

Salamanca School of Economic Thought in the Texas-Mexico Borderlands

Belinda Roman, PhD
Association for Borderlands Studies
Annual Meetings
April 2018
San Antonio, Texas

ROMÁN
economics

Belinda Román, PhD
210-589-5204
belinda@romaneconomics.com
www.romaneconomics.com

Motivation

- 300 years of Bexar County history
- 200 years of Marianist history
- What was the intellectual context of the establishment of these borderlands and how do they relate to economics?

Catholic Heritage and UNESCO

- 300 years of Catholic presence
- five Franciscan missions strung along the San Antonio River that were established in the early seventeen-hundreds
- UNESCO World Heritage Site

Epistemology

- What is the knowledge on our borderlands?
- Our ABS program gives us an idea of what branches of knowledge we tend to focus on.
- It still seems that something more fundamental was missing from our Borderlands History—a consideration of the intellectual milieu that underpins all if not most of these fields of research.
- This research a modest effort to locate Borderlands economic thought within the broader history of economic thought and economic history.

Economic Thought in Context

- Joseph Schumpeter acknowledges in his work, *The History of Economic Analysis* (1950):

“Hence, even economists who are not economic historians themselves and who merely read the historical reports written by others must understand how these reports came into being or else they will not be able to appraise the real meaning. We shall not be able to live up to the program that follows from this.”
(Schumpeter, Chapter 2, p. 11)

Context: William H Sewell

William H Sewell, distinguished University of Chicago Socio-economist, writing in 2008 explains:

“If it is true that events transform or reconfigure social relations...[Temporal heterogeneity] implies that the consequences of a given act are not intrinsic in the act but rather will depend on the nature of the social world within which it takes place. This assumption is quite contrary to the practices of mainstream social sciences...We cannot know what an act or an utterance means and what its consequences might be without understanding the semantics, the technologies, the conventions...that characterized the world in which the action takes place. (2008, p. 518)

Context: Dierdre McCloskey

Dierdre McCloskey, noted economic historian, in her presentation on the subject of the future of Economic History to the Allied Social Sciences Association meetings held in Philadelphia in 2018 remarked:

“A showing that ideas matter is not so unusual nowadays among historians. But it is another project to show that the material base itself is determined by habits of the lip and mind—*that* conclusion evokes angry words among most people on the economistic side of the social sciences, and often enough from historical materialists in the humanities.” (2018, p. 11)

Role of Catholic Church

- An inescapable factor is the role of the Catholic Church in the enterprise of settling what is now Bexar County and in advancing the presence of European interests in just about any part of the globe where they colonized.
- The role of the Church is a contentious issue

Missionary Colleges

- *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV was intended to oversee the worldwide effort of the Catholic Church in light of internal struggles between the various orders and the uneven success of its operations in far-flung areas of the world.
- The first such colleges were established in Italy, Spain and Portugal, and later extended into the Americas.
- Colegio Apostólico de la Santa Cruz de Queretaro, began the process in 1683. This was followed by Guatemala (1700)
- The college of Queretaro was split after a disagreed within the Queretaro faculty, leading to the establishment of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Zacatecas (1707)

Faith and Temporality

- Faith and temporality were the key pillars of Catholic Doctrine.
- Temporality applied to the day-to-day practice of life outside the spiritual world.
- Temporality implied living, that is the fundamental economics of existence—food, shelter and clothing, plus the rules of engaging Others – the indigenous tribes.
- In Spain (and Portugal), these matters of temporality were tied to money, hence the collection of tithes, and general administration of parishes, which were overseen by the Church hierarchy.
- In the New World, these duties were entrusted to mendicant orders by direct authority from the Pope and Crown (Galindo, 2018).

Marjorie Grice-Hutchinson

- Marjorie Grice-Hutchinson is credited with reviving interest in the Salamanca School of Economic Theory with the publication of her seminal work on the School in 1952.
- She was considered an expert on Spanish Economic History and explained that these thinkers originated ideas about value and price.
- Issues addressed by this School, primary among them were the explosion of credit, finance and speculation attributed to the riches arriving from the New World and how these impacted on vital aspects of Spanish moral considerations such as distributive justice, the interdicts of usury and received notions about money and value.

Hayek and The Scholastics

- Alfred Hayek remarked in his Nobel Prize comments that this school consisted of “anticipators of modern economics.”
- “[Scholastics] combine a strong adherence to scholastic methods of rigorous deductive and speculative reasoning, traditional authoritative sources with the objective to present, develop and apply Christian doctrine to the most salient issues of their time.” (p. 5)

Mendicants, Vitoria and Pedagogy

- The Jesuit and Dominican Orders were at the epicenter of a renewed intellectual project located at the University of Salamanca.
- Dominican Francisco de Vitoria founder.
- The School of Salamanca considered how to integrate Catholic teachings with social trends of the time,
- It was a broad-based intellectual movement with a clear purpose. Therefore, economic ideas were considered in light of the Catholic mandate for piety and social justice.

Scholastics in the Borderlands

- In North America, the focus can be narrowed to the Franciscan Order and the establishment of the missionary colleges, in particular the Missionary Colleges of Queretaro and Zacatecas, from which the founders of the Bexar County missions emerged.
- The idea of a “missionary college” originates in Rome as the Universal Church looked for ways to better manage the extent of its reach due to the ever-expanding spread of its contact concomitant with the movement

Training for the Missionary Field

- Training at the colleges focused on faith and learning.
- These missionaries were to be defenders of the Doctrine and the forefront of expansion through evangelization.
- It was agreed that their training required a deep knowledge of Catholic teachings and rhetoric in order to convince and persuade potential converts through enthusiasm that Christianity was the way to salvation.
- Key to this endeavor was the learning of local languages along with logic and other Humanities (Galindo 2018, p. 119).
- The structure of learning was that of the Scholastic atmosphere.
 - The first two years were a strict adherence to the daily schedule of prayer, devotion, meditation and learning, followed by a year in which *conferencias* allowed friars to openly debate and discuss topics.
 - Conferences gave rise to discussions of such temporal questions as money lending, labor relations in the work place, wine selling, granting of indulgences and sexual relations (Galindo p 150).

Influence is in the Pedagogy

- The Salamanca School's influence translates into practice in the Borderlands
- In Texas, and San Antonio in particular, the missionary colleges at Queretaro and Zacatecas (after the expulsion of the Jesuits) where the training colleges for all missionaries sent to the area.
- Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU), in San Antonio, Texas in their Old Spanish Mission Historical Collection within the Mexican-American Studies Center

Written Record

- The Franciscan missionaries did not take a penny – mendicant orders.
- Many reports and inventories of every item in the mission possession. This was the true extend of their management of temporal issues.

Summary

- School of Thought lost in time
- Relevant to Borderlands in general because of globalizing influence of Catholic Church
- More archival work
- More areas to consider
- Trajectory over time

Thank you.

ROMÁN
economics

Belinda Román, PhD

210-589-5204

belinda@romaneconomics.com

www.romaneconomics.com

SAN ANTONIO