

Analysing the significance of the treaty of westphalia politics essay



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The 350th anniversary of the Peace of Westphalia in 1998 was marked by a flurry of conferences and publications by historians, but it was largely ignored in the discipline of international relations (IR). This oversight is odd because in IR the end of the Thirty Years' War is regarded as the beginning of the international system with which the discipline has traditionally dealt. Indeed, the international system has been named for the 1648 peace. Firstly, for some time now, this "Westphalian system," along with the concept of sovereignty at its core, has been a subject of debate: Are the "pillars of the Westphalian temple decaying"? or Are we moving "beyond Westphalia"?[1]

In this debate, "Westphalia" constitutes the taken-for-granted template against which current change should be judged.[2] We contend, however, that the discipline theorizes against the backdrop of a past that is largely imaginary. We show here that the accepted IR narrative about Westphalia is a myth. Then we cover the introduction, theoretical aspects of the Westphalia states, the arguments if the elites actually enjoy substantial autonomy in both domestic and foreign affairs of third world countries or not, (it effects) how it is misleading and then the conclusion.

Introduction

Westphalia is a term used in international relations, supposedly arising from the Treaties of Westphalia 1648 which ended the Thirty Years War. It is generally held to mean a system of states or international society comprising sovereign state entities possessing the monopoly of force within their mutually recognized territories. Relations between states are conducted by means of formal diplomatic ties between heads of state and governments,

and international law consists of treaties made (and broken) by those sovereign entities.[3]

The term implies a separation of the domestic and international spheres, such that states may not legitimately intervene in the domestic affairs of another, whether in the pursuit of self-interest or by appeal to a higher notion of sovereignty, be it religion, ideology, or other supranational ideal. In this sense the term differentiates the 'modern' state system from earlier models, such as the Holy Roman Empire or the Ottoman Empire.[4] We define both domestic and foreign affairs because these are key words to understanding our question and why these two key words are important to third world countries and their elites as below:

Domestic policy, also known as public policy, presents decisions, laws, and programs made by the government which are directly related to issues in the country.[5] It is a set of laws and regulations that a government establishes within a nation's borders. It covers a wide range of areas, including business, education, energy, health care, law enforcement, money and taxes, natural resources, social welfare, and personal rights and freedoms.[6]

Domestic policy decisions usually reflect a nation's history and experience, its social and economic conditions, the needs and priorities of its people, and the nature of its government. Domestic policy is a frequent source of disagreement among people of different backgrounds and philosophies. People who hold conservative beliefs, for instance, will likely stress order, security, and traditional values in domestic policy. People who hold more liberal beliefs, on the other hand, will likely emphasize equality and

government efforts to help the needy, and many broad domestic policy issues are similar for nearly all countries of the world. For example, all governments are expected to provide education, law and order, and other basic services for their citizens. However, the specific goals and objectives of domestic policy vary depending on each nation's needs and capabilities. Most wealthy democracies, for instance, spend substantial sums of money on domestic programs. Many poorer countries have difficulty devoting resources to such essential areas as education and health care. A nation's form of government largely determines how its domestic policy is formed and implemented. Under authoritarian governments, a ruling group may pursue its domestic policy goals without the input or consent of the people being governed. But in democratic societies, the will of the people has a much greater influence.

However, a country's foreign policy, also called the international relations policy, is strategies chosen by the state to safeguard its national interests and to achieve its goals in international relations. The approaches are strategically employed to interact with other countries. In the recent time, due to the deepening level of globalization and transnational activities, the states will also have to interact with non-state actors. The aforementioned interaction is evaluated and monitored in attempts to maximize benefits of multilateral international cooperation. Since the national interests are paramount, foreign policies are designed by the government through high-level decision making processes. National interests' accomplishment can occur as a result of peaceful cooperation with other nations, or through exploitation. Usually, creating foreign policy is the job of the head of

government and the foreign minister (or equivalent). In some countries the legislature also has considerable oversight.[7]

The Theoretical Approach to the Westphalia State System.

