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On the Status and Future of Economic History

This is the last working paper version before this study was submitted and accepted.

Please cite as Baten, Jörg and Muschallik, Julia (2012). “On the Status and the Future of Economic History in the World”, *Economic History of Developing Regions* 27 (2012), pp. 93-113. Online: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15496/publikation-6536>

Abstract

How many economic historians are there? In which countries or regions are they concentrated? What can we learn from the number of economic historians participating in world congresses, and which determinants encourage or limit participation? Using an e-mail questionnaire, we analyse the discipline’s global status. Overall 59 countries were surveyed in this overview. Although the majority of economic historians are concentrated in rich countries, developing regions do have a substantial number of practitioners. Cross fertilisation between development studies, development economics and economic history is bearing increasing fruit. It is therefore important to strengthen the discipline of economic history in those regions where development is the core issue.

Acknowledgements: We thank the activists of the International Economic History Association, as well as Natacha Coquery, Jaime Reis, Jacob Weisdorf, Jeffrey Williamson, two referees and the editor. We also thank the Tübingen Economic History research group for comments and evidence.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Economic history has developed into a truly global discipline over the past two decades. For example, the world congresses of the International Economic History Association were held increasingly outside of Europe and North America - such as in Argentina in 1998 - and Latin America has hosted a regular continent-wide congress during the last decade. The 2012 World Economic History Congress will be held in Stellenbosch, South Africa, followed by the 2015 Congress in Kyoto, Japan. In addition, the topics of economic history sessions have become globally comparative.

Despite this rapid globalisation, however, surprisingly little is known about the scholars who represent economic history. Knowing our status and who we are is important for the future of our discipline. A number of questions relating to this issue are tackled in this study: In which countries or regions are economic historians concentrated? In which parts of the world are they under-represented and why? Is this due to a lack of academic activities in general or is economic history a neglected discipline in an otherwise developed university system? Which determinants encourage or limit the propensity to publish in international economic history journals?

Before it is possible to estimate the number of economic historians it is necessary to engage with the issue of defining the discipline. For example, should people working in museums who develop economic history exhibitions be included or only those who work 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 great potential for interdisciplinary work, but it also generates a certain amount of ambiguity. Our strategy for coping with these issues consists of asking a substantial number of people to give an estimate

of the number of economic historians in a broad sense (including doctoral students); the average of many different definitions might yield a common-sense estimate. Especially in large countries, the average of different estimates helps to improve accuracy.

Our special interest focus is to shed light on the situation in developing regions. The potential for fruitfully combining development studies and economic history makes it important to strengthen our field in those regions where development is the core issue.

Our sample is based on a list of participants of the last world economic history congresses and the leadership personnel of the 44 economic history societies existing in the world. Since these world congresses are organized by the International Economic History Association (IEHA), which unites economic historians from all over the world, our database can be considered fairly comprehensive: For North America (plus Australia and New Zealand) and Western Europe, we obtained evidence on all countries. In addition, the region of East Asia shows a very high coverage, and five other world regions are well represented. Only the sub-Saharan Africa region was not comprehensively covered by the survey.

After a short review of the current literature on economic history as a discipline, we analyse the number of economic historians by country. To verify the accuracy of these numbers, we check them against data on conference participation, membership in national organisations and the number of publications in economic history journals. We also give a short overview of the status of post-graduate and doctoral students in the field. The paper ends with a brief conclusion. In an Appendix, we report on which topics researchers are focussing on today and what the International Economic History Association should do to promote the discipline.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

While a number of studies have analysed economic history as a discipline, a comprehensive quantitative study of the number of economic historians has not yet been undertaken.

Studies of individual countries do exist. 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 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 figures suggested.

Recently, Helen Paul (2008) performed a survey for the Economic History Society which is mainly active in the UK. The major aim was to identify persons who were interested in economic history, and might be motivated to contribute to the field and the society. This author also decided to include retired scholars.

In a presentation at the European Historical Economics Conference in Geneva, 2009, Jaime Reis provided an overview of economic historians' publication patterns. The author provided his data to us, and we have therefore included it in our analysis.¹

Robert Whaples undertook an assessment of trends in the *Journal of Economic History*. He analysed patterns relating to contents, methodology, and temporal coverage. He also provided data on which authors and universities contributed to the *Journal* between the 1960s and 2000. Whaples found an increased interest in topics like business cycles and depressions, standards

¹ See also Di Vaio and Weisdorf (2010) who analyzed citation behaviour, although their main interest is in evaluating different journals.

of living and health, and labour markets and migration since the 1970s. He also pointed towards a substantial internationalization of contributors. In particular, the number of published pages produced by European authors has grown substantially in recent years (Whaples 2002).

