

How did the presentation at the Cliometrics Conference help your work?

The presentation I made at Clio was hugely valuable to me. Not only did I get great comments and suggestions, but it allowed me as a then graduate student to gain confidence in presenting material to a serious audience. At the time, I was not at all confident. People were unbelievably great. The main memory I have of it was that it was amazing how many people had read the paper and had helpful comments. It was a model of how a conference should be.

The participants in the Cliometrics Conference provided immediate, spirited, and insightful feedback on the paper that I presented. I believe that the 2000 Clio conference was the first time that I presented work on the political economic of anti-discrimination laws, and it was probably the most productive time. That is, I presented the work several other times, but the best feedback I received was at Clio.

When I presented at Clio my work was at a very preliminary stage, while I was still a graduate student. The comments I received were invaluable in helping me to focus on the essential components of the problem and devise an identification strategy to isolate the timing of the events I was describing. The revised article became one of the core chapters of my dissertation. In addition, the acquaintances I made at the conference proved very useful when I entered the job market later that year.

“Useful feedback”

“It has always been valuable to get pointed feedback at Clio on work as it is being developed.”

It helped me refine both the arguments and the presentation of the material. It gave me an accurate and overwhelming sense about what details were confusing and what assumptions needed clarification.

Well, it is difficult to say. It was certainly a great moral encouragement. From a scientific point of view I'm not sure. There was of course a lively discussion.

The comments improved the paper significantly.

Providing helpful feedback on the methods and structure of the argument.

The paper that I gave at the Clio Meetings in 1998 provided me with useful ideas and feedback that shaped the direction of my research. In the end, the paper I gave at Clio evolved into two papers: one dealing with the role of life insurance in 19th century wealth and asset portfolio and another dealing with inequality and how asset portfolios and the life-cycle could affect wealth and inequality. I suppose that the paper you start out with is not always the paper that gets published but that is part of the excitement of doing research. I am still looking at portfolio composition with a data set that augments the data I used for the Clio 1998 paper.

Comments I received at the presentation alerted me to some econometric issues.

The comments I received spurred me to add a section to the paper including a formal model.

The comments I received during my presentation at the Cliometrics conference showed me that I was failing to address some important issues related to sliding scales.

To be honest, it did not change the paper much at all. However, most of the feedback was positive, so I guess that's to be expected.

A: It was really useful to present the paper. The paper was trying to understand the functioning of a cartel in the context of theories of collusion, with quite a bit of emphasis on theory. The cliometricians wanted the emphasis to be on data and that's what the final version of the paper has turned out to be- much less IO and a lot of archival evidence.

The conference provided an unequalled opportunity to present work in progress to a large group of exceptionally well qualified colleagues. The cliometrics conference is unique in that participants are able and expected to read papers prior to the conference and the conference is able to provide a forum for extended discussion. As a result, a number of issues of exposition and substance came to our attention which significantly improved the final paper.

I do not remember specifically how I revised my paper as a result of the comments of the participants. But presenting at Clio was certainly helpful to me, since it provided valuable experience and enabled me to make useful contacts in the field of Economic History. (At the time I was still a graduate student.)

As always, excellent feedback at Clio that improved the paper immensely.

We received some useful comments, particularly on comparisons with US experience, which we incorporated into the revised version of the paper.

I'm sure I got some good suggestions but it was so long ago it's hard to remember. It was my first conference presentation and I was very nervous. C. Knick Harley came up to the board at the front of the room while I was talking and starting drawing something as a critique of my paper and I found it somewhat unnerving at the time. Afterwards McCloskey gave me a handwritten note saying that my paper was good. I still have it; I put it in a photo album. I'm sure that's more than you wanted to know.

The opportunity to present was an important opportunity to obtain reaction and feedback from some of the world's leading economists and economic historians who have studied labour market integration and who have been leaders in the development of real wage data for the United States, Europe and Australia. Opportunities to present before an audience with this much depth and expertise are rare.

The discussion at the Cliometrics conference was very useful - as it convinced me to drop all the second part of the paper, which I later incorporated in my forthcoming book on the economic history of world agriculture (title still to be decided) - Princeton UP 2005

The extensive comments we received at the conference led to several important changes in the project. First, the participants shared with us a number of valuable sources that we had either overlooked or undervalued. Secondly, we had emphasized refrigeration's impact on arbitrage over space, and the discussion at clio directed us to also consider the impact on arbitrage over time, which ultimately proved to be a substantial component of the of the published paper. Thirdly, and finally, a couple of participants had probing questions concerning our econometric techniques which led us to re-evaluate and/or work harder at explaining.

On a scale of 1 to 10, I would rate the comments an 11.

As always, the Cliometrics sessions were structured to maximize quality feedback and I received excellent comments that were used to revise the paper. It surprises me that more organizations don't use the Cliometrics approach of sending papers out prior to the conference and building in more time for comments.

