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Allan Gruchy's view of institutionalism and the foundation and early years of the Association for Evolutionary Economics

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Abstract

Studies on the history of economic thought of American institutionalism usually focus on the founding fathers, or pre-1930s institutionalism. The decline in importance of this school of thought during the 1930s resulted in few post-World War II studies on the history of institutionalism. However, institutionalists played a prominent role in the emergence of dissenting associations. In the late 1950s, institutionalists' dissatisfaction with the American Economic Association culminated in the Association for Evolutionary Economics (AFEE) in 1965. Allan Gruchy was a founder of the AFEE, and this paper highlights his perspective of institutionalism and how it changed over the course of his career because of his involvement in AFEE's internal affairs.

JEL classification: B25

Keywords: Allan Gruchy; Association for Evolutionary Economics; *Journal of Economic Issues*; Warren Samuels; American Institutionalism
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1. Introduction

At the beginning of the 20th century, American institutionalism was a prominent branch of economic science (Biddle, 1998; Hodgson, 2004; Morgan and Rutherford, 1998; Rutherford, 2011). By the 1950s, institutionalist economists had lost their influence over American economics, and became dissatisfied as a new mainstream path emerged (Bateman, 1998; Cavalieri and Almeida, 2015; Morgan and Rutherford, 1998). Therefore, in the late 1950s, institutionalists organised themselves to combat the decline of institutional economics. This led to the founding of the Association for Evolutionary Economics (AFEE) in 1965 (Cavalieri and Almeida, 2017). The AFEE was founded by the heirs of interwar institutionalism, with Allan Gruchy as a prominent founding member. Gruchy himself was not institutionalist royalty, as was Clarence Ayres, but was recognised among dissenters. Ayres himself acknowledged Gruchy's importance for post-war institutionalism. In 1953, Ayres said he considered Gruchy as the "leading interpreter of institutionalism" at that time (Ayres to Gruchy, 16 September 1953, Ayres Papers, Box 3F288).

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In 1926, Gruchy graduated with first class honours from the University of British Columbia and entered graduate school at the University of California at Berkeley, in 1927. In the same year, in a course taught by Paul Homan, Gruchy had contact with American institutionalism for the first time. However, Gruchy left Berkeley due to differences with Professor Ira B. Cross (Dillard, 1990, 1991). In 1929, after earning an MA degree with honours from the McGill University, he obtained his Ph.D. degree from the University of Virginia under Professor E. Alvis Kincaid, in 1931. Prior to taking up faculty membership at the University of Maryland (Dillard, 1990), he served as visiting assistant professor at the University of Virginia, and professor of economics and sociology at the College of St. Thomas in Minneapolis.

Gruchy served as a faculty member at the University of Maryland from 1937 to 1986, when he retired following a heart attack (Dillard, 1990). Four years later, in 1990, Gruchy passed away (Gruchy and Rutherford, 1990).¹ During his 49 years at the University of Maryland, Gruchy built a reputation as a remarkable educator; hence, his classes were always oversubscribed (Briggs, 1990; Dillard, 1990). Gruchy's contributions to American institutionalism were several: (1) a methodological proposal to analyse American institutionalism as holistic (see Gruchy, 1947); (2) an empirical proposal that focused on social provisioning and economic planning as key to organization of the American economy (see Gruchy, 1974, 1977, 1982a); and (3) a taxonomical proposal to classify American institutionalists after 1939 (see Gruchy, 1969, 1972). As discussed by Dillard (1991, 383), Gruchy's contributions were a means to an (ambitious) end: "the reconstruction of economics along institutionalist lines".

Gruchy was not always an easy person (Gruchy and Rutherford, 1990). He had several disagreements during his career. This paper relies on one such dispute: Gruchy's dissatisfaction with the type of institutionalism that the AFEE promoted during the 1970s. The goal of this paper is to highlight how Gruchy's view of American institutionalism aligned with the AFEE's foundation, and how the association's early years changed his perspective on the meaning of institutionalism. Accordingly, this paper examines how Gruchy's conflict with Warren Samuels, the editor of the *Journal of Economic Issues* (JEI)—the AFEE's journal—during the 1970s, may serve as a background to understand Gruchy's reconsideration of his taxonomy of institutionalism.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 introduces Gruchy's notions of institutional holism and neoinstitutionalism as a reading of American institutionalism from the post-war era. Furthermore, it also shows that these ideas are aligned with the pluralism and eclecticism of the early AFEE members. Section 3 provides a brief history of the diversity among the founding members of the AFEE. Section 4 introduces the early history of the JEI and Gruchy's strong criticism of Warren Samuels' editorship. Section 5 addresses how events concerning the JEI affected Gruchy's perspective on institutional economics. These events culminated in Gruchy's review of his taxonomy of institutionalist economists. Section 6 provides some final notes and concludes the paper.

2. Allan Gruchy's holism and neoinstitutionalism

Gruchy's views on institutionalism departed from the idea that it is a "holistic" approach to economic theorizing (Rutherford, 2015). As such, his effort to understand, characterize, and redefine the institutional movement is paramount to make sense of his attitude towards institutionalism and economics as a whole. In *The Modern Economic Thought* (1947), Gruchy highlighted that economics is a cultural science, and hence it is holistic. Other cultural sciences are anthropology, sociology, psychology, and political science; economics' distinctive feature is the analysis of material issues of culture. Nevertheless, economics' existence does not mean that material issues should be studied in isolation from other holistic sciences. The material issues of a society are embedded in its culture, that is, the basis on which social provisioning relies (Gruchy, 1947; see also Dillard, 1991). For Gruchy (1947), a common feature of holistic approaches in economics is the understanding of behaviour as a social rather than an individual matter. Gruchy and Rutherford (1990) affirm that Gruchy identifies institutional holism as an evolutionary and cultural background to study an economic system as an evolving process. Any part of this system can be fully understood by analysing the relations in the complete dynamic economic process. In this system, the individual is a social being who learns by collective standards or norms of conduct (Gruchy and Rutherford, 1990).

¹ This obituary is authored by Allan Gruchy and Malcolm Rutherford, as it is Gruchy's obituary. It was obviously written by Rutherford, but he, very kindly, credited it to Gruchy.