The editors of the *Journal of Economic History* regularly present quantitative data, not on the number of economic historians but on the topics of journal submissions by world region. In the latest issue, March 2011, Price Fishback showed that Non-North American topics had increased, bringing down the US and Canada share to “only” 32 percent in 2009-10. By contrast, Africa increased as a region of study from only one submission per year in both 2006/7 and 2007/8 to four submissions in 2008/9 and eight in 2009/10. While this result 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 regions account for 4-5 percent. Regional submissions have come from Asia and Pacific (5), Eastern Europe (4), Latin America, including the Caribbean (6), and the Middle East (4) (Fishback 2011). Clearly, the geography of topics is not identical to the geography of economic historians, but tables such as this one can be used for comparisons with our estimates presented below.

3. SAMPLE AND QUESTIONNAIRE

Our evidence was collected on the basis of an e-mail questionnaire (for the questionnaire see Appendix A). 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 respondent. 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 focussed on respondents' background information.

We sent the e-mail questionnaire to scholars across the world, building on the list of participants of the last world economic history congresses and on the leadership personnel of the major economic history societies. A snowball system allowed us to extend this network to previously undocumented countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Syria. The survey concluded with 59 countries being documented, often with more than one estimate.² To give an overview of the share of countries covered by responses, we divided the countries into nine main world regions and weighted them by population (Table 1). North America (plus 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. Sub-Saharan Africa has a modest coverage of 0.17, which is not negligible. The under-representation of the sub-Saharan region at past world congresses might also be a sign of the lack of governmental support and a thinner research infrastructure.³ South Africa, as the most productive country in social sciences in the sub-Saharan region, was an exception in the past.⁴ Overall, 59 countries could be included in this overview, including countries such as Vietnam, Ghana and Haiti.

All survey questions entailed open-ended responses. The average age of the respondents was around 46 years, and the ages varied from 24 to 80. We also asked whether the respondents would characterise themselves more as an economist, more as a historian, or whether they saw themselves somewhere between the two professions. Overall, 82 individuals saw themselves as historians, and 82 respondents saw themselves as between the core

² Questionnaires were sent to some 1,100 persons of whom 242 responded. If the information would refer to individual opinion, this would be a “response rate” of around 22%, which is quite remarkable compared to similar questionnaire activities. Because the unit of the observation is the country, however one person’s estimate would be appropriate enough.

³ Research in this region is quite under-funded, and the few existing science institutions in some African countries were sometimes even destroyed by domestic policies and events during the past decades (UNESCO 2010:65).

⁴ South Africa was actively measured by the UNESCO by its output of ISI papers over the past twenty years. This measurement showed that 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 (UNESCO 2010:64).

disciplines. Fifty individuals chose a clear economist designation. Twenty-seven participants abstained from responding to this question.

4. NUMBER OF ECONOMIC HISTORIANS

In the first section of the questionnaire, we asked respondents for an estimate of the number of economic historians in their country.

As economic history is characterised by heterogeneity, and as there is no clear-cut, universal definition of ‘the economic historian’ we asked respondents to include historians, economists and other social scientists with a strong interest in economic history. We asked them to include doctoral students, professors, and other scholarly staff (permanent and temporary).⁵

The results are reported in Table 2.

In 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 does Japan have the most economic historians? One reason could be the strong interest of the Japanese public in the history of the country. Another plausible explanation could be a Japanese preoccupation with business history.⁶

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 the discipline

⁵ Because a countrywide estimation might have been sometimes too difficult, we also asked for an estimated number of economic historians within their own universities, if that were more feasible.

⁶ As a caveat, we should also mention that some countries with high degree of specialization, such as the US, might not count the majority of business historians as economic historians.

even without a strong group around them. We have to admit that sometimes our estimates are based on slightly less precise statements for these countries.⁷ Please note also that only 59 countries are listed. Most of the other countries typically have small communities.

Although many developing countries have very few economic historians, others have very substantial communities, such as Vietnam, Brazil and Senegal. Many of these scholars have not, however, been very integrated into the world economic history community.

One reason for the high absolute number of economic historians, especially in China, Japan and the US, might be the large population of these countries relative to others. To take this into consideration, we document in the next step the number of economic historians relative to the 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 in positions five and six, respectively. As expected, China and the US rank lower in per capita terms. Some might suggest that these estimates might be too small. Given its dominance in the field, it is possible that the US estimates are too low. But we only measured the number, not the productivity, of scholars. Differences in productivity might influence the perceived real number of economic historians in a particular country such as the US.

We also investigated whether there is a linkage between the income of the corresponding country and the number of economic historians per capita. Are economic historians perhaps a “luxury item”? Is economic history consumed in greater quantities if incomes are high? To analyse this question, we compare our results with the GDP per capita of each country (Figure

⁷ For example, if the number of economic historians was only given for one of the two universities, we multiplied by two after making sure the universities were similar in size and character.

