



State Freedom and International Relations

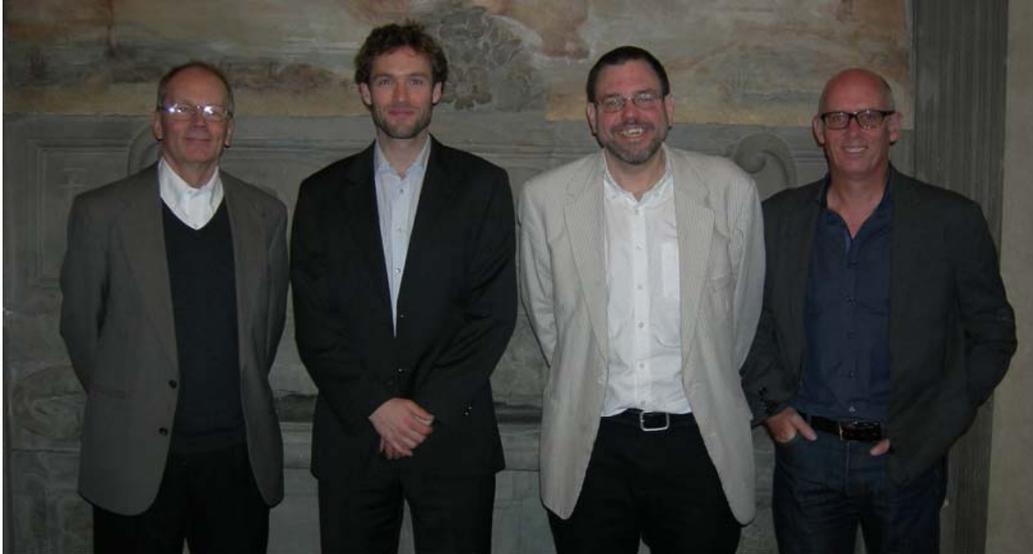
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Abstract

Much of both the academic and practical discourse about international politics implies conceptions of states as, in one way or another, free or unfree. However, such conceptions of state freedom remain for the large part implicit. The principal purpose of this thesis is to remedy the absence of sustained, explicit consideration of the concept of state freedom, and it does this by historically excavating ideas about what it means for states to be free.

Drawing on philosophical ideas about individual freedom, this thesis presents a theoretical approach to making such implicit ideas visible. It makes the case for a 'grammar' of freedom, which, it is argued, enables one to distinguish ideas about freedom from other species of ideas but does not prejudice their substance. The thesis then employs this grammar to identify ideas of state freedom in international debate surrounding three cognate concepts: non-intervention, sovereign equality and self-determination. Through analysis of the arguments made by states-people about these three concepts, the thesis articulates a number of evolving ideas about what it means for states to be free and unfree. That historical investigation uncovers both a strong normative preference among practitioners of international relations for the freedom of states and sharp disagreement about what constitutes that freedom. The thesis argues that the contestation surrounding ideas of state freedom have played an important role structuring legitimate relations of control between states.



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Bio

Patrick Herron is a doctoral researcher at the European University Institute. His primary areas of interest are international relations theory and history. He holds a BA in Social and Political Sciences from the University of Cambridge and an MA in International Relations from the Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva. He has spent time as a visiting researcher at the University of Queensland and, most recently, the Insitut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals