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On the Status and the Future of Economic History in the World

Abstract

In spite of a rapid globalization of our discipline, surprisingly little is known about economic history as a discipline and the scholars who are representing it: How many economic historians are there in the world? In which countries or world regions are they concentrated, and where are they lacking? Can we explain differences in the number of economic historians who are participating on world congresses, and which determinants encourage or limit participation propensity? We also provide a forecast of world congress participation in 2012.

This study is based on the first initiative to estimate the extent of the field in the world. Using an email questionnaire we analyze the global situation of this discipline. Overall 59 countries could be surveyed in this overview, including countries such as Vietnam, Ghana and Haiti. We estimate the overall number of economic historians in the world to be around 10,400 scholars, and the numbers of the global elite that had some economic history exposure around 39 million.

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INTRODUCTION

Economic History has developed into a truly global discipline over the past two decades, just as the world economy in general. For example, the World Congresses of the International Economic History Association took place increasingly outside of Europe and North America, such as in Argentina in 1998, and Latin America has developed a regular continent-wide congress over the last decade. The next World Economic History Congress will take place in Africa, in Stellenbosch (South Africa) in 2012. Also the topics of economic history sessions have become internationally and even globally comparative. In spite of this rapid globalization of our discipline, surprisingly little is known about economic history as a discipline and the scholars who are representing it: How many economic historians are there in the world? In which countries or world regions are they concentrated, and where are only few of them, perhaps in spite of an otherwise developed university system? Can we explain differences in the number of economic historians who are participating on world congresses? Which determinants encourage or limit the propensity to publish in international economic history journals?

This study is based on the first initiative to estimate the extent of the field of economic history in the world. Using an email questionnaire we analyze the global situation of this discipline. However, it turned out that it is quite a challenge to estimate the number of economic historians, because respondents probably have in mind different definitions of what an economic historian is: for example, should people working in museums that develop economy history exhibitions be included, or only those who are working full-time at universities? Should retired colleagues be included in the estimates? Moreover, economic history combines methods and rhetorical styles from economics, history and sometimes other scholarly disciplines. This position between academic fields offers a large potential for interdisciplinary and exciting work, but it certainly also generates a certain heterogeneity. Our

strategy to cope with these issues is that we have decided to ask a substantial number of people to give an estimate of economic historians in a broad sense (including doctoral students), because the average of many different definitions might yield something like a common sense estimate. Especially in large countries, the average of different estimates helps to improve the accuracy.

In order to obtain these estimates, we have sent an email questionnaire to all countries of the world in which we have contact persons or could find contact, and ask among other things for the number of economic historians in the respective country. We could conclude the survey with a quite remarkable response rate. To give an overview of the share of countries covered by responses we summarize the countries into nine main world regions and weighted them by population. For North America (including Australia and New Zealand) and Western Europe we could include all countries. Also the region East Asia shows a very high coverage and five world regions were well represented. Only the sub-Saharan Africa region was slightly less covered by the survey. In sum, we can provide a quite comprehensive picture of global economic history in this article.

The further plan of this study is as follows: After a short review of the current literature on economic history, we analyze the number of economic historians by country. In order to verify the accuracy of this numbers, we countercheck our new data by comparing them to conference participation, membership in national organizations and the number of publications in economic history journals. In the next section we give a short overview about the situation of the students and doctoral students in our field and report, which topics the researchers concern today and what the International Economic History Association should do to promote our discipline in the world. The paper ends with a brief conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

While there are a number of studies describing economic history as a discipline and the main approaches of the different schools, a quantitative study of the number of economic historians was lacking so far. Among the former type of study, the excellent survey of J.W. Drukker should be mentioned. Drukker describes the disputes among nineteenth century economists who were mainly divided into the historical and neoclassical school.[1] The historical school influenced traditional economic historians, whereas neoclassical thought was partly received by the cliometric movement of the 1960s and 1970s. However, as the latter became interested in institutional effects on economic development, a number of elements of the historical school were rediscovered by quantitative economic historians ("Cliometricians").

Some steps to quantification of the discipline were taken by individual country studies. For example, Canada's economic history group was recently surveyed, with a special focus on courses taught in the various universities and colleges. One of the questions raised in this article was about how retired colleagues should be counted when a quantitative survey is performed. Clearly, retired colleagues are often active in research, and some continue to teach, while others turn to alternative pursuits. Including them in the total number, yielded in the Canadian Case a slightly higher number of economic historians than our interviewed partners suggested.

An international overview of publication behaviour, including differences by nationalities was given by Jaime Reis in a presentation on the European Historical Economics conference in Geneva, 2009. The author was so nice to provide his data to us, so that it can be included in the analysis below.[2]

Quantitative data not on the number of economic historians, but on the number of journal submissions by world region are regularly presented by the editors of the Journal of

[1] Drukker, *Revolution*.
[2] See also Di Vaio and Weisdorf, "Ranking", analyzed the citation behaviour, although their main interest is in evaluating different journals.

Economic History. In the last issue of March 2011, Price Fishback, showed for example showed that Non-U.S. topics increased somewhat among the submissions, bringing down the U.S. share to "only" 32 percent in 2009-10. For example, Africa increased as a region of study from only one submission per year in both 2006/7 and 2007/8 via four in 2008/9 to now eight submissions in the last year. While this still only accounts for five percent of total submissions, the increase is substantial. Western Europe including the UK accounts for 43 percent, and most of the other world regressions also account for 4-5 percent: Asia and Pacific (5), Eastern Europe (4), Latin America including Caribbean (6), Middle East (4).[3] Clearly, the geography of topics is not identical to the geography of economic historians, but tables like this can be used for comparisons with our new estimates presented below.

SAMPLE AND QUESTIONNAIRE

Evidence on the situation of our discipline was collected on the basis of an email questionnaire. The questionnaire included eight questions and was divided into three parts. In the first section we asked about the status of economic history in the respective country of each participant. In the following section we interviewed the respondents about the most relevant topics in the field of economic history. The last part of the questionnaire asked for information about the responding person.

