

*The State and State-Building:
Theory and Practice in Retrospect*

5-6 May 2011, Belgrade

**Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade,
Center for Ethics, Law and Applied Philosophy, Belgrade,
Centre for the Study of Democracy, Westminster University, London**

Abstract

The state increasingly represents an enigma in contemporary politics, and opens up a variety of controversies in social science research. On the one hand, the state has been a central concept used to constitute the 'international', and its institutionalization across the globe the focus of concern behind state-building. For instance, the state frequently represents itself as a practical measure of political maturity - as exemplified by the significance attached to 'a seat' at the United Nations and the importance assigned to state-building measures as a means to counter poverty and terrorism. Yet, on the other hand, there are simultaneous claims that the state is increasingly eclipsed by global markets, transnational environmental and social hazards, and not to mention expanding webs of international governance regimes. Following this logic, the concept of the state is argued as outdated, while we are being persuaded to be better off speaking of a politics of networks, instead of a politics among nations.

This leaves us at an interesting juncture, at which some are concerned with crises of the state, while others refer to an evolving transposition of political authority beyond the state. Apparently, the state is a matter of concern for some, while for others it is epiphenomenal. What does this mean for social science analysis in its interpretation of our present political circumstances? How should political, social and legal researchers reconcile this swath of seeming contradictions: e.g., EU states secede growing degrees of sovereignty to Brussels, mounting secessionist movements clamour for statehood in New York, business and financial networks define the rules of 'best practice' in Davos...

Many political and social theorists would argue that what seems a puzzle is not one at all: the concept of the state is, according to them, nothing more than a social and political arrangement. To refer to Nettl's characterization: 'a conceptual variable' which arises not from nature but from conceptual construction and social authority. Yet, this explanation only leads to further questions; namely, what role can and should we expect from the present-day state? Which lessons can be drawn from our encounters with the state as an example of both authority and impotence? How should we articulate the changing boundaries between sovereignty and accountability, rights and responsibilities, the universal and the culturally determined, the individual and the collective, hierarchy and equality? These are profound questions which extend beyond a single discipline, and benefit greatly from the interdisciplinary insights of scholars across International Relations, Comparative Politics, Political and Social Theory, and International Law. They prompt reflection on theoretical postulates that encounter emerging practices and contradictions.

The chosen site of this conference, Belgrade, is a fitting location to consider these issues. Belgrade is at the heart of a region where politics dictates that the state does and does not matter. The former instance is demonstrated by challenges of secessionism and state-building, while the latter is reflected in national aspirations for EU membership and a Europe without borders. These different political objectives and practices demonstrate that Belgrade is indeed a symbolic site for addressing the controversies that are opened up by the concept of the state.

Preliminary Conference program
Thursday, 5 May

09.15 – 09:50 Opening addresses

TBA, in the name of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Government of Serbia

TBA, in the name of the Balkan Trust for Democracy

Petar Bojanic, Director of the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade

Vojin Rakic, Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade

David Chandler, Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Westminster

10.00 – 12.00 Panel I: The State: Excavating a Concept, Deconstructing an Image

Chair: TBA

Discussant: David Chandler (Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Westminster)

Papers:

Nicholas Onuf
Florida International University, Miami
State-Building, World-Making

Berit Bliesemann de Guevara
Institute for International Relations, Helmut Schmidt University Hamburg
Potemkin States: On the Illusion of Remaking the World in the Western Image

Iver Neumann
Norwegian Institute of International Affairs
The Anthropologist and the Early State: The Field, the Steppe and the Case of Rus'

12.00 – 13.30 Lunch

13.30 – 15.30 Panel II: The State: A Modern Institution, Contemporary Dilemmas

Chair: Friedrich Kratochwil (Kyung Hee University and CEU)

Discussants: Nicolas Lemay-Hebert (UQAM) and TBA

Papers:
Raymond Taras
Malmö University
Conflicting Norms Governing State Recognition Since 1989—Non-Interference in Domestic Affairs Versus Self-Determination of Nations, and Territorial Integrity Versus Plebiscitary Secession. Devaluing or Valorizing Statehood?

Vojin Rakic
Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade

Jan Wouters, PhD.

Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies and Institute for International Law at the University of Leuven (KULeuven)

The Role of Regional Organizations in State-Building after the North African Uprisings:

An Opportunity to Cement a Common Policy or a Threat to the New Emerging Democracies?

15.30 – 16.00 Coffee Break

16.00 – 17.30 Panel III: The State, Society and Governance

Chair: Vojin Rakic (Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade)

Discussants: Jan Wouters (KU Leuven) and Iver Neumann (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs)

Papers:

Rodney Hall

Oxford University

The Webs that we Weave: Failed State Social Policy and Regulatory Policy as Catalysts for Financial Crises

Jovan Babic, PhD.

Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade

Communities and Boundaries in Cyber Territories

Albena Azmanova

University of Kent at Brussels

The Crisis of Capitalism and the State - Ever More Powerful, Ever Less Authoritative

19.00 Dinner

Friday, 6 May

10.00 – 12.00 Panel IV: State-Building in Retrospect

Chair: TBA

Discussant: Raymond Taras (NIPO)

Papers:

David Chandler

Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Westminster

The Future of the State-Building Paradigm

Nicolas Lemay-Hébert
School of Management - UQAM
Center for Peace Missions and Humanitarian Studies – UQAM
Bringing Sociology Back In the Study of State and Statebuilding”

Julian Reid
Centre for International Relations at King’s College, London
Sustainable Development and the Neoliberal Problematization of State Sovereignty

12:00 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00 Panel V: The State, Citizenship and Globalization

Chair: Jovan Babic, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade

Discussant: Nicholas Onuf (FIU) and Albena Azmanova (UKB)

Papers:

Hannes Peltonen, PhD.
Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science and International Relations
Korea University
States as Good International Citizens: Some Pitfalls to Avoid

Friedrich Kratochwil, PhD.
Professor Kyung Hee University (S. Korea), Visiting Professor Central European
University
Politics, Law and the Sacred

16.00—16:30 Coffee Break

16:30 – 17.30 Panel VI: Wrap-up and De-briefing, Routledge Edited Book

Discussion

Chair: TBA

19.00 Dinner

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE:

Petar Bojanic
Center for Ethics, Law and Applied Philosophy
Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory
University of Belgrade

11000 Beograd, Serbia

Tel: 381-11-2646-242

bojanic@instifdt.bg.ac.rs

Vojin Rakic

Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory

Center for Ethics, Law and Applied Philosophy

University of Belgrade

11000 Beograd, Serbia

Tel: 381-11-2646-242

rakic@instifdt.bg.ac.rs; vojinrakic@hotmail.com

Nikolas M. Rajkovic

Austrian Academy of Sciences

Strohgasse 45 D/G

1030 Wien, Austria

nikolas.rajkovic@eui.eu

David Chandler

Department of Politics and International Relations

University of Westminster

32-38 Wells Street

London, W1T 3UW

United Kingdom

D.Chandler@wmin.ac.uk

The Conference is supported by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Serbia, the Balkan Trust for Democracy and the *Erste Stiftung*