SOVEREIGNTISM AS A VOCATION AND PROFESSION: IMPERIAL ROOTS, CURRENT STATE, POSSIBLE PROSPECTS

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Abstract. *This paper offers a conceptualization of sovereigntism as a political phenomenon that deconstructs the political system of a state or empire. Analysis of the evolution and genesis of sovereignty has shown its duality: on the one hand, sovereignty has to do with the independence of a state from external influence and focuses on the internal political and intrasocial aspects. On the other hand, sovereignty is a system of power relations, implying a system of universal control and the legitimate use of violence (i.e., through mechanisms of disciplinary power, biopower, biopolitics, control and reproduction of the official ideology). Also, the interpretation of sovereignty's degree of strength offered in this paper makes it possible to discriminate weak, medium-strength, and strong sovereignties, each with its own characteristics and specific of functioning, both in open political systems and in closed ones (taking into account the nature and properties of sovereign power).*

I argue that sovereigntism, under the influence of modern globalization processes, becomes either "politicized sovereignty," consolidating the instruments and practices of populism, particularism, nationalism, and separatism, or the means to refute and deconstruct the existing sovereign system of power (including by redistributing the structures of sovereign power and formalizing nonsystemic relations). Also, analysis of the factors that led to the modern appearance of sovereigntism shows two important features. The first is events in the sovereign entity's external space, such as, the fight against globalization, the actions of supranational governance systems, and the intervention of international institutional actors in the entity's internal political system. The second characteristic feature is the struggle for power within the entity's political system, which may take the form either of a struggle between the center and the periphery, or of a struggle for the transformation of the political system and the legitimacy of political decision-making. Sovereigntism exhibits the ability to catalyze sociopolitical events, phenomena, and practices (protest movements, revolutions or civil wars, rallies, strikes) for further (re)production of divisions within the political system.

Key words: *sovereignty, sovereigntism, modern state, empire, power, authority, social space*

"Universal law is for lackeys; context is for kings."
Captain Gabriel Lorca, *Star Trek: Discovery*

Social movements,[1] whose positive dynamics increased in 2020, have reactualized sovereignty as one of the key concepts of sociopolitical scientific discourse. Sovereignty is related to issues of state organization, the principle of territorialism, the method of organizing power relations within a specific sociopolitical order, the codification of social space, and political decision-making. On the one hand, sovereignty is interpreted as a configuration of power and domination, that is opposed to sociopolitical plurality (systemic, institutional, or structural). On the other hand, sovereignty denotes the rule and completeness of political power in various forms of (self)organization of the population (a state, an empire, etc.). The expression of political power occurs through (1) political decision-making; (2) the codification and formalization of social relations and the social space; and (3) the reproduction of decisions, actions, communications, symbols, and structures that are accepted by the society's system as "our own," separate from "alien."

The heterogeneity and plurality of the substantive part of the concept of sovereignty, as well as the lack of a comprehensive conceptualization and categorization of the concept under study, led to the (co)existence in the discourse of political science of three dominant forms of sovereignty. The first one is *state sovereignty* (as a legal norm for codifying power relations within a particular state). The second one is *national sovereignty* (as an appeal to national self-determination, which presupposes the existence of a political or cultural nation within a multicomponent society). The third one is *people's sovereignty* (as a way of legitimizing "people" in the system of power relations, the constitutionalization and legitimization of the rights of "people" to participate in the public policy of the state, i.e., political decision-making).

Over the past few years in the social sciences, sovereignty researchers have emphasized the following areas:

- sovereignty as a derivative of territorialism, that is, the influence of geographic determinism on the changing dynamics of sovereignty (Stilz 2019; Billé 2020);

- the impact of global processes, primarily globalization and building a network society, on the unsustainability of sovereignty (Agnew 2017; Mitchell & Fazi 2017; Craig 2019);

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[1] According to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP 2021), from January 2020 to January 2021, more than 90 discrete kinds of protest took place in the world: electoral, political, related to the COVID-19 pandemic, economic, social, and others. Among the most recent important events of this kind are (1) the military coup in Myanmar and the beginning of mass protests (from February 4) against the interim government, the State Administrative Council, led by Min Aung Hlaing; (2) protests in the Russian Federation against the arrest of Alexey Navalny, which began on January 23, 2021; (3) an attempt to seize the US Capitol by supporters of Donald Trump on January 6, 2021; (4) protests against restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic that took place in the Czech Republic, Brazil, the Netherlands, and Mongolia in January 2021; and (5) a series of "December" protests in Albania, Haiti, Montenegro, Nepal, and Peru.