1). The results suggest that there is a linkage between the number of economic historians in a country and its GDP. Sweden, with the highest rate of economic historians, has a very high per capita GDP. Rich countries, such as the United Kingdom, Norway and Portugal, also feature many economic historians per capita, whereas Haiti, Mauritania and Ghana have relatively small numbers. However, there are also some countries that are rich, but do not have as many 'economic historians' per capita such as Germany, which experienced a boom period in the hey-day of the "Historical School" during the 19th and early 20th centuries. When this school was replaced by other approaches in the post-war period, sufficient economic history chairs were not created to make up for the move away from historical approaches amongst economists. On the whole, however, the general correlation between GDP and the number of economic historians is positive for the developing world. For example, economic history in Brazil will surely grow over the next decade, given its rapid GDP per capita growth in the recent past.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

In order to test our findings, we now compare them to (1) conference participation statistics, (2) memberships in national organisations, and (3) publications in economic history journals. Apart from strengthening our findings on the numbers of scholars, this comparison process also provides insights into the determinants of conference participation and publication patterns.

To test our findings we employed a gravity model that explains conference participation in relation to distance, number of economic historians in the source country, home market effects of the country in which a world congress occurs, and other variables. The data was collected from world congress participation statistics for the past decade. We collected participation statistics from the world congresses held in Buenos Aires in 2002, Helsinki in

2006 and Utrecht in 2009 (Table 4). Unfortunately, the data did not always provide participants' country of origin. For most participants information on country of origin could be gleaned, but for some we could only get their regional base, such as "Scandinavia" or "other Asia" (see the notes to the Table for further information). Because 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 was relatively modest (Table 4, columns 1-3).⁸ Chinese and Japanese participation has grown substantially (in the Chinese case, we can observe this only for 2006-2009 because from 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 fewer 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.⁹ However, the British, US, Spanish and "other Scandinavia" communities were also quite well represented. These countries sometimes reach values of more than 100 participants.¹⁰

To compare the number of economic historians from our initial estimates with conference participation, we need to ask what the most important control variables are that could potentially distort the comparison. An obvious distortion could be the language issue.

⁸ We will discuss the "Forecast 2012 column" below.

⁹ Please note that the number of Finnish participants exceeded the number of economic historians of the country. Also other historians and economists participated at the congress.

¹⁰ It is a bit astonishing that, according to the Buenos Aires statistics, there were no participants from "other Latin America" (apart from Argentina, Mexico and Brazil). This might be a small data mistake because nearby Uruguay and other countries might also have sent delegates. Otherwise, the participation statistics seem relatively reliable.

Because English functions often as a global language in the scientific world, non-native speakers are, in a way, disadvantaged because they have to make great effort to learn the language; otherwise, they would be less successful at international conferences and get fewer publication opportunities (UNESCO 2010: 154-155). In other words, the success of a scholar, nowadays, might be partly related to his or her English language skills (UNESCO 2010: 156). According to UNESCO, English is the most widely used language in social science journals (85.3 percent of the referred journals are in the English language), followed by French (5.9 percent), German (5.4 percent), Spanish (4.0 percent) and Portuguese (1.7 percent). The most common non-European language is Chinese (1.5 percent), followed by Japanese (1.0 percent).¹¹ Therefore, we created an ‘English’ dummy variable, which is coded as 1 for the US, Canada, the UK, Ireland, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa.¹² To further distinguish the cultural proximity of participants to the English language, we collected the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) test score by country from the respective Internet page.¹³ We defined a group with weak TOEFL values below 70 points (the main example here is Japan, which is quite astonishing) and the group with modest TOEFL values between 70 and 84. Country groups that are not mainly English speaking but have fairly good TOEFL scores represent the constant.

In our regressions, we find that the number of economic historians and the distance from the congress are significant determinants of world congress attendance (see Table 5). Less distance and more economic historians mean higher congress participation in the respective country. As expected, GDP and the English-language variable also matter. Researchers from countries with high GDP can more easily afford the travel expense, while those from countries with low GDP face greater obstacles. English language skills affect

¹¹ Results based on the Ulrich database. For further information, see UNESCO (2010: 149).

¹² Although there are obviously language minorities in some of those countries. There are also some English-speaking countries in other country groups.

¹³ The TOEFL test is the most accepted international test to score English language skills. It consists of reading, listening, writing and speaking sections. The maximum total score is 120 points.

participation positively. The home market effect is always positive and has a large coefficient but is not statistically significant. We also tested whether visa requirements played a role and obtained a negative but significant coefficient. In addition, a time trend (“year”) was insignificant. Finally, including country fixed effects in a least square dummy variable model (column 5) did not make a difference.

