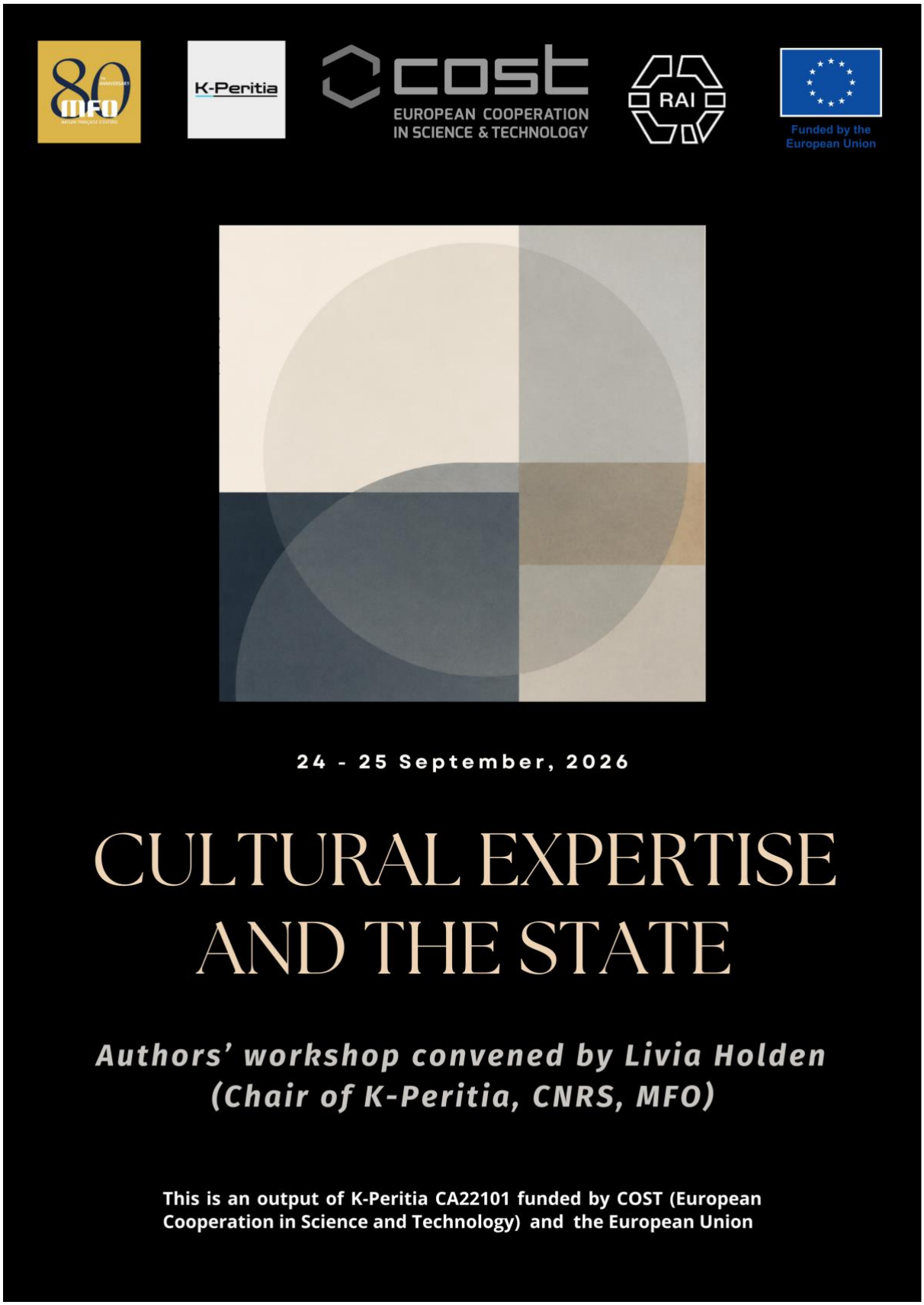


This output is based upon work from COST Action K-Peritia CA 22101, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) www.cost.eu

CULTURAL EXPERTISE AND THE STATE
Authors workshop convened by Livia Holden K-Peritia CA 22101
Maison Française d'Oxford 24th – 25th September 2026

Programme

24th September

9 am
Introduction by Stephane Van Damme (Director of the Maison Française d'Oxford) and Livia Holden (Chair of K-Peritia)

9:15 am – 10am
Toward Stateless Statehood: A Critical Genealogy of the State in the Social Sciences

Speaker: Livia Holden Director of Research (CNRS Paris 1 Panthéon - Sorbonne, Maison Française d'Oxford, Royal Institute of Anthropology of the United Kingdom and Ireland).