- historical analysis of sovereignty and its rethinking, taking into account the development of society as a social system and the state as a political institution (Bourke & Skinner 2017; Waltermann 2019; Herzog 2020);

- the study of sovereignty through the prism of nationalism, cosmopolitanism, and the modernization of political systems of economically developing "third world" countries (Margariti 2017; Walshe 2019; Bennett 2020).

Two areas of research are sovereignty, primarily in the political system of the EU (Baldassari, Castelli, Truffelli, & Vezzani 2020; Damiani 2020), and the role of sovereignty in the political system of national and modern states (state-nation, nation-state) and in the system of the liberal democratic order (Kallis 2018; Scholte 2020).

The positive dynamics of social movements around the world, mentioned earlier, also demonstrate the key tendencies of modern society:

1) attempts to increase the practice of the population's participation in (re)producing political decisions, as well as attempts to increase direct control over the implementation of these decisions;

2) the desire to narrow the established distance between the center of decision-making (the subject of political power) and the periphery of the execution of these decisions (the object of political power);

3) de-etatization of the sociopolitical space and the fragmentation of the structures of sovereignty; and

4) the growth of antiglobalization and nationalist, and populist tendencies.

Such tendencies become the basis for the development of sovereignty as one of the key concepts in sociopolitical discourse over the past ten years.

However, examining the category of "sovereignty," researchers have typically engaged with the issues of populism, nationalist movements, and the crisis in the system of governance that has developed in liberal democratic systems, missing the conceptual and structural features of sovereignty. Sovereignty is thereby transformed into a social and political movement, ideologizing (constructing social reality) claims to the sovereignty of the state, a power within a political organization.

Taking into account all the above mentioned factors, my aim in this paper is to conceptualize sovereignty as a mechanism for deconstructing[2] sovereign power. In this respect, sovereigntism as such a mechanism:

1) acts as a political movement that does not have a clearly expressed ideology;

2) manifests in crisis situations related to issues of legitimation and the legitimacy of political decisions within the state; and

3) functions as a system of power relations based on social and political antipodes (binary positions) that serve as the means to construct a political reality.

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[2] I borrow the term deconstruction from the work of Jacques Derrida. Deconstruction is the understanding of an object of research through breaking a stereotype about it or including it in a new research context.

I am going to focus on implementing the research goal through the use of various approaches (structural, functional, world-system, institutional) and various sociological and political concepts, including critical analysis, the concept of symbolic power as the power to produce, parameterization and factor analysis, and comparative analysis.

A Conceptual Framework and the Political Foundations of Sovereignty

Modern vectors in the study of sovereignty can be identified in three key areas: the legal (regulatory) approach, the sociopolitical approach, and an approach based on the theory of international relations (Krasner 2001: 1). My work adopts the sociopolitical approach, analyzing both the body of critical work on sovereignty and other leading approaches to understanding sovereignty as a system of power and power relations.

The first attempt at conceptualizing sovereignty is associated with the French political philosopher Jean Bodin, who in his work *On Sovereignty: Six Books of the Commonwealth* defined sovereignty as "absolute and perpetual power vested in a commonwealth" (Bodin 2009: 24). Bodin desacralizes political reality, which earlier was focused on religion and the church as key forms of worldview (ideology) and governance (organization). On the one hand, politics replaces theology; and therefore divine power, or *auctoritas,* which previously was granted only to the pope, is now extrapolated to belong to the ruler (sovereign) of the state.

On the other hand, the ruler is above political processes within the framework of political reality, which frees the ruler from the legal regulation of the social system. That is, the ruler is simultaneously within the boundaries of the political reality of the state and is not within the boundaries of the law and the laws of the state. It should be understood that the ruler cannot obey "other" laws, commands, or will that come from outside the political system in which the ruler functions. That is, sovereignty is an exclusively internal, immanent property of the political system.

Jean Bodin outlines several important characteristics of power. First, the actions of sovereignty extend to the entire society (population) and the territory of the state, thereby becoming a form of public policy in which political decisions are (re)made and the social structure of power functions. Second, sovereign power must be constant, uninterrupted, and integral, submerging other possible power structures potentially on a par with or above itself. In Bodin's conceptualization of sovereignty one more property of sovereignty is revealed—permanence. Third, the goal of sovereignty is the common good, which comes from internal factors (factors connected to home affairs and home policy). Fourth, sovereign power should be desacralized, that is, separated from religion (as an ideology) meaningfully and from the church (as an organization) formally.

An important clarification that Bodin brings to the study of sovereignty concerns the definition of sovereignty, first of all as power, public or private, but also power as a method of governance through a system of control. If for Bodin sovereignty is a permanent and continuous power, then Carl Schmitt points to the fact that sovereignty defines itself through extraordinary emergencies that go beyond the "normal" existence of the state (Schmitt 2005: 20–24). For Schmitt, sovereignty has a casual nature that

manifests informally, not systemically. Any difficult situation that cannot be explained, let alone resolved with the help of legal regulation, is a priori a matter not of power but of sovereignty—as an "emergency" power (Schmitt 2004).

