

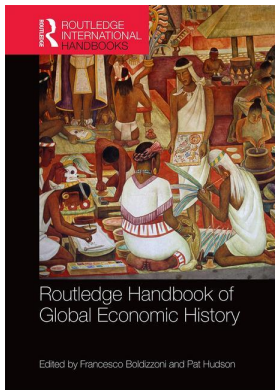
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CULTURE, POWER
AND CONTESTATION

Multiple roads from the past to the future

Francesco Boldizzoni and Pat Hudson

The historiographies we have gathered in this volume tell a multitude of stories about the development of economic history, in its various forms and guises, from its pre-history as an academic field, to the present. In some places and periods it has been conjoined with other disciplines or has even been defined in itself as a broadly based endeavour; in others it has been more narrowly delineated, largely to coincide with certain dominant forms of analysis or in engagement with regional political or policy imperatives, rather than with the subject matter of material history per se. The narratives highlight (by no means always congruent) periods of contraction and expansion, turning points in approaches and methods, the impact of varied ideas in broader social science, and the power of prejudice and ideology in limiting the influence of certain approaches and individuals, sometimes cutting short their careers and even their lives.¹ At the same time ideology and political favour have also, of course, been responsible for the elevation of certain individuals and ideas and for endorsing their influence over swathes of the subject, regardless of their shortcomings.

National, regional and trans-regional historiographical traditions can be seen to reflect the variety of ecological, socio-economic and political circumstances, and paths to development and modernization that have been experienced worldwide. History-writing is not necessarily determined by such factors but certainly they have proved a major influence upon particular preoccupations and approaches. Neither does the influence flow only in one direction. It is the case that national and regional traditions of writing, and the ideas and models that they promote, can become instruments of propaganda or policy and thus in turn reinforce the local trajectories and ideologies that they are also attempting, or purporting, to map. The influence of censorship and state control of ideas in altering the nature of economics and economic history, especially, but not solely, in command economies and authoritarian states, in turn reinforced the dominant ideology and the reality of the working of the economy. In freer societies, as Karl Polanyi argued more than half a century ago with respect to the transformation of Britain: ‘there was nothing natural about *laissez-faire*’, ‘*laissez-faire* was planned’ and it was the power of the ‘economistic prejudice’ as expressed and reinforced by writers and by the political economy of the nineteenth century that persuaded people that the ideal of the free market should be at the heart of social action (1944: 139, 141, 161). The impulse to social reform that influenced the nature and evolution of economic history in many regions, in turn impacted upon government policy and economic outcomes just as the development of national

accounting techniques, on the part of historians as well as economists, promoted the growth of the welfare state and macroeconomic management. Many chapters highlight the role played by government service in the careers of economic historians; this was particularly so in the United States where cliometricians often had executive positions and political power (see Lyons et al. 2008). The NBER was established in 1920 by Wesley C. Mitchell (soon joined by Edwin F. Gay) expressly to provide data as a foundation for economic policy making. In Latin America, especially Brazil, many historical economists became involved with state service and later with ECLA/CEPAL.² The close association between economic history and economic and social policy more widely is one reason why the nature of the subject has been so closely aligned with the trajectories of particular economies and societies, and even with particular regimes. The history profession played a central role in building national and nationalistic histories that are in turn deep rooted in associated historical orthodoxies. No less strong are colonial and post-colonial beliefs and understandings that have informed economic history, and many other disciplines, in all hemispheres. Ideologies, old and new, East and West, North and South, inspire historical research but also limit the potential for fresh approaches and thwart scholars' commitment to offer unbiased interpretations.

Our varied stories also demonstrate that the preoccupations of historians in different countries and world regions have, to a large degree, been governed by the economies, as well as the politics and cultures, within which they are placed: their dominant sectors, their level of development and speed of change, their positions in world trade or imperial relations, and the extent to which economies have been and are controlled by the state. The concentration, for many decades, of Polish and Russian historians on great estates and peasantries; of Indian historians on colonialism and subalterns; of Americans on the frontier, on slavery and big business; the Canadians and Australians on staples and natural resources; Latin American scholars on the primary sector and dependency; Brazil's writers on labour supply, land reform, commodity cycles and import substitution; African historians on cash crops and slave exports; South Africans on race, migrant labour and mining; the Dutch on maritime and financial enterprise; the British on the industrial revolution; Swedish scholars on the welfare state; French writers on regional issues, peasant mentalities and the role of the state; the Japanese on the nature and demise of feudalism and the rise of labour-intensive industrialization; are all understandable in these terms.

Such preoccupations also encouraged the transnational exchange of ideas where similar circumstances suggested the application of certain ideas and tools. Debates and theses about the variety and dynamics within a 'feudal mode of production' spread from Eastern Europe and Russia to Middle Eurasia, India and Latin America. Mexican historiography drew upon the works of Witold Kula and Pierre Vilar for example. Chinese historians, whilst drawing on Soviet theorizing in the 1950s, adapted the notion of 'precocious feudalism' to better suit Chinese conditions. Similarly staple theory travelled from Canada to Australia and in Latin America was dominated by preoccupation with the volatility of prices and the terms of trade of primary products. Analysis of development and social problems in South Africa has been aided by the adaptation of the US notion of the military-industrial complex to the idea of a mineral-energy complex. The analysis of slavery included borrowings from North America to South America and Africa; import-substitution studies grew to have a global reach; and studies of industrialization and economic growth have influenced one another transnationally. In most of these exchanges, ideas have been developed and adapted to suit different circumstances on the ground but global 'grand narratives' have also often been dismissed as outlandish, especially, but not always, when foreign scholars have brought in or imposed ideas from outside.

The degree to which economic history in a country or region has looked outward or has focused solely upon internal questions can also be related to wider histories of world trading relationships and experiences as colonizing or colonized entities. Concern with the histories of their imperial reach is deeply imbricated in the British and Dutch historiographies, for example, encouraged by the availability of trading company and colonial records. In some of our narratives the story of the development of economic history in a nation is largely confined to research on that nation. However, national, regional and local studies, in comparative context, can be globally informed and even pioneering examples of intellectual innovation. The regionally and locally focused studies in the *Annales* tradition and central European approaches to the study of large estates and late serfdom can be appreciated in this light, as we shall see. The complexities in, and contrasts between, the economies of sub-regions in France spawned much early work on the border between economic and cultural history: on birth control, literacy rates, local government that made French historical demography, in particular, peculiarly sophisticated from the outset. Showing sensitivity to the culture of time and place, such studies retain the ability to complement or indeed to undermine those conceived with a broader global sweep.

