “reform economists” also rose to political prominence, undertaking programs of transition to the market economy.¹⁷ In 1992, the Czech Republic underwent a monetarist turn under the guidance of Vaclav Klaus, whose first government included seven trained economists in key positions (Eyal 2000).¹⁸ A recent study of 160 countries worldwide showed that in 1998, 79 of them had at least one government leader with an economics degree (including 16 countries, mainly Middle Eastern and Latin American, with at least one leader with a *Western economics Ph.D.* [Shayo 2002, p. 27]).¹⁹ Similarly, a survey of the world's central bankers in the 1990s reports that a third of them have been educated in the United States, and one-fifth in the United Kingdom (Lebaron 2000b, p. 106).

This economicization of the technocracy on the one hand, and of the political elite on the other (particularly noticeable in middle-income countries) are two dimensions of the institutionalization of economic knowledge within the state in the twentieth century. The significance of these transformations goes beyond the fact that economists worldwide have captured important jurisdictions within the state. More important, they suggest that *the state itself has been redefined as a key professional terrain for economists*. In short, it has been reconstructed and governmentalized so as to legitimize the claims of economists. Economics has become central to the nation, then, because the nation has become more economic. I discuss in the section below the channels through which these reconstructions have taken place, emphasizing especially the role of international linkages.

¹⁷ Although connections with foreign works and academic communities were conspicuous in their case too, Kovács (1992, 1994) shows that the critique of the central planning system they forged was largely based on their own experience with it and on their pragmatic attempts at reforming it.

¹⁸ With a few exceptions, however, most of these Eastern European economists were educated at home, although some of them (e.g., the Czech monetarists) had spend time studying abroad.

¹⁹ In the study, “government leader” was defined as “the president or head of state; the prime minister; the vice-president or vice-premier; and the ministers of finance, economy, budget, treasury” (whenever they exist; Shayo 2002, p. 27).

Global Social Structures: Transnational Flows, International Institutions, and Hybridization

If economics institutionalized globally for reasons that had much to do with the global institutionalization and economicization of the nation-state itself as a legitimate political form, the shape and content of the professions that were being created still owe a lot to processes of international emulation and transfer, and to transnational socialization and policy networks. After the universalism of economic knowledge and the worldwide institutionalization of economics as expert and scientific practice, then, transnational connectedness constitutes a third dimension underlying the process of global professionalization in economics. I discuss below some of the global social structures (Knorr-Cetina and Bruegger 2002) that sustain these communities.

International Influences in the Rise of Economics

Emerging economics programs in peripheral countries were often set up in imitation of some Western archetype. Germany, England, and France each provided strong, alternative models for organizing economics as an academic domain—as they did for the entire university system (Karady 1998).²⁰ Colonial European powers exported educational designs to their core colonies during the first half of the twentieth century. In Egypt, the institutionalization of economics borrowed both from the French model (with the organization of economics as a subordinate subject in the law faculties) and from the British (with the establishment of economics courses in faculties of commerce [Messiha 1954]). In India, the Oxford program of PPE (politics, philosophy, economics) was adopted extensively (Ambirajan 1996, p. 82). In Indonesia during the colonial period, economics as well as the other social sciences were part of the law curriculum—a pattern consonant with continental European influences. Other countries, including many independent nations, borrowed more idiosyncratically, often for ideological or strategic reasons. Thus in Thailand, the early curricula in economics also took some inspiration from the European system, and were designed in a bureaucratic fashion, that is, primarily to “serve the state and the government” (Kohkongka 1985). Latin-American nations imitated the French extensively, while German influence was prominent in the design of Japanese institutions of economics education. Finally, Eastern Europe and Russia/the Soviet Union provided another

²⁰ The German model of research organization, for instance, exerted a powerful influence on the American social sciences (and especially economics) at the end of the nineteenth century (Haskell 1977; Herbst 1965).

model altogether, dominated by specialized institutes and academies connected to the state administration.

After World War II, international exchanges and influences became more and more centered on the Anglo-Saxon pole, and within it, the United States, which from then on provided the main model for the organization of economics education and expertise, even among other first-world countries. Part of the United States' influence on the new institutions of academic and bureaucratic economics in the nonsocialist world was a matter of sheer hegemony. Scientifically, the center of academic economics had decisively moved to the United States during the war and immediate afterwar period. Politically, the country had been extraordinarily influential in designing the postwar international economic order of "embedded liberalism" (Ruggie 1982; Ikenberry 1992). The post-1945 context, then, placed the United States in an unparalleled position to export its own ideologies, meanings, and representations, not by outright force, but rather through the "structural" channels of its own domination in international politics, science, economic relations, and popular culture.

One of the channels of international hegemony in the postwar era came from a large-scale and purposive use of philanthropy. Postgraduate economics programs were set up in collaboration with international foundations, which sponsored prolonged visits from foreign professors and researchers, most of them from the United States. For peripheral countries, such educational linkages often constituted a means to raise their own local institutions' profiles by associating them with the international community of researchers, which controlled reputations. For organizations and governments in rich countries, motivations may have been diverse, but in the context of the Cold War they were often straightforwardly political. The American economic aid programs of the 1950s and 1960s, for instance, were unambiguously aimed at preventing countries from joining the communist camp, as well as at helping to open up new markets. From that perspective, disseminating a liberal worldview by sending out Western economists to work in foreign countries and professionalizing the study of economics there seemed like a matter of national interest. This position was particularly well articulated by American state organizations and private foundations. As Berman argues, "Foundation personnel felt that the socialization of key Third-World nationals into the norms of Western social science could play a determining role in helping to ensure that those individuals would follow development paths that, minimally, were not antagonistic to the interests of the United States" (Berman 1983, p. 83; see Guilhot 2005 for an update on the role of American foundations).

