

A Prosopography of the European Society for the History of Economic Thought¹

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Abstract

Since its formal establishment in 1996, the European Society for the History of Economic Thought has organised 23 annual conferences. Participation data gathered from various sources reveals 1777 unique participants. In order to study their regular engagement with ESHET, we focus only on a group of 476 scholars who attended at least three conferences. We collect available biographic data on this smaller group of regular attendees and analyse their educational background, career trajectories, geographical and gender representation. With this prosopography we depict the evolving structure of the history of economic thought community in Europe and beyond.

Keywords: Prosopography, History of Economic Thought, ESHET

1. Introduction

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the legal incorporation of the European Society for the History of Economic Thought (ESHET) provides a fitting opportunity to assess one of ESHET's core activities — the organisation of scientific conferences. ESHET's twenty-three annual conferences thus far have been its flagship event criss-crossing Europe and galvanising the

¹ This research would not have been possible without the help of various colleagues. For information on the ESHET conferences or for feedback on a previous version of this paper, we are grateful to Alain Alcouffe, François Allisson, Richard Arena, N. Emrah Aydinonat, Roger E. Backhouse, Spencer Banzhaf, José Luis Cardoso, Volker Caspari, Muriel Dalpont, John B. Davis, Daniel Diatkine, Pedro Duarte, Guido Erreygers, Gilbert Faccarello, Julie Ferrand, Tiziana Foresti, Nicola Giocoli, Harald Hagemann, Shin Kubo, Harro Maas, Maria Cristina Marcuzzo, Tiago Mata, Antoine Missemer, Anna Mogilevskaja, Manuela Mosca, Elke A. Muchlinski, Annalisa Rosselli, Roberto Scazzieri, Bertram Schefold, Francesco Sergi, Philippe Steiner, Pedro Teixeira, Estrella Trincado Aznar, Lefteris Tsoulfidis, Richard Van Den Berg, John Vint, and Carlo Zappia. We are also indebted to the dozens of colleagues who have responded to our email request for biographical information. We thank Joshua Deneleh and Lara Torka for useful research assistance. We are also thankful for the constructive criticisms received from the participants to the REHPERE seminar in Paris where the paper was presented in October 2020. Finally, we want to express our gratitude to the two referees and the editors of the journal who have helped us in improving the paper. We are obviously responsible for all remaining errors.

community of historians of economic thought in Europe and beyond. Yet, who are the historians of economic thought? Most historians of economic thought who identify as such are trained as economists and work primarily in economics departments or business schools. In this paper we apply Bob Coats' programmatic call for an institutional study of economists on historians of economic thought. Coats asked "How have their social activities changed – their clubs, associations and informal channels of communication – and when, if ever, have they constituted an 'intellectual community', and with what effect?" (Coats 1969, 17)

The careers of some historians of economic thought have been scrutinised when they were bestowed honorary fellowships, or when *Festschriften* have been edited in their honour (Medema and Samuels, 2001). Other historians of economic thought have occupied positions of power as elected members of parliament, university rectors, or staff members in central banks and other key economic institutions. However, the focus on the highly regarded scholars casts a shadow on the influence of the large numbers of historians of economic thought who contribute to shaping the field by asking questions and commenting on papers during conferences, by sitting on committees who attribute awards, by acting as referees for journals, by teaching future generations of scholars, and by supervising PhD dissertations. Therefore, studying the community of historians of economic thought calls for an approach that is able to consider the "ordinary scientist" (Pyenson 1977, 179; Svorenčík 2014).

To this end we use the historiographic method of prosopography which "identifies and draws relationships between various people within a specific, well-defined historical or social context by collecting and analysing relevant biographical data" (Svorenčík 2018, p. 605). We collect data about our target population of all ESHET annual conference attendees from 1997 to 2019.² However only 476 people attended at least three times and for this smaller group we collect additional biographic information in order to analyse what these regular attendees have in common in terms of education and job history which in turn helps us to disentangle the structure of this community.

Prosopographic analysis relies on the quality of source data. In our case we rely on conference programs, online CVs and, when available, other sources such as books of abstracts and lists

² The 2020 conference scheduled to take place in Sofia, Bulgaria, was postponed until the autumn of 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

of participants. We do not report on the subjects presented by the participants. Furthermore, due to its statistical nature, prosopography does not furnish thick narratives. However, it can inform and even challenge such narratives when joined with other methods and sources (Cherrier and Svorenčik 2020, Hoover and Svorenčik 2020). This paper does not provide a comprehensive history of the ESHET, especially the twists and turns of its foundation remain beyond the scope of this paper.

Our prosopographic study of educational background, career trajectories, geographical and gender representation of regular attendees of ESHET conferences provides a new historiographic perspective on the professionalisation of HET in Europe and beyond. In spite of the decline of HET in some universities, ESHET constitutes a lively community with reproduction mechanisms in place that has allowed it to grow over the quarter-century of its existence.

The second section of this paper surveys the institutionalisation of history of economic thought, followed by a very brief sketch of the foundation of the ESHET. The fourth section explains the sources and limitations of our data. Subsequently we present the main results of our prosopographic analysis pertaining to attendance, mobility, centres of HET, supervision networks, and ESHET young scholars. All is followed by a concluding section.

2. The Institutionalisation of History of Economic Thought

In the first decades of its academic institutionalisation, teaching and research in economics exhibited a wide range of methods. As the pluralism of the interwar period was replaced by a powerful neoclassical synthesis after WWII, savaging the “wrong ideas of dead men” as A.C. Pigou once put it, was increasingly perceived as falling outside the scope of scientific economics (Blaug, 1990). Ironically, according to Goodwin (2008), history of economic thought might have lived its golden age in that period of high theory thanks to a generation of prominent economists who had been trained in the pluralist cradle of the earlier decades. What was first a US transformation, eventually spread across the world over the course of the second half of the twentieth century as the American hegemony on the standards of the discipline grew. In the English-speaking world, the estrangement of economics from its own history became apparent by the 1960s. For some, this was a natural state of affairs, a sign of a mature science

that did not need to look into its past to move forward (Winch 1964). The standardisation of economics made it more difficult to publish reflexive pieces in the top journals, at the very same time as such publications became essential for professional advancement in economics departments. In danger of becoming irrelevant to economics, some scholars interested in the history of economics regrouped (Backhouse and Fontaine 2014). In the UK, the first annual conference in History of Economic Thought was organised by Donald Winch at the University of Sussex in 1968. *History of Political Economy*, the first specialised journal in English was launched in 1969. The History of Economics Society (HES), the first international association, albeit very US-centred in its early years, was founded in 1974.

