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The interdisciplinary space

Interdisciplinary research is the key to addressing the challenges of our current moment. Climate change, global development, pandemics and so on are infuriatingly complex, and rarely respect disciplinary boundaries. As we have all learnt recently, responding to the COVID-19 pandemic has required not only understanding epidemiology, but also political science, economics, sociology, psychology and geography. Interdisciplinary fields communicate between disciplines and integrate this knowledge to produce something new.[1] Interdisciplinary research is advocated as a source of innovation and scientific breakthroughs,[2] and in Australia, discourse in favour of interdisciplinarity has voiced the need for 'job-ready' graduates and 'useful' real-world research.[3] Universities have responded, redesigning curricula in some areas to incorporate cross-disciplinary instruction, and invoking its benefits in public statements about learning and graduate outcomes.[4] However, despite this rhetoric, university policy and practice

1 Claire EF Wright and Simon Ville, 'Visualising the Interdisciplinary Research Field: The Life Cycle of Economic History in Australia', *Minerva* 55, no. 3 (2017): 321–40, doi.org/10.1007/s11024-017-9319-z.

2 National Academies, *Facilitating Interdisciplinary Research* (Washington DC: The National Academies Press, 2005); Her Majesty's Treasury, *Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004–2014: Next Steps* (London: Her Majesty's Treasury, 2006); Dian Rhoten, 'Interdisciplinary Research: Trend or Transition', *Items and Issues* 5, no. 1–2 (2004): 6–11; Peter Woelert and Victoria Millar, 'The "Paradox of Interdisciplinarity" in Australian Research Governance', *Higher Education* 66, no. 6 (2013): 755–67, doi.org/10.1007/s10734-013-9634-8; Wright and Ville, 'The Interdisciplinary Research Field'.

3 Woelert and Millar, 'Paradox of Interdisciplinarity'; Victoria Millar, 'Interdisciplinary Curriculum Reform in the Changing University', *Teaching in Higher Education* 21, no. 4 (2016): 471–83, doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2016.1155549.

4 Millar, 'Interdisciplinary Curriculum Reform'.

continues to reinforce the dominance of disciplines. Everyone *wants* interdisciplinary research, but very few understand how it is produced, and even fewer actively implement policies to encourage it.

Economic history is one of the world's oldest interdisciplinary fields. It emerged alongside the large social science and humanities fields of the modern period, with the formalisation of economics and history disciplines in nineteenth-century universities providing the stability for scholars to begin conducting economic history research.[5] The expansion of universities in the twentieth century, particularly post–World War II, provided new students and additional space for economic history – and other interdisciplinary fields – to flourish.[6] As with the university sector more generally, the field expanded first in metropole nations such as the US and Britain, though it has had a strong presence in most nations and regions across the world. In 2011 there were approximately 10,000 economic historians and 44 economic history societies representing at least 59 countries.[7] The World Economic History Congress has run triennially since 1960, and there are a dozen or more international journals focused on publishing work in the field.[8]

Australian economic history has been a part of these global trends. The common narrative of the field's progress is that it has experienced a 'rise and fall' in three acts: dedicated research began in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with the intellectual foundations laid by Sir Timothy

5 Francesco Boldizzoni, *The Poverty of Clio: Resurrecting Economic History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), doi.org/10.23943/princeton/9780691144009.001.0001; Herman Van Der Wee, 'Economic History: Its Past, Present and Future', *European Review* 15, no. 1 (2007): 33–45, doi.org/10.1017/S106279870700004X; NB Harte, ed., *The Study of Economic History* (London: Frank Cass, 1971); Pat Hudson, 'Economic History in Britain: The "First Industrial Nation"', in *Routledge Handbook of Global Economic History*, ed. Francesco Boldizzoni and Pat Hudson (London: Routledge, 2015), 17–34, doi.org/10.4324/9781315734736-2; John S Lyons, Louis P Cain and Samuel H Williamson, eds, *Reflections on the Cliometrics Revolution: Conversations with Economic Historians* (New York: Routledge, 2008), doi.org/10.4324/9780203799635; Alfred William Coats, 'Disciplinary Self-Examination, Departments, and Research Traditions in Economic History: The Anglo-American Story', *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 38, no. 1 (1990): 3–18, doi.org/10.1080/03585522.1990.10408164; Jon S Cohen, 'The Achievements of Economic History: The Marxist School', *Journal of Economic History* 38, no. 1 (1978): 29–57, doi.org/10.1017/S002205070008815X; Naomi Lamoreaux, 'Beyond the Old and the New: Economic History in the United States', in Boldizzoni and Hudson, *Global Economic History*, 35–54, doi.org/10.4324/9781315734736.

6 Boldizzoni and Hudson, *Global Economic History*.

7 Joerg Baten and Julia Muschallik, 'The Global Status of Economic History', *Economic History of Developing Regions* 27, no. 1 (2012): 93–113, doi.org/10.1080/20780389.2012.682390.

8 Gianfranco Di Vaio and Jacob Louis Weisdorf, 'Ranking Economic History Journals: A Citation-Based Impact-Adjusted Analysis', *Cliometrica* 4, no. 1 (2010): 1–17, doi.org/10.1007/s11698-009-0039-y.

Coghlan, E. O. G. Shann and Brian Fitzpatrick. The publication of Noel G. Butlin's two volumes in the early 1960s was a significant event, and his work inspired a wealth of other research in a similar vein. Butlin's contribution gave the field focus and identity, and although economists generally approved, historians kept their distance. Following from this intellectual success and the postwar emphasis on higher education, the 1960s and 1970s were characterised by expansion of scholars, students and research, and closer relationships with the economics discipline. In the 1990s, higher education reform was responsible for the closure of departments and 'institutional reversal in the fortunes of economic history in Australasia'. To the present day, Australian economic history is considered a bit of 'corpse', albeit one that 'still twitches'.[9]

Vicissitudes in economic history's fortunes mean it has been subject to regular reflection. The field's progress has been covered most comprehensively in the US and Britain,[10] though Francesco Boldizzoni and Pat Hudson's recent *Routledge Handbook of Global Economic History* has incorporated a variety of voices to understand the study of economic history across the world.[11] Research generally examines the field's ideas

9 Stephen Morgan and Martin Shanahan, 'The Supply of Economic History in Australasia: The *Australian Economic History Review* at 50', *Australian Economic History Review* 50, no. 3 (2010): 217–39, doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8446.2010.00303.x, 220; David Meredith and Deborah Oxley, 'The Rise and Fall of Australian Economic History', in Boldizzoni and Hudson, *Global Economic History*, 73–94, 84.