In this chapter we consider what the collective project overall can tell us about the past, the present and the possible future of our field.³ We cover some of the general characteristics of economic history that have played themselves out differently in different contexts and we draw out some distinct ideas and concepts, often developed at the margins of the world system, that might usefully complement the tools currently employed by the international mainstream. We consider the way that various ideas and methodologies have been received, adapted or rejected in different environments. In the final section we seek to draw some methodological implications and conclusions for global history-writing.

The context of the emergence and development of social science

In many world regions the methodology of economic history has been closely associated with debates that accompanied the emergence of social science as well as the use of social science as a toolbox for state intervention, fiscal control and the amelioration of social distress caused by rapid economic change.

Practically all of the narratives in this volume refer to early struggles within social science over the degree to which human behaviour is universally predictable at the aggregate level and therefore amenable to general laws or to hypothetico-deductive or mechanical forms of analysis in the same way as natural science. Positions taken in the late nineteenth century and in continuing debates over the nature of political economy and economics have been vital in explaining different positions taken in economic history, within as well as between different world regions and intellectual cultures. In the Netherlands P. J. Blok, a major figure at the turn of the century, argued that the natural science approach could be 'equally successful in solving social questions as in clarifying the mysteries of the universe' (quoted in Bosma, section II of chapter 11). The role of the German Historical School in tempering such notions and in influencing the global development of our field is highlighted in many chapters, from Britain, across East and West Europe to Asia and Latin America. But the influence clearly played itself out differently in different contexts. In some places, as in Germany itself, it became a focus of reaction and partial rejection, in others it provided inspiration for the search beyond universalizing paradigms towards greater sensitivity to time, place and varying cultures. This can be seen, for example, in the emergence of British and continental historiographies such as the Belgian, the Italian, the Czech and the Hungarian; in a swathe of

the early Polish historiography of Franciszek Bujak and Jan Rutkowski; or with the search in India for a political economy suitable for Indian circumstances on the part of Mahadev Govind Ranade and Romesh Chunder Dutt.

In France François Simiand had refused to accept economic laws detached from any historical or institutional context but French traditions in this respect emerged rather separately and differently from the German historiography. Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre did not study Sombart and Weber closely and were careful to distinguish themselves from Marx. In Grenier's (chapter 7) words, 'they were interested in the economy because social relations were more dense and visible there than elsewhere, and not because it was the determining instance of the ensemble of social relations in Marx's sense'. These sorts of differences, similarly though not inevitably, have led to very different attitudes to the role of institutions, as well as culture, in economic life. In recent decades, for example, French research on institutions has adopted a contrasting approach to that found in the USA and associated with Douglass North. The accent is upon 'how economic systems with quite different institutional structures can achieve a comparative level of economic performance' (Grenier). Performance, however, does not occupy centre stage, nor is it seen as an explanation for the persistence of institutions.

Whereas economists generally focus upon institutions as potential constraints upon, or facilitators of, utility-maximizing activity, there is no such preconception with the approach to institutions from a socio-cultural history perspective which has been the one taken in many of the stories presented here. Indeed, one of the problems of the American institutional turn in economic history is the relatively limited departure from neoclassical orthodoxy and from a western-oriented modernization teleology that it has created despite celebrations to the contrary. For Fernand Braudel, whose ideas have been a key influence in many parts of the world, the rules of capitalism are the opposite to those conceived in the neoclassical schema. Free markets characterized by fair and efficient competition are not at the centre of capitalism as a concept but a privilege founded on the power of monopolies and their incorporation by the state. It is not surprising that the sort of institutional discourse employed in parts of the globe as various as China and Latin America in recent years has favoured the broader more historically oriented approach of Joseph Schumpeter and Albert O. Hirschman over that of North.

The social science context in different countries influences not only methodological leanings but also the boundaries of economic history: whether these are narrowly and firmly defined or, at the other pole, whether some sort of total history is pursued in the belief that economic history cannot extract the economy from the rest of life (for study), leaving the context and environment of stylized facts to other specialists. French historiography has had a preoccupation with *histoire totale*, articulated around relationships between the natural and human worlds, within which the economy has had no autonomous or independent role. Hence the pioneering French work on mental frameworks, feelings and beliefs but also on the human body, illness, climate and the environment. The necessary overlap between economic history and cultural analysis, if not 'total history', has been prominent elsewhere: in the early work of Rutkowski, for example, who favoured ethnography, and in attention to psychological factors in Italian approaches to microhistory. Elsewhere these topics and approaches would struggle to find a place within economic history.

As part of economics, economic history has been successively influenced by formalism, rational choice theory, the new institutional economics, the new home economics, and game theory amongst other things, and often professed its loyalty to neoliberalism. Its methodologies have become less and less useful for analysing long-term change even though this has become

a major focus of global concern. As a part of history, economic history has been subject to a wider range of ideas, incorporating humanistic methods and non-documentary evidence. The potential strengths of both positions may seem obvious but so are their weaknesses, especially without dialogue between the two. The methodological bifurcation has undermined the subject and, in recent years, economic history in many regions has been in decline because it has been marginalized by both parent disciplines, albeit for different reasons.

Social science debates in the twentieth century polarized between *Erklären* and *Verstehen* or in relation to various versions of *Geistesgeschichte*, and between logical-positivist and historicist positions, further fed variously into the field of economic history as did the force of Marxist and Marxian historical materialist models and controversies about modes of production. These figure prominently in the Russian, Indian, Latin American, Japanese and Middle Eurasian narratives and are not absent in others. Whether endorsed by authoritarian regimes or not these debates crossed continents, everywhere being reinterpreted in the light of different specificities of culture and environment. In East Germany the ideological climate spawned massive study of the history of the working class and labour movements. It informed the 'moral economy' and other work of the British Marxist historians, and research on capitalism and slavery by Caio Prado Jr, Eugene Genovese and others in the Americas. In Eastern Europe and Russia more rigid Marxist frameworks were imposed proving detrimental to the subject but despite this enforcement of uniformity, as our chapters on Czechoslovakia, Hungary and especially Poland demonstrate, many historians managed to produce major empirical and even analytical contributions.

