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## Working Paper

# New scope, new sources, new methods? An essay on contemporary scholarship in history of economic thought journals, 2016-2017

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NEW SCOPE, NEW SOURCES, NEW METHODS?  
AN ESSAY ON CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARSHIP  
IN HISTORY OF ECONOMIC THOUGHT JOURNALS,  
2016-2017

BY

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CENTER FOR THE  
HISTORY OF POLITICAL ECONOMY  
AT DUKE UNIVERSITY

New Scope, New Sources, New Methods?  
An Essay on Contemporary Scholarship  
in History of Economic Thought Journals, 2016-2017

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(May 2, 2018)

Abstract

This essay gives an overview of a set of selected articles published between 2016 and 2017 in the major journals that cover the history of economic thought. In surveying the literature, we focus on three major aspects – the scope, the sources, and the methods – with reference to which we discuss the novelties that we find in the recent literature on the history of economic thought.

Keywords: Historiography; recent literature on the history of economic thought; scope, methods, and sources in the history of economic thought; new trends in the history of economic thought.

JEL Classifications: B00, B1, B2, B4

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New Scope, New Sources, New Methods?  
Contemporary Scholarship  
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This essay gives an overview of a set of selected articles published between 2016 and 2017 in the major journals that cover the history of economic thought. In surveying the literature, we focus on three major aspects – the scope, the sources, and the methods – with reference to which we discuss the novelties that we find in the recent literature on the history of economic thought.

## 1. Introduction

In this article, we give an overview of a number of papers that were published in 2016 and 2017 in the core journals of the history of economic thought (hereafter HET).<sup>1</sup> The goal of the present article is two-fold: First, our review-article should be a source for historians of economics to consult when they are considering the debates and topics pursued in the last two years. Second, we want to give an informed overview of trends in HET in regard to three aspects: the scope, the sources, and the methods of HET. New trends are revealed in a comparative way, i.e., we identify some new trends in light of more established research in HET.

Our survey is not representative of all the major debates and topics that have concerned historians of economic thought in the last two years; in its emphasis it slightly departs from previous surveys published in the *History of Economic Ideas* (Bianchi 2017,

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<sup>1</sup> We use the term history of economic thought (HET) here in the broadest possible sense, i.e. to include the history of economic ideas, the history of economics, the history of economic knowledge, etc.

Schumacher et al. 2017). Our choice of emphasis is further justified by the fact that the present issue of *History of Economic Ideas* has published a complementary survey article, which focuses on publications in the history of macroeconomics, the history of development economics, as well as essays about the lives and ideas of economists or schools of thought (Beal et al. 2018). These are HET research areas, which we have largely excluded from our survey, further limiting its scope.

In our survey we selected articles from the major HET journals that we considered representative on all three levels – scope, sources, methods – namely, *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought (EJHET)*, *Journal of the History of Economic Thought (JHET)*, *History of Political Economy (HOPE)*, *History of Economic Thought and Policy (HETP)*, *History of Economics Review (HER)*, *Journal of Economic Methodology (JEM)*, *Æconomia*, and *Research in the History of Economic Thought and Methodology (RHETM)*. We further considered articles published in *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *Journal of Economic Literature*, *Isis* and *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*.<sup>2</sup>

For compiling our sample, we considered all papers published in those journals that were either classified as HET publications or that we identified as HET publications on the basis of their content. As such, our survey is not exhaustive. In 2016 and 2017, 205 articles were published in the three core HET journals alone, *EJHET*, *HOPE*, and *JHET*. This survey goes beyond articles published in those journals, but our discussion is constrained to a sample of 51 publications in total.

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<sup>2</sup> Articles published in *History of Economic Ideas* are not part of the review.

The survey is divided into four sections, three survey sections on the literature with regard to **scope, sources, and method**, and a final discussion section. First in the next three sections we justify in detail our focus on **scope, sources, and methods**.

## 2. The Scope of HET

For some decades, works on HET seem to have broadened in scope. In fact, historians of economic thought are now working on topics, locations, institutional sites, time periods, and objects of analysis that would not have received much attention in the past. By asking whether the general scope of major HET studies has expanded, we can assess whether the discipline has systematically changed and whether its changes have led historians of economic thought to transform their approach to HET and *vice versa*. We distinguish four different, but inter-related, categories that help us survey the literature with regard to the scope of HET and its changes, if any. This possibility, however, necessarily entails the availability of new sources (see Section 3) and the freer use of novel methods (see Section 4).

The first category in this survey of the literature is related to the spectrum of topics studied in HET. Although HET has traditionally studied a great variety of topics (Biddle 2003), topics such as pedagogy, education and training, the relations between economics and associated areas such as business, the study of sociological aspects of economics as a discipline, the role of the political context and the goals pursued in a particular period, have tended to receive more attention lately.

The second category asks whether HET studies novel objects of analysis that are provided by new historiographical frameworks. The study of scientific practices as well

as that of scientific communities is one of the kinds of object that historians of economics increasingly study. Their research differs from that on more traditional topics in HET in that, rather than being considered the product of “pure” economic ideas, the production of economic knowledge is increasingly seen as the result of an intricate and complex social and cultural system that involves scientific practices and institutional configurations.

The third category that allows us to understand changes in the scope of HET assesses whether novel institutional sites and geographical locations tend to be studied more. Non-traditional geographical locations are being paid more attention; for example, on economic thinking in China, in former Soviet states or on Islamic economics, while new sites such as academic institutions, economic departments in universities, think tanks, and governmental institutions are chosen for research. Studying these locations has elicited narratives that are not Euro- and US-centric, but show that important ideas and practices have under particular conditions developed in other parts of the world. The study of sites such as governmental, private, and academic institutions, has revealed economics as a discipline that is necessarily developed within a particular institutional setting (not necessarily academic) which accounts for an important kind of materiality in the formation of communities and networks.

Finally, the fourth category has to do with the temporal dimension and particularly with the role that the study of more recent time periods might play in broadening the scope of HET. Historians of economic thought have paid more attention to the history of recent economics, the study of post-war economics from the mid-1940s to the twenty-first century. Works in more traditional HET used to stop either with the Marginalist

Revolution of the end of the nineteenth century or with the Keynesian Revolution of the 1930s. Recently, however, historians of economic thought have turned to studying the history of post-war economics, producing different narratives to present the discipline in relation to other disciplines and to political, social, and cultural questions.

## 2.1 The Scope of Traditional Studies in HET

Adam Smith is still one of the thinkers who are extensively studied by HET scholars. Nicholas A. Currot (2017) assesses whether authors in the last two centuries have provided “the correct [...] interpretation” (323) of Smith’s contributions to the theory of money and banking. Currot argues that there are two views, the “usual view” which maintains that “Smith was a poor banking theorist who promulgated the real-bills doctrine” and the “less popular view” under which “Smith was an excellent banking theorist who incorporated banknotes into a price-specie-flow of the model of payments” (324). Currot believes that both interpretations are incorrect and that Smith’s theory actually involves a “more primitive reflux theory” (325).

Lorenzo Garbo (2016) tackles the interpretation of “superior prudence” that Smith introduced in the last edition of his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, revising Smith’s last teachings on wise conduct in a context of major socio-economic and cultural changes, and of a stronger desire for conspicuous consumption. Garbo argues for a more complex interpretation of Smith’s understanding of prudence, in which the social materialistic stimuli and the individual moral concerns of eighteenth-century Britain formed a dialectic path to the formation of individuals’ moral character. This dialectic path characterised by a social obsession with opulence on the one hand, and with the desire to attain individual and moral alignment on the other, produced “paroxysms of emotion



and distress” (51), but allowed for a “dialogue between self-interest and moral conscience, which would lead to a progressively wiser [...] existence” (44). Garbo argues that his interpretation of “Smith’s last teachings on the dialectical path to wisdom provide a unifying theme to his most fundamental economic and moral contributions” (50).

John Maynard Keynes is also a popular thinker studied in HET. Both Richard J. Kent (2016) and Ho-Po Crystal Wong (2016) contribute to our understanding of Keynes’s “long struggle” in the beginning of the 1930s to change his mind about the theoretical approach he used in the *Treatise on Money*, which allowed him to formulate his *General Theory* in 1936. Kent (2016) argues that Keynes discarded the formulation of his fundamental equations of the *Treatise* quite quickly because J. N. Welingkar and F. A. Hayek pointed him to a third fundamental equation which made him change his mind. Wong (2016) sheds light on the way Keynes changed his views on monetary theory, starting from a focus on the forced saving concept in his *Treatise of Money* to the formulation of the theory of effective demand in his *General Theory*. Wong’s argument is that Keynes’s changes were “closely related to his intense intellectual debates with Denis Robertson” and to Ralph Hawtrey’s criticisms of his *Treatise*, which “highlighted the flaws of using price as an equilibrating mechanism” (515-516).

Two of the most popular periods studied in “traditional” HET are the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Inspired by Ricardo’s theory of growth, Neri Salvadori and Rodolfo Signorino (2017) develop a model to analyse “the relationship between growth and international trade in the world economy scenario” (508). Here, the questions ask not only about the proper interpretation of Say and Ricardo, but also the use of HET as

a way of contributing to current economic theory by designing an economic model that is based on the contributions of the Classical economists. The main conclusion is that “*all* trading countries [in their model] eventually reach the stationary state” but that the “path towards [this] state is not monotonic,” given the different dynamics of capital and population that each country exerts (508).

