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# The contribution of the history of economic thought and economic history to the development of economics in the Third Polish Republic. A concise overview of academic centres, research output, and international impact

Wkład historii myśli ekonomicznej i historii gospodarczej w rozwój ekonomii w III RP. Zwięzły przegląd ośrodków akademickich, dorobku naukowego i oddziaływania międzynarodowego

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## Abstract

Economic history and history of economic thought have had to contend with a crisis of a didactic and scientific nature since the beginning of the shift from a command economy to a free-market system in Poland, and the accompanying legal and constitutional changes have compounded these difficulties. The Law on Higher Education and Science reclassified academic fields and disciplines, with the result that history was placed in the humanities and economics and finance were placed in the social sciences. This paper aims to show the contribution of these two subdisciplines to the development of economics in Poland over the last 30 years. The present authors contend that the waning didactic significance of these two sub-disciplines at economics and history faculties, and the subsequent liquidation or absorption of many university departments devoted to them, has not impeded valuable research in these fields in Poland. The article not only presents the teaching, research and publishing activities of the existing academic institutions and faculties, but also shows the international influence of academicians and their teaching work, and examines the market for textbooks and synthetic works.

**Keywords:** history of economic thought, economic history, textbooks, history of economics, research in Poland.

**JEL:** A10, A20, B00, N00

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## Streszczenie

Historia gospodarcza i historia myśli ekonomicznej borykały się z kryzysem o charakterze dydaktycznym i naukowym od początku transformacji, a nowe rozwiązania prawne pogłębiały te trudności. Ustawa Prawo o szkolnictwie wyższym i nauce wprowadziła m.in. nową klasyfikację dziedzin i dyscyplin nauki, umieszczając dyscyplinę historia w dziedzinie nauk humanistycznych, a dyscyplinę ekonomia i finanse w dziedzinie nauk społecznych. Celem artykułu jest pokazanie wkładu dwóch wskazanych subdyscyplin w rozwój ekonomii w Polsce w ostatnich 30 latach. Stawiamy hipotezę, że spadek znaczenia dydaktycznego obu subdyscyplin na wydziałach ekonomicznych i historycznych oraz jego następstwa: likwidacja lub wchłonięcie wielu katedr, nie zahamowały w Polsce wartościowych badań w obu obszarach. W artykule przedstawiono nie tylko aktywność naukową istniejących jednostek, ale także pokazano wpływ międzynarodowy polskich badaczy i ich działalność dydaktyczną, rynek podręczników i prac syntetycznych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** historia myśli ekonomicznej, historia gospodarcza, podręczniki, historia ekonomii, badania w Polsce.

**JEL:** A10, A20, B00, N00



## 1. Introduction

With the collapse of the communist system, and the beginning of the transition to a parliamentary democracy and market economy, Poland was faced with the daunting task of implementing a raft of political, economic, social and legislative changes. Economists and lawyers presented their views on the principles of transitioning to a market economy. At the same time, there was renewed interest in history. Freed from the pressure of censorship, historians began to present a new vision of Poland's history, including its economic aspects.

However, from the 1990s, partly due to political interference from the ruling parties, fundamental historical and political themes were simplified or even distorted. The Institute of National Remembrance (IPN – Instytut Pamięci Narodowej), established in 1998, began an avalanche of 'production' concerning WWII and the first decades of the Polish People's Republic. A significant percentage of the institution's research was tainted by a one-sided perspective. Economic history, however, was not politically influenced in these new circumstances. The attempts to ideologise history in research and education have returned as a result of political interference, especially after 2015, but again, economic history, most probably due to its impact being underestimated, has not been unduly affected.

*The Law on Higher Education and Science (Prawo o szkolnictwie wyższym i nauce)* of 20 July 2018, often called *The Constitution for Science*, reclassified academic disciplines, placing history in the humanities and economics and finance in the social sciences. Unlike socio-economic geography and spatial economics, which are classified as social sciences, the legislature has not ruled on whether subdisciplines such as economic history and/or history of economic thought should be assigned to the humanities or the social sciences. Both straddle the borderline between history and economics. Both also use of the methodologies of history and economics, often supported by such (sub)disciplines as political science, sociology and even psychology or ethics, which demonstrates their interdisciplinarity, although the influence of the social sciences is clearly more evident.

Both subdisciplines have been confronted with a crisis of a didactic and scientific nature since the beginning of the transition, and the legal and constitutional changes mentioned above have only exacerbated the difficulties in the way they function in Polish universities (in economics and history faculties) and in economic universities. The Act of 2018 definitely creates difficulties in implementing promotion procedures and in acquiring funds. When it comes to competing for grants from the National Science Centre (NCN – Narodowe Centrum Nauki), history and economics submissions are evaluated by different panels and 'purity' of discipline is viewed favourably. There are also several forums where historians and economists can work together. These have improved understanding and led to the creation of connecting threads. To a certain extent, the groups centred around the Polish Economic Society (PTE – Polskie Towarzystwo Ekonomiczne), the Society of Polish Economists (TEP – Towarzystwo Ekonomistów Polskich), the Polish Association of Economic History (PTHG – Polskie Towarzystwo Historii Gospodarczej), and the Forum of Institutional Thought (FMI – Forum Myśli Instytucjonalnej) are pursuing

this objective. The regular conferences on economic crises organised by the University of Białystok (<https://konferencjarsg.uwb.edu.pl>) are an exceptional example of this.

This paper demonstrates the contribution of these two important subdisciplines have made to the development of economics in Poland over the past 30 years. Despite the didactic difficulties occasioned by shrinking staff resources, some universities have made considerable progress. The authors therefore hypothesise that the decline in the didactic significance of the history of economic thought and economic history at economics and history faculties (with the history of economic thought taught only at economics but economic history at both faculties), and the subsequent liquidation, absorption or transformation of many departments has (fortunately) not stopped valuable research in Poland in either of these important subdisciplines. The article does not address business history (popular in the UK and the USA), as there are no separate departments that specialise in this area in Polish universities. While there are individual researchers specializing in business history from the 19th century, through the Second Polish Republic, the Polish People's Republic, and up to the transformation period, this article emphasises those historical studies that correlate more strongly with economic theory or which at least contain references to economic processes. For the same reason, the industrial period is reviewed much more thoroughly.