As stated by Gruchy, the basis of institutional holism was present in Thorstein Veblen's notion of institution, John Commons' collective economics, Wesley Mitchell's quantitative economics, John M. Clark's social economics, Rexford Tugwell's experimental economics, and Gardiner Means' administrative economics (Gruchy, 1947). Gruchy (1947) associates these thinkers with holistic economics. Dillard (1991, 387) stresses that despite the diverse interests and approaches among economists, Gruchy's analysis found a "surprising amount of uniformity in their conception of economics". According to Gruchy and Rutherford (1990), holism leads institutionalism to use less formalist methods (more likely studies of cultures and their evolution), and it became the basis for virtually all methodological debates regarding institutional economics. In essence, Rutherford (2015, 104) also stresses that Gruchy's "holistic institutionalism" had a distinct influence on post-war institutionalists. Holism encouraged institutionalism to step away from comparisons with natural sciences—something common even in Veblen's work. Considering the AFEE's foundation, Gruchy's holistic method for the institutionalist approach is a good way to deal with pluralism and eclecticism among the AFEE members. As Gruchy's institutional holism puts Veblen next to Commons, Tugwell, and Means, Gruchy recognised that different types of institutionalism could comprise the same kind of holistic approach. Hence, someone may assume that the goal of Gruchy's holism was to encompass different kinds of institutionalism. The same is true for Gruchy's neoinstitutionalism.

According to Bush (2009, 294), "Allan Gruchy (1972) appears to have adopted the term 'neoinstitutionalism' from [Marc] Tool [. . .]", who coined it in his 1953 doctoral dissertation; Tool's term was much more restrictive than Gruchy's, though. Tool was a member of a group of American institutionalists known as the "Cactus Branch". This was a nickname given by Gambs to the Ayresian wing of American institutionalism (Report on Interviews with American Economists, 1963, Gruchy and Gambs Papers).² For Cavalieri and Almeida (2017), the Cactus Branch was the most cohesive group of institutionalists at the time of the AFEE's foundation. Cactus Branchers had close and continuous contact with each other because of their geographical localization (they were at universities in the Southwest); the Southwestern Social Science Association and the Southwestern Social Science Quarterly worked as forums for exchanging and disseminating their ideas. Additionally, Ayres' contact with his former students and his charismatic leadership, created a successful network among the Cactus Branchers (Cavalieri and Almeida, 2017).³

Tool's notion of neoinstitutionalism reflected the group to which he belonged. For Tool, neoinstitutionalists would be the ones developing American institutionalism, according to Ayres' interpretation of Veblen's writings. Gruchy's neoinstitutionalism is much more encompassing than Tool's—revealing itself as a more adequate classification of institutionalism in the early days of the AFEE. Gruchy introduced his complete notion of neoinstitutionalism in *Contemporary Economic Thought* (1972), but before the book was published, he presented his perspective of neoinstitutionalism in his 1968 AFEE presidential speech.⁴ This speech was published as "Neoinstitutionalism and the Economics of Dissent" in JEI (Gruchy, 1969). According to Gruchy (1969, 1972), since 1939, the writings of some institutionalists such as Clarence Ayres, John Kenneth Galbraith, Gunnar Myrdal, Gerhard Colm, and Adolph Lowe⁵ could be seen as an extension of the works of Veblen, Hobson, Commons, Clark, Mitchell, and other heterodox economists from the first three decades of the 20th century. For Gruchy (1969, 1972), the first group was labelled neoinstitutionalists because members were inspired by the "old institutionalism" (except for Ayres who was greatly influenced by Veblen and Dewey in his formative years). However, they offered a fresh perspective of institutionalism for analysis, which Gruchy (1972) calls "mature capitalism".

As stated by Gruchy (1969), neoinstitutionalism made economics less technical and more social, accepting conventional economics for "what it is worth", and going beyond this to develop a broader economics concerned not only with decision making in the market place, but also "the larger evolution of the economic system" (Gruchy, 1969, 6–7). For Gruchy (1969), the larger view of economic reality led the neoinstitutionalists to believe that they had a perspective of economics that would be more relevant to the major economic problems of their time. This perspective was based on the analysis of both the "social reality" and the "dynamics of the process" of an evolving social system of which the economic system is a part (Gruchy, 1972). For Gruchy (1969, 1972), economics should be social economics. Hence,

² Marc Tool wrote his dissertation under J. Fagg Foster at the University of Denver; Foster, in turn, was a former student of Clarence Ayres (Tool, 1982). Tool's dissertation is entitled "The Philosophy of Neo-Institutionalism: Veblen, Dewey, and Ayres". As the title suggests, Tool's dissertation introduced neoinstitutionalism as a term relying exclusively on Ayres' interpretation of Veblen's writings.

³ For more details about the Cactus Branch, see Sturgeon (1981).

⁴ Gruchy was the third president of the AFEE after Clarence Ayres and John Gambs completed their terms.

⁵ Both Gruchy (1969) and Gruchy (1972) highlight these names. However, the latter also included François Perroux in the list.

the neoinstitutionalists saw differences between the physical and social sciences, and between physical and social data (Gruchy, 1972). The nature of physical data does not change over time and the purposive issues of physical sciences do not raise questions. Social data are different because they not only evolve but are also purposeful (Gruchy, 1972).

Gruchy (1969, 1972) affirms that a simple comparison between conventional economics and neoinstitutionalism would be a contrast between “market economics” and “system economics”. The key concern of neoinstitutionalists was “wants, goals, and values” and “process” rather than “efficiency” and “equilibrium” (Gruchy, 1969). Furthermore, Gruchy (1972) adds that conventional economics relies on “science of choice” or “science of efficiency”, while neoinstitutionalism is a “social science”. For the neoinstitutionalists, according to Gruchy (1969), the capitalist system is not a monolithic or a metaphysical entity that holds interests common to all individuals, but an evolving arrangement of human relationships regarding the disposal of resources for socially shaped satisfaction. Neoinstitutionalists study choice among the possible uses of resources, but with a consideration of the cultural view of reality concerning historical time and geographical place (Gruchy, 1972). According to Gruchy (1972), neoinstitutionalism pointed to the reconstruction of economics by shifting prediction for organization and control, which “mature capitalism” was demanding.

For Dillard (1991), Gruchy’s neoinstitutionalism and holism were means to an end, and represented a reconstruction of economics consistent with American institutionalism. *Contemporary Economic Thought* was published when the AFEE was established and, as far as we understand, it respected the eclecticism and plurality of the association’s membership, mainly because Gruchy was not defending or hammering out a specific kind of institutionalism. On the contrary, Gruchy’s neoinstitutionalism was more encompassing than the institutional approaches prevailing at that time. Gambs (1980, 29) stresses that *Contemporary Economic Thought* “should have been considered something of a guiding light to the AFEE”. However, the events associated with the reception of *Contemporary Economic Thought* by the JEI took a very different path than the one perceived by Gambs. To explore how echoes of this episode would go on to haunt both Gruchy and the AFEE, we must take the history of the association and the JEI into consideration.

3. The diversity in the AFEE’s early years

The AFEE was founded by post-war institutionalists dissatisfied with the path taken by mainstream economics. Their dissatisfaction can be split into three main perspectives: (1) frustration with the programs hosted by the American Economic Association (AEA) Conference (Almeida, 2016; Cavalieri and Almeida, 2017; Bush, 1991; Gambs, 1980); (2) the curriculum of top universities was no longer considering American institutionalism (Cavalieri and Almeida, 2015); and (3) aversion to early interpretations of Keynesianism, as Alvin Hansen’s (Cavalieri and Almeida, 2015; Rutherford, 2011). The foundation of AFEE took place before the emergence of the post-Keynesian approach. For Cavalieri and Almeida (2015), the Richard T. Ely Lecture delivered by Joan Robinson in 1971 was a breakpoint for institutionalists’ criticism. After Robinson’s lecture, Keynes’ writings came gradually to be understood as compatible with a dissenter’s perspective. As this section will highlight later, the intent to build a Veblenian association gave rise to a pluralistic AFEE. This plural perspective indicates that the founders of the AFEE looked for an organization with an intellectual movement (American institutionalism), but found an association interested in rethinking and reconstructing economic science in a broader sense. The fact that Dudley Dillard and Wallace C. Peterson were members of the AFEE in its early days indicates that there was room for Keynesian thinking in the association (Cavalieri and Almeida, 2015; Whalen, 2016). Despite Gruchy’s friendship with Dillard, he was a critic of Keynesianism during his entire career. His criticism evolved from a philosophical and theoretical basis (Gruchy, 1948, 1949) to economic policy (Gruchy, 1972, 1982b)

The strong dissatisfaction institutionalists experienced motivated them to make moves toward building an association other than the AEA. Along with John Gambs, from Hamilton College (New York), Gruchy sent out an invitation to economists dissatisfied with the path taken by economics for a meeting at the end of the AEA meeting in 1959. The goal of this institutionalist gathering was to discuss the dissatisfaction with the prevailing economic science and the desire to reconstruct it. A small group of eleven economists met at the Windsor Hotel in Washington D.C., the venue of the 1959 AEA meeting.⁶ During that first meeting, the group decided to organise rump sessions, following AEA’s annual

⁶ The eleven people were Joseph Brown, J. Fagg Foster, John Gambs, Washington Glade, Allan Gruchy, William Hewitt, Forest Hill, Robert Patton, James Reese, Arthur Schweitzer, and James Street, (Minutes of the Meeting, 29 December 1959, Gruchy Papers). The meeting took place

meeting⁷ (Matters Discussed at the First Meeting, December 1959, Gruchy Papers). In 1963, these eleven people and several others became known as the “Wardman Group”.⁸

The foundation of the AFEE holds a unique feature for a nascent association: the significant diversity of its members. This diversity was not only about the presence of non-institutionalists in the association but also about the larger interpretation of being an institutionalist. Rutherford (2015) divides this diverse group of institutionalists into three categories: (1) Ayresians: Texan institutionalists led by Clarence Ayres⁹; (2) Commonsians: heirs of John Commons’ legacy; and (3) a group that is difficult to classify since its members were too loosely aligned to be categorised as non-Ayresians; it included, for example, both John Kenneth Galbraith and Allan Gruchy. Cavalieri and Almeida (2017) broadly agree with Rutherford’s (2015) grouping of institutionalists, but one can affirm that Cavalieri and Almeida (2017) focus on an even broader diversity. Cavalieri and Almeida (2017) analyse the educational background and theoretical affiliations of key people associated with the founding of the AFEE, and points to 42 people as key associates. These included some of the eleven people who had attended the first meeting of the Wardman Group, as well as presidents, vice-presidents, board members of the AFEE, and editors of the JEI. The universities connected with more institutionalists, according to Cavalieri and Almeida (2017), were Columbia University (14 institutionalists) and University of Texas at Austin, UT Austin, (10 institutionalists).¹⁰ Rutherford (2011) stated that Columbia “was not very collegial”; it had no interest in creating “a band of faithful followers”. On the contrary, UT Austin’s Clarence Ayres displayed characteristics of a charismatic leader and, consequently, he had some followers. However, the late David Hamilton, a student of Ayres, stressed that professors who influenced Texan institutionalists, such as Ruth Allen, E. E. Hale, R. H. Montgomery, C.A. Wiley, and Ayres himself, did not take the same institutional perspective into consideration (Hamilton, 2004).¹¹

It should be noted, nonetheless, that the presence of “non-monolithic” (Bateman, 1998) and “loosely related” research programs (Morgan and Rutherford, 1998) has been a defining feature of institutionalism since its heyday in the first half of the 20th century, when economics itself—especially American economics—was a pluralist discipline. This pluralism of economics, alternatively, translated into the coexistence of competing schools of thought, each exercising similar influence. It meant variety, which was evident “in beliefs, in ideology, in methods, and in policy advice” (Morgan and Rutherford, 1998, 4). In this scenario, institutionalism and neoclassical economics held particularly privileged positions (Bateman, 1998; Biddle, 1998; Colander and Landreth, 2008; Sent, 2006), and it is the demise of the former and the rise of the latter that prompted the AFEE’s foundation.

That said, Cavalieri and Almeida (2017) emphasise that among the 42 key people associated with the founding of the AFEE, there are (1) Commonsians; (2) Ayresians; (3) Dewey-Veblen institutionalists, who do not take the Ayresian perspective into consideration; (4) Pluralists; and (5) early adopters of the rising heterodox version of Keynesianism.¹²

in Fagg Foster’s hotel room at the Windsor Hotel (Foster to Ayres, 18 October 1967, Ayres Papers, Box 3F287; Rutherford, 2011, 185; Cavalieri and Almeida, 2017).