Moreover, sovereignty is unregulated power that exists simultaneously with constitutional, lawful power. Constitutional power regulates and codifies normal situations that are the natural state of a political system or social relations. Sovereignty acts in the field of extraordinary circumstances; therefore, sovereignty is an extraordinary power that cannot be regulated in advance. Sovereignty is a kind of permanent power that is not produced from anything but exists in politics itself as a mechanism of management through political decision-making. Sovereignty is "real political power" (Schmitt [1932] 1996: 30–34) that ensures the sovereign order of political organization; it becomes especially relevant in those situations where the question is about the survival of the political system itself, which is under threat of destruction.

The sovereign, according to Schmitt, is a delimiter that points to "enemies," draws the boundaries between "normal" and "emergency" situations, and also directly and absolutely ensures the survival and reproducibility of the political system. The sovereign is the subject of political relations and political reality at the same time (Schmitt 2005). Certainly, the central element of Schmitt's theory is "political will" as a special instrumental quality of a sovereign. The sovereign is above the constitutional field, but acts within the framework of a specific political system. Thus, by acting outside the normative-legal field, the sovereign is able to impose his or her own political order, which in the future will acquire the features of a legal, constitutional, and legitimate one.

Criticism of and opposition to Carl Schmitt's perspective on sovereignty is provided by the French philosopher Michel Foucault, who points out that "sovereignty and discipline, legislation, the right of sovereignty and disciplinary mechanics are in fact the two things that constitute the general mechanisms of power in our society" (Foucault 2003: 39). Foucault designates several important epistemological positions: first, the subject of sovereignty cannot be single and exclusive within the political system; rather, we should be speaking about a plurality of subjects, or at least about the binary opposition "subject to subject." Second, sovereign power does not come "from above," according to the will of a sovereign-ruler, but "from below" as the fear of subordinates before the ruler (sovereign); therefore, it is necessary to highlight a certain plurality of powers, which in total should constitute the unity of political power. Third, sovereign power is based not on the law as a structure for normalizing and codifying the social space of the population but on a certain fundamental legitimacy that is the ground for all laws (ibid.: 44).

According to Foucault, sovereign power is in opposition to disciplinary power, but it can also have a set of disciplinary mechanisms to implement the reproduction of itself. Chiefly, this arises from the arrangement of the infrastructure for control, supervision, and observation—in aggregate, the expansive nature of biopower, or "power over the body." Sovereign power is a system of governance that has regulatory and political dimensions (Foucault 2009: 53–55). The normative aspect of sovereign power presupposes quite legal and legitimate mechanisms of "inclusion" and "exclusion" of various structural units

from public administration while the political aspect of sovereign power is a legitimate, but beyond normative, way of resolving the situation that puts the political system in a situation of hopelessness, "a dead end."

Of most important concern here is the radical rejection of the law as a universal system of order that ensures the safety of the population within the boundaries of a specific territory. To resolve this stalemate which goes beyond the normative and transforms into the political Foucault suggests distinguishing between two regimes of power: sovereign law and disciplinary mechanisms. If sovereign law is a derivative of sovereign power and is aimed at controlling territory, then disciplinary power, through a certain set of mechanisms, controls the population:

> From the nineteenth century until the present day, we have then in modern societies, on the one hand, a legislation, a discourse, and an organization of public right articulated around the principle of the sovereignty of the social body and the delegation of individual sovereignty to the State; and we also have a tight grid of disciplinary coercions that actually guarantees the cohesion of that social body. (ibid.: 37)

That is, sovereignty is transformed from social power into a constitutive property of political (state) power through management, communication, and control. Sovereignty is determined by its normative and legal nature (its legal component), while in sociopolitical discourse, sovereignty is transformed into an ideological construct, which, in my opinion, is aimed at legitimizing the practices of constructing the sociopolitical reality of the population of a particular state. Sovereignty exhausted itself meaningfully when it ceased to perform the functions of control over land and resources during the creation of the modern state. Disciplinary power is guided by a person and by social relations in the era of rationalization of the state as a system.

Taking into account the conceptual positions outlined above, I suggest considering *sovereignty as a system of (re)production and legitimation of political decisions within a specific political system (open or closed), focused exclusively on the internal "agenda" (requests, demands, proposals) of the population*. A sovereign system both hinders and resists both pressure and influence from outside. Sovereignty draws visible or invisible borders that distinguish "friends" from "enemies;" that is, it opposes two different systems of government, two different forms of internal political order.