Also, the conference provided a great opportunity for me to share my work with more senior scholars who have expertise in my area.

“To be honest, a bit less than expected. People were confused about the use of VARs, and found it hard to believe I had reconstructed the German macro data of the time (a project for which I later got my current job at Humboldt here in Berlin). The same comments resurfaced upon submission to an economic history journal specialized in somewhat technical contributions. As a result, I later submitted the paper to a joint CEPR/NBER/TCR conference in Tokyo, and it got published in the Japanese Journal, where it has good visibility among macroeconomists. My results, still unpublished as far as the English language history community is concerned, have meanwhile become the standard in Germany.”

It helped me to focus the paper and the presentation of the information, confirming that the narrative of the history was useful. The questions also helped me in many small ways with the presentation. This particular paper was part of a bigger project, and the presentation helped me to think about the issues concerning free banking in the U.S. and its history.

Tim and I got several useful comments on our paper at the conference session. Based on these comments, we revised the paper before we sent it off to the Journal of Economic History.

The presentation helped a lot, both with the paper and with ongoing work on financial intermediaries and financial development.

The comments we received pointed to some remaining weaknesses in the argumentation of the paper, which we were able to correct.

Eleven years ago is such a long time that I can't remember specifics. I do recall receiving some valuable suggestions I took into account for revisions.

We received valuable comments from participants that helped to sharpen the contrasts we were drawing between the British and American experience.

The questions helped identify some problems with the paper which were later fixed.

I benefited from the discussions following my presentation

Two ways:

A) The comments we got were nearly all of high quality and moreover they were representative of many different preferences. Therefore when sending in an article for publication we were able to anticipate many possible criticisms.

B) The overall quality of participants was also very high. I benefited enormously from informal interaction.

Very insightful feedback + I was contacted by an editor for a collective book (which, in the end, was not completed).

It did help me very much in completing my PhD thesis... and encouraged me to look into returns from intercontinental trade (which was published as a paper in the Journal of Economic History).

After the excellent criticism, it was revised and published. This paper was one of the first that launched my decade's work on globalization and history, so clio was critical it making it happen!

The feedback was extremely useful and very detailed.

We received useful suggestions for improving the graphical and statistical presentation of the data.

Presenting at the Clio conference helped my research in three ways. First, the audience was made up of a combination of established and experienced academics at the very top of the field, with young, motivated, dynamic students and new academics. It quickly became obvious that all of the participants had read and thought about my paper a great deal. This meant that the quality of feedback I received was an exceptional illustration of "constructive criticism" - well meaning and solution based, yet challenging, unflinching and honest. The subsequent revisions on the paper I presented led to a substantive improvement in both the breadth and depth of the work.

Second, at the time of my presentation I was a post-doctoral research fellow with limited experience presenting my work in an academic forum. The confidence I gained just being invited to attend the Clio conference, to say nothing of successfully presenting and defending my work, was considerable. More than five years later, I still draw lessons from my experience at the Clio conference when I present papers to challenging audiences.

Finally, because of the intimate environment at the Clio conference you have no option but to interact in more informal settings with other students, young economic historians and those at the frontier of international research in economic history. As a result, I established relationships, indeed friendships, at the Clio conference that have persisted and grown in the subsequent years.

In summary, as a young scholar, being invited to present at the Clio conference was unquestionably intimidating, but extremely rewarding.

We received a series of excellent comments from the participants that helped us in revising the paper. The format is superb because nearly all of the participants had read the paper carefully and we delved directly into the key criticisms that people had. Those criticisms led us to perform a series of robustness checks that made the findings of the paper much stronger.

The Clio conference helped me to refine my ideas for this specific paper, and for my research in general. The Clio conference is different from all other conferences because you get so many more questions. Most conferences devoted the bulk of the time to presentations by the authors, while Clio devotes the bulk of the time to questions from the audience. Because they have the papers ahead of time, the questions are higher quality as well.

I benefited from the comments of the audience. The format of the conference – pre-circulation of the papers – contributes to the high quality of the comments and feedback. The conference expedited the publication of my work.

I received some great feedback from both Robert Margo and Bill Sundstrom. Also, this conference was the first time I had the opportunity to interact with other economic historians doing research in my area. These ongoing relationships started at the 2000 Clio have been of significant value to my research.

Presentation at Clio gives you the thoughtful opinions of many people simultaneously. It's like having 30 referees. You realize where the weak points of your argument are, and what needs to be addressed before you submit the article to a journal.

we got a couple of useful comments, but there wasn't a whole lot of discussion.....

We were encouraged to link the implicit credit through the labor market to the informal credit market. Two recent papers provide a more careful examination of informal credit contracts.

I presented an early draft of key conclusions of my dissertation; the discussant's comments and questions by the participants led me to change key aspects of the data sampling strategy, the econometric techniques used, and the conclusions drawn from the data.

