

Selectivity Criteria in the Historiography of Economics

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Introduction

In the present paper the various criteria utilised in selecting the scope, content (mainly of authors/books), and methodological approach employed by the historians of economics are investigated. The analysis runs along the following lines: First, a taxonomic orientation is used in distinguishing the various works (randomly selected) on the history of economics. Then, for each type of history the scope, content and criteria of selection employed are analyzed. The conclusion drawn is that from the various criteria of content selectivity some are more or less objective merely because they are used by the majority of historians. Also, it is deduced that the pluralistic approach to history, in which special research provides general works with new material, is the most fertile for the advancement of the history of economic thought.

The paper is based mainly on the views and suggestions of the historians of economics. By leaving aside the philosophers of science and other scientists it is not meant that their views are not important but that in the past they have exerted only an occasional influence on the historiography of economics. Only in recent times has this influence been made more intense. However the intention in the present paper is to draw some conclusion about the selectivity criteria adopted in regard to the content and scope of the various types of the written histories of economics, mainly through the specific arguments and proposals made by the historians of our discipline. Another constraint of this paper is that it is based mainly on a sample of written books on the history of economics, which have been randomly selected. Historical articles are left aside - except those engaged with the historiography of economics - because of: (1) their huge number, (2) their multiplicity and variance of specific subjects contained, and (3) their lower or indirect influence on students' knowledge.

A taxonomy of historical works

Popescu more than thirty years ago (1964) had distinguished between general and special works on the history of economics. By general, he meant (1964, pp. 174-5) histories comprising and covering all periods and stages independent of spatial dimension through which economic science has developed, and without leaving aside "the totality of the general aspects of economic science". He then (1964, pp. 174-6) defines special histories as those covering a specific period, or country, or phenomenon which is of importance for the advancement of economic thought.

For taxonomic facilitation this paper utilises a much more detailed distinction between the various works on the history of economic thought.¹ The general history works on economics are divided into: (1) "general-general", (2) "general-orthodox", and (3) "general heterodox" histories. The purpose and content of the first are those attributed by Popescu. By general-orthodox is meant histories which analyze and appraise the growth of modern mainstream theory. By general-heterodox is meant works engaged with radical economics and/or neglected aspects and authors on economics. Table 1 depicts the above distinction of

economics, and the arrows indicate the way that these various histories are interconnected. The main point is that both the general-orthodox and general-heterodox provide the content and the scope of the general-general histories with new materials. Through this process the body of the historiography of economics is made more correct and enriched.

The special histories, on the other hand, may be distinguished in: (A) phenomenological, (B) time/place, (C) individualistic, and (D) interdisciplinary histories.² The phenomenological histories are written in order to analyse and/or critically present and appraise a specific economic phenomena such as interest, technology, distribution, etc. The second type of special histories are those undertaken for examining the economic ideas/theories of a specific period (e.g. the classical school, pre-Smithian economics) or of a specific place (e.g. Austrian economic thought). Those histories engaged with one past author analysing his ideas/theories, influences, etc. (e.g. the economics of Smith) are characterized as individualistic histories. And those by which the evolution of a specific subdiscipline (e.g. econometrics) is investigated are called interdisciplinary histories. In table 2 are presented the various types of the special histories and their interconnections. By following the path of arrows it can be seen that there are twelve ways by which these types of history offer each other new material and thus influence the content of them all.

The historians engaged with the above types of special histories are facing the problem of selectivity with regard not only to the target and the content of their analysis, but also to the material which will be used. This problem of selection, and the concomitant risk of historian subjectivity, is much more present and intense in the general histories and the first two types of special history (phenomenological, and time/place,). By this it is not meant that the individualistic and interdisciplinary types of histories have not been based on some selectivity criteria, but that the number of their criteria is much lower than that encountered in the other types of histories.

Subjectivity, or other arbitrary factors, in selecting the content, target, etc. of a history is an influential reality for any type of history.³ It has been argued that every historian of economics having her own beliefs, education, experience and knowledge cannot avoid using such factors when she schedules her constructed type of history.⁴ The subjective element in determining the content of the history of economics is not negligible. Particularly in the cases where the historians are of high reputation and their works are used as a standard textbook their influence for the future of historical analysis is important. The appeal to "authority" is alive and present in history as is in theory mainly in scheduling the "general framework" of the content, purpose and methodological approach of future analysis. Thus, generally speaking, one may agree with Routh's (1975, p. 2) comment that "Each generation of economists perpetuates what it likes and neglects what it does not".

Another factor influencing the "general framework" of historical analysis is the direction and rate of market demand. The historians, as other scientists, write their histories not only attempting to advance the growth of knowledge but also trying to have some specific personal gains such as fame, position and money. These are determined mainly through the estimation of their work in the scientific community, which may be measured through the number of citations and the number of copies sold. Thus there is a market for historical books which partly influence the general "line" that someone who wants to "be remembered" must follow. However, if there is a demand pull type of influence on the direction of historical analysis, it is not the only and/or the most dominant. There is also the subjective element which influences the direction of specific lines of approach which must not be underestimated.⁵ Lying behind the market demand pull factor influencing the general framework and the specific content and scope of the various types of historical analysis, is also the supply push factor generated by the subjective characteristics and elements of the

historians. We are now going to examine if and to what extent some fundamental criteria in selecting the specific content of the historical works have been established.

Selectivity criteria in general histories

The problem of choice of the content of any historical analysis is unavoidable because of the shortage of time (searching and reading), the acquaintance of students with specific methodological tools and procedures, the need to focus the "attention" of the reader on some important authors/subjects and the similarities with present problem solving. Thus the majority of the writers - included also those writing an "encyclopedic" book like Schumpeter (1954) - are obliged to adopt various selectivity criteria in determining the scope, content, and methodological approach adopted.⁶ Moving from the present to the past, these criteria are multiplied so that the historical analysis becomes more and more weak in terms of its historical correctness.⁷ Let us now examine upon what criteria Weintraub's argument (1991, p. 4) that "History is not found; history is written" would be based.

The selectivity criteria adopted by the authors of general-general histories of economic thought in regard to their contents are the following:

First: The extent of past authors' influence on the advancement of economic science. This "influential strength" criteria may be regarded as a general and widely used standard by the majority of historians (e.g. Roll, 1938, pp.12-4; Whittaker, 1960, p. vii).⁸

Second: The "eclectic" approach where history is written "without any dominant, unifying principle of presentation. Different periods in the history of economics are treated from different points of view as the occasion seems to suggest them" (Heimann, 1945, p.13).

Third: In describing economics as a product of class conflicts as with Marxian orientation histories of economics (Heimann, 1945, p. 14).

Fourth: Another content is "to present the history of economics as a sequence of the methods employed in solving the problem of economics" (Heimann, 1945, p. 14; see also Pribram, 1983, p. xviii).

Fifth: In terms of the present state of economics and the rate of expected approval by the fellow economists. Here we have two interconnected criteria. The relevance with respect to the present state of economics which is described by Samuelson as "whig" history,⁹ and the "acceptance" by fellow economists.¹⁰

Sixth: The content of the history of economic thought is subjected to a fashionable progress. As Viner (1957, p. 189) stated: "the history of economics as a discipline is to quite a large extent a history of fashion in economic thinking".

However the above content-target determining factors of the general histories of economics is not exhaustive, but may be regarded as the main one governing the state of such a subdiscipline.¹¹ The most celebrated and strongest criteria for choosing the content of the general histories of economics is the selection of authors and schools included. Let us see in what terms these two main inclusions were justified.

