

Economics Tripos: Part IIA, Paper 9
Historical Perspectives on Economic Growth
Paper Coordinator: Prof. Sheilagh Ogilvie

Paper Content

This paper analyses what economic history tells us about the long-term causes of sustained economic growth.

Aims of the Paper

The paper aims to introduce participants to conceptual tools and empirical findings relevant to understanding the historical sources of economic growth.

Objectives of the Paper

By the end of this paper, students should have acquired a basic knowledge and understanding core topics in the history of economic growth and the empirical light shed on them by the historical growth experiences of specific economies. Topics covered will include a number of the following:

1. how historical economic growth is defined and measured
2. agricultural productivity and rural institutions
3. different paths to industrialization
4. the role of trade in historical growth
5. the contribution of the financial sector
6. the relationship between demographic and economic growth
7. the role of education
8. the role of health and nutrition
9. the role of institutions
10. politics and state capacity

Lecture Courses

The paper consists of 3 lecture courses, each of which examines historical economic growth from a different theoretical and empirical perspective:

***Debates in Historical Growth* (Prof. Sheilagh Ogilvie, 8 lectures)**

***Historical Perspectives on African Economic Growth* (Dr Sara Horrell, 12 lectures)**

***Historical Perspectives on European Economic Growth* (Prof. Sheilagh Ogilvie, 12 lectures)**

“Debates in Historical Growth” covers current debates among economists and economic historians concerning a number of the growth topics listed above. The courses on the long-term growth experience of Africa and Europe focus on showing how combining economic and historical approaches can illuminate the growth process in concrete empirical contexts.

Recommended Reading

Weil, D. N. (2013). *Economic Growth*. Boston.

Baten, J., ed. (2016). *A History of the Global Economy: from 1500 to the Present*. Cambridge.

Diebolt, C. and M. Hauptert, eds. (2016). *Handbook of Cliometrics*. Berlin,

Akyeampong, E. K., R. H. Bates, N. Nunn and J. A. Robinson, eds. (2014). *Africa's Development in Historical Perspective*. Cambridge.

Lecturers will recommend a maximum of 2 key readings for each topic.

Supervision

Supervisions will be organized centrally by the Paper Coordinator, up to a ceiling of 20 students. The Paper Coordinator will provide a supervision curriculum containing essay-questions and concise readings for 8 supervision essays.

Examination

The paper will be assessed through a 3-hour examination. Candidates will be asked to answer 3 questions out of a choice of 6.

Sample Examination Questions

Assess the relative roles of technology and factor markets in increasing agricultural productivity based on the historical experience of Africa and Europe.

Does education cause economic growth or does economic growth cause education to improve? Discuss with reference to the historical experience of Africa and Europe.

What role does health and nutrition play in the process of economic growth? Answer in terms of the historical experience of Africa and Europe.

How successful are banks compared to other financial institutions in contributing to economic growth? Answer with reference to the historical experience of Africa and Europe.

Does the “European Marriage Pattern” explain the divergent historical growth experiences of European and African economies?

Does economic history hold lessons for the role of manufacturing industry in contributing to economic growth? Discuss with reference to the historical experience of Africa and Europe.

In what ways does state capacity help or hinder economic growth? Discuss with reference to the historical experience of Africa and Europe.