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 regions with the highest residual participation propensity are Iberia, Scandinavia and, surprisingly, Eastern Europe (excluding Russia). Africa and some Latin American countries also have positive residuals.

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 occur in Stellenbosch. The most astonishing fact is the non-participation of Africans (outside South Africa). It should be noted that this is a *ceteris paribus* forecast that does not take into account special stipends and other interventions that would encourage African participation. The forecast in Table 4 is based only on the variables in Table 5: the number of economic historians, which is small in most African countries, the distance, which is quite large (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 from this region will add up to at least 40 to 50 participants.

Because of a potential home market effect, participation by South Africans will be the highest ever. We also forecast that South African historians and economists who have not previously

engaged with economic history will attend, as these groups did in Helsinki. The largest participation is estimated for the US, with more than 90 delegates. The British will also be quite well represented. China's participation at recent congresses was relatively modest but is growing substantially because of the large group of economic historians at home and the growing integration and income of the country. Compared with the showing at Utrecht in 2009, participation will climb from 23 to a forecasted 54 delegates at the congress in Stellenbosch. Furthermore, Japan's participation is estimated to be 54 delegates. In our estimation, the European countries will send fewer delegates to Stellenbosch 2012 than to the last congresses in Helsinki and Utrecht, but they will send more than they did in 2002 (to Buenos Aires). From the Latin American group, Argentina and Mexico will be represented by 37 and 31 delegates, respectively. Altogether, we predict a participation number of 1064 delegates (excluding accompanying persons). That number is slightly less than that for the last two World Economic History Congresses in Utrecht (1211 delegates) and Helsinki (1292 delegates), but more than for the congress in Buenos Aires in 2002 (712 delegates). 1064 delegates is a number that will facilitate a very successful world congress. Moreover, this number is an estimate based only on travel costs and similar variables. The unusual location of South Africa and the fact that this event will be the first world congress in Africa will probably attract an even higher number, as the number of session proposals at the time of writing indicates.

MEMBERSHIPS IN NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

In this section we compare our estimated number of economic historians with memberships of national economic history organisations. Do our estimated economic historian numbers match the number of memberships in national organisations in the respective country? We interviewed representatives of several national organisations via e-mail about their current membership numbers. Some of these organisations include foreign scholars, such as the

Economic History Society, which is mainly located in the UK but includes people from outside Britain. Nevertheless, these organisations are the exception rather than the rule.

A strong link exists between our estimates and the memberships in national organisations data (Figure 2). Japan and the US, countries with large numbers of economic historians, also have many members of national economic history organisations. In addition, for the other countries, we observe a close numerical correlation. Economic historians in the documented countries seem to be highly organised and represented by their associations. However, this correlation might mean that economic historians were more visible for our initial respondents precisely because they are well represented in those national organisations.

Of course, the ability to correctly estimate the number of economic historians by the respondents might also depend on the size of the particular nation. For example, correspondents from the US could probably estimate the number of economic historians for their own state much more accurately than the number for the entire US. In the figure, both large and small countries lie close to an imagined regression line.

Therefore, respondents appeared to have based their estimates on the number of members in their national association. Nevertheless, in general, our estimates are confirmed.

JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS

In another plausibility check, we regress journal publications by country (or region) against our new estimates of the number of economic historians, adding 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 whether the journal was considered established and international

enough to be included in this database. A list of journals is given below in Table 7. 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 as in 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.¹⁴ 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 appearing between 2005 and 2010 and consisting of 1218 authorships sorted by affiliation. One author might have several authorships. Again, we included control variables to counter potential distortions. The language variables were also included. In addition, we included a dummy variable representing the fact that the journal is situated in a given country. For example, Australians will publish more often in the *Australian Economic History Review*, and Indians will do so in 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 though the number of cases was only 25 countries and regions. This regression confirms the plausibility of our new results.

Jaime Reis provided 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, the one that Reis used had a larger time frame, sampling the years 1996,

¹⁴ For studies about the variety of measures of scientific productivity. See, for example, Kalaitzidakis, Mamuneas and Stengos (2003); Di Vaio and Weisdorf (2010).

1998 and 2008, covering four journals. When we compared the two, the results we obtained for our new publication database were fairly robust (Table 7, Column 4).

Next, we estimated the overall number of economic historians in the world by interpolating values for all countries with a population of 500,000 inhabitants or more that had missing values due to non-reported data. We interpolate the values of missing countries by utilising our estimated number of economic historians relative to the population in the same geographical region. For example, the value for Ivory Coast was an estimate based on the per capita value for Ghana and the population of the Ivory Coast. We find that the overall number of economic historians in the world is probably around 10,400 scholars, almost 8,700 of which are in the 59 surveyed countries and 1,700 in the countries without data.

