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**WRITING AN ECONOMIC HISTORY AND THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF  
INTERNATIONAL LAW**

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I have been commissioned to write the introductory chapter on the economic history and the historiography of international law for a multivolume collection on the history of international law. The purpose of the chapter is to engage with methodological questions and treat history-writing as an intellectual endeavour, and not primarily with its object of study (the history of international itself). I will focus on how people have used international law to create a particular understanding of what is an “economic” issue.

In this chapter, I want to write a historiographical account that would open new ways of thinking about economic issues and international law. At this point I only have my research experience, panic, and a lot of questions. I want to write this chapter with this particular collective in mind as my principal audience since I think this will provide me the context and knowledge that I need to work through these questions.

My anxiety stems from the fact that I want to ask some fundamental questions through the rich and ever-expanding historical record. What material should I focus on? I can include things like: economic aspects of key international institutional moments (e.g. League of Nations, Bandung, UN), how the field of international economic law was generated, the central role that the idea of economic development plays in all international law, and the different accounts of law and development. Then there is the whole issue of how international law imagines the world in different ways and creates boundaries between domestic/international, public/private, and political/economic. Is there anything I should add or remove?

What working framework should I start with in order to start organizing the material. Is this a story about institutions, ideas, and interests? People and their projects? Imperialism and capitalism? Or is there another way of thinking about this? What are the politics of periodization for this particular project in today's international law? How far back do I go without re-legitimizing a certain canon of international law? What institutions should I focus on? If I'm treating the idea of the "economy" as ever-changing, how much should I also interrogate the understanding of law?