Core countries, and the United States in particular, thus contributed directly to the consolidation of economics scientific communities at the periphery, and the diffusion of a model of professional legitimacy rooted

in the academic system (Loureiro 1998, p. 43). During the early postwar decades, at a time when local training in economics was either poor or barely existent, international institutions and American foundations organized economic curricula for government officials and other important actors from the developing world. The United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America, set up in 1948 and famous for its "historical structuralist" theories of development and for its support of import substitution industrialization, had a major influence in educating public sector technocrats in the region during the 1960s (Haddad 1981). In 1954 the World Bank established its Economic Development Institute, which provided ready-made teaching and training materials in the areas of macroeconomics and development policy.

Beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, the intellectual and institutional framework of the social sciences worldwide started undergoing rapid expansion and transformation. Foreign experts were actively involved in the construction of powerful university, research, and policy bases for economics in peripheral countries. Joan Robinson, the renowned Cambridge economist, once bitterly remarked that what she called the "bastard" Keynesian doctrine "evolved in the United States, invaded the economics faculties of the world, floating on the wings of the almighty dollar" (quoted in Turner 1989, p. 112). Whether the picture is as gloomy as she painted it remains a matter for discussion, yet it is unquestionable that the financial involvement of American organizations was considerable. The Ford Foundation, for instance, which established its Economic Development and Administration Program in 1953, became "the largest financial supporter of social science research in Latin America" (Berman 1983, pp. 79–80; also see Loureiro 1996 and Dezalay and Garth 2002 on the role of the Ford Foundation in Brazilian economics).²¹ It was remarkably active in Asia as well, where its grants helped create important research organizations in India, Pakistan, and Indonesia.²² In Africa, the foundations also supported universities and social sciences research institutes, especially in locally powerful states (see, e.g., the West African Institute of Social and Economic Research in Nigeria or the Uganda-based East African Institute for Social Research).

²¹ A precedent for all these ventures existed in the involvement of foundations, particularly the Rockefeller Foundation, in financing *European* social science during the interwar period (see Arnove 1980; Fisher 1993).

²² The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics was thus modeled after the Brookings Institution in the United States and the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) in Britain (see Rosen 1985; Berman 1983, pp. 83–84).

The Transnational Socialization of Economists

Direct financial involvement by American organizations thus played an important role in shaping the design of economic policy and research institutions at the periphery. Yet the vehicles of professional socialization are transnational in other ways. In part this is the result of the extremely hierarchical structure of economics as a scientific enterprise. The top American economics departments represent the vast majority of the authoritative work produced by the discipline, and they exercise a considerable amount of hierarchical control over the rest of the field (Whitley 1983, 1984; Han 2003). As suggested earlier individual researchers in these institutions exhibit a large degree of consensus about the procedures that are necessary to achieve “science” in economics. Certainly there are bitter controversies about *ways* to model economic behavior—about fundamental hypotheses, and about the goals of economic policies. Yet mathematical models, by and large, are widely perceived as a rhetorical necessity, as *the* natural scientific medium (McCloskey 1985). Students in core departments are generally taught standardized rules for exercising their skills and judging the abilities of others to “do” economics (Klamer and Colander 1990), so that the boundaries of what constitutes “serious” work in economics are fairly explicit and clearly enforced.

In contrast to other fields of expertise or scholarship, and especially other social sciences, one of the distinctive traits of the practice of economics worldwide is its *globalized* (as opposed to purely *global*) character. The existence of a “Nobel” prize in economics, and of distinguished international awards, such as a fellowship of the Econometric Society, suggests the image of a field where international consensus on excellence is routinely and easily achieved.²³ (Of course, the construction of such an image is perhaps one of the most important functions of these awards.) Individual economic specialists tend to define themselves in relation to a transnational, Western-dominated status hierarchy, which commands implicit, yet powerful, influence upon their immediate professional environment. The internationalization of reputation and evaluation mechanisms has led the authority of individuals with foreign (and especially American) credentials to rise inexorably.²⁴

²³ In spite of its name, the economics “Nobel Prize” is in fact awarded annually by the Royal Bank of Sweden. See also Lebaron (2002).

²⁴ As is well known, scientific publications can be hierarchically ranked worldwide based on citation counts. The Social Science Citation Index, which constitutes the most complete database for this purpose, indexes only about 120 (most cited) economic journals worldwide. These are overwhelmingly Western (if not American), and (with a few exceptions) they are also representative of the neoclassical orthodoxy. English is by far the dominant language, even among foreign publications included in the SSCI.

