



Aberdeen Political Economy Group Annual Workshop

The Political Economy of Nations, States, and Power in Europe and beyond

**Fraser Noble Building
University of Aberdeen
24-25 June**

The referendum debate has thrown up key issues of state, nation and the economy. Few discussions on the critical issues facing the people

of Scotland and the UK far less Europe, and other developed and developing countries in the world economy can proceed far before the issues of power and the state emerge. But what is the state and what is its relationship to other centres of power, regional blocs such as the EU and to the issues of money, finance and capital accumulation? How did the state and the system of nation states emerge, and how are we to understand the role of the state in contemporary capitalism?

Much globalization discourse questioned whether the individual national (territorial) state would survive tendencies for the internationalization of production and exchange and the emergence of regional trading agreements. The financial crisis that began in 2007, however, showed how central the state is to capitalism through the many rescue packages of endangered banks and other financial institutions by central banks, states or international financial bodies dominated by major states.

With economic recovery following the crash of 2007 at best weak and against the backcloth of the referendum result, this workshop addresses the key economic issues of today with a focus on the critical role played by the state. After critically reviewing the implications of the referendum outcome, speakers will examine in detail alternative perspectives on power and the state and the history and trajectory of the system of nation states from a political economy framework.

The workshop will be of particular interest to political activists, final and post graduate students and academic staff from a wide range of disciplines

This is the second annual workshop organized by the Aberdeen Political Economy Group following our launch in October 2014.

Preliminary programme aims, content and outline

For further information see [facebook.com/AberdeenPEG](https://www.facebook.com/AberdeenPEG) : To book an early place and for information contact: Keith Paterson on 07793655410 or e mail: keithpaterson@abdn.ac.uk

Content / Programme The final programme will be divided into three parts over 1 1/2 to 2 full days (depending on the number of final speakers) covering Friday 24 and Saturday 25 June roughly as follows:

Day 1 Overview – Friday 24 June - In the context of the referendum result, a commentary from different perspectives on the outcome will be given followed by an initial presentation of the challenges facing UK capitalism, Europe and the state. This will be followed by a panel discussion and contributions from participants. A wine reception will conclude day one.

Provisionally and depending on post referendum commitments, George Kerevan, Journalist, economist and MP – has agreed to introduce the main issues and challenges confronting the UK and Scottish economies in which the state is implicated following the referendum on UK membership of the EU the condition of neoliberal capitalism in Scotland and the rest of the UK and the controversial debate over the fiscal position of the state - state spending and government borrowing; the state, finance, debt and the banking system etc

A second speaker from the University of Aberdeen will address some of the constitutional and political issues emerging from the referendum and implications for the EU and contributions will be made by other speakers. The first panel discussion will follow.

Day 2 Overview – Saturday 25 June – Today will involve an exploration of how theoretical work on capitalism, power and the state can assist us in understanding these issues - over three/ four sessions on Saturday morning/ part Saturday afternoon.

Finally a second panel discussion will conclude the workshop, bringing the theoretical expositions and empirical issues together. This session will include all the speakers and answer questions from the floor.

Session 1 - Power and Hegemony - learning from Marx, Gramsci and Foucault – Speaker: Ngai-ling Sum, University of Lancaster

Session 2 - The State - Past Present and Future - state theory, states, and state power – Speaker: Bob Jessop, University of Glasgow

Session 3 - The Necessity of Nation-States for Capital – Speaker: Neil Davidson, University of Aberdeen

Session 4 – The local dimension - Scotland in the UK and Europe – Speaker(s) from University of Aberdeen

Session 5 - Panel Discussion - The State, Economy, Power and Political Practice

Speakers:

George Kerevan tbc is a Scottish journalist, economist and Scottish National Party (SNP) politician. He has been the Member of Parliament (MP) for East Lothian since May 2015 and is a member of the House of Commons Treasury Select Committee.

George has written extensively on the Scottish economy and is the author of a number of books and articles on the coal industry.

Local speakers from politics/IR/sociology/business school **to be confirmed.**

Ngai-Ling Sum is Reader in Cultural Political Economy at the Department: Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University. Her interests centre on the regulation approach in political economy, international political economy, and the challenges of post-structuralism. She has a particular interest in developing a 'cultural political economy' that combines the 'cultural turn' and the study of 'political economy' considered both as a set of methods and as a field of study. Together with Bob Jessop she is a co-director of the Cultural Political Economy Research Centre with whom she also co-authored the much acclaimed book, *Towards a cultural political economy: putting culture in its place in political economy*. More recently, Ngai-ling has been working on global governance, transnational business governance, corporate social responsibility and the cultural political economy of competitiveness.

Bob Jessop, has published extensively on state theory, the financial crisis and political economy. He is currently Distinguished Professor of Sociology at the University of Lancaster. Bob is co-director of the Cultural Political Economy Research Centre and co-author with Ngai-Ling Sum of *Towards a cultural political economy: putting culture in its place in political economy*. His new book, *The State: Past, Present, Future* was published in 2015 and he has co-edited a recent book on the cultural political economy of the financial crisis: *Financial Cultures and Crisis Dynamics* (Routledge Frontiers of Political Economy).

Neil Davidson worked as a state manager for the Scottish Government and its predecessors for over twenty years, but now lectures in sociology with the School of Political and Social Science at the University of Glasgow. He is the author of *The Origins of Scottish Nationhood* (2000), *Discovering the Scottish Revolution* (2003), for which he was awarded the Deutscher Prize, *How Revolutionary Were the Bourgeois Revolutions?* (2012). *Holding Fast to an Image of the Past* (2014), *We Cannot Escape History* (2015) and *Nation-States: Consciousness and Competition* (2016).

About the organisers:

The Aberdeen Political Economy Group was launched in October 2014 with the aim of promoting interdisciplinary understanding, awareness, debate, discussion and research in Political Economy. For APEG political economy includes approaches which view economic processes as dynamic and embedded in social relations that need to be analysed in the context of historical considerations, power relations and social norms. Significant are the role of effective demand, social structure, institutions, social class and social conflict in economic analysis. Contemporary political economy also emphasises the importance of gender, the environment and cultural and ethical considerations

APEG aims to provide a pluralistic interdisciplinary forum for discussion and debate where all progressive brands of political economy are welcome and to promote joint teaching and research based on political economy approaches. *APEG is also an affiliated society of Aberdeen University Students Association*