Other parts of the world did not escape the specialisation of economic fields. The Japanese Society for the History of Economic Thought was founded in 1950 and to this day probably has the largest membership among all learned societies in the field. At the initiative of Fritz Neumark, the German-language *Verein für Socialpolitik* established a history of economic thought section in 1980 (now named *Ausschuss für die Geschichte der Wirtschaftswissenschaften*). The History of Economic Thought Society of Australia was founded in 1981, the Association Charles Gide pour l'étude de la pensée économique in 1983, and the Associazione Italiana per la Storia del Pensiero Economico in 1992.³

The 1960s also saw the politicisation of universities in the West with the rise of various critical strands contesting the orthodoxy of disciplines. In economics, the famous capital controversy helped to forge a heterodox identity in the 1970s (Mata 2004). The Cambridge (UK) position was restated in a broader historical narrative that connected Italian and English contemporary work to 19th-century Ricardian political economy. But Cambridge was also the home of Keynes, whose ideas were revived by the publication of his *Collected Works* in the 1970s. Throughout the 1980s, Post-Keynesians from Europe and the USA gathered in Trieste to debate the compatibility between Keynesian and neo-Ricardian traditions (Arena 1987). Many founding members of the ESHET first met each other at one of these summer schools (Kurz 2016).

³ After the creation of ESHET, an Iberian Association for the History of Economic Thought (AIHPE) was created in the late 1990s and the Associazione Italiana per la Storia dell'Economia Politica (STOREP) was established in 2003. More recently, the Latin American Society for the History of Economic Thought (ALAHPE) was founded in 2015.

While scholars did not all share the same motivations for studying the history of economic thought, most agreed that professional recognition of their work required the creation and interaction of several elements: associations, meetings, channels of communication, speciality journals — and their inclusion in classification systems — book collections, speciality library collections, archives, etc. Ultimately, these institutions empower “individual academics to credential themselves for promotion and salary purposes by work done in the field” (Davis 2002), a requirement for the long-term survival of the community. For instance, the symbiosis between conferences and journals was noted early on. Conferences need journals as outlets for papers presented, but journals also need conferences to generate potential submissions and a large readership base (Medema, Cardoso, and Lodewijks 2002; Davis 2002).

In the first issue of *The European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* in 1993, the editors made their principal motivation very clear: “Historians of economic thought need to go on the offensive. Their subject has been marginalized or totally removed in many cases from the curriculum of their academic institutions. At the same time mainline economics journals seem to be increasingly reluctant to publish articles on the history of economic thought.” (Cardoso et al. 1993). In addition to the urge of regaining lost ground for HET, there was a desire to showcase the good scholarship that was done in different countries and to help break the linguistic barriers.

3. The Foundation of the ESHET

Since the mid-1980s, some European economists who regularly attended HES conferences in the US contemplated the possibility of creating an association that could organise regular conferences in Europe. A federal structure based on the national associations for the history of economic thought was discussed in the early 1990s. After all, federal institutions were in the air: the European Union was established by the signature of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. A history of the foundation of the ESHET has not been written yet. Due to space limitations and the paucity of documentary evidence, we are unable to offer a history of the various plans and efforts that were entertained. In this section we only sketch out the timeline.

In the spring of 1994, four young scholars — José Luís Cardoso, Philippe Fontaine, Albert Jolink, and Robert Leonard — proposed to create a “European Society for the History of

Economics” to “increase communication between individual scholars in European countries”.⁴ They noted the paradox of “waning curriculum popularity being matched by amplified enterprise in research”. To provide opportunities for contact which could lead to the creation of an “umbrella group”, they proposed to organise a meeting in Rotterdam in February 1995. They wanted a new institution that would support the organisation of conferences. Some established scholars favoured the creation of a more formal institution with elected officers that could delegate conference organising powers to local members.

In September 1994, Richard Arena hosted those interested in the creation of a European society for a three-day meeting: the first two days in Sophia-Antipolis and the last one on the Lérins Islands near Cannes. Various disagreements were voiced and a steering committee was created to plan the establishment of the new institution. The committee met again in December 1994 in Nice.⁵

After the success of the Rotterdam conference in February 1995—the program listed 122 participants—another conference was organised in September 1995 by Carlo Zappia in Siena to “support the foundation of the European Society for the History of *Economic Thought*”.⁶

The ESHET was officially founded in Nice in December 1995 at a meeting attended by 35 founding members, of which 25 were based in French universities, 6 in Italian, 3 in German and 1 in UK universities. The executive committee, elected by prior postal ballot, was formed of Luigi Pasinetti (President), Andrew Skinner (Vice-President) Richard Arena (Secretary), Harald Hagemann (Treasurer), Ricardo Faucci, Heinz Kurz, and Pier Luigi Porta.⁷

⁴ The four scholars were based in Portugal, France, Netherlands, and Canada respectively. See *History of Economic Thought Newsletter* (edited by John Vint), Issue 52, Spring 1994, p. 29, available at <https://thets.org.uk/archive/>.

⁵ The steering committee was initially composed of Richard Arena, Ricardo Faucci, Albert Jolink, Heinz Kurz, and Stephen Rankin. Jolink later dropped out of the group. We are grateful to the two referees for their recollection of events which complemented the scarce documentary evidence on the events leading up to the creation of ESHET.

⁶ “Minutes of the Founding Meeting of ESHET (9.12.95 and 10.12.95, Nice)”, <https://www.eshet.net/minutes-of-the-founding-meeting/>. Carlo Zappia to HES list on July 1995, <https://listserv.yorku.ca/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind9507&L=shoe&T=0&P=5044>.

Archive of ECHE website from 2008, <https://web.archive.org/web/20081203112712/http://www.eche.eu.com/>

⁷ A council was elected by the attending founding members. Chaired by Bertram Schefold, it was composed of Pascal Bridel, Jean Cartelier, Jan van Daal, Pierre Dockès, Walter Eltis, André Lapidus, Cristina Marcuzzo, Stephen Rankin, Christian Schmidt, Ian Steedman, Erich Streissler, Gianni Vaggi, Donald Winch, and Stefano Zamagni.

José Luis Cardoso organised another large conference in Lisbon in February 1996 together with Philippe Fontaine, Albert Jolink, and Robert Leonard, none of whom had attended the Nice ESHET foundational meeting. More than 100 papers were presented, including many by scholars who had attended the December meeting in Nice.

Initial plans to register the Society in Brussels were marred by legal complications and it was finally formally registered as a scientific non-profit organisation in Frankfurt am Main in September 1996 thanks to the initiative of Bertram Schefold. Thus, the first official annual conference of the ESHET was held in Marseille in 1997.⁸

4. Sources of Our Data

From 1997 until 2019, 23 ESHET annual conferences were held.⁹ We were able to procure conference programs for all conferences. For some we also obtained participants lists, books of abstracts and other materials from the conference websites, or by contacting conference organisers. Due to privacy concerns, we were not given access to ESHET records.

