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分工与交易

——一个一般理论及其对中国非专业化问题的应用分析

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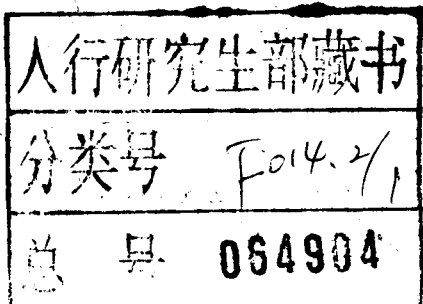
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作者介绍

盛洪，1954年12月生于北京。1983年毕业于中国人民大学，获得经济学学士学位。1986年和1990年相继获得经济学硕士、经济学博士学位。现在中国社会科学院经济研究所工作。

盛洪对经济学各领域有着广泛的兴趣。自八十年代以来，他先后致力于宏观经济理论和中国宏观经济问题的研究；产业经济理论和中国产业政策的研究；有关中国经济体制改革的理论与实践的研究；制度变革和经济发展之关系的研究；制度的结构、起源和变迁的研究；数十篇研究成果分别发表在《经济研究》、《管理世界》、《中国：发展与改革》、《上海经济研究》等学术刊物上。1987年以后，又注重介绍和翻译新制度经济学的文献。组织翻译了罗纳德·科斯教授的论文集《企业、市场与法律》（与陈郁合作）。本书为盛洪的第一部学术专著。

出版前言



为了全面地、系统地反映当代经济学的全貌及其进程，总结与挖掘当代经济学已有的和潜在的成果，展示当代经济学新的发展方向，我们决定出版“当代经济学系列丛书”。

“当代经济学系列丛书”是大型的、高层次的、综合性的经济学术理论丛书。它包括四个子系列：(1)当代经济学文库；(2)当代经济学译库；(3)当代经济学教学参考书系；(4)当代经济学新知文丛。该丛书在学科领域方面，不仅着眼于各传统经济学科的新成果，更注重经济前沿学科、边缘学科和综合学科的新成就；在选题的采择上，广泛联系海内外学者，努力开掘学术功力深厚、思想新颖独到、作品水平拔尖的“高、新、尖”著作。“文库”力求达到中国经济学界当前的最高水平；“译库”翻译当代经济学的名人名著；“教学参考书系”主要出版国外著名高等院校 80 年代后

期 90 年代初期的通用教材；“新知文丛”则运用通俗易懂的语言，介绍国际上当代经济学的最新发展。

本丛书致力于推动中国经济学的现代化和国际标准化，力图在一个不太长的时期内，从研究范围、研究内容、研究方法、分析技术等方面逐步完成中国经济学从传统向现代的转轨。我们渴望经济学家们支持我们的追求，向这套丛书提供高质量的标准经济学著作，进而为提高中国经济学的水平，使之立足于世界经济之林而共同努力。

我们和经济学家一起瞻望着中国经济学的未来。

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ABSTRACT

THE DIVISION OF LABOR AND THE TRANSACTIONS: A GENERAL THEORY AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE PROBLEM OF UNSPECIALIZATION IN CHINA

I

This book discusses the problem of the division of labor which is a very old but eternal theme in Economics. It seems that what Adam Smith had said about it is all what Economics can say, so economists after him, except a few, hardly talk about it again. However, what happened in China reminds us that Adam Smith did not give us a perfect explanation about the problem.

Contrary to the tendency of specialization described by Adam Smith, there has been an interesting phenomenon in China in these decades: enterprises prefer producing

parts and components of their products by themselves to purchasing them from the market. There is a tendency among enterprises in China to become a so-called "full-function factory" which produces most of the parts and components it needs at a scale far from economic scale. Such a problem has troubled the Chinese government and economists for many years. Almost all the efforts of the central government to change the problem of unspecialization failed. This gets us into a dilemma: now that specialization can bring benefit to people, why enterprises in China would rather choose unspecialization? It seems that the economic theory of division of labor, which we need and can be regarded as a "perfect" one, should be able not only to explain why the division of labor has developed, but also to indicate the reason why the specialization could NOT be advanced.

II

People must maintain their consumption and production through exchange with others once the division of labor appears, since people can not divide their consumption while they can divide their production. The theory of division of labor is concerned not only with the relationship between human beings and the Nature but also with that between human beings. Therefore, it is impossible to further the analysis of division of labor only depending on the approach of standard economics which mainly focuses on the problem of resource allocation, i.e. the relationship between human beings and the Nature. However, the classical political economy and its modern successors, such as Institutional Economists, including old, neo- and new ones, can give us some help, since they traditionally consider economic problems from both the relationship between

human beings and the Nature, and that between human beings themselves.

In order to resolve that dilemma mentioned above, we must study people's behavior in their transactions as well as in their productions. Accordingly, the Institutional Approach, which emphasizes the study of both transactions and productions, will be the main theoretical method in this book. the concept of "Transaction Costs", which is developed by New Institutional Economics, will be the key concept in the analysis, and a combination of the methods of the Neoclassical Economics and the Institutional Economics will be a methodological goal I seek for in the research.