10 Coats, 'Disciplinary Self-Examination'; Hudson, 'Economic History in Britain'; Lamoreaux, 'Beyond the Old and the New'; Harte, *Study of Economic History*; Alfred William Coats, 'The Historical Context of the "New" Economic History', *Journal of European Economic History* 9, no. 1 (1980): 185–207; Arthur H Cole, 'Economic History in the United States: Formative Years of a Discipline', *Journal of Economic History* 28, no. 4 (1968): 556–89, doi.org/10.1017/S002205070010097X; Cristel de Rouvray, '"Old" Economic History in the United States: 1939–1954', *Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 26, no. 4 (2004): 221–39, doi.org/10.1080/1042771042000219046; David Mitch, 'Economic History in Departments of Economics: The Case of the University of Chicago, 1892 to the Present', *Social Science History* 35, no. 2 (2011): 237–71; DC Coleman, *History and the Economic Past: An Account of the Rise and Decline of Economic History in Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); Gerard M Koot, 'English Historical Economics and the Emergence of Economic History in England', *History of Political Economy* 12, no. 2 (1980): 174, doi.org/10.1215/00182702-12-2-174; Gerard M Koot, *English Historical Economics, 1870–1926: The Rise of Economic History and Neomercantilism* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1987), doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511983832; Gerard M Koot, 'Historians and Economists: The Study of Economic History in Britain ca. 1920–1950', *History of Political Economy* 25, no. 4 (1993): 641–75, doi.org/10.1215/00182702-25-4-641. Also briefly in Lyons et al., *Reflections*; Ángela Milena Rojas, 'Cliometrics: A Market Account of a Scientific Community (1957–2006)', *Lecturas de Economia Universidad de Antioquia-Lecturas de Economia* 66, no. 1 (2007): 47–82; Robert Whaples, 'Where Is the Consensus among American Economic Historians? The Results of a Survey on Forty Propositions', *Journal of Economic History* 55, no. 1 (1995): 139–54, doi.org/10.1017/S0022050700040602.

11 Boldizzoni and Hudson, *Global Economic History*.

and traditions, in relation to individual scholars, or as motivated by the national economic and political context.[12] The relationship between knowledge and universities has been discussed briefly for the US, UK, Italy, Netherlands, Africa and Japan.[13] For example, the innovativeness and success of the cliometrics revolution in the US has been argued to be due to the expansion of the higher education system, and the nature of Purdue University in the postwar period.[14] For the UK, A. W. 'Bob' Coats and D. C. Coleman examined departments of economic history, linking the departmental form to the field's insularity and lethargy in the postwar period.[15] Despite the fact that economic history has experienced vastly different outcomes in different places, there has been very little systematic analysis of the impact of universities on knowledge in this field.

12 Tirthankar Roy, 'The Rise and Fall of Indian Economic History 1920–2013', *Economic History of Developing Regions* 29, no. 1 (2014): 15–41, doi.org/10.1080/20780389.2014.922843; Gareth Austin and Stephen Broadberry, 'Introduction: The Renaissance of African Economic History', *Economic History Review* 67, no. 4 (2014): 893–906, doi.org/10.1111/1468-0289.12081; AG Hopkins, 'The New Economic History of Africa', *Journal of African History* 50, no. 2 (2009): 155–77, doi.org/10.1017/S0021853709990041; Morten Jerven, 'A Clash of Disciplines? Economists and Historians Approaching the African Past', *Economic History of Developing Regions* 26, no. 2 (2011): 111–24, doi.org/10.1080/20780389.2011.625244; John H Coatsworth, 'Structures, Endowments, and Institutions in the Economic History of Latin America', *Latin American Research Review* 40, no. 3 (2005): 126–44, doi.org/10.1353/lar.2005.0040.

13 Lamoreaux, 'Beyond the Old and the New'; Francesco Boldizzoni, 'The Flight of Icarus: Economic History in the Italian Mirror', in Boldizzoni and Hudson, *Global Economic History*, 130–45, doi.org/10.4324/9781315734736; Erik Aerts and Ulbe Bosma, 'The Low Countries, Intellectual Borderlands of Economic History' in Boldizzoni and Hudson, *Global Economic History*, 175–92, doi.org/10.4324/9781315734736; Meredith and Oxley, 'Australian Economic History', 73–94; Ayodeji Olokoju, 'Beyond a Footnote: Indigenous Scholars and the Writing of West African Economic History', in Boldizzoni and Hudson, *Global Economic History,* 377–93, doi.org/10.4324/9781315734736; Bill Freund, 'Reflections on the Economic History of South Africa', in Boldizzoni and Hudson, *Global Economic History,* 394–408, doi.org/10.4324/9781315734736; Per Boje, 'Danish Economic History – Towards a New Millenium', *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 50, no. 3 (2002): 13–34, doi.org/10.1080/03585522.2002.10410815; H Borton, 'Modern Japanese Economic Historians', in *Historians of China and Japan*, ed. William G Beasley and Edwin G Pulleyblank (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 288–306; M Mehl, *Historiography and the State in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (London: Macmillan, 1998); Osamu Saito, 'A Very Brief History of Japan's Economic and Social History Research' (paper presented at the XVIIth World Economic History Congress, Kyoto, Japan, 2015); K Sugihara, 'The Socio-Economic History Society of Japan', *Information Bulletin of the Union of National Economic Associations in Japan* 21, no. 1 (2011): 99.

14 Coats, 'The Historical Context'; Coats, 'Disciplinary Self-Examination'; Lyons et al., *Reflections*.

15 Coats, 'Disciplinary Self-Examination'; Coleman, *History and the Economic Past*.

Economic history in Australia has been subject to similar interest.[16] Individual ideas and texts have been examined,[17] with William Coleman emphasising biographical elements for Noel and Syd Butlin, who were economic historians, and brothers, who both grew up in the Maitland region of New South Wales.[18] David Meredith and Deborah Oxley have incorporated some contextual and institutional elements, examining the role of Australia's background as an affluent British colony, and the place of postwar economic historians within economics departments.[19] Contemporary commentary during the field's crisis in the 1990s has also highlighted the role of higher education policy on economic history.[20] The field's experience has been aggregated at the national level, with Butlin's approach seen as the guiding framework in the post–World War II decades. Some have attempted to define an 'Australian approach', though

