

Welfare via Atlantic and Baltic trade?

Northern German port cities such as Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck became the wealthiest cities in Germany during the early modern period and likely reached some of the highest wealth levels in Europe by the late nineteenth century. Atlantic and Baltic trade probably played a key role in this development, but what are the exact mechanisms behind its contribution? Did selective migration from neighbouring cities, interior regions or from the countryside play a strong role?

In this study a newly available dataset from genealogical databases is accessed and created in order to analyze the differences in height (a proxy indicator for welfare) between migrants and locally born military conscripts. The thesis is entirely based on existing data (online available as fotos) and does not require visits to archives. Data: Earlier documentation by Wilhelm and Sigl (will be explained in office hour).

Recommended / comparative literature (for a later period):

[Berbée, P., Braun, S. T., & Franke, R. \(2025\). Reversing fortunes of German regions, 1926–2019: Boon and bane of early industrialization?. *Journal of Economic Growth*, 30\(2\), 307-337.](#)

Early Death in Chinese and European metropolises in the very long run? Evidence from long run samples

19th century large industrial cities were often unhealthy, and premature death frequent. “urban penalty” In contrast, after the middle of the twentieth century, we see a clear urban life expectancy advantage, and the advantage is visible for heights, a closely related health indicator.

This study uses the latitude and longitudes of cities based on the Chandler data set as well as the data set by Bosker et al. and compares them with height data sets recorded in our research group. The latitude and longitude of these height data sets allows to assign urban or rural status. Hence the long standing question of the origin of the urban penalty will be possible to answer for the first time using this new data set. Based on the height to life expectancy relationship also early death events can be estimated for Chinese and urban metropolises as well smaller cities and rural places.

Was the population of Northwest Germany the healthiest during the industrialization process?

New evidence has emerged on height developments in the regions of Germany. Some German regions experienced a very dramatic development and decline in health as the country became wealthier. Especially in Saxony, where Cinnirella and Ewert estimated a substantial height decline of several

centimeters during a period of rising population density. In contrast, the areas of Northwestern Germany seem to have had the tallest recruits in the mid-19th century, and for the far northwest, in Ostfriesland, demographers observed one of the lowest infant mortality rates, in a region that became a backwater after World War II.

How did health in western Germany evolve in the long run? Did the agricultural specialization on cattle farming play a role?

The portal „ARCINSYS“ allows to search registers (in German: Stammrollen) and includes only those for which a digitized image (in German: Digitalizat) is available, as well as a number of military units. The representativeness will be counter-checked using various established strategies, for example, by comparing the data sets with other sources like the British German Legion and, where available, local conscription records.

Trends of inequality in East Asia and Europe in the very long run.

Inequality is a crucial issue of today's world, it even makes military conflict and civil wars more likely. Inequality is partly determined by earlier trends towards an unequal distribution of welfare, although it is not always possible to measure long run inequality trends. In this study we explore the use of human height between of middle and upper social strata and lower income social strata using grave goods and other characteristics of archaeological excavation material. This allows to distinguish the social groups for both East Asian and European economies. Data sets are available and can be processed in this study. Macroeconomic context variables will be added to provide an overall evaluation of inequality in the long run

The Economics of Crime: Which economic factors influence specific criminal behavior patterns?

One important historical source are prison records, as they allow us to trace the behavior of human beings in very special situations. Our database contains already prison records for a number of countries, and an additional country might be added with a modestly sized sample (often available in digital archives). Various crimes have been committed, such as murder, violent and less violent crimes against property (i.e. theft and robbery), treason, prostitution, drunkenness and other crimes. This study takes into account additional factors that might have influence the selection into a prison population.

Gender equality during 19th and early 20th century: evidence based on anthropometric research

Apart from relative incomes and mortality values, the height values of males and females have been recently been suggested as an instrument to study and understand gender (in-)equality during the major industrialization period. This study will be based on a dataset of anthropological height recordings, as well as height recorded in prisons, which allow to estimate male and female heights for a large number of countries and regions.