I concluded that the results of my investigation would be much more convincing if I compiled a much larger dataset, which now contains observations for 32 countries. I also changed some aspects of the research methodology employed.

It helped me judge my ultimate audience, for what became a book chapter.

Certainly helped me get the paper done!

I received a large number of very valuable comments that helped me to improve my paper quite substantially. The questions - both with respect to methodology and to interpretation - led to several modifications of the paper, which made the paper in my view more convincing. I cannot remember to have received an input into my work either in a seminar or at a conference comparable to that at the Cliometrics Conference. In addition, I got to know a number of interesting economic historians from the US and elsewhere.

1)The first was that I needed to go from the more conjectural question in my title of "How much CAN human capital explain?" (My emphasis here) to How much DID human capital explain? --This led to a new version of the paper focused on the actual role of schooling in European economic growth. I presented this revised version at the European Historical Economics Society meeting in 2001.

2)The second point was that given I was considering a time period spanning a few hundred years, I needed to give much more considered attention to forces influencing the changing role of education over this period. I have kept this fundamental point in mind in more recent work related to this paper.

At the time I presented that paper I was in my second year as a faculty member. The opportunity to get direct feedback and constructive criticism from some of the leading experts in the field was invaluable in helping me to get the work published. It was a part of my dissertation that ultimately led to three publications.

It helped me tremendously in finding ways to improve the focus of the work and identifying weaknesses. It also helped me to connect with other scholars with similar interests. And finally the cliometrics conference group is just a great group of scholars!!!

I felt I received very good comments which helped me prepare the paper for submission to a journal. Price Fishback's comments, in particular, were especially helpful.

It pushed me to more formally model how competition would work among the independent Reserve banks of the 1920s.

We received some great feedback and some publicity that we leveraged into an NSF grant.

The presentation helped me mostly by imposing me to focus my argument toward a public which did not know much about the historical context. The questions were good, but did not raise points I had not thought of before.

We received very good comments from several of those who actually were important authors cited in our paper. This was invaluable. I definitely hope to attend another conference. I found this group to be one of the most intellectually stimulating groups I have interacted with.

I received a number of very useful comments. For example, Lee Alston urged me to discuss the various aspects of ownership in more detail: this simple bit of advice allowed me to make the argument much more clearly.

I must also confess that it was useful to hear from several members of the audience that they found the paper interesting and valuable. This has proven to be one of the more difficult papers to get published, and the encouragement I received at the Clio conference has been valuable as I have grappled with less enthusiastic referee reports over the years.

Great feedback and I met several new colleagues.

It provided useful feedback for the paper and for subsequent work.

This was, I think, the first presentation of a really complete version of the paper. The approach we took in the paper was sort of unusual, so one thing the discussion did was build our confidence that what we were doing was worthwhile. The details of the comments escape me - it's been a while!

The Clio Conference sharpened the economic argument, tightened the empirical argument, and broadened the historical implications of my paper. In other words, it was "Clio" as usual!

I received fantastic feedback. As a graduating student, it was a marvelous introduction to the world of professional economic historians.

This paper provides an overall look at the structure of government in the 20th century. Giving the paper at Clio helped me bring together a great deal of data that I had been working on and to start formulating some quantitative questions about the interrelationships between local, state, and national finance in the 20th century.

The format of the conference is incredibly conducive to getting feedback. The version of the paper that was eventually sent for publication was in many ways different than the version presented in the conference. It is hard to remember the details, but certainly the information that people gave us led us to investigate some different possibilities, discuss alternative interpretations, and also led to a strengthening of the institutional content of the paper.

We also had reached the conclusion that the "theory" part of the paper could easily be eliminated, which we did.

a) It made me aware of a dataset I was unaware of - the 1911 US Tariff Board enquiry. Greg Clark told me about it, and I did not meet Greg until I put in to go to Clio. He actually bought the whole copy of the data with him, for me to copy. What a star!

b) There were a number of good questions, particularly on productivity. It is one of only two conference presentations (out of c. 40 that I have given) that have significantly changed my work. The question was about augmenting labour estimates. Because everyone had read the paper, it was clear that I was in a minority of one, and so I changed what I did. At most conferences few people have read the paper, so you can't tell if you or the questioner are in the minority.

Comments received were incorporated into revised version of paper.

The paper was on a topic in US economic history. I was able to get valuable feedback from experts on the specific topic and in the general area, that I could not have obtained in England (or at other conferences).

The comments I received were extremely helpful in identifying other work and analyses to do on both the particular issue treated in the paper, and in the general research program of which it is a part. The feedback helped make for a much better paper.

You are asking about a short presentation 10 years ago, so a detailed answer is impossible, but I certainly remember the event favorably and recall getting helpful comments from Joel Mokyr and some of the other participants.

