

The Palgrave Companion to LSE Economics

Robert A. Cord
Editor

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For Helen and David

Introduction

This is a volume about the economics and economists associated with the London School of Economics (LSE). It is the second in a series to be published by Palgrave examining the many and varied contributions made by important centres of economics. With only a very few exceptions, the focus of most history of economic thought studies, at least in terms of books,¹ has been on schools of thought. Such an approach provides valuable insights into how competing schools interact and how some come to predominate, for whatever reason and length of time, while others fall out of fashion or indeed never attain any particular notoriety. However, a key deficiency of such a *modus operandi* is that it often fails to illuminate the many processes and tensions that can and do occur at the level of the individual university, the personnel of which may be fighting internal battles for supremacy while at the same time trying to establish external hegemony.

Each volume in the series will consist of two parts. The first will contain a set of chapters which will consider the contributions made by a centre where these contributions are considered to be especially important, and this subjects to a mixture of personal preferences and soundings from those who know better. The second, longer part will be made up of chapters discussing the contributions of individual economists attached to a particular centre. 'Attached' is the crucial word. Some economists are easy to identify with a single institution as they may, for example, have spent their whole academic careers at it. Those who have moved from institution to institution

¹ Articles are of course another matter.

are the more difficult case. One way forward in these instances is to place an economist in the institution where they carried out their most important work, although this, in its turn, carries with it the danger of disagreement over what 'their most important work' was or is perceived to be and how this has changed over time. Another factor perhaps worthy of consideration is an economist's education. Where such an education has been received at the knee of a master, to what extent has this influenced the subsequent work of the noted pupil and how should this be considered when that pupil has flown the nest and settled at another institution? Issues of leadership style, discipleship, loyalty, access to publication outlets and to financing also enter the frame. Finally, there are issues of practicality, including space constraints and unavailability of contributors, among others. Given this matrix of possibilities, disagreement about who should be in which volume is inevitable. However, I hope that the outrage will not be too great given the overarching goal of the series.

The next volume in the series will examine the University of Oxford.

Robert A. Cord

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