16 William Coleman, 'The Historiography of Australian Economic History', in *Cambridge Economic History of Australia*, ed. Simon Ville and Glenn Withers (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 11–28, doi.org/10.1017/CHO9781107445222.004; Brian Fitzpatrick, 'Counter Revolution in Australian Historiography?', *Meanjin Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (1963): 197–213; Timothy Jetson, 'Economic History–the Neglected Relative of Australian Historiography?', *Tasmanian Historical Studies* 15, no. 1 (2010): 7–37; Martin Shanahan, 'Discipline Identity in Economic History: Reflecting on an Interdisciplinary Community', *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education* 14, no. 2 (2015): 181–93; Christopher Lloyd, 'Economic History and Policy: Historiography of Australian Traditions', *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 41, no. 3 (1995): 61–79, doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8497.1995.tb01082.x; Christopher Lloyd, 'Can Economic History Be the Core of Social Science? Why the Discipline Must Open and Integrate to Ensure the Survival of Long-Run Economic Analysis', *Australian Economic History Review* 37, no. 3 (1997): 256–66, doi.org/10.1111/aehr.373005; Christopher Lloyd, 'Analytical Frameworks of Australia's Economic History', in Ville and Withers, *Cambridge Economic History of Australia*, 52–69, doi.org/10.1017/CHO9781107445222.006; C Boris Schedvin, 'Economic History in Australian Universities, 1961–1966', *Australian Economic History Review* 7, no. 1 (1967): 1–18, doi.org/10.1111/aehr.71001; C Boris Schedvin, 'Midas and the Merino: A Perspective on Australian Economic Historiography', *Economic History Review* 32, no. 3 (1979): 542–56, doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0289.1979.tb02058.x; William Angus Sinclair, 'Economic History', in *Australians: A Guide to Sources*, ed, DH Borchardt (Sydney: Fairfax, Syme & Weldon, 1987), 245–51; Jonathan Pincus and Graeme Snooks, 'The Past and Future Role of the *Australian Economic History Review*: Editorial Reflections and Aspirations', *Australian Economic History Review* 28, no. 2 (1988): 3–7, doi.org/10.1111/aehr.282001; Morgan and Shanahan, 'Supply of Economic History'; Meredith and Oxley, 'Australian Economic History'.

17 Jetson, 'Economic History'; Lloyd, 'Economic History and Policy'; Schedvin, 'Midas and the Merino'; Sinclair, 'Economic History'; Lloyd, 'Analytical Frameworks'.

18 Coleman, 'Historiography'.

19 Meredith and Oxley, 'Australian Economic History'.

20 Stephen Nicholas, 'The Future of Economic History in Australia', *Australian Economic History Review* 37, no. 3 (1997): 267–74, doi.org/10.1111/aehr.373006; Greg Whitwell, 'Future Directions for the *Australian Economic History Review*', *Australian Economic History Review* 37, no. 3 (1997): 275–81, doi.org/10.1111/aehr.373007; HM Boot, 'Some Developments in Teaching Practice in the Department of Economic History at the Australian National University', *Australian Economic History Review* 37, no. 3 (1997): 282–97, doi.org/10.1111/aehr.373008; Lloyd, 'Core of Social Science'.

only very loose unifying characteristics have been identified.[21] Chris Lloyd and C. B. 'Boris' Schedvin have argued that the approach had unique origins through the national income accounting tradition.[22] Schedvin has argued that a major characteristic of Australian economic history has been to 'under-interpret', letting the numbers speak for themselves.[23] Coleman, on the other hand, has argued that there is no uniform style in the field, though has conceded that the practice was distinctive to both Britain and the US.[24]

Higher education policy has not featured heavily in understanding the progress of Australian economic history. The institutional situation is used as a barometer – the presence of separate departments accepted as evidence of the field's success, and their closure more recently demonstrating its decline.[25] Meredith and Oxley have identified one of the primary issues associated with departments: that the structure isolated scholars from the history discipline – though they also argue that the closure of departments 'inevitably narrows the disciplinary backgrounds of practitioners and thus the intellectual influence on the discipline, reduces research output and decimates teaching capacity, constraining future prospects'.[26] This book contributes to these existing conversations by systematically demonstrating the impact of higher education policy on Australian economic history. Incorporating work on intellectual communities and the history of education (see below), I differ from the mainstream 'rise and fall' narrative in my assessment of economic history's progress. University departments were designed with disciplines in mind, by a higher education system that fundamentally misunderstood interdisciplinary knowledge. For Australian economic history, this structure has been, at once, both protagonist and antagonist, contributing to the perceived success of the field as well as restricting its ability to perform core functions. Under this framework, there is neither a 'rise' nor a 'fall', simply different ways of organising scholarship that then had an influence on the sort of knowledge produced.

21 Coleman, 'Historiography'; Lloyd, 'Analytical Frameworks'; C Boris Schedvin, 'Australian Economic History', *Economic Record* 65, no. 190 (1989): 287–90, doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4932.1989.tb00938.x.

22 Lloyd, 'Analytical Frameworks'; Schedvin, 'Australian Economic History'.

23 Schedvin, 'Australian Economic History', 288.

24 Coleman, 'Historiography'.

25 Nicholas, 'Future of Economic History'; Lloyd, 'Core of Social Science'; Whitwell, 'Future Directions'; Meredith and Oxley, 'Australian Economic History'; Morgan and Shanahan, 'Supply of Economic History'.

26 Meredith and Oxley, 'Australian Economic History', 86.

By offering a theoretically grounded assessment of economic history's progress, I hope to encourage broader conversations about what it means to be a 'successful' interdisciplinary field.

Universities and interdisciplinary research

A key innovation of this book is embedding the progress of Australian economic history within its knowledge community, particularly the nature of interdisciplinary research and the policy and practice of the higher education sector. Intellectual historians have been concerned not only with knowledge itself, but examining the development of ideas within scholars' personal, professional and institutional contexts. Some see knowledge as a form of internal expression, and thus largely independent of the context in which it is produced.[27] Others embed knowledge within the scholar's context, including their childhood, education, workplace, political orientation, class and social relationships.[28] Intellectual communities have received attention, with formal research schools and informal collaborative circles demonstrating the way groups of scholars develop research agendas and exchange support, ideas and criticism.[29] Activities

27 Arthur Lovejoy's examination of molecule-like 'unit-ideas' over the course of history is an early example of this. See Arthur O Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (New York: Harper and Row, 1936).

28 Quentin Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', *History and Theory* 8, no. 1 (1969): 3–53, doi.org/10.2307/2504188; Margaret Schabas, 'Breaking Away: History of Economics as History of Science', *History of Political Economy* 24, no. 1 (1992): 187–203, doi.org/10.1215/00182702-24-1-187; JGA Pocock, 'The Reconstruction of Discourse: Towards the Historiography of Political Thought', *MLN* 96, no. 5 (1981): 959–80, doi.org/10.2307/2906228; Malachi Haim Hacohen, *Karl Popper – The Formative Years, 1902–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001); Alfred William Coats, 'The Sociology of Economics and Scientific Knowledge, and the History of Economic Thought', in *A Companion to the History of Economic Thought*, ed. Warren J Samuels, Jeff E Biddle and John B Davis (Malden: Blackwell, 2003), 507–22; D Wade Hands, 'Conjectures and Reputations: The Sociology of Scientific Knowledge and the History of Economic Thought', *History of Political Economy* 29, no. 4 (1997): 695–739, doi.org/10.1215/00182702-29-4-695.

29 JB Morrell, 'The Chemist Breeders: The Research Schools of Liebig and Thomas Thomson', *Ambix* 19, no. 1 (1972): 1–46, doi.org/10.1179/amb.1972.19.1.1; Gerald L Geison, 'Scientific Change, Emerging Specialties, and Research Schools', *History of Science* 19, no. 43 (1981): 20–40, doi.org/10.1177/007327538101900103; Alan J Rocke, 'Group Research in German Chemistry: Kolbe's Marburg and Leipzig Institutes', *Osiris* 8, no. 1 (1993): 52–79, doi.org/10.1086/368718; Randall Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1998); Harriet Zuckerman, 'Nobel Laureates in Science: Patterns of Productivity, Collaboration, and Authorship', *American Sociological Review* 32, no. 3 (1967): 391–403, doi.org/10.2307/2091086; MP Farrell, *Collaborative Circles: Friendship Dynamics and Creative Work* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Claire

associated with groups – seminars, conferences, collaboration, graduate supervision, social activities, meetings and so on – bring scholars together. These interactions contribute to communication, debate, challenge, compromise and learning. Communication then reinforces, alters or expands the way individuals think, the research questions they ask and the answers they find.[30] This body of work reminds us that no scholar is an island, and sometimes even casual conversations may, gradually, change how they see the world.

Research institutions have been seen as powerful organising structures for ideas. Some intellectual communities have been independent of universities, for example the Bloomsbury group of British intellectuals, or the marginalised *Anschluß*-era Viennese scholars.[31] However, universities have been important for enabling hierarchies, focused research programs, graduate research and publication outlets.[32] Universities often structure the physical space where scholars interact, including things as basic as the placement of offices along a hallway.[33] Universities have been found to determine groupings – faculties, departments and so on – that match scholars with like-minded colleagues. Institutions have also controlled the cash: they have decided who to hire, the incentives for funding and promotion, and the degrees they will offer.[34] These policy decisions have been found to direct scholars' time and attention in certain ways. Institutions can thus be responsible for the overt barriers and covert inconveniences that influence the way that knowledge is produced.

EF Wright, 'The 1920s Viennese Intellectual Community as a Centre for Ideas Exchange: A Network Analysis', *History of Political Economy* 48, no. 4 (2016): 593–634, doi.org/10.1215/00182702-3687271.

30 Scott L Feld, 'The Focused Organisation of Social Ties', *American Journal of Sociology* 86, no. 5 (1981): 1015–35, doi.org/10.1086/227352.

31 Craufurd D Goodwin, 'The Bloomsbury Group as Creative Community', *History of Political Economy* 43, no. 1 (2011): 59–82, doi.org/10.1215/00182702-2010-044; Wright, 'The 1920s Viennese Intellectual Community'.

32 Morrell, 'The Chemist Breeders'; Geison, 'Scientific Change'; Rocke, 'Group Research in German Chemistry'; Zuckerman, 'Nobel Laureates in Science'.

33 Claire EF Wright and Simon Ville, 'The University Tea Room: Informal Public Spaces as Ideas Incubators', *History Australia* 15, no. 2 (2018): 236–54, doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2018.1443701.

34 Woelert and Millar, 'Paradox of Interdisciplinarity'; Andrew Abbott, *Chaos of Disciplines* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Hermann Röhrs, 'The Classical Idea of the University', in *Tradition and Reform of the University Under an International Perspective*, ed. Hermann Röhrs and Gerhard Hess (Verlag: Peter Lang, 1987), 13–27.

Despite growing attention to intellectual communities overseas, Australian historians rarely examine ideas in this context. For the most part, work has examined a particular discipline, tracing the main research themes and attributing the development of ideas to individual capabilities or sociopolitical context. The transformation of prominent international ideas has been of key concern, with work uncovering the extent to which Australian intellectual traditions are 'unique'.[35] Connections between various knowledge domains and the policy sphere have also been prominent.[36] This research is often framed individualistically: while authors discuss prominent collective research themes, current work lacks a systematic analysis of the way interpersonal networks and university structures have influenced ideas.[37]

Historians of education, on the other hand, have focused on university policies and the production of knowledge. Scholars internationally have traced the underlying logic of universities around three distinct systems of learning. Medieval universities in the UK and Europe were elite enclaves tied to the clergy. This 'English' or 'Oxbridge' model of higher education aimed to provide a common moral, intellectual and social experience for the ruling elite, with academic disciplines relatively unimportant and students instead grounded in general intellectual skills. The 'Scottish' model was more secular and egalitarian, emphasising practical subjects and applied knowledge. Universities served the professions, and educators were responsible for imparting practical knowledge to students. Scottish-led universities placed emphasis on academic disciplines as a way to organise knowledge into discrete categories. Finally, the 'German' or 'Humboldtian'

35 Alex Millmow, *A History of Australasian Economic Thought* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2017), doi.org/10.4324/9781315716152; Alison Bashford and Joyce E Chaplin, *The New Worlds of Thomas Robert Malthus: Rereading the Principle of Population* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); Deborah Gare, Geoffrey Bolton, Stuart Macintyre and Tom Stannage, eds, *The Fuss That Never Ended* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003); Geoffrey Bolton, 'Rediscovering Australia: Hancock and the Wool Seminar', *Journal of Australian Studies* 23, no. 62 (1999): 159–70, doi.org/10.1080/14443059909387515; Peter Groenewegen and Bruce McFarlane, *A History of Australian Economic Thought* (London: Routledge, 1990); Craufurd D Goodwin, *Economic Inquiry in Australia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1966).

36 Millmow, *Australasian Economic Thought*; William Coleman, Selwyn Cornish and Alf Hagger, *Giblin's Platoon: The Trials and Triumphs of the Economist in Australian Public Life* (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2006), doi.org/10.22459/GP.04.2006; Neville Cain, 'The Economists and Australian Population Strategy in the Twenties', *The Australian Journal of Politics and History* 20, no. 3 (1974): 346–59, doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8497.1974.tb01123.x; Stuart Macintyre, *The Poor Relation* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2010).

37 Stuart Macintyre's history of the social sciences – particularly the way their constitution within universities has impacted their practice and progress – is a key exception. See Macintyre, *The Poor Relation*.

model of higher education emerged in the early nineteenth century through an emphasis on scientific training and research. The university professor, in this system, develops new knowledge and supervises postgraduate research students, with instruction in undergraduate knowledge a secondary activity. The Humboldtian university model strongly emphasises research at the frontier of siloed academic disciplines.[38]

Closer to home, Australian historians of education have examined the way universities combined these systems of learning, and the impact of policy design on education and research.[39] The older sandstone universities, one in each Australian state capital city, were established in the nineteenth century on principles similar to the Oxbridge elite Liberal Arts education.[40] However, they quickly incorporated professional instruction, expanding to include law and medicine. The 'Scottish model' has been prevalent, with nineteenth- and early twentieth-century tertiary education designed to prepare students for professional work.[41] The Workers' Educational Association (WEA) was also established in the interwar period to complement university professional education by providing extension tutorials in discrete subjects for blue-collar workers.[42] Postwar mass expansion of higher education was designed along similar lines: to multiply the supply of skilled labour, particularly in professions such as engineering, accountancy, law, teaching, business, medicine and science.[43] Universities came to command greater space in professional work, and simultaneously a much greater proportion of Australia's workforce trained as professionals through tertiary education.[44] Postwar universities also incorporated the German model of higher education.