The strength of different forms of historical materialism, and broader beliefs about the central role of the economy within social science, encouraged the expansion of economic history globally in the middle decades of the twentieth century. By contrast, since the 1980s the ideological taint of Marxism, the rise of neoliberalism and the general widening of the gulf between neopositivist and interpretive methodologies, has tended to leave economic history between a rock and a hard place. The subject is in decline in many regions, especially in its traditional forms. The present state of economic and social theory in the post-industrial West has left historians alienated from the economy and economists alienated from history. By contrast, it is in the more dynamic economies and societies of the developing world, in search of wide-ranging explanations for structural change, that the discipline seems to have maintained its appeal.

Relationship to statistical movements

The progress of political arithmetic and national statistical movements was closely related to the emergence and nature of nascent economic history in many regions but varied with the strength and stability of nation states.⁴ State recording of vital events and indicators of production and trade provided the raw materials for the expansion of economic history and demographic history but differentially. Following the emergence of Belgium as an independent state in 1830 the Commission Centrale de Statistique was founded to provide instruments for policy making and social order, and soon developed an international reputation under the directorship of L. A. J. Quetelet, its first chairman who pioneered the application of statistics to social science. It is not surprising that quantitative methods and, later, national accounting geared to measuring the performance of the economy flourished earliest in those countries where reasonably good data at national level were available. This was generally the case in areas of the world with centralized states that promoted fact gathering and accounting for fiscal purposes as in Britain and France, and in Italy after unification. The accuracy, coverage

and availability of statistical data on the economy were often pivotal to the emergence, nature and expansion of economic history. In Spain, parts of Latin America, India, Africa and elsewhere quantitative economic history was held back by the paucity of reliable figures.

Contributors to the volume have variously indicated, on the one hand, the historic appeal of statistical evidence and analysis in economic history but also the difficulties of applying similar quantitative measures and methods across time and space. Problems start with recognition of the poor quality of data in many regions. In Eastern Europe major historical discontinuities in political regimes coupled with wartime destructions of government records make it difficult to estimate output or national income figures for lengthy periods in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, hence the reluctance of indigenous scholars to involve themselves in such exercises. Similarly in Africa time series are discontinuous and lack temporal comparability especially for the pre- and post-colonial periods. Elsewhere, political and economic conflicts, the desire for macroeconomic management and the needs of welfare states in the twentieth century drove innovation in statistical collection with knock-on effects upon the discipline. In Britain, Germany and the United States, for example, the needs of the war economy of 1939–45 created a turning point. And where national accounting developed, the methods and approaches of a significant branch of economic history soon followed.

The statistical approach to society, that became embedded in economic history, from the late nineteenth century in many countries, everywhere represents a very different quantitative tradition to that of the later, US-inspired ‘new economic history’, where deductive methods rather than induction were the touchstone. Most pioneers of the collection and use of historical statistics and those who developed national accounts shared a bias against deductive methods and equilibrium models and even seriously doubted whether market outcomes were optimal either in efficiency or welfare terms (Offer 2008). Part of their motivation was that time series of output, trade and income variables made it easier to address the most pressing issues of historical enquiry, regarding the long-term development of economies, levels of social welfare and the experience of fluctuations. It is no accident that national accounts were pioneered very early in Australia. Motives of social reform or tariff reform commonly lay behind historical statistical endeavour. Statistics were also pivotal, in different ways and using rather different methods, to the central planning of state socialism as in the Soviet bloc and China, and in absolutist regimes, as in Japan 1868–1940.

The so-called new economic history spreading from the USA from the 1970s as well as the current craze for generating global panel data to indicate relative levels and rates of development and growth have indeed had mixed receptions. In Britain the former was very much a minority taste, largely because quantitative analysis had already developed its own way (often associated with state intervention), free of any connection with neoclassical or other economic modelling. In France *histoire sérielle*, arising from the *Annales* School, was based upon the very different foundations of long-run time series rather than equilibrium or market-based frameworks. The same impulse encouraged quantitative approaches in other parts of continental Europe where stochastic elements, such as the impact of climatic fluctuations, wars, epidemics, fires and so on, were often a central concern. In Latin America, particularly Brazil, the approach of *histoire sérielle* was also influential. In the Netherlands historians felt pressured to develop a leading role in cross-national comparative quantitative history in order to regain a central place in analysing the precocious modernization of their own country in comparative perspective. Their specialization in this respect has recently developed outwards (in the CLIO-infra project) from GDP to a wide range of historical developmental indicators covering biological, institutional, environmental and human capital indices. However, doubts may be raised as to the reliability of such indices (often inadequately

sourced) and the moral tales they seem to imply – by identifying democracy with western-style political competition for instance. In Belgium, by contrast, despite a strong tradition of quantitative social science, the influence of the *Annales* approach was too strong to allow the new economic history to displace it. Even in the USA itself the cliometric revolution created enormous controversy. As the cliometricians' claims became increasingly didactic the weight of disagreement grew over principles as well as practice. Most internal criticism of cliometrics concerned the quality of the data employed and the difficulties of reducing information to money values at one equilibrium point in time in order to effect social savings calculations that also frequently ignored the possible range of counterfactual responses (Lamoreaux, chapter 3; cf. Cain and Whaples 2013).

The association of US-style quantitative history with rational choice and other neoclassical approaches diminished its appeal in regions of the world with large subsistence and peasant sectors and where western-style market models and profit-maximizing assumptions were difficult to apply. Thus in India, in Japan, in Latin America and in Africa it had few converts. The Russian take-up of quantitative history in the heat of Cold War computer-aided scientific rivalry was marked, although the data and assumptions upon which quantitative exercises were based (state production, shadow pricing) were necessarily different before and even after 1989. Because of the common language of formal models and statistical enquiry, quantitative economic history provided a bridge between Soviet and western historians through exchanges and international conferences and via International Economic History Association networks, that the Russian and East European political authorities found harder than other fields to police. However, this did not prevent a gap emerging between indigenous measures of economic growth and those pursued, often for equally ideological reasons, by the CIA (Borodkin, chapter 12). Measures of growth or well-being have been applied transnationally only with great difficulty and much debate. Major controversy has surrounded the application of orthodox measures of GDP to Africa, for example.⁵ And in Latin America the necessity of adjusting the weighted composition of the Human Development Index has been highlighted because in different cultural contexts elements of well-being take on different levels of importance (Bértola and Rodríguez Weber, chapter 20).

