

FELIX S.F. SCHAFF

Bocconi University

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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Bocconi University (Milan, Italy)

Since 2026

Assistant Professor, Department of Social and Political Sciences

Fellow, Dondena Centre for Research on Social Dynamics and Public Policy

PREVIOUS POSITIONS

Utrecht University (Utrecht, Netherlands)

2025 – 2026

Research Fellow, Sustainable Cooperation (SCOOP) Centre

European University Institute (Florence, Italy)

2022 – 2025

Max Weber Fellow

Part-time Assistant Professor (Economics), 2023–2024

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Political Economy, Inequality and Development, Economic History

EDUCATION

PhD, London School of Economics (London, UK)

2018 – 2022

Dissertation: “Exploring the Political Economy Causes of Inequality in Pre-Industrial Germany”

Dissertation Prize Finalist, Economic History Association

MPhil, University of Cambridge (Cambridge, UK)

2017 – 2018

MSc, Bocconi University (Milan, Italy)

2014 – 2017

BA, University Witten-Herdecke (Witten, Germany)

2011 – 2014

PUBLICATIONS

“The Unequal Spirit of the Protestant Reformation: Particularism and Wealth Distribution in Early Modern Germany”. *Journal of Economic Growth* 30, no. 3 (2025), 417-460. [Link]

“The Political Economy of Inequality in Preindustrial Europe”. *Journal of Economic History*, 85, no. 2 (2025), 567-570. (PhD summary) [Link]

“Poverty in Germany from the Black Death until the Beginning of Industrialization” (with Guido Alfani and Victoria Gierok). *Explorations in Economic History* 95, no. 1 (2025), 101630. [Link]

“Urban Political Structure and Inequality: Political Economy Lessons from Early Modern German Cities”. *Journal of Economic History* 84, no. 2 (2024), 517-553. [Link]

“Measuring Historical Inequality in Germany” (with Thilo Albers and Charlotte Bartels). *German Economic Review* 25, no. 4 (2024), 255-274. [Link]

“Warfare and Economic Inequality: Evidence from Preindustrial Germany (c.1400–1800)”. *Explorations in Economic History* 89, no. 2 (2023), 101495. [Link]

“Economic Inequality in Preindustrial Germany: ca. 1300–1850” (with Guido Alfani and Victoria Gierok). *Journal of Economic History* 82, no. 1 (2022), 87-125. [Link]

BOOK PROJECT

“Believe or Not Believe? The Economic History of the Protestant Reformation”. Under contract with *Cambridge University Press*

WORKING PAPERS & RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

“Claiming Her Share: Property Rights and Gender Inequality before Industrialization” (with Sheilagh Ogilvie). *CEPR Discussion Paper No. 20770*, submitted [Link]

“Inheritance and Inequality in a Pre-Modern Economy” (with Sheilagh Ogilvie), submitted

“Inequality and Social Mobility in Preindustrial France” (with Guido Alfani)

“The Emergence of Heavy-Tailed Urban Distributions” (with Thilo Albers and Timo Stieglitz)

VISITING POSITIONS

University of Oxford (Oxford, UK) Nuffield College and Department of Economics	<i>01/2025 – 03/2025</i>
Bocconi University (Milan, Italy) DONDENA Centre for Research on Social Dynamics and Public Policy	<i>09/2024 – 01/2025</i>
London School of Economics (London, UK) Department of Economic History	<i>01/2023 – 12/2023</i>
Hertie School Berlin (Berlin, Germany)	<i>03/2023 – 05/2023</i>

TEACHING

Since 2026 Economic History (undergraduate), Bocconi University

2023–2025 Development & Inequality in the Long Run (graduate), European University Institute

2023–2024 Historical Political Economy (graduate), European University Institute

2022–2023 Analysis of Historical Data: Collection, Elaboration & Causal Inference (graduate), European University Institute

2019–2020 Pre-Industrial Economic History (undergraduate), London School of Economics

2018–2019 The Internationalisation of Economic Growth, 1870–Present (undergraduate), London School of Economics

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND POLICY OUTREACH

EUI Max Weber Newsletter (September 2024): “Beyond Weberian Growth: The Impact of the Protestant Reformation on Inequality and Poverty in the Long Run of History” [Link]

EUI Public Lecture Interviews: Sheilagh Ogilvie (June 2024); Gabriel Zucman (May 2024)

EUI Economics Blog ‘La Fonte’ (December 2023): “Urban Political Structures and the Historical Roots of Wealth Inequality” [Link]

Centre for Economic Policy Research VoxEU Column: (January 2022): “Economic Inequality in Germany: a Long-Run View” (with Guido Alfani and Victoria Gierok) [Link]

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

London School of Economics (London, UK) <i>Instructor (Graduate Teaching Assistant) and Teaching Mentor</i>	<i>2019 – 2021</i>
Bocconi University (Milan, Italy) <i>Research Assistant, ERC Project on Social Mobility and Inequality (PI: Guido Alfani)</i>	<i>2020 – 2022</i>
Bocconi University (Milan, Italy) <i>Research Assistant, ERC Project on Economic Inequality (PI: Guido Alfani)</i>	<i>2016 – 2017</i>

RESEARCH GRANTS AND AWARDS

SCOOP Centre Postdoctoral Research Grant, Utrecht University, €190,000 (2025)
Gerschenkron Dissertation Prize Finalist, Economic History Association (2024)
Max Weber Fellowship Grant, European University Institute, €81,800 (2022)
PhD Studentship, London School of Economics, £72,000 (2018)

SELECTED INVITED TALKS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2026 University of St Andrews (Economics Seminar), University of Manchester (Economics Seminar), London School of Economics (Economic History Seminar), Bocconi University (Department of Social and Political Sciences Seminar), Utrecht School of Economics Research Seminar.

2025 University of Manchester (Frontiers of Comparative Development Conference), Vienna University of Economics and Business (Economic History Seminar), Nuffield College Oxford (Economic History Seminar), University College London (PIMS Seminar), World Economic History Congress (Lund).

2024 Economic History Association (Sacramento), Cliometrics Conference (Washington DC), Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago (Wealth and Income Inequality in History Conference), UCLouvain (FRESH Workshop).

2023–2022 Paris School of Economics (Applied Economics Seminar), Economic History Association (Pittsburgh), DIW Berlin (Applied Micro Seminar), Hertie School Berlin (Social Policy Colloquium), University of Konstanz (Excellence Cluster Conference), ECINEQ Meeting.

ACADEMIC SERVICE

2025–2026 Convenor, Cliometrics Working Group, Utrecht University
2020–2021 Convenor, Cliometrics Working Group, London School of Economics
2020–2021 Steering Committee Member, Virtual Inequality Brownbag Seminar (University of Michigan, LSE, Paris School of Economics, EUI, WZB Berlin, University of Amsterdam)

REFEREEING

Quarterly Journal of Economics; Journal of Economic Growth; Journal of Economic History; Economic History Review; Explorations in Economic History; European Review of Economic History; Cliometrica.

RESEARCH SKILLS

Languages	German (native), English and Italian (fluent)
Methods	R, Stata, Python, QGIS, L ^A T _E X

Updated September 2026