Under the great men - great books standard test must be estimated the extent of the past authors' influence on general and/or special topics. Thus a subcriterion accompanying the above is authors' originality and influence in advancing a special economic idea/theory. The fame and the importance of past authors on the advancement of science may be justified by their influence on the discipline which in its turn may be measured according to the rate of citations as argued by Stigler & Freidland (1979), Bordo & Landau (1979). Another measure is the number of translations of an authors works and its rate of sale (see Carpenter & Redlich, 1973, p. 270).¹² In addition to these measures the importance of past authors has been grounded upon the following criteria:

(i) The greatness of their influence on the intellectual progress of society, that is, in terms

of "who influenced whom and in what way" (Boulding, 1971, p. 234). The "great men principle"¹³ which the majority of historians used, has been treated differently. Some historians judged the greatness according to the influence on analytic techniques and economic analysis. This way of selecting authors to be included in historical analysis was suggested by Schumpeter (1954, p. 3; see also Viner, 1954, pp. 327, 329) and adopted by other historians such as Rima (1972, p. ix) who had chosen the authors included in her book according to their contribution toward "the analytical tools and concepts which comprise the body of economic theory". Other historians had judged their included authors' importance in terms of their analysis and suggestions based upon different methodological reasoning (e.g. Pribram, 1983, p. xviii), while others contradicted such a one-sided approach.¹⁴

- (ii) "The recognizable fame", that is, the already recognized and accepted fame of authors "whose writing have marked distinct and recognized stages in the development of economic knowledge" (Price, 1891, p. v), or "whose influence has left permanent imprint on the body of economic doctrines" (Bell, 1953, p. v). The "representative" authors' strategy employed by some historians (e.g. Barber, 1967, p. 9) has as a penalty "the impossibility of quoting a large number of writers of distinction, who have frequently made important corrections and additions to fundamental theories" (Rist, 1940, p. 16).
- (iii) Originality and priority of their ideas/theories have been used as strong criteria (e.g. Landreth, 1976, p. 7; Shackleton & Locksley, 1981, p. 3). The criterion of the priority of an idea - if we are able to verify it - is worthwhile in re-estimating the "heroes" in every field of science.¹⁵ The characteristic of originality however have been questioned by some scientists in terms of its correctness and influence in advancing the related idea/theory. For example, Stigler (1955, p. 3) emphasized the contribution of those who made important an economic idea/theory. Samuelson, on the other hand, stressed the difficulty in using the priority criteria: "I cannot tell you who first disproved the labor theory of value, much less who originated it" (1962, p. 5, ft. 2).
- (iv) The selection of past authors included in historical analysis is primarily determined by the general methodology adopted. If the historian adopts the relativist approach then he chooses other authors or pays much more attention to different authors than if he had adopted the absolutist approach. As Fetter wrote: "These different approaches to economic thought (i.e. absolutist and relativist) almost inevitably affect the evaluation by the economist of today of the greatness of an economist of an earlier age" (1965, p. 137; brackets added).
- (v) Each generation of economists have shown a different stress on some particular ideas/theories,¹⁶ and therefore, "each generation (i.e. of economists) rewrites its own history of economics" (Hollander, 1979, p. 4; brackets added).¹⁷ Thus, the current state of the science and the contemporary controversies play a significant role in determining the content of historical analysis (e.g. Oser, & Blanchfield, 1963, p. 2; Ekelund & Hebert, 1975, p. xi; Deane, 1978, p. xiv).
- (vi) Another criterion is that following the sociology of knowledge explanation of the advancement of science. In terms of such an approach, custom and tradition plays an important role in selecting past author's historical position in economics. As Hunt (1979, p. xv) comments: "custom and tradition are the principal criteria. The ideas included in one generation's histories of thought seem to be restated by most of the historians of the next generation with few changes".

The various significant criteria determining the specific content and authors included in general-general histories are presented (see table 3) as: personal influence, recognizable

fame, originality-priority, general methodological approach, relevance to the present state of science, and custom-tradition. It is obvious that these type of criteria influence the content and character of the historical works by offering new materials according to the extent that they are variously employed.