Nation state formation, nationalistic history, instrumentalism and ideology

In several countries the rise of economic history was closely related to nation building and associated political economy. In China much early analysis of agriculture, handicrafts, commerce, taxation, consumption and market management, money and prices took place during the process of unification and centralization of the imperial authority before the start of the first millennium. In most of the world such discussions, in different forms, started to take place between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries and intensified in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when modern powerful mixed economy states evolved. State formation was also a main driver of the rise of economic history in twentieth-century command economies where it followed a distinctive path dictated by rigid adherence to a particular vision of the past and the future. In Sweden what Hasselberg (chapter 9) has termed 'the historic compromise' – a nationalistic master narrative of technological innovation, the achievement of social peace and the evolution of the welfare state – is the key event around which the story of economic history (its key preoccupations, its sources and its methods) unfolds.

In other cases, the relation between economic history and nation building appears to be retrospective. History is used rather to make sense of a civilization and contributes to a quest

for identity. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Brazilian case, where the concept of 'formation' (*formação*), and the associated search for meaning (*sentido*), became paradigmatic in the period 1930–60 with the works of Caio Prado Jr and Celso Furtado in particular. 'Interpretations' of Brazil (Freyre) and a focus on deep 'roots' (Buarque de Holanda) were also part of what looks like a collective endeavour. By that time, it became clear to Brazilians that the roots of their national identity were in the South Atlantic, in an intermediate space between Africa and America (Alencastro 2000; chapter 22 in this volume). This space, more ideal than geographical, had come into being as an unintended consequence of European violence. Over the centuries, sugar, gold mining and coffee, which dominated the lives of slaves and free men, gradually shifted the country's centre of gravity towards the continental tropics. Braudel, who had taught in São Paulo and admired these works, observed that 'each part of the world mirrors the history of the entire world; it is subjected to it and adapts to it' (1948: 102). For him, who at that time was writing the *Mediterranean*, the South Atlantic became another Mediterranean. Here we can appreciate two different points of view: one internal, the other external. What they have in common is the perspective of a 'long duration' *ante litteram* whereby the past explains the present.

There has always been, and to a degree there remains, a driving need, felt universally, to document and to explain development in ways compatible with nationalist sentiments, with internal and external political changes, and with ideology. What is less predictable is the degree to which the imperative of explanation translates itself into particular methodological frameworks, intellectual traditions and theoretical approaches. Here politics, ideology and intellectual culture are important. Appreciation of the comparative history of economic thought is important for questioning temporal and cultural specificities and biases. In parts of continental Europe and Asia the history of political economy has been more prominent, and established in the educational system, than in the UK or the USA (cf. Backhouse 2004). This may help to account for the strength of universalizing modernization paradigms and free market models in the USA as well as major conflicts between imperialist and anti-imperialist/nationalist interpretations as found in the historiographies of Southern Europe, including Greece (see Gazi 2012), Middle Eurasia, India, Japan and Latin America.

Taking the Indian historiography as an example, the strength of the nationalist impulse upon subject matter and interpretation in the discipline can be seen to be paramount from the search for an Indian political economy rooted in Indian conditions through colonial and post-colonial debates to subaltern studies and the rejection of new economic history and neoliberal impositions. One might cite the work of the Aligarh School in the 1980s, centred around Irfan Habib of the Aligarh Muslim University. In a controversial hard-hitting and detailed review of Volume II of the *Cambridge Economic History of India* (1983) which had just been published, Habib exposed the bias of a multitude of mostly western contributors, specifically the American Morris D. Morris. The authors had ignored much previous Indian, mostly nationalist but nevertheless serious scholarship, to produce a version of Indian history that entirely downplayed the negative aspects of British domination up to the 1940s. Using a rich array of statistics published by indigenous historians but ignored by Cambridge, Habib exposed the upbeat interpretation of the Tribute between 1757 and 1813; denial of de-industrialization and de-urbanization under the impact of western imports; and the dismissal of stalling per capita income growth and lowered life expectancy of the later nineteenth century. For his generation of Indian historians, the tendency of Anglo-Saxon historians to treat free trade and the munificence of the free market as an act of faith or ideology rather than reason was an important target to be attacked (Habib 1985; cf. Morris 1963).

Tirthankar Roy (2004) criticized the fact that the dominant paradigm guiding research in economic history in India during the second half of the twentieth century had stressed that the market-oriented policies of British colonial rule had led to underdevelopment and poverty. This idea appealed to economists, he argued, because 'it provided independent India's pursuit of socialist policies with an ideological basis'. But after the return to greater free market orientation in the 1990s, 'the compatibility between history and policy was undermined leading to a progressive irrelevance of [economic] history'. He thus urged the discipline to reinvent itself by moving from narratives centred on colonial power to a greater stress on resource-endowments and endogenous growth theory, but one could argue that he was advocating the replacement of one set of questionable tools with another. Not surprisingly, his work has become a target of harsh criticism in India, along with that of the Cambridge School of Eric Stokes (1978) and Christopher Bayly (2012). Their revisionist accounts emphasizing indigenous agency under British rule, highly respected in western academia, are often dubbed 'far-fetched' or even 'neo-colonial' by the current Indian historiographical mainstream. While it is understandable that such overtones cause Roy (2014: 30) considerable disappointment, it is hard to dismiss the historiography of an entire subcontinent as tendentious and unscientific.

Japanese economic historians in the early twentieth century focused much work on the so-called capitalism debate. This included discussion of economic development under feudalism in the late Tokugawa and the question of whether or not the Meiji Restoration could be seen as a bourgeois revolution, ushering in a specific form of Japanese capitalism, rather than marking the transition to a new sort of feudal regime within the absolutist monarchy (Yasuba 1975; Sugihara 1992). For a long time the western-inspired Marxist framework was central to these discussions. But Marxian models were generally applied flexibly with regard to the different environment of Asian culture and prior economic systems, particularly the late development of urbanization. Sensitivity to the specificities of Japanese culture in everyday life, particularly in village manufacturing, also promoted Weberian influence in Japanese economic history associated with the Otsuka School in particular. Following Weber, Hisao Otsuka stressed the embeddedness of economic life and decision-making in the social and cultural environment and emphasized the need for interdisciplinary understandings that took in the ideas and beliefs of actors, including their spiritual ethics and religious motivations.