We have sent the email questionnaire to colleagues in all countries of the world in which we could find contacts. A snowball system allowed us to reach many of the main persons and researchers in the field of economic history. The survey concluded with 242 respondents, after questionnaires were sent to some 1,100 persons. This is a response rate of around 22%, which is quite remarkable, compared to similar questionnaire activities. To give

[3] Fishback, "Editors' Notes".

an overview of the share of countries covered by responses we summarize the countries into nine main world regions and weighted them by population (Table 1).

North America (including Australia and New Zealand), East Asia and Western Europe reach coverage values of 98-100 percent. Eastern Europe, Latin America, South and Southeast Asia also have quite good levels of documentation. Only sub-Saharan Africa with a coverage of 0.17 is not as well represented by the survey, mainly because the number of participants at earlier world congresses was quite low. The underrepresentation of the sub-Saharan region at past world congresses might also be a sign for the lack of governmental support and the thinner research infrastructure.[4] Only South Africa as the most productive country in social sciences in the sub-Saharan region was an exception in the past.[5] Overall 59 countries could be included in this overview, including countries such as Vietnam, Ghana and Haiti.

All survey questions were open-ended responses and participant's responses were anonymous. The average age of the respondents was around 46 years, and it varied from 24 to 80. We also asked whether the respondents would characterize themselves more as an economist, more as an historian, or whether they saw themselves between both disciplines. 82 voices felt more like being historians, and also 82 respondents situated themselves in between, whereas a clear economic focus was chosen by 50 voices. 27 participants abstained from responding to this question. It seems that the respondents cover the various fields of economic history quite well.

NUMBER OF ECONOMIC HISTORIANS

[4] Research in this region is quite underfunded and the few science institutions in some African countries were sometimes even destroyed by domestic policies and events during the past decades. UNESCO, *Social Science Report*, p. 65.

[5] South Africa was actively measured by the UNESCO by its output of ISI papers over the past twenty years. As a result, South Africa produces about half of all output in the social sciences and more than three times more than Nigeria, the second most productive country. Ibid, p. 64.

After we have taken a close look at the structure of the questionnaire and its participants we now want to document the number of economic historians per country. In the first section of the questionnaire, we asked for an estimate of this number.

As already mentioned, economic history is characterized by a certain heterogeneity. As it is the case for most scholarly fields, there is no clear-cut, universal definition of 'the economic historian' per se. So respondents probably have in mind different definitions of what an economic historian is. We therefore asked to include also historians, economists and other social scientists with strong interests in this field. This estimation also included doctoral students, professors, and other scholarly staff (permanent and temporary).[6] Especially in large countries, the average or median of many different definitions might yield something like a common sense estimate and helps to improve the accuracy. Results are reported in Table 2.

In the first place there is Japan with an absolute number of 1,340 economic historians, followed by China (800), the United Kingdom (770) and the United States (675). Astonishingly high numbers were also reached for Vietnam, Mexico and Turkey.

Why has Japan the largest number? When we take a look at Japan's long and continuous history, and the strong interest of the Japanese public in the history of the country, the high number of economic historians seems to be no surprise. Japan is even today a country that returns to its tradition and history in many facets of life. Especially the number of business historians is quite high in Japan. They are well-presented in national organizations and perhaps therefore also slightly more visible than in other countries. On the other side of the spectrum there are some countries with few economic historians. We consider economic historians in those countries to be pioneers, who promote our discipline even without a strong group around them. We have to admit, that sometimes our estimates are weak for those

[6] Because a country-wide estimation might have been sometimes too difficult, we also asked for an estimated number of economic historians within the own university, if that was more feasible.

countries. Please note also that only 59 countries are listed. Most of the other countries typically have small communities.

However, one reason for the high absolute number of economic historians especially in China, Japan and the US might be the large population relative to other countries. China and the US have a huge pool of potential economic historians. In order to take this into consideration, we document in a next step the number of economic historians relative to population (Table 3). Sweden occupies the first rank with 20 economic historians per million inhabitants, followed by Uruguay (13.3), Norway (13.1) and Portugal (11.4). The United Kingdom with 11.3 and Japan with 10.6 are on position five and six. As expected, China and the US had lower values in per capita terms.

We were also curious about the question: Is there a linkage between income of the corresponding country and the number of economic historians per capita? Are economic historians perhaps something like a "luxury product"? Is economic history consumed in greater quantity if incomes are high? To analyze this question we compare our results with the GDP of each country (Figure 1). In fact, there seems to be a linkage between the number of economic historians in a country and its GDP. Sweden with the highest rate of economic historians has a high GDP. Rich countries such as the United Kingdom, Norway and Portugal feature also many economic historians per capita, whereas Haiti, Mauritania and Ghana have relatively small numbers. However, there are also some countries which are rich, but do not have as many, such as Australia, Germany, Canada, and the United States. This might be partly caused by underreporting, but might also reflect a real phenomenon. Among the "New World" countries which received a large number of European immigrants, the interest in history might be slightly more limited, because history was less stimulating for national identities. Germany had the special development that during the boom period of the "Historical School" of the 19th and early 20th century, economists were also partly economic

historians. When this school was replaced by other approaches in the post-war period, the chair denominations were not changed proportionally in favour of more economic history.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

After estimating and discussing the number of economic historians in the respective country we now ask, whether the new estimates can be confirmed by comparing them to (1) conference participation statistics, (2) memberships in national organizations, and (3) publications in economic history journals? Apart from counterchecking the numbers of scholars, this also allows to understand some of the determinants of conference participation and publication propensities in international journals. First we turn to conference participation.

We fit a gravity model that explains conference participation with distance, number of economic historians in the source country, home market effects of the country in which a world congress takes place, and other variables. The data stems from the participation statistics on world congresses over the past 15 years. We have collected participation statistics on the three world congresses of Buenos Aires 2002, Helsinki 2006 and Utrecht 2009 (Table 4). Unfortunately, those statistics were not always available on a country basis, but sometimes groups like "Scandinavia" or "other Asia" were formed (see the notes to the table for further information). Nevertheless, the majority of countries (and groups) could be made comparable. As we will assess a home market effect below, we decided to separate Finland and "other Scandinavia" in the case of the Helsinki congress.

