

# International migrations challenge to state sovereignty politics essay



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In order to assess whether international migration negatively affects state sovereignty, this essay uses the definition of 'sovereignty' as a starting point, followed by a brief description of the contradictory cosmopolitanist and communitarianist views. Referring to realist approach, linked to the latter, focusing and believing that individuals are defined by their nation, the subsequent sections will determine the notions of 'international migration', 'citizenship' as well as 'identity'. Moreover, this essay will regard the impacts of globalization and its implications on states borders, pinpointing the example of the supervision and closure of American-Mexican borders to highlight the territorial threat and measures taken to counter illegal migration. Finally, this essay will apply the example of the French ban of the veil to argue the possible existence of a cultural and social danger of migration, as well as the attempt of governments to prevent severe changes in their nation.

The notion of sovereignty is composed of domestic, interdependent, international legal and Westphalian elements. These features include the recognition by other states, the capability of governments to regulate the flow of commodities, investments and people across their borders along with 'the autonomy of domestic authority structures' (Kranser, 2001, p. 2).

Nation-states exist of secured territories and governance from a central administration, while citizens remain loyal them as their sole provider of legal, political and economic factors, providing welfare, health, education and protection (a)Linklater, 1996, p. 82, 83). Only sovereign states can negotiate on behalf of their people and due to their juridical independence, they merely sign treaties, regarding their territory and resources and

promoting national self-interests (Heller and Sofaer, 2001, p. 27; Krasner, 2001, p. 1). Moreover, states possess the 'monopoly over the legitimate crossing of borders' and the 'sovereign right to designate who are citizens or not' (Guild, 2009, p. 11). Hence, it is the state's 'duty control both security and migration' (Guild, 2009, p. 3).

Scholars, known as cosmopolitans, challenge the classical notion of sovereignty and believe in a global community, without defined territories; a 'borderless world' (Ohmae in Castles and Davidson, 2000, p. 17).

Boundaries of political communities are expanded and everyone is placed on 'on equal terms', attempting to achieve identical distribution with no 'major territorial discrepancies' with the establishment of fluidity of people, information and goods (a)Linklater, 1996, p. 88; b)Brown, 2001, p. 121, 127).

Political identity loses significance in this universalist perspective; cosmopolitans claim that identity roots in common values, rather than in politics and national borders (b)Brown, 2001, p. 120). Additionally, national citizenship loses significance; people should owe obligations towards everyone (Castles and Davidson, 2000, p. 24; Steans, et. al, 2010, p. 47).

Proponents of cosmopolitan democracy argue that nation-states lost control of the world economy. Consequently, they are less capable of organizing and managing their domestic economy; as a result, nation-states 'wither away' (Ferguson and Mansbach, 1999, p. 202; Held, 1997, p. 233).

Communitarians critic this 'utopian' standpoint and argue that states continue to protect their sovereignty, while refusing to give up 'the right to self-government across diverse matters' (Held, 1997, p. 230). This theory is based on Brenner's analysis suggesting that 'territory plays a formative role  
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in explaining what makes the world hang together, not only in the international, but also in the economic sociological, anthropological, geographic and historical sense' (Lapid, 2001, p. 8). Advocates of this perspective believe that state borders are needed for defining citizenship and identity (Castles and Davidson, 2000, p. 24; Lapid, 2001, p. 7).

This leads to migration, a process since the history of mankind. Migration includes the movement within a country as well as across international borders, known as international migration (Guild, 2009, p. 10). Current international migration affects most countries simultaneously, altering these concerned nations (Castle and Davidson, 2000, p. 9; Kim, 2010, p. 900).

Linklater argues that mass migration is turning societies into multi-ethnic spheres, forming complex webs of social, economic, political and cultural modifications (a), 1996, p. 84). Despite the negative effect of migration on national economies, for instance on aspects of welfare or ' the expenditures of local governments', it is vital to acknowledge the financial benefit that economic migration brings to the sending as well as receiving country (Moses, 2006, p. 105, 106). Nevertheless, if free human mobility throughout the world was permitted, massive migration from poor to rich countries might occur. The immediate aftermath would be detrimental; the numerous migrants would change local cultural, security and political arrangements, undermine national sovereignty, cause economical ' brain drain' in leaving countries and the entire political and economical system would collapse (Moses, 2006, p. 108, 123, 137). Walker argues that migration can be seen as a ' threat to social cohesion, while more specific labour migration can be defined as a social as well as economic security threat'; a realist argument of

security (Guild, 2009, p. 26, 153). Sidwick claims that 'open borders would lead to the corruption of domestic culture and politics' and that states remain vital to secure their society's internal unity, culture and domestic policies (Beitz, 1983, p. 594, 600). How much sovereign states are affected by these factors relies on their status, power, will and effectiveness, not on their authority (Boli, 2001, p. 59).

Nonetheless, many scholars refer to globalization as a threat to the autonomy of nation-states. Linklater argues that this process confronts the 'exclusionary nature of sovereignty and...traditional ideas about citizenship' (a), 1996, p. 78). This phenomenon consists of the interdependence of countries due to the flow of investment, trade and migration across political frontiers as a result of transport and communication technology.