International Student Flows

International education networks, which encourage elite students from foreign countries to train abroad, have always existed. Generations of students from the Far East were educated in Japan or China. The Central and Eastern European countries used to send students to the USSR. Thanks to their colonial past, British, French, and German universities have traditionally trained large numbers of foreign individuals. The last 20 years, however, have witnessed a general reinforcement of American and British influence in the education of foreign nationals, particularly noticeable in economics. The United States' share of the world foreign student population has hovered around one-third between the 1960s and the 1990s (Research Institute for Higher Education 1989, p. 289; UNESCO). In 2000, nearly 26% of all graduate students in the United States had temporary student visas, yet the figure for economics was 54%: more foreign students today get a Ph.D. in economics in American universities than do native-born students, with the largest contingents coming from Asia (South and East), Western Europe, and Latin America (National Science Foundation 2000; also see Aslanbeigui and Montecinos 1998).²⁵ In England, the proportion of foreign students in 1991 reached 47%, up from 39% a decade earlier (National Science Foundation 2000). Again, the figures for economics are much more dramatic. A recent Economic and Social Research Council report stated that barely 10% of the students enrolled in Ph.D. programs in top-rated U.K. economics departments are British citizens (Machin and Oswald 1999).

By contrast, the share of the world foreign student population going to France and Germany has steadily declined in the last two decades.²⁶ The proportion of foreign students in French universities, for instance, has dropped from 13.6% in 1985 to 8.6% in 1996. In addition, the low-tuition policy in French and German higher education tends to attract students from poorer world regions. In 1996–97, slightly over 50% of foreign students in France, but 63.4% of foreign students in economics, came from African countries.²⁷

The importance of foreign graduates (and, especially, given their sheer weight in the foreign student population, of U.S. graduates) on the intellectual makeup of national fields of economic knowledge cannot be underestimated. In the postwar period, returning graduates with doctorates from American institutions constituted an essential channel for the pro-

²⁵ In "science, engineering and health" fields (National Science Foundation 2002).

²⁶ From 12% to 11% for France between the 1960s and the 1990s, and 10% to 4.5% for Germany over the same period (UNESCO).

²⁷ The percentage of foreign doctoral students in Germany has also slightly declined from about 8% in 1980 to about 6.5% in 1993 (National Science Foundation 2000).

found transformation, and internationalization, of the national educational and research systems in economics, as well as of the main institutions for economic policy. In particular, they often played a critical role in the establishment of economic research and policy organizations in peripheral countries, imitating Western models perceived as successful (e.g., the Brookings Institution was widely copied). From the 1960s on in many third-world countries, newly created development planning agencies and key economic administrations were typically staffed with native economic experts who had graduated from top American universities. Loureiro's (1998, p. 49) work on Brazil shows that among the 70% of officials from the Central Bank who did postgraduate work over the 1965–95 period, 54% studied in the United States. The case of the “Chicago Boys” in Chile is perhaps one of the most extreme examples of such transfers, although it is by no means an isolated one.²⁸ More generally, Ivy League-educated economics graduates have shaped much of the economic policy of Latin American countries since the 1980s debt crisis (*Business Week* 1992; Markoff and Montecinos 1993). In Indonesia, the economic technocrats who ran the country under Suharto's rule were known as the “Berkeley mafia” (Dezalay and Garth, forthcoming).

The relative status and institutional success of the U.S.-trained economists within national fields, however, is not uniform within or across nations. Certainly, in many countries, especially developing ones, an American degree often constitutes an entry point into positions of intellectual or political power—a phenomenon that is reflected by the higher concentrations of people who received their doctoral degrees in the United States in the “core” institutions of the higher education system and in important public administrations, such as central banks and ministries of finance. In the late twentieth century, divisions between a “nationally oriented” crowd—which is more frequently locally trained (or foreign, but non-American), of the political economy style, more nationalist, and more interventionist—and an “internationally oriented” crowd—which is U.S.-trained, more scientific in its methodological approach, universalistic, and often promarket—were sometimes quite acute.²⁹ These divisions were

²⁸ Between 1957 and 1970, about 100 Chilean students from the *Universita Catolica* were educated at the economics department of the University of Chicago, partly sponsored by the American government. Upon their return, not only did they have a profound impact on economic discourse in their country, revolutionizing the curriculum at their home institution and dramatically altering the terms of the public debate on economic issues through their incessant media activism, but they also came to occupy key positions in the state administration after Pinochet's coup in 1973 and lead the country toward neoliberal reform and an “economic miracle,” which was for a time celebrated as a model (Montecinos 1988; Valdes 1995).

²⁹ See Babb (2001) for a superb account of such competition in the Mexican case.

all the more intense, in fact, since they were often embedded in differences in social background (foreign degrees are typically an elite career path) and, as we saw, in local conflicts over the distribution of scientific and political authority. Writing in 1996, Loureiro stated that over 80% of the professors at the two main economics departments in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) had a North American doctorate, as opposed to about 7% at the largest department in São Paulo and even smaller percentages in more provincial universities (Loureiro 1996, p. 192). Similar patterns could be found in other parts of the world. A 1985 report on the teaching of economics in Asia stated that 30 out of 38 faculty members of the University of the Philippines School of Economics had received their Ph.D. from an American university, although such patterns were less true of other universities (Tan 1985). Wade (1990, p. 220) argues that the central division in the Taiwanese economics field opposes people trained in the United States (who constitute the core of academia and the main public administrations) to those educated in East Asia (who tend to be employed in journalism, business, or other governmental agencies). A study on South Korea mentions that more than half the members of the Korean Economic Society holding a Ph.D. were trained in the United States, and that disproportionate numbers of these are found in Seoul (Choi 1996).