The article reviews the literature of the two subdisciplines, and presents the existing units in the history of economic thought and economic history in Poland. It also shows the international influence of academicians by conducting a simple bibliometric analysis of the SCOPUS, WoS, and Google Scholar databases. This article especially depicts the research and teaching activities of economic theorists, economic historians, and specialists in economic thought. The former focuses on the most recent research and the latter academic textbooks. The third section shows how the achievements of the history of economic thought and economic history may be compared to mainstream economics. It demonstrates the professionalism of scholars in teaching future generations. The article shows the most up-to-date output, which is unfortunately poorly recognised outside Poland.

Several cross-sectional publications attempting to synthesise the output of Polish scholars in the field of economic history and the history of economic thought from the perspective of individual research centres have appeared in the 21st century. A work edited by Morawski (2007) covers the history of economic higher education in Warsaw (both from the Warsaw School of Economics and the University of Warsaw), Poznań, Kraków, Łódź, and Wrocław. The links between economic theory, economic history, and the history of economic thought are discussed in a multi-author publication edited by Skodlarski (2008). A review of the research on Polish economic history was included in a publication edited by Matera and Pieczewski (2011). The current state of research from the pre-industrial period was referred to in an article by Kochanowicz and Sosnowska (2011). The chapter by Leszczyńska, written in German (2012/2013), offers an extremely valuable overview. There are as yet no similar studies in English. Finally, in a publication edited by Janicki (2020), in reference to the book by arguably Poland's most eminent economic historian, Witold Kula (2001), some authors referred to the output of economic history, especially in

the chapter by Morawski (2020). Some references to the work of Polish economic historians can also be found in the polemical articles by Guzowski and Poniak (2013, 2015, 2021) and Matera (2015). What was lacking until recently, however, was an overview of the history of economic thought. Happily, this gap has now been filled by Ratajczak (2021). To summarise, there are still few publications that overview Polish achievements of these two important economic subdisciplines.

## 2. The contribution of the history of economic thought

The declining interest in the history of economic thought around the world was raised by Mark Blaug (2001) and Nuno Palma (2008) at the turn of the 21st century. Blaug drew attention to the removal of this subject from both graduate and undergraduate university courses, especially in the United States, but almost everywhere (Blaug, p. 145). Some economists are still doubtful as to whether the history of economic thought is the province of economics. Therefore, there are few openings in the West for scholars specialising in this subdiscipline (Palma, p. 94). Two divergent trends can be observed: despite the decline in the importance of the history of economic thought in the United States and Western Europe, interest in this field is growing, as evidenced by e.g., an increase in the number of publications (Mielcarek, p. 96).

After a brief preliminary review, it can be stated that there is a similar trend in Poland. As the history of economic thought is gradually being removed from bachelor degrees, it has also begun to be heavily restricted in masters programmes. Until the end of the second decade of the 21st century, there were still several chairs and/or departments of the history of economic thought in Poland. Currently, there are only two. At the Warsaw School of Economics, there is a team of six people in the Department of Political Economy and the History of Economic Thought, while at the Faculty of Economics and Sociology of the University of Łódź, there is a team of eight people in the Department of the History of Economics, transformed from the Department of the History of Economic Thought and Economic History. The change was substantive, as the history of economics (this name is preferred to the history of economic thought in Western universities) is concerned with studying bygone economic concepts and revealing patterns in their development. The history of economic thought is therefore the history of the development of economics. It emphasises the evolution of different currents of economics under the influence of ground-breaking events, and is therefore compelled to consider economic history. The history of economic thought and economic history are therefore closely interrelated, so the name 'history of economics' is closer to the real content of the research and the subjects taught. This was the rationale for changing the name of the department at the University of Łódź.

In addition to these two exceptions, however, there are no longer any separate units in the other faculties of economics or in universities of economics. At the Poznań University of Economics in 2014, the Department of Macroeconomics and Development Studies consisted of former staff members from the Department of History and Theory of Economics, which continued the tradition of the three pre-

viously existing separate units, which were the Department of History of Economic Thought, the Department of Economic History and the Department of Consumption Economics (<https://ue.poznan.pl>). At the Cracow University of Economics, the Department of the History of Economic Thought ceased to exist in 2018 and its staff were transferred to the Department of Microeconomics (<http://archiwumuek.uek.krakow.pl>). At the University of Economics in Katowice, the Chair of History of Economic Thought operated within the Department of Economics until 2019, but as a result of organisational changes, the structure was unified, abandoning the division into smaller units (<https://www.ue.katowice.pl>). At other universities, historians of economic thought are employed in the Departments of Political Economy (University of Warsaw); the Departments of Ecological Economics (Wrocław University of Economics); or in the Departments of Micro-, Macro-, and Economics. There is also a group of researchers who are dispersed in various institutes or non-historical and non-economic faculties (e.g., law or political science).

As the output of the various centres of the history of economic thought in Poland over the last 30 years has been considerable, this paper is confined to pointing out the key monographs which, in the history of economic thought (but also in economic history), are still evidence of the long-term cross-sectional research crucial to highlighting the evolution of ideas. The papers that have been published in significant indexed journals outside Poland are also mentioned.

Witold Kwaśnicki's work has a unique place in Polish economics. *Knowledge, Innovation and Economy: An Evolutionary Exploration* (1996), published by Edward Elgar Publishing in the 20th century was an impressive achievement. This innovative book examines industrial dynamics from an evolutionary perspective, applying a biological model to the analysis of economic problems. Kwaśnicki compares and contrasts this model with that of well-known, classical development models. Contemporary economic problems relating to cumulative causation and path dependence are also discussed. In Poland, Kwaśnicki's most recognisable work is *History of Liberal Thought* (2000). The development of liberal thought is presented in a historical perspective and the links between the ideas of freedom and private property and economic and legal issues. Considering economic development with reference to the ideas of Western liberalism and Chinese Taoism was highly original.