Key historical periods, episodes, and places such as the Scottish Enlightenment, the British nineteenth century, or Western countries continue to be investigated. Ai-Thu Dang’s (2016) paper, for example, takes an ambitious timespan, from the Scottish Enlightenment to contemporary economics, to explore both the continuities and differences between the “approaches of Bernard Mandeville, Adam Fergusson, and Adam Smith to the division of labor and the contemporary analyses of technical change and economic dynamics” (211). Victor Bianchini (2016a; 2016b) deepens our understanding of the role of education in James Mill’s thought, exploring (2016a) Mill’s ideas on the relation between production and education as a way of promoting “the greatest social welfare by providing for a specific distribution of education and production in society” (154). According to Mill, any society should seek the “precious middle point,” which consists of a situation in “which the highest quantity of goods is obtained while people attain the greatest degree of education” (*ibid.*). Yet, at the individual level, the decision-making process does not guarantee that individuals will always make the decisions that promote their greatest happiness. Furthermore, Bianchini (2016b) provides a formal interpretation of Mill’s view on the way in which intemperance can shape individuals’ preferences, affecting their decisions and leading them to educational actions that do not promote their greatest happiness.

## 2.2 The Scope of Studies Representing New Trends in HET

In 2017, *HOPE* published a special issue containing studies about “The Contributions of Business to Economics” (Van Horn and Nik-Khah 2017). This special issue provides representative examples of the kinds of historical study that go beyond the scope of traditional studies. More specifically, it broadens the scope of HET in terms of the categories discussed above, i.e. in terms of the study of (1) a broader spectrum of topics, (2) new institutional sites and geographical locations, (3) recent time periods, and (4) novel historiographical frameworks.

This special issue contributes studies that fall clearly into the first category. As Robert Van Horn and Edward Nik-Khah (2017, 166) put it, historians who have been concerned with the study of the relation between business and economics so far have explored either “the relationship between corporate funders and economists,” or “how businesses have influenced economic *policy*.” The papers in the special issue seek to provide answers to new questions about the active participation of businesspersons in the construction of economic doctrines, about what businesspersons thought about particular economic topics, and about the way that businesspersons “used their understanding to engage, challenge, and steer economists” (167). The special issue also exemplifies a tendency towards an enriched collaboration of historians of economics with scholars trained in Science and Technology Studies, and with historians, philosophers and sociologists of science.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> This *HOPE* special issue included publications by four historians of economics, two STS scholars, two sociologists of science, two business historians, and one historian of science.

Thomas Stapleford (2017b) explores the contributions of businesspersons to the making of US-American econometrics in the early but decisive period between 1910 and 1940, contributing to change the standard historiographical framework used in the history of econometrics. More specifically, “rather than asking how certain individuals influenced particular propositions,” Stapleford examines “the interactions between two forms of social practice” (234) – the practices of business and of econometrics – which he defines as “collections of actions that are [...] linked by teleology [...] and are subject to normative evaluation” (*ibid.*).<sup>4</sup> Thereby, Stapleford engages in studying the intertwined practices of economics and business as a new way to understand the contributions of businesspersons to the history of econometrics, arguing that between 1910 and 1940 “the practice of business and the practice of economics came to inform one another in novel ways,” reconfiguring economics so as to “[include] the emergence of econometrics” (236).<sup>5</sup>

The special issue also examines matters of identity and how they affected economists and businesspersons in their practices and the production of knowledge. For example, Tiago Mata and Robert Van Horn (2017) study Friedrich Engels’s “double life” between 1850 and 1870, separating his official and “unhappy” life as businessman from his life as a supporter of the revolutionary and economic thinker Karl Marx. Mata and Van Horn argue that Engels was “a merchant and an intelligencer” whose business life “left an imprint on the development of Marxist political economy” (208). This imprint has been neglected in the scholarship on Engels, partly because of a lack of sources, which remained unavailable until the more recent project on the *Marx-Engels*

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<sup>4</sup> Stapleford (2017a) describes his approach regarding scientific practices.

<sup>5</sup> Stapleford (2017b) defines “econometrics” “loosely as the mathematical (and especially statistical) analysis of economic data” (236).

*Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA). Marx trusted “Engels’s business acumen” (208) and so he relied on Engels’s guidance in matters that concerned machinery depreciation and reinvestment, getting first-hand understanding on some capitalists’ views and beliefs about the economic system. In doing so, Marx thought that he was describing “essential features of industrial capitalism” (209), which ended up building his fundamental blocks of economic ideas. Indeed, the authors argue that some elements in Engels’s experience as a businessman are reflected as central ideas in Marx’s economics, in particular about the conception of “capitalism as a unified world market,” or the “belief that [capitalism] was under a constant threat of overproduction that by interrupting the pace of production could bring economic catastrophe” (*ibid.*).

Although some papers of the special issue explore periods that have been traditionally studied by historians of economic thought, such as the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these papers approach these periods in innovative ways. For instance, William Deringer (2017) analyses the role that eighteenth-century merchants played in shaping economic thinking through the concept of *mercantile epistemology*, a social and institutional practice and form of knowledge that dominated economic thinking in the first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup> More specifically, this new way of thinking “became consolidated as an organizing feature of British economic discourse” (181). Mercantile epistemology considered commerce a “clear, even ‘common sense,’ field of knowledge” (179) that was shared by merchants and manufacturers. Yet Deringer argues that rather than defining “the content of [commercial] knowledge itself,” mercantile epistemology “was defined by an attitude *about* commercial knowledge,”

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<sup>6</sup> Deringer’s (2017) concept of mercantile epistemology borrows important elements from Clark Miller’s (2008, 1896) concept of *civic epistemology*, which consists of “the social and institutional practices by which political communities construct, review, validate, and deliberate politically relevant knowledge,” including “styles of reasoning, modes of argumentation, standards of evidence and norms of expertise.”

and was “essentially artificial” (183). As an artefact, it was an “actors’ category” that eighteenth-century thinkers created to promote the image of “a coherent business community that shared a common, and common-sense-driven, body of knowledge” (*ibid.*) allowing these merchants to influence the development of political economy during the eighteenth century.

Harro Maas and Andrej Svorenčik (2017) explore a specific historical episode – the Exxon Valdez oil spill – where scientific expertise was organised by a multinational company to make a case to the public against the method of Contingent Valuation (CV) used to estimate the damage caused by the oil spill. Focusing on the work done by experimental economists hired by Exxon as consultants and experts, Maas and Svorenčik provide a new account that demonstrates how firms can alter the production of knowledge. Such alteration is possible because of the existence of specific conditions of distrust and disagreement within a scientific community, and the firm’s organization of a specific configuration of expertise. “Exxon [...] could build on substantial resources of academic distrust that nicely aligned with its own interests” (317), because there was no consensus within the economics discipline about the appropriateness of any method to evaluate damages of this kind. The authors explain how Exxon “organized expertise to show [the] essential and irreparable flaws” of CV, through the work of experimental economists with previous experience in both CV studies and environmental litigation cases (317).

Robert Fredona and Sophus A. Reinert (2017) focus on the history of an undocumented yet important site: the *Harvard Research Center in Entrepreneurial History* (HRCEH). Fredona and Reinert’s intention is to analyse “one of the most coherent attempts in the

history of economics [...] to not merely bridge business practice and economic theory but essentially to reconceptualize economics [...] in relation to the activities and experiences of businesspeople” (269). This attempt was made at the HRCEH during the economic turmoil in the wake of World War II and consisted in getting economics closer to practical affairs. Fredona and Reinert emphasise the issue of pedagogy and show how Harvard students of Business Administration were “constantly reminded of the early [history] of the field and of how much the economic traditions of the businessman diverged from those of [Smith] and of classical economics” (273). By contrast to most US economists, businesspeople found their inspiration mainly in the works and teaching materials of the German Historical School economists, such as Friedrich List, Wilhelm Roscher, Karl Knies, Bruno Hildebrandt, and Gustav Schmoller. These materials gave students the image of an economics discipline that was applied, practical, and useful, with a hazy line of demarcation from management.

Understanding how ideas originate has been rather traditionally under scrutiny from HET scholars (Biddle 2003). But understanding not only the emergence but also the dissemination of ideas across one or several disciplines, together with their institutionalisation as central to a specific field, has been less studied by historians of economic thought. Marion Fourcade and Rakesh Khurana (2017) engage in this endeavour and study the “emergence and institutionalization of what [they] call the ‘neoliberal common sense of capital’ in economics and the broader economy,” or the “‘shareholder value’ view of the American firm” (348). They focus on the social trajectory of Michael Jensen, a Finance Professor educated at the University of Chicago, who contributed to the construction of an important business school at Rochester and then made his way to the Harvard Business School. Thereby, Fourcade

and Khurana tell a complex story of the cultural change that the development and integration of agency theory exerted on both economics and finance, as well as on the practice of finance. Specifically, they consider that pedagogy was “the pivotal institution” playing the role of a channel of ideas and practices, and explain how Jensen, the chief promoter of the “Theory of the Firm” in business school programmes, used the classroom “to purge” his students “of their unscientific beliefs and practices” (368) and educate them in the scientific approach to “finance economics” he had developed in his Chicagoan background.

Jensen could not effectively disseminate these ideas alone. In fact, the authors take Jensen’s enthusiasm and career together with other conditions as prerequisites for spreading them. The other conditions were business schools emerging to develop the field of finance into “financial economics” and “financial technologies and practices” turning into financial engineering (359). In addition to the pedagogical channel, these authors also study the role of the press in the dissemination process. They study how business professors used national newspapers such as *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, or the *Wall Street Journal* to advertise “concrete prescriptions to improve corporate profitability, all of which had to do with properly aligning managerial incentives” (369). Fourcade and Khurana use multiple sources and undertake quantitative analysis to reinforce their claims (see Sections 3 and 4). In particular, they use *Google’s Ngram Viewer*, *Factiva*, *LexisNetxis*, and *JSTOR* for a textual analysis that illustrates some important tendencies in citations of Jensen’s work on the theory of the firm, agency costs of free cash flow, etc., Jensen’s media visibility over time, and the use of particular terms such as “shareholder value” in key journals of economics, finance, and management.