Discussants: Patrice Baubeau Associate Professor in Economic History at the University of Paris Nanterre; and Chihab El Khachab Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Oxford

10am – 10:45 am
Hybrid Governance in a Globalised World: Rethinking State Sovereignty, Accountability, and Equity

Speaker: Charmaine Cole Legal Advisor at St Catherine's College, University of Oxford.

Discussant: Noelle Higgins - Associate Professor, Public international law, Founding Director of the Research Centre in International Justice at Maynooth University.

10:45 am - 11:00 am

Coffee break

11am – 12am
Contested Sovereignty, Hybrid Governance, and State Resilience in the Arab Middle East

Speaker: Dina Hadad Specialist in international law and has a significant involvement with research and a first-hand knowledge of socio-legal and political complexities of the Arab Middle East World.

Discussant: Morgan Clarke Professor of Social Anthropology and Fellow of Keble College at the University of Oxford.

12am - 2 pm

Lunch break

2pm -2:45pm

This output is based upon work from COST Action K-Peritia CA 22101, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) www.cost.eu

Cyber Statehood, Territoriality, and Sovereignty Challenges in Sinking States

Speaker: Sara Baydoun PhD candidate and instructor in Public International Law, affiliated to the Institute for Advanced International Studies (IHEI) at Université Paris-Panthéon-Assas.

Discussant: Susan F. Hirsch Professor Emeritus of Conflict Resolution and Anthropology at the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University (Virginia, USA).

2:45 pm – 3:30 pm
Non-state Norms and the State in International Family Matters Across Borders

Speaker: Laureline Kergueris PhD in Private International Law, University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

Discussant: Stefanie Lemke Director of Rule of Law Initiative and Senior Scientific Officer with Berlin SOCLES International Centre for Socio-Legal Studies.

3:30 pm – 4:15 pm
War, Sovereignty, and State Formation: The Role of Conflict in Shaping Statehood

Speaker: Blazej Kaucz: PhD from University College Cork, Ireland.

Discussant: Sameer Rashid Bhat DPhil candidate at the University of Oxford. His doctoral research explores the interaction of legal regimes in armed conflicts.

4:15pm
Light refreshments

25th September

9 am – 9:45 am
State Sovereignty and Humanitarian Intervention

Speaker: Olagunju Adesewa Precious LL.M from Afe Babalola University's Department of Law, Nigeria.

Discussant: Noora Arajärvi, Legal Advisor, European University Institute, Florence, Italy. She holds a PhD in International Law from the EUI.

9:45am – 10:30am
Rethinking Statehood in Italy from the Street-Level Bureaucrats' Perspective

Speaker: Elena Tagliani: PhD in cultural anthropology and anthropology of thought.

Discussant: Helena Belchior-Rocha Associate Professor at the Iscte-University Institute of Lisbon in the Political Science and Public Policies Department and part of the Dispute Resolution Lab of Complutense University in Madrid.

10:30 - 11am

This output is based upon work from COST Action K-Peritia CA 22101, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) www.cost.eu

Coffee Break

11 am – 11:45am
Feminist Governance and Statehood: Sweden's Experiment with Institutionalized Gender Equality

Speaker: Lukas Bullock Assistant Teaching Professor, Colorado State University.

Discussant: Fatima Mukaddam Postdoctoral Fellow with the DISSECT Project at Ghent University.

12am - 2pm

Lunch break

2 pm – 2:45pm
Ecolawfare in Colossea of the State: The Sprout of *Juliana v. United States*

Speaker: Ryan J Fisher, PhD Candidate (*ABD*) from University of California, Santa Barbara; JD from UC Hastings College of the Law; and BA from New York University.

Discussant: Giorgio Fabio Colombo Professor of Comparative Law and Director of the International College at Ca' Foscari University Venice.