Freed from Marxist indoctrination, the history of economic thought in Poland was revived and restored to full sovereignty. Janina Godłów-Legiędź's work *Friedrich August von Hayek's Socio-Economic Doctrine* (1992) was published at the beginning of the political and economic transition. The book provided support for the socio-economic changes that were taking place in Poland at the time. As a proponent of the liberal worldview and the market economy, Hayek created his own version of the science of society. Godłów-Legiędź conducted a comprehensive analysis of Hayek's thought. Hayek's economic and social system has a rich philosophical, legal-political and sociological foundation. He stands up for the individual, criticising both the welfare state and the socialist economy.

Almost simultaneously, *Joseph A. Schumpeter's Theory of Economic Development* (1993) was published by Stanisław Mikosik. Schumpeterian economics is distinguished by its long-term and dynamic approach and its consideration of the impact

of natural factors and inventions. Schumpeter called them combinations, although they are nowadays referred to as innovation. It is to Mikosik's credit that he pays particular attention to this aspect.

Two decades later, recognising the current elements of the Austrian scholar's theory, Adam Glapiński also wrote about Schumpeter's entrepreneurial theory (2012a; 2012b). He argues that sociology and class theory are the keys to understanding the most important economic theories, viz., the theory of economic development, the theory of capitalism and socialism, and the theory of systemic transformation.

Polish academicians have not avoided confronting the father of economics. A work on Adam Smith was published in 2003. Stefan Zabieglik presented his life and work in an accessible manner. The value of the work lies in its references to works published during Smith's lifetime and posthumously, as well as those reconstructed from the notes of his followers. The second part includes a selection of excerpts from the texts most representative of the philosopher, including texts translated into Polish for the first time (Zabieglik, 2003).

Joanna Dzionek-Kozłowska's *Alfred Marshall's Economic and Social System* (2007) is one of the most outstanding books on the history of economic thought. Marshall ranks among the greatest economists in history. The author gives a complete picture of Marshall's work, from its methodological foundations, through the most relevant theoretical threads, to his views on current economic and social problems. According to Dzionek-Kozłowska, the timeless value of Marshall's work lies in his skilful combination of economic theory and practice (participation in governmental bodies) and his recognition of the role of modern economic history, political science, history of economic doctrines, law, statistics and mathematics in the education of economists. Dzionek-Kozłowska's scholarly output is augmented by her work with Matera (2015), but above all by her monograph (2018) presenting the origin and evolution of the *homo oeconomicus* model, which is one of the most well-known concepts in the whole three centuries of the economic sciences.

Valuable cross-cutting works include studies by Aleksander Jakimowicz that draw on the 20th-century economics classic by John Maynard Keynes. Jakimowicz focuses on business cycle fluctuations in output, national income, and employment. He points out that the various theories of the business cycle and of economic growth for post-WWII development were based on Keynesian theory. The work *From Keynes to Chaos Theory* (2003) is devoted to a comparative analysis of Keynesian and post-Keynesian theories of business cycles. *Fundamentals of State Interventionism* (2012) is an attempt to define – within the paradigm of complexity economics – an appropriate framework for the effective functioning of interventionism. It also aims to clarify some fundamental problems of economic historiosophy.

The importance of Keynes' thought for Polish economists is evidenced by the publication of dozens of essays and articles in the *Bulletin of the Polish Economic Society*, published between 2020 and 2022, on Keynes's famous essay 'The Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren'.

*The State in the Economy: A Theoretical Study* (2013) by Katarzyna Szarzec also takes a broad look at the evolution of economic thought. This monograph is devoted to the views of selected economists on economic freedom and the role of the



state in the economy. Szarzec has reconstructed the debate on the role of the state in the economy, which has been ongoing since Smith. The analysis is based on the works of the most prominent economists; works that are considered milestones in the development of economic theory. *The State in the Economy* is a wide-ranging, comparative study of the contributions of major economists to the debate on the state's role in the economy and the importance of economic freedom.

Piotr Pysz's book, *Social Market Economy: An Ordoliberal Concept of Economic Policy* (2008), is also a valuable cross-cutting work. It discusses the main problems of the contemporary economy, the general characteristics of the ordoliberal concept of economic policy, and the economic policy of Walter Eucken and Ludwig Erhard. Pysz argues that economic order is the basis for harmonious development in a globalized and integrated world. Without it, economic dynamism weakens and social conflicts increase, even in the richest countries, as evidenced by numerous examples included in the book.

In the Polish literature, it is possible to discern a significant difference of opinion between the majority of ordoliberal thinkers and the followers of Hayek – the leading economist of the Austrian school. While the former advocate that political institutions should shape the economic order, Hayek and his followers, in principle, would like to leave this task to market self-regulation (Fedorowicz, 2004; Pysz, 2008; Mączyńska, Pysz, 2010; Ciborowski, Kargol-Wasiluk, Zalesko, 2013).

Among Polish scholars of the history of economic thought, it is worth mentioning the works of Edward Łukawer (1996), Aleksandra Lityńska (1998), and Danuta Drabińska (2004). Łukawer's valuable publication outlines the history of Polish economic thought with an emphasis on the post-war period. The study is divided into two main parts. The first deals with the period of the socialist economy, when the gradual transition from the Soviet-type model was already underway, until the struggle for reforms and attempts to 'marketise' the economy. The second part is devoted to the beginnings of the systemic transition from socialism to capitalism. For his part, Lityńska shows the achievements and the evolution of Polish economic thought in the interwar period in an accessible way.

As for the history of economic thought, the works of Michał Kalecki and Oskar Lange were not discarded after 1989. Drabińska recalls Lange's achievements in her monograph. She justifies the thesis that the professor was one of the forerunners of the neoclassical synthesis that incorporated Keynesianism into the framework of neoclassical economics. His theory took into account the structure of economic agents, analysing expectations, uncertainty and risk, which would provide the key to solving the complex problems of economic life. Kalecki's thought was brought closer by Osiatyński (2020).