38 John C Smart, Kenneth A Feldman and Corinna A Ethington, *Academic Disciplines: Holland's Theory and the Study of College Students and Faculty* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000); John Gascoigne, 'The Cultural Origins of Australian Universities', *Journal of Australian Studies* 20, no. 50–51 (1996): 18–27, doi.org/10.1080/14443059609387275; Röhrs, 'The Classical Idea'.

39 Hannah Forsyth, *A History of the Modern Australian University* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2014).

40 Gascoigne, 'Cultural Origins'; Tamson Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars: Universities, Networks and the British Academic World, 1850–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

41 Gascoigne, 'Cultural Origins'; Hannah Forsyth, 'Census Data on Universities, Professions and War', in *The First World War, the Universities and the Professions in Australia 1914–1939*, ed. Kate Darian-Smith and James Waghorne, 1–25 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2019).

42 Gerald Friesen and Lucy Taksa, 'Workers' Education in Australia and Canada: A Comparative Approach to Labour's Cultural History', *Labour History*, no. 71 (1996): 170–97, doi.org/10.2307/27516453.

43 Forsyth, *Modern Australian University*; Stuart Macintyre, Andre Brett and Gwilym Croucher, *No End of a Lesson: Australia's Unified National System of Higher Education* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2017).

44 Forsyth, *Modern Australian University*.

Primary research became part of the compact of the establishment of new universities and the expansion of old ones, with governments funding a greater proportion of research through universities, and the role of university workers expanding to include both professional instruction and research.[45] The Australian National University (ANU) was the only true 'Humboldtian' university, with work at the institution consisting of frontier discovery and supervision of graduate students. Since the late 1980s, neoliberal reform corporatised Australia's higher education system. While the underlying logic of universities – focusing on professional education and frontier research – remained the same, principles of 'New Public Management' were introduced to encourage performance through competition in new and expanded markets for students and research.[46]

Others have incorporated the discussion of Australia's higher education policy into an understanding of the global hierarchy of knowledge. Our nation has profited from the dispossession of Indigenous people, and our education systems are based on, and constantly look to, the British and US metropoles. Raewyn Connell's *Southern Theory* argues that ideas in the humanities and social sciences are based on imperial education structures. 'Southern tier' countries such as Australia provide much of the raw information on which mainstream knowledge is based, and to which it is then later applied. The North, the 'metropole', on the other hand, is the main site of theoretical processing of global knowledge. Data and information from the periphery flow to the metropole, are legitimised and then flow back to be applied in the periphery again. Modern universities are a European invention, and the knowledge they produce is seen as universal and objective. While there has been remarkable growth of higher education beyond the metropole, particularly since the decolonisation movement from the mid-twentieth century, a Eurocentric curriculum

45 Gascoigne, 'Cultural Origins'; Forsyth, *Modern Australian University*; Macintyre, *The Poor Relation*; DS Anderson and E Eaton, 'Part 1: Post-War Reconstruction and Expansion 1940–1965', *Higher Education Research and Development* 1, no. 1 (1982): 8–93, doi.org/10.1080/0729436820010102.

46 Forsyth, *Modern Australian University*; Macintyre et al., *No End of a Lesson*; Peter Woelert and Lyn Yates, 'Too Little and Too Much Trust: Performance Measurement in Australian Higher Education', *Critical Studies in Education* 56, no. 2 (2015): 175–89, doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2014.943776 ; Jill Blackmore, Marie Brennan and Lew Zipin, *Re-Positioning University Governance and Academic Work* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2010), doi.org/10.1163/9789460911743; Simon Marginson and Mark Considine, *The Enterprise University: Power, Governance and Reinvention in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Hugh Lauder et al., *Educating for the Knowledge Economy? Critical Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2012); Raewyn Connell, 'The Neoliberal Cascade and Education: An Essay on the Market Agenda and Its Consequences', *Critical Studies in Education* 54, no. 2 (2013): 99–112, doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2013.776990.

prevails, and instruction is increasingly conducted in English. University policies around hiring, funding and promotion encourage research palatable to the global North, under the assumption that this process of legitimacy implies research 'quality'.[47]

These insights from Australian historians of education – the credentialisation of universities, increased bureaucracy and competition from the 1980s, and the global hierarchy of knowledge – have been applied to the sector in general,[48] a particular university[49] or a large discipline such as economics.[50] Interdisciplinary fields have been left out of these conversations, as they are often small, unstable or amorphous, thus presenting challenges for historical inquiry. Contemporary educationists, on the other hand, have emphasised the importance of interdisciplinary research, adopting a case study approach to understanding the progress of this form of knowledge within university structures.[51] Margaret Boden's work on the cognitive science field is a rare exception of a historical approach to understanding

47 Raewyn Connell, *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2007); Raewyn Connell, *The Good University: What Universities Actually Do and Why It's Time for Radical Change* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 2019); Fran Collyer et al., *Knowledge and Global Power: Making New Sciences in the South* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2019).

48 Forsyth, *Modern Australian University*; Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*; Connell, *Southern Theory*.

49 William James Breen and John A Salmond, *Building La Trobe University: Reflections on the First 25 Years 1964–1989* (Melbourne: La Trobe University Press, 1989); Peter Groenewegen, *Educating for Business, Public Service and the Social Sciences: A History of the Faculty of Economics at the University of Sydney 1920–1999* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2009), doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1wmz4h4; Ross Williams, *Balanced Growth: A History of the Department of Economics, University of Melbourne* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2009); Fay Anderson and Stuart Macintyre, eds, *The Life of the Past: The Discipline of History at the University of Melbourne* (Melbourne: RMIT Publishing, 2006); WGK Duncan and RA Leonard, *The University of Adelaide, 1874–1974* (Adelaide: Rigby Ltd, 1973); Stephen G Foster and Miriam M Varghese, *The Making of the Australian National University* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1996); Wilfrid Prest, ed., *Pasts Present: History at Australia's Third University* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 2014).

50 Alex Millmow, 'The State We're In: University Economics 1989/1999', *Economic Papers* 19, no. 4 (2000): 43–51, doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-3441.2000.tb00974.x; Tim Thornton, 'The Economics Curriculum in Australian Universities 1980 to 2011', *Economic Papers* 31, no. 1 (2012): 103–13, doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-3441.2011.00163.x; John Kees Lodewijks, 'The History of Economic Thought in Australia and New Zealand', *History of Political Economy* 34, no. 5 (2002): 154–64, doi.org/10.1215/00182702-34-Suppl_1-154.

