

Is state power still relevant today?



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State power can be defined in terms of the “ state having the capacity to manage what takes place in its borders”, influence behaviors and control outcomes. Another important term to define is soft power which is the ability of a state to persuade others to do what it wants without force or coercion (Foreign Affairs, 2004).

State power can be considered to still be relevant today because states continue to have command over national military sources. Most states around the world maintain military power for defense purposes and protecting their citizens, but that is not always the case. The Russian invasion of Crimea in 2014 is a good example of the relevance of states manifested through the use of national forces and when states use military power aggressively to fulfill their own objectives. Crimea was a territory of Ukraine with ethnic links to Russia because of its majority Russian population. Crimea’s annexation was part of the Russian initiative to recapture former Soviet Union territory. Russian President Putin never accepted the loss of Russian prestige following the end of the Cold War, and was determined to regain it, partly by extending the boundaries of Russia (Foreign Affairs, 2016). The developments in Ukraine at that time presented an opportunity for intervention, which was seized by Russia. This example portrays the relevance of state power in today’s world.

States also continue to be responsible for providing their citizens with public services and the power to do so continues to make them relevant in today’s world. Services provided by states include, for example, health and education, free of charge in some countries (payment for these services is received indirectly through taxation). In fact, recently New Delhi announced

that there will be free public transport for women and that this measure will be rolled out in the next two-to-three months for around 850, 000 women (France 24, 2019). The state's power to provide these services make it relevant, since the citizens would suffer if no public services were to be available.

State power is still relevant today because states have the power to form relations with other countries, making this “ soft power” an integral aspect of their relevance. Soft power is becoming more relevant in today's world. For example, China's Belt and Road Initiative is not only making parts of the world more interlinked, but it is also helping to form or strengthen relations among states. This ambitious program to link Asia with Africa and Europe through land and maritime networks along six corridors is thought to improve regional integration, increase trade and stimulate economic growth (EBRD. com, n. d.). Therefore, soft power of states enabling them to create relations whilst simulating economic growth is another indication of the relevance of state power in today's world.

State power is less relevant when public services to citizens can be provided by other entities. For example, BRAC is a large non-governmental organization that provides education services in Bangladesh and other countries in the world at very low cost. Other entities that provide public services, such as health, education and access to clean water, include multilateral institutions, bilateral institutions (such as aid agencies and foundations). The private sector is increasingly assuming responsibility for services provided by the state, which implies that the power of the state is becoming less relevant. Transportation, for example, is provided through <https://assignbuster.com/is-state-power-still-relevant-today/>

agreements between private companies and states, with the former responsible for constructing roads, for example, and users of roads compensating the private companies by paying tolls.

States are less able to exercise power over cybersecurity threats. One example is the threat of hacking in connection with elections or the dispersing of “fake news” that interfere with election outcomes. Another example is hacking affecting national electricity grids causing blackouts (Greenberg, 2019). In such cases, the power of the state is seen as less relevant, since states are not able to control the situation

In conclusion, I believe that state power is still relevant today, especially soft power that can lead to forming relations with other countries to achieve common objectives. To achieve these objectives, states need to collaborate more with each other. This is particularly important for global challenges, such as climate change and cybersecurity. Whilst it remains important for states to have military command, possessing that kind of power is not always used for justifiable causes. Finally, states retain the power and responsibility of providing goods and services to citizens, but increasingly require the support of other actors in this regard, such as donors and the private sector.

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