



Workshop on Money as a Value System

Waseda Institute for Political Economy

Date and time: Monday, 18 March 2024, 15:00-17:00 (Japan Standard Time, 9 hours ahead of GST)

Venue (Hybrid): Building 3, Room 710, [Waseda Campus](#), Waseda University and online (Zoom)

Registration: If you wish to participate, please register in advance using [this form](#). After registration, the meeting URL (Zoom) will be distributed via email prior to the event.

Speakers:

1. Juntaro Fukada (Mie University) "Shell money in Rabaul, Papua New Guinea" (tentative)
2. Masato Shizume (Waseda University) "Transition from a multiple to a single currency system in the 19th century Japan" (tentative)
3. Chikako Nakayama (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies) "Revisiting Georg Fredrich Knapp's State Theory of Money" (tentative)
4. Anders Ögren (Uppsala University) Discussion

Standard textbooks of economics often attribute the need for money to the lack of a double coincidence of wants and proceed to explain three functions of money: means of payment, unit of account, and store of value. A common feature of this view is to focus on the function of money and explain it based on its utility and convenience. This explanation can be defined as "the functional view" of money, as it explains money through its functions. This perspective dates back to Aristotle and Adam Smith and has been enhanced by theorists such as Stanley Jevons and Karl Menger. However, this view has faced criticism for being too narrow or lacking historical evidence. Indeed, as Keynes indicates, we don't know when and how money emerged.

Other observers in various fields have proposed different views on money. For example, John Ruskin claims that "money is correspondent in its nature to the title-deed of an estate. Though the deed be burned, the estate still exists, but the right to it has become disputable." Georg Friedrich Knapp defines money as a creature of legal structure. More recently, David Graeber collects historical cases of the emergence of money within a community, focusing on the value sharing within the community. Akinobu Kuroda describes a community to use the same currency as a "currency circuit." While the methodology and theoretical background vary, a general feature of this view is to focus on the relationship among people to use the same money. This view can be identified as "the charter view" of money because it focuses on a charter among people.

In this workshop, we explore alternative ways of viewing money. To achieve this goal, we examine the history of money as "a system to share/communicate the value of things" aligning with the perspectives of Graeber and Kuroda. We invite speakers from anthropology, economic history and the history of economic thought to discuss the evolution of money. The cases we delve into include: 1) the practical use of shell money in Rabaul, Papua New Guinea in the 21st century, 2) the transition



from a system with plural currencies to a single currency in Japan in the late 19th century, and 3) the monetary theorist Georg Fredrich Knapp's view on money in the early 20th century. These episodes provide us with diverse perspectives for reexamining money from different angles.

(References)

Graeber, David. *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams*, 2001.

Jevons, W. Stanley. *Money and the Mechanism of Exchange*, 1875.

Keynes, John Maynard. *A Treatise on Money*, 1930.

Knapp, Georg Friedrich. *Staatliche Theorie des Geldes*, 1905.

Kuroda, Akinobu. "Concurrent but Non-Integrable Currency Circuits: Complementary Relationships among Monies in Modern China and Other Regions," *Financial History review* 15(1): 17-36, 2008.

Menger, Karl. "On the Origin of Money," *Economic Journal*, vol.2, 1892.

Ruskin, John. *Munera Pulveris: Six Essays on the Elements of Political Economy*, 1862.