Gender equality und bildungsbasiertes Wachstum in der sehr langfristigen Perspektive

Gilt der Zusammenhang von Gender equality und bildungsbasiertem Wachstum, den Maravall und Baten (2019) für Skandinavien beobachteten, ähnlich auch für andere Geographische Räume.

Major pandemic catastrophes in early human history

The events taking place 3200 before common era were pathbreaking. The earlier Bronze Age civilisation in the eastern Mediterranean was breaking down under the severe pandemic, which resulted in population loss, major migration of large military population groups, and the breakdown of states' administrations which had revolutionised human history. In this study, the standard of living is analysed before the 3200 events. An indicator by the name of enamel hypoplasia is used to assess how the average standard of living developed and how inequality was weakening the societies of the Mediterranean and northern Europe before the collapse.

An Anthropometric History of the Middle East: Trends of height and height inequality

The Middle East provided important development innovations to human civilization. However, we know not as much about the welfare and the inequality of welfare in this important world region. In this study we use a database of human height and other indicators (such as enamel hypoplasia, which also informs us about the quality of nutrition). In archaeological excavation reports, we obtain important additional information about individuals that we included in our database: can the burials be identified as middle/upper social strata, or rather as lower income social strata using grave goods and other characteristics of archaeological excavation material. Data sets are available and can be processed in this study. The SESHAT database provides additional context for the Middle East.

Health and Health Inequality in the Metropolis - Hamburg in the 19th Century

Requirements: Archival visit to an archive in Hamburg

Berlin is one of the most rapidly growing cities in the 19th century. London and Paris, for example, had already much more experience coping with such rapid growth. This makes it particularly fascinating to study health development in Berlin. For Berlin, a substantial amount of height data is available, which allows the study of net nutrition and health in this rapidly growing metropolis. It is interesting to see which groups of immigrants brought specific health human capital to the metropolis and how they differed from the people born in Berlin.

Anthropometric inequality can also be studied using new methods of height variation analysis. It is very interesting for the global health and height development dataset to study Berlin in particular because the German case has so far lacked its most important city.

Nutrition and Life Expectancy in Southern Germany During Harvest Failures

Esther Dufo, who won the Nobel Prize in 2019, studied the harvest shock of phylloxera in France during the 19th century. She found that this harvest shock was very decisive for the health development in France. A similar interesting historical development can be observed for the Southern German state of Baden-Württemberg. Fortunately, the state archive of Baden-Württemberg provides an important dataset for all the conscripts who were recruited for the army during the 19th century. The dataset reports the net nutritional status as well as the survival of parents, which is a unique feature. It allows the study of how the net nutritional status and health of the conscripts correlated with the survival of their parents when the conscripts were around 20 years old. We would expect that during the harvest failure period of the 1840s and early 1850s, the relationship between height and survival of parents might be slightly narrower than in the period before and after, but whether this was truly the case is an empirical question.

Regional gender equality in China during the 17th and 18th century: evidence based on anthropometric research

An exciting new source has been identified that includes the height of male and female victims of violent crimes. This allows to study and understand gender (in-)equality during a crucial period of Chinese history, and a large number of different regions with specific economic specializations can be studied.

Human Capital Inequality in Latin America

Life expectation and ages structures-new estimating methods for long-run perspective

The life expectations for long-run period analysis are available only for a small number of countries and time points. However, there is mortality- and birth rates for many countries and regions inside these countries. Pyramids of ages can be almost accurate. Mortality rates can be an indicator for life expectancy. Anyway they are also related to the ages' structure (in general, the rates for old ages are higher, and they are also higher for babies and infants in the poorer economies). This study observes the development of the ages' structure and mortality rates in order to get information about life expectancy using regression models. Life expectancy is a basic variable to represent the life standards measurements. In this way also important evidence on long-term trends in contemporary societies can be obtained worldwide.

Country Case Study: The Human Capital Development of <any country>, 1500-2007

This topic requires a visit in an archive, and some knowledge of another language.

