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S. N. Broadberry, Kevin H. O'Rourke, eds. *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Europe: Volume 1, 1700-1870.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 344 pp. $110.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-521-88202-6; $40.00 (paper), ISBN 978-0-521-70838-8.

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Survey of European Economic History

In the preface to this first of a two-volume series on modern European economic history, the authors point out the dearth of textbook treatments of pan-European economic history aimed at the undergraduate audience. The void has been admirably filled with this volume. Each of the contributions problematizes key issues in European economic history during the transition to modern economic growth between 1700 and 1870. The essays in the volume not only provide a grand survey of European economic history, particularly during the period of intensifying industrialization, but also highlight the historiographical and methodological debates, setting a useful framework to encourage further debate and discussion. Beyond filling the need for an accessible textbook-length treatment of the field, the value of this work is in its attempt to provide a transnational picture of economic development just as Europe, at least in the form of the European Union, is challenged to find common links and patterns to a regional identity that transcends national boundaries.

The strength of this volume as a primer on European economic history is its organization. The editors of the series, Stephen Broadberry and Kevin H. O'Rourke, use Simon Kuznet's definition of modern economic growth to provide a common analytical framework for all the essays and to organize the essays in a coherent succession. The chapters that follow the introduction expound on Kuznet's essential characteristics of economic growth in the modern period: high rates of growth in per capita product and total factor productivity; shifts across sectors and within organizational forms; dramatic social change; expansion and intensification of networks of exchange; and increasing disparities between regions. The chapters are well written by a set of contributors from both economic and historical disciplines who are well known in their fields and who admirably lay out the important interpretive issues of their topic while providing a critical examination of data sources. Most essays also provide useful definitions of key economic and socioeconomic terms and concepts that make them easily accessible to students from all disciplines.

Taken as a whole, the essays establish a coherent and comprehensive picture of the history of modern European economic growth. The first chapter sets up the ambitious scope of the volume. Joel Mokyr and Hans-Joachim Voth provide a broad theoretical and methodological overview of the debates about modern economic growth, analyzing the main arguments of exogenous and endogenous growth models and efforts to create a "unified theory of growth." Their conclusions make an appeal to return to an analytical framework à la Walt Rostow to understand the dynamics of "take-off," or alternatively phrased, "historical delays." In appealing to better integration of theoretical and historical approaches to understanding economic growth, the authors stress the need to avoid the pitfalls of using Europe's transition as a model for the correct path to follow and explaining divergence in simplistic terms of "forwardness" and other regions' "backwardness."

Many of the essays fulfill the goal of providing a European history that highlights regional or European-wide patterns of economic development. For example, the excellent essay by Lee Craig and Concepción García-Iglesias on business cycles proposes a new periodization of downturns in the business cycle to problematize economic development in Europe as a whole. Likewise, George Alter and Gregory Clark's contribution on demographic change highlights the complex and not well understood connections between European-wide differences in fertility and modern economic growth, while Paolo Malanima's essay on the major shifts in the geography of European urbanization reveals a significant break

from patterns that emerged during the Middle Ages. The cumulative result of these essays is to paint a panoramic view of socioeconomic change that swept across Europe from the northwest toward the south and east, leaving distinctive patterns of interregional differences that persisted well into the twentieth century.

This volume also highlights the challenges of writing an economic history of Europe that is truly pan-European. A weakness of the volume as a whole is the failure to provide a definition of "Europe." Some essays include data and analysis from the Ottoman Empire and others do not. This lack of consistency reinforces the problem of conceptualizing Europe for analytical and narrative purposes. Another weakness is a natural outgrowth of data sets available to economic historians. The majority of data is presented and analyzed at the nation-state level and one is left with the impression that national histories remain the backdrop for all analyses. Several of the essays discuss the importance of formal institutions in shaping patterns of economic growth, but these issues tend to focus on the political institutions that influenced nation-state formation. The result is to reinforce the nation-state as the level of analysis for economic development. In particular, there is a persistent tendency to privilege the British model of industrialization to explain patterns of modern economic growth. In turn, this tendency marginalizes and homogenizes discussions of other regional patterns, particularly those within central and eastern Europe. More problematically, there is a seemingly inescapable theme in many of the essays that emphasizes "the best and the rest" perspective, including the last essay by Bishnupriya Gupta and Debin Ma on the "great divergence" debate.

This volume is an important contribution to European economic history as a comprehensive survey of the period of intense industrialization and the transition to modern economic growth. The strengths of this work far outweigh any criticisms, especially as this work provides a basis for further debate and discussion. The bar has been raised for the second volume to continue with the quality of contributions in this series, as well as for other treatments of European economic history that may follow.

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