

# Call for Sessions - WEHC 2015 [S20089]

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## **Proposed title of the session**

Organizational Innovation and Business Enterprise in International Perspective

## **Abstract**

It is conventional to conceive of the standard business organizational forms as originating in Western Europe. These forms are then generally thought to have spread to the rest of the world either through voluntary adoption or colonial imposition. Recent research has highlighted the limitations of this perspective in a number of ways. First, it has demonstrated that organizational forms that are roughly similar to ones in the standard Western European menu evolved indigenously in many parts of the world, as did forms that do not have direct counterparts in the European menu. Second, new research has shown that when countries outside Europe adopted one of the standard forms, it often functioned very differently in the new context from its original setting. Third, the standard Western European forms turn out not to be so standard after all. Rather, they evolved differently (and functioned very differently) depending on context.

The proposed session aims to showcase some of this new work. One group of scholars participating in this session (Colli, Hilt, Khan, Lamoreaux, and Martinez-Rodrigues) will examine the basic forms in different western settings, highlight the extent of the legal variation, show how the forms worked differently on the ground, and theorize about the sources of the variation. The other group (Aldous, Artunc, Hannah, Harris, Nicholas, and Okazaki) will examine ostensibly transplanted institutions to see how they compared to indigenous economic institutions and how they functioned in new settings. They will also show how the analysis of data on business organizational forms in these different settings sheds new light on such fundamental questions as the choice of business organizational forms and how forms like the corporation actually work.

The broader purpose of the session is to highlight the diverse history of business organizational forms around the world. In particular, we aim to shift the focus of scholarly attention from its current preoccupation with the merits of transplanting particular Western European institutions (such as the focus in the "law and finance" literature on the superiority of common-law over civil-law systems) to understanding how organizational forms evolve endogenously and in particular contexts and the extent to which local institutions shape what businesses can and cannot do.

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## **I. Corresponding Session Organiser**

Prof. Naomi R. Lamoreaux (Yale University [United States of America])

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## **II. Co-Organiser(s)**

1. Corresponding Organiser.
  2. Prof. Zorina Khan (Bowdoin College [United States of America])
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## **III. Expected Participant(s)**

1. same as correspondent.
2. Zorina Khan (Bowdoin College [United States of America])
3. Tetsuji Okazaki (University of Tokyo [Japan])
4. Tom Nicholas (Harvard Business School [United States of America])
5. Cihan Artunc (University of Arizona [United States of America])
6. Michael Aldous (London School of Economics [United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland])
7. Susana Martinez (University of Murcia [Spain])
8. Eric Hilt (Wellesley College [United States of America])
9. Leslie Hannah (London School of Economics [United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland])
10. Andrea Colli (Bocconi University [Italy])
11. Ron Harris (Tel Aviv University [Israel])