From this source material, we extracted 4710 entries consisting of names, years of attendance and in some cases title of a presented paper, affiliation, and role in a conference (chair, discussant, presenter, keynote speaker, etc.). Multiple roles in a conference are recorded individually, but this is later accounted for when analysing the data. For years 1997-2003, 2005, 2008, and 2011 we did not obtain participant lists and had to rely on the conference program. When multiple co-authors of a paper were mentioned in the program, we assumed they were all attending. In absence of information on who actually attended, we prefer to overstate the number of participants rather than discriminate against co-authors, especially since many of them might have been in more precarious institutional positions, such as spouses, colleagues from developing countries, and graduate students.

⁸ “European Conferences on the History of Economics” (ECHE) continued to be organised by Cardoso, Fontaine, Jolink and Leonard (in collaboration with local organisers) in parallel to ESHET conferences until 2007. From 1997 onwards, the conferences were smaller and focused on particular topics. In 2007, together with Roger Backhouse and Tiago Mata, Philippe Fontaine organised the first of a new series of even smaller conferences focused on the *History of Recent Economics*. See <http://hisreco.org>

⁹ In the following cities, in chronological order: Marseille (FR), Bologna (IT), Valencia (ES), Graz (AT), Darmstadt (GE), Rethymno (EL), Paris (FR), Treviso and Venice (IT), Stirling (UK), Porto (PT), Strasbourg (FR), Prague (CZ), Thessaloniki (EL), Amsterdam (NL), Istanbul (TR), Saint Petersburg (RU), Kingston (UK), Lausanne (CH), Rome (IT), Paris (FR), Antwerp (BE), Madrid (ES), Lille (FR).

Since we relied mostly on programs to register attendance, it is possible that some members of the executive committees or of the council did attend a conference without appearing on the program, although in many cases they appear as a chair of a session. If their name is not on the program, we could be underestimating the real number of conferences these individuals attended. Yet, we are also aware that some programs were not updated at the last minute to reflect late cancellations which would create an overinclusion bias. Our focus on a community who attended at least three conferences partly smooths out these biases.

5. Results

5.1. Who are the ESHET Conference Attendees?

This unified attendance list allowed us to identify 1777 unique individuals. The distribution of frequency of attendance is very skewed: 1048 individuals attended only once, 253 just twice. Only 26,8 percent of all individuals attended at least three times. For attendees with 20 and more conferences we created a single category to account for the limitations of our data. There are 86 people who attended at least ten times (Table 1).

Of the 1777 attendees 428 were women (share 24,1 percent), 1348 men, and for one person we were unable to identify them as the programs only contained the initial of their first name and the person attended just once.¹⁰

Frequency of Attendance	Women	Men	Number of All Attendees	Cumulative Number of Attendees	Cumulative Share of Attendees	Share of Women in a Frequency Bracket
1	260	782	1048	1048	59,0%	24,8%
2	59	194	253	1301	73,2%	23,3%
3	26	104	130	1431	80,5%	20,0%
4	17	48	65	1496	84,2%	26,2%
5	16	47	63	1559	87,7%	25,4%
6	13	34	47	1606	90,4%	27,7%
7	12	29	41	1647	92,7%	29,3%
8	6	14	20	1667	93,8%	30,0%
9	1	23	24	1691	95,2%	4,2%

¹⁰ We would like to thank Harald Hagemann for his help with identifying the attendees with first names containing only initials.

10	2	14	16	1707	96,1%	12,5%
11	4	11	15	1722	96,9%	26,7%
12	2	7	9	1731	97,4%	22,2%
13	1	9	10	1741	98,0%	10,0%
14	3	6	9	1750	98,5%	33,3%
15	2	7	9	1759	99,0%	22,2%
16	1	2	3	1762	99,2%	33,3%
17	1	3	4	1766	99,4%	25,0%
18	1	1	2	1768	99,5%	50,0%
19		2	2	1770	99,6%	0,0%
20 +	1	6	7	1777	100,0%	14,2%
Grand Total	428	1343	1777			

Table 1 Attendance statistics of ESHET annual conferences 1997-2019. NB: For six individuals who attended just once we were unable to identify their gender. The fifth column states the number of people who attended no more conferences than the number given by the corresponding row in column 1). Our sources of data do not include people who attended a conference, but are not listed in the program (see footnote 10)

The inaugural ESHET conference in 1997 attracted 212 attendees and this number was not surpassed until a decade later in 2007. The lowest point was reached in 2001 and ever since the attendance rate has had an upward trend (Figure 1).

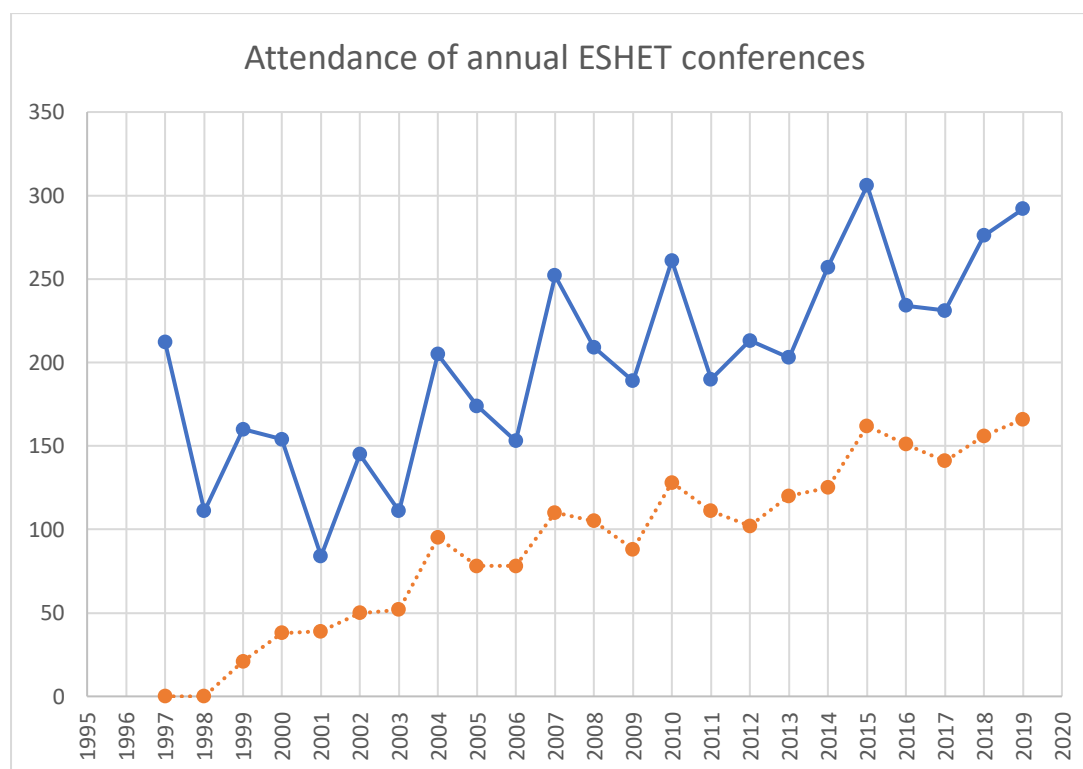


Figure 1 Attendance of Annual ESHET conferences. The lower dotted line depicts the number of regular attendees attending in a given year. Since it takes three attendances to become a regular, there were no regulars during the first two conferences.