Does a discussion of the Treaty of Westphalia, promulgated in 1648, rightfully fall under the purview of a social science journal? The question arises because of the rather uneasy relationship between historians and social scientists. If one were to search the various history departments across the United States, for example, some are organized under colleges of social science and others under humanities. This ambiguity stems from the belief that there are fundamental assumptions in the modern practice of history that are largely incompatible with the tenets of social science but historians are certainly not adverse to borrowing liberally from their theories and practices, and vice versa. (1) Nearly despite themselves, however, historians have much to offer current debates about the future of the modern state system and its alleged origins in the Treaty of Westphalia.[8]

The Treaty of Westphalia is used by social scientists as the foundation of several theoretical schools. Both realist and neo-liberal theories of international relations use the Westphalia state system as one of their most fundamental assumptions (though, of course, with different intentions). (2) Theorists of nationalism also consider the settlement of some significance. By linking religious identity to state identity, they argue, Westphalia was part of a long-term process that led to the ideology of nationalism in the nineteenth century and the primary identification of most ordinary Europeans with their nation-states. (3) The term has been used so often that most introductory political science texts treat its use as axiomatic. (4) The <https://assignbuster.com/analysing-the-significance-of-the-treaty-of-westphalia-politics-essay/>

historical origins and context of the term, on the other hand, are generally not deemed of sufficient import to convey.[9]

Historians view Westphalia quite differently. The Treaty of Westphalia itself was not the only agreement concluded at the peace negotiations held in the town of Muenster in 1648. In addition, the Treaty of Muenster, recognizing the independence of the United Provinces of the Netherlands and ceding territory to France, and the Treaty of Osnabruck, granting Sweden its spoils of victory, also came out of what is more properly called the Settlement of Westphalia. Many of the precepts ascribed to Westphalia, such as state sovereignty and enforcement and regulation of international law, come from these two treaties rather than the Treaty of Westphalia itself. (5) The treaty ended the Thirty Years' War, which had physically devastated much of the Holy Roman Empire, and marked the twilight of the power of the Holy Roman Emperor and the rise of powers such as France, the Netherlands, and, briefly, Sweden in the latter part ...[10]

Arguments that state elite of third world countries enjoy substantial autonomy in both domestic and foreign affairs are misleading are below:

Land is one of the most fundamental components of agriculture, urban and industrial development. In sub-Sahara Africa just like the rest of the third world, ambitious land reforms have become commonplace over the past three decades as one government over the other have sought to free up land resources to meet national priorities. Whatever form it has taken, land reform often signifies only a single element in a large trend involving the expansion of the state at the expense of others, oftentimes competing of

social authority.[11]State intervention in policy arena like land tenure is just one aspect of a large trend involving the wholesale expansion of the state in Africa. In past research, attempts have been made to connect this development to a coherent class or bureaucratic authoritarian strategy, with a primary focus on emergency of an autonomous. However, most evidence seems to confirm that the extension of the public sector has consisted of patchwork on initiatives designed primarily to satisfy the desperate interests of well placed individuals, called the state elites, their families and other favored groups. There has been little coordination, accounting, or planned use of resources and the state has been described as “ predatory” rather than productive.[12]For example, the land question and Zimbabwe’s current crisis of governance appear to be intimately related. However, an extensive survey of the population in the mid-1990s ranked land access very low on the list of priorities when compared to employment creation.[13]Please show how the African elite are limited in implementing land policies that are their own by giving examples of Zimbabwe, where land reforms aimed at indigenous Zimbabweans also owning land was met with resistance and blackmail from UK etc. In south Africa big chunks of land still owned by white minority while the Black are crowded in Soweto slums. In Kenya the high lands most fertile for commercial agric owned by the white settlers. In Uganda the land tenure system inherited from the British colonialists still pose a night mare, big chunks of land to the few royals (mailo akenda) 900, 000 sq miles to the king and a few royals, the lost counties - land of Banyoro being freely given to Buganda as reward for cooperation and punishment to Bunyoro etc.