Bogusław Czarny criticizes the achievements of economic thought in the Polish People's Republic (2014). The Polish systemic economic transformation in the context of the evolution of economic thought is also discussed in works by Zbigniew Hockuba (1995), Tadeusz Kowalik (2009), and others. The broader approach on the role of the state in the economy is presented by Zdzisław Sadowski (2004).

A separate and more prominent place is reserved for Jerzy Wilkin who, like few others in Poland, understands the evolution of institutions in economic development.

He brilliantly interprets and explains the classical authors of institutionalism: Ronald Coase, Douglass North, Oliver Williamson, Barry R. Weingast, and John Kenneth Galbraith. In his *Opus Magnum* (2016), Wilkin places human beings functioning in the economy and society at the centre of his analysis. The mechanisms and structures of the economy, especially the market, are of lesser importance to him. In Wilkin's opinion, the market is a significant regulator of human behaviour, but market theory does not fully explain many fundamental phenomena in terms of economic processes. His work is an essential contribution to the discussions on the condition and methodological problems of contemporary economics and on economic policy and the directions of systemic change. Wilkin shows that institutional economics has untapped research potential.

This brief overview only covers the more important monographs. But other works, especially scholarly articles, should also be borne in mind. Until a dozen years ago, researchers were not obliged to publish in renowned foreign journals. There were a few exceptions of academics who made their name in international circulation. The situation has only changed since the parameterisation/evaluation process of higher education was launched. This entailed a commitment to publish abroad.

In the SCOPUS and WoS databases (Polish journals listed in these databases are excluded and journals recognised in the USA, UK and Western Europe emphasised), Witold Kwaśnicki is the most notable, having published papers on the evolution of economic thought in the *Journal of Evolutionary Economics* and elsewhere. In the case of the other authors, parts of their research are published in the *Journal of Economic Issues* (Hardt, Dzionek-Kozłowska, Matera), *Post-Communist Economies* (Szarzec et al.), and the *Erasmus Journal for Philosophy and Economics* (Hardt). The five most prominent journals of the two subdisciplines, viz.: *Journal of the History of Economic Thought*; *Cambridge Journal of Economics*; *Journal of Economic Theory*; *History of Political Economy*; and *Economic Thought: History, Philosophy, and Methodology* feature very few Polish authors dealing with economic thought. The frequently changing lists of journals and the absurd scoring and rating of some of them by the Polish minister 'responsible' for higher education do not encourage anyone to publish in the journals most highly regarded by experts in the field.

### 3. The contribution of economic history

The first paragraph on the importance of economic history could almost be repeated from the initial paragraph on trends in the history of economic thought. In practice, the subject functions in a very truncated way, and even then, only at the bachelor degree level. The subject is usually elective and this is the case in history and economic faculties of Polish universities. The status of economic history in terms of subject classification is even more problematic, as not only some economists, but even historians of economic thought, dispute whether economic history properly belongs to economics (reviews from: radon.nauka.gov.pl).

On the other hand, there are slightly more departments of economic history in Poland than of economic thought, but this is mainly due to the contribution



and activity of the history community. Of the economic units, the seven-member Department of Economic and Social History at the Warsaw School of Economics, the five-member Department of Economic History at the University of Warsaw (Faculty of Economic Sciences), the seven-member Department of Economic and Social History at the Cracow University of Economics, and the nine-member team of the Department of Philosophy and Economic History at the Wrocław University of Economics are quite successful. Once again, it is important to remember the eight-member Department of History of Economics at the Faculty of Economics and Sociology of the University of Łódź, where practically all academicians conduct research in economic history.

Polish faculties of history include the Department of Economic History at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, and the Department of Economic and Social History at the University of Rzeszów. At the University of Białystok, there is the Department of the History of Demographic, Economic and Religious Structures, and at the University of Wrocław there is a five-member Department of Economic History, Demography and Statistics. Smaller units also operate at Jagiellonian University (Laboratory of Economic and Social History) and the University of Warmia and Mazury (Laboratory of Economic History and Cartography). As in the case of historians of economic thought, there is also a group of specialists in economic history who are dispersed in various units at universities or even in polytechnics.

Therefore, at first glance, it is not easy to agree with Morawski (2020) that at the end of the second decade of the 21st century, Polish economic history was in a state of crisis. A similar attitude towards the discipline was expressed in articles and at conferences by Guzowski and Poniat (2013, 2015, 2021), although the arguments were put forward from different perspectives. However, it should be recalled that economic history was ideologically tainted in communist Poland, as it was privileged by the socialist authorities. The discipline was a good place to transmit Marxist ideology. The accusations levelled at Polish economic history also referred to the lack of application of economic theories and the underdeveloped quantitative research methods (Guzowski, Poniat, 2013, 2015, 2021). Attention has also been drawn to the tendency to focus on narrow, particularistic, local, or at most, regional research, usually limited to Polish subjects (Matera, Pieczewski, 2011; Morawski, 2020).

In contrast to the tendencies in the West (mainly in the USA and UK), works on political history have prevailed in the 21st century. Nevertheless, significant progress has been made in economic history research. Morawski (2020), Matera (2015) and Leszczyńska (2012/2013) recall these achievements. In their selective selection of achievements in Polish economic history, the present authors mainly consider departments, researchers and works relating to Poland's recent history from the Second Polish Republic (the interwar period), WWII, the People's Republic of Poland, and especially the transition period.

After 1989, interest in the 19th century waned, and research became dominated by recent Polish and world economic history. Many of the published works, especially those by Zbigniew Landau (1994; 1995; Landau, Tomaszewski, 1991; Landau, Roszkowski, 1995) and Janusz Kaliński (1989; 1995; 2009; Landau, Kaliński, 1998) were pioneering and are counted among the scientific canon of the field today.