⁷ In 1961, about 28 economists requested they be informed of the group’s activities (Manuscript by Gambs, February 1962, Gambs Papers). In 1963, the group comprised 150 economists (Minutes of a Meeting of Dissent Economists, 28 December 1963, Gruchy Papers) including big names such as Joseph Dorfman, Carter Goodrich, Albert Hirschman, Simon Kuznets, and Gardiner Means—Dorfman and Means would become active members of the AFEE (Minutes of a Meeting of Dissent Economists, 28 December 1963, Gruchy Papers). Their presence suggests that the Wardman Group was indeed successful in bringing together a qualified group of dissenter economists.

⁸ Literature (such as Bush, 1991; Gambs, 1980, and O’Hara, 1995) and oral tradition refer to the group that would found the AFEE as the “Wardman Group” in 1959. The group adopted this name in 1963 (Cavalieri and Almeida, 2017). It relied on the hotel where the 1959 AEA meeting took place. In 1959, the hotel was renamed the Sheraton-Park Hotel. Rutherford (2013) stressed that the original name was the “AEA Group” that was changed to “Wardman Group” in 1963.

⁹ As aforementioned in the paper, Ayresians became known as the *Cactus Branch* from 1963 onwards.

¹⁰ The other scholar-university connections pointed out by Cavalieri and Almeida (2017) are: University of Wisconsin (5), University of California at Berkeley (3), American University (3), University of Chicago (2), Harvard University (1) and Brookings Institution (1). It is important to highlight that Cavalieri and Almeida (2017) connect people to university by training and teaching. Hence a person can be connected to more than one university.

¹¹ Cavalieri and Almeida’s (2017, 615, footnote 3) 42 names are: Bushrod Allin, Clarence Ayres, A.A. Baylor, John Blair, Kendall Cochran, Dudley Dillard, Joseph Dorfman, Douglas Dowd, J. Fagg Foster, Daniel Fusfeld, John Kenneth Galbraith, John Gambs, Meredith Givens, Washington Glade, Carter Goodrich, Wendell Gordon, Allan Gruchy, David Hamilton, Robert Heilbroner, William Hewitt, Forest Hill, Louis Junker, William Kapp, Gardiner Means, Walter Neale, William Pardridge, Robert Patton, James Reese, Julius Rubin, Louis Salkever, Warren Samuels, David Schwartz, Arthur Schweitzer, Harvey Segal, Ben Seligman, W. Paul Strassman, Marc Tool, Harry Trebing, Colston Warne, Murray Weidenbaum, Theresa Wolfson, and George Zinke.

¹² This diversity can also be found in Rutherford (2011, Rutherford, 2015).

American institutionalism, which developed without a clear paradigm, research program, or methodology (Asso and Fiorito, 2008; Fiorito, 2012; Rutherford, 2011), maintained its diversity, or diversified with time. Cavalieri and Almeida (2017) highlight an additional issue: of the 42 key people associated with the founding of the AFEE, 22 held PhD degrees after the inter-war period (including Gruchy); hence, they experienced American institutionalism as a paradigm in decline.

The leading founders of the AFEE, Allan Gruchy, John Gambs, and Clarence Ayres, had to deal with such diversity. Among them, Ayres was indisputably more representative of post-war institutionalism than the others (see Rutherford, 2011). According to James Buchanan, Ayres was a leading member of the profession at the beginning of the 20th century (Buchanan, 1976). For British economist Bob Coats, Ayres was part of the mainstream of American dissenters (Coats, 1992). Edwin Witte, an economist from the University of Wisconsin, recognised Ayres as a prominent economist of the 20th century. During his AEA presidency, Witte referred to Ayres as “the Dean of all institutional economists now living” (Witte to Ayres, 30 April 1956, Ayres Papers, Box 3F296). As far as we understand, the “Dean” was responsible for the AFEE’s pluralism and eclecticism, while Gambs and Gruchy were more cautious.

In 1963, Gambs defended a membership that was more open to pluralism and eclecticism (Report on Interviews with American Economists, 1963, Gambs and Gruchy Papers). Almost two decades later, Gambs revealed that even though he and Gruchy had accepted and even defended pluralism and eclecticism, they found it difficult to deal with the apparently irreconcilable pluralism among members of the AFEE (Gambs, 1980). Notwithstanding their acceptance of pluralism and eclecticism in the AFEE, Gruchy and Gambs tried to extract theoretical and political consensus from the group on three different occasions: (1) in the early 1960s, Gambs tried to organise a book that summarised post-war institutionalism (Gruchy to Gambs, 8 March 1960; Schweitzer to Gambs, 11 April 1960, Gambs Papers); (2) in 1965, just after the official formation of the AFEE, Gambs insisted on an AFEE project called the “Position Papers” to build consensus for the association; and (3) in 1968, Gambs published a manifesto in the JEI.

In a publication entitled “What Next for the Association for Evolutionary Economics?”, Gambs (1968) presents the series of so-called “Position Papers” as an urgent matter to find the essence (spirit) of the AFEE. This obsession with building a consensus raised significant concerns from Ayres. He was rather blunt in a letter to Gruchy, and considered Gambs’ reiterated attempts at “hammering out” a commitment among members as detrimental to the AFEE (Ayres to Gruchy, 30 September 1967, Ayres Papers, Box 3F288). Notwithstanding Gambs (1968), Gruchy informed Ayres that it was not his intention to promote an ideological consensus for the AFEE, but to address the path that institutional economics was taking (Gruchy to Ayres, 6 February 1968, Ayres Papers, Box 3F288).¹³

It should be noted that events related to the foundation of the AFEE were consistent with Gruchy’s view of American institutionalism, more specifically, his holistic approach to institutional economics and notion of neoinstitutionalism. The interpretation we offer here is that Gruchy’s holistic approach and neoinstitutionalism are two sides of the same coin, and this coin is his personal interpretation of the American institutionalist movement. On the one hand, he was looking to methodologically deal with American institutionalism as a unit, through holism; on the other, he was attempting to classify institutionalists in a non-sectarian way to characterise them as a group, namely the neoinstitutionalists.¹⁴

4. The JEI and disagreements

After the AFEE was founded, Ayres, its first president, and the executive board decided to produce an AFEE journal—sponsored by UT Austin. This marked the birth of the JEI, which took place in 1967.¹⁵ Two years later, in

¹³ The next section focuses on some facts about the history of the JEI, founded by the AFEE. However, as some events related to the JEI were associated with pluralism among the AFEE members, these events are highlighted here. The JEI became a reality through an arrangement between the AFEE and UT Austin. Mediated by Clarence Ayres, the arrangement established that the editor had to be a faculty member of UT Austin. Ayres appointed his department colleague Forest Hill, and Gruchy received it well (Gruchy to Ayres, 14 June 1966, Gruchy Papers). In fact, Gruchy assisted Hill with structuring the editorial board. Gruchy stressed that the journal should not only be about American institutionalism, but the JEI’s scope should be “social economics” (Gruchy to Hill, 21 July 1966, Gruchy Papers). Hence, it can be affirmed that despite originally seeking a Veblenian association, Gruchy understood that a Veblenian group would be a part of the AFEE, whose scope would be broader than Veblenian institutionalism.