Determinants of Early Human Capital Education in East- and Central-European Regions

There are a lot of samples about early human capital education in Europe. These samples could be evaluated in the study. At the begin, you can measure which countries were leading in the last four centuries and how big were the gaps among them? Partially, the data can be taken from our department's data bank. You can extend the data by collecting new samples after visiting new archives in other locations, such as Moscow, Budapest, Kiev, Bucharest, etc.

Determinants of early human capital education in South European Regions

There are a lot of samples about early human capital education in Europe. These samples could be evaluated in the study. At the begin you can measure which countries were leading in the last four centuries and how big were the gaps among them? Partially, the data can be taken from our department's database. You can extend the data by collecting new samples after visiting new archives in other cities such as Rome, Madrid, Athens, Lisbon and Istanbul (In this case, the knowledge of Ottoman-Turkish is required).

Did Demographic factors influence the economic growth on the very long-run period?

A rich data base of mortality rate 1600-1900 is built for this research (according to decades), based on indirect indicators such as mortality of soldiers (see Curtin 1964, 68, 89, 98, cited in Acemoglu et al. (2001). Also cited there: elite groups such as bishops (Gutierrez 1986). The level and the variability of the mortality can be used to influence the economic growth in the following period of the twentieth century.

Literature: Acemoglu et al., "The Colonial Origins", American Ec. Review (2001).

The long-run period development of Human Capital in England

England is the motherland of the industrial revolution. But the reasons of this early success are not studied sufficiently. In this study, the marriage registers and court documents can be used to know more about the early human capital development by using the Age Heaping strategy. In addition to that, data about immigrants and accused from our data bank can be used. The data is located mainly in London.

Trends of Beauty as an indicator of cultural human capital: an century-long-analysis

Nowadays, there is a large body of research on the effects of beauty in the labor market. It is

possible to overcome the subjectivity problem by evaluating beauty with at least five different evaluations of different persons, ideally from different age groups and potentially different cultures. In the long run, i.e. over centuries and millennia, this thesis assesses the cultural human capital over the long run.

Economic and Social Development Based on Heights in India

Height information can provide valuable insights about the individuals' health conditions. In an earlier study (Baten, 2016) analyze potential determinants of regional Indian heights by region or superstate and half decade of birth. Recently, a new dataset was released by the Indian Health Economics Institution. This gives us the opportunity to refine the approach, using individual height as dependent variable, and controlling better for sanitation. Also, one should

include the measurement issues and the solution to these issues which Angus Deaton mentioned in his studies about Indian health development.

Climate conditions as a determinant of living standards

One of the crucial determinants of long-term living standards in the past were agriculture harvests. However, until now not much is known about which weather situation and which combination of humidity and temperature ranges in different months were optimal for a good harvest and which climatic shocks destroyed the harvest.

In this study the knowledge acquired by climatic historians such as Christian Pfister and Rudolf Brázdil are used to specify an econometric model of grain production based on the combination of different climatic factors. Often shortcut methods have to be used since the number of combinations is simply too large. For example, a case where the temperature is in a range between a certain minimum and 10 degrees higher in, perhaps, July to August, and humidity is in a range of a certain minimum and maximum and no hail storm is preventing the harvest can be difficult to analyze.

Studying violence as an economic determinant of growth for the early modern period

Recently, Cummins created a new dataset of nobility/life histories starting in the early Middle Ages and covering very long time spans until the eve of modern industrial development. This dataset can be used to study early developments of violence and human capital formation of the elite by using several techniques. Cummins suggested to identify the battle violence by the common dates in which many noblemen were killed, which is already coded for the dataset. More innovative could be the suggestion to consider the share of birth years ending with zero because this might allow to trace the numerical abilities of the noblemen and their immediate surroundings in reporting precise dates. Firstly, the share of birth years which are not rounded could serve as an indicator for early human capital. Secondly, the fact that birth years were reported for noblemen would be another indicator of human capital because it also required a certain skill in reporting and saving this kind of biographic information. The usual caveats, which are discussed in the paper by Keywood and Baten on the birth year known share of European rulers and in the related paper on Middle Eastern human capital, would be good to discuss here as well. The aim of the study would be to identify early determinants of human capital, which later decided on higher or lower regional income levels and which might have implications until today.