The comments helped me subsequently publish the paper and later turn the paper into a book. I was invited to give a seminar at Harvard as a result of my presentation at Clio.

The format of 5 minutes for presentation and the rest for discussion is unique and enabled me to get many more comments and questions than otherwise. Since I am a macroeconomist, to get the perspective of economic historians was invaluable.

The comments that we received on the paper were extremely useful. We incorporated them in the version that was published. They also helped us to identify additional interesting questions for further research.

It helped me immensely in focusing my research in the final stretch towards finishing my dissertation. Getting feed-back from the best of the field was extremely valuable, as were the connections I was able to make to researchers in the field.

The suggestions and criticisms received helped greatly in converting the paper into a publishable piece of work.

This was one of the first times we presented this paper and we received very helpful comments, both in the presentation and immediate one-on-one discussion afterwards (some of which had a very significant effect on the final published version, pp. 188, passim, see below).

Giving a paper at Clio always provides excellent feedback for revisions. There is no better audience to test one's ideas.

It was invaluable. It was also daunting, evidence of how far away from the leaders of the discipline I still was. It made me rethink and rework virtually every part of my project on limited liability.

I found the presentations very helpful. Probably the most important aspect of the clio meetings is the opportunity to interact with other economic historians, young and old.

Several senior scholars commented on my paper in particularly constructive fashion and offered encouragement to continue this line of work. Jeff Williamson claimed that data similar to mine on work attendance and absenteeism existed for some Asian countries around my time of interest (c. 1900). I was skeptical until a discussion with Gary Saxonhouse at Michigan disclosed that in fact, such data do exist for India and Japan cotton textiles. I wouldn't have thought to ask Gary except for the comments I got at Clio, and now the paper will have a broader context.

Discussants at the Clio meetings insisted that I clarify the meaning of the fundamental variable I was working with, absenteeism rates. To what extent does that reflect sickness, and to what extent the economic ability to accommodate recovery from that sickness. This is a big question that led to the first publication. I also received econometric suggestions from peers that I would not have had access to otherwise. The econometric suggestions included both things to do (re: panel data techniques) and things to skip (time series diagnostics).

We received very valuable comments that helped us revise the paper.

It provided feedback on both the theory I was employing and the data that I was using to test the theory. The comments and suggestions led me to reorient my research towards reconstructing and improving estimates of GDP and the labor force from 1800 to 1930.

It allowed me to share my work at an early stage. I received many useful comments and suggestions that I have incorporated into later versions of the work.

The 2002 Clio conference was a critical experience for me at a time when I was struggling to make a transition from one area of research to another. Let me detail by answering your questions.

1. The presentation helped tremendously. At the time I was in the midst of a transition from one area of research (Communal Societies) to another (the Ottoman Empire). The transition was difficult because the literature on the Ottoman Empire had been dominated by historians, whose approach to issues was very different from mine. I was having difficulty asking questions or finding an approach to these questions that would be received well from both Ottoman historians and my economist colleagues. The process of preparing a paper for the conference, receiving comments and feedback from other economic historians (from both economics and history) who have read the paper in its entirety, and the overall experience of talking to them about a variety of issues in economic history helped me tremendously in putting my broad research agenda in perspective. This has been unmatched by any other conference I have attended.

2. The paper that I presented at the Clio meetings was a combination of two papers (for not being able to decide which would be better to present and to be able to receive comments on both papers).

The conference provided a valuable forum to present ongoing research. The unique aspect of the Clio conference is the set of ground rules. Everyone reads the papers ahead of time, and you only have 10 minutes to get the idea across. Then you are subject to 50 minutes of intense, but constructive, criticism from 30 or 40 "captive inquisitors" (so to speak). I know of no other conference in the economic history circuit that does this. In fact, I can't think of one in economics as a whole. It provides the best kind of feedback possible, and should be used as a model for other conferences. As an author, you gain immeasurably from this kind of scrutiny from the best minds in the profession.

The comments of the audience were extremely insightful. Their suggestions helped us to revise both the technical and historical sections of the essay. Suggestions included new instruments to employ in our regressions and new methods to examine.

People really battered me when I presented. It made me rethink what I was doing. Several publications resulted from my reflections (see below). Several other essays are under review. Thanks.

In two equally important ways. First, the very good comments I received during the conference helped me improved my work. Second, I received the necessary stimulus and encouragement that made (and still makes) me keep on working on this field.

I received excellent comments from conference participants. They forced me to think more deeply about the underlying economic model. Several participants provided me with insights on how to link the paper to other literature on colonial governments.

I found the comments very helpful in revising the paper for journal submission. In general the atmosphere helped to maintain a high level of commitment to research in economic history. My thinking was stimulated on a number of topics. It was gratifying to observe and interact with the next generation of economic historians as well as established researchers.