**The Uses and Abuses of State Power in a Changing World**

The use of state power has certainly moved through a series of different phases since 1945. This has been the result of simultaneous changes in broad structures of IPE and in domestic social contracts. In IPE terms this is concerned with the changing forms and functions of globalisation; in social contract terms this is concerned with how states respond to changing political challenges such as the meaning of development and associated processes of industrialisation, environmental degradation, technological transformations, concepts of citizenship, and democratisation. Political power and associated understandings of its (re)constitution in the face of these different networks, forms, and resources is best placed to offer ways in which the academy can “get to grips” with mapping, understanding, and perhaps even explaining these changes. The epistemological, ontological, and analytical richness that can emerge from the rich intellectual traditions within this discipline offer a possibility for developing heuristic devices that address the challenges to the state in the twenty-first century. This panel will seek to bring together scholars from across these different traditions, analysing different iterations of the use of state power in order to induce common themes and trends that emerge from such investigations and interrogations.

**PAPER 1**

**Power in the Americas: Learning about Democracy from Latin America**

*Christopher Wylde, St Mary’s University, Twickenham; Barry Cannon, Maynooth University, Ireland*  
*Abstract:*

This article is an attempt to emphasise the learnings from Latin America that are instructive for theory and practice on politics and democracy, including for political contexts beyond Latin America. Essentially, we argue that underlying these processes is an inequality of power between elites and masses, favouring the latter, and that this imbalance must be righted if democracy is to be reinvigorated. Adapting Michael Mann’s IEMP (ideology, economy, military and politics) structure we identify the key characteristics which can inhibit and can encourage democracy, both in Latin America and beyond. In this way, not only do we aim to provide a panoramic overview of Latin American power structures, but also provide essential learnings for mature democracies on how to restore essential democratic values. This serves equally as a comprehensive overview on Latin American society and politics, and a powerful polemic in favour of democracy.

*Key words*: Latin America, Area Studies, Democratisation, Power

**PAPER 2**

**(De)-democratisation and the Far-Right: Global Entanglements in the Brazilian and Irish Cases**

*Barry Cannon (Maynooth University), Rodrigo Campos (University of York) and Shane Murphy (Dublin City University)*

*ABSTRACT:*

This paper analyses processes of (de)-democratisation in Brazil and Ireland, focusing on the rise of the far-right in both countries through the lens of Global Historical Sociology (GHS). First, we engage with the democratisation literature arguing that much of its analytical power is hampered by normative framing based on Western models of democracy and ‘methodological nationalism’ which treats each national case as an isolated exemplar, ignoring how global and transnational dynamics shape (de)-democratisation processes. Instead, we offer Balibar’s (2009) more expansive notion of these processes as a constant popular struggle for ‘equaliberty’. Then, we examine the far-right's ascendance in a comparative sense in both the Global North (Ireland) and Global South (Brazil), demonstrating how political economy, ideology, and enmity are interlinked factors that explain the conditions of emergence and agency of far-right politics. In this manner, we uncover the ways global capitalism's crisis, transnational identity formations, and the global circulation of fear-mongering narratives have co-constituted the far-right, exacerbating to greater or lesser degrees, de-democratisation processes in both contexts. The chapter concludes that while local specificities remain, the interconnectedness of global capitalism necessitates a rescaled, relational understanding of the far-right, highlighting both the persistent differences and entangled similarities between Brazil and Ireland in their (de)democratisation processes.

*Keywords*: (De)-democratisation, Far-Right Politics, Bolsonarismo, Ireland, Global Historical Sociology, Methodological Nationalism.

**PAPER 3**

**21st century politics in Latin America: re-politicization and democratic tensions**

*Juan Pablo Ferrero, University of Bath*

*Abstract:*

At the onset of the 21st century in South America, a socio-political shift emerged, characterized by an anti-neoliberal mobilization process. This led to a left turn in various countries in the region, including Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina, Bolivia, Uruguay, and Ecuador, between 2000 and 2008. These governments opposed the economic tenets and geopolitical alignments of the Washington Consensus, advocating for policies aimed at enhancing the well-being of the population and fostering a substantial expansion of rights. The initial two decades marked a significant re-politicization, particularly in emphasizing the importance of state intervention in civil society's rights. However, following the global crisis of 2008/2009, a conservative reaction gained momentum. Presently, this has resulted in the predominance of right-wing ideologies, propelling a new wave of politicization. This trend challenges the limited but crucial democratic consensus achieved since the re-democratization of the 1980s. To what extent is this reactionary wave similar or different to the reactionary wave of the 1960s? To answer this question, this paper adopts a meso-level analysis as we reassess O’Donnell’s Bureaucratic Authoritarian State (BAS) as analytical proxy. We argue that while there are some similarities with the BAS (the reaction to the political cycle that preceded it), the new political dynamics affect less the political regimes but is shaped by a different (active) citizenship. A type of citizenship that questions the idea that the nation-state, as currently conceived and constituted, serves as the legitimate basis for defining democratic citizenship rights and responsibilities. The function of the state, therefore, becomes to deregulate the economy. By doing so, it aligns itself with the new contentious type of citizenship, reproducing rather than interrupting the democratic political regime.

*Key Words*: Democracy, right-wing, Latin America, citizenship

**PAPER 4**

**Enhanced State Functions: Dynamics of State Power and Developmental Conundrums**

*Michael F. Keating, American International University, UK.*

*Abstract:*

States face political economic difficulties in a low-growth, fractious post-COVID global context, characterised by internal political de-/re-alignment, rising populism and democratic backsliding, and punctuated by rising military confrontation and threat perception. Meanwhile, states are engaged – to various degrees – in a low-carbon transition, driven by a range of cost, normative and electoral factors. To manage these pressures, states require enhanced regulatory and governance functions far beyond those envisaged by neo-liberal ‘good governance’ conceptions of the state. State power, always a dynamic issue, therefore faces a critical juncture, where strategies to build on National Innovation Systems (NIS) largely undermined by the political economic disjunctures of neo-liberalism, austerity, and other forms of anti-state governance; while the ability of civil society to exercise countervailing pressure has clearly declined since the turn of the Century. This paper outlines the difficulties developed states face in meeting these contemporary challenges, and from there, core problems of state power in the developing world are projected.

*Keywords:* State, power, regulation, governance, neoliberalism, low-carbon transition, development, civil society

DISCUSSANT: JoJo Nem Singh