Sovereignty should be understood as a tool for legitimizing the political system by other political systems; that is, "sovereignty differentiates the state ontologically and ethically from other forms of political life, and furnishes us simultaneously with the conditions for knowing the state as such" (Bartelson 1995: 189). Sovereignty is also interpreted as an internal property of the political system: the ability to adopt and legitimate political decisions and to use legitimate violence as a means of building the infrastructure of power relations, which is consolidated around the mechanisms of discipline and control.

On the one hand, sovereignty presupposes the normative and legitimate consolidation of the spatial organization of the population through the creation and maintenance of a security system and the functionality of a sociopolitical order, using

control instruments (violence, domination, coercion, discipline, communication). On the other hand, sovereignty (re)creates the social reality of the political life of the population by: (1) constructing collective identities (through the prism of opposition, inclusion and exclusion, restriction); (2) creating an extensive infrastructure for managing a variety of objects of power; (3) bringing society to order from a multitude into a certain political whole, unity; and (4) constituting and legitimizing political power.

Does Empire Construct Sovereignty or Does Sovereignty Construct Empire?

Even though the conceptualization of sovereignty took place in the 16th century and was associated primarily with royal power and the feudal system of organizing the population within a limited territory, we can observe a ramified system of sovereign power, through the presence of signs of sovereignty, even in ancient Rome. The Roman Empire illustrates many of the systemic and functional features that formed the basis for the modern forms of (self)organization of the population. Sovereignty also existed in the structure of power relations not so much in the Roman Republic as in the Roman Empire. The first emperor, Octavian Augustus, consolidated the maximum amount of power in his hands, becoming a single subject of power relations (Hinsley 1986: 41–43). Such sovereignty could be designated "absolute," using the terminology proposed by Gottfried Leibniz (1988).

In analyzing the political structure of the Holy Roman Empire, however, Leibniz denied the existence of absolute sovereignty, giving scientific preference to a multitude of relative sovereignties, which are immanent, extend to a specific territory, may be influenced from outside, but at the same time constantly interact with each other. With respect to sovereign relations in the Roman Empire, we can identify several features:

1) The right to change political reality and lead political changes belongs to a single subject of power relations.

2) A single subject of power relations exercises direct control over the movement of capital, goods, people, and services in the territorial space of the imperial system.

3) A single subject of power relations is able to manage the system both in a peaceful period, when the paths and opportunities for the development of the system are predetermined, and in a period of uncertainty, when the system is engulfed in crisis.

It is during such systemic crises that exclusivity and a certain absoluteness of sovereignty are manifested, when the central government becomes not just power over the law, but also power capable of changing laws, political decisions, "rules of the game," and political reality, and of getting an opportunity beyond actions. We suggest speaking less about the absoluteness of the system (about its infinity, perfection, or unconditionality) and more about its autonomy and autarky (its focus on itself). This idea is developed further later in the paper when the analysis turns to determining the degree of strength of sovereignty.

For absolute sovereignty, a characteristic feature is its personification, that is, its identification with a specific subject of power relations—with the ruler. Absolute sovereignty is not just above the law, that is, it is not just outside the normative legal system it also produces the normative reality itself, constructs it through a personified control system. Consequently, with absolute sovereignty, the system becomes autarky (focused on itself and ensuring its own security) and autocracy, in which power relations are monopolized and subsequently subjectively reproduced. Under these circumstances of uncertainty, absolute sovereignty is the embodiment of some (un)natural state of society, while sovereignty, according to Giorgio Agamben,

> presents itself as an incorporation of the state of nature in society, or, if one prefers, as a state of indistinction between nature and culture, between violence and law, and this very indistinction constitutes specifically sovereign violence. The state of nature is therefore not truly external to nomos but rather contains its virtuality. (Agamben 1998: 35)

The Roman Empire was a huge and multi-level political organization that required a certain system of government, being not just a set of territories but many political forms of organization of the population. The multifunctional Latin word *imperium* means control, power, limitation possessed by the subject of power relations. "Imperium" was received by the governors of the emperor, proconsuls or propraetors who ruled over a limited territory, realizing there the model of power relations that they projected from the center, Rome. Consequently, the provincial leaders controlled the movement of capital, goods, people, and services, and directed political changes, but could not change political reality itself.

Thus, the provincial leaders themselves became the subjects of power relations, which functioned in the system of a single subject of power relations, but at the same time they created their own "system within the system" (a subsystem of the system). In other words, within the framework of the absolute sovereignty of the entire Roman Empire, the type of sovereignty operated and reproduced what we may call *relative sovereignty,* following the logic of Leibniz.