51 Guy G Gable et al., *The Information Systems Academic Discipline in Australia* (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2008), doi.org/10.22459/ISADA.09.2008; Chris Gibson, 'Geography in Higher Education in Australia', *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 31, no. 1 (2007): 97–119, doi.org/10.1080/03098260601033050; Christina Raasch et al., 'The Rise and Fall of Interdisciplinary Research: The Case of Open Source Innovation', *Research Policy* 42, no. 5 (2013): 1138–51, doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2013.01.010; Thomas Pfister, 'Coproducing European Integration Studies: Infrastructures and Epistemic Movements in an Interdisciplinary Field', *Minerva* 53, no. 3 (2015): 235–55, doi.org/10.1007/s11024-015-9275-4 .

interdisciplinarity, with others calling for similar efforts offering the benefit of hindsight.[52] This book is the first systematic study of an interdisciplinary field in the Australian history of education.

Education scholars have argued that contemporary universities promote disciplinary knowledge through the emphasis on professional instruction in Scottish-style universities, and the Humboldtian focusing on frontier research. Universities have an incentive to encourage disciplinary research and teaching, as professional accreditation requires standardisation, collaboration between those with similar knowledge occurs more efficiently, and research within disciplines is more likely to receive funding and citations.[53] As a result, universities are designed to encourage work around disciplines: appointment and promotion is based on assessment within the 'tribe', which means being published in the 'right' places, cited by the right people and accredited by the appropriate professional bodies.[54] Inward communication is encouraged by clustering offices together, with each group conducting their own meetings, seminars and joint projects.[55] Degrees and majors are designed to match students and instructors based on their intellectual alignment, with students progressing through a standardised program from first year to the end of their PhD.

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52 Margaret Ann Boden, *Mind as Machine: A History of Cognitive Science* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006); Jerry A Jacobs and Scott Frickel, 'Interdisciplinarity: A Critical Assessment', *Annual Review of Sociology* 35, no. 1 (2009): 43–65, doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-070308-115954.

53 Clark Hu and Pradeep Racherla, 'Visual Representation of Knowledge Networks: A Social Network Analysis of Hospitality Research Domain', *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 27, no. 1 (2008): 302–12, doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2007.01.002; JS Coleman, 'Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital', *American Journal of Sociology* 94, Supplement (1988): S95–S120, doi.org/10.1086/228943; Julia Nieves and Javier Osorio, 'The Role of Social Networks in Knowledge Creation', *Knowledge Management Research and Practice* 11, no. 1 (2013): 62–77, doi.org/10.1057/kmrp.2012.28; Ray Reagans and Bill McEvily, 'Network Structure and Knowledge Transfer: The Effects of Cohesion and Range', *Administrative Science Quarterly* 48 no. 2 (2003): 240–67, doi.org/10.2307/3556658; Katja Rost, 'The Strength of Strong Ties in the Creation of Innovation', *Research Policy* 40, no. 4 (2011): 588–604, doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2010.12.001; Andrea Bonaccorsi, 'New Forms of Complementarity in Science', *Minerva* 48, no. 4 (2010): 355–87, doi.org/10.1007/s11024-010-9159-6; R Whitley, *The Intellectual and Social Organisation of the Sciences* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984); Ronald S Burt, 'The Network Structure of Social Capital', *Research in Organisational Behaviour* 22, no. 1 (2000): 345–423, doi.org/10.1016/S0191-3085(00)22009-1; Ismael Rafols et al., 'How Journal Rankings Can Suppress Interdisciplinary Research: A Comparison between Innovation Studies and Business and Management', *Research Policy* 41, no. 7 (2012): 1262–82, doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2012.03.015; Ehud Shapiro, 'Point of View: Correcting the Bias against Interdisciplinary Research', *eLife* 3, no. 1 (2014): 1–3, doi.org/10.7554/eLife.02576; Jochen Gläser and Grit Laudel, 'Evaluation without Evaluators: The Impact of Funding Formulae on Australian University Research', in *The Changing Governance of the Sciences*, ed. Richard Whitley and Jochen Gläser (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), 127–51, doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-6746-4_6; Woelert and Millar, 'Paradox of Interdisciplinarity'.

54 Woelert and Millar, 'Paradox of Interdisciplinarity'; Rafols et al., 'Journal Rankings'.

55 Wright and Ville, 'University Tea Room'.

This establishes hierarchies, frequent interactions and adherence to group norms, meaning that scholars and students are identifiable among themselves and to outsiders.[56] Instruction within the discipline shapes the pool of those in the labour market, which then determines those appointed to train the next generation, beginning the cycle again.[57]

While these policies are entirely appropriate for disciplines, they are not cognisant of the nature and value of interdisciplinary knowledge, which integrates concepts, methodologies and perspectives from two or more disciplines.[58] As disciplines grow over time, they develop more inward-looking structures and thus greater gaps in understanding between them. Interdisciplinary practitioners take pieces of knowledge from 'parent' disciplines, combine them into something new, and then communicate this knowledge back to parent disciplines. The process of communication and integration essentially bridges the two otherwise separate knowledge domains, and develops new, innovative insights.[59] Much of the theoretical work sees interdisciplinary knowledge as either the residue of disciplines evolving over time, or as separate and mutually exclusive groups.[60] More recently, however, these different forms of knowledge production have been seen as complementary.[61] Some have advocated for division of labour and cooperation between disciplines and interdisciplinary fields, with the

56 Alan Collins, John Seely Brown and Susan E Newman, 'Cognitive Apprenticeship: Teaching the Crafts of Reading, Writing, and Mathematics', in *Knowing, Learning and Instruction*, ed. Lauren B Resnik (Hillsdale: Erlbaum, 1989), 453–94, doi.org/10.4324/9781315044408-14; Alston Lee, 'How Are Doctoral Students Supervised? Concepts of Doctoral Research Supervision', *Studies in Higher Education* 33, no. 3 (2008): 267–81, doi.org/10.1080/03075070802049202; Margot Pearson and Angela Brew, 'Research Training and Supervision Development', *Studies in Higher Education* 27, no. 2 (2002): 135–50, doi.org/10.1080/03075070220119986c.

57 Abbott refers to this as 'dual institutionalisation'. See Abbott, *Chaos of Disciplines*.

58 Thomas S Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); C Lyall and LR Meagher, 'A Masterclass in Interdisciplinarity: Research into Practice in Training the Next Generation of Interdisciplinary Researchers', *Futures* 44, no. 6 (2012): 608–17, doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2012.03.011; Scott E Page, *The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), doi.org/10.1515/9781400830282; Frank J van Rijnsoever and Laurens K Hessels, 'Factors Associated with Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Research Collaboration', *Research Policy* 40, no. 3 (2011): 463–72, doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2010.11.001; Rafols et al., 'Journal Rankings'.

