

Reader's note

This part is meant to render a service to the reader and make the Journal easier to use by providing four different indexes. The first index lists the articles by issue, in a chronological sequence; the second one is ordered alphabetically by author. The third index provides a list of all the books reviewed, arranged alphabetically by author. Last but not at least, the subject index deserves more detailed explanation.

Creating a subject index, particularly for a periodical such as the *Journal of European Economic History* which covers a very broad spectrum of themes, is by no means a mechanical task. To make the index more readily accessible to the reader, I would like to explain briefly the criteria used in making the present classification.

In the first place, in keeping with the enormous range of subjects dealt with, there has been no economising as far as the number of key-words is concerned. Three categories of key-words may be distinguished. Alongside a) very general headings (*trade, economic policy, economic growth, industrialisation* etc.) which occur frequently and are to be used as initial and very broad indicators, there are more analytical headings which b) refer to thematical subsets (such as *capital formation, gold standard, charity* etc.) or c) at a much lower level of aggregation, define very specific themes and occur perhaps only once or twice (such as *commenda contract, famine, notars* and people's names).

Although the aim has been to show such a great range of topics and theories, a 1:1 scale reproduction of the contents would neither be possible nor desirable. For the sake of synthesis, certain important words have been given a conventional meaning. The term *industrialisation* also includes the semantically ambiguous "industrial revolution" of the western countries. On the other hand, the terms *agricultural revolution* and *commercial revolution* have been used when reference to these much more narrowly-defined categories is explicit. Again, the term *economic growth* is now generally accepted in defining any dynamic process of growth, while the term "development" appears only in the expression *theory of development*, that is to say, when reference to that particular theoretical set is explicit. The same goes for *backwardness*. By *state intervention*, reference is made to direct government intervention in the economy, as opposed to the much wider and more comprehensive term *economic policy*. *Public administration* denotes the function, *bureaucracy* the social group. *Urban history* is used when the history of a town is outlined. *Cultural factors*, with its Gerschenkronian ring, refers to culture in the widest, anthropological sense. *Methodology* indicates a methodological reflection, which may be of a technico-statistical or of an epistemological nature. Generally speaking, geographical terms have been left in the form they appear in the text.

When we choose words, we actually refer to theoretical sets in which these words have acquired a precise sense. Certain words are by now part of the common historiographical lexicon, that is, they form part of consolidated paradigms, such as *industrialisation*. Other words that have only recently come into use are part of paradigms still in progress. They express concepts which are still controversial and are therefore less neutral; a good example is the term *protoindustrialisation*. In other words, certain key-words are related to the presence of the same words in the text; when the paradigm is still loose, the use of a word corresponds to a conscious choice. The frequency over time of the key-words thus reflects the pace of acceptance of new paradigms, not within the entire spectrum of economic history, but within that portion of economic history - itself substantial - which makes up the Journal. The key-words are, therefore, the index, or rather the imperfect index, of both facts and theories. "*Words, while defining, muzzle...*" (Sylvia Plath, from "Poems, potatoes").

Costanza D'Elia