

Title: Globalisation, the State and Neoliberal Strategies: Reconstructing the State in a Global World

Author: Ramon Ribera, Manchester

ABSTRACT

The constitutive character of globalisation and the role of the state in the current era have long been debated in the social science literature. A wide range of contending positions has emerged. For the most part these approaches can be differentiated between two claims. On the one hand, there are those perspectives which affirm that market-driven globalisation is an irreversible reality and imply, as a direct consequence, a significant reduction of the role of the state. And, on the other hand, there are those theories which contend that globalisation is only a political discourse and strategic device whereby the state remains the central actor in the global political economy. The premise of the argument presented here is that neither approach is adequate to the task of conceptualising the restructuring of the state form under conditions of capitalist development on a global scale. To counterpose states *versus* markets, as much of the literature does, fails to capture the complex interplay between globalisation as an explicitly capitalist development and the historic role of capitalist states in providing the institutional shell to guarantee the accumulation process through new regulatory regimes.

In order to advance this argument the paper is organised in three sections. The first part provides a critical overview of three leading theories of the political economy of globalisation, namely neo-liberalism (the purest version of the 'hollowing out' of the state thesis), its main critique in progressive nationalism, and a so-called 'third way' that it is emerging based on a hybrid form of Schumpeterianism and institutionalism. The second part an alternative reading of globalisation – through a redefinition of key concepts and a different analytical framework – that is based on a conceptualisation of the state and the ways in which it is linked to capitalist accumulation. The particular focus here is on state strategies of restructuring in under conditions of global accumulation. The third part then deals with the neoliberal strategy of the state that seems to be imposed over other kinds of state form. It outlines four key features of this strategy, namely the emergence of the so-called 'competition state', the new territorialisation of state, new forms of governance, and the ideological discourses of that underpin orthodox conceptions of the relations between the state and globalisation. The concluding argument suggests that in order to comprehend the shifts in state form it is necessary to examine not only at the global process, but also the functions that the state has in the development of capitalism as a social system.