2:45pm – 3:15pm
Translating Statehood: Bureaucratic Practices and the Ambiguities of Governance in Mumbai

Speaker: Adwaita Banerjee PhD Candidate, Department of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania.

Discussant: David Perez PhD candidate University of Paris 1 Sorbonne Panthéon

3:15pm – 4:30pm
Redefining Statehood in the Digital Era: Network Governance and the Cybernetic Approach

Speaker: Ana Cristina Aguilar Viana PhD in Public Law from Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne and the Federal University of Paraná.

Discussant: Soazick Kerneis Professor at University Paris-Nanterre and Director of Center of History and legal History (CHAD EA 4417)

4:30 pm
Light refreshments

Abstracts

Toward Stateless Statehood: A Critical Genealogy of the State in the Social Sciences

Livia Holden: Director of Research (CNRS Paris 1 Panthéon - Sorbonne, Maison Française d'Oxford), Royal Institute of Anthropology of the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Discussants:

Patrice Baubeau Associate Professor in Economy at the University of Paris Nanterre.

This output is based upon work from COST Action K-Peritia CA 22101, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) www.cost.eu

Chihab El Khachab Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Oxford

Abstract
This article develops a critical genealogy of the state across political theory, sociology, anthropology, feminist theory, postcolonial studies, political geography, and relational approaches in order to interrogate the enduring centrality of the conventional triad linking sovereignty, territory, and citizenship. It argues that dominant theories of the state emerged from historically specific European trajectories of state formation, colonial expansion, and international legal ordering that progressively universalised territorially bounded sovereignty as the normative model of political organisation. While successive critical traditions challenged this framework by exposing the cultural, gendered, colonial, performative, spatial, and infrastructural dimensions of political authority, they frequently continued to reproduce residual assumptions concerning institutional coherence, sovereign legibility, or territorial governance. The article demonstrates how anthropology challenged evolutionary state narratives through ethnographic accounts of alternative political organisation; how sociology expanded understandings of legitimacy and ideological integration while preserving assumptions of institutional coherence; how feminist and intersectional approaches revealed the stratified and gendered nature of citizenship; and how postcolonial and decolonial scholarship provincialised Western statehood by exposing its imperial genealogy. Political geography, infrastructure studies, and relational approaches further reconceptualised the state as spatially contested, materially embedded, and socially negotiated across dispersed networks of governance. Yet even these approaches often struggled to explain how fragmented political formations achieve continuity, legitimacy, and durability over time. Rather than treating plural, layered, or incomplete forms of authority as deviations from stable statehood—or as symptoms of institutional weakness, fragility, or "failed" sovereignty—the article argues that they reveal deeper epistemological limitations within dominant state theory itself. Building on these critiques, the article proposes the notion of "stateless statehood" as a conceptual framework for analysing enduring political formations that persist despite incomplete sovereignty, fragmented territoriality, differentiated citizenship, or unstable international recognition. Stateless statehood does not designate the absence of governance, but rather configurations in which authority, legitimacy, administration, and collective belonging endure without fully stabilising into the institutional coherence conventionally associated with sovereign statehood. The article therefore advances the concept of stateless statehood in order to reconceptualise how political authority, legitimacy, and collective belonging persist beyond the conventional alignment of sovereignty, territory, and citizenship.

Hybrid Governance in a Globalised World: Rethinking State Sovereignty, Accountability, and Equity

Charmaine Cole: Legal Advisor at St Catherine's College, University of Oxford.

Discussant:

Noelle Higgins - Associate Professor, Public international law, Founding Director of the Research Centre in International Justice at Maynooth University.

Abstract

Hybrid governance systems, which integrate state and non-state actors, are reshaping the regulatory landscape in response to global challenges such as digitalisation, data privacy, and climate change. This paper examines the evolving role of the state within these frameworks, focusing on how sovereignty is negotiated, accountability is operationalised, and equity is maintained across diverse geopolitical contexts. Through comparative case studies of the EU, UK, Brazil, and Chile, the analysis highlights the tensions between innovation and regulation, and the ethical imperatives of balancing corporate and public interests. Drawing on interdisciplinary insights from political science, law, anthropology, and geography, the paper situates hybrid governance within broader debates on state transformation in a

This output is based upon work from COST Action K-Peritia CA 22101, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) www.cost.eu

globalised world. It argues that understanding the performative and relational nature of state authority is crucial for crafting inclusive and effective governance frameworks. By foregrounding the spatial configurations and infrastructural mechanisms through which hybrid authority is exercised, the paper highlights how governance is enacted across territorial, institutional, and technological boundaries. By addressing the ethical and cultural dimensions of hybrid governance, this work contributes to ongoing discussions on how states can adapt to the complexities of global interdependence while fostering accountability and equity.