What do the figures show about participation trends? In general, the participation from African countries is relatively modest (Table 4, column 1-3).[7] Chinese and Japanese participation has substantially grown (in the Chinese case, we can observe this only for 2006-

[7] We will discuss the "Forecast 2012 column" below.

2009, because 2002 it was included in "other Asia"). Russia was represented better in Helsinki than elsewhere, which might be caused by the geographic proximity of Finland to the Northwestern parts of Russia. Geographic proximity clearly also played a role in the case of European countries which had sent less delegates to Buenos Aires than to the other two congresses (and the macroeconomic crisis in Argentina was probably also important here). The largest participation figure in all congresses was the one of the Finnish in Helsinki with 157 participants, but the British, U.S., Spanish and "other Scandinavia" communities were also quite well represented. These countries reach values of more than 100 participants sometimes. This might be explained with their large groups of economic historians at home -- although Japan and China also feature large groups, which promise additional potential for the future. It is a bit astonishing that according to the Buenos Aires statistics, there was nobody from "other Latin America" (apart from Argentina, Mexico, Brazil). This might be a small data mistake, because, for example nearby Uruguay and other countries might also have sent delegates. Otherwise the participation statistics seem relatively reliable.

In order to compare the number of economic historians in our field and conference participation, we need to take into account additional factors: What could be the most important control variables that potentially distort this comparison? An obvious distortion could be the language issue: Since English functions often as a global language in the scientific world, non-native speakers are in a way disadvantaged, because they have to devote a great effort to learn the language; otherwise they will be less successful at international conferences and get less publication opportunities.[8] In other words, the success of a scholar might be partly related to her English language skills nowadays.[9] According to the UNESCO, English is the widely most used language in social science journals (85.3 percent of the refereed journals are in English language), followed by French (5.9), German (5.4), Spanish

[8] UNESCO, *Social Science Report*, pp. 154-5.
[9] Ibid, p. 151.

(4.0) and Portuguese (1.7). The most common non-European language is Chinese (1.5), followed by Japanese (1.0).[10] Hence, we create a dummy variable "English", which is coded as 1 for U.S., Canada, UK, Ireland, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa.[11] As additional variables to distinguish the cultural proximity to English language, we collected the TOEFL test score by country from the respective internet page.[12] We defined a group with TOEFL values below 70 points (the main proponent here is Japan, which was quite astonishing to us) and the group with modest TOEFL values between 70 and 84. The constant is represented by country (groups) which are not mainly English-speaking, but have fairly good TOEFL scores.

In our regressions we find that the number of economic historians and distance to the congress are significant determinants of the world congress attendance (see Table 5). The lesser the distance and the bigger the number of economic historians, the higher is the congress participation of the respective country. As expected, also GDP and the English-language variable matter. While researchers from countries with high GDP can more easily afford the travel expense, researchers from countries with low GDP face greater obstacles. The English language skills affect the participation positively. The home market effect is always positive and has a large coefficient, but is statistically not significant. In Table 6 we list the residuals of congress participation. After controlling for distance, language barriers, income and size of the economic history community, the three country groups with the highest residual participation propensity are Iberia, Scandinavia and, surprisingly, Eastern Europe. On the other hand, China, Russia and Southeastern Europe might still have the largest potential for congress participation, because the residual propensity was relatively low in the past.

[10] Results based on Ulrich database. For further information see Ibid, p.149.
[11] Although there are obviously language minorities in some of those countries, as well as some English-speaking countries in other country groups.
[12] The TOEFL test is the most accepted international test to score English language skills. It consists of a reading, listening, writing and speaking section. The maximum total score is 120 points.

Based on these regression results, we attempt a forecast of participation at the world congress 2012. In column 4 of Table 4, we estimate the participation at the next World Economic History Congress that will take place in Stellenbosch (South Africa). The most astonishing is the non-participation of Africans (outside South Africa). Please note that this is a ceteris paribus forecast which does not take into account special stipends and other interventions which will encourage African participation. The forecast in Table 4 is only based on the variables in Table 5: The number of economic historians, which is small in most African countries, the distance, which is quite high (the Northern part of the continent is closer to Europe than to South Africa), low GDP and similar variables. Looking at the sessions already accepted for 2012, we are sure that the actual participation of this country group will be at least 40-50.

Because of a potential home market effect the participation of South Africa will be the highest ever. We forecast that also some historians and economists will attend, as these groups did in Helsinki. The largest participation is estimated for the U.S with more than 90 delegates, but also the British will be quite well represented. China's participation at the last congresses was relatively modest but grows substantially, because of the large group of economic historians at home and the growing integration and income of the country. Compared with Utrecht in 2009 participation will climb up from 23 to a forecasted 54 delegates at the congress in Stellenbosch. Also Japan's participation is estimated as being 54 delegates. In our estimation the European countries will send less delegates to Stellenbosch 2012 than to the last congresses in Helsinki and Utrecht, but more than to Buenos Aires in 2002. In the Latin American group, Argentina and Mexico will be represented quite well with 37 and 31 delegates, whereas the participation of "Latin America others" and Brazil will be relatively modest. Altogether we predict a participation number of 1064 delegates (excluding accompanying persons). That is slightly less than the last two World Economic History

Congresses in Utrecht (1211 delegates) and Helsinki (1292 delegates), but more than in Buenos Aires in 2002 (712 delegates). 1064 delegates is a number that will allow a very successful world congress. Moreover, this is an estimate based only on travel costs and similar variables. The unusual location of South Africa and the fact that this will be the first world congress in Africa will probably attract a even higher number, as also the number of session proposals already indicates.