¹⁴ In Gruchy’s (1947, 26) words: “According to holistic economists, economic science seeks to explain the functioning of that segment of the total cultural complex which is concerned with the provision of mankind’s material needs”.

¹⁵ As the AFEE was founded as an alternative to the AEA, the journal was also projected as an alternative to journals like the American Economic Review. Accordingly, by early 1966, the State University of New York agreed to sponsor the AFEE journal (Ayres to Gruchy, Gambs, Seligman, Dorfman, and Hamilton, 27 March 1966, Gruchy Papers). However, the sponsorship fell through. During the same year, the UT Austin agreed to

1969, problems were obvious. It was clear to the AFEE executive board that Forest Hill's editorship was characterised by delays in distribution and responses to contributors (Gruchy to Ayres, 5 July 1969, Ayres Papers, Box 3F288 and Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Board of the AFEE, 12 April 1969, Gruchy Papers). The delays and accompanying problems were so serious that the executive board had to assist Hill with his tasks as editor (Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Board of AFEE, 12 April 1969, Gruchy Papers). Eventually, the executive board held that Hill had failed as editor (Ayres to Gruchy, 20 July 1969, Gruchy Papers and Ayres to Gruchy, 19 August 1969, Gruchy Papers).¹⁶ Ben Seligman, vice-president of the AFEE and professor at the University of Massachusetts (UMass), offered an arrangement, similar to the UT Austin's, to publish the JEI. Subsequently, Harvey Segal, Seligman's colleague at UMass, replaced Hill as editor (Minutes of General Business Meeting, 29 December 1969, Ayres Papers, Box 3F285). However, Segal's tenure as JEI editor was short. Seligman—the main link between the UMass and the AFEE—passed away in 1970 (Trebing to Ayres, 28 October 1970, Ayres Papers, Box 3F285). Segal then resigned his position as JEI's editor in July 1971 (Segal to Fufeld, 8 July 1971, Ayres Papers, Box 3F285).

In line with these previous arrangements, Michigan State University (MSU) made an offer to be responsible for publishing the JEI in 1971 (Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board, 8 July 1971, Ayres Papers, Box 3F285). Warren Samuels took over as editor, thus ending the editorial instability. Samuels' tenure as JEI editor extended from 1971 to 1981. Almeida (2016) notes that in addition to ending the instability associated with editorship, Samuels built a strong international reputation for the journal during his tenure at the JEI. Yet, Samuels' editorship deepened issues surrounding the role of pluralism and the eclecticism in both the AFEE and the JEI (Almeida, 2016; Cavalieri and Almeida, 2017). Samuels' perspective on institutional economics and pluralism was more encompassing than that of the AFEE's leading founders, namely Ayres, Gambs, and Gruchy (see Davis, 2012), and, on this regard, a letter from Ayres, the most moderate of AFEE's founding fathers, to Samuels in August 1968 is illustrative. Ayres wrote positive comments about Samuels' interpretation of institutional economics and references to major institutionalists. However, Ayres also criticised Samuels' perspective on conventional economics theory. Samuels was of the opinion that the future of institutional economics relied on a conventional economics approach (Samuels to Ayres, 27 August 1968, Ayres Papers, Box 3F294). Ayres, however, argued that the two bodies of knowledge contradicted each other and therefore such an approach would be impossible (Ayres to Samuels, 15 August 1968, Ayres Papers, Box 3F294).¹⁷

Clearly, Samuels' perspective on institutional economics was reflected in the JEI's pages; this displeased the AFEE members, who understood that both AFEE and JEI were associated with the reconstruction of economics based on institutional approaches. Samuels' perspective, we argue, generated animosity from Gruchy, changing the latter's view about who actually were institutionalists. The Gruchy-Samuels asperity seems to have peaked in 1974, when the JEI published four reviews of Gruchy's *Contemporary Economic Thought* (Gruchy, 1972).¹⁸ Gruchy understood that one of the reviews was an attack from conventional economics on institutionalism (Gruchy to Willard Muller, 4 February 1974, Gruchy Papers). The author of this review was Bob Coats, a friend of Samuels'. According to Backhouse et al. (2008), this was among Coats' most critical reviews. Obviously, institutionalists such as Liebhafsky (1980) disagreed with Coats' review. Our argument is that Gruchy's reaction to Coats' review is more important than the content of the review itself. According to Backhouse et al. (2008, 428): “[t]his [Coats' review] resulted in Gruchy's waging a long and bitter campaign to remove Samuels from the editorship of the JEI”. In fact, it is far more complex: the review episode led Gruchy to revise his institutionalists' taxonomy as he became less open-minded to different institutional

sponsor and publish the AFEE's journal, and Ayres possibly played a key role in firming up this arrangement. Ayres, as president of the association, appointed Forest Hill, his colleague at UT Austin, as editor (Ayres to Gruchy, 14 June 1966, Gruchy Papers).

¹⁶ In Ayres to Gruchy, 20 July 1969, the former wrote “Dear Allab”, considering the position of the letter “n” and “b” on a QWERTY keyboard, and the content of the letter, we assume that Ayres intended to write “Dear Allan” and the letter was addressed to Allan Gruchy.

¹⁷ As Ayres was the most moderate of AFEE's founding fathers and did not spare criticisms to institutional economics, it is possible that Samuels' claim regarding the future of institutional economics was made in order to induce Ayres to profess his views on the convergence between institutional and conventional economics. Hence, the leitmotif behind this letter exchange could reside more on Samuels' search for Ayres' views on this matter than on Samuels' defense of his own perspective. Speculations aside, however, for the purpose we have in hand, we must take into consideration only what Samuels actually wrote in that correspondence.

