

## The Making of Karl Polanyi's Economic Sociology

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The main purpose of this paper is to understand Polanyi's research project after *The Great Transformation*. This includes his developing ideas on economic history and theory of economic institutions after 1947, when he came to Columbia University in New York. This paper deals mainly with Polanyi's new agenda, namely "the place of the economy in society" in the intellectual context of post World War II United States of America.

In his Columbia lectures, Polanyi made "the changing place of economies in societies" the theme of General Economic History, by which he indicated from the start that, instead of the "outmoded chronological accounts of general economic history," he wished to develop his subject in the direction of "economic sociology." He then intended to write a book which was to be titled *The Livelihood of Man*.

Around 1947, Polanyi developed a strong interest in the theories and methods of the general economic history and economic sociology of

Max Weber and Weber's disputable receptions in the Anglo-American world. Polanyi's intellectual targets were Robbins and Parsons. Polanyi criticized the scarcity postulate in the economic theory of Robbins and Parsons's economic sociology which seemed to support the presumption of Robbins's theory. In his attack on the prevailing market system bias, Polanyi focused his attention primarily on trade, money, and markets—the institutions that he felt had been most seriously misunderstood as being naturally and inseparably linked in a chain of profit-making activities in their history because of the myopic, modern Western view. In his attack, he drew most heavily on the work of Weber. Polanyi's original achievement was to explain the significant role of the "substantive" meaning of rationality which instituted economies well in early societies as a new direction of economic sociology.

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