MEMBERSHIPS IN NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

In a next step we compare our estimated number of economic historians with the memberships in national economic history organizations. Do our estimated numbers match with the memberships in national organizations in the respective country? We interviewed representatives of several national organizations via email about their current number of memberships. Some of these organizations include foreign scholars, such as the Economic History Society, which is mainly located in the UK, but includes some foreigners. Nevertheless those organizations are the exception rather than the rule, hence the comparison is still informative.

Comparing our data of economic historians to the memberships in national organizations, we can see a strong linkage between them (Figure 2). Japan and the U.S. as countries with relative high estimated numbers of economic historians also have high numbers of members in their national economic history organization, too. Also for the other countries, we can observe a close correlation. Economic historians in the documented countries seem to be highly organized and represented by their associations. On the other hand this might show that the numbers of economic historians are more visible for respondents precisely because they are well-represented in those national organizations.

Therefore respondents base their estimates on the number of members of their national association. But in general, our estimates are confirmed.

JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS

In another plausibility check, we regress journal publications by country (or country group) on our new estimates of number of economic historians, plus additional control variables. We collected a dataset from nine economic history journals that are contained in the EconLit database 2005-2010. The criterion was whether the title included "economic history" (or a translation thereof) and the journal was considered established and international enough to be included in this database. A list of journals is given below Figure 2. We have to acknowledge that the latter criterion generates a certain bias towards economics-oriented publications in our field, because the more history-orientated colleagues do not publish as much in journals, but put greater weight on books and edited volumes. There is also a bias in favour of English language journals, because those are more often included in EconLit. However, our main purpose here is to assess the plausibility of the new estimates of the number of economic historians.[13] The number of journal publications per country should correlate with the number of economic historians, after controlling for intervening variables (such as language).

We obtained a dataset of 825 publications between 2005 and 2010, which were published by 1218 authorships sorted by affiliation. One author can have several authorships here. Again we included control variables that potentially distort the comparison between the number of scholars in our field and publications in those nine mostly English-language journals. The language variables should be obviously included again. Moreover, we included a dummy variable for the fact that the journal is situated in a given country. For example Australians will publish more often in the Australian Economic History Review, Indians in

[13] Studies about the variety of measures of scientific productivity see for example Kalaitzidakis, Mamuneas and Stengos, "Ranking of academic journals"; Di Vaio and Weisdorf, "Ranking ".

the Indian Economic and Social History Review. Those considerations are confirmed by the regression results: Language and location of journals matter. But even more important for our study: The variable “Number of economic historians“ is significant again, even if the number of cases was only 25 country (groups). This confirms the plausibility of our new results.

Jaime Reis was so nice to provide a dataset for comparative purposes which he collected for a presentation at the 2009 European Historical Economics Society Congress in Geneva. Compared to our dataset of 2005-2010, Reis used a larger time frame by sampling the years 1996, 1998 and 2008, and concentrated on four journals. The results we obtained above for our new publication database were fairly robust (Table 7, column 4).

These three comparisons allowed counterchecking the plausibility of the new country-specific estimates. Both the results of regressing congress participation and journal publications on the number of economic historians were fairly robust. Also the comparison between our estimated number of economic historians and the memberships in national economic history organizations confirms our result. In summary it can be said, that the average of many different definitions might yield something like a common sense estimate of an “economic historian”. Especially in large countries, the average of different estimates helps to improve the accuracy. Counterchecking the plausibility by three plausibility checks reinforces our estimations about the number of economic historians in the respective country.

In a next step, we estimate the overall number of economic historians in the world, by interpolating values for all countries with a population of 500,000 inhabitants and more, which had missing values due to non-reported data. We interpolate the values of missing countries by taking our estimated number of economic historians relative to population in the same geographical region. For example, the value for Ivory Coast was estimated based on the per capita value for Ghana and the population of Ivory Coast. We find that the overall number

of economic historians in the world might be around 10,400 scholars, almost 8700 in the 59 surveyed countries and 1700 in the other countries.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS

We also wanted to know how many students are studying economic history in the world. We distinguish between the number of students below doctoral student level, and doctoral students. We asked the participants of the survey to give a rough estimate about how many students below the doctoral student level (Bachelor, Master and similar, students) are taking at least one course in economic history presently in the respective countries. Because a country-wide estimation often was too difficult, the participants could also estimate the number for their own university which gave us a rate per economic historian. However the participants of the survey found this question even more difficult than the one about the number of scholars. After analyzing the resulting data, we do not think country-specific values contain informative value. But we think that the evidence allows calculating the ratio of students per economic historian as one global average.[14] We have 74 observations on students per scholar. The average is 27 students per economic historian in the world taking presently one course. Multiplied with 10,400 scholars, we arrive at 280,800 students per semester or trimester. Some countries have two semesters, other have three trimesters. Hence we take 2.5 as a multiplier to arrive at annual values. Thus, we estimate a number of around 702,000 students per year. How many university graduates who are still alive have attended at least one course, assuming certain stability over time? A weighted value for life expectancy is around 56 years at age 20, when many students take their courses.[15] So the estimate of the global academic elite that had some economic history exposure is around 39 million. It is

[14] We excluded ratios with a value less than 1, because those were mainly economic historians at research institutes.

[15] We calculate the mean life expectancy by world region and weighted it with the number of economic historians by world region.

unnecessary to mention that the large number of assumptions makes this estimate somewhat debatable, but even if it were half the number, economic history plays a substantial role in global academic education.

In order to estimate the number of doctoral students, the participants should estimate how many of the estimated number of economic historians might be doctoral students. In Table 8 we report the number of doctoral students by world region. Again there is a lot of variation, but the measure might be within acceptable bounds for some of the world regions. It displays the expected differences: For example, the share of doctoral students is higher in Western Europe, where not all of those students aim at starting an academic career, whereas the North American system is characterized by this.

TOPICS AND PROMOTION OF ECONOMIC HISTORY

In order to promote economic history and to attract more students of outstanding ability for this field we asked the participants whether they possibly had suggestion for the International Economic History Association: what should the organization do to promote economic history in their country? Can they do anything to improve international contacts and cooperation? In Table 9, we give an overview of the most frequently mentioned answers.