¹⁸ Publishing four reviews of the same book was a JEI strategy to avoid “taking sides”. The four reviews of Gruchy's *Contemporary Economic Thought* were published as Coats et al. (1974).

approaches—as discussed in the next section. In addition, Samuels became Gruchy’s “archenemy” (also in matters that transcended the editorship of JEI).¹⁹

From 1974 onwards, Gruchy openly criticised Samuels’ editorship, and on several occasions Gambs supported Gruchy. For Gruchy (1978, 1982b), Samuels was the leader of a group of AFEE members endeavouring to promote a new general theory of institutional economics. According to Gruchy, looking for what he called general theory, Samuels organised symposia from 1972 to 1977. Gruchy complained that the symposia introduced “fringe” issues (Gruchy’s term) into institutional economics (Gruchy to R. D. Peterson, 5 December 1976, Gruchy Papers). Gruchy classified the issues as quite interesting but stated that they did little to give the AFEE an “image” or a “focus” (Gruchy to Samuels, 15 March 1974, Gruchy Papers).

Gruchy generally complained about the symposia themes. However, if one considers the 1972 symposium, they would find another layer of Gruchy’s criticisms targeting the AFEE’s lack of a distinctive image with regard to economic policy (Gruchy, 1978, 1982b; Gruchy to Samuels, 15 March 1974, Gruchy Papers). In 1972, the symposium theme was “Macroeconomic Institutional Innovation”, and its goal was “to consider how the United States might reorganize and redirect both its instruments of macroeconomic policy and its decision-making structure dealing with macroeconomic problems” (Samuels, 1972a, 1). As stated by Gruchy (1978, 1982b), recommendation of economic policy was a major form of providing intellectual identity. Keynesians, conventional economists, and radical economists built identities through policy recommendation; Gruchy believed that the AFEE should follow this path (Gruchy, 1978, 1982b), as it had not evolved since the AFEE’s foundation (Gruchy, 1978). For Gruchy (1978), this non-policy position partly explained why the AFEE had little influence on theoretical and applied economics since its foundation.²⁰

The themes of other symposia were “Law and Economics” (1973a), “Markets, Institutions, and Technology” (1974), “The Chicago School of Political Economy” (1975a), “Commons and Clark on Law and Economics” (1976), and “Contributions to Institutional Economics” (1977a). Hence, the themes from 1973 to 1976 were aligned with but not closely related to Gruchy’s neoinstitutionalism. The themes were, however, very closely related to Samuels work at the time. The 1974 symposium was a celebration of Clarence Ayres’ work, a cornerstone of Gruchy’s neoinstitutionalism. The 1977 theme was too broad not to consider an institutional perspective; still, Gruchy (1982b, 236) was nonetheless dissatisfied:

[a]lmost 20 years were to elapse after the founding of the AFEE before it devoted a symposium to the topic of the nature and scope of institutional economics, but [...] the symposium largely ignored the basic questions of nature and significance of mainstream institutionalism and considered instead a wide variety of highly specialized topics such as information systems, price theory, trade unions, the property institution, socialist planning, and development economics.

In the context of the AFEE’s foundation, the 1975 theme could seem polemical, as it took the Chicago School into consideration, and the AFEE’s founding fathers felt that they were excluded from the AEA because of the economics common in “Chicago kind of economics”.

Symposia and policy positions were the targets of Gruchy’s forceful complaints about Samuels’ editorship. However, the review episode pushed Gruchy to officially demand changes in the AFEE’s internal affairs. On 6 June 1974, Gruchy wrote to Gambs (Gruchy Papers) about the AFEE’s “statement of purpose” which, in Gruchy’s opinion, should be rewritten. For Gambs (1980), this statement of purpose was in Article II of the AFEE’s constitution, and he agreed with Gruchy that it was inadequate.²¹ Gruchy and Gambs’ point was that Article II made sense during the foundation

¹⁹ An illustrative fact about this antagonism is given in Gruchy (1989). At the end of his life, battling serious health issues, Gruchy wrote a note (Gruchy, 1989) disapproving Samuels’ contribution to the *New Palgrave: A Dictionary of Economics*.

²⁰ Gruchy introduced his criticism on what he understood as lack of policy position directly to Samuels in the form of a letter (Gruchy to Samuels, 15 March 1974, Gruchy Papers). In the same letter, Gruchy stressed that he would like to see the JEI’s editor being more critical of conventional economics. As this paper previously highlighted, Samuels did not share the split between conventional economics and institutional economics with Gruchy, Ayres, and others. Hence, it would not make sense to Samuels to be critical of conventional economics.

²¹ The content of Article II was: “[t]he purpose and objectives of the Association, a non-profit organization, shall be to foster, in the broadest manner, the development of economic study and of economics as a social science based on the complex interrelationships of man and society and in a manner such that will acknowledge the need to join questions of economic theory to questions of economic policy. Toward this end the organization may conduct meetings; issues publications; make available information on economics and economic policy; cooperate with other organizations; stimulate research; and undertake any other activities in the advancement of its purposes and objectives” (Constitution of the Association for Evolutionary Economics, Gruchy Papers).

of the AFEE, but that after the establishment of the association, Article II legitimated the JEI's editor's adoption of his/her own policy (Gambs, 1980). Gruchy and Gambs, supported by Daniel Fusfeld, drafted an amendment to the AFEE's constitution to clarify Article II (Gambs, 1980). The statement of purpose would be "to promote dissident non-Marxian economics" (Gambs, 1980, 30). In 1975, the executive board turned down the proposed amendment. Gruchy and Gambs resigned from the AFEE during the same year. Unlike Gambs, however, Gruchy would yet resume his post as an active member of the AFEE until the end of his life (Dillard, 1990).