In regard to the formation of various schools of economics- mainly the historical ones- the following criteria have been suggested to determine which main function provides the better organization of analysis:¹⁸

1. According to Schumpeter, (1954, p. 470) an economic school exists when "there was one master, one doctrine, personal coherence; there was a core; there were zones of influence; there were fringe ends".
2. According to the nature of problems selected to be solved, the methodological techniques adopted and the "fundamental" solutions offered by some scientists (Groenewegen & McFarlane, 1990, p. 6; Houmanidis, 1995, p. 26).¹⁹

However, in a general history book, the analysis according to the various schools must not be solely concentrated on the major figures of each school. There must be also included all those minor figures who clarified and propagate relevant ideas/theories.

The range of the selectivity criteria used in the so called "general-orthodox" histories, is more shorter than the previous ones. Generally speaking, the content of mainstream economics is rather approached through the absolutist methodology and has been mathematically presented (see e.g. Negishi, 1989, p. xi; Brems, 1986, p. xiii). The selectivity criteria of included authors to this type of histories may not be different than that employed in the case of the general-general type of histories. The only difference might be in their sole mainstream orientation.

The so called "general-heterodox" histories concentrate their target in presenting and analysing ideas/theories which either are critical toward the mainstream economics or have been developed by neglected scientists. In writing such histories the selectivity principles in regard to their content are: (a) the critique on mainstream theory by the socialists (e.g. Hardach, Karras, Fine, 1978, p. vii), (b) the institutional approach (e.g. Gruchy, 1972), and (c) the significance of neglected authors in terms either of their relevance toward present state economic ideas/theories or simply forgotten authors (e.g. King, 1988).²⁰ In this type of histories the majority of selectivity criteria of included authors used in the case of general-general histories may equally be applied, though their direction is on non-orthodox economics.

However, the distinction between orthodox and heterodox general histories is misleading in regard to the fruitful role of a general history of economics.²¹ Both these approaches may contribute in advancing the history of economics. If the orthodox economists contributed in directly advancing mainstream economics the heterodox indirectly played such a role through their different approaches or through critique. Thus, more and more historians contradict such a distinction and argue on behalf of a historical analysis containing both currents of thought. In regard to the so called neglected authors the general histories incorporated them in their corpus as they are reviewed in special historical treatises.

Selectivity criteria in special histories

Let us now turn to the selectivity criteria of special histories starting with the so called "special phenomenological" ones. Their content may be attributed to the following targets:

1. In gap-filling for the historical literature of economics. The majority of special treatises claim such a target (see e.g. Smart, 1891, p. ix; Heertje, 1973, p. xi; Pagano, 1985, pp. 1-2).
2. In analysing the various theories and/or solutions developed for a specific problem in a

- specific environment according to their internal logic and unity (e.g. Vickers, 1959, p. 4; Eshag, 1963, p. xi; Dobb, 1973, p. 36).
3. In order for a specific tradition to be understandable with regard to a special subject (e.g. Waterman, 1991, p. 4).
 4. In comparing two different methodological approaches for explaining the same phenomena and/or solving the same problem (e.g. Bharadwaj, 1989, p. 1).
 5. In tracing and analysing the origins and early development of an idea/theory important in our days (e.g. Meek, 1976, p. 2).
 6. In examining the way that economic views, ideas and arguments influence the general political and social spirit of a period (e.g. Appleby, 1978, p. ix).

Of course the above list does not exhaust the variability of contents and targets of special phenomenological histories, but it gives a sample of the significance of those types of histories not only in throwing light on unknown subjects but also in supplying the general histories with new material. In these special histories some of the criteria of the general histories are also applied and widely employed. The selectivity criteria of included authors in this type of history are justified on the following grounds:

- (i) The importance of a past economist on the formation and advancement of a specific idea/theory (Catherwood, 1939, pp. 2-3; Heertje, 1973, pp. 1,5; Eltis, 1984, p. vii).²²
- (ii) According to their direct contribution on the formation of the present state of theory (Stigler, 1941, p. 1; Howard, 1983, pp. 3-4).