Contested Sovereignty, Hybrid Governance, and State Resilience in the Arab Middle East

Dina Hadad: Specialist in international law and has a significant involvement with research and a first-hand knowledge of socio-legal and political complexities of the Arab Middle East World.

Discussant:

Morgan Clarke Professor of Social Anthropology and Fellow of Keble College at the University of Oxford.

The Arab Middle East provides a critical perspective on the interplay of identity politics, hybrid governance, and state resilience. This paper examines how colonial legacies, identity crises, and transnational pressures have fragmented traditional notions of sovereignty, producing challenges that extend beyond the region. Hybrid governance models and legal-administrative systems have emerged as critical mechanisms for state adaptation, enabling flexibility and resilience in the face of global and local pressures.

Through a comparative study of the UAE and Syria, the paper explores divergent paths of statehood. The UAE represents a resilient model of governance, where hybridity and strategic adaptation to identity politics sustain sovereignty amidst globalisations. In contrast, Syria reflects the challenges of state fragmentation, with hybrid governance structures operating in contested spaces shaped by identity-based divisions. By focusing on the spatial distribution of authority and the relational dynamics between state and non-state actors, the paper highlights how governance is configured through plural practices and uneven territorial control. Ethnographic and interdisciplinary approaches underscore the dynamic and relational nature of governance in these contexts, contributing to broader debates on statehood in the Middle East and beyond.

Cyber Statehood, Territoriality, and Sovereignty Challenges in Sinking States

Sara Baydoun: PhD candidate and instructor in Public International Law, affiliated to the Institute for Advanced International Studies (IHEI) at Université Paris-Panthéon-Assas.

Discussant:

Susan F. Hirsch Professor Emeritus of Conflict Resolution and Anthropology at the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University (Virginia, USA).

This paper explores the evolving concept of statehood in the face of existential climate threats through the case study of Tuvalu's Falepili Union treaty with Australia. As rising sea levels challenge traditional notions of territoriality, Tuvalu's pursuit of cyber statehood introduces a novel dimension to sovereignty and governance. The paper critically examines the treaty's implications for the Westphalian model, highlighting the tensions between national resilience, territorial reconfiguration, and international legal frameworks. By positioning Tuvalu within broader discussions of deterritorialised statehood, spatial governance, and political geography, the analysis offers an interdisciplinary perspective on how

international law adapts to contemporary challenges. Foregrounding the spatial dislocation and digital reterritorialisation of authority, this paper contributes to the literature by framing Tuvalu's case within the broader evolution of state functions, questioning the flexibility of sovereignty in the 21st century and examining the potential emergence of hybrid governance models with geographical implications.

Non-state Norms and the State in International Family Matters Across Borders

Laureline Kergueris: PhD in Private International Law, University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

Discussant: Stefanie Lemke. Director of Rule of Law Initiative and Senior Scientific Officer with Berlin SOCLES International Centre for Socio-Legal Studies.

How is state authority and its function redefined in the context of legal pluralism and globalized identities? This paper explores the evolving role of the state in international family law, focusing on cases where state and non-state norms intersect. By examining the application of foreign laws and the consideration of cultural and religious norms in disputes involving private individuals, the paper highlights the state's shifting capacity to regulate complex international interactions.

Drawing on the challenges posed by, on one side, failing states, newly authoritarian regimes, "states" lacking full international recognition as independent countries and, on the other side, effective non-state powers, this paper interrogates the traditional assumption that state norms possess the legitimacy and effectiveness to underpin private international law. It considers how claims from non-state communities could reshape the legal landscape, questioning whether the state should remain the central framework or adapt to recognize non-state norms and under which conditions.