A multitude of relative sovereignties constituted a hierarchy of power relations that provided control over the existing order. Moreover, it was precisely this set of relative sovereignties that legitimized absolute sovereignty; that is, the periphery legitimized the center's right to govern itself. In this case, sovereignty is the refusal of the regions to challenge the center (central power), as well as the refusal of any state to interfere in the internal affairs of any other state (Wallerstein 2004: 97).

In empires, which are both complex and multilevel systems of government, the problem of sovereignty was solved by identifying the object of political power—the individual as a structural component of the population. At the same time, an empire should be understood not only and not so much as a political form of organizing space but as a form of a sociopolitical order with an extensive infrastructure of control over the constant (re)production of this very order.

The empire always claims to be complete, to create its own imperial world, into which all the social and political structures of the periphery are integrated. However, the

degree of integration can be different, and it depends on the institutional, structural, and functional capabilities first of all of the periphery itself, as well as on its willingness to integrate into the imperial system of order.

If we apply the conceptual and discursive practices of modern science to studying the empire, then the empire is a supranational entity within which imperial sovereignty operates and, in the system of imperial sovereignty, a subsystem of sovereignty of the periphery can operate. Claiming completeness, empires resolved the issue of sovereign power by identifying the population with the empire through either (1) *practices of citizenship* (citizen of the Roman Empire, citizen of the Soviet Union) or (2) *practices of subjectness* (subjects of the ruler in the British, Russian, or Ottoman Empires).

The peripheral constituents of an empire (principalities, kingdoms, provinces, and other political forms of organization) are part of the (re)production of imperial sovereignty. That is, we have a situation in which the emperor is a sovereign interacting with the entire system through the development of a certain sum of relations (decisions, actions, communications, structures, symbols and signs), which are accepted by the system as "their own," separated from "aliens' ones."

In this case, sovereignty acts as a property of the social system to order chaos, (re)producing the existing imperial order. However, owing to the territorial extent of the empire and its structural and functional complexity, the emerging situations of chaos or uncertainty (the so-called "bifurcation points" in political science) extrapolate the mechanisms of sovereignty to their "local" ruler, that is, to the one who is "here and now" managing the periphery and making decisions. In this understanding, the practice of "colonial administration" or "local government of colonies" is manifested when the king or emperor is formally a sovereign, and nominally these functions are (re)performed by the "colonial manager" who has a system of control; instruments of violence, discipline, and domination; and the ability to influence the construction of collective identities at his or her disposal.

Charles Tilly points to the fact that the colonization of new territories by the British, Dutch, and French focused on "giving their merchants permission to organize colonial rule" (Tilly 1992: 92). However, a certain clarification is in order: in addition to merchants, other structures of social power were also involved,[3] primarily missionaries, who formed the ideological basis of the imperial order, and the military, which functioned as an instrument for maintaining order, ensuring security, and protecting the territory of the colony from external interference (McNeill 1963; Mann 1986). These power structures organized new territories, extrapolating the practices and methods of governing the center to the empire (in this case, the metropolis).

As a consequence, there is a process in which the empire institutionalizes the structures of sovereignty, creating, for example, the British, French or Dutch East India

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[3] By structures of social power, I mean what Michael Mann writes about in *Sources of Social Power*, where he points out the existence of four fundamental social types of power: commercial (merchant), military (guards, army), religious-ideological (priests), and political (ruler).

Company.[4] The development of new territories on the one hand turns the empire into a discrete management system, forcing it to seek new forms of management of the sociopolitical order. On the other hand, it transforms its system into a supraterritorial and multilevel one, forcing a consideration of sovereignty not just as a system but as a mechanism with the ability to reproduce and legitimize political decisions, where internal factors determine not only the interests of the center but also the needs of the periphery, though to a lesser extent.

Neoliberalism as a Projection of the "Imperial" Character of Sovereignty: The Degree of Strength, and Ways of Functioning

No matter how paradoxical it may sound, the modern neoliberal system of government that was formed during the 20th century is a projection of the colonial (imperial) system of government that was formed in the 16th to 18th centuries. In my opinion, neoliberalism is an attempt to legitimize the (post)imperial order in modern times by institutionalizing the structures of sovereignty: international and local associations (organizations or blocs), transnational corporations, and military-political alliances. As Giovanni Arrighi pointed out:

> Moreover, constraints and restrictions on state sovereignty came to be embodied in parastatal organizations—most notably, the UN and the Bretton Woods organizations—which for the first time in the modern era institutionalized the idea of world government. (Arrighi 1994: 75)

Institutionalization, primarily of the network structures of sovereignty, is the process of creating a supranational level of government with dominant centers and (semi)peripheries lying within the sphere of the center's influence.