Continuing his work on the interwar period, Landau undertook research on the People's Republic of Poland. This was a valuable contribution to the discussion on the economic policy of the Third Polish Republic. Dozens of works were published abroad by Landau. Meanwhile, the main subject of Kaliński's research was the Polish economy during the socialist period and the first few years of the systemic transformation. His work is characterised by its versatility – in addition to general problems, a lot of space is devoted to sectoral syntheses, e.g., internal trade, transport and communications, and finance and banking.

The younger generation of historians associated with the Warsaw School of Economics presented a decidedly anti-Marxist view. Some of them, especially Wojciech Roszkowski and Wojciech Morawski, became pioneers in researching the relationships between economic history and politics, historical geography, socio-economic doctrines, and even religion and culture (Bartkowiak, 2015). Morawski's works (1996; 2002; 2008) on money, finance and banking are unprecedented in Polish scholarship. The Department of Economic and Social History, headed by Morawski, conducts research on the history of finance, the interwar and socialist periods, and social policy, as well as the problems of the transformation period (e.g., Morawski, 2021; Zawistowski, 2017; Luszczewicz, Morawski, Zawistowski, 2022).

By contrast, the Department of Economic History at the University of Warsaw, headed by Maciej Tymiński, continues the long-standing research begun by Andrzej Jezierski and Jacek Kochanowicz. In the last decade of the 20th century, Jezierski's research was directed towards historical statistics. He headed a team appointed by the president of the Central Statistical Office (GUS), which resulted in the multi-volume *History of Poland in Figures* (successive volumes were published after Jezierski's death in 2002). Jacek Kochanowicz made an equally substantial contribution to the development of economic history. In the early 1990s, he began to work with the Central European University in Budapest. In the first quarter century of free Poland, Kochanowicz was the most recognisable and most frequently quoted Polish economic historian abroad (Leszczyńska, 2015). His best-known works include: *The Market Meets Its Match: Restructuring the Economies of Eastern Europe*, published with Alice H. Amsden and Lance Taylor (1998); and *Backwardness and Modernization: Poland and Eastern Europe in the 16th-20th Centuries* (2006). The current team of researchers at the University of Warsaw have been focusing on: the economic history of Poland in the modern period (19th–20th centuries), especially: quantitative research on the reconstruction of historical national accounts and other historical statistics; the history of industrialisation in Poland; the history of money and banking in Poland in the 19th and 20th centuries; and comparative research on modernisation in Poland and the rest of Europe (e.g., Leszczyńska, 2013; Tymiński, 2011; Koryś, 2018).

In the Department of History of Economics (formerly the Department of History of Economic Thought and Economic History, headed by Joanna Dzionek-Kozłowska, previously by Rafał Matera and Janusz Skodlarski) at the University of Łódź, the main research areas in economic history included comparative studies of Łódź and other European cities, issues related to war losses, the history of Polish banking,

and studies of institutions including those of other countries (e.g. Kłusek, 2013, 2020; Pieczewski, 2019; Dzionek-Kozłowska, Kowalski, Matera, 2018).

Other economic universities (both specialist universities and faculties in classical universities) lack larger teams, but there are obviously active researchers working there. The low number of academic staff is probably due to the lack of demand for economic history classes. At the Wrocław University of Economics, the work of Jędrzej Chuminski (2015; 2021), who heads the Department of Philosophy and Economic History, has made a significant contribution to recent economic and social history. Research at the Jagiellonian University's Department of Economic and Social History (headed by Jacek Purchla), is focused on urban development, and the theory and protection of cultural heritage (Purchla, 2022; Broński, 2006), but the history of population and industry in Galicia (Broński, 2019) is also covered. At the Poznań University of Economics, research conducted by Malgorzata Słodowa-Hełpa (2020) examined the historical background of socio-economic change, emphasising Polish traditions of social economics and social capital.

From the historical university centres, the Department of Economic History at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, headed by Tadeusz Janicki, stands out. Another notable institution is the Department of Economic and Social History at the University of Rzeszów, headed by Paweł Grata, who inaugurated pioneering research on the all-important sphere of fiscal policy in the interwar period (Grata 2013; 2018). Also noteworthy are the Department of Economic History, Demography and Statistics at the University of Wrocław, headed by Tomasz Głowiński (formerly by Elżbieta Kościk), and the Laboratory of Economic and Social History at the Jagiellonian University, headed by Piotr Franaszek.

The Department of the History of Demographic, Economic and Religious Structures at the University of Białystok, headed by Cezary Kukło, is also extremely active in research, with members such as Piotr Guzowski and Radosław Poniak. However, they specialise mainly in the historical demography, family and women's history of Pre-Partition Poland. The works of Kukło (2009) and Guzowski (2020) are the most recognisable.

Individual scholars with a historical background from various scientific centres have also been engaged in recent research. These include: Michał Kopczyński (from the Faculty of History at the University of Warsaw), who investigates past living standards on the basis of monetary and biological sources (height and weight, mortality); Dariusz Jarosz (the Polish Academy of Sciences), who has published critiques of the People's Republic of Poland; Sławomir Kamosiński (from the Institute of Law and Economics at Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz), who has written on entrepreneurship during the transformation period (2021); Dariusz Grala (Poznań), who has focused on economic reforms in the late socialism and the transition periods, examining the condition of corporations; and Adriana Merta-Staszczak (Wrocław University of Science and Technology), who specializes in regional history. The Jan Kochanowski University of Kielce (researchers such as Grzegorz Miernik, Elżbieta Słabińska, and Edyta Majcher-Ociesa) should not be left out either.

Collaboration between economic and historical centres has resulted in the publication of several common studies. Noteworthy works include *From the Great*

*Economic Crisis to the Great Financial Crisis* (2009), *Between Stabilisation and Expansion: The Financial System in the Service of Modernisation* (2014), and *History of Polish Industrial Districts and Regions* (2015), which involved dozens of researchers from many scientific centres across Poland.

Four volumes edited by Paweł Grata were published between 2019 and 2022 as part of a project titled *On the Road to Modernisation. Independent Poland and Free Poles in the 19th–21st Centuries* and funded by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (Grata, 2019; 2020; 2021; 2022). The guiding principle of the individual studies is that despite negative external and internal conditions, transformations modernising industry, agriculture and society have been taking place in the Polish lands. The volumes referred to stages in the history of development. Many scholars from all major academic centres in Poland were involved in this project.