As in India, western modernization paradigms and free trade/free market models were not seen as appropriate in Japanese economic history and were never popular. For the same reason econometric, as opposed to serial/quantitative, history has never been salient in Japan outside of the economics discipline. Also, as in India, Marxian interpretations appealed most strongly insofar as they could be harnessed to the nationalist view before the Second World War. Indeed some Japanese Marxist social scientists of the 1930s (dubbed turncoats by their peers) shifted neatly from Marxist models of economic subordination to the West, to varieties of nationalist history. As Marx had little to say about economic policy for and by developing nations, or for nations under the sway of more powerful economic actors, the ideas of Friedrich List were found attractive in Japan and elsewhere. List's views not only provided a model for Japanese policy for many years but also influenced the development of economic history (Metzler 2006).

List's framework for a national system of political economy with protectionism, where this was necessitated by unequal exchange, was also influential (partly because of fitting in with development needs) in National Socialist Germany, post-war Latin America, independent India and appealed to Den Xiaoping's post-Mao policies in China. The differential appeal of the model of industrialization via import substitution can be seen in a variety of lights but one

is certainly ideological. As Ha-Joon Chang has recently argued, from a Korean perspective, 'the history of capitalism has been so totally re-written that many people in the rich world do not perceive the historical double standards involved in recommending free trade and free market to developing countries' (2007: 16).

The work of Braudel has been a pervasive influence upon the historiographies of large parts of Europe, Latin America and Middle Eurasia. Braudel's concept of total history to include taking account of ecosystems, mentalities and the environment, his rejection of Eurocentrism and the pioneering transnational framework embodied in his Mediterranean study, are all reflected far and wide in global historiographies where they often fitted neatly with anti-colonial and nationalist sentiments. These motives are prominent in the traditions of the Middle East where Braudel's concept of a unity amongst the connected economies of the Mediterranean world brought Ottoman scholarship a new legitimacy. It gave the regions of the former Ottoman Empire (and Qajar Iran) a common platform of analysis that did not depend on concepts of cultural sluggishness, obstructive religious obscurantism or failed states (Islamoglu, chapter 16).

For similar reasons, that is, because of the instrumental and ideological appeal, dependency theory emerged and was promoted in Latin America and had a major impact in Eastern Europe, Middle Eurasia and India during the 1970s to 1990s. Broader links between East and West, North and South are influenced by histories of imperialism, formal and informal, past and present. This has resulted in traditions of intellectual endeavour incorporating superiority/inferiority, dominance/resistance, imperial and anti-imperial stances which are central to the analyses of various chapters of this book.

Openness to external influences

There has been a surprising degree of cross-national and cross-ideological debate and borrowings in our subject. In Japan following the Meiji Restoration the intellectual environment was very open to western influence, and economic history first emerged from the late nineteenth century as a response to western classical economics and the ideal of moral as well as economic progress. The influence of the German Historical School in Japan was encouraged by Japanese scholars admiring and spending time at the great German universities. In China the 'Self-Strengthening Movement' of the early twentieth century deliberately explored and adopted western works starting with Adam Smith. What occurred was a westernization of tools rather than values but this had a profound impact in the absorption of Hegelian dialectics and Marxian historical materialism, although the Rankian School also flourished until China closed itself off from western influence during the Cultural Revolution.

Despite the similar closure of Russian scholarship from the West during the Soviet era, from at least the 1920s and throughout the Cold War many active international dialogues can be identified (see Berg 2015). These contacts owed a great deal to the international outlook and preoccupations of groups of economic historians in Britain and France in particular (Postan, Power, Pirenne, Braudel and others), and were encouraged partly by the migrations of intellectuals from East and Central Europe to the West between the 1880s and the 1940s. A degree of international cooperation arose through the activities of the early and later *Annales* in promoting their interdisciplinary concerns, zeal for statistical series, and regional and global vision beyond French borders. As the *Annales* School grew to become the most powerful force in French history by the 1950s and 1960s and with Braudel at the helm, not only was this internationalism reinforced on an intellectual front but also via active encouragement and funding of scholarships for many Eastern European and Asian historians to spend time at the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales* (EHESS) and the *Maison*

des Sciences de l'Homme (MSH) in Paris (Burke 1990: 44). A very influential transfer in the years of the Cold War was the influence of the *Annales* in Poland. Thanks to the nature of earlier traditions of Polish research in economic and social history, the French were pushing at an open door. As with most transfers however, the translation of a tradition or set of approaches into a new cultural and political environment did not see these unchanged. In Poland the *Annales* influence did not translate into serial history or into *longue durée* regional studies. Instead epoch-centred studies of estates or towns were the result.

In Latin America strong influences on the development of approaches to economic history arose from dominant traditions of training in either Western Europe or the USA. Many scholars trained in Paris in the 1960s and 1970s taking *Annales* ideas back to analyse Latin American conditions. In Chile the Pinochet Coup resulted in the exile of young intellectuals who were subsequently trained in Britain, Sweden, Cuba and the USA, often with the aid of World University Service awards. Similarly, many native African scholars have trained in France, Britain and Eastern Europe or in the Soviet Union taking dominant ideas from these cultures back with them into a different environment. In recent years, South African universities have attracted a number of Zimbabweans and the economic history of Zimbabwe is being increasingly written there. Such transplants of ideas via higher academic training have however had less impact than one might expect. In Brazil for example indigenous scholars, trained in recent decades in the USA have returned to careers in which they have continued to focus on the preoccupations of their predecessors favouring studies of aspects of Brazilian history over geographically more extensive research and few have adopted orthodox anglophone approaches. Mexico, by acting as an open magnet for scholars fleeing the regional coups and dictatorships of the 1960s to 1980s, drew itself closer to the intellectual mood of the rest of Latin America rather than to that of its nearer neighbour, the USA, from where a significant proportion of its scholars obtained higher degrees (Kuntz Ficker, chapter 21). Japanese scholars after training and or lengthy sojourns in the West have pursued distinctive lines of enquiry and developed research geared, in both methodology and concepts, to Asian conditions. Likewise African scholars have only rarely assimilated the ideas, source priorities and research methods of their western training, particularly when based back in Africa.