During the course of the collapse of empires, the creation of independent national states, and the process of decolonization that took place in the 19th and 20th centuries, sovereignty began to be associated with the independence of domestic politics (the political system) from external influence (other political systems). If we take the *state of modernity* (as a rational, secularized, and disciplining state) as an axiom of the existence of the modern state, then it is necessary to stipulate possible ways to evaluate the strength of sovereignty, that is, possible ways to evaluate the functioning of sovereignty.

We suggest distinguishing three degrees of strength of sovereignty, depending on the set of specific parameters: weak, medium and strong (see table 1). These degrees of strength of sovereignty are more characteristic of open political systems, in which sovereignty itself is relative to many other sovereignties or the same sovereignty both within the internal political system and beyond. On the one hand, in the modern world,

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[4] The East India Company, which was created as a trade organization, evolved over time into a political structure with its own fleet and army, a bureaucratic management system, and territorial possessions; but, most important, it possessed sovereignty as a way of implementing decisions.

the dominant form is an open political system, but recently conditions have been created for a "rollback from openness" and autonomy of the system.[5]

On the other hand, a closed political system is a "project" of the 20th century, associated primarily with the undemocratic regime characteristics of the political system.[6] In the case of a closed political system, we are speaking about the autonomy of sovereignty, which, as a rule, is strong in terms of the degree of strength, and also tends to absoluteness (returning to Leibniz's idea of absolute sovereignty).

Table 1. Sovereignty's degree of strength: Structure and functions

Sovereignty / Parameters	Weak	Medium	Strong
Power hierarchy	Weak hierarchy	Medium hierarchy	Strong hierarchy
Direction of the organization of power relations	From below	Consensus	From above
Type of bureaucracy	No bureaucracy	Client-oriented	Professional
Institutional design of the political system	Leaderism	Monarchy	Parliamentarism
Regulatory system	Custom / Morality	Morality / Law	Law / Politics
Social solidarity[7]	Mechanic (formal)	Organic (according to interests)	Societal (value)
Social structure[8]	Layers / Columns[9]	Classes / Strata	Estates / Guilds, Trusts

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[5] A striking example of the autonomy of the political system is the policy of the US during the presidency of Donald Trump, when the US began either to withdraw from international platforms or to question their consistency and functionality. It also raises the question of the viability of the liberal democratic order not only in the US but also in other countries, for example in Western Europe.

[6] In this case, the regime must be viewed as the state of the political system in a specific period, what we call the "here and now." Until the 20th century, a closed political system as such did not exist, if we do not take into account Japan in the period of Sakoku (isolation). In the case of Japan, the matter concerns not so much the closedness of the system from other systems as it does isolation, that is, a sufficiently large restriction of Japan's ties and communication with other forms of political organization.

[7] We consider social solidarity from the position of Emile Durkheim, adding to it an additional type societal.

[8] The social structure in this case has a variable character since it is influenced by the openness or closedness of the political system, vertical or horizontal structures of sociopolitical relations, and the ways of (self)organization of the population.

[9] We use the "Columns" category in the sense Arend Lijphart used it in his analysis of multiconstituent societies and in the theory of consocial democracy.

With **weak sovereignty**, the hierarchical structure of power relations is weak and rather formal. Such a hierarchy is volatile and unstable, depending on the internal or external social, military, or cultural environment. A weak hierarchy is characterized by a mismatch between elites and a blur in the clear planning of interactions between different social structures. Such a mechanism arises during political or social crises and is of a short-term nature. Because it is unstable and weak accordingly, it seeks to strengthen power hierarchies in any form. Weak sovereignty rests on organization "from below"; that is, the power of the sovereign is directly proportional to the desire of the population to obey, and also depends on the belief of the population in its ruler and the fear of subordinates before the ruler.

With weak sovereignty, there is no bureaucracy as such; its functions are performed by groups of persons close to the ruler who function according to a system of informal relations. Therefore, the structure of power relations is patrimonial, and also includes the practices of nepotism and crony capitalism. The political system itself is close to leaderism as a way of institutionalizing social relations. Leaderism presupposes the presence of a charismatic ruler—a leader who is both a catalyst for political reality and a coordinator of political processes.

Therefore, the normative system with weak sovereignty functions through the prism of customs and morality. A custom is a historically established norm that relies on literal performance; that is, it does not require individual or collective interpretation. The custom is not universal and the same for everyone; it may be different for different social groups, and the degree of its implementation will also differ. Morality precedes law; accordingly, the normative system tries to systematize norms in such a way that they are the same for everyone in terms of the degree of fulfillment and the degree of punishment for nonfulfillment. Morality goes beyond the everyday life in which the individual finds him- or herself and his or her social boundaries.