More developed countries, like France, Germany, or even England, are not exempt from these divisions either. Yet in these cases, a partly insular academic labor market, a closed civil service, strong autochthonous intellectual traditions, and less exposure to international policy pressures have sometimes worked *against*, rather than in favor of the incorporation of U.S.-trained economists in core administrative and educational institutions. Still, even when they operate “negatively,” international connections constitute a fundamental mechanism of field structuration.

The U.S. Roots of Regionalization in Economic Science

We can gain further intuition into the historical and geographical variability of the relationship between international connections and national field structuration by analyzing transformations in the *levels* of organization in the field of economics worldwide. Figure 3 is based on the same associational data as figure 1, this time coded by the geographical focus of the organization (national, regional, or international), and by the generalist or specialized character of its orientation. The figure shows an interesting pattern of institutionalization. Consistent with the model presented in the preceding sections, the graph confirms that the development of economics was initially centered on the national community (e.g., the Economic Society of South Africa) and reflects the embeddedness of economics in the institutional apparatus of the nation-state. As these national

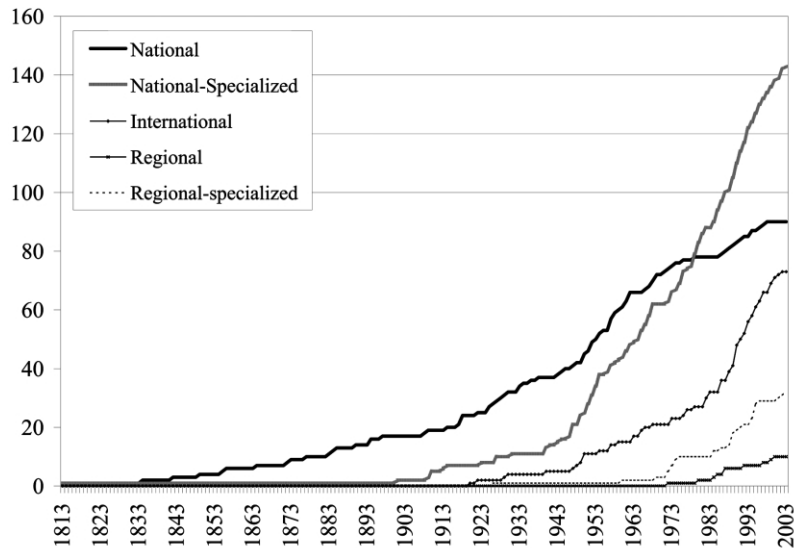


FIG. 3.—National, regional, and international associations of economists (cumulative foundings). Source: Same as fig. 1.

fields grew in size, they became more specialized (which is indicated by the “national-specialized” category in the graph, e.g., the French Association of Economic Historians). After World War II, associational founding patterns also became more international in scope and purpose, although international associations often remained based in the United States and continued to be dominated—numerically and hierarchically—by scholars established there.

Since the late 1970s, however, a third phase is unfolding, with the clear emergence of a regional pattern of organization. Like the international associations of the earlier era, regional associations host disproportionate numbers of members educated in the core (most prominently in America) but who have returned to their home countries. We may mention the history of the construction of a truly “European” economics profession as an illustration of this phenomenon. The Europeanization of the economics profession was the result of the combined effects of the construction of Europe and of the transatlantic connections of the most internationalized segments of the national economics professions in European countries.

Up until the mid-1980s, economists socialized in American scientific norms entertained bilateral relationships with the United States, rather than among themselves. Several persons I interviewed in the mid-1990s even recounted that “internationally oriented” economists then met much

more often in the United States than in their home region or even country.³⁰ Starting in the early 1980s, however, integration into “European” institutions (the European Economic Review, the European Economic Association, and the Center for Economic Policy Research) came to be seen by these scholars as a strategy to overcome their relative isolation within their national fields.³¹ The construction of the European Community, which relied heavily on these networks to satisfy its demands for expertise, gave further impetus to these institutions.³²

Regional associations (e.g., the European Economic Association) and the regional chapters of international associations (e.g., the Latin American meetings of the Econometric Society) thus constitute “intermediary bodies” that are both solidly tied to the American research community and play a critical role in the socialization of peripheral economics communities into the research, professional norms, and intellectual frameworks produced in U.S. academia (see, e.g., Williamson [1996] on the role of the regional chapter of the Econometric Society in Latin America). Nonetheless, once started, these regional institutions follow a logic of their own. There is some indication, for instance, that the movement of regionalization is becoming self-sustaining, particularly in the case of Europe, where higher education is increasingly organized on a regional basis, thus bypassing the United States as an obligatory training ground.

Internationalization, then, leads regionalization (rather than the other way around). This point is important theoretically. It further establishes that diffusion is not a one-step phenomenon, but takes place as a gradual, multilayered process of professional stratification and concomitant reconstruction.