5.2. Regular Attendees

Based on the histogram in Table 1, we decided to define the category of a regular ESHET attendee as a person who attended at least three ESHET annual conferences. This gives us in total 476 individuals. We collected publicly available biographic data on this smaller group — primarily from their academic websites and CVs. For 55 percent of the regular attendees, we were able to identify the name(s) of their doctoral advisor(s). We emailed the rest and received responses increasing our data coverage to 75 percent. Two hundred and thirty-eight individuals started their career before the establishment of ESHET.

The share of women who are regular attendees (22,9 percent) is slightly lower than the share of irregular women attendees (24,1 percent). There is a substantial body of literature examining the phenomenon that the share of female academic economists decreases as they climb the academic career ladder (Buckles 2019; Lundberg and Stearns 2019). The 1,2 percent drop does not indicate the presence of a “leaky pipeline” in the path to becoming a regular ESHET conference attendee. However, more detailed data on women career paths would be needed to scrutinise this phenomenon in the field of history of economic thought. In line with the rest of the economics profession, the share of women among recent PhD has been increasing, but it stays highly unequal between countries. For instance, women account for only 6,7 percent of the regulars with a PhD awarded in Germany. This is partly explained by the fact that the median year of PhD graduation of the German regulars is 1996. That is, very few regulars graduated from German universities in the recent years when the share of women could have been higher. Still, the share of women among economics PhDs (all fields) awarded between 2015 and 2018 in Germany was only 33 percent, whereas it was higher than 50 percent among many eastern European countries. Among ESHET regulars who are French PhD graduates, women represented 36,2 percent, a share which climbs to 42 percent if we restrict the sample to graduates of the last 20 years. This proportion is comparable to the 41 percent of women among all Economics PhDs awarded in France between 2015 and 2018.¹¹

¹¹ Based on Eurostat Series “Graduates by education level, programme orientation, sex and field of education”, educ_uoe_grad02. Many European countries do not report the number of women among PhD graduates by programme orientation (economics). https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=educ_uoe_grad02

Over the course of the twentieth century, doctoral degrees have become mandatory requirements of full-time academic jobs. Whereas it was already common for German, French and American economists to hold one at the beginning of the twentieth century, it became a defining feature of the academic culture in other countries in the last third of the century (Fourcade 2009; Svorenčík 2018; 2019). This transformation of the entry requirement in the profession has also impacted historians of economic thought. Four hundred and thirteen regular attendees have a PhD (or equivalent) degree, two are currently pursuing one and only 61 (12,8 percent) do not hold one (or we were not able to find out if they do). Among the countries that are well represented in the group of regular ESHET conference attendees, Japan and Italy stand out. The Italian doctorate (*Dottorato di ricerca*) was created by law in 1980 and the first ESHET regulars to obtain one did so in 1987. Unsurprisingly, among the 87 ESHET regulars based in Italy, we have been able to confirm that 59 of them hold a PhD, but only 47 from an Italian University. In Japan, the PhD became a compulsory requirement for a tenured position only in the late 1990s and thus only 18 individuals hold one out of 30 regular ESHET conference attendees based in Japan. A few of them actually obtained the degree late in their career (on the basis of past work) in order to adapt to the changing standards of the field. In comparison, of the 115 regular ESHET participants based in France, 113 of them have a doctoral degree based on the information available.

Country	Women	Men	Total	Share on all PhDs	Number of Institutions	Average per Institution	Share of Women	Share of regulars who started their academic career after the foundation of ESHET
France	46,5	82	128,5	31,4%	25	5,14	36,2%	70,0%
Italy	16,5	37	53,5	13,1%	13	4,12	30,8%	62,3%
UK	5	41	46	11,2%	21	2,19	10,9%	23,9%
USA	2	31	33	8,1%	25	1,32	6,1%	30,3%
Germany	1,5	21	22,5	5,5%	11	2,05	6,7%	50,0%
Spain	4	14	18	4,4%	10	1,80	22,2%	38,9%

Japan	2	11	13	3,2%	9	1,44	15,4%	38,5%
Austria	2	9	11	2,7%	5	2,20	18,2%	36,4%
Russia	4	6	10	2,4%	4	2,63	40,0%	40,0%
Switzerland	2,5	8	10,5	2,6%	3	3,50	23,8%	90,0%
Netherlands		9	9	2,2%	4	2,25	0,0%	70,0%
Portugal	1	6	7	1,7%	5	1,40	14,3%	42,9%
Brazil		6	6	1,5%	4	1,50	0,0%	66,7%
Australia		5	5	1,2%	3	1,67	0,0%	80,0%
Greece		5	5	1,2%	4	1,25	0,0%	60,0%
Turkey	2	3	5	1,2%	4	1,25	40,0%	80,0%
Belgium		5	5	1,2%	4	1,25	0,0%	20,0%
Canada	2	2	4	1,0%	3	1,33	50,0%	50,0%
Others (14)	3	14	17	4,2%	16	1,06	17,6%	

Table 2 Countries of Doctoral Origin. Only completed PhDs (N=407) are counted. Five dual PhDs are counted in country each with a weight of 0,5 and not as a separate institution. The last column refers only to regulars who were awarded a PhD degree after the creation of ESHET (from 1996 onwards) and had not substantially started their academic career before.

We were able to identify the graduation year of 400 out of 413 regular attendees with a PhD degree. These 413 regular attendees graduated from 172 different institutions in 31 countries. A substantial portion graduated from a French university (31,4 percent) followed by Italy and the UK with shares of 13,1 percent and 11,2 percent respectively. Women graduates have reached the highest shares in Canada, Turkey, Russia and France (Table 2). The most productive universities in terms of PhD graduates with at least 10 graduates are in descending order Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne (51,5), Università degli Studi di Firenze (21), Université Paris Nanterre (15), and University of Cambridge (13) (see Table 3).¹² Together they have produced more than 100 regular attendees (24,9% of the total). Half of all regular attendees graduated from just 24 universities. If Paris 1 counted as a country of its own, it would occupy the third place just behind Italy and ahead of the United Kingdom. Yet, it is worth noting that ESHET regulars with a French doctoral degree come from 25 different institutions of higher education across the country. This reflects the plurality of economic research centres (*laboratoires*) in France where history of economic thought is considered a legitimate field of research and postgraduate studies. Among the large PhD granting countries,

¹² There are five instances of dual degrees and each is counted with equal weight given to each institution involved.

the United States has the largest diversity with 33 graduates coming from 25 different universities.

