

Call for Sessions - WEHC 2015 [S20133]

Proposed title of the session

Chinese Public Finance: From military-fiscal state through the issues of common pool resources and foreign trade taxation to the emergence of public debt

Abstract

Chinese public finance offers many practices that can be compared with those in other societies but which do not fit into the arc of changes suggested by recent efforts at synthesizing global fiscal history in terms of the “rise of fiscal states.” (Yun-Casalilla, Bartolomé and Patrick K. O’Brien with Francisco Comín Comín. eds. 2012. *The Rise of Fiscal States: A Global History 1500-1914*. Cambridge University Press). This panel introduces recent research by a group of scholars trained in economics, political science, and history, and now working or studying in China and the U.S. that allows us to consider different features of Chinese public finance that separately support distinct assessments of Chinese fiscal practices—alternately stories of failure (to sustain a military-fiscal state), early confrontation with common pool resource problems, and late development of Western financial institutions. We include papers comparing 10th-12th c. Chinese fiscal practices with subsequent European military-fiscal state practices, 16th-19th century common pool resources management issues (two papers), commercial taxation from the 17th to 19th centuries (two papers), and 19th – 20th century Chinese public debt (two papers). We have as our discussant a senior European economic historian, Philip Hoffman, whose forthcoming book actively contrasts the economics of early modern European military developments with those in other parts of the world. The papers, listed in tentative of presentation according to theme and temporal coverage are:

Organizer: R. Bin Wong (UCLA)

William Guanglin Liu (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology), “The Song Military Fiscal State: Travel with Robert Hartwell in early modern Europe and Song China.”

Man Wu (Zhengzhou University) with R. Bin Wong, “Local Water Control Projects: Public Resources and Local Finance, 1500-1900.”

Shigu Liu (Shanghai Jiaotong University), “Taxing Fishermen in the Poyang Lake Region: common pool resource issues in China, 1500-1900”

He Wenkai (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology), “Information and Discipline: The Monitoring of the Collection of Transit Duties on Domestic Trades in Qing China, 1740-1850.”

Diao Li (Wuhan University), “Taxation of the 19th-century China-Russia Tea Trade.”

Jin-hua Ma (Central University of Finance and Economics), “A Study of local government debt in Modern China: 1840-1949.”

Dong Yan (UCLA), “The Introduction of Western Instruments of Public Credit to late 19th-century China.”

These papers individually provide diverse empirical examples of how Chinese public finance practices have resembled those elsewhere and collectively suggest that the larger pattern of historical changes in Chinese public finance trace an arc distinct from more commonly known. Issues of common pool resources, trade taxation, and public debt together provide different perspectives on Chinese public finance all of which develop after the Chinese state abandons the mix of policies and strategies most similar to those of the European military-fiscal state.

I. Corresponding Session Organiser

Prof. R Bin Wong (UCLA [United States of America])

II. Co-Organiser(s)

1. Corresponding Organiser.

III. Expected Participant(s)

1. same as correspondent.
2. William Guanglin Liu (HKUST [China])
3. Man Wu (Zhengzhou University [China])
4. Shigu Liu (Shanghai Jiaotong University [China])
5. Wenkai He (HKUST [China])
6. Diao Li (Wuhan University [China])
7. Jinhua Ma (Central University of Finance and Economics [China])
8. Dong Yan (UCLA [United States of America])