International Institutions

Not only scholarly communities, but also economic policy networks (sometimes closely linked to the latter) are directly constructed at the international level. With the globalization of economies, the audiences and constituencies of policy actors are increasingly located outside of the coun-

³⁰ Source: interviews with French and British economists, summers of 1995 (France) and 1997 (Great Britain).

³¹ U.S. authors even contribute a significant share of publications in European journals (above 30% in the *European Economic Review* and the *Economic Journal* [see Elliott, Greenaway, and Sapsford 1998]).

³² By making funding contingent on cross-national collaborations, EC (now EU) research policies have been an important vector of cross-national integration—initially benefiting the U.S.- or U.K.-trained mainstream just described, but growing to incorporate a much broader range of approaches to economics (such as those represented in the *European Association for Evolutionary Political Economy*).

try, among multinational corporations, international financial markets, and multilateral economic organizations. Probably the most visible vehicle of the transnational socialization of elites at the periphery, in fact, is their embeddedness in this broad international society of economic actors.

International organizations have been shown to spread worldwide “regimes”— about development, science, environment, or education, for example (Chabbott 1996; Finnemore 1993; Meyer et al. 1991; Nadelmann 1990; Schofer 1997). “Epistemic communities” located in the international sphere are powerful producers and disseminators of norms about economic policy, which foster international homogeneity among comparable national institutions (Adler and Haas 1992). These may include scientists and technical assistants in governmental and nongovernmental organizations, as well as individuals in multinational firms and banks, or journalists in economic newspapers and magazines diffused internationally (e.g., the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Financial Times*).

Such institutions and networks routinely participate in the diffusion of economics worldwide and in the international reconstruction of the economics profession around the neoclassical paradigm. First, linkages to an international sphere dominated by Western organizations, and deeply rooted in mainstream economics, have contributed to legitimizing particular approaches to development, which typically emphasize internal deficiencies (e.g., quality of labor, property rights allocation [Mitchell 2005], size of public sector), rather than external economic relations (e.g., dependency), as sources of underdevelopment. Hence there was widespread implementation, starting in the 1950s, of policies based on manpower planning and, later, human capital theories (Berman 1983). Second, these institutions have encouraged forms of social-scientific research geared toward solving well-defined problems of public policy. Certainly, earlier generations of economists, especially in the developing world, often saw their role as not only managing the national economy, but also as involving broader societal reform, sometimes even the transformation of international economic relations (Hirschman 1981). These views, however, were never able to secure a stronghold in U.S. academia or in international financial organizations—and were often dismissed as mere “ideology” conflicting with more desirable standards of professionalism. Instead international institutions have promoted a technocratic view of development problems, which sees the economist as a “social engineer” (McCloskey 1997) and the scientific apparatus of economics as a device to solve narrowly defined problems of policy advice, and consequently encourage the construction of technical elites with strong quantitative skills. (Today this outlook is evolving, however, partly under pressure from below to address structural relations between the first and third worlds.)

Naturally, the most conspicuous dimension of the international orga-

nizations' influence remains the direct action on economic policy through the provision of expert advice. Foreign economic expertise is in fact an old business that emerged around 1900, often as an outgrowth of colonial administration or neocolonial relations (Cooper and Packard 1998).³³ During the interwar period it came to be increasingly understood as the activity of independent technicians acting on the basis of their expertise and responding to explicit requests by sovereign nation-states (Rosenberg and Rosenberg 1994). "International money doctors" from the United States and Western Europe began traveling the world providing advice to the governments of peripheral countries. For instance, Edwin Kemmerer, a professor of economics at Princeton University, is often described as the "one-man IMF" of his time (Seidel 1972; Drake 1994; Rosenberg 1999). International bodies such as the League of Nations also undertook important economic consulting activities, notably in Central Europe (De Marchi 1991).

After World War II, nationalist elites in the developing world were eager to lead their country on the path to industrialization and development. This position partly stimulated a flourish of new "development" knowledge within academia (Cooper and Packard 1998), which was further supported by a proactivist expert consensus institutionalized in international organizations.³⁴ International economic consulting grew into a considerably large industry, dominated by advisers from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (Currie 1981, p. 245). It became a very diverse field, involving governmental and nongovernmental sources, private and nonprofit. Most prominent of all, the IMF has the ability to exercise direct control on the economic policies of its member states through its use of multilateral economic surveillance (in the form of obligatory consultations) and its ability to make lending conditional (Pauly 1997; Babb 2003).³⁵

The sheer volume of economic expertise available in international organizations is remarkable, and it overshadows any other economic institution worldwide. Economists recruited from core U.S. and U.K. economics departments have traditionally staffed positions (including those

³³ In some cases, one can look further back in time. Hence, the French liberal economist Jean de Courcelle-Seneuil famously advised Chilean governments in the 1850s and 1870s to adopt a set of *laissez-faire* reforms that would not be unlike what the Chicago Boys would advocate over a century later (Glaser 2003).

³⁴ This consensus has often been referred to as "embedded liberalism" (Ruggie 1982; Ikenberry 1992; also see Arndt 1987; Helleiner 2003).

³⁵ It used to be that world powers ensured economic compliance by military means. A famous example of this enforcement strategy occurred when Venezuela failed to repay its debt in 1902. At the time, British and German vessels blockaded the country's ports (Singh 1999).