University	Women	Men	Total	Share of all PhDs	Share of Women
Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne	23,5	28	51,5	12,7%	45,6%
Firenze	8	13	21	5,2%	38,1%
Paris Nanterre	4,5	11	15,5	3,8%	29,0%
Cambridge	2	11	13	3,2%	15,4%
Sapienza Università di Roma	3	6	9	2,2%	33,3%
Strasbourg	4,5	5	9,5	2,3%	47,4%
Côte d'Azur (Nice)	5	4	9	2,2%	55,6%
Complutense Madrid	4	3	7	1,7%	57,1%
Lyon	1	6	7	1,7%	14,3%
New School for Social Research		6	6	1,5%	0,0%
Moscow State University	3	3	6	1,5%	50,0%
LSE	1	5	6	1,5%	16,7%
Wien	1	4	5	1,2%	20,0%
Lausanne		6	6	1,5%	0,0%
European University Institute	1	3	4	1,0%	25,0%
Jean Monnet (Saint-Etienne)		4	4	1,0%	0,0%
Paris Dauphine	1	3	4	1,0%	25,0%
Goethe University Frankfurt	0,5	4	4,5	1,1%	11,1%
Kyoto	1	3	4	1,0%	25,0%
Siena	1	3	4	1,0%	25,0%

Table 3 Most active universities producing more than three regular attendees. The fifth column is calculated with a base of 407 regular attendees with a PhD degree. Dual degrees (cotuelles) are shared equally between institutions.

On average it takes 6,1 years to become a regular attendee and the average is the same for women and men. When we exclude scholars for whom it takes more than thirteen years to become a regular (twice the average), then the average for women is 5,4 years and 5,5 for men.

Conference attendees do not become regulars evenly, but ‘arrive’ in waves peaking approximately every five years (Figure 2). Their cumulative growth can be seen in Figure 1. We do not have a definite answer for these waves. They could be a by-product of supervision capacity, the effect of some very fruitful conferences, path-dependence, or be of no particular significance.

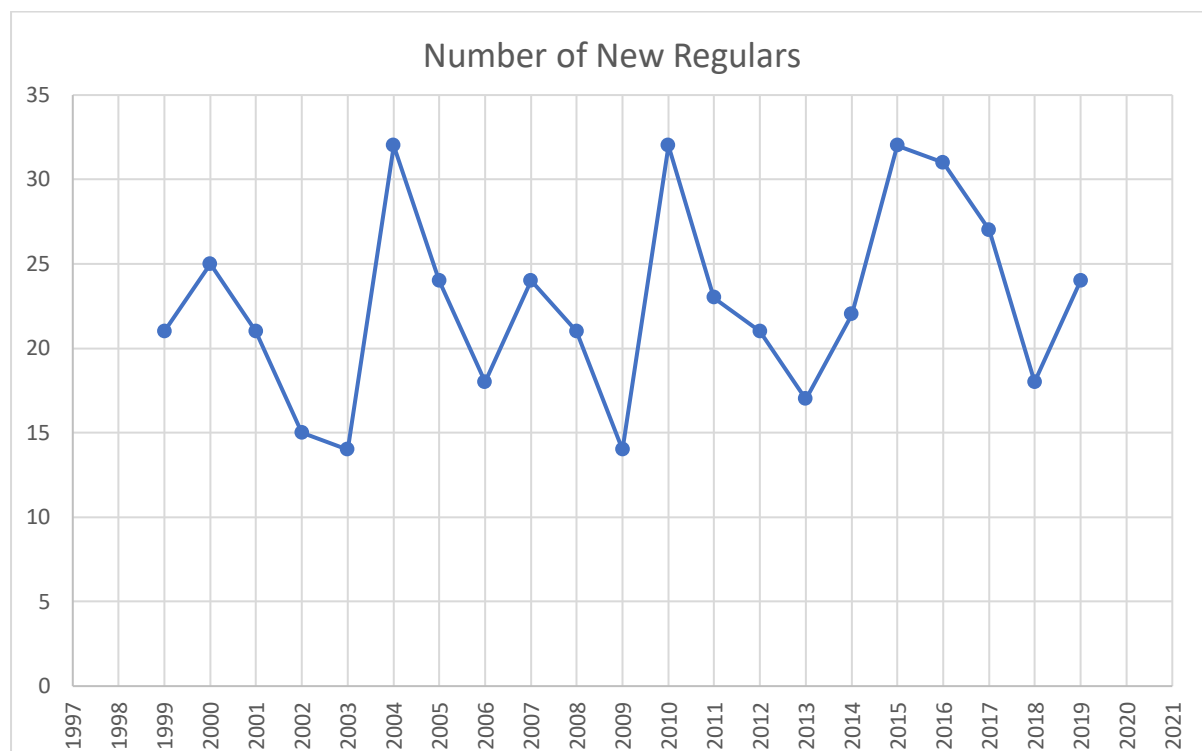


Figure 2 depicts the number scholars each year who become regulars.

Figure 3 shows us that over the years the share of regular attendees has continually increased. In the early 2000s it has stabilised at around 44 percent. While in the first half of the 2010s the share rose to 53%, in the second half of the decade it reached 58%. This can be in part explained by the generous definition of a regular attendee: the three required attendances can spread over 22 years (Table 4). Therefore, if we restrict the category of regular attendees to those who, between their first and last recorded attendance, came to at least 40% (very frequent regulars) of all conferences, then we can see that their share still increases over time, indicating a level of maturity of the community. Just shy of 50 percent of all conference attendees in the last five years were very frequent regular attendees. When the founding generation will stop attending conferences in the coming years as they gradually retire (or pass away as a few already did), the share of regulars might decline for a few years.