5. Allan Gruchy's new taxonomies for institutionalists

The proposed amendment to the AFEE's constitution illustrates that the first tangible impact Samuels' JEI editorship had on Gruchy's economic reasoning regarded his views about pluralism. Gruchy's approach, which originally presented the AFEE and the JEI as pluralistic endeavours, came to resemble what Giere (2006); Jackson (2018), and Sent (2006) call strategic pluralism. The stamp of a strategic pluralist is the pursuit of pluralism while belonging to the heterodoxy of the profession, but with the ultimate goal of placing his/her own paradigm as the new orthodoxy. In this same fashion, Gruchy advocated pluralism as institutionalism occupied the margins of economics. His project, nonetheless, never included neoclassical economics—something he now would like to institutionalise. Accordingly, the monism of Gruchy's mind-set became sharper, to the extent that he did not want institutionalism to share the stage with mainstream economics but wanted the former to supersede the latter. His goal was, after all, to reconstruct economics *along institutionalist lines*. In the sense posed by Sent (2006), Gruchy did not believe institutionalism to be *also* correct, but saw it as *the* alternative to remedy neoclassical economics' shortcomings—a theoretical monist view.

The roots of Gruchy's hostility towards Samuels, therefore, is associated with an epistemological disagreement regarding the meaning of pluralism: Samuels, unlike Gruchy, was a fundamental pluralist (see Giere, 2006) who favoured the representation of all economic theories alike (Davis, 2012). Naturally, this encompassed both mainstream economics and heterodox approaches. Accordingly, in response, Gruchy refashioned his discourse from 1974 onwards to reinforce that pluralism should only exist *within well-established limits*. Ergo, ultimately, the confrontation with Samuels' period ahead of the JEI rendered Gruchy's narrower notion of pluralism more explicit, as he aimed at the institutionalisation of theoretical boundaries for the AFEE's journal.

The animosity between Gruchy and Samuels, largely attributable to their dissonant views regarding the meaning of pluralism, further prompted Gruchy to revisit his taxonomy on institutionalists²². *Contemporary Economic Thought* (Gruchy, 1972) was about introducing neoinstitutionalism, thus reinforcing the holistic methodology of institutional economics previously addressed in *Modern Economic Thought* (Gruchy, 1947). In the book, however, Gruchy introduces his neoinstitutionalism mentioning (without much emphasis) his AFEE presidential address and other segments of dissenters. Gruchy (1969) believed there were two categories of dissenters, non-academic dissenters,²³ and academic dissenters, with this latter category further divided into three sub-groups: (1) those who would like to reconstruct conventional economics, making it more realistic by utilizing feedback from empirical studies; (2) those who believed that the scope of conventional economics was too limited, and an interdisciplinary approach was necessary—hence, the need to combine economics with other social sciences, instead of reconstructing it; and (3) neoinstitutionalists (Gruchy, 1969).

Accordingly, following the review episode, Gruchy reviewed the taxonomy of dissenters to classify institutionalists. In a 1975 letter to Gambs, Gruchy detailed three groups of institutionalists: (1) a group that objected to conventional economics and called themselves institutionalists but did not know exactly why. This group, for Gruchy, represented a significant part of the AFEE membership during its early years. (2) Commonsians who, according to Gruchy, were dissenters looking for a more realistic, socially inclined, and less technical economic science. This group demanded

²² Conflicting views on pluralism might be understood as the theoretical root of the disagreement between Gruchy and Samuels. Oral history, nonetheless, usually refers to both of them as individuals of strong personality. Gruchy and Rutherford (1990), for instance, claim that Gruchy was not an easy person. Samuels, furthermore, in the foundation of the History of Economics Society (HES), had a conflict with Vincent Tarascio that resembled his disagreements with Gruchy (see William Jaffé to Vincent Tarascio, 13 January, 1972; Craufurd Goodwin to Samuels, 29 February 1972; Samuels to William Allen, Robert Eagly, Craufurd Goodwin, William Grampp, and Vincent Tarascio, 08 March 1972; Samuels Papers). Hence, we cannot dismiss the personality clash as a factor in Gruchy and Samuels' disagreements.

²³ As this paper discusses academic issues, such types of dissenters are not vital for analysis. However, Gruchy (1969) emphasises that this group criticised and disapproved of conventional economics and the consequences of its operations.

that economics should be more involved with empirical work inter-disciplinarily (combining law, economics, and sociology). For Gruchy, Samuels was a part of this group. (3) “Mainstream institutionalists”, the neoinstitutionalists, who believed that conventional economics was too limited in scope and, therefore, needed reconstruction. The goal of this group was to replace conventional economic analysis in its entirety (Gruchy to Gambs, 29 July 1975, Gruchy Papers and Gambs Papers).

The 1975 taxonomy can be assumed to be a version of the 1969 taxonomy of dissenters that was applied only to institutional economics. However, a more important feature of the 1975 classification was the segmentation of institutionalists into a group of Commonsians on one side, and the neoinstitutionalists, on the other. Before 1975, Gruchy understood that institutionalists were inspired by Commons and his followers as part of neoinstitutionalism. This can be illustrated by a passage from *Contemporary Economic Thought*, which highlights that neoinstitutionalists were inspired by “[. . .] the work of Thorstein Veblen and latter institutionalists such as John R. Commons, Wesley C. Mitchell and John M. Clark” (Gruchy, 1972, 1). In his letter to Gambs, Gruchy goes beyond a review of his taxonomy, emphasising that tensions emerged in the AFEE because the Commonsian group rejected mainstream institutionalists (Gruchy to Gambs, 29 July 1975, Gruchy Papers and Gambs Papers).

At the beginning of the 1980s, Gruchy introduced a new taxonomy, highlighting four groups of institutionalists, and stressed that those groups were “distinct and conflicting” (Gruchy, 1982b, 228). The groups were: (1) mainstream institutionalism or neoinstitutionalism; (2) general institutionalism; (3) radical institutionalism; and (4) applied institutionalism. As stated by Gruchy (1982b, 228):

[t]he general institutionalists do not accept mainstream institutionalism as it has been developed by the post-1939 mainstream institutionalists. Instead they seek to construct a new general theory of institutional economics that they say would be on a higher and more abstract level than the theorizing of the present-day mainstream institutionalists.

The radical wing would provide a Marxist perspective of the advanced industrial system. Applied institutionalism, would represent the majority of the AFEE members who “take institutional economics to be only a supplement to neoclassical microeconomics and Keynesian macroeconomics” (Gruchy, 1982b, 228).²⁴

As stated by Gruchy (1982b), general institutionalists, also known as anti-mainstream institutionalists, understand that mainstream institutionalism failed to deliver an institutional theory superior to conventional economics. Gruchy classifies Samuels as a general institutionalist and himself as a mainstream institutionalist. For Gruchy (1982b), general institutionalism was looking for a general theory of institutional economics relying on a general model of power, knowledge, and psychology that would be built on numerous monographic studies in economics and related social sciences. For Gruchy, this conflict within institutional economics led it towards a current state that was far from satisfactory, as institutionalism failed to work as a unit. Gruchy (1978) highlights the fact that the AFEE lacked a distinct theoretical image as its members mostly defended a vague notion of evolutionary economics as a new general theory of institutionalism, and as a substitute for mainstream institutionalism.