“reserved” for foreigners) at the World Bank, the regional United Nations agencies and development banks, the World Trade Organization, and, most prominently, the IMF, where they numbered 1,227 in 2001 (International Monetary Fund 2002).³⁶ Less than 40% of the fund’s economists came from developing countries—a percentage that masks strong variations between grade levels: higher in lower grades, lower in higher grades (Evans and Finnemore 2001). Furthermore, economists recruited through the prestigious Economist program in 1999 graduated *exclusively* from North European or North American universities, with a disproportionate share (50% in 1999) going to U.S. graduates (Evans and Finnemore 2001). The normative effect of these patterns of recruitment is further deepened by the fact that economists are the professional group most typically involved in field missions and direct consulting (Polak 1996). It is therefore particularly vital for countries’ representatives and negotiators to share the economic culture and language of their counterparts in international organizations. Both to external and internal audiences (particularly business audiences), foreign or foreign-trained expertise will then appear not only much “safer” than its counterpart grown at home, but also the only way to ensure communication and legitimacy in a situation of asymmetrical power. Thus a witness of the 1950s missions in Chile commented: “The bringing of these foreign experts is not because we do not have true capabilities in financial matters but rather because those experts are backed by an international reputation that makes their proposals less controvertible” (Valdes 1995, p. 107).³⁷

This long discussion of the global social structures in economics suggests two main conclusions: First, at the microlevel, economics has partly become a profession of transnational hybrids—a “creolized” profession, to apply Ulf Hannerz’s (1987) terminology. Second, at the macrolevel, it is characterized by a set of properly “global” dynamics, whereby professional communities *everywhere* are being reshaped by the international circulation of actors, scientific models, professional practices, and policies. This is the last point of my argument, which I now turn to.

³⁶ Baldwin (1986) reports that while only 25% of the World Bank professionals are trained economists, the same group represents 50% of the bank’s vice presidents and one-third of its division chiefs (1982 figures). In contrast to the IMF, which was conceived, designed, and staffed by economists from its beginnings (Polak 1996), the rise of economists at the bank came somewhat later (in the 1960s).

³⁷ Likewise, there is substantial evidence that countries that owe the IMF money (and are thus constrained by IMF conditionality in their policy options) receive a “credibility bonus” from foreign investors (Brune et al. 2004).

GLOBAL COMPETITION AND THE LEGITIMACY OF THE ECONOMICS PROFESSION

How, then, are the dynamics of professional development affected by transnational networks? Through which mechanisms do these international connections transform the nature of economic knowledge and the jurisdiction of the economics profession? I argue below that global linkages affect the professional construction (and reconstruction) of economics because they shape the competition for intellectual and jurisdictional space. In other words, many of the competitive mechanisms that drive professional development in economics are taking place at the global level. This happens mainly through three channels: (1) through the mobilization of international resources in the process of intellectual competition within economic science—both in the core and in the periphery, (2) through the internationalization of the process of creative destruction of jurisdictions, and (3) through the use of international arenas to expand economics' jurisdictional control away from other professions.

The Globalization of Intellectual and Jurisdictional Battles

We have seen how foreign credentials allow economists from developing countries to gain access to positions of power within their national political and academic fields. Yet the dynamics set in motion by the transnational socialization of economists are, in fact, much more powerful. The professional empowerment of transnational economists (itself linked to the international reconstruction of economies) serves to reinforce considerably the world that contributed to produce them—namely, top economics departments, most of which are located in the United States—and the international organizations and foundations that supported their coming of age.³⁸ Hence the Chicago Boys' experiment in Chile, and the country's ultimate democratic transition, gave monetarist ideas considerable publicity and helped enhance the position of the University of Chicago's Department of Economics within the American academic field (Becker 1997; Dezalay and Garth 2002). In an interview conducted in 1999, Arnold Harberger, a professor at the University of Chicago for 38 years, thus commented evocatively: "I think *my* number of ministers is now crossing 25, and I know *my* number of central bank presidents has already crossed a dozen. Right now the central bank presidents of Chile, Argentina and

³⁸ One should not forget that in an earlier time, it was German universities whose international prestige was enhanced by the foreign students they educated. Upon their return, these American young turks contested mainstream American economics and founded the American Economic Association on a resolutely progressive platform (Yonay 1998).

Israel were *my students*, and the immediate former central bank presidents in Argentina, Chile and Costa Rica were also *my students*” (*The Region* 1999, emphasis added).

Eastern and Central Europe provides another striking example. Bockman and Eyal (2002), for instance, have shown that in their effort to craft a space for promarket ideas, libertarians in the United States and Western Europe during the 1960s used their connections to Eastern European reform economists to turn the critique of socialist planning into a weapon against Western Keynesianism. The Russian transition to capitalism was the site of a fierce competition between American and European (including East European) advisers sponsored by their respective governments (or the European Union), as well as a number of freelancers (some of whom financed themselves), who sought to use the Russian scene as a platform for self-promotion (Murrell 1995; Wedel 1998; Ivanova and Wyplosz 2003). Internationalization thus appears to be one of the key mechanisms by which different segments of the (mainly) dominant economics profession seek to assert their authority on an economic jurisdiction. The ability to transnationalize knowledge through educational or policy influence is a fundamental source of intellectual legitimacy and material power: it also leads to financial resources, social capital, and jurisdictional control.

