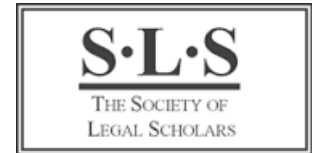




British Institute of
International and
Comparative Law



27TH Annual SLS/BIICL Workshop on Theory & International Law

Wednesday 16th May 2018, 14:00-19:00

British Institute of International and Comparative Law
Charles Clore House, 17 Russell Square, London WC1B 5JP

Call for Papers

The Return of The “S” Word: Sovereignty in Contemporary International Law

It was not too long ago that many prominent “internationalists” (lawyers and international relations theorists alike) were relishing the end, or death, of state sovereignty – or at the very least ushering in the concept’s twilight years. Indeed, in the heady days, month and years following the collapse of the Berlin Wall there seemed to be an overt liberal triumphalism and resuscitation of internationalist ambition, with the revival and rejuvenation of a number of global regimes and institutions. Fast forward to the present, however, and the geo-political climate at the start of 2018 seems only to highlight the naivety of this vision for the future of international law. A rising tide of populist nationalism in the West and a resurgence of authoritarianism among existing and emerging superpowers in the East play out under the political rhetoric of sovereignty and political independence.

With mooted withdrawals from international institutions such as the European Union and the International Criminal Court – institutions championed very much in opposition to the worst excesses of state sovereignty – it might not be too churlish to say that we are witnessing sovereignty’s resurgence. One must be careful, however, to not simply replace one overly simplistic teleological narrative with another, as the complex interplay of political forces in the modern era arguably resist such easy framing. Nevertheless, now is a fruitful time to reengage with the concept of sovereignty, as well as the related ideas of statehood and self-determination, less to reveal grand narratives about the evolving nature of the international legal order, and more to draw from current events to shed critical light on the continuing relevance and changing meaning of those concepts in their current political context.

With this background in mind, the 2018 Workshop on Theory and International Law invites paper proposals to address a range of contemporary questions, **including but not limited to** the following: Does the concept of sovereignty remain useful beyond political rhetoric or in acting as a placeholder for other claims? What do current political struggles reveal about the balance between the norms of sovereignty and self-determination? What can historical struggles over territorial sovereignty and self-determination teach us about the contemporary context? What does the mooted exit or retreat from institutions by a number of states reveal about sovereignty, if anything, or indeed the future of multilateralism beyond such episodes? What exclusions or silences exist when speaking of (state) sovereignty and what do such omissions reveal about our perceived boundaries of the concept? What future does sovereignty have in an age of global governance?

The workshop will include keynote presentations from the following:

- **Professor Gerry Simpson** (LSE), “Sovereignty after Sovereignty”

- **Professor Robert Cryer** (Birmingham), “The International Criminal Court: A Threat to, or a Supporter of Sovereignty?”
- **Professor Nicholas Tsagourias** (Sheffield), “Sovereignty of Cyberspace or Sovereignty in Cyberspace?”

The convenors welcome contributions that:

- Seek to engage with the concept of sovereignty directly, or engage with key aspects of international law related to sovereignty (institutions, statehood, territory, jurisdiction, self-determination, etc.);
- draw insights from other disciplines, including but not limited to philosophy, politics and economics; or,
- employ innovative methods and/or are self-reflexive about methodology.

Application Process

Submission of abstracts is open to academics, including graduate students, and to legal practitioners.

Please submit an abstract in Word or PDF of no more than one page to [Dr Aisling O’Sullivan](#) and [Dr Richard Collins](#) . The following information should also be provided with each abstract:

- The author’s name and affiliation
- The author’s CV, including a list of relevant publications
- The author’s contact details, including email address

The deadline for submission of abstracts is Wednesday 4th April 2018. Applicants will be informed by Monday 9th April 2018.

Regrettably, we are unable to provide funding for travel to and attendance at the conference, but there will be a reception at the end of the conference.

Aisling O’Sullivan
University of Sussex

Richard Collins
University College Dublin

March 2nd 2018