NUMBER OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS

The participants in our survey were also asked to estimate how many economic historians were doctoral students. In Table 8, we report the number of doctoral students by region. Again, there is a lot of variation, but the measure might be within acceptable bounds for most of the regions. It displays the expected differences, which we based on qualitative information about doctoral schooling. For example, the share of doctoral students among all economic historians is high in Western Europe, where not all of those students aim at starting an academic career. In the North American system, the pervasive goal of doctoral students is to start an academic career.

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 at world congresses, and which determinants encourage or limit publication propensity?

We found that the overall number of economic historians in the world might be around 10,400. Breaking the number of economic historians down by country, Japan obtained a high value with an estimated 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 with 11.4, the United Kingdom with 11.3 and Japan with 10.6 occupy positions four to six.

Clearly, this estimation procedure does not reveal the impact each nation had on overall knowledge creation, nor on the neighbouring fields of economics and history. For example, US economic historians had a large impact on the development of the discipline due to high productivity or original ideas.¹⁵ But establishing estimates for the number of economic historians is a necessary first step to understand the dynamics of the discipline.

To countercheck our new data on economic historians, we implemented three plausibility checks. First, we fitted a gravity model that explains conference participation in relation to distance, the number of economic historians in the source country, home market effects of the country in which a world congress occurs, and other variables. The data originated from world congress participation statistics. As expected, distance and the number of economic

¹⁵ To cite another example: Waldenström (2005a) criticized the Swedish economic history mainstream for focusing mostly on national or regional economic history, whereas the share of international comparative work published in international journals was quite limited in his view. See also Waldenström (2005b).

historians were statistically significant across all regressions. In addition, GDP and English language skills had a significant impact on economic historian numbers.

In another plausibility check, we compared our new estimates with the memberships in national economic history associations. The results of this approach supported our estimated number of economic historians. Economic historians seem to be highly organised.

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

These comparisons of different measures allow us, to some extent, to overcome the problem of defining economic historians precisely. Moreover, by comparing the participation at international congresses with the number of economic historians, a clearer understanding of the scholarly knowledge generation process of congress participation is possible. The intriguing question about limiting factors of participation (language, travel costs, visa, etc) is quantified here for the first time. A similar model is created for publications in international journals. For example, this allows us to specify how many publications can be expected by, say, a junior economic historian with a TOEFL value 70. This knowledge can be important in research evaluation which becomes a part of everyday university life and which is not always performed appropriately.

To forecast the participation at the next World Economic History Congress in Stellenbosch (South Africa) in 2012, we analysed participation statistics on the three world congresses of the last decade, namely those in Buenos Aires 2002, Helsinki 2006 and Utrecht 2009. Our estimated participation number at the congress in Stellenbosch suggests that the participation of East Asia will increase. The total number will be around 1064 delegates. In addition, although not confirmed by our estimates, the expected success of attracting Africans to the congress will help to strengthen the discipline on the African continent.

Lastly, some developing countries with substantial economic history communities, such as Vietnam, Brazil and Senegal, have not been extensively integrated into the global economic history community. Strengthening the extent of this integration in the future will substantially bolster the future of economic history as a discipline. Since economic history can shed much light on crucial development issues, it is important to strengthen the discipline in those regions where development is the core issue.

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Table 1: Coverage of world regions

World Region	Coverage in percentage
East Asia	98
East Europe/Central Asia	62
Latin America/Caribbean	73
Middle East/North Africa	51
North America/Australia/New Zealand	100
South Asia	77
Southeast Asia	54
Subsaharan Africa	13
Western Europe	100

Note: Oceania is not included, because we focused only on countries with a population of 500,000 and more in 2010 (Philippians are included in South East Asia)

Table 2: Ranking of economic historians by country

Country	Number of economic historians	Population (in mio)	Respondents
Japan	1340	128	5
China	800	1346	1
United States	770	312	5
United Kingdom	675	63	4
Russian Federation	488	143	2
Mexico	350	115	2
India	350	1241	1
Spain	346	46	11
Italy	342	61	13
France	336	63	7
Argentina	300	41	1
Germany	210	82	9
Viet Nam	200	88	1
Turkey	200	74	1
Sweden	183	9	6
Brazil	160	197	2
Netherlands	138	17	2
Portugal	114	11	5
Taiwan	113	23	3
Colombia	100	47	1
Korea (South)	100	49	1
Peru	100	29	1
Greece	80	11	4
Hungary	70	10	1
Bulgaria	65	8	3
Belgium	60	11	1
Austria	60	8	1

Norway	53	5	4
Switzerland	52	8	4
Canada	44	35	3
Denmark	43	6	4
Finland	43	5	5
Senegal	41	13	1
Cuba	40	11	1
Uruguay	40	3	1
Australia	35	23	2
Chile	33	17	3
Poland	30	38	1
Indonesia	30	238	1
South Africa	28	51	3
Egypt	20	83	1
Israel	18	8	3
Serbia	15	7	1
Slovenia	15	2	1
New Zealand (Aotearoa)	15	4	1
Ireland	11	5	2
Romania	10	21	1
Total	8666	4816	137

Note: 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.