In table 4 is shown the selectivity criteria of included authors in the special phenomenological histories and the scope of their analysis. The criteria of authors' selection influence not only the material but also partly the analysis of the phenomenological histories.

The standard criteria of important contributions on specific economic phenomena however have been employed differently by some historians. Some have tried to exhaust the majority of major and minor writers on a specific theme (e.g. Viner, 1937, p. xiii; Mints, 1945, p. 12), while others concentrate on a few representative figures (e.g. Adelman, 1962, p. vii). There are cases where the author may be obliged to ground analysis more towards minor than to major economists. For example in the history of economic methodology we may find that minor economists (e.g. Steuart) had much more to say than major ones (e.g. Smith) (see Karayiannis, 1995, pp. 62-4, 68-70). Thus the great men - great books principle widely used in general histories of economics may not be applied with the same rate and tone in the cases of the special histories.

It seems that the most fruitful way to conduct a special type history is that which investigates both major and minor figures who directly and/or indirectly have contributed on a specific economic phenomena according to the angle and scope of its analysis. It is obvious that if for a specific phenomena an exhaustive investigation is undertaken, the main findings will be included in general history and thus not only knowledge will be advanced but furthermore the territory for further historical investigations will be extended. In other words, with extended investigations on special phenomena both students (through more historically correct texts) and scholars (through incentives for more investigation) will benefit.

In regard to the "special time/space" histories the criteria for their content and scope adopted are somehow similar to those followed by the previous special histories. The following justification for their various content and scope have been put forward:

1. In filling a gap in historical literature (e.g. O'Brien, 1920, p. 3; Beer, 1939, p. 5; Kadish, 1982, p.viii; Morris-Suzuki, 1989; Groenewegen & McFarlane, 1990),²³ and bringing in light the ideas/theories of neglected authors (e.g. Gordon, 1967).
2. Through such histories the "intellectual" continuation of human mind may be demonstrated (e.g. Trever, 1916, p. 3; Letwin, 1963, p. vii).

3. The reassessment of past economists by the light of new theories and/or material (e.g. Thweatt, 1988, p. 4; Yang, 1994, p. 4).
4. "Knowledge for the sake of knowledge". Under such a dictum many historical studies have been conducted. However this scope is not so descriptive as some believe. The majority of historical studies concerned with ancient intellectuality have still some importance as they are concerned also in showing either the indirect influence in the advancement of an idea/theory or those anticipating modern ones, or explain some empirical phenomena according to an intellectual environment "strange" to us (e.g. Ohrenstein & Gordon, 1992, p. xvi).²⁴

Histories taking as their scope either filling a gap in the literature or increasing knowledge for a specific period or space, must elaborate on it deeply and extensively. As the exhaustive analysis of every subject might be impossible as more and more materials are coming into light,²⁵ it seems that in these special histories the following criteria were commonly adopted: (a) the originality and priority in establishing and/or advancing an idea/theory; and (b) the rate of influence for the formation of the present state of economics (e.g. Beer, 1938, p. 5).

The criteria of priority and influence in selecting the past authors inclusion in special histories of time/space seems to be the main ones which are also adopted in histories of modern economics (e.g. O'Brien & Presley, 1981, p. xv). Despite these standards of selectivity from the historical literature covering special histories of period and/ or space, it may be mentioned that generally speaking those elaborating with the remote past and/or with countries or space which do not have direct influence on the present state of economics, the general approach is rather relativist (e.g. Baeck, 1994, p. viii). On the other hand, for those histories written for more recent periods and/or countries having paramount influence of the present state economics the approach is rather absolutist (e.g. Kregel, 1988, p. xix; Greenaway & Presley, 1989, p. xv).

In table 5 the various contents of the special time/space histories and the selectivity criteria of authors included are depicted. As in the previous case of special histories the two main criteria of authors' selectivity may influence relatively the specific content of such type of histories.

