

Call for Sessions - WEHC 2015 [S20091]

Proposed title of the session

Patents and Incentives for Innovation across Time and Space

Abstract

Technological change accounts for a large fraction of economic growth, and is critical for understanding the sources of social and economic progress. Central questions include the nature and consequences of incentives that might promote innovation, and the extent to which specific institutions are appropriate for societies that differ significantly in terms of their endowments and development objectives. To scholars who extrapolate from the experience of Britain and the United States during early industrialization, patent systems were an important determinant of rapid technological advances. Today, however, many academics, policymakers and interest groups are increasingly questioning the validity of these conclusions, and considering how relevant other forms of incentives might be for high-technology industries and information technology, and also for developing countries, in the twenty-first century. For instance, some argue that underdeveloped regions might experience net losses if patents are primarily held by foreigners who choose not to exploit their innovations, and further exercise their monopoly power to block local developments. Prizes, which were extensively used by such countries as France and Japan, are often supported as an alternative that might further the development goals of society to a greater degree than patent grants.

The proposed panel is based on the premise that current policies regarding incentives for innovation would benefit from more systematic studies that explore such questions, especially research that employs an historical and comparative approach to identify and analyze the implications of the observed diversity in approaches and outcomes. The participants in the session represent a spectrum of different disciplines and methodologies, and their papers highlight the disparate experiences of countries and industries across time and regions. The empirical results of these papers allow us to compare the institutions and patterns of inventive activity in different continents, including Asia, Europe, and the Americas, over the past three centuries. They comprise extensive new work on incentives, markets, firms, management and entrepreneurship. Topics addressed include Japanese management practices, financing in Germany, trade in property rights in technology in France, the role of spatial factors in innovation, the appropriation of returns from technological creativity, the transfer of agricultural technology in Latin America, comparative approaches to U.S. institutions and inventive activity, and the analysis of related issues in today's developing economies. In sum, the proposed session promises to enable participants and audience alike to draw broad general conclusions that will shed light on the nature and consequences of different incentives and innovations across many cultures in the past, and will facilitate discussions regarding the lessons that these diverse institutions might hold for technological and socioeconomic development in the modern era.

I. Corresponding Session Organiser

Prof. Zorina Khan (Bowdoin College/Hoover Institution, Stanford University [United States of America])

II. Co-Organiser(s)

1. Corresponding Organiser.
2. Prof. Naomi Lamoreaux (Yale University [Afghanistan])

III. Expected Participant(s)

1. same as correspondent.
2. Shigehiro Mishimura (Kansai University [Japan])
3. Tom Nicholas (Harvard Business School [United States of America])
4. Jochen Streb (Mannheim University [Germany])
5. Gabriel Galvez Behar (University of Lille [France])
6. Alessandro Nuvolari (University of Pisa [Italy])
7. Sean Bottomley (Cambridge University [United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland])
8. Yovanna Pineda (Central Florida University [United States of America])
9. Naomi Lamoreaux (Yale University [United States of America])
10. Keith Maskus (University of Colorado [United States of America])