Subsequently, the 'boundaries between domestic matters and global affairs can become increasingly blunted', creating a sort of 'new persuasive international culture' (Held and McGrew, 2001, p. 135; Castles and Davidson, 2000, p. viii). However, these factors create new ethnic, cultural and political forms of resistance. The state might have lost its power to solely govern economic activities; though its rights and authority to regulate other policies remain intact (Kraner, 2001, p. 8). In attempt to secure their values, economy and the overview of their population, developed states restrict the flow of migration (Moses, 2006, p. 8). Host citizens are aware and anxious of how immigrants affect their local culture, and fear that they challenge their security, wealth and sense of community (Moses, 2006, p. 137, 176). Hence, citizens have been willing to apply political and military measures to keep immigration at a minimum (Moses, 2006, p. 137).

The illegal immigration between the U. S. and Mexico, which borders recently became militarized, proves this claim. According to the 2002 Current Population Survey, Mexico makes up the largest source of undocumented immigration to the U. S.; the latter being the global leading immigrant country (Passel, 2004; Huntington, 1997, p. 39). It is estimated that annually between 400, 000 and 1 million undocumented migrants try to slip across the border (Homeland Security). The main reason for this large scale immigration is the per-capita income gage between the nations, a difference of \$24, 000 (Homeland Security). Next to the economic factor, the legal as well as illegal immigration, jointly with the ' high birth rates of some immigrant groups', change the ethnic and cultural face of America (Huntington, 1997, p. 32). In 2005, the proposal to build a 2, 000-mile security fence and to increase the number of checkpoints and U. S. border control, hindering illegal alien population to enter, was favoured and approved by the majority of American people (Homeland Security). Hence, it has become increasingly difficult to unnoticeably cross the boarders, causing hundreds of deaths every year.

This control leads to the discussion about citizenship, which symbolizes the belonging of an individual to a democratic nation-state (Fukuyama, 2007). National identity is socially constructed around the nation's history, symbols, culture and traditions and is a ' psychological process through which individuals construe part of their self-concept on the basis of national membership' (Tajfel in Staerklé and Sidanius 2010, p. 496; Fukuyama, 2007). This membership is proven and recognized by a certificate of birth and refers to the ' politics of recognition' (Castles and Davidson, 2000, p. vii;

a)Linklater, 1996, p. 93). Moreover, citizens possess various social, civil and political rights and duties to the state; these tasks included the obligation to the law, the right to vote and the payment of taxes; 'citizenship' entitles all inhabitants as equal (Castles and Davidson, 2000, p. 1). Nonetheless, this sense of belonging simultaneously neglects specific ethnic groups and implies inclusion as well as exclusion, leading to deprivation of legal, social and political rights of certain minorities (Castles and Davidson, 2000, p. 10; a)Linklater, 1996, p. 78, 89). Regardless the existence of 'cross-national' identities, political, social and cultural tensions appear (Castles and Davidson, 2000, p. 9).

Additionally, 'the uniqueness of national identities appears to be challenged by' the fluidity of people, culture and goods (Moses, 2006, p. 176). Migration demands citizens to pose the question 'who are we'; hence reinforces the national identity, the ethnic 'we' (Fukuyama, 2007; Brown, 2008, p. 779). Huntington argues that national identity creates national interests, while these normally 'combine security and material concerns' and 'moral and ethical concerns' (1997, p. 28, 35). In every nation-state, the preservation of the local culture and tradition jointly with autonomy and independence are pursued; an aim claimed to be threatened by mass-migration (b)Linklater, 2008, p. 549). Consequently, immigrants are welcomed as long as they do not pose a threat; working rather than receiving welfare or changing the host's culture (Fukuyama, 2007).

Migration leads to multiculturalism, which is part of the majority of democratic states; it demands for 'tolerance of cultural diversity'; hence denies the existence of a shared culture (Fukuyama, 2007; Huntington, 1997, p. 33).  
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The question whether nation-states should welcome changes and adopt certain new values which otherwise might clash with national characteristics arises.

The ban of the veil in France supports the assumption, that most host states and their ruling national identity feel threatened by immigrants, wanting them to incorporate themselves into the national society and culture (Huntington, 1997, p. 33). The French Senate approved almost unanimously the bill imposing a ban on wearing a full veil in public, coming into force in 2011 (BBC, 2010). This ban concerns about 2, 000 women, which must pay a penalty of 150 euro or pass a ' citizenship course' if they break the law, while a 30, 000 euro fine or a one-year prison sentence will be imposed on men, forcing their wives to wear the veil (BBC, 2010; Davies. 2010). The French government justified the bill by portraying the veil ' threats to women's rights and the secular nature of the state' and defined it as a policy of integration (BBC. 2010). Senator Buffet claims that the veil is offensive against humans and consists of a break in equality, while Justice minister Alliot-Marie argues that ' the full veil dissolves a person's identity in that of a community. It calls into question the French model of integration, founded on the acceptance of our society's values' (Euronews, 2010; Davies, 2010). The full Islamic veil ' is not welcome' in France (Sarkozy in Davies, 2010). As a result, nations in general restrict the flow of migration out of fear of external influence, in order to remain in control of social and cultural factors.

After defining the term of sovereignty, this paper looked at the polarized groups of cosmopolitans and communitarians. Building its arguments on realist assumption, international migration is perceived by many states as a <https://assignbuster.com/international-migrations-challenge-to-state-sovereignty-politics-essay/>



threat to the social collectivity and economy while combined with globalization, it changes various aspects of nations. Nevertheless, states want to remain sovereign, controlling their national identity, interests, citizenship and society by focusing on integrity, shared traditions and values. As a result, nation-states take restricting measurements to dim the flow of migration.

They can also destabilize

host countries by changing ethnic balances, exacerbating social and economic problems, and disrupting notions of political and cultural identity

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