In regard to the type of special history called "individualistic" its main criteria of content's selectivity relies not only on priority and influence but on the reassessment through "fresh knowledge". In such histories selectivity criteria are much fewer than in other histories, as their scope is to fully comprehend an old author's scientific achievements (e.g. Hollander, 1979).

Finally, we have those recently emerged "special subdisciplinary" histories which concentrate on: (1) the examination of how some fundamental concepts and/or techniques emerged, used, and became established (Morgan, 1990, p. xi, Karayiannis, 1995, p. 13); and (2) the understanding of the current state of the subdiscipline (Epstein, 1987, p. v). By writing such histories the selectivity criteria lose their meaning as happens in the previous type of histories as the historian attempts to examine every available material in tracing out his/her history.

Conclusions

The selectivity standards adopted throughout are numerous, showing a pluralistic justification of content, although they may be concentrated toward the most powerful (in terms of usually employed) standards such as: (a) the dominance of "great men", and (b) the relevance in relation to the present state economics.²⁶ Although these seem to be the most

prevailing criteria of selecting the content of the histories of economics, there are some others such as priority and indirect influence which through their adoption advance historical knowledge and thus its contribution in widening the horizons of economists is increased.

From the above analysis may be deduced first of all that the way that the various types of histories are constructed is a pluralistic one which is illustrated by the difference not only in personal opinions and beliefs of the historians, but also their attitude toward its subject matter. By this pluralistic style of historical constructions, and mainly the special ones, the field of the general history is much more enriched than otherwise. In such a way the books on general history could be selective, and be complemented by books which present deeply a special economic phenomenon (e.g. wages or growth) in which the various ideas of old economists must be analyzed in detail. By this pluralistic content of the various types of histories we have a regenerating of the history of economics, fascinating not only the economists working on this field but also the scholars in other disciplines such as sociology and anthropology.

Notes

- * Department of Economics, University of Piraeus, 80 Karaoli & Dimitriou Street, 185 34 Piraeus, Greece. A version of this article was presented at the European Conference on the History of Economics, Athens, April 1997. I wish to thank the anonymous referees of this journal for helpful comments.
- 1. Some other distinctions have been drawn in the history of economics according to: (a) their main scope as history of economic analysis and history of economic doctrines (Gordon, 1965, p. 121), and (b) their methodological approach as absolutist and relativist (Fetter, 1965, pp. 136-7; Landreth, 1976, p. 6).
- 2. The second and third types of histories are also noticed by Tullock (1971, p. ix)
- 3. The arbitrariness of the historians in constructing their own histories has been explicitly admitted by some authors as e.g. Gide & Rist (1917, p. xii), Machlup (1977, p. ix).
- 4. Landreth (1976, p. 3) comments that "Selection implies interpretation, and therefore reflects all the factors that have influenced the historian's own development: training, biases, prejudices, and value system". The subjectivity of selection in the contents of history is stressed also by Samuels (1996, p. 58) who wrote: "one could do history of economic thought in different ways and that what mattered ultimately was the quality of one's work- and reinforcing a propensity for individualism, that one could go about studying the history of economic thought, and the history of economics, in one's own way". This approach resulted in "different histories": "I learned from the comparison of textbooks that quite different stories could be told, differences sometimes of major content of emphasis and other times of subtle nuance, even when the broad outlines were largely similar" (Samuels, 1996, p. 58).
- 5. Roll (1938, p. 13) says that "A history of ideas is by nature selective and interpretative; by virtue of what he leaves out and by his manner of presenting that which he includes, the author gives sway to his own interests, predilections and prejudices".
- 6. As Hunt (1979, p. xv) comments, "The writer of a history of economic thought must have, above all else, some principles of selectivity".
- 7. As Landreth (1976, p. 3) put it: "the more selective a history of economic theory becomes, the less historically correct it will be".
- 8. Haney (1911, vi-vii) considers that the relative space devoted to each economist is derived under two tests: "first, what has been the writer's effect upon the stream of economic thought? Next, what important point in theory has he originated or developed? If his contribution has been both discovery in theory and a profound effect on his contemporaries, then he deserves considerable discussion" That is why Haney used as a sub title of his book: "A critical account of the origin and development of the economic theories of the leading thinkers in the leading nations".
- 9. As Samuelson (1987, p. 52) argues "I propose that history of economics more purposefully reorient itself toward studying the past from the standpoint of the present state of economic science. To use a pejorative word unpejoratively I am suggesting Whig Economic History of Economic Analysis". By this kind of approach "we Whig historians will never run out of work. In the course of discussing the works of past scientists, we are producing works that will be grist for the mills of those who will follow us - I mean who will come after us, after us with scalpels and hemp" (Ibid., p. 58).
- 10. Spengler (1968, p. 6) argued that the approval of other economists determines to a high rate the content of a text book, something which may be applied also to historical books.