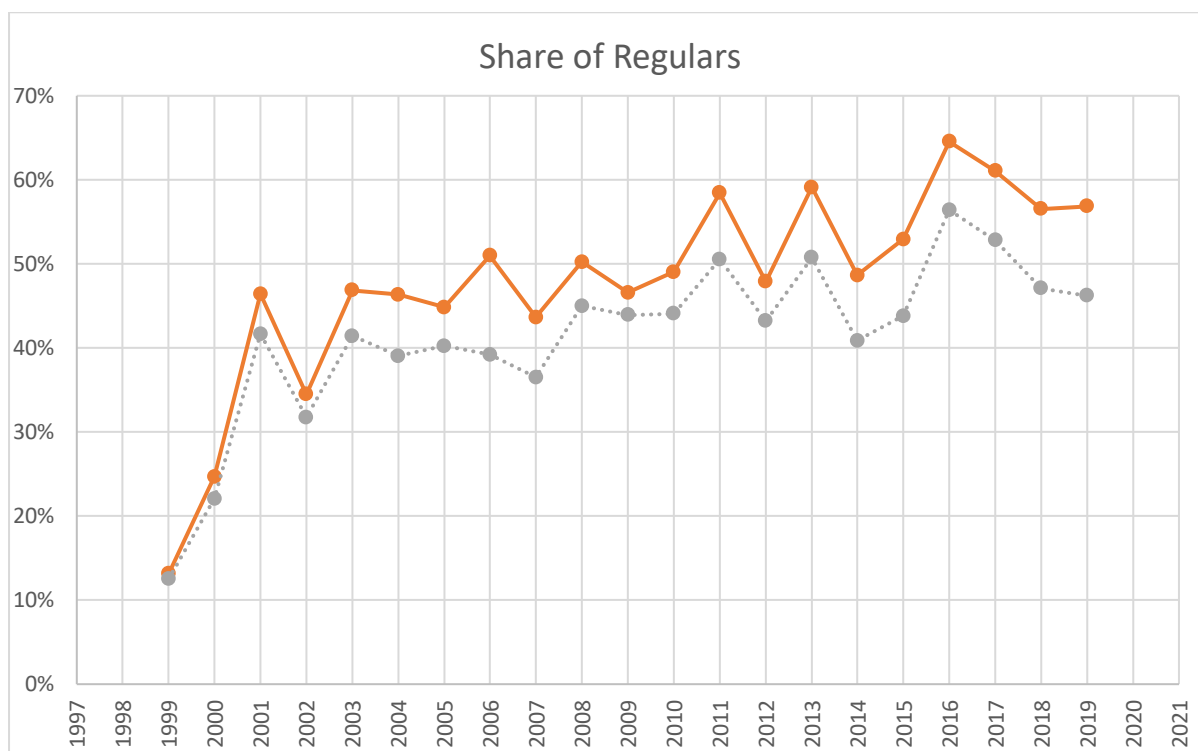


Figure 3 The dotted line depicts the share of regulars in attendance in an annual conference. The solid line depicts very frequent regulars.

Years to becoming a regular	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	22
Count	144	78	48	46	35	30	19	21	15	9	6	4	4	7	2	3	2	2	1

Table 4 Distribution of the time needed to become a regular attendee.

5.3. Geographical Mobility

Most scholars study for their first degree in the country in which they were raised. With the internationalisation of universities and the pressure to acquire postgraduate education, many historians of economic thought, not unlike other academics, studied abroad. From information available in CVs, we were able to identify at least one country of studies for 469 regular ESHET members. In some cases, it was their first degree, in other cases, the doctoral degree, or a master's degree.¹³ Moreover, according to the information we could find, 126 of them also

¹³ We excluded from this analysis visiting studentships, exchange abroad stays, and postdoctoral contracts.

received a university degree from a second country. A few members have studied in three or four different countries. Thus, 27 percent of the individuals for whom we have information have studied in more than one country (with an average of 1.29 country).

When counting the number of graduates of each country, we can produce an international ranking of 40 countries which is unsurprisingly close to the distribution of the 32 countries of PhD (Table 2 above). Figure 4 shows the wide international distribution of countries in which regular ESHET members studied. European countries are unsurprisingly well represented. With the exception of South Africa, we did not find any individual in the community who graduated from an African university. What stands out in contrast to the distribution of countries in which ESHET members work is the prominence of the United Kingdom and the United States. Only 31 regular members are/were based at universities in the UK and 19 in the USA, but respectively 74 and 40 were awarded a degree from a British or American university. While the number of PhDs from UK universities is high (46), it does not completely account for the difference. In fact, more individuals graduated from UK universities than from any other two countries, excluding France and Italy (See Table 5).

Country	France	Italy	UK	USA	Germany	Japan	Spain	Switzerland	Greece	Russia	Turkey	Austria	Netherlands	Portugal	Canada
Count	139	98	74	40	31	29	22	17	14	14	14	12	12	12	10

Table 5 Countries of higher education which count at least 10 graduates with a bachelor's, master's or PhD degree.



Figure 4 Countries in which ESHET regular members obtained a university degree (N= 469)

5.4. Centres of HET

The last column of Table 2 provides some interesting insights into the dynamics and vitality of various countries as centres of production of regular attendees. The share of regulars who have obtained a PhD after ESHET’s establishment (1996) shows whether the population of local scholars is growing or not being replaced. European countries can be divided into three groups. Switzerland, Turkey, France, Italy, and Greece have a larger share of regulars who received their PhDs after 1996. The second group is led by Belgium, the United Kingdom, Austria, Spain, Russia, and Portugal. They have not produced new regulars that would outnumber the older ones. Germany is the only country at crossroads.

The data for countries outside of Europe — USA, Japan, and to lesser degree Canada — might be interpreted as a sign that mostly senior scholars can afford regular attendance of geographically distant conferences. Brazil and Australia are exceptions to this observation.

For 413 ESHET regulars we were able to reconstruct their career paths from the country of PhD education to the most recent place of employment available.¹⁴ This academic

¹⁴ Note that in Table 6, the country of PhD degree does not equate with a country of nationality.

peregrination can be succinctly depicted in an export-import table for countries in which at least 10 ESHET regulars earned their doctoral degree (Table 6).

We observe that most individuals work in the country in which they acquired their PhD degree (or equivalent) — the diagonal of the table. For instance, 95 and 78 percent of the ESHET regulars with a French or Italian doctoral degree are based respectively in a French or Italian institution. All the Japanese PhD graduates are based in Japan. The lowest shares are observed either in small countries with fewer job opportunities or countries outside of Europe, for which geographical distance provides an explanation for the observed shares.

If we restrict our import/export analysis to a subset of 18 PhD producing and 19 employment countries (Table 6), 375,5 out of 409 ESHET regulars are captured and 281,5 work in the country in which they acquired their PhD.¹⁵ France, the United Kingdom, the United States, Austria, Russia, Switzerland, and the Netherlands are net PhD exporting countries. Italy, Spain, Japan, Portugal, Greece, Brazil, Turkey, Australia, Canada, and Colombia are net importing countries. That is, they employ more people who received a PhD from another country than the other countries employ graduates from their universities. This “balance of trade” is partly explained by the fact that some countries have a longer tradition of granting PhD degrees in economics. But it might also reflect the openness of the job market to individuals with a foreign education as well as the relative opportunity of funding for PhD programs.

In some cases, a small net export might hide a large volume of international flow. We can define an index of internationalisation by the sum of exports and imports divided by the number of ESHET regulars who work in the country in which they acquired their PhD (last column of Table 6). Canada and Switzerland stand out with respectively 25 times and 7 times more individuals who graduated abroad or left after they graduated than the number who are based where they graduated. Large national markets such as Japan, Italy, Spain, France and Russia employ many more of their own graduates than they imported or exported.