Collecting taxes, policing and administering justice are among the most basic functions of government and its elites. Historically, states were in large part formed around interactions between government agencies and subjects/citizens over these issues.[14]It is around the same issues that public officials have the greatest license to exercise coercion against citizens. There are powerful sensitivities about the character of the agencies that perform these functions, and strong reactions against any hint of commercialism in their governing principles. ' Tax-farmer', like ' mercenary', has long been a term of disparagement.[15]It is then no surprise that suspicion has attended the rapid spread of (semi-) autonomous revenue agencies (ARAs) in Latin America and in Anglophone Africa over the past two decades.[16]

The task of collecting taxes has been taken from ministries of finance and given to revenue agencies that have some autonomy from central executive power and from rules governing public service recruitment, remuneration and procedures. In consequence, tax collectors, who are anyway often perceived as corrupt and privileged, generally have achieved very substantial increases in their formal salaries. Popular reaction has sometimes been adverse. President Museveni was probably speaking for many Ugandans when, in 2000, he described the Uganda Revenue Authority as a ' den of thieves'.[17]

However, in the eyes of a few academics and external observers, the introduction of revenue agencies has been seen as a step on the road to privatization of the revenue collection process. The establishment of an autonomous revenue authority, with staff paid at rates similar to those in <https://assignbuster.com/analysing-the-significance-of-the-treaty-of-westphalia-politics-essay/>

comparable private sector jobs, does indeed seem to parallel the process of putting state agencies on a commercial footing as a prelude to privatization. In Anglophone Africa, and most third worlds, revenue raising will remain a core state function, controlled by the top political leadership. The creation of ARAs has improved relationships between tax authorities and larger corporate taxpayers, and increased, at least marginally, the capacity of governments to raise revenue.[18]

Several African states have implemented democratic and liberal constitutional reforms during the last two decades. Regime change, the ending of decades of autocratic rule, and the emergence of independent courts are among the important changes produced by these reforms. Yet Africa's "constitutional moment" has not received the scholarly attention it deserves. With the notable exception of South Africa, African nations continue to lie largely outside the mainstream of contemporary comparative constitutional discourse.[19] In Uganda for example, the first constitution of Uganda was abrogated in the year 1966 by state elites just after the independence of the country. In 1995 the Republic of Uganda promulgated a new constitution. The powers of the president which were initially limited are further increased by these amendments. The constitution of this African country declares Uganda as a Presidential Republic. A number of National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy are included in the constitution of Uganda. The constitution is the ultimate rulebook for all operations of the State and its various agencies. The president is directly answerable to the parliament that is indirectly responsible to the people.[20]

Domestically, there are threats from the state, institutional bureaucrats and academics themselves to academic freedom and to the institutional autonomy of universities in most Third world countries especially in South Africa. The situation is more complex than is often perceived. The generally disappointing post-independence history of academic freedom and autonomy in Sub-Saharan Africa is drawn upon to illustrate the perils that may accompany too eager an embrace of the state by intellectuals in South Africa in confronting persisting racial inequities in institutions of higher learning.[21]We must say here that these are purely domestic policies enjoyed by state elites autonomously.

A case study of Tsinghua University, one of China's most influential universities, which has special national significance and strong political ties to the state. Recalling three chapters in the past century of Tsinghua's history, gives an interpretive understanding of how the intertwined relationship between academia and officialdom has acted as a double-edged sword in shaping the University's autonomy. It shows an interesting interplay between the university and the state, revealing the mechanisms of the state's control over the university, and the strategies adopted by the university to gain relative freedom. In the context of China, an individual university can contend with the state's power to strive for its own autonomy. [22]

To bring understanding closer, the intertwining of academia and officialdom is often perceived as a threat to university autonomy. In the modern Western university system, the concept of university autonomy emphasizes ' the power of a university or college to govern itself without outside controls'.
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[23]Autonomy, along with academic freedom, is defined as intrinsic to the nature of the university, and a precondition if a university is to best fulfill its role and responsibilities toward society.[24]The intertwining of academia and officialdom, however, implies external political influence being brought to bear on education. A great deal of research has addressed diverse aspects of the relationship between academia and officialdom, including, for example, the use of the educational system as a channel for the socialization and circulation of elites. The development of school networks by political elites for recruitment purposes, the involvement of political forces in the appointment and promotion of professors, and the political alliance between the university leadership and government officials, including alumni in powerful governmental positions.[25]Hence this clearly shows that state elites enjoy autonomy of their domestic policy in Third World Countries.

Poor leadership of state elites and bad knowledge generation are behind the illusion that African developmental challenges are exotic and difficult to resolve, an illusion exploited by paternalistic outsiders who talk about us as if we were infantile and incapable of the simplest tasks of self-government.