III

This book consists of three parts. In the first part, which includes two chapters (Chapter 1 and 2), problems and basic concepts are presented. Chapter 1 expounds the

fundamental concepts and classification of division of labor and specialization, discusses the economy of division of labor, and review briefly the history of the division of labor and specialization. Division of labor and specialization in production is here defined as a kind of production form. Correspondingly, unspecialization is another kind of production form which does not carry out the division of labor in production. In real world, human beings may make choice between the two production forms. Dynamically, there is a process of specialization when people adopt more specialized form of production, and there is a process of vertical integration when people make the opposite decision. In terms of both technology and law, we can divide the vertical integration into two kinds: High Vertical Integration and Low Vertical Integration. Although there are various discussions about the benefits of (i.e. economies of) division of labor and specialization, I in this book simply explain them as that a given pro-

duction operation arrives at optimal production scale through division of labor, which otherwise can not be achieved by the unspecialized form. The optimal production scale implies that the average production cost is lowest. The marginal return of division of labor is the difference between the average production cost of the optimal production scale and that of the unspecialized production form. Therefore the marginal return of division of labor may also be regarded as marginal saving in production cost.

No doubt, the level of division of labor and specialization in China has increased since 1949. However, the tendency of unspecialization can not be neglected. In Chapter 2, I describe the problems of unspecialization as phenomena of "full-function factory", "general workshop", "pocket-society enterprise", "low-scale duplicate investment", "non-diversity of products" and "similarity in industrial structures between regions". Dynamically, the tendency of unspeciali-

zation is the incarnation of unspecialized choice of enterprises and regional governments against the specialization efforts of the central government.

IV

The second part is the core of this book. In this part, in order to answer the question why people choose specialized production form or unspecialized one, and find the necessary and sufficient conditions of the development of division of labor and the expansion of firm scale in modern history, different forms of transaction activities and their costs are analysed.

The development of division of labor in production inevitably brings the increment of people's contacts with each other which is defined as Transaction Activity. In Chapter 3, Transaction Activity is regarded as a general concept with the same importance as Production Activity. While production

activity is an economic activity by which people obtain benefit from Nature, transaction activity is an economic activity by which people gain from the transactions between themselves. In maximizing people's interest, there is an alternative relation between transaction activity and production activity; in employing and consuming the same resources, there is a competitive relation between them. Since it is a kind of economic activity, transaction activity can provide utility but it also needs costs. The factor determining the transaction utility and transaction costs, besides transaction technology and social economic situation, is mainly the transaction form. The forms of transaction may basically be classified as bargaining transaction, managerial transaction and rationing transaction (as Commons defined). A set of transaction activities obeying the same transaction form is called an institutional arrangement. The market, the firm and the government are three institutional arrangements

corresponding to those three kinds of transaction forms mentioned above. There are complementary relations among these three forms when they realize different transactional functions; there are alternative relations between them when they work for the same transactional function.

Chapter 4 is a static analysis of the problem of "why people choose specialized or unspecialized production form". The analysis develops in two dimensions: one is varied transaction forms and the other is varied states of market structure. Given market scale and resources, an individual or an economic organization may make choice between two production forms, the specialized and the unspecialized, and between two transaction forms, transaction through market and one within firms. These two production forms and two transaction forms may involve three basic choice combinations: (1) specialized production through market transaction; (2) specialized production within firms and (3)

unspecialized production within firms. Whether an individual or an economic organization adopts the transaction form through market or within firms depends on which one of these two transaction forms has lower unit transaction cost. When the marginal cost of market transaction equal to that of intrafirm transaction, the specialization level of a firm achieves equilibrium, and at this point its scale is determined. When the marginal cost of market transaction and that of intrafirm transaction are higher than the marginal return brought by the specialization, people would rather choose the unspecialized production form.

The higher the unit cost of market transaction is, the more difficult it is to realize the specialized production through market; and the stronger the monopoly power in market and the higher the transaction costs, the more reluctant the consumers are to buy the products by specialized production. To monopolistic producers, the monopoly behavior is an alternative choice to specialized stragedy.

People would not be willing to adopt specialized production form if they are able to obtain higher benefit by monopoly behaviors such as trade association, cartel, controlling stock company and trust. The government activities may have either active or negative effect on the market structure. Monopoly power may be reduced by enacting laws and regulations to restrict monopoly behavior and guarantee fair competition. However, other government measures intervening market, such as the high regulated price, the low regulated price and prohibition of free entrance and exit and so on, are possible to make the market power stronger, or result other similar consequences. The low regulated price is a government intervening measure which has a special meaning. The low regulated price inevitably brings about shortage of supply which may increase the transaction costs of obtaining the product or service in short. The shortage makes producers and purchasers to adopt the stragedy of