Social solidarity (Durkheim 1969: 37–43) as a way of legitimizing collective identity is mechanical, that is, formal. It is based on the underdevelopment and similarity of the constituent models of society. Inherent in mechanical solidarity is the use of violence and repressive mechanisms to support social structuring. With mechanical solidarity, an individual blends into a team, which the individual directly depends on. The social solidarity of a team depends on the level of interaction among its members, as well as on cooperation between socioeconomic functions reflecting the normative space of such a team. Mechanical solidarity is characterized by repressive sanctions, a similarity in sociocultural structures and norms, and a poorly developed infrastructure of social ties and social mobility.

The social structure is represented by the variation of layers/columns where the "filter" for the transition from one layer to another is the presence of certain resources and capabilities (financial, administrative, military, power, relatives). This structure is typical, for example, of some countries in Africa and the Middle East (Libya, Syria, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia), where formally these political organizations are states, but nominally they are divided into many (self)organized groups (military

formations, rebels, paramilitary groups that control a certain territory and the movement of capital, goods, and people on it).

With **medium sovereignty**, a medium hierarchy of power functions that is based on at least a two-level system of relations. The level of organization of the hierarchy depends on the level of organization of the political system and the society itself. As a rule, medium sovereignty is represented by the practices of populism, clientelism, and elitism in how the distribution of power is structured and in the formation of power inequalities. With respect to clientelism, there is an indirect interaction between the patron and the client whereby the latter directly depends on the former. Clients are loyal and devoted to the patron or to the person interested in obtaining both social prestige and socioeconomic benefits.

Consequently, during the functioning of the medium hierarchy, there is a consensus direction in the organization of power relations, whereby not only subjects of political power but also objects are allowed to develop and make a political decision. In this context, consensus is a way of coordinating the actions of the authorities that, in one way or another, depends on the relationship between the ruler, the bureaucracy, and the population. Bureaucracy, on the other hand, is client-oriented and its functions are aimed at identifying the needs and desires of the population for more flexible management and to prevent crises in the political system. On the one hand, the patron has broad social ties, power or economic resources on the other, the patron needs "his or her own people" in the appropriate areas of implementing the power policy and supporting the legitimacy of the existing system of government.

Institutional design with medium sovereignty is formalized as a monarchy, which cannot always be only and exclusively hereditary. The monarchical structure presupposes the creation of a vertical of power relations, a ramified infrastructure of power, as well as a differentiation of society—a normatively fixed social stratification of the population. The social structure is represented by classes and strata; the latter, in turn, are characterized by (1) the unification of people into a community on a nominal basis— property, blood, ethnos, language; and (2) the construction of a hierarchical model of interaction and relationships.

Classes, as Pierre Bourdieu defines them, are a set of agents that occupy an initial position (at the same time, they exist in specific conditions, and are subject to these conditions and circumstances); have similar dispositions, interests, and capital and produce similar social practices and positions (Bourdieu 1985: 726–727). A social class is a set of objective and subjective factors having in common the acceptance of the (re)production of the social order, a normative value system, and a "class consciousness." Class consciousness, in turn, is the construction of social reality, an ideology manifesting as a set of social practices, norms, values, and identification of oneself in the social and political system.

With **strong sovereignty**, a strong power hierarchy also functions, which is best represented in a meaningful way in corporatism and its structural varieties (bureaucratic, oligarchic, societal, economic, others). With strong sovereignty, we are speaking about the degree of integration of the elites into the political system, as well as their (in)direct

participation in the development of political decisions and (re)production of the network structure of power. According to the logic of corporatism, the structural units of society are not separate individuals but social groups that have the best chance at being on the receiving end of the redistribution of power, capital, prestige, and social benefits. The power structure, as a system reproducing sovereign relations, is formed "from above," creating a ramified configuration of power: (1) as a relationship between subjects and objects, (2) as a struggle for the possession of power resources, and (3) as control over the organization of social space.

The production of mechanisms to legitimize power, the maintenance of a system of universal control, and the reproduction of the existing political order all require a professional bureaucracy that is rational, systemic, and multifunctional (Weber [1921] 1978; Merton 1968). Thus the power hierarchy in strong sovereignty performs a management function that is, sovereignty in this case should be considered as the management and organization of social structures in the context of the political system. Therefore, the normative system is based on law as a process of codification, systematization, and universalization of existing norms in conjunction with politics as an instrument of the conscious regulation of society, social structures, social processes, and sociopolitical relations.