The default cry of Africa's political, intellectual and business elite is to assert that when faced with the complexity of achieving social, economic and political transformation is to call for a continental government to rule all of Africa, a so-called " United States of Africa". It is the religion of the African intelligentsia, the rainbow-over-the-horizon promise of the politicians.

Uganda, the third big East African partner, has been an autocracy since independence; the voices of Obote, Amin and Museveni have displaced the voice of the Ugandan people. They purport to act in the name of the people,

but no one can know what the policy leanings of the people are, because they have never had a chance to express their thoughts through politics.

Something is broken in Africa, something that has been broken for a long time now, something we need to fix, something our elite are avoiding by misdirecting our attention to the daydream of a single continental government. We will not get to our dream Africa by creating a continental platform for the relentless rent-seeking that hobbles us in our local and national communities. We need to unleash the entrepreneurial energies, political and economic, of the varied peoples of Africa. We cannot continue this way, not if we want to actualize all of our aspirations and our domestic policies.

Industrialization by state elites in Third World Countries domestic policy is the process of social and economic change that transforms a human group from a pre-industrial society into an industrial one. It is a part of a wider modernization process, where social change and economic development are closely related with technological innovation, particularly with the development of large-scale energy and metallurgy production. It is the extensive organization of an economy for the purpose of manufacturing. Countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America and the Caribbean in the late 20th century found that high levels of structural differentiation, functional specialization, and autonomy of economic systems from government were likely to contribute greatly to industrial-commercial growth and prosperity. Amongst other things, relatively open trading systems with zero or low duties on goods imports tended to stimulate industrial cost-efficiency and innovation across the board. Free and flexible

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labor and other markets also helped raise general business-economic performance levels, as did rapid popular learning capabilities.

Positive work ethics in populations at large combined with skills in quickly utilizing new technologies and scientific discoveries were likely to boost production and income levels and as the latter rose, markets for consumer goods and services of all kinds tended to expand and provide a further stimulus to industrial investment and economic growth. By the end of the century, East Asia was one of the most economically successful regions of the world - with free market countries such as Hong Kong being widely seen as models for other, less developed countries around the world to emulate.

A similar state-led developing programme was pursued in virtually all the Third World countries during the Cold War, including the socialist ones, but especially in Sub-Saharan Africa after the decolonization period. The primary scope of those projects was to achieve self-sufficiency through the local production of previously imported goods, the mechanization of agriculture and the spread of education and health care. However, all those experiences failed bitterly due to a lack of realism: most countries didn't have a pre-industrial bourgeoisie able to carry on a capitalistic development or even a stable and peaceful state. Those aborted experiences left huge debts toward western countries and fuelled public corruption.

However, in this discussion, we still hold the view that the elites in third world countries do not enjoy their full state autonomy to make independent domestic policies and are misleading. Developed or powerful countries of the world like America, Britain, France among others who were at times colonial

powers, continued to influence both the domestic and foreign policies of third world countries because they are poor, dependants, weak, underdeveloped among others. In this view, matters of trade, finance, investment, foreign aid among others have been shaped by developed countries making it worse for less developed countries in the face of the current globalization and the evil empires (Multinational) which are normally stronger than third world countries, international organizations, global institutions of the IMF, World Bank and the IMF.

Globalization concerns have taken a far more positive path since the 1999 Seattle protests. Activists have begun to realize that it is the world governments who are the backbone of international organizations such as the G8, the World Bank, and the IMF and that efforts must be directed toward both the organizations and the member governments in order to achieve policy objectives. In July 2005, on the eve of an important G8 summit in Scotland, a massive music festival was organized to express public support for issues such as debt relief, aid for Africa and cooperation on cutting greenhouse emissions. Almost as if in response, the G8 heads of state announced important initiatives in these areas.[26]