Dezalay and Garth (2002) describe this logic of field development with the terms “internationalization of palace wars.” In their account, the competitive struggles within Western economics (“palace wars,” a concept adapted from Bourdieu [1993]) are being internationalized—that is, fought through third parties in distant places worldwide. International connections, then, enter the process of field structuration both ways: on the one hand, connections *to* the United States (especially) constitute a form of symbolic capital, which domestic actors in other countries manipulate in their own attempt to establish legitimacy within their local field. On the other hand, the international connections *of* Western economists and economic institutions feed back into the competitive processes in the core itself. The transnationalization of American economics, then, is profoundly dual, fostering a complex (and of course highly asymmetrical) dialectic of export-import. This also implies that transnationalization is not a power-neutral mechanism, but instead entails very strategic elements on both sides—I shall soon return to this point.

The Creative Destruction of Economic Jurisdictions

The second global dynamic in the professionalization process has to do with the relationship between internationalization and the reconstruction of the jurisdictional basis of the economics profession. In advocating and implementing the reconstruction of the world economies (usually accord-

ing to the current wisdom in mainstream economics), economic experts worldwide participate in the ongoing reconstruction, transformation, and expansion of their own jurisdictional domain.

The “creative destruction” of jurisdictions is one of the mechanisms whereby competing segments of a profession and new generations of practitioners can gain power and legitimacy within their field. Yet a characteristic of economics as a profession is that the creative destruction of jurisdictions is largely an *endogenous* process, rather than a result of external forces. Economics generates its own jurisdictions not only through the development of new analytical and practical tools, but also through its participation in the ongoing economic reconstruction of societies. It is as if the development of medicine relied on constantly generating new pathologies (rather than on the development of new treatments and techniques for existing pathologies).³⁹

One consequence of this is that many of the competitive processes that drive professional development in economics originate in competitive struggles *within the profession itself* to gain authority on this process of reconstruction, rather than at the level of the *system* of professions (which I examine next). An example will illustrate this point. When state-led development was the received wisdom, in the 1960s, the economists’ professional jurisdiction typically included national planning (Robertson 1984), demand management, industrial policy, or macroeconomic model building. The worldwide move to freer markets—itsself partly triggered by new economic ideas and policy technologies—has left vacant some of these traditional occupations. Certain institutions and groups have found their knowledge becoming increasingly obsolete (e.g., structuralist economists within the Economic Commission for Latin America and specialists of central planning in Eastern Europe and Russia [Sikkink 1998]). Newer actors, on the other hand, have seen their prestige and authority within the national fields grow. I suggested earlier that transnational hybrids have benefited most clearly from these transformations, as have, interestingly, the mainly privately funded institutions of higher education, which often harbor them (e.g., Mexico’s Technological Institute, or ITAM [Babb 2001], Fundação Getulio Vargas in Brazil [Loureiro 1998], Institute Di Tella in Argentina [Neiburg and Plotkin 2004], and Central European University in Eastern Europe [Guilhot 2004; Ivanova and Wyplosz

³⁹ Of course a case can be made that a similar logic does, indeed, apply to medicine, psychiatry, and like fields. (Foucault made this argument about the mutual constitution of knowledge and its object long ago.)

2003]).⁴⁰ In Russia the competition for the control of the economic transition process at the beginning of the 1990s saw the birth of a group of small economic research institutes, populated by a new generation of reform economists well versed in the knowledge of neoclassical economics (Chmatko 2002).

The economic reforms of the 1980s and 1990s (e.g., privatization of state assets, deregulation of financial markets, elimination of foreign exchange and capital controls, revival of antitrust policies) have also opened up new spaces of professional expertise and control, especially toward the private sector. Economic knowledge becomes relevant not only to governments, but also to trade organizations, financial institutions, and business corporations. Although these processes of “privatization of economic knowledge” are not in themselves inherently international, they have first benefited Western corporations and the Western economics profession, which have found new outlets abroad for an expertise sometimes difficult to market at home, where competition is more intense and economic reform programs have either been already implemented or, in some cases, are not implemented because of domestic political pressures. The *Economist*, for instance, reported, “As privatization has spread across the world, so British economists have found that expertise gained at home (during the Thatcher years) is highly marketable. Also, because antitrust cases now turn on economic as well as legal arguments, companies are paying big fees to economists as well as lawyers” (*The Economist*, May 9, 1998; also see Wedel 1998, p. 51).