The studies published by Kaliński also carry a great deal of weight (Zawistowski, 2012). Their basic value comes down to a broad spectrum of economics, and social and political problems. The multi-authored monograph on religious institutions in the economic life of the Polish lands is also innovative (Kowalski, Matera, Pieczewski, 2017). It draws attention to two specific levels, viz., the impact of religious doctrines on the economy and the role the clergy and the church as direct participants in economic life.

However, the greatest mine of knowledge on the research of Polish economic historians is unquestionably the successive post-conference volumes of the, which have been held regularly since 2006. A full bibliography can be found on the publisher's website<sup>1</sup> and in Morawski's article (2020). This enormous output testifies to the continuity of research by economic historians.

Nor should we forget the enormous output published in two Polish journals focused on economic history, viz. *Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych* and *Acta Historiae Oeconomica*, but a detailed analysis of this output would require a separate study.

Finally, this article examines some of the output of Polish economic historians on the most recent period of Polish history published in internationally important journals. As with the history of economic thought, Polish journals included in databases are omitted and internationally prestigious journals are emphasised, especially those that are highly regarded in the USA, UK, and Western Europe. Only a handful of Polish scholars (Kopczyński and Rodak, 2021; Wallusch, 2007) have managed to get published in the three most established journals in the field of economic history (Matera, Pieczewski, 2011), viz. the British *The Economic History Review*, and the American *The Journal of Economic History* and *Explorations in Economic History*. The SCOPUS database lists the works of Landau (1989) and Kaliński (1982) with the indexed German *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte*. Kochanowicz (2014), Koryś and Tymiński (2023) managed to get published in *East European Politics and Society*. The same team has been published in *European Review of Economic History* (2022), and with Bukowski and Leszczyńska, (2019). In addition, Kopczyński, Sobechowicz (2016) Dzionek-Kozłowska, Kowalski, Matera (2018) and Guzowski (2022) have been

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gajt.pl>.

published in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. Guzowski has also contributed to *Continuity and Change* and *Annales. Histoire: Sciences Sociales*, but his works cover an earlier period in Polish history. Finally, Kowalski and Matera (2020) have managed to get published in *Journal of Migration History*, Kopczyński (1994) and Pieczewski (2010) in *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire*, and Bębnowski (2023) and Wroński (2023) in *Economic History of Developing Regions*. Wroński has also managed to have historical research published in *Scandinavian Economic History Review* (2022). The demographer and social historian Bartosz Ogórek also has a considerable international output (papers published with co-authors in *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History* and *The History of the Family* in 2020–2022). To this list of articles, it is worth adding the cross-sectional monographs by Koryś (2018) and Marcin Piątkowski, whose book *Europe's Growth Champion* (2019) was an innovative historical case study of Poland's economic success while drawing on the institutional economics theory propounded by Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson. To summarise, Polish researchers have been published in prestigious foreign journals and by major publishing houses. They should not cease to submit their work. Nor should they shy away from international collaborations. However, Polish academics and researchers are still underrepresented in international forums (Bębnowski, 2022).

#### 4. Teaching dilemmas: common challenges of economics and its subdisciplines

Since 1990, the teaching of economics has changed radically. The political economy of socialism and the political economy of capitalism were replaced by micro- and macro-economics, based on neoclassical and Keynesian theories. This was made possible by the knowledge acquired by Polish economists during internships and scholarships abroad, mainly in the United States and the United Kingdom. These internships at renowned universities began during the communist period.

This section compiles classic textbooks on economics, the history of economic thought, economic history, and international economic relations. These publications all contain references to economic theories and sometimes detail historical examples. It is impossible to imagine an economics textbook without references to Smith, Marshall, Keynes or New Institutional Economics, or without mentioning the Great Depression or hyperinflation.

In the early 1990s, a new generation of textbooks emerged, with the Warsaw and Łódź centres leading the pack. Nasiłowski, who radically changed his views on economics, was the first to publish a textbook for teaching the basics of the market economy (Nasiłowski, 1996). A new approach to the basics of economics was presented by Bogusław and Elżbieta Czarny, Bartkowiak and Rapacki (1998). These books have gained significant popularity.

A textbook edited by Milewski and Kwiatkowski, first published in 1998, has also received considerable attention. Many editions have been published over the years. It is a complete work (Milewski, Kwiatkowski, 2018) that covers basic concepts, as



well as more advanced issues, such as the globalisation of the economy. It is the work of 18 authors, including those from the University of Łódź (14 scholars), the Warsaw University of Technology (2) and the National Bank of Poland (2).

The full range of problems is presented in *Macroeconomics*, prepared under the scientific editorship of Nowak and Zalega (2019). The individual chapters were prepared by 11 authors from major academic and research centres in Poland, viz., the University of Warsaw, the Warsaw School of Economics, the University of Łódź, the Cracow University of Economics, and the Poznań University of Economics.

The pioneer of the new generation of textbooks on international economic relations is Świerkocki (2011), who discusses a variety of issues from the theory of international trade to the international financial market. *International Economic Relations*, edited by Oziewicz and Michałowski (2013), was published two years later. The fundamentals of economic policy, selected international issues, and the coordination of international economic policy are additionally covered in a book by Rosati (2017).

Students at Polish universities also use foreign textbooks (e.g., Samuelson, Nordhaus, 2021; Varian, 2022; Begg, Vernasca, Fisher, Dornbush, 2022a, 2022b; Mankiw, Taylor, 2022). Lecturers usually prepare original programmes based on the broader literature and often promote selected economic theories. Thus, Leokadia Orężak states: 'I believe that the neoliberal approach has done great damage to education in our country' (Konat, Smuga, 2016, p. 349). According to Osiatyński, students should have the opportunity to learn about the core of alternative economics, e.g., a lecture on Kalecki's theory or the contemporary output of post-Keynesian economics. In his opinion, there should be more openness to other theories in economics (Konat, Smuga, 2016, p. 379). Fiedor believes that education has moved towards model-deductive thinking, largely based on the tools of mathematics, econometrics and statistics (Konat, Smuga, 2016, p. 34–52). He states that methodology and philosophy of economics have no place in the educational core. If students and young academics are deprived of the knowledge of history and methodology, then they will lack two basic sources of cognition (Konat, Smuga, 2016, p. 86–88).