With respect to trade issues, many of the third world countries have created the greatest recent resistance to the global pressure to reduce trade barriers through World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements. The main problem relates to agricultural products. Many of these countries have experienced a severe downturn in their domestic agricultural acreage because local producers cannot compete with agricultural exports from major countries such as the United States. They have persuasively argued that it is not a fair <https://assignbuster.com/analysing-the-significance-of-the-treaty-of-westphalia-politics-essay/>

playing field because in Europe, Japan and the United States, agriculture receives sizeable government subsidies. Third world countries cannot afford to similarly subsidize their own domestic agricultural industries.[27]The matter came into focus at the WTO summit in Cancun, Mexico in September 2003. Mid-level developing countries such as Brazil, South Africa, India and China objected to any progress on reducing tariff barriers in general until the agricultural problem was resolved and the talks collapsed. At the subsequent WTO summit in Geneva, Switzerland in July 2004, a breakthrough was reached. The deal, approved by all 147 members, will cut rich countries' farm subsidies in return for developing countries opening markets for manufactured goods. The implementation of the agreement presents obvious internal political challenges in the developed countries.[28]

In matters of loans, the World Bank is an organization affiliated with the United Nations for the purpose of making loans to developing countries which are guaranteed. The bank is self-sustaining and has maintained a profit on its lending activities. The bank is owned by the member nations which include virtually all nations with the exception of Cuba and North Korea. Voting on bank policy is based on capital subscription. Seven countries, United States, Germany, Japan, Great Britain, Canada, Italy and France, have 45% of the voting power. The United States is a 17% shareholder. Many loans now issued by the World Bank involve structural adjustment conditions which generally require countries to devalue their currencies against the dollar; lift import and export restrictions; balance their budgets and not overspend; and remove price controls and state subsidies. [29]

International Monetary Fund (IMF), The IMF is closely affiliated with the World Bank. It is also owned by virtually the same member nations as the World Bank and has a similar shareholder and voting arrangement based on the size of each member's economy. The IMF's primary responsibility has been to maintain stable currency exchange rates between countries. The IMF also issues loans designed to help countries restructure their economies to increase exports and draw foreign investment. Countries that take out such structural adjustment loans give the IMF influence over their economic policies and foreign affairs as well.[30]

Structural Adjustment Policies are economic policies which countries must follow in order to qualify for new World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans and help them make debt repayments on the older debts owed to commercial banks, governments and the World Bank. Although SAPs are designed for individual countries but have common guiding principles and features which include export-led growth; privatization and liberalization; and the efficiency of the free market.[31]

SAPs generally require countries to devalue their currencies against the dollar; lift import and export restrictions; balance their budgets and not overspend; and remove price controls and state subsidies. However, anyone must remember that evaluation makes their goods cheaper for foreigners to buy and theoretically makes foreign imports more expensive. In principle it should make the country wary of buying expensive foreign equipment. In practice, however, the IMF actually disrupts this by rewarding the country with a large foreign currency loan that encourages it to purchase imports.

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Balancing national budgets can be done by raising taxes, which the IMF frowns upon, or by cutting government spending, which it definitely recommends. As a result, SAPs often result in deep cuts in programmes like education, health and social care, and the removal of subsidies designed to control the price of basics such as food and milk. So SAPs hurt the poor most, because they depend heavily on these services and subsidies. SAPs encourage countries to focus on the production and export of primary commodities such as cocoa and coffee to earn foreign exchange. But these commodities have notoriously erratic prices subject to the whims of global markets which can depress prices just when countries have invested in these so-called 'cash crops'. [33]

The term "Structural Adjustment Program" has gained such a negative connotation that the World Bank and IMF launched a new initiative, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Initiative, and makes countries develop Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP). While the name has changed, with PRSPs, the World Bank is still forcing countries to adopt the same types of policies as SAPs. SAPs has caused a lot of protests and strikes around the world for example in December 1990 students at Makerere University protest cutting of stationery and travel allowances arising from a World Bank-imposed SAP. Police fire into a crowd of protesting students, killing two. Other countries are Sudan, Benin, Jamaica, Trinidad, Venezuela, Russia, Nigeria, Niger, Mexico, Jordan, Zaire, Zambia among others. [34]

Globalization and Competitive Markets in Third World Countries. Nowadays, globalization is playing an important role in the world's economy. There are many viewpoints involving the concept of globalization but a common one is <https://assignbuster.com/analysing-the-significance-of-the-treaty-of-westphalia-politics-essay/>

that “ globalization is the integration of national markets through international trade an