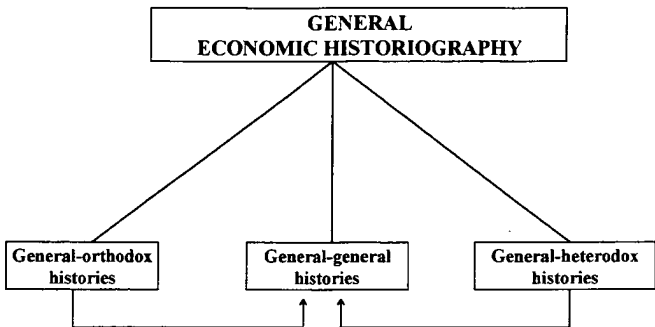


Table 1

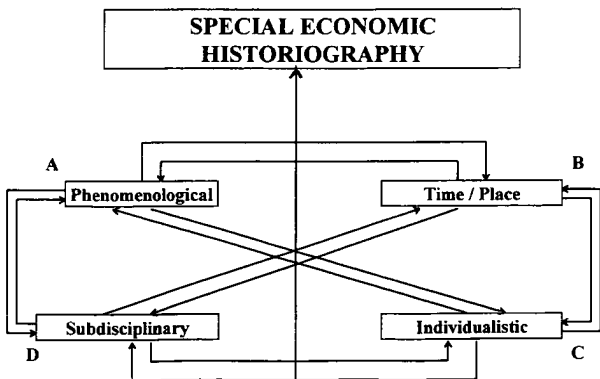


Table 2

**CHARACTER OF
CONTENT**

1. influence
2. eclectic
3. class conflict
4. methodology
5. present state
6. fashion

**SELECTIVITY CRITERIA
OF INCLUDED AUTHORS**

- I. personal influence
- II. recognizable fame
- III. originality-priority
- IV. methodology
- V. present state
- VI. custom-tradition

Table 3

**SCOPE OF
PHENOMENOLOGICAL
HISTORIES**

1. gap filling
2. way of development
3. understanding
tradition
4. methodology
5. present state
6. general influence

**SELECTIVITY CRITERIA
OF INCLUDED AUTHORS**

- I. originality-priority
- II. influence on the present state

Table 4

**SCOPE OF
TIME / SPACE
HISTORIES**

1. gap filling
2. continuation of
intellectuality
3. re-assessment
4. advancement of
knowledge

