



Law Beyond the State

**Call for Submissions for the 8th Annual Toronto Group Conference
May 1 & 2, 2015 at the University of Toronto**

We are pleased to present the 8th Annual Conference of the Toronto Group for the study of International, Transnational and Comparative Law. The Toronto Group is a collaborative project between graduate students at Osgoode Hall Law School and the University of Toronto Faculty of Law.

This year's topic is "**Law Beyond the State.**" Participants are invited to conceptualize, criticize, and examine the status of law from various perspectives. While much of Western legal thought has conceptualized the existence and operation of law as arising from a state paradigm, this year's theme provides participants with an opportunity to examine instances of law that is not dependent on the state. Scholars may examine law as a phenomenon that is more amorphous and diffuse, with claims of legitimacy that transcends and exists beyond the state.

Participants can examine whether law is dependent on statehood for legitimacy, or whether law can be disembedded from the state. Globalization provides an opportunity to see the movement of actors within and outside state boundaries. Transnational human rights claims approach corporate accountability and legitimacy in ways that match their cross-border sphere of influence. Systems of law and ordering set up jurisdictional boundaries, and transcend these same boundaries, for example through the Canadian *Foreign Corrupt Practices Act*.

Conceptualizing law as "beyond the state" necessarily brings to fore the argument that law exists beyond artificial notions of statehood. Within any single bounded territory, a perspective transcending the state can reveal a plurality of laws between co-existing legal systems, but also an inter-legality where multiple legal norms or frameworks converge and collide. Competing and equally legitimate claims for legal recognition that challenge our pre-conceived notions of the foundations of the force of law are possible. This is apparent from contemporary debates surrounding First Nations sovereignty, treaties, Free Trade Agreements, and transnational contractual relations involving numerous actors.

Existing legal frameworks are ripe for examination. The time has come to envision not only what is currently part of the governance debates, but also how new systems of governance can be developed for the future. Please make 350-word abstract submissions and any inquiries by e-mail to torontogroupconference@gmail.com by **February 9, 2015**.