The long-term global intellectual impact of the Jewish diasporas of the late nineteenth century, and even more of the 1930s and 1940s, upon economics and history has yet to be fully explored. The chapters in this volume suggest disproportionately large influences throughout the major receiving regions, especially in the United States and illustrated in the personal biographies of many major scholars.⁶

State support and state policy

State socialism has been important in placing a premium on Marxist–Leninist and Maoist historical materialist analyses in which the role of the economy in the historical sciences is paramount. This gave a huge intellectual boost to economic history especially where incorporated into official views that accorded with state policy and perspectives. Economic history in the Soviet Union and in East European satellite states was encouraged by relatively generous state support and, in most countries, before the backlash of the late 1960s, scholars were relatively lightly policed. The fact that they were interested in economic history often gave them the status and the freedom to pursue their research unhindered and even to travel to the West to conferences and to take up scholarships. Furthermore, the advent of state socialism in countries like Poland resulted in the nationalization of archives previously in private hands, particularly those of the great landed estates which encouraged original research with such documents.

Degrees of relative freedom from authoritarianism coupled with existing national histories and intellectual cultures made for considerable variation within the Marxist approaches of the different satellites of the Soviet bloc. In Poland, for example, Malowist, Kula and Topolski all employed Marxist jargon in posing questions but do not seem to have been confined to straitjacket answers, particularly concerning the transition from feudalism to capitalism. This is partly explained by the strength of pre-existing traditions and of prevailing heretic Marxist approaches (including that of Oskar Lange). Kula produced a theory of specifically Eastern European late feudalism where the market sector played a marginal role and devoid of any internal dynamics leading to capitalism. He and Topolski stressed mechanisms locking Eastern Europe into structural reproduction. Economic history elsewhere in Eastern Europe particularly in the later Cold War years suffered greater repression as in the former Czechoslovakia where major figures in the subject lost their jobs in the 1960s and 1970s.

In other contexts ideology and state repression deliberately restricted the scope and approach of the subject as in Russia and China, where historians had to conform to a strict line under state socialism and Maoism. The persecution and imprisonment of Marxist historians by the Fascist regime in 1930s Japan left the field to be dominated by positivists and by the Otsuka school for a generation or so. Persecution and decimation of Jewish intellectuals and Communists in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s had a similar impact. In more subtle ways the ideology of the Cold War and McCarthyism influenced approaches in the United States. It is significant that the expansion of social history in the USA in the 1960s and 1970s was much less tied to Marxist frameworks than elsewhere.

State support for the social sciences and for economic history in particular has been vital in the progress of the subject in western mixed economy contexts, in Belgium after the Second World War for example and in Germany (with Marshall Aid). The 'catch-up' needed in late development of economic history in Spain could only occur with considerable state investment and the growth of cliometrics in the Netherlands has been heavily subsidized by the Dutch Science Foundation (NWO). The booming nature of the subject in Great Britain in the 1960s and 1970s accompanying the expansion of the university sector and investment in social science is also a good example. But in the current global economic crisis, public sector university education in West European neoliberal states is generally under strain, and instrumentalism is paramount. What cannot be justified in terms of direct contribution to economic growth and national income gets a low priority in funding. This biases research plans and research appointments in favour of those who can gain grant support most easily. In Australia the current precipitous decline in economic history can be associated with the priority given to vocational training within social science and business faculties and the consequent marginalization of history. Private sector universities in some countries, particularly in Japan, have been prominent in protecting the discipline from the excesses of state instrumentalism. In other cases (Britain, Germany, Norway and South Africa spring to mind), private financing of commissioned business histories has been important in boosting economic history but with mixed results because it encourages concentration on larger and more successful firms and often includes pressure (at worst censorship) to avoid a negative image.

Institutional factors

Institutional factors impacted strongly on the early history of the field. In some places legal or religious scholars, archivists or numismatists were among the first to analyse historical aspects of the economy bringing particular and enduring perspectives. In other places antiquarian

commentators, folklorists, travellers, entrepreneurs and politicians have been prominent in producing formative influential works in the field, limited by their own perspectives and biases but free from the disciplinary boundaries that came to affect so much scholarship after the professionalization of academic life. The varied nature of economic history in different regions derives, to a large extent, from its relationship to economics and to history, as they themselves emerged as identifiable disciplines. A key factor is whether economic history evolved primarily within economics as a discipline and within economics departments, whether it has been allied more closely with business schools or, as is most common throughout Europe and many other parts of the world, whether the subject identifies itself as a branch of history. But these different affiliations are not accidental: they have arisen because of more fundamental elements in national histories and cultures, and hence in national methodological approaches. The spread of particular institutional influences and practices in academia from one part of the globe to another, partly but not solely through cultural hegemony and imperialism, is also relevant here.

At one end of the spectrum is economic history in the United States. The mailing addresses of the Economic History Association (EHA), the major professional organization of economic historians in the United States, suggest that two-thirds are in either economics departments or business schools. Only 8.5 per cent are based in economic history departments but all of these are accounted for by overseas membership. Likewise, three-quarters of those attending Economic History Association meetings in recent years are economists, only around 10 per cent are historians. Perhaps most tellingly, the overwhelming majority of authors publishing articles or notes in the *Journal of Economic History* in recent years are affiliated with departments of economics and/or trained as economists. It is not only that the field is dominated by economists; these economists rarely collaborate or seek advice from historians. Few historians are able to enter into debates with economists on the terms that the latter respect and vice versa. In sum, economic historians in the USA are primarily trained in economics by economists and have the culture of that profession (Whaples 2010).

Within Europe, by contrast, most economic history is sited in history or social science departments, more so now than at any time since the 1980s. It is predominantly pursued by the historical community and is defined by topic rather than by any particularly dominant methodological emphasis. The strongest affiliations institutionally between economic history and economics in Europe are in a restricted number of centres in Britain, Spain and the Netherlands. Elsewhere, modern and contemporary econometric history tends to be practised by economists within economics departments, separate from their colleagues in history, in an unfortunate bifurcation of the subject which allows for insufficient dialogue between economists and historians on particular topics. This notwithstanding, in Germany and Italy, but also in Japan and Latin America, economic history chairs are still found in faculties of economic and social sciences, even when occupied by historians. This reflects the importance that the discipline used to have in contexts once dominated by various forms of historicist or structuralist economics. In some of these countries, the progressive hegemony of the theoretical mainstream is posing a serious threat to the survival of economic history. Even in Australia, which was for a long time a stronghold of post-Keynesian economics, the marginalization of heterodox approaches has been a decisive factor in the recent decline of economic history (see King 2013).

