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The Communicative Construction of Europe

**Cultures of Political Discourse, Public
Sphere and the Euro Crisis**

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Series Preface

Over the past four centuries, the nation-state has emerged as the world's most effective means of organizing society, but its current status and future are decidedly uncertain. Some scholars predict the total demise of the nation-state as we know it, its powers eroded by a dynamic global economy on the one hand and, on the other, by the transfer of political decision-making to supranational bodies. Other analysts point out the remarkable resilience of the state's core institutions and assert that even in the age of global markets and politics, the state remains the ultimate guarantor of security, democracy, welfare, and the rule of law. Does either of these interpretations describe the future of the OECD world's modern, liberal nation-state? Will the state soon be as obsolete and irrelevant as an outdated computer? Should it be scrapped for some new invention, or can it be overhauled and rejuvenated? Or, is the state actually thriving and still fit to serve, and just in need of a few minor reforms?

In an attempt to address these questions, the analyses in the *Transformations of the State* series separate the complex tangle of tasks and functions that comprise the state into four manageable dimensions:

- the monopolization of the means of force;
- the rule of law, as prescribed and safeguarded by the constitution;
- the guarantee of democratic self-governance; and
- the provision of welfare and the assurance of social cohesion.

In the OECD world of the 1960s and 1970s, these four dimensions formed a synergetic constellation that emerged as the central, defining characteristic of the modern state. Books in the series report the results of both empirical and theoretical studies of the transformations experienced in each of these dimensions over the past few decades.

Transformations of the State? (Stephan Leibfried and Michael Zürn (eds), 2005), *Transforming the Golden-Age National State* (Achim Hurrelmann, Stephan Leibfried, Kerstin Martens and Peter Mayer (eds), Palgrave Macmillan 2007), *State Transformations in OECD Countries: Dimensions, Driving Forces and Trajectories* (Heinz Rothgang and Steffen Schneider (eds), Palgrave Macmillan 2015) and *The Oxford Handbook of Transformations of the State* (Stephan Leibfried, Evelyn Huber, Matthew Lange, Jonah Levy

and Frank Nullmeier (eds), 2015) define the basic concepts of state transformation employed in all of these studies and provide an overview of the issues addressed. Written by political scientists, lawyers, economists, and sociologists, the series tracks the development of the post-World War II OECD state. Here, at last, is an up-to-date series of reports on the state of the state and a crystal-ball glimpse into its future.