

# *Global and Quantitative Economic History*

**Joel Mokyr**

**2015 Balzan Prize for Economic History**

**Balzan GPC Adviser:** Thomas Maissen

**Project Directors:** Joel Mokyr, Joseph Ferrie, Louis Cain

**Main Researchers:** Carola Frydman, José Espin, Natalya Naumenko, Aniket Panjwani, Yannay Spitzer, Mara Squicciarini, Taco Terpstra, Marlous van Waijenburg, Anthony Wray, Heyu Xiong, Yiling Zhao, Ariell Zimran, Nicola Bianchi

**Affiliated Institution:** Northwestern Center for Economic History

**Period:** 2016-

Joel Mokyr is Robert H. Strotz Professor of Arts and Sciences and Professor of Economics and History at Northwestern University, Evanston IL, and Sackler Professorial Fellow at the Eitan Berglas School of Economics at the University of Tel Aviv. He would channel the entire half of his Balzan Prize to research through the Northwestern Center for Economic History, which he directs together with his Northwestern colleagues Professor Joseph Ferrie and Louis Cain. The Center was set up in 2012 with very limited seed money from Northwestern University, and the Balzan Prize would make it possible to continue this funding at a higher level. In addition to supporting graduate students, the Balzan funds will be used to support other young investigators from all over the world who are affiliated with the Center, including junior faculty at other universities who recently graduated from Northwestern. More specifically, Mokyr plans to support the graduate students' and young investigators' travel to libraries and archives, employ undergraduate research assistance, purchase and process data, travel to professional conferences, and attend local seminars and workshops.

In addition, a position for a postdoctoral fellow in Economic History will be created, requiring the candidate to spend a full year at Northwestern in the Economics or History department engaged in research under Mokyr's supervision. Part of the position would entail teaching one or two courses in global and quantitative economic history, which could be used to supplement the postdoc's salary, as well as prepare her or him for an

academic career. It is also proposed that the Center help fund data collection systems, specifically maintaining and extending a data transcription system named d'Entry, originally developed by Dr. Roy Mill at Stanford. This program is critical to the “big-data” projects currently ongoing or planned by Northwestern students and recent graduates. It allows an easy and fast transcription of quantitative information from sources such as Ancestry.com and the US Census into machine-readable databases.

At the time of writing, the following individuals have been designated to participate in Mokyr's Balzan research project: Carola Frydman (Harvard PhD), from Argentina, an Assistant Professor at the Northwestern Kellogg School of Management; José Espin, from Spain, PhD 2013 (Northwestern), now Assistant Professor of Economics at Yale University; Natalya Naumenko, from Russia, economics PhD student at Northwestern University, expected to receive her degree in 2018; Aniket Panjwani, from India, economics PhD student at Northwestern University, expecting to graduate in 2018; Yannay Spitzer, from Israel, PhD 2015 (Northwestern), currently Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Mara Squicciarini, from Italy, PhD 2014 (KU Leuven), postdoctoral visitor at Northwestern University; Taco Terpstra, from the Netherlands, PhD 2011 (Columbia University), an Assistant Professor at Northwestern in the Classics Department; Marlous van Waijenburg, from the Netherlands, sixth year PhD student in history at Northwestern University (expected in 2016), specializing in African economic history; Anthony Wray, from Canada, (Northwestern PhD, 2015) currently a postdoctoral fellow at Hitotsubashi University in Japan; Heyu Xiong, from China, economics PhD student at Northwestern University, expected year of PhD, 2018; Yiling Zhao from China, currently a PhD student at Northwestern, expected year of PhD 2019; Ariell Zimran, from the USA, economics PhD student at Northwestern University, expected year of PhD 2016; Nicola Bianchi, from Italy, PhD (Stanford), currently an Assistant Professor at Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management Strategy Department.

In addition, the funds will be used for two other purposes. First, a week to 10-day residency at Northwestern for a distinguished scholar, wherein he/she will interact with the graduate students and the postdoctoral fellow, engaging in discussions and providing them with in-depth advice on their research projects. The senior scholars will be designated as Balzan Visitors. Second, two small international conferences in economic history – officially designated as Balzan Conferences – to be held on the Northwestern campus, and which will include a keynote address by a distinguished scholar.

In summary, the Center for Economic History at Northwestern funds, supports and guides the work of young researchers (six current PhD students, three Northwestern recent graduates, the resident postdoctoral fellow and three Assistant Professors, one in the Classics Department and the two others in the Kellogg School of Management). Their work will lead to the construction of historical databases, completed PhD dissertations, and the publication of articles in refereed journals and books. These publications will acknowledge the support of the Balzan Foundation. All research projects funded by the Balzan Foundation via the center will be carried out by young researchers under the direction of the Prizewinner, Professor Joel Mokyr. Professors Joseph Ferrie (a Professor in the Economics Department) and Louis Cain (an adjunct Professor in the Economics Department) will serve as deputy supervisors, assisting in project implementation and assuming an active role in coordinating research presentations.