

Prof. John H. Munro
Department of Economics
University of Toronto

munro5@chass.utoronto.ca
john.munro@utoronto.ca
<http://www.economics.utoronto.ca/munro5/>

Revised: 3 January 2013

Economics 303Y1: Economic History of Modern Europe to 1914

**Topic No. 7 [13] : Impediments to Continental Industrialization:
The ‘Slow Industrialization’ of France, 1789 - 1914**

A. The Debate: in general

- * 1. François Crouzet, ‘The Historiography of French Economic Growth in the Nineteenth Century’, The Economic History Review, 2nd ser., 56:2 (May 2003), 215-42.
- * 2. François Crouzet, ‘French Economic Growth in the Nineteenth Century Reconsidered’, History, new ser. 59 (1974), 167-79.
- * 3. Patrick K. O’Brien, ‘Path Dependency: Or Why Britain Became an Industrialized and Urbanized Economy Long Before France’, The Economic History Review, 2nd ser., 49:2 (May 1996), 213-49.
- * 4. N.F.R. Crafts, ‘Economic Growth in France and Britain, 1830-1910: A Review of the Evidence’, Journal of Economic History, 44:1 (Mar 1984), 49-68; and also N.F.R. Crafts, ‘Gross National Product in Europe, 1870-1910: Some New Estimates’, Explorations in Economic History, 20 (Oct. 1983), 387-401.
- * 5. Paul R. Sharp and Jacob L. Weisdorf, ‘French Revolution or Industrial Revolution? A Note on the Contrasting Experiences of England and France up to 1800’, Cliometrica: Journal of Historical Economics and Econometric History, 6:1 (January 2012), 79-88.
- * 6. Colin Heywood, The Development of the French Economy, 1750 - 1914, Studies in Economic and Social History series (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), especially pp. 9-43.
- * 7. Patrick O’Brien and Caglar Keyder, Economic Growth in Britain and France, 1780 - 1914 (London: Routledge, 1978; revised edn., London, 2011).
- * 8. N.F.R. Crafts, ‘Macroinventions, Economic Growth, and “Industrial Revolution” in Britain and France’, and D. S. Landes, ‘Some Further Thoughts on Accident in History: A Reply to Professor Crafts’, The Economic History Review, 2nd ser., 48:3 (August 1995), 591-98, 599-601.
- * 9. Robert Aldrich, ‘Late-Comer or Early-Starter? New Views on French Economic History’, Journal of European Economic History, 16 (1987), 89 - 100.
- * 10. Barry Supple, ed., The Experience of Economic Growth: Case Studies in Economic History (New York, 1963):
 - (a) Rondo Cameron, ‘Economic Growth and Stagnation in France’, pp. 328-39
 - (b) David Landes, ‘French Entrepreneurship and Industrial Growth in the Nineteenth Century’, pp. 230-53.
- * 11. Rondo Cameron, ‘Was England Really Superior to France?’ Journal of Economic History, 46:4 (Dec.

1986), 1031-39.

12. C. Nardinelli, 'Productivity in XIXth Century France and Britain: A Note on the Comparisons', Journal of European Economic History, 17 (Fall 1988), 427-34.
13. D.R. Lect and J.A. Shaw, 'French Economic Stagnation, 1700-1960: Old Economic History Revisited', Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 8 (1978), 531-41.
14. David R. Weir, 'Life Under Pressure: France and England, 1670-1870', Journal of Economic History, 42 (March 1984), 27-48.
- * 15. Christian Morrisson and Wayne Snyder, 'The Income Inequality of France in Historical Perspective', European Review of Economic History, 4:1 (April 2000), 59-84.
- * 16. Jeff Horn, The Path Not Taken: French Industrialization in the Age of Revolution, 1750 - 1830 (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2006).

