

At the Crossroads

International and Comparative Public Law in Times of Geopolitical Uncertainty

9-10 December 2025

Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law



MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE

FOR COMPARATIVE PUBLIC LAW
AND INTERNATIONAL LAW



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Law in a fractured global order

Over the past decade, geopolitical dynamics have undergone a visible shift. The post–Cold War narrative of liberal internationalism and institutional cooperation seems to be rapidly replaced by a focus on military build-up, the re-emergence of spheres of influence, and intensified strategic rivalries. From Europe to the Pacific, and increasingly across Latin America, global actors such as the United States, China, Russia, and the European Union or NATO are reshaping the rules of engagement, with profound consequences for domestic and regional public law.

In this moment of change, we seek to convene scholars and practitioners to explore whether and how domestic and regional legal frameworks can (or cannot) adapt to the pressures of a fractured global order, particularly in Latin America and Europe. What are the pathways through which evolving external geopolitical shifts influence the practice and conceptual foundations of domestic and regional public law?

To start the conversation, we invite participants to engage with three initial questions:

- 1) How do national and regional courts respond to such external geopolitical pressures? How do they approach cases involving international norms, institutions, or/and obligations that are affected by the geopolitical tensions?
- 2) How is the domestic and regional production, circulation, and legitimation of legal knowledge and expertise shaped by geopolitical shifts?
- 3) To what extent do dominant categories in domestic and regional public law—such as sovereignty, universalism, or even the idiom of rights—remain adequate in an international order marked by power struggles, new forms of imperialism, and democratic backsliding?

Our invitation is therefore not only to assess the capacity of domestic and regional legal systems to respond to the contestation of rights arising from cross-border strategies of influence, but also to explore alternative legal imaginaries and renewed forms of agency for international law and human rights, especially from the peripherie(s).

Program Overview

Day 1: Tuesday, December 9, 2025

Room 038

14:00 – 14:30, Opening remarks – **René Urueña & Sué González Hauck**

14:30 – 15:15, **Daniel R. Quiroga-Villamarín** – “‘School Begins’: Democracy, Geopolitics, and Legal Education at the Dawn of the American Century”.

Discussant: **Poul F. Kjaer**

15:15 – 15:30, Coffee break (Outside Room 038)

15:30 – 16:15, **Fabia Fernandes Carvalho** – “Authoritarian politics, ideological contestation, and liberal internationalism: assessing the Inter-American view on democracy in a multipolar world”.

Discussant: **Malcolm Jorgensen**

16:15 – 17:30, *First Panel: Geopolitics and the law: Historical Reconstructions*

Alma Beltrán y Puga – “Legal Imagination and Historical Knowledge”

Leon Seidl – “Unilateral sanctions in the face of disintegrating multilateralism: The CJEU’s jurisprudence on trade with occupied territories as a model for national and regional courts?”

Lavinia Francesconi – “Geopolitical Tensions in the Organization of American States: The ‘Battlefield’ of Human Rights”

Moderation: **René Urueña**

19:30 – 20:30, Dinner – Kulturbrauerei Restaurant (Leyergasse 6, Heidelberg)

20.30 - 21.00 Open discussion and networking session day 1

Day 2: Wednesday, December 10, 2025

Room 038

9:00 – 9:45, **Ignacio G. Perotti Pincirolí** – “Resisting Hegemony in Latin America: The Inter-American Court as a Geopolitical Actor?”.

Discussant: **Lavinia Francesconi**

9:45 – 10:30, **Clara López Rodríguez** – “Between Continuity and Rupture: Investment Treaties, Critical Minerals, and the Limits of Legal Reform in a Geoeconomic Era”. Discussant: **Alma Beltrán y Puga**

10:30 – 10:45, Coffee break (Outside Room 038)

10:45 – 11:30, **Irene Vázquez Serrano** – “Electoral interference, sovereignty, non-intervention and cyberspace in Europe and Latin America. A comparative view”.

Discussant: **Leon Seidl**

11:30 – 12:15, **Nahuel Maisley** – “Latin American Visions of Legal Order in a Time of Global Disorder”.

Discussant: **Carolina Bejarano Martínez**

12:15 – 13:00 pm, **Hannah Birkenkötter** – “Latin America and the United Nations - A Review at UN80”.

Discussant: **Kerttuli Lingenfelter**

13:00 – 14:00 pm, Lunch. BräuStadel Restaurant. (Berliner Str. 41, Heidelberg)

Program Overview

Day 2: Wednesday, December 10, 2025 (continuation)

14.00 – 15.15 , *Second Panel: New Regionalism?*

Malcolm Jorgensen – “Regionalism as Geolegal Orders: The Quest for a New Hegemonic Legitimacy”
Carolina Bejarano Martínez – “Regions and Geopolitics: Methodological Lessons from the ICCAL Collaboration Lab on Democratic Resilience”

Poul F. Kjaer – "The EU Legal Order in the Era of Fragmented Globalisation"

Moderation: **Sué González-Hauck**

15:15 – 15.45, Closing remarks – Organizing team

16.15 - 17:45 Editorial meeting (authors who want to joint & editors)

19:30 – 20:30 , Dinner. Olé Olé Restaurant (Römerstraße 76, Heidelberg)

20.30 - 21.00 Open discussion and networking session day 2

All sessions will be held at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law (MPII),
Heidelberg.