

Globalisation and its effect on sovereignty



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In essence, understanding the consequences that subsequently emerge from globalization and sovereignty depends on how we define both the globalization and sovereignty. Once defined it is much clearer to draw out the central themes concerning the relationship between globalisation and sovereignty. In this essay, the subject matter I have chosen to address pays focal attention to the three most palpable issues; political, economic and security-related safekeeping. In each case, I aim to demonstrate that globalization has both threatened sovereignty and strengthened it. Ultimately, I intend to show that whilst globalization has transformed our understanding of sovereignty it has progressed in such a way that globalization has, to a large degree, been structured around the Westphalian concept. If we are to understand how the consequences of globalization affect our understanding of sovereignty, we must first define what we mean when we speak of sovereignty and globalisation. For the sake of simplicity, I will offer a definition of both globalisation and sovereignty and proceeding from that basis draw out the consequences such a definition of globalization has on such a definition of sovereignty. Globalization is best defined as a relatively recent process of worldwide integration, cooperation and conscious building whereby an increase in the flows and trade of ideas, people, goods and services between national state borders is prevalent. Sovereignty is best defined as the recognised privilege of nation-states to legitimately hold and exercise complete authority over a territorialized jurisdiction, determine one's own destiny within one's territorialized jurisdiction and the freedom from external interference to dictate such domestic governing. Throughout human history, the globe has gone through a series of material epochs that have also brought with it a series of epochs concerning human political

organization. The two most striking epochs shaping human political organisation in recent times have been firstly; the emergence of the modern state, and secondly; the emergence of an era many contemporary political analysts regard as the post-modern epoch. It is these two prominent concepts of human political organisation that have fashioned the debate of globalization and sovereignty. The era in which the modern state emerged can be expectedly traced back to the Westphalian Peace Treaty of 1648 where the idea of state sovereignty arose and set the foundations to the 'normative structure' for international relations in the last several hundred years (McGrew, 2009: 23). As 'the sovereign state arose because of a particular conjunction of social and political interests in Europe' (Mansbach, 2000: 59) so too have interests dictated that sovereign states be drawn into union in the post-modern era. The most defining interests of the post-modern era that have drawn sovereign states into union have centred on political, economic and security-related safekeeping. International political relations in the 20th century have drastically transformed the way in which nation-states co-operate. Since the 1940s, substantial political integration has become so predominant that some political theorists believe that the idea of Westphalian sovereignty no longer pertains. Political interconnectedness via international and regional organisations such as the United Nations and European Union has meant that nation-states are increasingly coalescing and thus sacrificing their recognition as sovereign. Advocates of such a view argue that supranational entities such as the European Union demand unified conformity and thus gradually erode the individual legal characteristics set by the legitimate authority put in place to govern over a territorialized jurisdiction. As such, they argue member states

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of the European Union have forfeited their freedom to determine their own destiny by willingly granting external entities the privilege to interfere and dictate domestic governing. A classic contemporary example we can take into consideration of where critics argue that the monopoly of domestic-retained governing is undermined and reduced can be found in the European Union's European Court of Justice. Via the European Arrest Warrant, the European Court of Justice issued an extradition order for British citizen and controversial historian Frederick Toben in 2008 for alleged denial of the Holocaust. Whilst the German government who had initiated the arrest warrant eventually abandoned the extradition order, critics of globalization would argue that the incident demonstrates that the extent of British integration into the European Union calls into question the definitive distinctions between state sovereignty and supranational interference. Conversely, however, advocates of British membership to the European Union would argue that the fact that the extradition order was dropped demonstrates that member states clearly still retain the legitimate monopoly to exercise complete enforcement of domestic laws. Nevertheless, whilst critics of globalization may perceive the consequences of globalization to be eroding the concept of state sovereignty, and political theorists such as Stephen D. Krasner accepts that state interdependence has somewhat reduced the Westphalian concept of state sovereignty when the domestic jurisdiction of sovereignty is taken into account, Krasner also argues that globalization is not necessarily eroding the concept of state sovereignty but evolving, enhancing and expanding the concept (Krasner, 1999). Supporters of this argument would point to international organisations such as the United Nations that stresses each member state recognise and uphold the <https://assignbuster.com/globalisation-and-its-effect-on-sovereignty/>