Two clear examples of the broadening scope of geographical and temporal expansion studies are Deniz T. Kılınçoğlu (2017) and Guang-Zhen Sun (2016). Kılınçoğlu's paper invites readers of the history of Islamic economics to change the historiographical emphasis, from a well-documented history of medieval Muslim philosophers and twentieth-century Islamist intellectuals, to nineteenth-century Islamic economics, an under-researched period. Through the examination of a particularly Islamic economic thinker, Menâpirzâde Nuri Bey and his treatise *Mebâhis-i İlm-i Servet* (Themes in the Science of Wealth, 1882), Kılınçoğlu (2017) provides an example of the fruitfulness not only of extending the geographical and temporal borders of HET, but also of broadening some historiographical questions to change our understanding of the evolution of economics as a discipline. Kılınçoğlu argues that the study of eighteenth-century Ottoman economic thinkers such as Nuri Bey is important for understanding twentieth-century Islamic economics in at least two ways: (1) as a means of defying the “prevailing assumption that economics was an exclusively European invention” and “to revive [an earlier, pre-modern,] tradition [of Islamic Economics] for the prosperity of the *ummah*, i.e. the Islamic community” (529); and (2) because of the way in which Nuri Bey uses the “Islamic scripture, [...] intellectual tradition, and [...] vocabulary” to elaborate “his moral approach to economics,” which turns his “work into an example of ‘Islamic’ (if not ‘Islamist’) economics” (*ibid.*).

Sun (2016), for his part, provides a different reading of what Karl Jaspers (1953) calls the mystery of the “Axial Period” of human civilization (from 800-200 BC). This period was characterised by the upsurge of important philosophical (and religious) thinking “almost simultaneously in China, India, and the West, without any one of these regions

knowing of the others” (2). Sun’s paper is an attempt to recover the independent origins of Chinese ideas on the concept of the division of labour, not only through the study of three important Chinese philosophers (Kuan Tzu, Mencius, and Hsün Tzu), but also in light of other historical and social factors in the political, military, and social situation that China experienced during those centuries.

The most significant trend in terms of temporal expansion in HET is neither Ancient nor eighteenth century. Rather, the expansion has predominantly been redirected towards more contemporary periods, such as post-war economics, labelled “the history of recent economics.” Laura Holden and Jeff Biddle (2017) ask how the concept of *human capital*, a “new way of thinking” developed by Theodore Schultz (1960), and the formal framework that was developed on its basis rapidly became increasingly used “to shape and motivate federal economic policy in the United States” (Holden and Biddle 2017, 538). Holden and Biddle argue that the rapid acceptance and application of the concept of human capital is interesting because, first, economic concepts and ideas are not often accepted and applied so quickly, and, second, this particular episode “contributed to a profound transformation of the discourse surrounding education policy in the United States” (539). The authors argue that the “rapid migration of the human capital idea from the technical literature of economics to the public comments of US presidents” was possible because of a particular “convergence of political, economic, and cultural trends in the postwar decades that combined to make political actors particularly receptive to Schulz’s message” (538). Nevertheless, the effects of accepting and applying the concept of human capital to the discourse about education policy in the US are still generally apparent today in three central assumptions, that (1) the federal government plays an important role in the funding and regulation of public

education; (2) “the central purpose of education is to increase students’ future productivity and earnings capacity;” and (3) “economists possess expert knowledge that gives them important insights into the educational process” (539). These studies in the “history of recent economics” have started to change not the only kind of historiographical questions asked, but also the kinds of sources and methods used in HET.<sup>7</sup>

### 3. Going Beyond Canonical Sources in HET

The existence of a generally stable list of great economists outlined a sort of *canon* (see Table 1), defined as the accepted list of texts considered as the most important to a specific field or subject (Psalidopoulos 2000). It has been focused on Western economics since Adam Smith. Studying important figures and their writings does not preclude using additional sources. For example, even Schumpeter (1954) goes well beyond working on seminal texts. He also explores some aspects of the sociology of the economics profession and the varied “intellectual scenery” of the periods studied (1954, 407). Defined as any observable traces from the past, the sources used and the criteria that make a source relevant—such as their “intrinsic qualities,” their “historically or historiographically contextual values,” their representativeness, or, depending on the source, also the status of their author or of their “readers” (Simon 2016, 403)—are central to HET scholarship. This section sketches in the knowledge that has accrued in the past two years *via* the recourse to new sources.

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<sup>7</sup> Other examples of HET studies that focus on a more recent history of economic thought are Chassonnery-Zaïgouche and Larrouy (2017) and Teixeira (2017).

Novelty is a multidimensional concept. In this section, we are concerned with the novelty of sources, as combinations of new sources with a variety of others (including canonical texts) or new articulations between sources. One such combination is new sources for well-researched topics and authors who belong to the canon. Accepting a canon implies that the point of contention lies in the battle to defend a specific interpretation of seminal texts. Hence, the exploration of sources beyond the canon necessarily stems from the centrality of seminal texts: it aims to nurture the debate over the interpretation of canonical texts. Another possible combination is to look beyond canonical texts, including a variety of texts (some considered minor). The rising importance of texts other than celebrated monographs, *Principles*, and seminal articles usually opens the door to studying the variety of research practices in different contexts. The specific status of this set of sources usually explains why certain research was done at a specific time and place and discusses its practical meaning and impact. For example, an official letter of appointment for a specific project conveys other kinds of information than would mention of a private motive to pursue a specific research found in private correspondence with friends. Hence, new sources are windows to the way that knowledge is produced individually and collectively while also delivering information about the use and diffusion of knowledge “in the wild” (Callon and Rabeharisoa 2003).

In the period 2016-2017, we identified different trends by the type of novelty conveyed by sources. We first identified new sources for understanding canonical texts, viz. translations and correspondences. Second, we reviewed articles which use a set of sources to investigate research practices, such as non-academic texts with scientific content (e.g., reports) or organisational content (e.g., memos on the funding of

research). We then explored the willingness and decision to use new *types* of source, before bringing up the use of (quantitative) data.

### 3.1. New Kinds of Source in Studies of the Canon

The use of written texts, such as new editions and translations of canonical texts as well as correspondence around the text's production are sources that enrich our understanding of classical texts.<sup>8</sup> The “Economic e-translation to and from European Languages” project, for instance, which is concerned with translating classical texts and has led to a set of publications in the past two years, is a good example of this way of enriching our understanding of classical texts.<sup>9</sup> Laurie Bréban and Jean Dellemotte's (2017) article on Sophie de Grouchy's translation of Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* does not draw upon any new sources, but displays new links between familiar sources. Building on secondary literature about the contextual explanations for translation choices, the authors use Grouchy's epistolary commentary published alongside the translation—*Letters on Sympathy*—to account for her own choice in translation (Bréban and Dellemotte 2017, 669). By showing that her own reading of Smith was influenced by her sensualist perspective, Bréban and Dellemotte further distinguish Smith's and Grouchy's conceptions of reason, imagination, and self-love. The authors show, for example, how Grouchy's failed project of reconciliation illustrates how she downplays any meaningful differences between “self-love” and “selfishness.” The authors provide evidence for the observation that the *Letters* were completed before the translation was finished, suggesting the primacy of her normative project over the fidelity of translation (Bréban and Dellemotte 2017, 703). The paper

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<sup>8</sup> In this context, we should mention two major new edition projects recently completed: Sismondi's economic papers by Bridel, Dal Degan, and Eyguesier (2018); three new volumes of the MEGA have been completed see [<http://mega.bbaw.de/>].

<sup>9</sup> For information on this project and to access the database produced for it, see [<https://eet.pixel-online.org/>].

sheds new light on the French reception of Smith's *œuvre*. Similarly, Nathalie Sigot's (2016) article on the "activist" translation of Jeremy Bentham's *Defence of Usury* by Saint-Simonian Saint-Amand Bazard emphasizes the value of translations for diffusing the translator's ideas, echoing the work on Say's role in the translation of the French edition of Ricardo's *Principles* by Christophe Depoortère (2017).

Personal and professional correspondence usually sheds new light on well-researched topics.<sup>10</sup> John Pullen (2016) published an analysis of a selection of Thomas Malthus's letters on economic theory and policy. Pullen's review carefully lists the various published and unpublished correspondences organized by topic, and in two lengthy inventory appendices (n=295 items). His selection clarifies some aspects of Malthus's thought and work, for example, how Malthus defended his principle of population against accusations of being "gloomy" and "pessimistic" (Pullen 2016, 71). Another example is the exchange with Nassau William Senior on the various interpretations of a "tendency", which sheds light on conceptual discussions and personal relationships, sometimes shifting from amicable exchanges to bitterness. Letters between 1813 and 1815 show how Malthus changed his mind on the Corn Laws in correspondence with the Scottish Whig politician Francis Horner and with Jane Marcet (Pullen 2016, 82-85).

### 3.2. 'Other Texts' as New Sources

Studying the production of knowledge in its context reveals a complex picture of ideas influencing individuals and the world— if anything, a multifaceted rather than linear influence. Studying the practices of experts outside academia offers another way to explore the influence of scholars besides their seminal contributions. Such a perspective

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<sup>10</sup> See also Menudo and Rieucan (2017) for another example of unpublished correspondence; here between Adam Smith and Joseph Nicolas Windischgrätz.

usually lies in sources that can be used as proxies for research practices.<sup>11</sup> This perspective includes texts with scientific content, such as expert reports, institutional memos; and texts on practical issues that are not directly related to the production of scholarly ideas but rather to the organisation of their production and/or diffusion (minutes of meetings, tables of conference participants, editorial correspondence).