Through a main case study of marriage adjudication involving Muslim Syrian refugees, the paper demonstrates that the objectives of private international law can be achieved through the application of non-state norms. This case foregrounds the spatial and normative disjunctures that arise in transnational legal processes and proposes a revised definition of the State for the purposes of private international law, challenging classical definitions of statehood and authority. This analysis further examines the interaction between states and non-state communities and considers how these plural normative encounters shape the spatial practices of authority and governance. It contributes to interdisciplinary debates on the adaptability and limits of the state in navigating legal and cultural pluralism.

II. Conflict, Coercion, and Governance in Crisis

War, Sovereignty, and State Formation: The Role of Conflict in Shaping Statehood

Blazej Kaucz: PhD from University College Cork, Ireland.

Discussant: Sameer Rashid Bhat: DPhil candidate at the University of Oxford. His doctoral research explores the interaction of legal regimes in armed conflicts.

How does war-making and societal conflict shape the formation and evolution of states, and how do these processes contribute to our broader understanding of statehood? This paper examines the state as a dynamic product of conflict, exploring the interplay of coercion, capital, and military development in state-building. Drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives and the works of Charles Tilly, Bob Jessop, and Jacob Shively, the analysis highlights how state capacity for violence and authority is both contested and reinforced through war and militarisation. This study argues that conflict plays a crucial role in defining and redefining state sovereignty and authority, particularly in relation to the challenges posed by non-state actors and "pseudo-states" (entities that exhibit some characteristics of statehood but lack full international recognition).

This output is based upon work from COST Action K-Peritia CA 22101, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) www.cost.eu

This study situates state formation within the broader context of sovereignty and governance, emphasising the challenges posed by non-state actors and pseudo-states to traditional notions of statehood. It explores the evolving distinctions between war and crime as central to state development and interrogates how militarisation reshapes political structures, societal relations, and the state's role in mediating security and control. For example, the rise of private military companies challenges the traditional Weberian monopoly on violence, forcing states to adapt and redefine their roles in security provision. In doing so, it foregrounds the spatial deployment of coercive infrastructures and the uneven geographies of militarised authority.

This analysis contributes to contemporary debates on the relational and performative nature of statehood by examining how state institutions, societal forces, and governance practices interact and co-constitute each other in the context of conflict. By examining the intersection of conflict and governance, this paper contributes to contemporary state studies by offering new insights into the adaptability and resilience of states in the face of crises, such as war. It addresses gaps in the literature on militarisation and state formation by foregrounding the relational dynamics of statehood, where societal forces and institutional practices continuously redefine the boundaries and meanings of the state in theory and practice. This study offers a nuanced understanding of how conflict mediates the relationship between coercion and societal structures over time, impacting state resilience and adaptability in the modern era.

State Sovereignty and Humanitarian Intervention

Olagunju Adesewa Precious: LL.M from Afe Babalola University's Department of Law, Nigeria.

Discussant: Noora Arajärvi: Legal Advisor, European University Institute, Florence. She holds a PhD in International Law from the EUI.

How do humanitarian interventions challenge traditional notions of state sovereignty in the modern era? This paper explores the complex legal and political dimensions of humanitarian intervention, focusing on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine and its application in conflicts such as Kosovo, Libya, and Syria. By analysing the interplay between international legal frameworks and geopolitical realities, this paper interrogates the balance between respecting state sovereignty and protecting human rights during crises. Using qualitative research methods, the paper highlights how interventions often result in inconsistent applications of international norms, driven by political factors rather than purely humanitarian concerns. These dynamics expose the tensions inherent in global governance and question the resilience of state sovereignty in a world increasingly influenced by transnational pressures.

The findings suggest that while R2P provides a normative basis for interventions, its selective use undermines its legitimacy and calls for clearer guidelines from bodies like the UN Security Council. Furthermore, the study points out that these challenges demand not only better intervention strategies but also a rethinking of traditional concepts of state sovereignty, putting into the forefront a flexible framework that balances territorial integrity with the evolving needs of human dignity and global governance. In doing so, the paper highlights the shifting geographies of state authority and the relational dynamics between states, supranational institutions, and populations at risk.