As the example above suggests, and in striking parallel with Marx’s quote at the outset of this article, competition and the search for profit (whether this profit is monetary or symbolic) in economics can give rise either to the transformation of work (through the creation of new jurisdictions) or to the expansion of the geographical scale of economic activities (through the export of economic ideas and tools), and often to both. In fact, the creative transformation of jurisdictions and the process of internationalization are intimately connected through market competition. This should not come as a surprise: professions are, after all, capitalist enterprises (Sarfatti-Larson 1979). The ongoing reconstruction of economies worldwide is thus symbiotically related to the ongoing transformation of the intellectual and professional jurisdictions of economists. It is a constantly evolving process, driven by competition, and it is highly unbalanced and stratified internationally because core countries and in-

⁴⁰ Babb (2001) has examined the process by which the ITAM and other private institutions have gained more influence within the Mexican government at the expense of the public university (UNAM), which used to enjoy a near monopoly on bureaucratic recruitment. Central European University was founded in 1991 by George Soros.

stitutions typically control, to use Marxist terms, the means of mental and material production.⁴¹

Global Dynamics within the System of Professions

The third underlying force in the global dynamics of the economics profession comes from other professions. Abbott's account of the professionalization process rested on the capture of jurisdictions from other professional competitors: "Professions constitute an interdependent system. A move by one inevitably affects the others" (Abbott 1988, p. 87). Through the creative destruction of jurisdictions, the internationalization of economics involves not only the reconstruction of the economics profession itself, but also that of the entire ecological milieu this profession interacts with, each segment of which also follows its own logic of international diffusion. For instance, the combined processes of the universalization of the "rule of law" on the one hand, and of the general "economicization" of legal arguments on the other, creates a de facto jurisdictional opening for economists in legal arenas worldwide (Dezalay and Garth 2002). From this point of view, the globalization of economics might thus be driven by the globalization of law itself. Conversely, the emergence of new forms of economic control, based on regulation rather than administrative guidance, profoundly transforms the exercise of legal expertise, as exemplified by the quote from the *Economist* above. In this new environment economics becomes part of new professional terrains like law, finance, and consulting, all of which entered the business of economic advice massively in the 1980s. The international diffusion of economic reforms such as privatization, antitrust legislation, or financial liberalization thus feeds back into the professionalization process of economics (but also of law, the financial services industry, etc.) both in the core and the periphery (see Kelemen and Sibbitt 2004). For instance, a large proportion of the assistance for economic restructuring to the former Soviet countries in the early 1990s was contracted out to large Western accounting firms, in particular the (then) "Big Six" (Wedel 1998). In their process of expansion, these organizations have relied heavily on transnational hybrids. International linkages and the increased organization of the economy along market lines—a process partly set in motion by the *intellectual* reconstruction of neoclassical economics around the free market—thus also

⁴¹ There are some important exceptions, however: see, for instance, Import Substitution Industrialization, which originated in the work of Raul Prebisch at ECLA or, more recently, Peruvian economist De Soto's (2000) influential pamphlet on asset management as a key resource for economic development.

drive the “privatization” of economics as a *professional* enterprise and its reconstruction as a corporate activity in its own right.

A GLOBAL CASE OF PROFESSIONALIZATION?

Taken together, the patterns described in this article exemplify a logic of professional development, which is produced (and reproduced) at the global level through the dialectical relationship between economics and the economy (Callon 1998). The functioning of economies gets “academicized” into scientific models, largely produced in core countries and in reference to the prevailing model view of the economy there. These models in turn help legitimize or formulate reforms, both at home but especially abroad (Blinder 1999). In the process of constant recreation of what an economy is supposed to look like, new jurisdictions open up for economists, not only because of the creation of new areas of expertise (e.g., deregulation, privatization), but also because economists are able to convert their professional credibility into other forms of “capital” (economic, political). Scientific representations, policy paradigms, and international linkages all enter the competitive processes whereby different segments and groups in the various national economics professions seek to assert their authority on particular jurisdictions (professional, scientific, or political), ultimately transforming the world they claim control upon, and their own professional “identity” in the process.

A neoinstitutional interpretation of this process would certainly account for its formal aspects—the “global diffusion” of economics through the institutionalization of specialized economics curricula, government organizations, professional associations, and so on. To a large extent it also helps us understand the mechanisms (mimetic, coercive, normative) that encourage the establishment of such transnational linkages as international student flows or recruitment patterns in international organizations. Neoinstitutional theory, however, does not acknowledge that the diffusion of professional models and institutions supposes a constant reconstruction on *both* sides of the diffusion process, a transformation that goes well above and beyond what institutionalist scholars often call the “mediating” effect of local institutions (Guillén 1994). What happens in the case of economics is a form of “global professionalization,” rooted in the dialectical interaction between the real world (the economy) and the profession (economics), which claims tutelary power over it. In fact, I have gone as far as to suggest that globalization constitutes, in fact, a fundamental element in the professionalization of economics: for “peripheral” elites, transnational linkages to the mainstream economics profession are a necessity (sometimes eagerly accepted), a function of their double (scientific and

political) marginality. They may also be an essential strategic vehicle for the transmission of local claims and grievances. For instance, when Joseph Stiglitz—an economics Nobel Prize winner and former World Bank chief economist—loudly condemns IMF policies in East Asia, the relevant countries are de facto encouraged to leverage his reputation in the battle that opposes them to international financial institutions. Conversely for Stiglitz, the *enfant terrible* of American economics, the stake is both reputational (to reinforce his own position within the U.S. field) and intellectual/political (to establish the viability of alternative policies). Global jurisdictions, then, constitute an essential source of legitimacy and resources for “core” economists, too. Since the more peripheral places of the world economy are more vulnerable to the professional influence of economists (both local and foreign), they, in fact, constitute a fundamental space where individual experts and organizations fight key intellectual and jurisdictional battles through the ongoing economic reconstruction of societies—a process that is not, and never will be, settled.

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