Two papers explore expertise practices by analysing reports. Annalisa Rosselli (2017) explores Richard Kahn's attempt to produce a weighty report for the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. Kahn proposed a scheme of buffer stock institutions to guarantee price stability for food products. Gerda Blau, a friend from Cambridge and officer of the Economics Department of the FAO commissioned the report. Despite Blau's scientific and editorial support, Kahn could not complete the project. Rosselli describes the diminishing engagement of Kahn with publishing under the FAO's auspices. More importantly, she also traces the evolution of the political climate between the beginning of the project in the 1940s and the Cold War context of the late 1950s, which explains the institution's declining interest in publishing a report on this subject. Although the project was abandoned in 1959, Kahn subsequently decided to produce studies on specific markets (sugar and tin) since practical illustrations would, in his view, be more convincing than abstract schemes.

Sebastian Edwards (2017) explores the role of Franklin D. Roosevelt's close circle of advisers known as the 'Brain Trust' in crafting the US abandonment of the Gold Standard in 1933. In this case, the absence of a "preconceived plan" or a specific theory

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<sup>11</sup> On the "turn to practice" within the history of the social sciences, see Camic and Lamont (2011). Practices are defined as "the ensembles of patterned activities" by which individuals (here, economists) structure the production, evaluation and use of social knowledge (Camic and Lamont 2011, 7).

to apply is inferred from the *absence* of sources, and carefully supported using various other sources—from public speeches and writings to private correspondence, memoranda and diary entries. Edwards demonstrates that there was no such plan during Roosevelt’s campaign; even during the early days after his election, both the experts and the president-elect had no strong views on monetary issues. Edwards captures the doubts that fuelled discussions within the ‘Brain Trust’ and in informal contexts such as cooperation conferences. The author shows how abandoning the Gold Standard was set in motion with no direct input from professional economists.

‘Other texts’ also include organisational elements of the production of knowledge. The main source of Kye Sang Lee’s article (2016) on the rise of experimental economics is a report for an institution in charge of scientific policy and funding. The author originally focused on the role of non-experimental economists in the rise to prominence of experimental economics. Lee identifies an “ecosystem” between mechanism design theorists and experimental economists which emerged at the Purdue Economics Program in the 1950s. Lee describes how the attention of mechanism design theorists was drawn to laboratory experiments for conceptual reasons, but Lee also shows how non-experimentalists who were crucially involved in research funding policy made a case for experimental economics in the context of research funding policy. The explicit endorsement of the legitimacy of laboratory experiments by a Committee of the (US) National Research Council provides a powerful proxy for acceptance of the methodology within economics, but also sheds light on the link between its academic validity and its legitimacy for a wider constituency, in this case, policy makers.

Rogério Arthmar and Michael McLure (2017) study the recognition of scholarship and scholars by studying the history of the International “Antonio Feltrinelli” Prize for the



Economic and Social Sciences. This sheds light on the history of ideas and their growing relevance, how credit is attributed, and what power structures characterize the economics profession.<sup>12</sup> The authors focus on the reception of Cambridge Economics in Italy. The first edition of the Feltrinelli prize was awarded in 1950 to Arthur Cecil Pigou, a well-recognized British economist. The broader Italian-Cambridge UK connection is documented by looking at the prize committee's composition, reports, and correspondence about the prize. The paper also examines the rather distant relationship between Pigou and Piero Sraffa, which improved in their attempt to support the Cambridge connection with the Italian scholars.

The production of knowledge is also influenced by the general organization of a field, from its funding sources to its classification systems. Backhouse and Maas (2017) study the role of economists and historians of science in the writing of the 'Bowman Report.' They draw upon documents about the Bowman committee work (e.g., meeting minutes, notes, and correspondence) to analyse the roles played by the young Paul Samuelson as secretary of the committee and by MIT economist Rupert Mclaurin. Roosevelt asked Vannevar Bush, director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development and mainly responsible for the organization of the scientific war effort, to produce a report on what should be done to make science influential in leading the country towards post-war prosperity. In the committee, points of contention between economists and historians of science concerned the degree of freedom granted to scientists and the organisation and funding of innovations. Despite the deep divisions on the role of the

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<sup>12</sup> See e.g. Cherrier and Svorenčik (2017) on the John Bates Clark Medal, or the abundant literature on the Nobel Prize.

state, consensus was reached on the need to fund basic research primarily at private universities.

The institutional negotiation of the classification, representation, and hierarchy of subfields by the American Economic Association (AEA) is the object of Beatrice Cherrier's (2017) seminal paper. She uses the JEL Code system as a proxy to draw 'intellectual and institutional maps' of the transformation of economics in the 20th century, essentially using archives of the AEA committee's work during the four revisions of the JEL Codes system. The article traces how economists participating in the revision processes after 1938 perceived the evolution of their discipline, showing the negotiations and disagreements about the identity of economics and the hierarchical status of fields within economics. The result is the opposite of a smooth image of a unified discipline. Cherrier depicts the JEL Code as a moving target subject to internal and external constraints, from debates on economics' classification to the technology used to classify it, from the demographic evolution of the profession itself to the demand for professional certification. Cherrier makes three important points. This history reflects changes in the relation of theoretical and applied economics; it also reveals the rise and fall of different approaches in economics; such choices also reflect changes in the social demand for expertise addressed to the profession.

### 3.3. New Types of Source

Unlike the dominant use of texts, the use of new types of source is not widespread in HET. We nevertheless identified four papers that use (relatively) new types of source: while the first paper, displays a wish to use digital sources of a new type, the other three discuss new types of source, such as oral sources and material artefacts.

One short paper by Fabio Masini (2017) asks in a rather programmatic way how new sources can be used in HET. He argues for the need to include online digital resources (emails, blogs' entries, social media posts, and even *WhatsApp* group discussions) as useful sources in HET. While it is not clear how written online materials differ from paper-published articles, he hypothesises that the diversity of forms and the constraints implied by the difficulties of having recourse to online sources will increasingly be explored by HET scholars. In fact, the question is not new. More than a decade ago, Ross Emmet (2002), discussing the future of HET, had already addressed the possible uses of digital sources. Since then, scholars have explored the production of economic knowledge in blogs, e.g., Fleury and Marciano's (2013) exploration of the Becker-Posner blog. Such sources involve subsequent questions regarding the status, the storage and the access to them. For instance, many emails are now being printed and archived in the *Economists Papers* at Duke University and added to the "correspondence" files. The specificity of such forms of new media as historical sources should also be defined.

Informal sources are often used, especially in papers concerned with recent history. One such source is "communication to the author"; it refers to direct communication (letter or email) which is usually unpublished. This practice is relatively common but what are new are the reflections on ways of treating such sources and whether they should be made available to reviewers and readers for secondary use and external validation. Similarly to textual sources, informal statements are also subject to interpretation, and thus this kind of communication requires provenance. Beyond edited volumes containing spoken interviews with influential economists, databases containing

interviews emerge in HET as resources and made available for collective projects.<sup>13</sup> Such initiatives serve the same functions as the more common printed interview collections. Such sources are common and do not lead to specific methodological developments about the way in which they were collected. One exception, however, is source material produced by witness seminars. This new method draws explicitly upon actors' own retrospective reminiscences about their history (as active witnesses): It is a collective, but moderated and recorded, group conversation. The only study to date in HET is Svorenčik and Maas's (2016) witness seminar on the history of experiment in economics, which produced source material used in other publications, such as Svorenčik (2016). In this article, Svorenčik, furthermore, draws upon both a large stock of additional interviews that he conducted and sources related to a specific historical event—a Caltech workshop organized in 1988—to trace longstanding rifts between experimental economists and the project of behavioural economics. The opposition to deception in experiments and the use of performance-based payment, perceived as features of experimental economics, are traceable to Sidney Siegel's early work in the 1950s. This opposition, which also concerned the status of theories of rational decision-making, is studied in the failed attempt to merge a joint research program promoted by the Sloan and Russel Sage Foundations under the label "behavioural economics." Sources extracted from the witness seminar are sources among others, rather than standing alone.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> A classic example is the Nobel Prize winners' interview on the Nobel Prize website. One might think of the recent project at Goldsmiths, "Economics: Past, Present and Future. An interview project" [accessible here: <http://www.economicppf.com>]. Another project is Econ Journal Watch publication of the "Ideological profiles of the Economics Laureates" [<https://econjwatch.org>]. The IMF also curated a series of interviews [<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/people/index.htm>].

<sup>14</sup> There is an ongoing debate on how such oral sources should be more systematically used in HET. See Jullien (2018).

The last type of new source comprises artefacts, defined in relational terms as the conditions, especially material, underlying economists' practices (Halsmayer 2017). The received view of artefacts seems to give these objects of analysis a definite material nature, comparable to archaeological artefacts such as human remains or scripture on stone. However, diagrams, curves, and even models themselves can be considered artefacts (see Morgan 2012). But computers and buildings are also artefacts in the very narrow sense of the term that, as material conditions, they affect the production of knowledge. The following three papers combine old questions with new ways of looking at the materiality of knowledge, via the study of artefacts or other material elements surrounding the production of knowledge, such as infrastructure.

The first paper by Harro Maas (2016) studies the materiality of the notebook as a common recording device in the 19th century. Maas traces the impact of accounting practices on the private sphere via the transfer of commercial bookkeeping practices to self-monitoring—including the extension of types of (and markets for) the Letts' diaries, the British firm that popularized a wide range of products from daily planners to commercial folios. In this original paper, the material aspect of the practice of moral accounting is analysed with two case-studies—George Eliot's and Stanley Jevons's everyday note-keeping practices. The objective is not to study the practices in themselves but to connect these individual yet widespread practices, to the late Victorian debates about the psychological effects of deliberation—found not only in Jevons's thought but in larger cultural production such as Eliot's greatest novel *Middlemarch*.