1-10 economic historians in the following countries: Morocco, Bolivia, Estonia, Algeria, Syria, Ghana, Cameroon, Mauritania, Kyrgyzstan, Haiti.

Population data from 2010.

Table 3: Economic historians relative to population by country

Country	Economic historian / Population	GDP (per capita)	Respondents
Sweden	20.4	20442	6
Uruguay	13.3	7708	1
United Kingdom	10.7	19972	4
Japan	10.5	20876	5
Norway	10.5	24471	4
Portugal	10.4	14126	5
Finland	8.5	20290	5
Bulgaria	8.1	5505	3
Netherlands	8.1	21656	2
Slovenia	7.5	13650	1
Austria	7.5	20161	1
Spain	7.5	15464	11
Argentina	7.3	8340	1
Greece	7.3	12277	4
Denmark	7.1	23086	4

Hungary	7	7286	1
Switzerland	6.5	22144	4
Estonia	6	11495	3
Italy	5.6	18890	13
Belgium	5.5	20833	1
France	5.3	20950	7
Taiwan	4.9	16428	3
New Zealand (Aotearoa)	3.8	16064	1
Cuba	3.6	2445	1
Russian Federation	3.4	5428	2
Peru	3.4	3658	1
Senegal	3.2	1454	1
Mexico	3	7154	2
Turkey	2.7	6274	1
Germany	2.6	18636	9
United States	2.5	28039	5
Israel	2.3	15733	3
Viet Nam	2.3	1820	1
Ireland	2.2	22015	2
Serbia	2.1	2354	1
Colombia	2.1	5091	1
Chile	2	9921	3
Korea (South)	2	14508	1
Australia	1.5	21712	2
Canada	1.3	22250	3

1-10 economic historians in the following countries (0.1-0.8 economic historians per million inhabitants):
Bolivia, Brazil, Poland, China, Romania, South Africa, Mauritania, India, Cameroon, Morocco,
Kyrgyzstan, Ghana, Egypt, Syria, Indonesia, Algeria.

Note: GDP data from 2000

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

Country (group)	Buenos Aires 2002	Helsinki 2006	Utrecht 2009	Stellenbosch* 2012
South Africa	8	6	9	84
Africa others	1	3	2	0
China		4	23	53
India	12	9	10	9
Japan	19	55	78	54
Asia others	14	31	13	37
Russia	12	30	17	39
Eastern Europe others		48	50	16
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
Mexico	31	24	9	31
Latin America others	0	11	26	14
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: *Stellenbosch 2012 is the average of the previous 3 unknown figures

The fact that there were 8 South Africans was constructed from the academic program

The high participation rate of Finland in 2006 includes not only economic historians, but also all historians and economists who participated.

A forecast based on our model, see text.

Sources: Buenos Aires: Internet PowerPoint-Presentation, congress website

Helsinki: Excel sheet sent by Riitta Hjerpe, thanks for that

Utrecht: Excel sheet sent by Jessica Dijkman, 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. Also the arrangement "Greece/Turkey/Israel" was given by the world congress statistics, country specific numbers were not available.

The predicted value for "Africa others" in 2012 is actually -11, but we report a 0, because participation cannot be negative.

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 in Buenos Aires was constructed from the academic program.

Table 5: Panel Regressions: Determinants of world congress participation

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

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** (0.038)	12.90* (0.058)	4.94* (0.057)
TOEFL	3.47* (0.075)	2.24 (0.211)	0.86 (0.168)
English	121.06** (0.025)	97.82** (0.040)	38.37** (0.021)
Journal home		67.61** (0.038)	
Constant	-337.39* (0.071)	-231.32 (0.172)	-89.70 (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.

