NIG 2018 Panel proposal

Convenors:
Prof. Ramses A. Wessel (UT), Dr. Ringo Ossewaarde (UT), and Dr. Duco Bannink (VU)

The Role of the State in Times of Globalisation:
Multidisciplinary Perspectives

This panel aims to compare and discuss papers that either challenge or confirm the widespread notion that due to globalization nation-states are no longer able to fulfil their key functions in relation to, inter alia, providing legitimacy of decision-making, democracy, the rule of law and legal certainty. Is it really true that nation-states and their citizens are losing control as a result of globalization?

The idea that nation-states are losing control lies behind many theories explaining current trends in populism, the success of extreme right or left-wing political parties or attempts to ‘take back control’ such as ‘Brexit’ (Rodrik, 2017). Individuals may experience feelings of alienation as rules are no longer made by the people they (feel to) know and control (Giddens, 2002). Instead, they become part of ‘mega’ trade deals such as CETA or TTIP and unknown experts, rather than elected officials, in unknown international bodies decide on the quality of their food or their production standards (Ambrus, et al., 2014). And, indeed, global events seem to change our direct living conditions: refugees may end up in municipalities in EU member states as a result of events elsewhere, citizens are asked to separate their waste to prevent further global warming, and the 4th industrial revolution may challenge their job security. The direct link between global and local – ‘glocal’ – policies seems to make it impossible for domestic administrative structures to continue guaranteeing their well-being. The same has been held in relation to globalisation as a source for changes in the role of states: “the nation-state is indeed ‘under attack’ – but not only by globalization”. Larger trends under headings like ‘internationalisation’ or ‘regionalisation’ also play a role, leading to ‘transnational’ or ‘regional’ rather than ‘globalised’ structures (Lenhard, 2009:4). And this is what global governance is all about: public authority is no longer (merely) exercised by national governmental actors, but (increasingly) by both public and private actors outside of existing state-structures (Zürn, 2018).

Many economists, sociologists and political scientists (including IR theorists) have pointed to the influence of globalisation on the role of the nation-state. Thus Cerny (1995), for instance, suggests an erosion of the ability of the state to provide all three main kinds of public good: regulatory, productive/distributive, and redistributive. And, even the defence of its population (perhaps the rationale of the state) has largely been removed in some cases from the hands of individual nations, which rely instead on multilateral agreements (Held, 1998; Held and McGrew, 1998). Some, taking another perspective, have argued that in this situation we should not look for solutions beyond the state, but within the state as the latter has become ‘dysfunctional’ in tackling “the most perilous challenges of our time – climate change, terrorism, poverty, and trafficking of drugs, guns, and people” (Barber, 2013). Governance by cities rather than by states would be the solution. Some of these insights – pointing to the looming ‘end of the state’ or to ‘de-bordering’ (Albert and Brock, 1996) – also influenced legal scholarship with a view to studying interactions between legal systems (Nijman and Nollkaemper, 2007), legal pluralism (Krisch, 2010), multilevel
regulation (Føllesdal, Wessel, Wouters, 2008), and the role of non-state actors and informal processes and outcomes under the heading of ‘informal international lawmaking’ (Pauwelyn, Wessel, and Wouters, 2012, 2014).

At the same time, globalisation has not made an end to the way we structured the world in any legal, jurisdictional, or political sense. A map of the world still shows us the neatly defined borders and the different colours of the currently existing states and ‘statehood’ is still on the wishlist of a number of territories around the world. Indeed, the nation-state seems to be remarkably resilient and the number of states as full members of the United Nations has even increased from 157 in 1980 to 193 today. What is ‘the state of the state’ these days? Is it really under attack by globalisation or is it more resilient than the main literature over the past two decades or so made us believe?

**Link to the NIG themes**

This panel aims to bring different insights together from, *inter alia*, political science, public administration, sociology, economics and law. Papers are expected to either clearly challenge the idea of the fading nation-state or confirm its continued relevance. The topic is closely connected to the NIG theme Political Institutions and Democracy, but there are also clear links with the other themes, including multi-actor and multi-level governance.

**Prof. Ramses Wessel**
University of Twente
E-mail: ramses.wessel@utwente.nl

**Dr. Ringo Ossewaarde**
University of Twente
E-mail: m.r.r.ossewaarde@utwente.nl

**Dr. Duco Bannink**
VU Amsterdam
E-mail: d.b.d.bannink@vu.nl