Researching a different period, Backhouse and Cherrier (2017b) trace a research program for the study of the impact of the spread of (first mainframe and then personal)

computers and software on the practices of economics. Their chronology starts with the early developments of electro-mechanical computers in the 1940s and 1950s and extends to the new modelling and programming practices in relation to data management and technological developments in the 1960s and 1970s. The authors argue that computerization did not impact every subfield of economics in the same way, but it changed modelling practices in general. They explore the impact of computerization cutting across many material aspects of research practices, from storing and exploring bigger (pre-existing or new) data-sets, the graphical display of results, and the ‘user-friendliness’ of interfaces, to the evolving size of computers themselves.

Verena Halsmayer (2017) looks at the material aspects of the building, institutionalization, and dissemination of a particular “applied model”—the “multi-sector growth model”—from the 1960s to the mid-1970s. She traces the model’s spread from Norway’s economic planning institutions to international agencies, private entities and distinct countries and so on. First developed by the Norwegian and communist economist Leif Johansen in his dissertation, the material aspect of implementing the model is something that Halsmayer insists on. Material aspects range from the particular restrictions imposed on the model in relation to computers’ limited capacity to calculate to the impact of reorganized office spaces when the models are used in a policy context. She uses the concept of *bricolage*<sup>15</sup> to describe the different layers and decisions that lead to using the model as a policy-making device; she also uses the concept of *infrastructure* to explore how a specific model fits within a “system of

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<sup>15</sup> ‘Bricolage’ is a French expression for “do-it-yourself” activities by which Halsmayer describes the “reciprocal shaping” of various elements such as techniques, data, and theory, but also institutional arrangements, policy goals, and economic culture (Halsmayer 2017, 3-4).

models,” that, political changes notwithstanding, display a high degree of resilience over time.

### 3.4. Quantitative Data as Sources

While attention to the material manifestations of knowledge is not new in HET,<sup>16</sup> this does not mean that HET scholars use methods such as field work or ethnographic practices.<sup>17</sup> By contrast, the use of quantitative source data necessarily implies the use of specific methods. Data refers here to the systematic serialisation (*mise en série*) of a many observation on individuals in a sample with clear selection criteria. The quantification of co-citation and citation rates, text structures, or relational properties, as well as other types of bibliometric data, becomes a source. This last type of source is discussed in relation to the method for collect and analyse such data (Section 4).

## 4. New and Old Methods in the History of Economics

Classifying HET papers on the basis of the method used in them is challenging. A primary reason is that HET scholars have previously pointed to methodological diversity, which is sometimes made responsible even for the “unsettled nature of the field” (Biddle 2003, 2). This methodological diversity partly originates from different interests among HET scholars and in their disagreement about fundamental historiographical questions (Biddle 2003, 2). A second reason is that historians of economics are often not explicit about the methods they employ, let alone engage in historiographical reflection. This may partly be because most HET scholars are still trained in economics and affiliated to economics departments (see Section 4, Table 3).

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<sup>16</sup> See the introduction to the symposium on the historical epistemology of economics by Düppe and Maas (2017).

<sup>17</sup> For example, HET scholars looking at practices sometimes perform in-situ observations (Svorenčík 2016; Düppe 2017) but do not engage with specific methods of observation or defined it as field work.

As such, they have for a long time not self-identified primarily as historians but as economists (see, e.g., Moscati 2008) and have consequently taken their work to be relevant to contemporary economics and today's economic discourse. This is why their methodology is frequently not easy to subsume as a core method from a trained historian's toolbox. It is furthermore challenging to identify their historical methods because they often do not use them self-consciously (see also Weintraub 2017, 149).

Despite this challenge, a major purpose in reviewing the HET literature with a particular emphasis on methods is to address a set of questions regarding recent developments in the field; first, whether there is a trend towards using new methods. For example, although the number of quantitative-empirical studies that use methods such as bibliometrics and network analysis in HET scholarship is still small compared with studies using more traditional methods, the number is slowly increasing such that historians have even debated whether HET is becoming more quantitative (e.g., Cherrier 2015). Furthermore, the usefulness of quantitative-empirical methods is itself debated, in written form (e.g., De Vroey 2016) and also in symposia on, for example "A Quantitative Turn in the History of Economics: Lessons from the History, Sociology and Economics of Science" at major events such as the 2017 annual conferences of the *History of Economics Society* (HES).<sup>18</sup> A second question is whether there is a trend in HET scholarship towards becoming more interdisciplinary, opening up to fields such as sociology, cultural studies, history of science, and science studies. As we will see, some HET scholars have reinforced older arguments for the need to write the history of economics as a history of the social sciences (Backhouse and Fontaine 2010, 2014).

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<sup>18</sup> Given the comparatively small set of papers in our sample that in fact apply such quantitative methods, we do not think at this point that a 'turn' can be detected. We might, however, be able to speak of a 'trend' that can be detected towards the increased use of quantitative methods.



The expansion of the scope of a discipline, the use of new sources to study new subject matter and analysing those new sources with new methods often go hand in hand. Given that HET scholars have new kinds of source available (see Section 3), a third question is whether or not a shift in the kinds of source used has influenced the choice of applicable methods. Furthermore, drawing upon new sources and using new methods may influence the scope (see Section 2). Take, for example, studies of the history of recent economics, that is, the development of economics since World War II. Fundamental changes in the social, cultural and political environment of knowledge production and the turn of economics into a modelling science (Düppe and Weintraub 2014, Maas et al. 2011, Weintraub 2017), shift the subject matter of scholarship on this period away from tracing, understanding, and interpreting the core ideas of important economists towards studying institutional, social, political, and cultural contexts of knowledge production, the practices that economics engage in, the relationship of economics with other fields, among many other issues. Thus, as economics changes over time, the way that we study its history changes as well. This may also be reflected in our methods. Complementing a strong emphasis on doctrines by new approaches and perspectives does not have to be limited to the history of recent economics. It may also apply to earlier periods. Reviewing articles in light of their historiographical approach may help us to grasp such a potential shift.

Historiography, concerned with the use and reflection of the historian's methods, guides us through this section of the survey.<sup>19</sup> We classified articles in our sample

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<sup>19</sup> Klaes (2003, 491) takes 'historiography,' i.e., literally meaning the writing of history, to have two distinct meanings. First, it refers to historical accounts of the past and, second, it refers to reflections on the way in which historians account for the past and consists, as such, of a meta-theoretical reflection. The latter can again be divided into two concerns, referring either to historical methods or to a broader

according to their historiographical approach by 1) taking the author's own explicit classification; 2) considering the historiographical orientation of a journal in which an article is published; and 3) on the basis of the goal of the article, the data used, or the research question posed. Our classification is not categorical and exclusive but serves as a rough guideline in separate what can be considered historiographically traditional from what is innovative. The distinction between traditional methods and innovative one makes a guiding distinction below.

#### 4.1. Historiographical Reflections

In the 2017 HEI survey, Schumacher et al. (2017) point out the increasing interest of historians of science, sociologists and intellectual historians in HET. We can see on the historiographical level that historians of economics in part return this interest. First, in a set of articles, some HET scholars reflect on the current status of the field, focusing especially on historiographical questions. Representative of those reflections is a review paper by E. Roy Weintraub (2017) published in the *Journal of Economic Literature* and a paper by Philippe Fontaine (2016), published in *History of Political Economy*. Reviving a similar debate from the 1990s (Backhouse 1992, Schabas 1992, 2002, Weintraub 1999), the authors remind us of the persistent emphasis in HET on studying the ideas of great economic thinkers, such as Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Karl Marx, or John Maynard Keynes. They have mostly been studied in their canonical texts and in the form of intellectual histories (Weintraub 2017).

The authors note, however, that the economics discipline and its practices have profoundly changed since the 1950s. Two kinds of change are that, first, while

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reflection on the methodology underlying historical research. Below, we mainly focus on that part of historiography that concerns the particular historical methods employed in HET.

economic theory is still important, the methodological toolbox of economists has expanded beyond economic theory; and, second, that empirical research has become more prestigious and thus more prevalent (Düppe and Weintraub 2014, Backhouse and Cherrier 2017a). The historical study of economic communities, scientific instruments, and practices such as modelling, different variants of experimentation, computational methods, etc. implies—historiographically—that the place of HET is to be found in the history of science (e.g., Weintraub 2017, Fontaine 2016). As such, HET scholarship should be open to methods unlike well-established ones, such as those of intellectual history, comparative history, rational and historical reconstruction, and text interpretation.

Weintraub has also pointed to the historiographic consequences of the fact that scholarship on the history of recent economics draws on new archival materials, such as syllabi, personal and professional correspondence, institutional records, etc. (Weintraub 2017, 14, Weintraub et al. 1998). As opposed to more traditional HET research offering a history of economic ideas that abstracts from the social, economic, cultural or political context in which science is produced, research on the history of recent economics takes a perspective beyond economic theories or doctrines to study economic knowledge in precisely this context.

Those methodological reflections suggest that the historiographical debate about whether HET should be more closely related to the history of science or remain closely connected to economics is far from settled. But they also reveal that the debate has not yet advanced to a point of resolution at any time soon. As shown below, HET

scholarship is still dominated by traditional methods. However, a slight but stable trend to use new approaches seems to complement these

Tony Aspromourgos and Hans-Michael Trautwein reflect upon the role, the place, and the relevance of the field by taking a pedagogical perspective. They depart from the observation that HET as a research field in the economics profession has largely been marginalized. One way in which it could restore its relevance is via teaching economics students and the pedagogy behind this. Tony Aspromourgos (2017) asks why teaching HET might be relevant for economics students today. Departing from a rather traditional view of what HET scholarship is, he (2017, 60) offers a set of reasons why students should study HET: first, that studying the classic texts of “great minds” offers students insights into economics beyond the study of “mediocre” textbooks. Second, acknowledging that historical contingencies and a consequent pluralism in economics can provide students “with a sense of perspective” allows for the detection of temporary trends and intellectual fads, and an appreciation of the historicity of the subject matter. Third, studying history allows students to see an important two-fold vulnerability in economics: first, the reflexive character of the social sciences, i.e., the observation that social scientific theorizing influences its subject matter and *vice versa*; second, the inevitable impact of value-judgements and ideologies on economic reasoning. And fourth, Aspromourgos argues that students should study HET because doctrines, theories and concepts from the past can still be relevant to theorising about the economy today.