¹⁵ The ‘half’ person is accounted by someone with a position in two different countries.

Country of Work \ Country of PhD	France	Italy	UK	USA	Germany	Spain	Japan	Switzerland	Austria	Russia	Netherlands	Portugal	Greece	Brazil	Turkey	Belgium	Australia	Canada	Colombia	Sum Row	All regulars with a PhD from the country ¹⁶	Export	Net Export	Internationalisation
France	108	2	1	2			1	2							2	1		4	4	127	130	19	14	0,22
Italy		46	2			2														50	53	4	-9	0,37
UK	1	8	16,5	1		1	1	3				2	5	2	1		2	2		45,5	46	29	21	2,24
USA		1	1	14,5		2					2		1,5	1	3			2		28	33	13,5	10	1,17
Germany					16		1		1				1		1					20	22	4	0	0,50
Spain						17														17	18	0	-5	0,29
Japan							13													13	13	0	-5	0,38
Switzerland	3		2		3			2												10	10	8	2	7,00
Austria							2		6				1				1			10	11	4	3	0,83
Russia										9	1									10	10	1	1	0,11
Netherlands		1			1			1											1	9	10	4	5,5	1,50
Portugal												7								7	7	0	-3	0,43
Greece			1										4							5	5	1	-8	2,50
Brazil														6						6	6	0	-3	0,50
Turkey															5					5	5	0	-7	1,40
Belgium											1					4				5	5	1	0	0,50
Australia		1															3			4	5	1	-2	1,33
Canada	1		1	0,5								1								4	4	3,5	-5,5	25,00
Sum Column	113	59	24,5	18	20	22	18	8	7	9	8,5	10	13	9	12	5	6	9,5	4	375,5	409			
All regulars working in a country	114	59	24,5	18	20	22	18	8	7	10	8,5	10	13	9	12	5	6	9,5	4	412				
Import	5	13	8	4	4	5	5	6	1	0	3,5	3	9	3	7	1	3	9	4					

Table 6 Export-Import Table of ESHET regulars. Columns denote countries of work and rows countries where ESHET regulars obtained their PhD.

¹⁶ The difference between the numbers in this column and those in the preceding one is explained by exports to other countries not featured in this table. Export and import numbers are based on the flows between the restricted list of countries featured in this table.

5.5. Advisor-Advisee Networks

For 304 out of 418 regular scholars with a completed PhD we were able to obtain information about their PhD advisors. Seven had three advisors, 69 had two advisors and 227 had one.

In total, 276 advisors were involved in the supervision of ESHET regulars. These advisors might have been involved in the supervision of additional PhD students whom we do not include here if they are not (yet) regulars. Therefore, in this section when we refer to students we mean students who have become ESHET regulars. Following Svorenčik (2014) we distinguish between intensive and extensive supervision. The latter just counts the number of PhD graduates an advisor was involved with. The former measure modifies extensive supervision by accounting for co-supervision. For scholars with more than one supervisor, we attributed them weights in order to calculate a measure of intensive supervision. In the absence of fine-grained quantitative information that would be comparable among various patterns of thesis supervision, we fell back on assigning weights in the following way: When two supervisors of equal importance were mentioned, they were each attributed 0,5 student. In cases where a first supervisor was distinguished from a second supervisor, they were respectively attributed weight of 0,6 and 0,4. In cases where the scholar reported three supervisors of declining importance, they were respectively attributed weights of 0,5; 0,3; and 0,2.

One hundred and eleven advisors supervised less than one student. Another 114 supervised one student (or several with weights adding to one). Only 51 advisors supervised more than one person according to our intensive measure. Fifteen of them supervised more than three doctoral students (intensive count). Among those, 11 are regular ESHET attendees, including two whose supervisor is also a regular (Table 7).

Since regular attendees graduated from many different countries and institutions, we are unable to construct comprehensive family trees that can be done for closely connected networks of advisors and advisees who related to a particular department (Svorenčik 2014, 2019). However, we can see three small French groups each with at least 10 regulars, all originating in Paris.

The largest group totals 21 ESHET regulars (extensive measure) and originates with Hubert Brochier (not a regular himself). His students include Annie L. Cot, Jérôme Lallement and Claude Ménard (not a regular) who became supervisors of many ESHET regulars.

Jean Schmidt (not a regular) supervised André Lapidus who is the second most active supervisor of ESHET regulars and one of his students, Nathalie Sigot, is also an active supervisor herself. This group contains 13 regulars.

The third identified group contains 11 regulars and was originated by Bernard Ducros who was not a regular himself, but supervised 4 regulars: Catherine Martin, Christian Bidard, Ghislain Deleplace, and Jérôme de Boyer des Roches.

The description of these trees does not constitute a complete portrait of the multipolar situation of history of economic thought postgraduate education in France. Other centres in Nice, Strasbourg and Lyon have trained many PhD students who became ESHET regulars (Table 3). Moreover, key members of the community in Italy, in the UK, in Germany, and in Switzerland have also supervised a few historians of economic thought themselves (Table 7).

Supervisor	Intensive supervision of ESHET regulars	Supervisor's supervisor
Annie L. Cot	9	Hubert Brochier
André Lapidus	8	Jean Schmidt
Richard Arena	6	Claude Berthomieu
Ragip Ege	5,9	Jean-Paul Fitoussi
Pierangelo Garegnani	5,2	Maurice Dobb
J. de Boyer des Roches	5	Bernard Ducros
Bertram Schefold	4,5	G. Bombach and L. Pasinetti
Jérôme Lallement	4	Hubert Brochier
Bernard Ducros ¹⁷	4	
Geoffrey Harcourt	3,5	Ronald Henderson
Mary S. Morgan	3,4	David Forbes Hendry
Pascal Bridel	3,2	James Trevithick
Carlo Benetti	3,1	Henri Bartoli
Nathalie Sigot	3	André Lapidus

¹⁷ Bernard Ducros's PhD dissertation defended at the University of Poitiers in 1950 does not contain information about his supervisor.

Claude Ménard	3	Hubert Brochier
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Table 7 Most active supervisors (intensive supervision of ESHET regulars) and their advisors (when known). Scholars in bold in the first column denote regular attendees.

5.6. Young Scholars

Since the late 1990s, André Lapidus has organised summer schools on History of Economic Thought, Economic Philosophy and Economic History, in collaboration with various colleagues across Europe. For the past decade, these week-long events for PhD students have been officially sponsored by ESHET. Many European young scholars presented their research to an international audience for the first time in one of these summer schools.

