



6th International PPE-Conference

Re-Thinking the State: Democracy between order and chaos

17. – 19. September 2021

University Witten/Herdecke

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Introduction

This will now be the 6th International PPE Conference. The title for 2021 is "Rethinking the state: Democracy between order and chaos" and the conference will focus on democracy and its relationship to the state as such. Due to the complexity of the topic, competent keynote speakers will provide participants with the necessary background knowledge to be able to deal with the topic intensively in workshops and discussion rounds. As in previous years, the conference - in cooperation with the Witten Institute for Social and Institutional Change (ISIC) - will give students the opportunity to present original and outstanding research papers at the academic level, which have been selected in a peer-review process.

Due to current circumstances, we are planning to hold the conference in a hybrid format, allowing both physical and digital participation. We hope that it will still be possible to offer at least a partial presence in September 2021 and thus provide you as participants with an unforgettable experience!

Rethinking the State - Democracy between Order and Chaos

Since the dawn of civilisation, states have been the dominant entity in the political organisation of society and the economy. To this day, they have evolved and transformed through a variety of forms. One result of this transformation is the rise of democracy to global prominence. The birth of democracy gave rise to perhaps the most controversial but at the same time very popular idea of the democratic state: a state governed by its people. Today, much of the academic discourse on the state is devoted to the analysis of the democratic system. Various political theories see democracy as the end result of social progress and economic development. Other proponents understand it as a necessary precondition for national and global peace and for a just and sustainable transformation of the state.

While democracy is undeniably linked to the purpose of ordering the state in a fair and just manner, it is also under constant threat, which can trigger political chaos and eventually lead to its demise. Democratic chaos arises from a variety of internal and external contradictions and criticisms of the state. For example, the stated European goals of spreading democracy, stability, tolerance, security and prosperity are not unchallenged. From monetary policy to institutional reform, Europe faces disagreements among its members and pressures from outside that question the functioning of its democracy and the role of its institutions. These criticisms confront the democratic state with various challenges against its effectiveness and legitimacy. The remedy often recommended by critics is to curtail democratic institutions and strengthen the will of the people, but in addition, it is often pointed out that stronger and more effective institutions at the national and supranational levels can be crucial to overcome political paralysis and erosion.

Since the birth of democracy, there have always been times when the democratic state order has faced an existential crisis. The pressing questions that guide us are therefore: When and where will this crisis repeat itself? And what are its causes and consequences? How can democracy remain capable of acting in times of increasing polarisation? Will democracies be able to adapt to changing environments and technologies? Can democracy preserve peace and justice under the pressure of populism?

The PPE Conference 2021 aims to address these questions and related issues from different academic and practical perspectives. The main aim of this year's conference is to shed light on some of these questions

and to open up new avenues of scientific enquiry. We want to enable the discourse on the state and democracy to be enriched by advances in future research and critical thinking. We hope to contribute to this progress by providing an interdisciplinary and academic setting for students and scholars to exchange knowledge and ideas and to engage in dialogue.

The Programme

The programme will include keynotes, workshops and a panel discussion over three consecutive days. We also want to schedule time to allow our participants to socialise, network and have fun. The physical well-being of participants will also be taken care of in the form of breakfast, lunch and dinner. The highlight of the weekend will also be a party. So don't miss out on all this!

[In four keynotes](#), experts with different backgrounds will present different perspectives on the state and democracy to give participants a comprehensive overview. The keynotes will also introduce participants to different theories and relevant case studies. Find out which keynotes you can expect on our website or on our social medias!

[In four workshops](#), participants are invited to acquire new knowledge and skills in an interactive way. The aim of the workshops is to enable participants to engage with the craft and science of democratic governance in a practical and impactful way. The workshops are led by experts with extensive professional experience in science and politics. Also find out here on our website or on our social medias which workshops you can expect!

[In a panel discussion](#) we want to create a space to discuss relevant challenges for democracy. It will bring together scholars from different disciplines to address these challenges and discuss possible solutions. The moderation of the debate will ensure that the voices of participants from the audience are included.

Beyond the academic framework of the programme, we want to give our participants the space for stimulating exchange, networking and making new friends.

The ISIC Young Scholar and Student Paper Awards

Faculty participation and support is crucial to the success of the International PPE Conference. With the support of the Witten Institute for Social and Institutional Change, or ISIC, which is integrated into the Faculty of Economics at Witten/Herdecke University, the PPE Conference awards two prizes for outstanding research on the state and democracy.

- The ISIC Young Scholar Award is given to young, promising doctoral students or researchers who conduct remarkable and novel research in the fields of politics, philosophy and economics
- The Student Paper Award is given to students for an outstanding and promising contribution to academic discourse.

The ISIC Board, in collaboration with a delegation from the organising team, will select the winning paper. The winner of the award will receive the opportunity to present the winning paper at the 6th International PPE Conference, as well as an allowance of 500€!

The International PPE Conference 2021