B. The Roehl Thesis, 'Backwardness', Entrepreneurship, and the 'Firm Size' Debate:

- * 1. Richard Roehl, 'French Industrialization: A Reconsideration', Explorations in Economic History, 13 (1976), 233-81.
- * 2. Robert Locke, 'French Industrialization: the Roehl Thesis Reconsidered', and Richard Roehl, 'A Reply', Explorations in Economic History, 18 (Oct. 1981), 415-33, 434-35.
- * 3. John Vincent Nye, 'Firm Size and Economic Backwardness: A New Look at the French Industrialization Debate', Journal of Economic History, 47:3 (Sept. 1987), 649 - 70.
- * 4. Pierre Sicsic, 'Establishment Size and Economies of Scale in 19th-Century France', Explorations in Economic History, 31:4 (October 1994), 453-78.
- * 5. James Forman-Peck, Elisa Boccaletti, Tom Nicholas, 'Entrepreneurs and Business Performance in Nineteenth-Century France', European Review of Economic History, 2:3 (December 1998): 235-62.
- * 6. Ulrich Doraszelski, 'Measuring Returns to Scale in Nineteenth-Century French Industry', Explorations in Economic History, 41:3 (July 2004), 256-81.
7. Claude Fohlen, 'Entrepreneurship and Management in France in the Nineteenth Century', in Peter Mathias, ed., Cambridge Economic History of Europe, Vol. VII:1 (1978), pp. 347-81.
- * 8. Michael Stephen Smith, The Emergence of Modern Business Enterprise in France, 1800-1930 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).
- *9. Michel Hau, 'Entrepreneurship in France', in David S. Landes, Joel Mokyr, and William J. Baumol, The Invention of Enterprise: Entrepreneurship from Ancient Mesopotamia to Modern Times (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 305-30.

For the background for the Roehl debate, read: Alexander Gerschenkron, Economic Backwardness in

Historical Perspective: A Book of Essays (New York, 1962): (a) 'Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective', pp. 5-30; (b) 'Reflections on the Concept of 'Prerequisites' of Modern Industrialization', pp. 31-51; (c) 'Social Attitudes, Entrepreneurship, and Economic Development', pp. 52-71.

QUESTIONS:

1. Did the French economy grow as quickly and completely as did the British and German economies in the 19th century: what is the evidence for comparative economic growth rates?
2. Discuss and debate some of the current theses concerning the nature of French economic growth and industrialization in the period 1789 - 1914:
 - a) Cameron's thesis about the relationships between and among: the French Revolutionary land reforms, peasant farming after the Revolution, slow population growth, agricultural and industrial stagnation. Is there any evidence for this thesis?
 - b) Landes' thesis that the family -- in agriculture, trade, and industry, both as an economic and as a social unit -- acted as an impediment to entrepreneurship, industrialization, economic growth.
 - c) The O'Brien-Keyder thesis comparing the structures of British and French agriculture (especially in northern France).
 - d) Roehl's use of the famous Gerschenkron thesis on 'backwardness', but reversed to reinterpret French industrialization much more favourably.
 - e) Crouzet's 'revisionist' theses on French economic growth in the 19th century.
 - f) Craft's 'Review of the Evidence', and Aldrich's 'New Views' in these debates.
3. Discuss the possible impediments to French economic growth and industrialization in the 19th century in terms of some of the following:
 - a) the institutional heritage of the past: especially feudal
 - b) the social and economic structure of agriculture, north and south
 - c) the location of natural resources
 - d) demographic trends and population structures
 - e) government economic policies
 - f) commercial and financial institutions: the structure of banking
 - g) social structures and attitudes: towards business, saving, investment, entrepreneurship, labour.
4. Is it legitimate to consider problems of economic growth and industrialization as though 19th century France had been a fully integrated national economic entity, making *national* economic comparisons? Or should the relevant comparisons be made in terms of the *regional* economies of western Europe? For example, in terms of industrialization (based on iron, steel, and coal), should we instead compare North-West France (the Lille and Pas de Calais region) with southern Belgium, the Rhineland and the Saar (in Germany), and the English Midlands or South Wales?
5. Did any *region* or *regions* of France undergo either an agricultural or industrial revolution, comparable to those of Britain and Germany, before 1914?