59 Wright and Ville, 'The Interdisciplinary Research Field'.

60 Abbott, *Chaos of Disciplines*; Stephen Turner, 'What Are Disciplines? And How Is Interdisciplinarity Different?', in *Practising Interdisciplinarity*, ed. Peter Weingart and Nico Stehr (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 46–65, doi.org/10.3138/9781442678729-005.

61 John D Aram, 'Concepts of Interdisciplinarity: Configuration of Knowledge and Action', *Human Relations* 57, no. 4 (2004): 379–412, doi.org/10.1177/0018726704043893; Bonaccorsi, 'Complementarity in Science'; Robert Frodeman and Carl Mitcham, 'New Directions in Interdisciplinarity: Broad, Deep, and Critical', *Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society* 27, no. 6 (2007): 506–14, doi.org/10.1177/0270467607308284; Pfister, 'European Integration Studies'.

former providing coherent intellectual foundations and systematic research techniques, as well as credibility strategies that underpin interdisciplinary integration.[62] They argue that broad interdisciplinary groups are able to produce innovative synergies, whereas the interrogation and application of these new ideas is efficiently done within the disciplinary tribe.

Empirical research has found that interdisciplinarity can take a number of different forms. Specific projects or funded research centres can serve as 'boundary organisations' that bring relevant scholars together to solve a particular problem.[63] Liberal arts 'colleges', with the broad ideals of Oxbridge universities, integrate knowledge and personnel from a range of backgrounds. Simon Ville and I have used the case study of Australian economic history to specify the interdisciplinary research field (IDRF) as a more enduring organising framework.[64] The IDRF is an organisational structure that brings scholars into the space between disciplines, and helps mediate the relationships between them. Professionally, *communicating infrastructures* such as publications, events, collaborations and teaching activities facilitate interactions between scholars from different groups. Intellectually, a body of knowledge with a spectrum of approaches also acts as a communicating infrastructure, bridging the interdisciplinary space by providing overlapping frameworks for members of the IDRF and parent disciplines to interact. As with any intellectual community, there is interdependence between the places where scholars interact and the knowledge they produce. The field's progress over time depends on the success of its communicating infrastructures, as well as the interests of parent disciplines and the nature of the higher education environment.

Disciplinary forms of organisation can restrict the IDRF's ability to perform core functions. As discussed above, universities often adopt a 'one size fits all', specifically disciplinary, policy with regard to its research groups. Even within the field, there is strong temptation to colonise, with scholars understandably building capacity through training, research projects and administrative structures. However, they are faced with opportunity costs – a vibrant seminar program within the group

62 Ken Fuchsman, 'Rethinking Integration in Interdisciplinary Studies', *Issues in Integrative Studies* 1, no. 27 (2009): 72–73; Bonaccorsi, 'Complementarity in Science'; Abbott, *Chaos of Disciplines*; Rost, 'Strong Ties'; Burt, 'Network Structure'.

63 David H Gunston, *Between Politics and Science: Assuring the Integrity and Productivity of Research* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Jacobs and Frickel, 'Interdisciplinarity'; Rhoten, 'Interdisciplinary Research'.

64 Wright and Ville, 'The Interdisciplinary Research Field'.

means scholars are not able to host or attend as many events in other groups. Collaborations that deepen connections within the field reduce the time and energy available for developing interdisciplinary bridges. If scholars and students all emerge from a particular major, then they have a comprehensive understanding of that knowledge domain, at the expense of broad knowledge and networks.[65] On the other hand, the complete absence of institutional resources, collaboration and shared ideas can lead to the dispersal of the field's members. Communicating infrastructures that are too strong or too weak both represent, without being too dramatic, the 'death' of the IDRF. In either scenario the knowledge domain no longer exists in an integrative position. A long-lasting 'hybrid' is the aim, with the IDRF maintaining a degree of autonomy as well as links to larger disciplines.[66] As the following chapters will examine in detail, this is a very complicated balance to maintain.

The place of interdisciplinary research, over time and within university structures, is the key issue this book will address. Economic history has flourished in the empty spaces created by two disciplinary silos, and scholars have existed along a spectrum from the humanist on the one end to the social scientist on the other. The nature of interdisciplinary integration has depended on the quality of professional interactions, the nature of the higher education system and the field's pertinent research questions within local and temporal contexts. As such, traditions in economic history are part of global conversations, but can also be specific to the particular place and historical moment.[67] Analysing the development of Australian economic history as part of its knowledge community thus reveals the way scholars worked together to develop new ideas, the opportunities and challenges associated with moving between intellectual paradigms, and the ways universities have encouraged (and discouraged) interdisciplinary research.

65 JS Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990); Julie T Klein, *Interdisciplinarity: History Theory, and Practice* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1990); Julie T Klein, *Crossing Boundaries: Knowledge, Disciplinarities, and Interdisciplinarities* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 1996); Whitley, *Organisation of the Sciences*; Frodeman and Mitcham, 'New Directions'; Jacobs and Frickel, 'Interdisciplinarity'.

66 Wright and Ville, 'The Interdisciplinary Research Field'; Raasch et al., 'Rise and Fall of Interdisciplinary Research'.

67 This is the subject of Boldizzoni and Hudson, *Global Economic History*.

As with any interdisciplinary field, economic historians have had some autonomy regarding how they spend their time. These choices reflect deeper questions of identity, about how the scholar sees economic history and their place in it. Some see the field as interdisciplinary, others see it as a subdiscipline of economics or history. Some identify as economic historians, and others see themselves as, say, an economist who sometimes works on historical matters. These questions of identity are not new, with Pat Hudson's edited *Living Economic and Social History* collating responses of over 100 prominent economic historians who reflected on 'what economic and social history means to me'.[68] The diversity of scholars' self-identification, and views on what economic history should be, is quite astounding. Joel Mokyr has similarly argued that:

> It has never been easy to be an economic historian. Much like Jews in their diaspora, they belong simultaneously in many places and nowhere at all. They are perennial minorities, often persecuted, exiled, accustomed to niche existences, surviving by their wits and by (usually) showing solidarity to one another.[69]

In Australia, William Coleman has asked 'what is economic history for?', with Ben Huf commenting that successive generations of scholars have 'contested what economic history ought to encompass'.[70] Some, like Chris Lloyd, see it as the 'core of social science', while others argue that it is a key component of Australian historiography.[71] The interviews that follow in this book express the diversity of perspectives in Australian economic history. As Huf comments, it is inherently political to draw lines around what *is* economic history, and what is *not*.[72] Such lines often betray what the practitioners themselves want the field to be, and where they would like it to go in the future.