principle of respect for the territorial and political jurisdiction of fellow states (Mansbach, 2000: 71). In this way, whilst some may see international organisations of this nature to have a negative influence on the idea of sovereignty, it is argued that such organisations in fact strengthen the value of sovereignty by including the idea as a central pillar to United Nations structure. Political integration is practically inseparable from economic integration. The latter has also been a historic product of globalization, specifically since the end of the Cold War. 'The internationalization of commerce', spreading global capitalism into all continents, has become so substantial that the issue of borders has become irrelevant and vanished as an effective control mechanism (Reynolds, 2000: 650-656). For national state sovereignty therefore, economic amalgamation has become an inevitable consequence to which many feel has both merits and demerits. International organisations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have played an extensive role in shaping intercontinental trade and thus created animosity and resentment in specifically non-Western states where it is properly accepted as an extension of Western ideology. In recent years, there has been some vocal opposition to the International Monetary Fund's involvement in South Africa where the post-apartheid state continues to be indebted by International Monetary Fund loans dating back to the apartheid era. For many South Africans such colossal debt, they feel, has prevented them from making good their freedom in the post-apartheid era and ultimately restricted their ability to direct funds toward social programmes such as education, health and even policing within their territorial jurisdiction. In essence, many of those who resent economic integration feel 'The increasing internationalisation of national economies and the increasing

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transnational character of capital, suggests that policies designed to compete for inward investment favour transnational rather than national interests' (Ralph, 2001: 158). However, advocates of global capitalism and the democratic peace theory argue that the internationalization of trade has not only created greater wealth (Osterhammel and Petersson, 2005: 121) but also lessened the prospect of military conflict among state actors that adopt liberal democratic political values and thus capitalist economics. Therefore, they argue, ensuring state stability on a global basis and accordingly reinforcing the effectiveness of state sovereignty, internally and externally. This is evident if one takes into account that since the 1940s, countries that have adopted liberal democracy and capitalist economics have not waged war against one another or had a civil war. Interlinked with state stability and sovereignty in a global era is the issue of security-related safekeeping. The issue of security-related safekeeping is also, like political relations, intertwined with the economic aspect. Technological advance in areas such as transport and communications has had an impact on sovereignty on a global scale so much so that it has shaped, if not dictated, greater co-operation among state actors in times of peace and in times of conflict. Conflict, specifically, has drastically changed over the last several centuries due to the global integration of both technology and communications. In contemporary international relations, state actors have been effectively forced to collaborate on related national security interests (Mansbach, 2000: 80-92). International relations in the 21st century has been commonly referred to an era whereby global cooperation between state actors will be crucial in managing the phenomenon of global terror (Eriksen, 2007: 134-138). This phenomenon of global terror has greatly benefited from the

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technological advance of transport and communications and thus revolutionized contemporary warfare. The War in Afghanistan, for example, was prompted not by any central authority in the nation-state but by non-state actors - Al Qaeda. As a result of the September 11th Attacks the ' War on Terror' has challenged the state sovereignty of numerous nation-states, predominantly Iraq and most recently Iran. Greater emphasis has also been placed on international stability and human rights. Thus, the globalization of terrorism has transformed the way in which we conceptualise the right to the privilege of sovereignty of other nation-state and the way in which we ourselves perceive our own sovereignty in the post-modern age (Arnold, 2008: 190-209). However, there are those that whilst recognizing that the art of war has changed over time, of which globalization has had an immeasurable impact upon, who argue that ' If we think of global politics today as unfolding in an arena without superordinate authority, in which overlapping groups compete with each other...and in which the potential for violence is present, then the politics of medieval Europe may not seem so alien' (Mansbach, 2000: 43). Some would even go as far to say that the art of war, or rather terrorism, has only superficially changed (Baylis and Rengger, 1992: 229-230). In this sense, the Hobbesian view that the period in which the Westphalian concept of state sovereignty arose in Europe was a time where lack of security and ' the absence of clear centres of authority... erased the distinction between the domestic and foreign realms' (Mansbach, 2000: 44) can be considered exceptionally relevant to how the Westphalian concept still remains a central pillar to the ' normative structure' of inter-state security relations since its emergence. In conclusion, understanding the consequences that subsequently emerge from globalization and sovereignty

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depends on how we define both concepts. Proceeding from that basis there are three central issues that are instantly recognizable to such a discussion, namely; political, economic and security-related safekeeping. In each case, globalization has both threatened sovereignty and strengthened it.

Ultimately, I consider that ' Since state evolution was gradual, states managed to monopolize the means of coercion...Today, some states have surrendered that monopoly. This does not suggest that states will become irrelevant or disappear. Rather they must share pride of place with other actors and must co-operate with one another...to cope with today's challenges' (Mansbach, 2000: 59).