This paper contributes to state studies by examining how humanitarian interventions reshape state authority and legitimacy, offering two key novel insights. First, it uncovers how the selective application of R2P highlights the limitations of existing international legal frameworks in responding equitably to crises. Second, it proposes a recalibration of state sovereignty that accommodates evolving norms of human rights protection while preserving the foundational principles of territorial integrity. This research encourages the establishment of consistent intervention strategies based on clear humanitarian standards and improved accountability frameworks, thus overcoming the gap between normative principles and practical governance. By engaging with the spatial and normative tensions

This output is based upon work from COST Action K-Peritia CA 22101, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) www.cost.eu

that structure global governance, it contributes to the on-going discussion on the limits of statehood within the framework of global governance.

Rethinking Statehood in Italy from the Street-Level Bureaucrats' Perspective

Elena Tagliani: PhD in cultural anthropology and anthropology of thought.

Discussant: Helena Belchior-Rocha Associate Professor at the Iscte-University Institute of Lisbon in the Political Science and Public Policies Department and part of the Dispute Resolution Lab of Complutense University in Madrid.

How do regional public employees negotiate their roles as intermediaries between state authority and societal needs in an era of managerial governance? How indeed do they manage to rethink the notion of statehood through their everyday activities of policy implementation? This paper examines the "sense of the state" from the perspective of regional public employees in Italy, exploring their daily practices of policy implementation, their relationships with colleagues and citizens, and their reflections on statehood. Through an ethnographic lens, the study investigates how their work both embodies and transforms the public's relationship with the state.

The analysis highlights key pressures on public service, including the influence of New Public Management, the erosion of traditional public careers, and the diminishing autonomy and status recognition of street-level bureaucrats. These factors contribute to what public employees think as a "reduction of public space" and a profound shift in the meaning of statehood. The study situates these changes within broader debates on the transformation of state governance in neoliberal contexts, emphasizing how local and European policy dynamics intersect to reshape state authority, and how much policy-making practices impact on the notion of statehood.

This work contributes to interdisciplinary discussions on statehood by adopting interpretive anthropology to explore the relational and performative aspects of public action. By analysing how state legitimacy is spatially negotiated and materially enacted at the street level, it challenges classical models of statehood by foregrounding the lived experiences of public employees, offering a novel perspective on how states adapt and transform in contemporary society.

Feminist Governance and Statehood: Sweden's Experiment with Institutionalized Gender Equality

Lukas Bullock: PhD candidate, Gender and Women's Studies, University of Kentucky.

Discussant: Fatima Mukaddam Postdoctoral Fellow with the DISSECT Project at Ghent University.

How does the institutionalization of feminist principles redefine the state's role in governance and societal transformation? This paper explores the Swedish state's adoption of feminism as a framework for governance, focusing on its claim to be the world's first "feminist government" (2014–2022). Drawing on interviews with government officials, grassroots activists, and politicians, as well as critical analysis of policy documents and survey data, this study interrogates the extent to which the state can embody feminist ideals. By examining the integration of gender equality considerations into state policy processes, the paper highlights the tensions between feminist governance and traditional state functions. It explores how the state negotiates global backlash against feminism and the challenges of adapting to transnational pressures while delivering transformative outcomes.

The Swedish case provides a lens through which to understand the relational dynamics between feminist ideology and state authority, offering insights into the extent to which states can act as feminist actors within a globalized political landscape. In doing so this paper reflects on how feminist governance is

materially and spatially embedded in policy infrastructures and bureaucratic procedures, shaping how state power is experienced and resisted. This paper contributes to contemporary state studies by analysing the adaptability and resilience of state structures in embedding feminist policies. It challenges classical models of sovereignty and governance by demonstrating how feminist principles reshape state boundaries and redefine its capacity to mediate societal and ideological transformations.

III. Infrastructure, Environment, and the Digital State

Ecolawfare in Colossea of the State: The Sprout of *Juliana v. United States*

Ryan J Fisher: PhD Candidate (*ABD*) from University of California, Santa Barbara; JD from UC Hastings College of the Law, and BA from New York University.

Discussant:

Giorgio Fabio Colombo: Full Professor of Comparative Law and Director of the International College at Ca' Foscari University Venice.