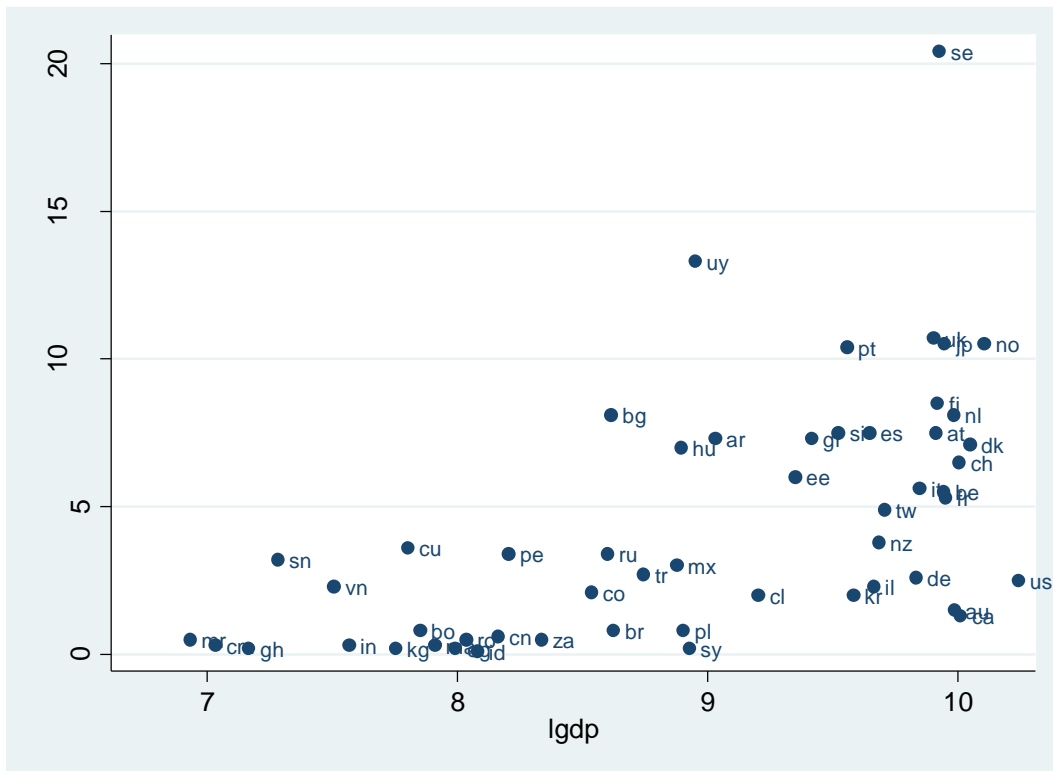
Journals: Australian Economic History Review, Economic History Review, European Review of Economic History, Explorations in Economic History, Indian Economic and Social History Review, Journal of Economic History, Revista de Historia Economica, Rivista di Storia Economica, Scandinavian Economic History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

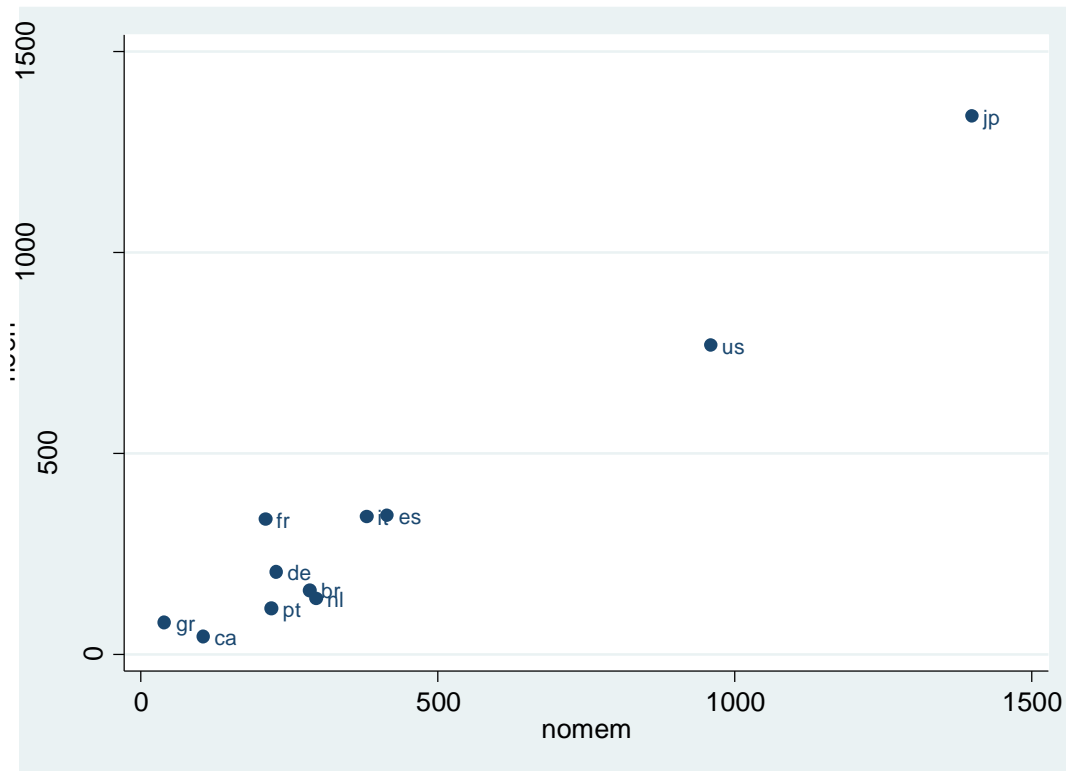
Notes: Column 1 excludes doctoral students

Figure 1: Are economic historians a luxury product?