Trautwein (2017) argues that the future role of historians of economics will be what he calls the “last generalists.” Thus they have a coordinating role in helping economists in

their increasingly fragmented and methodologically pluralist discipline to integrate disparate theoretical frameworks in the context of a highly specialized yet globalized world. Historians of economics can lower the cost of increasing specialization by reducing the disciplinary fragmentation. They have a specific skill-set for the role of communicators, which Trautwein defines as “a generalist in the sense that [they communicate] economic ‘basics’ and standpoints to the general public and [take] care of [...] the profession’s communal identity” (Trautwein 2017, 11).<sup>20</sup> He makes this claim more concrete by suggesting six strategies to help HET scholars engage in conversation with economists: (1) being competent in the economics of one’s own research focus as an HET scholar; (2) collaborating with specialist economists to challenge present research, to identify blind spots in current approaches, or to make scientific progress by backtracking; (3) collaborating with other HET scholars, economic historians, and historians of science; (4) increasing the visibility of HET scholarship and the community; (5) acting as generalists within the economics community instead of taking an outsider position; and finally (6) reminding economists that HET scholars will be the ones who one day will write their histories too – as generalists of last resort.

#### 4.2. Oral History Interviews

A core historical method is conducting interviews to produce oral history (see Section 3.3 on other types of oral sources used in HET). Our sample contains one published oral history interview and one article that uses oral history interviews. John E. King (2016) interviewed the Australian historian of economic thought Michael Schneider.<sup>21</sup> The interview provides biographical insights into Schneider’s personal and professional

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<sup>20</sup> Trautwein (2017, 11) further distinguishes between three forms of communicator, namely, the opinion leader, the instructor, and the research coordinator.

<sup>21</sup> For a well-known oral history project in HET, see Emmett (2007).

biography and conveys Schneider's experiences as a postgraduate student of economics at the University of Cambridge in the 1950s, where Schneider studied under Maurice Dobb, Richard Goodwin, Richard Kahn, Nicholas Kaldor, Dennis Robertson, Joan Robinson, and Andrew Bain, among others. After returning to Australia, first to the University of Adelaide and then to Monash University, Schneider first taught the history of economic thought at Monash in the 1960s and later at La Trobe University, when he moved there in 1968. The interview also provides insights into the development of HET as a field in Australia and its further development in distinct institutional contexts, such as the *History of Economic Thought Society of Australia (HETSA)*, the *History of Economics Review*, and mainly at Australian universities at the time, such as La Trobe. Schneider identifies increasingly low student enrolment numbers as a major reason for the field's recent decline in the country.

Pedro Teixeira (2017) studies the role, activity and influence of international agencies on the design of public policy during the post-war period. It explores the practical significance of a major concept of human capital, the rate of return to education. This issue became important when the World Bank reframed the question of how much the state should spend on education as a question about economic development. Teixeira analyses the ways in which human capital theory and the economics of education emerged in the 1960s and how it changed the intellectual debate until the mid-1980s, at the World Bank and beyond. He shows that the diffusion of scientific ideas in specific institutional contexts depends upon many factors. It is not made possible by single individuals' views and practices alone, such as those of Chicago-educated Georges Psacharopoulos or ex-Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. Their successful diffusion within specific institutional contexts presupposes that ideas meet institutional

priorities, that the institution is to some degree open to the new idea, and that some people are willing to overcome the methodological challenges and general scepticism that every new idea is likely to face. Teixeira shows, however, that the debate about human capital theory did not stop until the 1980s, when it was increasingly scrutinized as becoming dogmatically dominant and when its function in supporting policy agendas began to decline.

While Teixeira uses a set of published personal accounts and interviews from the World Bank's oral history project,<sup>22</sup> the main set consists of published sources and archival material that reveal the "complex interaction between economic ideas, institutional changes, and the broader policy environment" (Teixeira 2017, 488). The underrepresentation of oral history interviews in our sample exemplifies their low use in recent HET scholarship.

Catherine Herfeld (2016) uses an interview technique different from those of oral history interviews. The technique can be characterized as a methodological mix of engaging in critical conversation with a historical figure to understand a subject's theoretical views, to reveal the subject's justifications for these views and a combination of investigative and critical questions and oral history questions. The primary purpose of the interview is not so much to find out about Suppes' personal biography but rather to shed light on the emergence of Suppes' theoretical ideas and methodological positions. In this sense, the interview could serve as a historical source for HET scholars. Like the witness seminar (see Section 3), this kind of interview technique diverges in important ways from oral history interviews. The interviewer

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<sup>22</sup> <https://oralhistory.worldbank.org>

intervenes in the reporting process of the interviewee by potentially interrupting and checking back on the interviewee's responses to get a critical conversation going. This may qualify the usefulness of the results for the historian.

#### 4.3. Comparative Case Studies

Niels Geiger (2016) presents a comparative case study of the influence of behavioural economics on economic policy. The paper is grounded in a bibliometric analysis about the rise of behavioural economics already published in *Social Sciences History* (Geiger 2017), where Geiger traces bibliometrically the increasing use of behavioural economics terminology (i.e., 'behavioral economics' and 'bounded rationality') in major economic journals. Geiger (2016) shows how this trend supports qualitative histories of behavioural economics that locate the rise of behavioural economics mainly during the decade 2001-2010. This was especially perceptible after Daniel Kahneman received the Nobel Prize in 2002, which suggests increased discussion in the last two decades. The paper provides a qualitative comparative analysis of Germany's, the United States's, and the United Kingdom's economies to assess the past and future importance of behavioural economics in economic policy. It finds the rapid rise of behavioural economics, in particular the idea of libertarian paternalism, in economic policy; the extent of this influence differs across these countries. Contrary to the developments in the US and the UK, where behavioural economics in general, and the idea of libertarian paternalism in particular, entered policy through the instantiation of special teams, behavioural economic ideas did not at this point have a significant impact on German political discourse and political decision-making. Geiger goes on to argue that, while policy advice does not necessarily translate into the actual implementation of policy recommendations, the impact of behavioural economics will most likely increase in the near future.



#### 4.4. Rational and Historical Reconstructions

Rational reconstruction is still a highly popular approach among HET scholars. In our sample, it is exemplified by Massimo Di Matteo's paper (2016). Di Matteo reconstructs Pigou's two-sector model to reveal Pigou's implicit assumptions about the passive behaviour of non-wage earners in the non-wage goods sector. Di Matteo connects Pigou to the wage fund doctrine and the hypothesis on profits in Classical economics, which grounds his argument that Pigou's model remains incomplete when viewed, as is common in the literature, only from a neoclassical perspective. Rather than being influenced by Keynes alone, Pigou is found by Di Matteo to have mixed neoclassical with Classical features. In his view, Pigou's methodology is Marshallian, along the lines of Boland's (1992) reconstruction of Marshall's methodology. Like Marshall, Pigou aimed to determine one variable at a time, which was exemplified in the recursive nature of his short-period theory, and "framed the discussion in such a way that everything else was for the moment fixed" (Di Matteo 2016, 349). He thereby also used the Marshallian concept of a representative firm or worker. On the basis of his reconstruction of Pigou's argument, Di Matteo offers his own mathematical formulation of the two-sector model to validate the consistency of Pigou's views.

Peter Boettke and Alain Marciano (2017) also exemplify the approach of a historical reconstruction. The authors discuss the possible implications of new archival material for a widely accepted rational reconstruction of the relationship between James Buchanan and Charles M. Tiebout and their contributions to the theory of clubs. The authors introduce and historically locate an unpublished comment by James Buchanan on Tiebout's paper "A Pure Theory of Local Public Expenditures." This comment leads the authors to question the commonly accepted rational reconstruction of the

relationship between the two economists as a complementary one, grounded in a substantial theoretical agreement regarding their frameworks in public economics. By placing Buchanan's comment in historical perspective, the authors show that this rational reconstruction is misleading. Buchanan's "An Economic Theory of Clubs" cannot be understood as complementary to Tiebout's ideas and the so-called 'Tiebout hypothesis' cannot necessarily be seen as Buchanan's precursor. Rather, it rests upon a fundamental but underappreciated disagreement about their ideas on mobility and fiscal federalism. Buchanan takes mobility, the idea that "individuals could 'vote with their feet' and therefore would migrate from one 'community' to the other according to their preferences" (Boettke and Marciano 2017, 206), to have negative consequences and to be the cause of inefficiencies (Boettke and Marciano 2017, 230) and he criticizes Tiebout for underestimating these consequences. The authors conclude that Buchanan and Tiebout were thus working in two different frameworks for public economics.