Most economics authorities recognise that an economist's education will always be incomplete. Apart from the subjects mentioned, disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, law, political science, and international relations are either neglected or completely absent in the curriculum (Macioł, 2012). Jerzy Wilkin argues that an economics student should be given more of a general education. He cannot imagine a good economist who does not know the history of economic thought, the basics of sociology, law, or methodology, or how to develop a theory (Konat, Smuga, 2016, p. 461). Most prominent economists advocate drawing on historical knowledge and other academic disciplines. However, over the past thirty years, too few synthetic monographs and too many niche studies have been published, and economic theory and methodological and philosophical issues have been neglected.

Textbooks on the history of economic thought form a separate category. For a subject that is steadily disappearing from economics courses, there are quite a few of them. In tandem with the progress of the political transformation, however, the education of economists has changed. This in turn has encouraged the publication of new types of textbooks.



Textbooks by Tadeusz Kowalik (1992) and Waclaw Stankiewicz (1998) were published in the last decade of the 20th century. Although they provide an essentially traditional description of the development of the history of economic thought, they undoubtedly enrich the literature on the subject. By contrast, Gedymin Spychalski's textbook (1999) has a problem-based layout that considers the development of economic thought from antiquity to recent times. It stands out among other textbooks for its extensive discussions of the Christian-Catholic strand and of Polish economic thought from the late 18th to the 20th century.

From the Łódź school of economics, lectures on economic thought have also been published by Wiesław Piątkowski. In five handbooks (2001; 2002; 2006a; 2006b; 2007), he included methodological themes and classical lectures on ancient economic thought, the Middle Ages, mercantilism, and the beginnings of classical economics, all supported by a wealth of source materials.

The first decade of the 21st century saw the appearance of new textbooks on the history of economic thought, with professors from the Warsaw School of Economics being the most active. Nasiłowski published *The History of Economic Thought* (1998; 2003), and Ryszard Bartkowiak published his textbook at nearly at the same time (2003). Finally, between 2007 and 2012, three 'mini-lectures' were published by Drabińska (2007; 2010; 2012).

The novelty of these textbooks lay in their presentation of mainstream classical, neoclassical, Keynesian, and oppositional concepts in varying degrees of detail; Antiquity and the Middle Ages were omitted. The authors began their presentation of economic thought with mercantilism or physiocratism, in contrast with the textbooks written during the communist period by Edward Lipiński, Janusz Górski and Witold Sierpiński, who provided a complete presentation of the development of economic thought (from antiquity to the mid-20th century).

Nasiłowski's book presents basic information on the development of the main trends of economic thought without delving into the intellectual subtleties and intricacies of often outdated concepts. Nasiłowski claims that the history of economics should be taught without an excess of detailed data. Otherwise, it will impede the acquisition of basic knowledge (Nasiłowski, 2003).

Bartkowiak, by contrast, analyses contemporary theories and selected old ones, but only those that are still relevant. He devotes more space to theories that 'constitute the standard of current academic economics and are analysed in general economics, microeconomics or macroeconomics courses' (Bartkowiak, 2003, p. 12). He justifies this perspective by the need to show the connection between economic theory and the real economy.

The thematic range of Drabińska's mini-lectures is very broad: from mercantilism to monetarism and from ordoliberalism to evolutionary economics and the works of prominent Polish thinkers. Although she concludes that 'there are no theories that are always true', she adds that 'economic concepts, even seemingly outdated ones, can be used in their improved version when creating theories to modify established paradigms' (Drabińska, 2007, p. 7, 12).

Finally, Mirosław Bochenek's monumental six-volume work, *The History of Economic Development*, was completed in 2017. Despite the many serious criticisms levelled

at it (reviews from [radon.nauka.gov.pl](http://radon.nauka.gov.pl)), it stands out by virtue of covering the long history of economics from antiquity, through classical economics, socialism, and marginalism to Keynesianism and contemporary schools of economics. The work is based on source materials and is a major contribution to the popularisation of economic knowledge. Bochenek does not overlook the heterodox currents, nor does he shy away from presenting the origins of econometrics or new currents, including institutionalism.

Lecturers and students at Polish universities have also been able to make use of Polish translations of renowned works by foreign authors. These cover both the history of, and the main currents in, economics – something that Polish authors have not taken into account so extensively (Blaug, 1994; Landreth, Colander, 2012; Snowdon, Vane, Wynarczyk, 1998).

Works outside the classic handbooks also have high didactic value. Here it is worth mentioning the book by Godłów-Legiędź (2010) and the collective work by authors from the Department of Economic Thought at the Poznań University of Economics (Ratajczak, 2014). Works that stray even further from the mainstream but that still support the history of economics include *The Philosophy of Economics* (2013), *Metaeconomics* (2016; 2019), *Economic Psychology* (2021), and even *Theory of Public Choice* (2012).

In the field of economic methodology, it is also worth citing the work of Bogusław Czarny (2004; 2010). The object of his analysis is to reconstruct the 19th and 20th century debates on the place and function of value judgements in economic science. The criteria used by economists to distinguish between positive and normative economics are presented as well. Empirical sciences are described in terms of modern positivism, using economics as an example. In the author's opinion, the above division of economics does not fulfil the essential functions conducive to knowledge of the economic process and is only a pretext for longstanding disputes about the place and role of value judgements in economics.