Those who examine intellectual communities – interdisciplinary fields or otherwise – make these identity judgements. I do myself in this book. Describing a profession and a body of knowledge has meant that I have

68 Pat Hudson, ed., *Living Economic and Social History* (Glasgow: Economic History Society, 2001).
69 Joel Mokyr, 'On the Supposed Decline and Fall of Economic History', *Historically Speaking* 11, no. 2 (2010): 23–25, doi.org/10.1353/hsp.0.0101.
70 Ben Huf, 'Making Things Economic: Theory and Government in New South Wales, 1788–1863' (PhD thesis, The Australian National University, 2018), 52; Coleman, 'Historiography', 27.
71 Lloyd, 'Core of Social Science'; Jetson, 'Economic History'; Hannah Forsyth and Sophie Loy-Wilson, 'Seeking a New Materialism in Australian History', *Australian Historical Studies* 48, no. 1 (2017): 169–88, doi.org/10.1080/1031461X.2017.1298635.
72 Huf, 'Making Things Economic'.

drawn boundaries around what I consider to be the main scholars, projects and ideas. As uncomfortable as it is to admit, the nature of interdisciplinary research means that my identification (and anyone's) is inherently flawed. Interdisciplinary fields have cascading spheres of centrality: overlap with parent disciplines means that members can be more, or less, central to economic history, but there are no hard lines to determine who is in and who is out. Members can also change scholarly identity over the course of their career. My group of scholars and texts will not please everyone. I have been guided by major works of economic historical writing and scholars involved in the field's primary professional structures. In the colonial and interwar period, the lack of formal structures means I have discussed those who made a major contribution to understanding Australian economic history, regardless of their institutional base. For the postwar period, a very strong professional community means I primarily discuss members of departments, and those involved in the field's key journal and society, the *Australian Economic History Review* and the Economic History Society of Australia and New Zealand (EHSANZ). In the period of resistance since the 1990s, I have been more inclusive institutionally, in recognition that work in the field has come from those in economics, history, business and other groups.

To understand Australian economic history, I have drawn on a range of complementary sources. Qualitative or content analysis has been applied to texts written on an aspect of the Australian economy or economic matters (including business and policy) in a historical time period or over the long run. This follows others who have reflected on the field's progress, examining the main themes, frameworks, methods and interpretations.[73] I discuss the major monographs, as well as edited collections where members of the field worked together. The field's main journal, the *Australian Economic History Review*, has also been very influential, and I have paid particular attention to work published in its pages. Work in the field has, of course, also been published in adjacent forums, such as journals overseas, parent discipline outlets and other interdisciplinary publications such as *Labour History*. The analysis of organisational structure and its influence on knowledge draws on university records regarding personnel and department activities. The chronology of EHSANZ activities were often mentioned in the *Review*, and discussion of informal collaborations through acknowledgments uncover the various ways that scholars have interacted.

73 Similar to a combination of Lloyd, 'Analytical Frameworks'; Coleman, 'Historiography'.

Oral history interviews provide one of the main empirical contributions of this book. Oral history provides details of undocumented experiences, recreates the 'multiplicity of standpoints' from a historical moment, and can be used to reaffirm or challenge received wisdom.[74] It's widely used in intellectual history to illuminate the more nuanced aspects of what it means to 'do research' – aspects often missing from written records.[75] Between 2015 and 2020, I interviewed 35 economic historians prominent in the field's key professional structures and intellectual debates. Earlier interviews for the most part focused on the postwar period.[76] Latterly, through the process of writing this book, interviews have focused more on the period from the 1980s onwards. Some interviews were in person, and some were conducted virtually. Occasionally, interviewees brought along someone else – as was the case with Tony Dingle and Graeme Davison, and Deborah Oxley and David Meredith. Interviews ranged in length from about 45 minutes to 2 hours, though I also had follow-up conversations with several scholars as the research progressed. The list of interviewees is incomplete, with some no longer with us, and some declining to be interviewed. I also had to draw my own lines around the interview material. Aligning with best practice in oral history, when I reached a 'saturation point' of hearing similar things about a particular theme or event, I generally moved on.[77] I also tried to balance between different types of scholars, with the aim of representing a range, rather than the totality, of possible voices. Lines of questioning were broad, focusing on scholars' professional communities, their approach to research, and the links between economic history and other fields. While all were undoubtedly based on subjective experiences, that is the point.[78] These conversations describe, in detail, the lived experiences of negotiating the interdisciplinary space.

74 Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, *The Oral History Reader* (New York: Routledge, [1998] 2006); Alistair Thomson, 'Fifty Years On: An International Perspective on Oral History', *Journal of American History* 85, no. 2 (1998): 581–95, doi.org/10.2307/2567753; Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1978] 2000).

75 Ronald E Doel, 'Oral History of American Science', *History of Science* 41 (2003): 349–78, doi.org/10.1177/007327530304100401; Charles Weiner, 'Oral History of Science: A Mushrooming Cloud?', *Journal of American History* 75, no. 2 (1988): 548–59, doi.org/10.2307/1887871.

76 For a preliminary discussion of these early interviews, see Claire EF Wright and Simon Ville, 'The Evolution of an Intellectual Community through the Words of Its Founders: Recollections of Australia's Economic History Field', *Australian Economic History Review* 57, no. 3 (2017): 345–67, doi.org/10.1111/aehr.12110.

77 Charles T Morrissey, 'On Oral History Interviewing', in *Elite and Specialised Interviewing*, ed. Lewis Anthony Dexter (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 109–18; Perks and Thomson, *The Oral History Reader*.

78 See Wright and Ville, 'Evolution of an Intellectual Community', for a detailed discussion of the oral history method.

Structure

This book progresses through five thematic–chronological chapters that examine major episodes in the relationship between Australian economic history and universities. Chapter 2 discusses the early period of colonial writing through to Coghlan's work on historical national income. It then examines the field's tripartite institutional structure in the interwar period, with cooperation between scholars in government agencies, universities and the WEA. This institutional flexibility resulted in knowledge that connected Australian economic history with a range of other groups. Chapter 3 focuses on the production and reception of Noel Butlin's major contribution to understanding Australian economic development in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The nature of ANU, and the resulting professional community of economic historians had an important role in the production of Butlin's work, and its transmission as an intellectual movement. Chapter 4 analyses the 'departmental era'; the period during the 'golden age' of Australian higher education, where economic historians were largely placed within separate departments and the field experienced 'disciplinary'-style growth. While this structure was important for developing resources and recognition, it isolated scholars from parent disciplines, and encouraged tribalism within each group.

Chapter 5 follows the field's progress from higher education reforms in the late 1980s, particularly scholars' resistance and adaptation in the face of a very hostile university sector. The closure of departments provided opportunities for renewed interdisciplinary engagement, particularly with economics and business schools. Chapter 6 discusses the shape of the recent revival in interest in economic historical matters, as well as the field's enduring uncertainties: uneven connections with parent disciplines, fragmentation between different clusters and the escalation of neoliberal policies that disadvantage the production of interdisciplinary research. Finally, Chapter 7 summarises the lessons from understanding this field's history, including the ways that scholars, universities and policymakers can develop robust interdisciplinary conversations now and in the future.