



UCD Sutherland
School of Law

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN CONSTITUTIONAL STUDIES GROUP

YOUNGER COMPARATIVISTS COMMITTEE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF COMPARATIVE LAW

“After the Economic Crisis: The Small State as a Problem or Solution?”

September 5th and 6th, 2014

The UCD Constitutional Studies Group, in association with the Young Comparativists Committee of the American Society of Comparative Law, invites submissions for a workshop on ‘After the economic crisis: the small state as a problem or solution?’ to be held in Dublin on September 5th and 6th 2014.

A number of bursaries are available to cover travel and accommodation expenses associated with participation in the event.

The workshop will bring together a mixture of junior and senior scholars from disciplines including constitutional law, political science and political economy to discuss a key issue in comparative constitutional law and politics: namely, the manner in which the economic, social and civic difficulties of recent years have manifested themselves in pressure for constitutional reform in smaller states.

The workshop theme addresses the fact that, while some small states featured amongst the countries worst affected by the economic crisis, the crisis has also coincided with growing calls for the recognition or creation of smaller political entities: whether by way of greater regional autonomy (Belgium, for example) by creating new ‘small states’ (for example, Scotland or Catalonia), or by intensifying long-standing debates about independence, sovereignty and federal structures (for instance, Quebec). Echoes of this trend might also arguably be seen in the demands within larger states for more decentralisation, state rights or localism (as in the United States and United Kingdom). This raises questions about the value, benefits and challenges of small state independence. Is small state independence an objective to pursue or a challenge to be managed? And what role do constitutional and political structures play in this regard?

With the Scottish independence referendum to be held on September 18th, and suggestions of a Catalonian referendum in November, this is a timely opportunity to reflect on an emerging issue of considerable comparative importance.

Questions to be considered will include:

- Were the political and constitutional structures in some small states partly to blame for their economic difficulties?
- What has led to demands for constitutional reform in small states? What has been the response from government?
- Are there common themes in debates about constitutional or political reform in small states?
- Are there common constitutional, political or institutional challenges in governing small states?
- How have recent small state experiments in constitutional innovation like Iceland's crowd-sourced constitution, or Ireland's constitutional convention fared?
- Are there lessons to be learned for constitutional design in an independent Scotland, Catalonia, or other small states?
- Are there parallels with political demands in larger states for more decentralised or local decision making?
- Are there compelling arguments for shrinking large republics into smaller ones, as some have suggested in connection with the United States?

Contributions from both senior and junior scholars are welcome but the organisers are particularly committed to providing opportunities for a number of younger scholars to have their work featured in the workshop.

Submission instructions and deadline

The deadline for initial submission of abstracts is **Monday May 26th, 2014** (by 5.00pm CET). Abstracts should be submitted via e-mail to constitutional@ucd.ie.

Abstracts should be no more than 500 words and should include a description of how the proposed paper relates to the conference theme. Abstracts should also be accompanied by a short CV.

The organisers will also consider proposals for panels of at least 3 speakers. Panel proposals should contain an abstract of each of the papers to be presented, as well as a short CV for the proposed participants.

Following a review of the abstracts, a shortlist of participants will be invited to submit a full paper by **July 18th, 2014**. Papers should be no more than 10,000 words (including footnotes).

A selection of the best papers presented will be considered by the Boston College International & Comparative Law Review for publication as a special symposium edition in Spring 2015.

The travel bursaries will be awarded on a competitive basis, following a review of the papers submitted. If you would like to be considered for a travel bursary, please indicate this when submitting your original abstract.