Travel stipends in order to participate in world congresses are the most relevant issue mentioned by the respondents to promote economic history in the different countries. Also the organization of regional meetings and summer schools for doctoral students by the International Economic History Association was suggested. In order to be a successful researcher you need not only skills and talent to search for the right themes but also social capital in a sense of knowing others to collaborate and to exchange ideas. In an international orientated scholarly community, to exchange with other researchers on conferences is

essential for being successful.[16] Especially young talented researchers without financial support and international reputation yet, should be supported by travel stipends and summer schools in order to promote their abilities and international prominence.

We also asked which topics should be on the agenda of the next world congress in Stellenbosch 2012. We classified the topics mentioned usind the EH.net Classification. The results are presented in Table 10.

The most frequently mentioned topics fall into the category 'Economic Development, Growth, and Aggregate Productivity'. A number of respondent noted that given the location of the next world congress in Africa, development processes should be particularly high on the agenda. Also 'Macroeconomics and Fluctuations' and 'Financial Markets, Financial Institution, and Monetary History' are very popular fields. Themes about the economic crises and the finance sector bother economic historians all over the world, as well as the general public. These themes will be approached with an economic history methodology, and allow to clarify current economic issues, which economists and other social scientists who limited themselves to theoretical considerations or looked only at the present or very recent past were not able.

We were curious whether the preferences of the topics varied by age. One could imagine, for example, that more recent topics were demanded by younger colleagues, whereas topics that were very popular, say, in the 1970s or 1980s, might be suggested by slightly more senior colleagues. Hence we take a look at the topics as a function of age (Table 11).

The age structure of respondents suggest that topics such as 'Household, Family and Consumer History', and 'Education and Human Resource Development' are quite popular

[16] For example, see Liberman and Wolf, "Flow of knowledge"; Fox, "Productivity in Science"; Salaran, "Research Productivity".

among younger respondents.[17] Topics like 'Labor and Employment History' have a long tradition in our discipline and are also popular among the slightly more senior colleagues. Also the study of agriculture, natural resources and mining (which also includes some fields of environmental history), and anthropometric history, which are sometimes perceived as "young" fields, have now also a certain history within our discipline.

CONCLUSION

In this study we focused on a number of questions: How many economic historians are there in the world? In which countries or world regions are they concentrated, and where are they lacking, perhaps in spite of an otherwise developed university system? Can we explain differences in the number of economic historians who are participating on world congresses, and which determinants encourage or limit publication propensity?

As a result we found that the overall number of economic historians in the world might be around 10,400 scholars and the numbers of the global elite that had some economic history exposure around 39 million.

Breaking the number of economic historians down by country, Japan reaches the first place with an estimated number of 1,340 economic historians, followed by China (800), the United Kingdom (770) and the United States (675). Astonishingly high numbers were also reached for Vietnam, Mexico and Turkey. In per capita terms, Sweden occupies the first rank with 20 economic historians per million inhabitants, followed by Uruguay (13.3), and Norway (13.1). Portugal (11.4), the United Kingdom with 11.3 and Japan with 10.6 are on positions four to six. There were some nice surprises, such as the cluster of economic history in Senegal, which could be promising for the future of economic history in Africa. In order to countercheck our new data of economic historians we implemented three plausibility checks.

[17] "Economywide Country Studies and Comparative History" seems like a relatively broad category into which topics fit that do not fit elsewhere.

First we fitted a gravity model that explains conference participation with distance, and the number of economic historians in the source country, home market effects of the country in which a world congress takes place, and other variables. The data originated from the participation statistics on world congresses over the past 15 years. As expected, distance and the number of economic historians was statistically significant across all regressions. Also GDP and the English language skills matter.

In another plausibility check we compared our new estimates with the memberships in national economic history associations. Also in this case the results supported our estimated number of economic historians. Economic historians seem to be highly organized by their national organizations.

Additionally we implemented a third plausibility check by regressing journal publications by country (or country group) on the new estimates of number of economic historians, plus additional control variables like the English-language variable or the journals' home country. We collected this dataset from nine economic history journals that were contained in the EconLit database. The results showed: Language and location of journals matter. But even more important for our study: The variable "Number of economic historians" was significant again, even if we restricted the number of cases to 25 country (groups).

In order to promote economic history and to attract more students of outstanding ability for this field we asked the participants whether they possibly had suggestions for the International Economic History Association. Travel stipends in order to participate in conferences but also to stay for several months and search with foreign scientists, seem to be the most relevant issue mentioned by the respondents to promote economic history in the countries.

Finally, we asked which topics should be on the agenda of the next world congress in Stellenbosch 2012. Using EH.net Classification, the most frequently mentioned topics fell into the category 'Economic Development, Growth, and Aggregate Productivity'. A number of respondent noted that given the location of the next world congress in Africa, development processes should be particularly high on the agenda. Also 'Macroeconomics and Fluctuations' and 'Financial Markets, Financial Institution, and Monetary History' were very popular fields. We also figured out, that topics such as 'Household, Family and Consumer History', and 'Education and Human Resource Development' were quite popular among younger respondents.

In order to forecast the participation at the next World Economic History Congress in Stellenbosch (South Africa) in 2012, we analyzed participation statistics on the three world congresses of the last decade, namely Buenos Aires 2002, Helsinki 2006 and Utrecht 2009. Our estimated participation number of economic historians at the congress in Stellenbosch suggests that the participation of East Asia will increase. The total number will be around 1064 delegates. Hence, the expected success in Africa will help to spread even more activity in this continent, which had slightly lower numbers in the past.

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Table 1: Coverage of world regions

World Region	Coverage in percentage
East Asia	98
East. Eur./Cntr. Asia	59
Latin America/Car.	74
Mid. East/N. Afr.	58
North America/Au/Nz	100
South Asia	76
Southeast Asia	56
Subsaharan Africa	17
Western Eur.	100

Table 2: Ranking of economic historians by country

Country	Number of economic historians	Population (in mio)	CV	Respondents
Japan	1340	127	10	5
China	800	1264		1
United States	770	282	54	5
United Kingdom	675	60	35	4
Russian Federation	488	146	62	2
Mexico	350	100	20	2
India	350	1008		1
Spain	346	40	44	11
Italy	342	58	31	13
France	336	59	63	7
Argentina	300	37		1
Germany	210	82	17	9
Turkey	200	66		1
Viet Nam	200	79		1
Sweden	183	9	14	6
Brazil	160	176	80	2
Netherlands	138	16	38	2
Portugal	114	10	55	5
Taiwan	113	22	143	3
Korea (South)	100	47		1
Peru	100	27		1
Colombia	100	40		1
Greece	80	11	71	4
Hungary	70	10		1
Bulgaria	65	8	147	3
Austria	60	8		1
Belgium	60	10		1
Norway	53	4	32	4
Switzerland	52	7	66	4
Canada	44	31	62	3
Denmark	43	5	63	4
Finland	43	5	77	5
Senegal	41	10		1
Cuba	40	11		1

Uruguay	40	3		1
Australia	35	19	20	2
Chile	33	15	46	3
Poland	30	39		1
Indonesia	30	211		1
South Africa	28	42	9	3
Egypt	20	70		1
Israel	18	6	11	3
Slovenia	15	2		1
New Zealand (Aotearoa)	15	4		1
Serbia	15	11		1
Ireland	11	4	13	2
Romania	10	22		1
Total	**8666**	**4323**	**1283**	**137**

Special encouragement is needed in the following countries (estimates between 1 and 9 economic historians): Morocco, Bolivia, Estonia, Algeria, Syria, Ghana, Cameroon, Mauritania, Kyrgyzstan, Haiti.

Even more encouragement is needed in the remaining 106 countries with 500,000 and more inhabitants.

Note: CV = Coefficient of variation, the variation in between responses. We excluded very few outliers (5), especially if respondents added notes saying: "I really do not know, but maybe around…". Line “Total” contains 10+ economic historians.

Table 3: Economic historians relative to population by country

Country	Economic historian / Population	GDP (2000)	Respondents
Sweden	20.4	20442	6
Uruguay	13.3	7708	1
Norway	13.1	24471	4
Portugal	11.4	14126	5
United Kingdom	11.3	19972	4
Japan	10.6	20876	5
Spain	8.6	15464	11
Netherlands	8.6	21656	2
Finland	8.5	20290	5
Denmark	8.5	23086	4
Argentina	8.1	8340	1
Bulgaria	8.1	5505	3
Austria	7.5	20161	1
Slovenia	7.5	13650	1
Switzerland	7.4	22144	4
Greece	7.3	12277	4
Hungary	7	7286	1
Belgium	6	20833	1
Estonia	6	11495	3
Italy	5.9	18890	13
France	5.7	20950	7
Taiwan	5.2	16428	3
Senegal	4.1	1454	1
New Zealand (Aotearoa)	3.8	16064	1
Peru	3.7	3658	1
Cuba	3.6	2445	1

Mexico	3.5	7154	2
Russian Federation	3.3	5428	2
Israel	3	15733	3
Turkey	3	6274	1
Ireland	2.8		2
United States	2.7	28039	5
Germany	2.6	18636	9
Viet Nam	2.5	1820	1
Colombia	2.5	5091	1
Chile	2.2	9921	3
Korea (South)	2.1	14508	1
Australia	1.8	21712	2
Serbia	1.4		1
Canada	1.4	22250	3
Bolivia	1	2567	1
Brazil	0.9	5563	2
Special encouragement is needed in the following countries (0.1-0.8 economic historians per million inhabitants): Poland, Mauritania, South Africa, China, Romania, Syria, Ghana, India, Morocco, Cameroon, Egypt, Algeria, Kyrgyztan, Haiti, Indonesia.			
Even more encouragement is needed in the remaining 106 countries with 500,000 and more inhabitants.			

Table 4: Participation in world congresses 2002-9 and forecast for 2012

Country (group)	Buenos Aires 2002	Helsinki 2006	Utrecht 2009	Stellenbosch 2012
Africa others	1	3	2	0
South Africa	8	6	9	84
Asia others	14	31	13	37
China		4	23	53
India	12	9	10	9
Japan	19	55	78	54
Eastern Europe others		48	50	16
Russia	12	30	17	39
Austria / Switzerland	10	37	36	37
Belgium	14	40	26	32
Finland		157		
France	25	71	88	55
Germany	25	71	52	42
Greece / Turkey / Israel		18	24	42
Italy	40	60	63	55
Scandinavia	38		108	54
Scandinavia others		121		
Spain / Portugal	35	108	119	57
The Netherlands	20	44	94	39
UK / Ireland	42	136	145	82
Argentina	113	18	14	37
Brazil	24	13	12	18
Latin America others	0	11	26	14
Mexico	31	24	9	31
Canada	26	27	25	29

USA	109	131	124	93
Australia / New Zealand	19	19	13	28
Unknown	75	0	31	35
Total	**712**	**1292**	**1211**	**1064**

Notes: Asia others in 2002 includes China, Scandinavia in 2002 is only Finland and Sweden
Unknown 2012 is the average of the previous 3 unknown figures
The fact that there were 8 South Africans was constructed from the academic program
Sources: Buenos Aires: Internet PowerPoint-Presentation, congress website
Helsinki: Excel sheet sent by Riitta Hjerppe, thanks for that
Utrecht: Excel sheet sent by Jessica , thanks for that
All figures exclude accompanying persons. The country groups were different in the cases of the Buenos Aires and the Utrecht congress, the previously mentioned “other Europe”, and the latter distinguished between East and West Europe. The former also had an “other countries in the world category”, which is why the “unknown” category in Table 4 is a bit larger.
The predicted value for “Africa others” in 2012 is actually -11, but we report a 0, because participation cannot be negative.

Table 5: Panel Regressions: Determinants of world congress participation

	1	2	3	4	5
Distance (logs)	-17.77***	-12.81***	-14.16***	-10.27**	-13.20***
	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.017)	(0.009)
Home market	24.93	33.39	25.89	32.89	33.57
	(0.258)	(0.129)	(0.289)	(0.214)	(0.233)
GDP (logs)		15.35***	9.98*	10.33*	19.58***
		(0.001)	(0.054)	(0.076)	(0.000)
Number of ec.hist.	5.97***	8.27***	6.11***	6.05***	8.80***
	(0.002)	(0.000)	(0.003)	(0.010)	(0.000)
Countries fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes
TOEFL (low)		-68.74***			
		(0.006)			
TOEFL (medium)		1.97			
		(0.850)			
English	32.60***	19.33***	23.09**		
	(0.010)	(0.005)	(0.042)		
TOEFL			0.57	0.76	
			(0.369)	(0.277)	
Visa requirements				-9.37	
				(0.200)	
Year				0.86	
				(0.328)	
Constant	161.31***	-24.78	-9.70	-1,788.54	-30.26
	(0.000)	(0.650)	(0.889)	(0.325)	(0.686)
Observations	71	71	71	71	73
R-squared	0.58	0.70	0.64	0.60	0.89

Notes: Number of economic historians was divided by 100 for expository purposes.

Table 6: Residuals of congress participation, after controlling for distance, number of economic historians and other variables of Table 5

Country	Residual
Spain / Portugal	34.3
Scandinavia	22.7
Eastern Europe others	22.2
Africa others	20.8
USA	19.2
Argentina	6.5
Brazil	6.4
India	5.3
France	3.6
UK / Ireland	3.5
Italy	3.0
Latin America others	1.7
Japan	0.0
South Africa	-0.6
Germany	-1.0
Mexico	-2.7
The Netherlands	-8.5
Asia others	-9.6
Austria / Switzerland	-9.6
Australia / New Zealand	-9.9
Canada	-12.2
Belgium	-12.6
Greece / Turkey / Israel	-21.6
Russia	-25.4
China	-41.6

Table 7: Regressions: Determinants of publication number by countries

	1	2	3
Sample	New	New	Reis
Years	2005-10	2005-10	1996, 1998, 2008
Number of economic historians	16.62**	12.90*	4.94*
	(0.038)	(0.058)	(0.057)
TOEFL	3.47*	2.24	0.86
	(0.075)	(0.211)	(0.168)
English	121.06**	97.82**	38.37**
	(0.025)	(0.040)	(0.021)
Journal home		67.61**	
		(0.038)	
Constant	-337.39*	-231.32	-89.70
	(0.071)	(0.172)	(0.140)
Observations	25	25	25
R-squared	0.57	0.66	0.58

Notes: Number of economic historians was divided by 100 for expository purposes.

Journals: Australian Economic History Review, Economic Histoy Review, European Review of Economic History, Explorations in Economic History, Indian Economic and Social History Review, Journal of Economic History, Revista de Historia Economica, Rivista di Storia Economica, Scandinavian Economic History Review.

Table 8: Number of doctoral students by world region

World Region	Number of economic historians	Number of doctoral students	Doctoral students per economic historian
East Asia	2108	245	0.12
East.Eur./Cntr. Asia	591	94	0.16
Latin America/ Car.	1094	n.a.	n.a.
Mid.East/N. Afr.	249	n.a.	n.a.
North America/Au/Nz	769	95	0.12
South Asia	275	75	0.27
South East Asia	225	n.a.	n.a.
Subsaharan Africa	76	n.a.	n.a.
Western Eur.	2033	711	0.35

Notes: Column 1 excludes doctoral students

Table 9: Promotion strategies to make the WEHC 2012 a success, as suggested by respondents

Promotion topics	Respondents
travel stipends to world congress	12
regional meetings	9
summer school (doctoral students)	9
travel stipends for several months	6
guest speakers in countries with small economic history groups	5
advertise eh in media	4
Host a world congress	3
international coop in doctoral education	2
joint doctoral education	2
new IEHA journal	2
travel stipends for last developed countries, competitive	1
IEHA newsletter (monthly)	1
weekly IEHA newsletter	1
1-week economics crash courses for historians	1
annual doctoral WEHC	1
travel cost stipends to sources	1
eh journals on IEHA webpage	1
Databases in internet	1
disseminate research written in Asian languages	1
Doctoral exchanges	1
encourage famous to participate in WEHC (as before)	1

annual WEHC	1
Kill all economists and historians who are not interested in economic	1

Abbreviation: WEHC = World Economic History Congress

Table 10: Topics that should be on the WEHC 2012, as mentioned by respondents

Topics	Respondents
Economic Development, Growth, and Aggregate Productivity	53
Macroeconomics and Fluctuations	43
Financial Markets, Financial Institution, and Monetary History	38
Business History	32
International and domestic Trade and Relations	30
Income and Wealth	29
Social and Cultural History, including Race, Ethnicity and Gender	26
Markets and Institutions	17
Development of the Economic History Discipline: Historiography	15
Education and Human Resource Development	13
Government, Law and Regulation, Public Finance	11
History Demography, including Migration	10
Economic Planning and Policy	9
History of Economic Thought, Methodology	8
History of Technology, including Technological Change	8
Labour and Employment History	8
Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Extractive Industries	7
Living Standards, Anthropometric History, Economic Anthropology	7
Household, Family and Consumer History	7
Industry: Manufacturing and Construction	6
Historical Geography	6
Military and War	5
Economywide Country Studies and Comparative History	5
Transport and Distribution, Energy and Other Services	3
Servitude and Slavery	2
Urban and Regional History	2

Table 11: Topics as a function of age

Topic	Age
Household, Family and Consumer History	41
Economywide Country Studies and Comparative History	43
Education and Human Resource Development	43
Economic Planning and Policy	44
Income and Wealth	45
Social and Cultural History, including Race, Ethnicity and Gender	45
Durchschnitt insgesamt	46
Business History	46
Macroeconomics and Fluctuations	46
Markets and Institutions	46
History of Technology, including Technological Change	47

Figure 1: Are economic historians a luxury product?