Globalization

In his *Cosmopolitan Islanders* (2009), Richard Evans rebuked continental historians for being too focused on the history of their own countries contrary to their British counterparts whose

research interests span across the globe. This objection is relatively common yet surprisingly naive. At the time of Thomas More, when England was still a peripheral country whose comparative advantage appeared to reside in sheep rearing, looking across the Channel was a practical need. The new interest in cosmopolitan matters that the British have developed over the past two centuries is largely a reflection of their changed geopolitical role, hence the founding of chairs in 'Imperial and Naval History' that survive to this day. By contrast, cultures evolving within well-delimited land borders, and in a context of continuous exchange with their neighbours, have tended to focus on regional specificities. This is why, for example, we find so much *Völkstumsgeschichte* or 'ethnic history' in Germany and Hungary. However, the fondness of 'the local' which many of the world's historiographies have in common, defined as a primary orientation to the problems and interests suggested by geographical proximity, by no means implies that this kind of research must have a provincial character. A comparative element is almost always implicit and in some cases is paramount. Thus, as Kochanowicz demonstrates, for example, key Polish works whilst focusing upon Polish evidence placed their analysis in a much broader European and global framework making it relevant to understanding geographically much wider processes of change.

If Japan's intellectual openness to external influences has had something of a chequered history, it is hard to imagine a more closed academic environment than that of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Yet in both contexts, the need to reflect on the transition from feudalism to modernity arose from the encounter/clash with the West that had occurred one century earlier: an encounter affecting the social as much as the political spheres of late Tokugawa Japan and nineteenth-century Prussia. The idea of a 'Prussian way' (*preußische Weg*) to capitalism, which Jürgen Kuczynski borrowed from Lenin, became a model to explain the 'strange' alliance of interests between a landed aristocracy and the bourgeoisie in the 'Junker state' (Hobsbawm 1977: 182). Its characterization as 'Prussian' implicitly entails a comparison with the English or French way, whereby modernity emerged from the radical opposition between the two classes leading to the ultimate triumph of a liberal bourgeoisie. For the likes of Kuczynski, Emilio Sereni, and Gramsci before them, it was important to understand not only what were the prospects for socialism but also where Fascism had come from.

The age of global trade and finance, the internet and the transfer of information electronically, and the current era of global academic exchange and publications, might be expected to result in a convergence or consensus of thinking in particular disciplines concerning research priorities and methodologies. To a degree this is the case. Many scholars of the current generation in the southern hemisphere, Asia and even continental Europe receive degrees in Britain or the USA. The prestige of Anglo-American journals has attracted a subset of Spanish economic historians to high profile research on the growth process but this only accounts for a small part of the Spanish research. The continued global variation of perspectives and approaches in the humanities in general and in history, including much economic history, suggests the importance of long-embedded cultural and intellectual differences of perspective which we should explore and respect.

In economic history, contemporary globalization has given global history a high priority in research, particularly the need to understand the rise of the modern Asian economies, especially China, and the timing and nature of the Great Divergence, even when the usefulness of this concept might be questioned. The debate has called forth new estimates of long-run growth differentials between different European countries as well as between East and West. A major challenge from an Asian perspective has been mounted upon interpretations that are based upon acceptance of western precocity in finding the optimal route to long-term

economic development. This challenge is indicative of the sorts of insights to be gained from alternative perspectives. In particular, Japanese scholarship has shown that much of the economic progress made during the later nineteenth century was not just based upon the adoption of foreign technology but upon the indigenous development of labour-intensive industries, labour-absorbing institutions and culturally specific technological adaptations and innovations. In Meiji Japan capital was substituted for labour but industrialization remained labour intensive in a way similar to the dominant patterns of industrialization in the contemporary world. In a challenge to western ideas about global development past and future, Sugihara maintains that East Asia would not have industrialized without western influence but 'it was the East Asian path of economic development that made it possible for the majority of the world's population to benefit from global industrialization' (2003: 81). New perspectives on Chinese and Korean development histories have similarly highlighted very different growth patterns and the need for different methodologies and approaches for understanding these together with the implications of contemporary high-speed growth for rethinking older and deeply ingrained assumptions about the superiority of western culture.

Methodological implications

As N. G. Butlin argued in 1964, Australia 'was not a footnote to the Industrial Revolution nor was [it] a sheep-walk for the benefit of British imperialism' (quoted in Meredith and Oxley, chapter 5). Australian history had suffered from such intellectual impositions. Similarly Spanish economic history has been shackled by the concepts of 'backwardness' and path dependency. It is not alone in this respect but recent sidelining of the concept in Spain has opened up research to alternative paths and the specifics of the Spanish developmental trajectory (Iriarte-Goñi, chapter 10). The emphasis upon path dependency and a unilinear perspective in the analysis of comparative economic growth by economic historians in the Netherlands is described by Bosma (section II of chapter 11) as more problematic for the subject there than the faith in cliometrics. Meanwhile in China economic history has currently stalled because 'scholars are not sure to what extent either the so far dominant Marxist scholarship or the newly introduced Western categories, concepts and tools can deal with Chinese experience' (Li Bozhong, chapter 18). A more genuine understanding of intellectual contexts may lead to greater caution in the lending and borrowing of historical categories and their application to distant world regions.

Problems have attended the application of the proto-industrialization thesis away from the household manufacture of consumer goods towards the very different context of the early modern producer goods sector, as with its use in relation to the iron industry of Sweden. Here the model was adapted to the Swedish master narrative that sited the source of dynamism of the economy in the entrepreneurship, skills and technological knowledge of eighteenth-century iron making. The framework of a theory first conceived as industrialization before industrialization also fits awkwardly in its application to village manufacture in Japan and to the sweated industries of industrialized Europe and America or modern East Asia. Likewise, the transposition of ideas about forced labour and 'market' exchanges, arising from earlier debates about the nature of serfdom and feudalism, to the world of slave plantations, indentured labour or the Gulag is profitable only with considerable sensitivity to time and place, without which such transpositions can be distorting or entirely misleading. This is the case especially when the natures of original concepts are adapted to cope with what one might term 'mission creep'.

