

Input-Output Table for Germany in 1936 as New Benchmark for Economic Historical Analysis

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In the thirties of the last century when Leontief published his input-output studies on the structure of the American economy the German Imperial Statistical Office (Statistisches Reichsamt) was also working on a “matrix of turnover interdependencies” (Umsatzverflechtung) for Germany distinguishing 98 industries. This fact is surprisingly not known. 1933 was chosen as base year to be followed by 1936 because for that year an industry census was carried out. This census provided comprehensive information of input and output data for all branches of German industry.

In connection with rearmament, however, this endeavour was given up and instead, these data were used for compiling detailed material balance sheets which served as statistical basis for preparing the war. Using the hitherto secret

records and additional statistical information we have been busy to fulfil the original plan of the German Imperial Statistical Office of constructing the desired input-output table.

In the paper we present our cumbersome activities to establish an input-output table for Germany in 1936 comprising 39 industries, five final demand categories and five primary inputs. Referring to statistical records which became accessible in the Federal Archive (Bundesarchiv) after German unification we discuss the specific problems of estimating, among others, the amount of government unofficial military expenditure, of capital formation and of industrial intermediate inputs when no internal information was available.

Using the expenditure side and the production side of the input-output table it was also possible to check the components of gross national product (GNP) for Germany in 1936.