Health and Height of Prisoners in 18th to 20th century: a survey

Height is often used as a health indicator, and for prisons, this proxy indicator is available in large numbers. This thesis expands our knowledge by comparing a number of different prison samples (and adding one from an archival source), in order to prepare a new exciting source and to understand potential motivations of different crime groups in the long run.

A New Generation? Junior Scholars in High-Productivity Networks: The Example of Long-Run Economic Studies

An important topic in educational economics is the ability of universities to train the next generation of scholars. Specifically, under what conditions do junior scholars develop the skills necessary to increase their publication productivity, effectively present at conferences, and build successful academic careers?

This study examines a sample of junior scholars connected to high-productivity networks. A high-productivity network is defined as a university or a research group focused on a specific topic, such as long-run economic studies, economic history, or economics with a long-run perspective, which includes at least one researcher who has published in a top-five economics journal or in another journal with an impact factor of ten or higher in the last decade. Long-run economic studies are defined as those that meet the following criteria: include "n-star" indicators in their publication framework, are categorized under "cc" in EconLit, or investigate trends spanning at least five decades.

The goal is to compile a dataset by first identifying high-productivity researchers from the top five economics journals and other relevant high-impact journals. The personal details of these researchers, such as their affiliations and departmental information, are collected from institutional webpages. Subsequently, a questionnaire is distributed to these researchers to gather information about their students over the last ten years, including the students' names, email addresses, and whether they continued in academia.

In the next stage, the identified junior scholars are interviewed to assess their publication records, their experiences with the journal revise-and-resubmit process, and their future academic plans. These responses are then analyzed in relation to various factors, including the scholars' subfields of study, differences in university cultures, migration experiences, and

biographical information about both the junior scholars and the high-productivity researchers in their departments.

This study aims to shed light on the dynamics of scholarly training within high-productivity networks and the factors that contribute to the development of successful academic careers in economics and related fields.

Did immigration from high numeracy countries increase growth during the last two centuries?

In this study, the new Tübingen economic history migration database is used to study the effect of migrants coming from a high numeracy level country as opposed to the effect of lower numeracy countries. The study uses national averages and assesses whether the GDP per capita development is positively influenced. The study uses national averages and assesses whether the GDP per capita development is positively influenced. GDP is taken from the [Clio Infra dataset](#) and for the missing cases approximated using anthropometric methods as explained in the Baten and Blum (2012) *Economic History of Developing Regions* study.

Literature: Baten, J., & Blum, M. (2012). Growing tall but unequal: new findings and new background evidence on anthropometric welfare in 156 countries, 1810-1989. *Economic History of Developing Regions*, 27(sup-1), 66-85.

Did globalization increase inequality?

The [Federico-Tena World Trade Historical Database](#), created in Madrid by Tena and his co-authors allows us to study trade also in a large number of developing countries during the 19th century. Klasing and Milionis (2014) estimated GDP in nominal terms which allows to calculate import plus export or only export per GDP. However, this is not available for all countries. One of the challenges of this study is to interpolate in a sensible way GDP in current prices using similar neighbouring countries or using the difference to a neighbouring country at a later point in time and then interpolating using a similar country in the same world region that shares the characteristics of export structure. An alternative might be to estimate nominal GDP using anthropometric methods. This allows to study the effect and another element in estimating and reconstructing this global trade intensity data is to calculate simply exports per population if GDP is not available and this might also result in estimates of globalization using

regressions on export and plus import per GDP for the overlapping cases. Perhaps adjusting for additional variables. This allows to assess the globalization impact on inequality using the Tübingen data set of inequality by country and decade during the last two centuries.

Literature: Federico, G. and Tena-Junguito A. (2019): World trade, 1800-1938: a new synthesis. *Revista de Historia Económica-Journal of Iberian and Latin America Economic History*, Vol 37, n.1.