Note: Lgdp is GDP per capita.

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), Società 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.

Appendix A: Questionnaire

The International Economic History Association would like to learn more about the situation of economic history in your country, and about your own views, hence you would do us a great favour answering the following questions. Please feel free to answer only questions 1 and 2, if you are very busy, this will not take you more than 1 minute. Answering all 8 questions might take 3 minutes. All answers will be treated completely anonymously, and all data will be deleted after the analysis.

On economic history in your country

1. In which country are you working as an economic historian?

2. Can you give a rough estimate of the number of economic historians working in your country, including historians and economists with strong interests in this field? Please include doctoral students, professors, and other scholarly staff (permanent and temporary). If a country-wide estimate might be too difficult, please estimate the number for your university (please specify to what you refer).

3. How many of those might be doctoral students?

4. Can you give a rough estimate about how many students below the doctoral student level (Bachelor, Master and similar; students of all fields) are taking at least one course in economic history presently in your country? Again, if a country-wide estimate might be too difficult, please estimate the number for your university (please specify to what you refer).

On the IEHA and its world congress

5. Which topics should be on the agenda of the 2012 world congress (max. 3)

6. Do you have suggestions what the International Economic History Association should do to promote economic history in your country, or to improve international contacts and cooperation?

On yourself

7. Do you consider your own preferred style of economic history to be closer to economics or history? Or exactly in the middle? Or are you mainly sociologist, political scientist or other?

8. May we ask for your age?

Appendix B: Topics and Promotion of economic history

To promote economic history and to attract more students of outstanding ability to this field, we asked the participants whether they possibly had suggestions for the International Economic History Association. What should the organisation 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 to participate in world congresses are the most relevant issue mentioned by the respondents to promote economic history in the different countries. These respondents suggested the organisation of regional meetings and summer schools for doctoral students by the International Economic History Association. Moreover, to be a successful researcher, it is necessary to have not only the skills and talent to search for the right themes but also the social capital consisting of knowing others with whom to collaborate and exchange ideas.¹⁶ In an international-oriented scholarly community, to exchange with other researchers at conferences is essential for being successful.¹⁷ In particular, young talented researchers without financial support and developed international reputations should be supported by travel stipends and summer schools 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 using the EH.net Classification. The results are presented in Table 10.

The most frequently mentioned topics fall into the category of ‘Economic Development, Growth, and Aggregate Productivity’. A number of respondents noted that,

¹⁶ Social capital defined here following Bourdieu, “Ökonomisches Kapital”, who considers it to be a capital asset consisting of useful relationships and contacts, whereas Putnam’s, “Bowling Alone”, definition of social capital is probably more often used in economics today.

¹⁷ For example, see Liberman and Wolf, “Flow of knowledge”; Fox, “Productivity in Science”; Salaran, “Research Productivity”.

given the location of the next world congress in Africa, development processes should be particularly high on the agenda. In addition, ‘Macroeconomics and Fluctuations’ and ‘Financial Markets, Financial Institutions, and Monetary History’ are very popular and critical fields. Themes about economic crises and the financial sector concern economic historians and the general public all over the world. These themes will be approached with an economic history methodology so as to clarify the undercurrents of current economic issues, which escaped economists and other social scientists who limited themselves to theoretical and current considerations.

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

The age structure of respondents indicated that topics such as ‘Household, Family and Consumer History’ and ‘Education and Human Resource Development’ are quite popular among younger respondents.¹⁸ Topics like ‘Labor and Employment History’ have a long tradition in our discipline and are also popular among the slightly more senior colleagues. In addition, 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, now have a certain history within our discipline.

¹⁸ “Economy-wide Country Studies and Comparative History” seems like a relatively broad category into which topics fit that do not fit elsewhere.

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 scholars to participate in WEHC (as before)	1
annual WEHC	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
Business History	46
Macroeconomics and Fluctuations	46
Markets and Institutions	46
History of Technology, including Technological Change	47
Economic Development, Growth, and Aggregate Productivity	47
Financial Markets, Financial Institution, and Monetary History	47
History of Economic Thought, Methodology	47
History Demography, including Migration	48
Servitude and Slavery	48
International and domestic Trade and Relations	48
Industry: Manufacturing and Construction	49
Government, Law and Regulation, Public Finance	49
Development of the Economic History Discipline: Historiography	49
Historical Geography	49
Urban and Regional History	50
Living Standards, Anthropometric History, Economic Anthropology	52
Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Extractive Industries	52
Military and War	52
Transport and Distribution, Energy and Other Services	52
Labour and Employment History	55