How do legal struggles over climate change—the global *crise pléthorique* straddling capital, value, production, technology, class, geopolitics, militarisation, even existence—spotlight responsibilities and contradictions of the state in contemporary governance? This paper examines *Juliana v. United States*, the human rights action brought in 2015 by a group of young people against the US federal government alleging injury from climate change, and contending that the US Constitution guarantees the right to a stable climate system that can sustain human life. *Juliana* plaintiffs maintain that the US federal government, by subsidising fossil fuel extraction and consumption, is responsible for destroying the climate system and for violating plaintiffs' rights under the Constitution and public/state trust doctrine (*i.e.*, that Earth's riches must be stewarded by those in power); defendants contend that the issue of state responsibilities for climate change is not judicial, but political. *Juliana*, having winded its way from District Court for Oregon, to Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, to Supreme Court, to Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, has been called the *biggest case on the planet*. Situated within an overlap of constitutional, property, environmental, human rights, and international law, the case demonstrates the dual nature of the state as instrument of capitalist interests and site for resistance. The paper explores the case's reëxamining of the state's obligations to steward ecology and intergenerational equity in our stormy epoch of environmental crisis, highlighting how environmental governance is embedded in contested legal and spatial infrastructures of power. It contributes to critical state studies by positioning *Juliana* as a microcosm of broader tensions among state authority, citizen rights, environmental governance, and global interconnectedness, heralding the urgency of transnationalism. By tracing the spatial and institutional trajectories of legal accountability, it evidences how legal action against the state can both contest and redefine the state's rôle during worldwide crises.

Translating Statehood: Bureaucratic Practices and the Ambiguities of Governance in Mumbai

Adwaita Banerjee: PhD Candidate, Department of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania.

Discussant:

David Perez PhD candidate University of Paris 1 Sorbonne Panthéon

This article explores how plastic waste management in Mumbai is shaped by bureaucratic translations of climate adaptation policies, revealing the contested and performative nature of official knowledge within the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). Based on ethnographic research and interviews with municipal administrators, I argue that the integration of climate goals into waste governance does not create new environmental subjectivities but instead reinforces state authority

through selective enforcement, strategic ignorance, and bureaucratic ambivalence. Through the case of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Campaign), I examine how municipal officials translate, contest, and perform climate expertise, often using ambiguous and unstable definitions of plastic waste to maintain control over both materials and marginalized labour.

Rather than fostering transparency or accountability, these bureaucratic performances obscure the structural inequalities embedded in waste work—particularly the caste-bound labour of plastic recyclers. Drawing from Science and Technology Studies (STS) and anthropological scholarship on the state, I show how processes of translation serve as mechanisms of governance, shaping both the regulation and circulation of plastics while allowing municipal actors to manage uncertainty. By foregrounding the spatial practices and infrastructural politics through which environmental governance is enacted, the paper situates waste management as a site of contested state legitimacy. Ultimately, I argue that plastic waste governance in Mumbai is not simply about implementing environmental policies but about navigating the tensions between expertise, performance, and the enduring fragility of state power.

Redefining Statehood in the Digital Era: Network Governance and the Cybernetic Approach

Ana Cristina Aguilar Viana: PhD in Public Law from Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne and the Federal University of Paraná.

Discussant:

Anupama Devendrakumar Assistant Professor VinUniversity

This paper aims to redefine statehood in the digital era by introducing the "digital state" as a model of network governance. This framework challenges traditional notions of sovereignty, authority, and political action. The digital state embodies an interconnected, data-dependent society characterized by the "cybernetic approach," a relational method that revises previous state models. The digital transformation significantly impacts social structures and shifts political action from centralized government to distributed governance.

The paper argues that the digital state's reliance on data transforms governance structures and redefines legitimacy and state power in the 21st century. It advocates for state action grounded in relational criteria, offering an alternative to both sovereign state power and other theories of governance. Using an empirical analysis, this study applies the framework of network governance to existing digital transformation models of government. By examining how algorithmic infrastructures and digital interfaces mediate state authority, the paper argues for the reinterpretation of governance principles, which can provide solutions to the challenges arising from the privatization of public spaces.

By integrating public law, cybernetics, and political theory, this interdisciplinary approach enriches existing literature, offering insights into the state's role in contemporary society. Emphasizing adaptive, relational dimensions, and the spatial and infrastructural conditions under which digital authority is exercised, it challenges assumptions about statehood in a digitizing world, expands the conceptual boundaries of state governance, and reframes the digital state's political action.

This output is based upon work from COST Action K-Peritia CA 22101, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) www.cost.eu