Complexity Science Hub Workshop

Computational Economic History

June 22–23, 2026, Vienna, Austria

Aim

Economic history is inheriting a flood of new tools from advances in generative AI. This workshop is hosting a conversation on how we envision the unfolding transformation of our discipline.

The workshop brings together a small group of researchers working at the intersection of economic history and computational social science. Presentation sessions will showcase how our discipline is currently using the new tools. Discussion sessions will support a conversation to identify some of the new frontiers - what could we be doing that we are not? Finally, there will be a session on replication in the age of generative AI, to consider not only the challenges but also the potential of AI assisted social science.

Objectives

The workshop aims to:

- Share methods that are transforming economic history
- Collectively identify potential new frontiers
- Consider replication in the age of Generative AI.

Participants

Name	Organization
Simone Daniotti	Utrecht/Berkeley/CSH
Yannick Dupraz	CNRS
Vitalia Eliseeva	Paris School of Economics
Joseph Enguehard	ENS Lyon
Erik Hellberg	Uppsala University
Philipp Hilmbauer	CSH
Lorenz Hufe	Fraunhofer HHI & University of Oxford
Guohui Jiang	University of Cologne
Mustafa Erdem Kabadayi	Koç University
Derek Mikola	Institute for Replication (I4R)
Matyas Molnar	CEU
Frank Neffke	CSH
Lida Smitkova	Oxford
Christian Vedel	University of Southern Denmark
Hillary Vipond	CSH
Joachim Voth	University of Zurich
Johannes Wachs	Corvinus University of Budapest
Benjamin Wagenvoort	Oxford INET
Fabian Wahl	WU Vienna

Workshop Schedule

Sunday, 21 June — Welcome

17:00–19:00	Welcome Reception @ CSH
	Informal introductions and meeting over drinks

Monday, 22 June

08:45–09:00	Opening Session
	Welcome remarks
9:00–10:30	Guohui Jiang
	Draft Dodging by the Rich and War Morale in World War II. Using newly digitized individual-level draft records, I show that men whose richer neighbors received more draft exemptions volunteered less, filed more draft appeals, and deserted more.
	Mustafa Erdem Kabadayi
	Mapping Historical Population Geography: Integrating Cold War Aerial and Satellite Imagery and Gridded Population Models.
	Yannick Dupraz
	The project digitizes 20 French census waves on a roughly five-year basis between 1836 and 1936. (TBC)
10:30–11:00	Coffee
11:00–11:30	Short Talks
	Matyas Molnar, Lida Smitkova, Frank Neffke
11:30–12:30	Derek Mikola (Institute for Replication)
	Replication in the age of Generative AI
12:30–13:30	Lunch
13:30–14:30	Walk and Talk
14:30–15:30	Round Table: Where are the new frontiers?
	(TBC)
15:30—16:00	Coffee
16:00–17:00	Christian Vedel
	Converting Historical Accounts into Occupational Scores. Replicable, fully automatic, and interpretable framework for converting historical occupational descriptions into outcome estimates
	Lorenz Hufe (AI Historian)
	An AI agent that collaborates with historians to extract structured datasets from primary sources, adapt to heterogeneous documents, and accumulate domain knowledge across sessions
17:00–18:00	Keynote Discussion
	Joachim Voth: Reflections on New Approaches in Economic History
18:30 onwards	Group Dinner
	Shared dinner in Vienna

Tuesday, 23 June

09:00–10:00	Coffee & Discussion - What are the new methods we are using?
	Informal coffee conversation: sharing new methods. What's working, what's new and interesting. Bring one or two ideas to add to the pot!
10:00–11:00	Benjamin Wagenvoort
	Universality and predictability of technology diffusion. Using data for 120 technologies ranging from canals to mobile phones, we show that S-curve shapes are remarkably universal.
	Vitalia Eliseeva
	The Market for Stories: How Unified Adoption Laws Shaped Narratives in US History Textbooks. This paper examines how changes in textbook adoption rules shaped historical narratives in American history textbooks between 1870 and 1930. During this period, most Western and Southern states transitioned from local to state-level textbook lists.
11:00–11:30	Coffee
11:30–13:00	Simone Daniotti
	The Republic of Letters as Collective Brain: Evidence from a Unified Correspondence Corpus A large-scale, authority-linked correspondence corpus covering 44,000+ scholars and half a million letters, enriched with Wikidata biographies and GVI bibliographic records.
	Erik Hellberg
	What Did Workers Do? Using Job Ads to Analyze the Task Content of Work in an Industrializing Economy. We assemble a large corpus of job advertisements from Swedish newspapers from the 1860s to the 1900s and use a large language model to extract task statements.
	Joseph Enguehard.
	This research studies long-run cultural change, drawing on a large genealogical dataset of 150 million individuals across multiple countries and centuries. I infer cultural characteristics from names using large language models, and trace how identity is transmitted and reshaped across generations.
13:00–13:30	Fishbowl
	Closing Session
13:30	Lunch and departure.