Comparing Gruchy’s 1975 and 1982 taxonomies, and considering the events surrounding the AFEE and the JEI during the 1970s, it is impossible not to notice that Gruchy forsook the explicit mention of Commons and Commonsians, and named Samuels’ group as general institutionalism. However, Samuels’ group’s aversion to mainstream institutionalists remained central to Gruchy’s perspective. According to Gruchy, tensions emerged in the AFEE mainly from these different academic perspectives (Gruchy, 1978, 1982b; Gruchy to Gambs, 29 July 1975, Gruchy Papers and Gambs Papers).

According to Rutherford (2013), categorising Samuels as Commonsian, as did Gruchy, seemed to be consistent with Samuels’ JEI editorship, which held a broad approach to institutional economics and resembled Commons’ understanding thereof. However, we argue, editorship style is not enough to affirm that Samuels was a Commonsian. Hence, inasmuch as this is directly related to Gruchy’s classification of institutionalists, we went through the main papers Samuels published in the 1970s to verify whether they see with Commonsian lenses or not.²⁵ We classified them into two different strands: (1) introduction to symposia: Samuels introduced five symposia organised by the AFEE

²⁴ Gruchy (1978) reinforces the same taxonomy without considering radical institutionalism. It is plausible because radical institutionalism was a birthing segment of institutional economics in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

²⁵ By Samuels’ main papers, we refer to studies published in representative dissenting journals.

and one by the Association for Social Economics (ASE); and (2) research papers: studies in which Samuels discusses economics or aspects of an economy; this strand amounts to papers on the history of economic thought and studies dealing with applied institutionalism.

Among the six introductions to symposia, only two can be clearly associated with Commons (Samuels, 1973a, 1976), while the remaining ones (Samuels, 1972a, 1974, 1975a, 1977a)²⁶ address subjects not clearly related to Commons' agenda. However, this is not enough to detach Samuels from Commonsian institutionalism. Samuels was in fact a great defender of Commons' theoretical view of institutions. Similarly, Samuels' wide spectrum of interests shines through his research papers. For example, his papers on the history of economic thought illustrate his attraction to subjects related both to the directions taken by economics at Harvard University (Samuels, 1972b, 1977b; Samuels and Gray, 1976) and to the history of institutional economics (Samuels, 1977c, 1977d, 1978a),²⁷ while Samuels (1975b, 1978b) are studies on applied institutionalism.

Finally, it is important to stress that during the late 1970s and early 1980s, Gruchy seemed to be a different person from the one who once advised the first editor of the JEI that the journal should rely on "social economics". Something changed along the way and it is our contention that this change in Gruchy's attitude regarding the breadth of subjects to be discussed in the JEI was a response to Samuels' editorship. In Gruchy's (1982b, 226) words

[t]his [AFEE] was the first organization that sought formally to bring together economists who worked in the mainstream tradition of Veblen, Wesley Clair Mitchell, John Maurice Clark, and Clarence E. Ayres. It was the intention of the founders of the AFEE that this association would have as its main purpose the advancement of mainstream institutionalism as it was developed by institutionalists from Veblen to Myrdal.

And

In 1959 the Association for Evolutionary Economics (AFEE) was founded for the purpose of bringing institutionalists together and providing a forum for the discussion and advancement of mainstream institutional economics. It was the hope of the founders of the AFEE that this association would enlarge the influence of the mainstream institutionalism that had developed over the decades from Veblen to Galbraith (Gruchy, 1978, 271).

6. Final notes

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, American institutionalism emerged without a distinct research program or methodology. Decades later, the same was true for post-war institutionalism. This diversity made itself clear during the AFEE's foundation. Among the early members of the AFEE who identified themselves as institutionalists, one could find both pluralism and eclecticism. This paper argues that this diversity among the early AFEE members was aligned with Allan Gruchy's holistic approach to institutional economics and his notion of neoinstitutionalism.

Gruchy's neoinstitutionalism was introduced through his presidential address at the AFEE and developed in *Contemporary Economic Thought*, a book published in 1972. Four reviews of Gruchy's book (1972) were published in 1974. Gruchy deeply disliked one of the reviews, considering it as an attack from conventional economics on institutionalism. He associated it with Warren Samuels' JEI editorship. This event marked the beginning of strong ill feelings between Gruchy and Samuels. The former criticised the issues Samuels focused on through the symposia he had organised, and the association's lack of focus on economic policy. For Gruchy, such aspects showed that the AFEE lacked a distinctive image. In response to the troubled events surrounding Gruchy's judgement of Samuels' editorship and his animosity towards Samuels, Gruchy sharpened his remarks about pluralism, suggesting that conventional economics should be off limits for the editor of the JEI, and to twice more revisit his taxonomy of institutionalists. This resulted in a different segmentation of institutionalists, but not in a more unified perspective than neoinstitutionalism. On the contrary, after

²⁶ Samuels (1975a) focused on the Chicago School of economics, while Samuels (1977a) took into consideration the nature of economics and its relationship with other sciences. Taken together, these introductions highlight that Samuels was not only interested in the path taken by institutional economics, but also by economics in the general sense, with no particular prejudice regarding the neoclassical approach or economics' fellow social sciences—which corroborates his classification here as a fundamental pluralist.

²⁷ There is another history of economic thought paper by Samuels that is about neither Harvard nor Institutional Economics: Samuels (1973b) stresses that Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* is more profound in decision making and power than neoclassical economics suggested.

1975, Gruchy emphasised conflicting groups of institutionalists; he and Samuels were always part of distinct groups that were always in disagreement.

Archive collections consulted

Allan Gruchy Papers. They are in the possession of the authors (provided by late Fred Lee and Marco Cavaliere, who obtained these archives from Malcolm Rutherford).

Clarence Ayres Papers. Briscoe Center of American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX.

John Gamba Papers. Hamilton College, Clinton, NY.

Warren Samuels Papers. Archives and Historical Collections, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.

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