The goal of Wilfried Parys's (2016) paper is to correct a common narrative about the professional relationship between Piero Sraffa and Wassily Leontief. According to this narrative, which was partly enforced by Paul Samuelson and Leontief himself, Sraffa and Leontief never met, never cited each other, and never paid any attention to each other's work. That Sraffa and Leontief—independently of each other—tried to construct linear systems of simultaneous equations describing the general interdependence of different sectors of the economy is well known. But the paper reconstructs their relationship, grounded in an extensive set of archival sources, in detail. Parys describes possible and actual meetings between the two economists in the 1950s and 1970s and outlines the ways in which they engaged with each other's writings. On the basis of diary entries, Parys constructs a personal coffee meeting,

meetings at Cambridge seminar sessions and at one of Leontief's public lectures at the university in 1971, as well as the absence of meetings at scientific conferences along a particular timeline. Parys identifies Sraffa's genuine interest in Leontief's research, suggested for instance by the works of Leontief contained in Sraffa's library, some of which are annotated. The attention that Leontief gave to Sraffa's work is revealed by his hidden engagement with Sraffian concepts and questions, visible in referee reports written by Leontief or in his own papers. Parys concludes: "Even if it is true that Leontief and Sraffa never cited the other's work, the story of 'no meeting, no citation, no attention' is more than 50% wrong" (Parys 2016, 996).

#### 4.5. Quantitative-Empirical Methods

Besides more traditional qualitative methods, our sample contains a small but increasing number of quantitative-empirical analyses. Pedro Garcia Duarte and Yann Giraud's (2016) paper conducts a bibliographical survey of HET publications in eight major economics journals to locate HET as an academic subfield within the discipline of economics.<sup>23</sup> The paper is also motivated by the persisting soul-search of historians of economics to determine their place in relation to the discipline of economics as a whole. By analysing the presence of HET articles in these journals and the methods and narrative styles used in these publications, the authors address the questions of how HET should be written and how it should relate to economics scholarship in general (2016, 432). HET papers are identified on the basis of their JEL code classification and their presence in these journals is then studied by bibliometric analysis.

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<sup>23</sup> Those journals are *American Economic Review*, *Econometrica*, *Journal of Political Economy*, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *Review of Economic Studies*, *Economic Journal*, *Journal of Economic Literature*, and the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*.

One finding is an overall steady decline in the number of HET research papers published in the major economics journals, and a total of 196 between 1991 and 2011 most of which are published in the *Journal of Economic Literature*, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, and *Economic Journal*. The authors differentiate between categories (e.g., HET, methodology of economics, heterodox economics), the development between and across journals and by authors, their institutional affiliation, academic background, etc. The latter is determined by another bibliometric analysis based upon data of the authors' publication record in major HET journals according to the *Social Sciences Citation Index*. It analyses the relationship between HET studies and the economics community. By an in-depth qualitative analysis, also based in part upon private correspondence with leading journal editors, Duarte and Giraud show the methodological diversity of HET available in these papers. They also show the strong presence of survey and overview articles that can be considered 'historical' to some extent, but which do not use concrete tools and methods for historical analysis. This leads the authors to question the representativeness of HET scholarship in the discipline and a link that apparently joins the HET community with economics as a whole. While the authors give no full explanation, they indicate the influence of current editorial practices and interests and the absence of historians on the editorial boards of key economic journals. They conclude that HET scholars, instead of adopting a strategy of pursuing publication in general economics journals, should rather focus on writing high-quality HET.

Similar bibliometric analyses and the use of descriptive statistics have been used in other papers, often to trace the use of a specific label or a set of concepts in journal articles (e.g., Boianovsky and Backhouse 2016, Hoover 2014, Geiger 2017). For this

reason, they do not constitute a new approach in HET. However, they have not often been used as the core method in HET papers, either. In contrast, the application of network analysis started only a few years ago. Representative of the historical analysis of network analyses is a paper by François Claveau and Ives Gringas (2016), in which the authors use bibliometrics and dynamic network analysis techniques to investigate the evolution of specialties in economics between the 1950s and 2014. They sought to capture the subject matter of economics as a discipline and how it has changed over time. The major output of this paper is a web application, which lets users explore specialty structures uncovered (see [digitalhistoryofscience.org/economics/](http://digitalhistoryofscience.org/economics/)). The paper illustrates the advantages of bibliographic techniques to conduct large-scale analysis; it draws upon a data corpus of roughly 415, 000 documents that are systematically analysed to visualize otherwise hidden patterns of subfields and specializations in economics; how these emerge; how they change; and how they disappear again.<sup>24</sup>

As part of the special issue *The Age of the Applied Economist: The Transformation of Economics since the 1970s*, Matthew Panhans and John Singleton's (2017) paper offers a bibliometric analysis which delineates a shift starting in the 1980s from models to methods, in particular to what the authors call "quasi-empirical methods" in applied microeconomics and the way in which these methods have shaped the knowledge economists produce and the expertise they possess. In order to understand the origins, the content, the context, and the application of these methods, the authors trace the use of quasi-experimental terms in the titles and abstracts of articles from top economics

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<sup>24</sup> Another example of large-scale network analysis looking at the recent history of rational choice theories is Herfeld and Doehne (2018), which traces the spread of rational choice theories across scientific communities by way of a co-citation analysis. A forthcoming special issue in the *Journal of Economic Methodology* is devoted to *A Quantitative Turn in the History of Economics*.

journals. By focusing on a case from the economics of education, the authors show how these methods, or the toolkit they provide, have expanded the boundaries of the discipline and altered the role of economic theorizing in applied research. Finally, the authors argue that what they call a “paradigm shift” was made possible not only by “vast increases in computing power and the availability of micro data.” These methods can also be integrated into the current econometric framework and conceptual categories and meet the requests of policymakers.

Besides such large-scale studies, network analysis has also been used for small-scale studies and visualising archival material. Claire Wright (2016) analyses the community of Viennese scholars, in particular the Austrian School, in the early 1920s, to illuminate the intellectual life in Vienna at the time. She uses social network analysis (SNA) to visualise key professional interactions between single scholars and disciplinary groups from mathematics, philosophy, and economics and shows how the intellectual community was affected by these social interactions. Her analysis draws upon the observation that Vienna’s intellectual life featured a culture of close interaction manifested in the holding of lively cross-disciplinary research seminars (Wright 2016, 596). The Viennese intellectual community was a hub for exchanging ideas via social interaction in the context of an informal seminar culture that was rather separated from the university. The intellectual character of this community is thereby linked to the structure of social relationships between key scholars and their role in this specific community. The paper illustrates how SNA applied to the relational data of scholars attending seminars allows key figures to be identified—such as Karl Menger, Felix Kaufmann, and Oskar Morgenstern—significantly affecting the community-building

process and encouraging cross-community influences, social interactions, and the spread of ideas.

A final example of an innovative network analysis is Richard van den Berg's (2017) network analysis of Postlethwayt's *Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce* published between 1751 and 1755 (see also Section 3). Van den Berg offers a map of cross-references between 770 entries out of a total of 1571 dictionary entries contained in the *Dictionary*, which systematically reconstruct the links and patterns of topics discussed in it. Using network analysis enables van den Berg to reveal clusters and patterns in Postlethwayt's vast cross-referencing system that point up specific and important themes in the dictionary and entries. The analysis shows how Postlethwayt thought about the ways in which topics were related and identifies the rules according to which he might have thought about his cross-listing system. The analysis reveals not only Postlethwayt's classification by subject matter but also his own understanding of the mercantile literature as being divided into two types of knowledge, the political and the national perspective on trade (1178). Van den Berg's analysis suggests a possible interpretation of how Postlethwayt thought about his cross-referencing scheme; he suggests the interpretation of his network representation of cross-references as Postlethwayt's mind map (2017, 1178). Finally, the analysis reveals sources of influence underlying Postlethwayt's classification scheme and asserts the prominent role of Richard Cantillon in shaping the substantive ideas and political perspective we find in the *Dictionary*'s entries.

These articles show how HET scholars have started to use quantitative-empirical techniques to systematically study a set of sources that would be difficult to analyse

with more traditional methods (see also Section 3). Such analyses are increasingly undertaken to systematically analyse relational data gathered from archival material or scattered sources and tackle questions otherwise too large in scope. Yet the interpretation of results is always supported by substantial historical knowledge. Most HET scholars stress that quantitative-empirical analyses should be seen as complementing qualitative approaches (Claveau and Gingras 2016, 552; Claveau and Herfeld, forthcoming, Wright 2016, 595). Wright's paper is an illustrative example of this complementarity.

The application of quantitative-empirical methods from network analysis has not gone uncriticised. Michel De Vroey (2016) discusses the limitation of bibliometric analyses in HET by focusing on Claveau and Gringras (2016). While acknowledging the historiographical innovativeness of their contribution, De Vroey argues that what has been called 'inside knowledge' of economics cannot be replaced by bibliometrics. Although bibliometrics can generate results beyond the scope of a traditional history of economic theory, the latter has this capacity as well. Furthermore, the bibliometric analysis, based upon a set of technical assumptions, specific algorithms, and a clearly but artificially delimited data-set that may contain too many irrelevant references, is too rudimentary (De Vroey 2016, 12). It misses the chance to identify the boundaries of specialities correctly, it does not reliably capture the logic effectively underlying the emergence of particular specialities as more traditional methods can, and it fails to identify the accurate genealogical links between subfields. De Vroey closes by suggesting that these approaches should be taken as complementary, a position that most HET scholars applying network analysis would share (e.g., Claveau and Gingras 2016, 586).