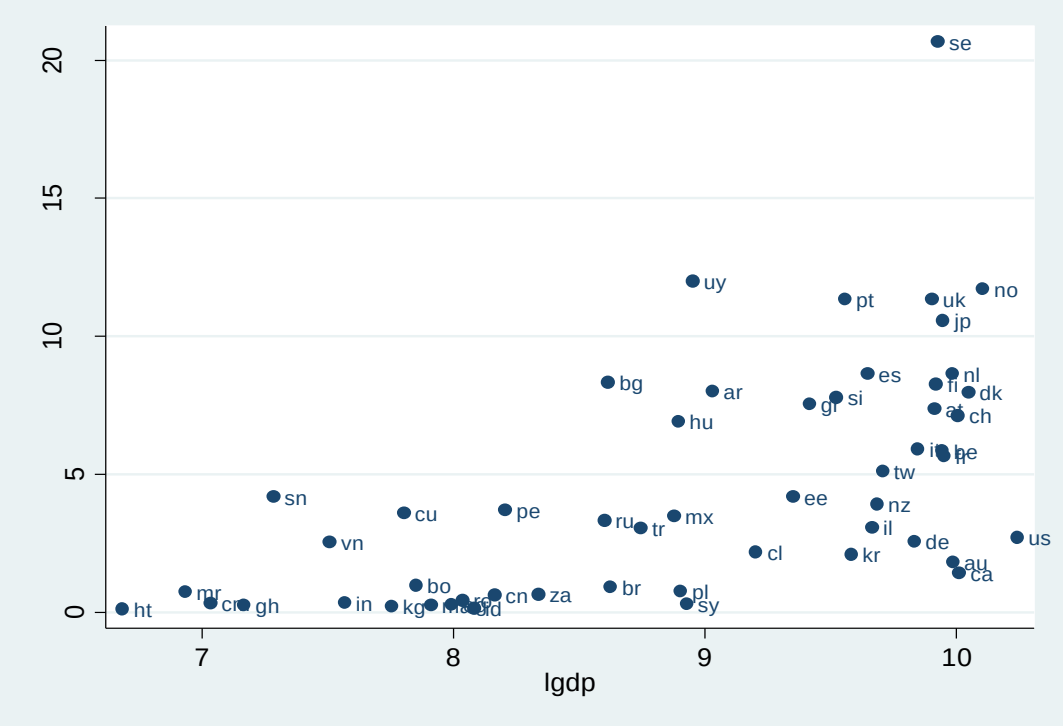
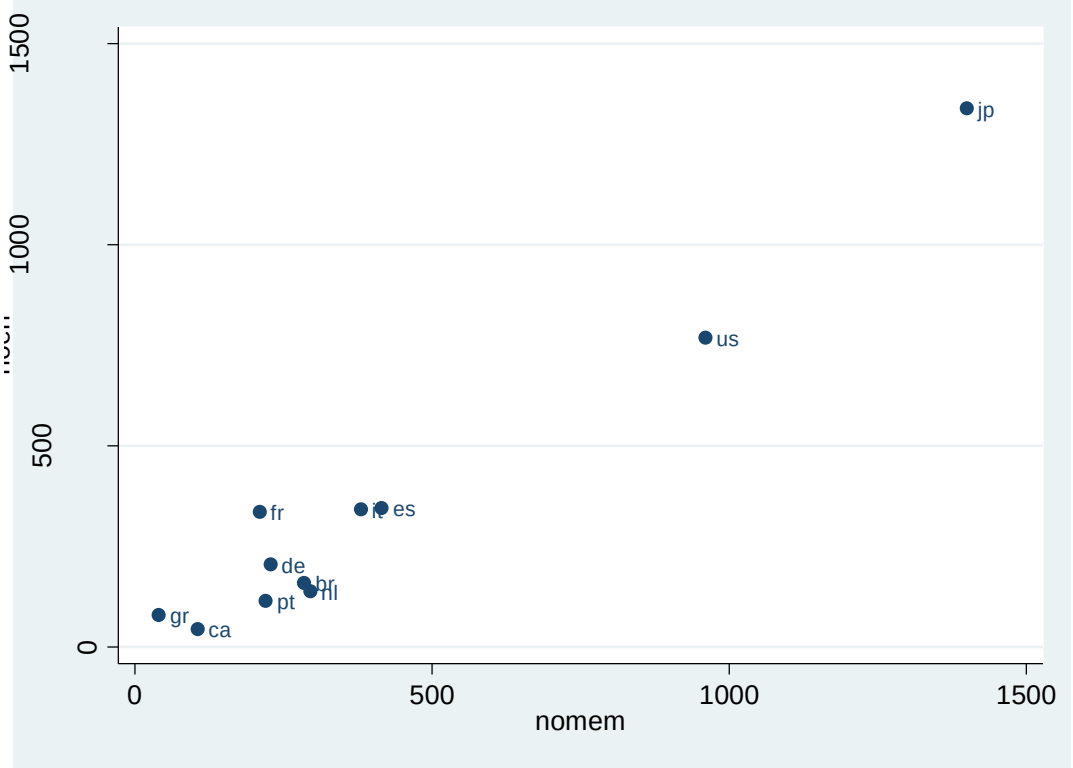


Figure 2: Comparison: number of economic historians and memberships in national organizations



Organizations: Associação Brasileira de Pesquisadores em História Econômica (Brazil), The Japan National Committee for Economic History (Japan), Association Française d'Histoire Économique (France), Portuguese Association of Economic and Social History (Portugal), Asociación Española de Historia Económica (Spain), Canadian Network for Economic History (Canada), Societa italiana degli storici dell'economia (Italy), Gesellschaft für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte (Germany), Economic History Association (United States), N.W. Posthumus Instituut (Netherlands), Greek Economic History Association (Greece).
Notes: noeh = number of economic historians; nomem = number of members in national organizations.