For example, take the concept of 'industrious revolution', coined in 1976 by the Japanese historian and demographer Akira Hayami. It was intended as a tool to explain what would

come to be known as the East Asian path of development. The transposition of the model to the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Netherlands (De Vries 2008), has introduced elements, such as the response to market incentives and the household allocation of time according to Beckerian principles, that are quite alien to the original concept. In his recent reappraisal of the subject, Hayami observed that the term had 'started a journey of its own' and that the thesis of a particular kind of continuum between the industrious revolution and the industrial revolution 'differs from the author's original idea'. More importantly, he stressed that Japanese industriousness rested on neither utilitarian calculation nor religious drive but on a work ethic or 'mentalité' transmitted 'from parent to child, and from child to grandchild' (2015: 95–6, 103). This lay behind the very different pattern of labour-intensive rather than capital-intensive industrialization experienced in many parts of Asia in the twentieth century. Can we now think of reintroducing the 'westernized' version of the concept back to Asia and into the Great Divergence debate presenting it as a yardstick for 'reciprocal comparisons' (Saito 2010; De Vries 2011)? Of course not.

Ideas about the industrious revolution in the West, particularly in the work of De Vries, have been pivotal in creating debate and stimulating new research in the anglophone sphere but the extent to which these notions have diverged from their original conceptualization and the degree to which they have been put to different work is too little acknowledged. Transnational borrowings are vital to the task ahead but only with greater sensitivity to these elements. For example, the extent to which labour-intensive industrialization lay at the heart of industrialization in Britain and other parts of Western Europe has been hidden by stress in the master narrative upon the rise of energy and capital-intensive mass production. Yet the Factory was never the dominant form of manufacture even in Britain. Labour and skill-intensive activities expanded alongside centralized and mechanized work often though not always via subcontracting. Labour intensity was at the heart of the financial sector until the computer age and remains central to most of the service sector today. Much technological advance, during the industrial revolution and since, was not labour saving. These facts help to explain the slow growth of labour productivity in the British economy in the early nineteenth century. And partly because the labour-intensive sector was less well recorded and taxed, it also helps to explain the slow rise of GDP per capita, at the height of the classic industrial revolution, that has so puzzled scholars. Western historiography could thus learn much from ideas about labour-intensive industrialization in Asia and the capacity this creates past and present both for exploitation and sweating but also for reducing underemployment, increasing employment and thus for spreading the benefits of manufacturing advance across a broad swathe of the population.

The approaches of Latin American structuralism in the 1960s warned scholars from the northern hemisphere against the perils of applying western growth models to the Global South. Equally distant from both neoclassical and crude Marxist interpretations of underdevelopment – the opposite poles of what Albert O. Hirschman (1981) once termed the 'monoeconomics' – Latin American economists and historians challenged the principle of comparative advantage that is still at the root of mainstream textbooks on international trade. They also disproved the identification of economic growth with development posited by the neoclassical production function (a controversial model devised to describe mature economies, but of no use for analysing structural change). Their emphasis on long-term dynamics, which requires interdisciplinary rather than mechanistic approaches, has not yet exhausted its potential, despite being ostracized since the late 1970s, when the Southern Cone entered the dark age of military dictatorships, and subsequently by the Washington Consensus. The high level of sophistication with which Celso Furtado, Tulio Halperin Donghi, Osvaldo Sunkel,

and the two generations of scholars they inspired, addressed the interplay of international and domestic forces, of material elements and socio-cultural variables, represents an antidote to one-size-fits-all explanations of development.

Several chapters in the volume call into question interpretations of categories like ‘capitalism’ and ‘market’, as a result of the self-reflexive exercise carried out from the standpoint of national and regional experiences. The most striking example is probably China, but the historiography of Middle Eurasia, too, has much to say on this. Western scholarship is notoriously divided on the matter. Jack Goody (2004) argues that capitalism is not specifically European, but he does so at the cost of employing a definition so loose and diluted as to be of limited analytic significance. For Giovanni Arrighi (2007), on the contrary, China demonstrates that a market economy can exist independently of capitalism. This thesis rests on Braudel’s idea (1977) that market and capitalism are different in nature and goals. Yet another view is associated with Polanyi (1957) who maintained that, while different allocation systems typically coexist in any socioeconomic formation, capitalism is characterized by a relative *prevalence* of markets over reciprocity and redistribution. What we have learned from the Chinese and Middle Eastern stories seems to confirm this view that markets can flourish even in contexts where a self-regulated market economy is absent, but only the latter is intrinsically tied to capitalism.

The historicization of capitalism and indeed of the terms, categories and language that ‘modern economic growth’ has generated (Grenier, chapter 7; see also Perrot 1992) brings us to the last fundamental lesson that we can draw from the chapters, which is one about rationality and economic behaviour. As usual, the ‘margin’, as epitomized by Witold Kula and Polish historiography, was at the vanguard in this respect. The classic alternative to the Anglo-Saxon rational choice model dates back to Weber and the German Historical School. They described economic activity carried out outside of capitalist contexts, including in early modern Europe, as ‘less rational’ compared to the modern West. Lucien Febvre (1942), one of the founders of *Annales*, qualified this hypothesis by arguing that the degree to which humans develop instrumental precision depends on the environment to which they need to adapt. Although the view that market societies stimulate ‘calculative reason’ has recently been reasserted in anthropology (Gudeman 2008), the relationship is neither automatic nor can it be generalized. Kula (1962), seeking to analyse non-capitalist systems, developed a historical model of what we might call ‘contextual rationality’. He showed that, in societies where wealth acquisition is of secondary importance, actors express their rationality in pursuing goals like the achievement of status or free time. The conclusion is straightforward: economic behaviour can be rational without being utilitarian. Another equation of the ‘monoeconomics’ gets demolished. This is what global economic history at its best can achieve.

Notes

- 1 We are particularly pleased that so many persecuted writers and their ideas get attention in this volume, as a reminder of innovations and arguments that have too often been sidelined purely for ideological reasons. We hope that sections of the book bear some witness to their integrity.
- 2 United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America.
- 3 Unless otherwise indicated, all of the points and illustrations used in the following pages are drawn from the specific chapter presented in the volume.
- 4 See, for example, Cullen (1975), Mackenzie (1981), Desrosières (1993), Porter (1995), Patriarca (1996).
- 5 See discussion of the problem in chapter 1.
- 6 Among them, K. Polanyi, M. M. Postan, A. Gerschenkron, R. S. Lopez, A. O. Hirschman, W. W. Rostow and many others.

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