## 5. Discussion

In light of this survey, our first observation is that most HET studies fall into the category of more traditional HET research. Most HET scholars still focus on the life and scholarship of a great economist, on the history of ideas, of doctrines, and theories. Many analyses are based on rational reconstructions as traditionally undertaken in HET. Aspromourgos's (2017, 60) list of "great minds" echoes the list of economists mostly studied in HET journals in 2015-2016 (see Schumacher et al., 2017), and the most studied individuals for the period 1955-2013 (Marcuzzo and Zachia, 2016).<sup>25</sup> In a sample restricted to the three major journals in HET (*JHET*, *EJHET*, and *HOPE*), the top five authors studied in 2016 and 2017 were Adam Smith, Friedrich A. Hayek, John Maynard Keynes, Paul Samuelson, and Joseph Schumpeter (see Table 1).<sup>26</sup>

**Table 1: Authors with at least 3 mentions as keywords of publications in *JHET*, *EJHET*, and *HOPE* in 2016 and 2017**

Author	Mentions	Author	Mentions
Adam Smith	14	Thomas R. Malthus	4
Friedrich A. Hayek	9	David Ricardo	4
John Maynard Keynes	8	Jean-Baptiste Say	4
Paul A. Samuelson	6	Charles Richard de Butré	3
Joseph A. Schumpeter	6	Robert Lucas	3
Thorstein Veblen	5	Alfred Marshall	3
Irving Fisher	4	John Stuart Mill	3

More generally, out of 205 articles, we identified 145 authors mentioned in keywords.

Three female scholars are part of this list: the philosopher and writer Sophie de Grouchy de Condorcet (1 mention), the economist Joan Robinson (1 mention) and the writer and

<sup>25</sup> See also the list of individual entries in the most recent HET *Handbook* (Facarello and Kurz 2016). Several entries cover the work and life of neglected 'precursors' defined by their relations to the main concepts developed by the canonical group of economists.

<sup>26</sup> These numbers are similar to those of Schumacher et al. (2016), where only David Ricardo takes Schumpeter's place among the top five. Based on our readings, these figures are likely to underestimate the centrality of the canonical authors. Indeed, many articles are concerned with one or more of the latter, but do not mention them either in the keywords or the titles. Content analysis would be a much more appropriate way to describe the authors prominently studied in HET more generally.

journalist George Eliot (2 mentions). As such, the economic knowledge studied by HET scholars is still produced by male thinkers who all represent an elite. We cannot detect any historiographical trends towards, for instance, writing popular histories of ideas, in which popular history means the history of knowledge or ideas not produced by academics or experts. Furthermore, most studies in our sample address questions that emerge in the context of Western economies (see Section 2). Given these results, it is difficult to identify a trend, even if subtle, in HET scholarship towards greater diversity of topic beyond the study of Western and male economists and their canonical works.

Besides existing historiographical discussion papers and survey articles, more systematic research is also needed on what HET scholars do and how they do it. Some trends have already been identified in a more general (quantitative as well as qualitative) survey (Marcuzzo and Zappia 2016) but more historical and sociological work in this direction would be welcome. For instance, one fact about the HET community is that most HET scholars not only focus on the study of Western economies but are themselves geographically located in the Western world (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Distribution of geographical locations per authorship (by journal) and author**

<b>Continent</b>	<b>EJHET</b>	<b>HOPE</b>	<b>JHET</b>	<b>Authorships</b>	<b>Authors</b>
Asia	5	2	1	8	8
Australia	2	5	1	8	7
Europe	89	46	44	179	144
North America	13	36	11	60	50
South America	4	8	2	14	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>219</b>

Note: The number of authorships includes double-counts of authors. We have excluded from the total of authors all 50 duplicates of authors having multiple authorships in our sample.

Most HET scholars are also affiliated with European universities, followed by scholars from North America. Another interesting observation is that in our sample, female scholars hold 21% of the authorships in our sample. At the same time, 51% of all co-authored publications are written by at least one woman (co-authored publications represent 26% of all publications).<sup>27</sup> More data is needed to further explore such trends and patterns. For example, it would be interesting to know why female economists are less frequently the subject of HET studies than their male colleagues (see Table 1). Regarding the structure of the HET community, it would also be interesting to see whether the professional career patterns for female scholars in HET are similar to those in the economics profession as a whole.<sup>28</sup>

Against this background and given the low absolute number of studies using new methods, our second observation is that there is no quantitative turn. However, there may be a slight trend towards an increasing use of quantitative-empirical methods, such as network analysis, prosopography, topic modelling, and bibliometric techniques more generally.<sup>29</sup> Using such methods can benefit HET scholarship in various ways, one being that it allows HET scholars to address questions of larger scope and study long periods of time (Claveau and Gringras 2016, Claveau and Herfeld 2018). Alongside quantitative analyses that focus on the evolution of the economics discipline (Gingras and Claveau 2016) or the spread of methods (Panhans and Singleton 2017), other objects of study such as classification systems (Cherrier 2017) take a *longue durée*

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<sup>27</sup> Recent research on the impact of co-authorship on tenure positions in economics shows that female scholars get less credit for co-authorship than their male colleagues (Sarsons 2017).

<sup>28</sup> Compared to other academic disciplines, and even to STEMs, there are fewer female economists in general, not only at the level of professorships but also at all the intermediate levels. For a review of the literature, see Boring and Zignago (2017).

<sup>29</sup> For an application of topic modelling to study the evolution of economics as a discipline, see Ambrosio et al. (2018).

perspective and signal an interest in large-scale narratives and even macro-histories. Such studies offer new narratives on the level of economics as a whole. The use of new sources and methods offers space for such narratives in that it allows writers to transcend general histories of great thinkers: it necessary imply looking beyond obvious contributions. Quantitative-empirical methods have been applied extensively in other fields, such as the sociology of science, history of science, and science studies.

Our third observation is that the broader focus also on scientific practices speaks for another—albeit slight—trend in HET scholarship towards becoming more open to questions and approaches from the history and sociology of science and thus more interdisciplinary. Qualitative methods traditionally used in HET, such as rational and historical reconstruction, intellectual history, or text analysis, remain by far the dominant approaches. However, there is an increasing interest also in studying the contexts of, and the kind of economic practices involved in, the production of economic knowledge. Teixeira’s approach (2017) to study the dissemination of human capital theory at the World Bank, compared with a different approach to the history of the relationship between psychology and economics by looking at note-keeping practices (Maas 2016, see Section 3) are examples that reveal this trend. While both are fundamentally distinct in terms of approach and subject, they both also illustrate how recent work increasingly takes up a history of science perspective, in their focus on studying scientific practices.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> It should be noted, however, that studying practices does not necessary change the focus on studying subjects of Western economies and the work of male economists.

This trend also includes increased attention to the relationship between economics and other social and behavioural sciences. Two special issues and one symposium published in *HOPE* provide further evidence for this observation: The 2016 special issue entitled *Economizing Mind 1870 - 2015: When Economics and Psychology Met ... Or Didn't* edited by Neil De Marchi and Marina Bianchi; a *HOPE* symposium published in 2017 and edited by Rob van Horn and Nik-Khah, which studies the contributions of business to economics; and the 2017 special issue on *The Age of the Applied Economist: The Transformation of Economics since the 1970s* edited by Roger E. Backhouse and Béatrice Cherrier contribute to a better understanding of what has been considered a recent applied turn in economics. All three collections not only try to better understand the links between these disciplines but also feature papers by scientists, business scholars, sociologists of science, and historians of science. Such collections suggest an increased openness to the use of methods from other fields, with possibly important implications for the kind of research accepted as HET scholarship.

This observation is also manifested in the affiliation data of HET scholars. While most HET scholars are affiliated to economics departments, they also have positions now in social sciences and humanities departments, as well as in history, philosophy, sociology, and science and technology studies (STS) departments (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Departmental affiliations of authors of publications in *JHET*, *EJHET*, and *HOPE* in 2016 and 2017**

<b>Type of institution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Economics Departments	64,8
Social Sciences and Humanities Departments	9,7
History, Philosophy, Sociology, and STS Departments	7,9
Research Centres	7,5
Business and Finance Schools	7,0
Other Type of Affiliation	1,8
STEM Departments	0,4

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Note: “Social Sciences and Humanities Departments” include: Departments of Political Science, Psychology, Anthropology, Law, Arts, Language and Culture, English, and Liberal Studies; “Research Centres” include: INET, CNRS, Centre Walras-Pareto, Graz Schumpeter Center, National Research Council (Argentina), NBER, Mises Institute, Political Economy Research Institute, Institute of Public Economics, and Mercatus Center; “Other types of Affiliation” includes: High Schools, Colleges of Education, and Independent Scholar. Eight authors were affiliated with two institutions. In this case, we counted both institutions.

It is difficult to assess the extent and future development of the new trends in HET.

However, in light of these observations, when we compare our sample with the HET scholarship undertaken twenty years ago our survey supports a general impression that HET has changed with respect to the scope of studies, sources used, and methods applied. One reason for holding such an impression may be that innovative research has greater visibility within the community and has therefore more effect on current debates. Research that is innovative may reach a broader audience comprising STS scholars, historians of science, sociologists of science, and integrated historians and philosophers of science (integrated HPS). This is coupled with some recent activities of HET scholars which, besides publishing their papers on academic online platforms such as SSRN or ResearchGate, use new ways to communicate their research, such as tweeting or blogging to discuss and promote their findings (see, e.g., Cherrier 2018).

Giraud and Duarte (2016, 458) suggest that “historians should stop trying to figure out what are the economists’ preferences in order to undertake research accordingly. Instead, they would better do their job by sharpening their tools—be it, among other things, an ever-increasing use of the concepts brought by the larger history and sociology of science or a more systematic recourse to quantitative and bibliometric methods found in the ‘new economics of science literature’—in order to produce expert knowledge at the subdisciplinary level.” Taking such an attitude would favour a broader scope of HET scholarship, an extended set of questions, would imply a broader set of

sources consulted, and a widened set of methods to be included in the HET scholar's toolbox.

## 6. Conclusion

Identifying the dynamics and structure of the field of HET goes far beyond the objective of this review. This survey offered an overview of a selection of papers published between 2016 and 2017 in the major HET journals. By surveying the literature, we focused on three major aspects—the scope, the data, and the methods—in order to assess whether or not there are significant changes on one or more of the three levels. The survey and our discussion show that there may be some ongoing changes but that these are limited.

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