**SELECTIVITY CRITERIA
OF INCLUDED AUTHORS**

- I. originality-priority
- II. influence on the present state

11. For Bell (1953, p. 5) the subject matter of economic thought "can be presented in at least three ways: first, a chronological presentation of materials as they were developed by writers and by schools; second, a straight-line development of concepts or ideas, with small reference to those who had a part in formulating the ideas; and third, a motivation approach which rationalizes economic ideas and motives for the purpose of explaining and justifying certain economic behavior".
12. The influential power exercised by modern economists is the main foundation of modern history of economics (see e.g. Silk, 1976, p. ix; Shackleton, & Locksley, 1981, p.3).
13. The extent of someone's importance has been variously estimated: as a world wide revolutionary (Heilbroner, 1953, p.11), in gradually advancing a discipline as a whole (Stigler, 1955, p. 3), or as "Any writer who is capable of affecting the thought of people who are living and thinking after he is dead may be said to be seminal in this sense and also part of the extended present" (Boulding, 1971, p. 231).
14. For example, Coats (1992, p. 209) argued that "If we are to consider the influence of economic ideas/theories/doctrines etc., (whatever that means) the role of lesser thinkers in the intellectual pantheon must be considered, together with a host of unsung popularisers, propagandists, cranks and amateurs".
15. The recognition awarded priority has been treated as a stimulus and reward instrument for the scientists and the advancement of science (see Stephan, 1996, pp. 1201-2).
16. On this ground, Samuelson (1962, p. 4) explained the differences in content and approach of the well known histories of economics of Gide & Rist and Schumpeter.
17. Bowley (1973, p. vii) argues that "the history of theory has to be continually rewritten, since the usual purpose of histories is to consider the extent to which earlier economists have contributed to the solution of problems with which later economists happen to be concerned at any particular moment".
18. Oser & Blanchfield, (1963, pp. 2-6) suggested that if the school division of history is adopted, the following answer in questioning each school must be given: What was the social background of the school? What was the essence of the school? What groups of people did the school serve or seek to serve? How was the school valid, useful, or correct in its time? and How did the school outlive its usefulness?
19. Samuels (1996, p. 57) relatively suggested, "That all schools of economic thought can and must be comprehended as having at least three dimensions: as protest movements against developments considered adverse; as efforts to create a body of acceptable knowledge; and as approaches to problem solving".
20. Fetter (1965, pp. 137-8) considers that neglected authors are of two types: "There were those who produced original analysis that influenced the thought and controversy of their day, but who have been largely forgotten. Some were important in that they provided the ideas that others developed; some were important in that they were leaders in a controversy which with the passing of time came to be associated with a single man..... There is another type of neglected economist: the man whose ideas, no matter how original and brilliant judged by the standards of today, had little if any impact on the thought of his own day. Not time but his contemporaries neglected him".
21. As Routh (1975, p. 2) wrote "So many interesting and, perhaps, meritorious works have passed out of the literature and remain unknown and unread, awaiting rediscovery by some student with a sense of the continuity of the human spirit or a nose for the spicy smell of old books. Those that please the orthodox are cited with approval and preserved; those that displease them are rebutted and thus preserved. It is the ones that neither please nor displease because written in an intellectual language that others fail to understand that are least likely to survive".
22. Ponsard justified the great men/books criteria in terms of their "synthesizing" power or "a creative synthesis in that by its organization and content it marks a radical expansion of knowledge with respect to what was previously known" (1983, p.2). However, he tried around them to "place the works of secondary authors, who are important because of their marginal contributions or because of the intellectual atmosphere they create" (Ibid.).
23. Adopting such an approach, Tribe spoke for the private enjoyment in discovering some unnoticed material (i.e. ideas/theories): "Part of the fascination of working on this book has lain in the discovery of arguments and preoccupations unlike those which now prevail" (1988, p. 5).
24. As Lowry (1991, p. 142) notes about his task as an historian: "What I am dealing with are patterns of thought and concepts that have endured over centuries and have acquired relevance or influence in modern economic thinking. My interest is in tracing these ideas to their earliest formulation".
25. However we have histories on special period and/or space such as Dorfman's (1946, vol. 1, p. ix) and Hutchison's (1988, pp. 8-9) which are written in order to exhaust, and accomplish as much as possible on the subject of their targets.
26. The same standards seems to be followed by the writers of historical articles. As de Marchi & Lodewijks deduced (1983, p. 325): "What emerges so far is that submissions over the first decade of HOPE apparently were strongly dominated by two approaches to writing the history of economic thought - the Great Man (and by definition Lesser Men) tradition, and the tradition which takes contemporary economic theory as

some sort of standard of truth and seeks to push backwards in time to discover first recognitions of correct formulations".

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