

Call for Sessions - WEHC 2015 [S20144]

Proposed title of the session

From Fragmented Societies to Modern Welfare States: Comparative Public Sector Transition Paths

Abstract

The growth of the public sector and social spending has been one of the most remarkable changes in western society from the 19th century onwards. In this period industrialization intensified, and many countries transformed politically from absolutist to parliamentary regimes. What was especially important for the transformation was the development from fiscally fragmented to more fiscally centralized public sectors (Dincecco 2011). This development was connected to the transition to fuller democracy, sustained economic growth and the formation of the modern welfare state. (Lindert 2004) Outside of western countries, it would appear that fiscal systems remained fragmented. Yet much research still needs to be done to understand how the experiences in Africa, Asia, and Latin America differed from the west.

The proposed session opens a historical perspective on the growth of the public sector (central and local government) from the middle of the 19th century onwards. In the variety of literature on the public sector development and the welfare state the comparison of different models has been one of the central aspects. The increasing historical knowledge has, however, showed that the origin and implementation of public sector institutions have differed substantially between countries.

This session examines (but is not restricted to) the following themes:

- (1) A long-term quantitative examination of public sector finances. We encourage research which will be based on new central or local government data.
- (2) In line with Gershenkron's classic thesis of backwardness we are interested in comparative institutional analysis and the information base of public sector development: On what kind of comparative knowledge were the reforms of the public sector based?
- (3) Comparative and theoretical analysis of the public sector development. Especially we are interested in research which analyzes preconditions and obstacles of public sector development during the transition period and the question of inclusiveness of economic growth. The rise of developmental states is a key issue in this theme.
- (4) Comparative historical analysis of fiscal development in countries or colonies beyond Europe and North America. The main issue is what factors (if any) delayed fiscal development.

I. Corresponding Session Organiser

Prof. Christopher Lloyd (The Finnish Centre of Excellence in Historical Research, University of Tampere [Finland])

II. Co-Organiser(s)

1. Corresponding Organiser.
2. Prof. Jari Eloranta (Appalachian State University [United States of America])
3. Dr. Matti Hannikainen (University of Tampere [Finland])
4. Prof. Dan Bogart (University of California-Irvine [United States of America])

III. Expected Participant(s)

1. same as correspondent.
2. Jari Eloranta (Appalachian State University [United States of America])
3. Matti Hannikainen (University of Tampere [Finland])
4. Dan Bogart (University of California-Irvine [United States of America])
5. Gudmundur Jónsson (University of Iceland [Iceland])
6. Ola Grytten (Norwegian School of Economics [Norway])
7. Huck-yu Kwon (Seoul National University [Republic of Korea])
8. Sakari Heikkinen (University of Helsinki [Finland])
9. Jarmo Peltola (University of Tampere [Finland])
10. Erik Eklund (Federation University Australia [Australia])
11. No input.
12. No input.