Since 2000, ESHET has also invited young scholars to present a paper at specially dedicated sessions during the annual conference in which they receive feedback from more senior scholars. Since participation in the young scholar seminars usually come with a travel stipend and a registration fee waiver, the selection process organised by a special committee has been more competitive than for papers selected for regular or special sessions by the conference scientific committee.¹⁸ From 2007 onwards, the Young Scholar sessions have been officially integrated in the conference programs. Between 2007 and 2019, there were 72 participants to a young scholar seminar, including three individuals who received the honour twice. Assuming co-authors are all recipients, the number of recipients averaged 5.1 individuals per year. Of those, 31 are part of the group of regular participants, nine came to two conferences, and 32 only attended the conference in which they were selected as young scholar. Since for many of them, participation in a young scholar session is their first participation in an ESHET conference and it takes over six years on average to become a regular, it is probable that some of those who were selected in the past few years will eventually become regular participants in the coming years.

¹⁸ Eligible candidates (PhD students or young scholars who had been awarded a PhD no more than two years before the date of the conference) had to submit a full paper to be considered.

Of the 31 who came at least three times, 30 completed a doctorate and one was still working on her thesis at the time of writing. The median year of degree completion was 2014. In 21 cases, their main thesis advisor was also a regular ESHET conference participant, while three others were advised by well-known scholars in the field who do not regularly attend ESHET conferences. This being said, the 30 Young Scholars who completed a PhD only represent 23,2 percent of the 129 regular attendees who graduated with a PhD since 2007. Thus, recent doctoral graduates among ESHET regulars are not likely to have participated in a Young Scholar session, but they might have presented in regular sessions of the conferences. However, among those who did participate in young scholar sessions, 43 percent have become regulars so far.

6. Conclusions

In this paper, we made use of the prosopographic method to analyse the demographic composition and professional trajectories of the regular participants to ESHET conferences between 1997 and 2019. Although we recorded 1777 individual participants, only 476 scholars attended at least 3 conferences. We define this smaller group as regular ESHET participants.

Like in other scientific fields, men are still in the majority. Women account for slightly less than a quarter of the population of ESHET regulars.¹⁹ We do not have data to analyse the continuation of women scholars at every stage of professional career trajectory, but we observe that between the non-regulars and the regulars, the share of women drops only by 1,2%.

Some of the founding members hoped that ESHET would foster research on the European roots of political economy. In 1996, the first president of the Society, Luigi Pasinetti noted that while “Europe as a whole is in the process of becoming more and more of a unity”, there were strong scientific reasons for the creation of a European society.²⁰ Such an intellectual project was likely going to attract many European scholars, and the majority of those who attended ESHET conferences between 1997 and 2019 were indeed European nationals based in European countries. Both Northern and Southern Europe are well represented. Besides a stable number

¹⁹ We did not identify any non-binary gender individual in the group.

²⁰ ESHET Newsletter, N°1, Winter 1996.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20010529130712/http://www.ecn.bris.ac.uk/het1/eshet/winter96.htm>.

of Russian regulars, a few regular members are based in Poland, Czech Republic, Latvia, Hungary, and Bulgaria. It goes without saying that meetings of economists from such a wide range of European countries would have been hardly possible 30 years ago. This does not mean that the membership has been representative of the European nations. Regular members based in France (116), Italy (87) and the United Kingdom (31) account for nearly half of the total (476). Different national traditions of teaching and research in history of economic thought, as well as the institutional leadership of key founding members probably explain the international differences in participation.

Nonetheless, ESHET is also a global institution with a significant base of Japanese scholars, for instance. Over the past 15 years, ESHET has organised joint conferences with other organisations in Japan, China, and Latin America. As the price of air travel declined in the past decades, it has become easier for scholars to cross the Atlantic from the United States, Canada, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Argentina, and Chile to attend ESHET conferences. With its historical ties with Anglo American universities, a few scholars in Australia have also made the journey to Europe regularly. Outside of Japan, only three regulars are based in Asia: two in India and one in China. Turkey, Lebanon, and Israel are the only Middle Eastern countries represented among ESHET regulars. We have not identified any regular member who is based in Africa. The composition of regular ESHET conference attendees also reflects the internationalisation of higher education to the extent that many regulars did part of their higher education abroad, although, in the end the majority work in the country in which they received their PhD.

The internationalisation of research has benefited from the increasing prevalence of English as a working language, but it has also reinforced this trend. Referees of this paper pointed out that the linguistic skills of many members of the founding generation helped the creation of the society. Yet, it is doubtful whether something like ESHET would have been successful 50 years ago when most academics in Europe worked in one of their national languages and the Iron Curtain was still dividing Europe. In a bid to broaden their participation base, national and regional associations have encouraged conference presentations in English. Moreover, as career progression depends increasingly on publications in English, specialised journals in HET that used to publish in Italian, French, German or Spanish, for instance, now accept submissions in English, when they have not stopped publishing in other vernacular languages altogether.

The ESHET does not have a federal structure, but most of its very regular members are also involved in other national or regional scientific societies for the promotion of history of economic thought. Together, these associations have probably contributed to the persistence of the history of economic thought ecosystem, alongside specialised journals, as well as the few research centres and departments that organise seminars, summer schools, or offer research or teaching fellowships in history of economic thought. If the foundation of the ESHET was part of a professionalisation strategy for the history of economic thought, it seems to have been successful. Attendance to annual conferences has followed an upward trend. More importantly, new faces are seen at annual conferences every year and some of them eventually become regulars, on average after six years. Some of these new attendees come to an ESHET conference after responding to the public call for papers, without prior acquaintance with the regular scholars, but in many other cases, the new members are PhD students, or former PhD students of the regulars. Thus, prominent members of the group have been able to “reproduce themselves”. Twenty-five years after its foundation, a few regulars, of which we are part, belong to the third generation of ESHET members. That is, their PhD dissertation has been supervised by regulars who, themselves, were supervised by regulars of the founding generation.

The assimilation of “outsiders”, alongside reproduction mechanisms, testify of the vitality of the community of historians of economic thought in Europe. This being said, no regular has graduated from three of the top four most productive PhD-granting institutions in the past decade (Firenze, Nanterre, Cambridge). While the survival of HET might be threatened in some universities and even in some countries, at the aggregate level, we find no evidence for the decline of history of economic thought in this study of regular ESHET conference participants.

This paper analysed the composition of ESHET regular members based on basic biographical data. To get a better picture of the global community of historians of economic thought, similar prosopographic analyses of other associations should be conducted. Future work could also tackle the evolution of subjects researched by historians of economic thought by analysing the titles and abstract of papers presented at annual conferences. Last but not least, we could not give full justice to developments leading up to the establishment of ESHET which in our view

deserves a thorough historical examination.²¹ Together these analyses could paint a better picture of the past and the current state of history of economic thought, as well as inform debates about its future.

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²¹ For instance, to successfully triangulate various personal perspectives and archival records a witness seminar could be organised (Svorenčík and Maas, 2016).

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