The literature on the subject is therefore comprehensive and quite rich. However, the contribution that the history of economic thought makes to the education of economists is not widely understood. And yet, reading about the history of economics, the main currents of economic theory, the history of economic doctrines, and the problems of modern economics helps students learn what the various schools of economic thought have contributed to the development of economics and how they are relevant to contemporary economic problems. Studying economic thinkers also hones logical thinking skills and the ability to conduct independent research. Finally, studying these topics teaches a critical approach to different economic ideas and an openness and tolerance towards those who present different views.

Many prominent economists believe that the younger generation of researchers is deficient in general knowledge. Greater study of the history of economic thought, and economic history, can alleviate this problem.

By contrast, broader studies have not been neglected by economic historians. After 1989, Kaliński and Landau concentrated on writing textbooks. Together, they edited *The Economy of Poland in the 20th Century* (1998), and Kaliński published *The Outline of Polish Economic History of the 19th and 20th Centuries* (2000). Competing with the authors from the Warsaw School of Economics was the textbook *Economic History of Poland* by Jezierski and Leszczyńska (2003). These publications are charac-

terised by a high degree of synthesis, accuracy of assessment, and sound economic analysis. What was lacking, however, was a textbook that covered the economic history of Poland in its entirety. The challenge was addressed by Skodlarski's *The Outline of Polish Economic History* (2000). This book presents the Polish economy from the 10th century until the systemic transformation, against the backdrop of changes in the world economy. Economic and social processes were linked to elements of economic theory and the history of economic thought. As a result, economic history may provide a perfect introduction to the teaching of economics.

At the turn of the millennium, textbooks on world economic history also appeared (Morawski, 1994; Szpak, 1997). These syntheses covered history over the long term – from pre-capitalist forms to developed market economy systems. The economies of ancient civilisations, of feudal, capitalist, monopolistic and socialist systems, and of the developing world, along with globalisation, are illustrated against a broad background of political and social changes. The value of these books is considerably enhanced by elements of economic theory and methodological issues. An achievement in the field of economic history is Kaliński's (2004) synthesis. This integrates the economic history of Europe with the world economy, presenting economic development in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The requirements of combining history and economics are largely fulfilled by Matera and Skodlarski's (2004; 2021) textbook on the history of the world economy. This covers the entire history of the world economy – from antiquity to the outbreak of the COVID-19 global pandemic. It focuses on examining the basic trends and turning points in history. Matera and Skodlarski highlight changes in national income, industrial and agricultural production, and trade flows, as well as integration and division in the age of globalisation. Political considerations are also included. The work is an essential resource for students of economics, management, international relations, political science, and history.

Writing textbooks is a difficult task. It requires the knowledge and skills to formulate thoughts and clearly articulate them. The descriptive parts of many published syntheses are noticeably too detailed, and unfortunately, the same can be said about university lectures.

While the authors of economic history textbooks have made significant progress, the teaching of this subject in economic studies and humanities courses is still poor. In many faculties, obligatory lectures or exercises in economic history have been abandoned. It is worrying that in the faculties of history and political science, separate lectures on economic history and classes on economics and the world economy have been dropped. The long term *modus vivendi* of history and economics does not look promising.

## Conclusions

This article points out the considerable importance of the history of economic thought and economic history in Poland over the last three decades. Despite the didactic marginalisation, the scholarly output in these two subdisciplines is con-

siderable. Economic history seems to be coping better with the academic crisis than the history of economic thought. Researchers in the latter subdiscipline have been relegated to general chairs/departments of economics and are also more dispersed. Economic historians are still active in the economic universities and history faculties, and interact with each other more often at conferences with different profiles. Moreover, their quantitative output and international contributions are more visible.

However, the output of historians of economic thought has been significant, especially in the first two decades from the beginning of the transition. Works analysing the thought of the great economists – from Smith and Marshall, to Keynes, Hayek and Schumpeter – have been published. The market for textbooks and synthetic works is also robust. What is lacking, however, are works on recent economic thought, new schools, and new Nobel laureates (the articles and essays published in *Ekonomista* are an exception). There is also a paucity of papers by Polish authors in the best indexed journals.

In this respect, there has been progress in economic history. Quite a few distinctive works have been published on the 19th and 20th centuries (especially the interwar period and the communist era). Polish researchers would make themselves more publishable, however, if they made more use of quantitative research and more extensively covered the great transformations: i) after the partitions, WWI, and the formation of the new state; ii) during and after WWII; and iii) after the fall of communism and the transformation of the economy to a market system. Economic historians are predominantly focused on Poland (more precisely, the Polish lands) and Poland is seldom presented against the backdrop of Central and Eastern Europe, and even more rarely against that of Europe as a whole. There is also a dearth of long-term studies, despite the constant demand for them. For this, statistical data are required, and the sequences are unfortunately not fully available. The lack of collaboration with external specialists continues to impede the progress of the two subdisciplines. The hardships of foreign publications and international projects have unfortunately been hampered by a flawed evaluation of academic disciplines by the ministry of higher education and by the responsible minister, who has completely messed up the lists of academic journals by equating excellent foreign, specialised journals with Polish ones with little (or zero) visibility abroad.

This article also demonstrates the indirect impact of the education and research published by academicians on economic policy. Economists, historians of economic thought and economic historians are still active, despite initial difficulties in adjusting to a completely different economic reality and due to the curricular limitations of these wide-ranging subjects. Their researches are diverse, and Polish textbooks on economics and the history of economics (including economic history and history of economic thought) are trying to compete with foreign textbooks.

Although the number of historians teaching economic history at universities is quite considerable, they are unable to form larger teams due to the low demand for these subjects in their fields of study. Only two Polish universities (which have an economic profile) have larger teams (i.e., more than six researchers who deal only with economic history and/or history of economic thought), viz., the Warsaw

School of Economics and the Faculty of Economics and Sociology at the University of Łódź. Collaboration between economists and historians would be an expression of building a *modus vivendi* between the two disciplines, and each would profit greatly from the other. However, this is currently difficult in Polish academia, as history and economics are classified as different fields. New history of economics, which teaches the evolution of views throughout history, shows the most dramatic economic consequences, and recalls the directions of economic policy, should bind the two disciplines.

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