The social structure is also determined variably, through the prism of estates (when certain "filters" are evident, which slow down social mobility and fix the social distance between communities, groups, and individuals); the social structure may also take the form of guild trusts (when an impenetrable system is created that regulates social distance, forms hierarchical structures of interactions, and monopolizes the very right to power). Guild trusts also have their own specificities, depending on their content:

1) *economic character*—the dominance of the economy; for example, US transnational corporations, chaebols in South Korea, zaibatsus in Japan;

2) *political nature*—political parties, elites, and leaders; politics seen as a field of struggle and the redistribution of power;

3) *professional (consensus) character*—a combination of economic and political, when the economy is seen as a way to achieve political goals and politics is understood and accepted as an instrument of reproduction and satisfaction of social needs.

The degrees of strength of sovereignty, as was noted earlier, function in open and closed political systems, where open systems are characterized by relative sovereignty, (co)related to other relative sovereignty. In a closed system, the relativity of sovereignty is impossible, since any closed political system tends to autonomization, autarky, and, as a possible option, isolation. Therefore, in closed political systems (see figure 1), sovereignty is autonomous, one of the properties of which can be absoluteness, and strong in terms of power at the same time.

Figure 1. Sovereignty's degree of strength on a scale of relative to absolute
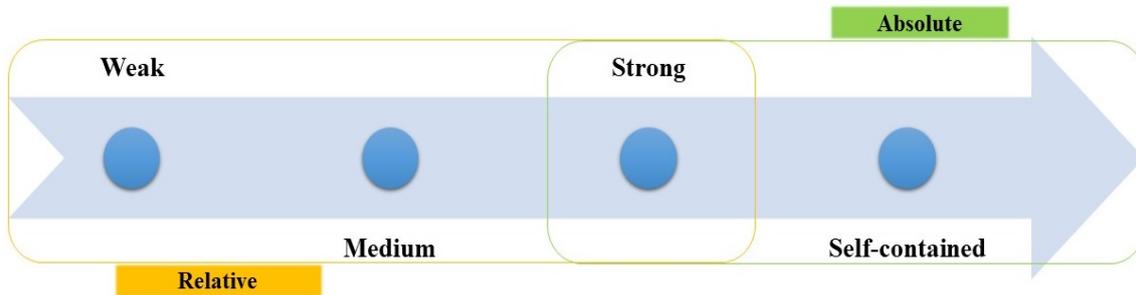
In other words, in open political systems, sovereignty is relative to a number of other relative sovereignties, which either line up in a hierarchy (vertical structure of sovereign power) or function with each other in equal conditions (horizontal structure of sovereign power) (see figure 2). Moreover, sovereignty is relative in relation to the very political system in which it functions. This type of sovereignty, as a rule, is permanent: it is a system of power relations that is (re)produced within the boundaries of a particular political system. Relative sovereignty presupposes the intervention of concomitant factors in the very process of producing sovereignty also, relative sovereignty can be influenced by social or political conjuncture, so it cannot be autonomous (tending to absoluteness).

Figure 2. Sovereignty in the context of political systems
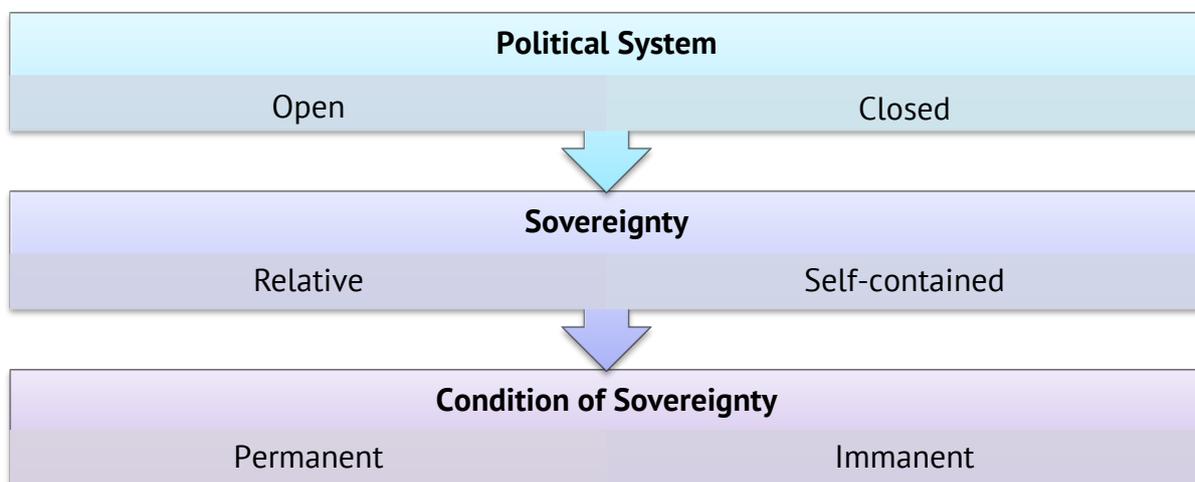
In closed political systems,[10] it is the autonomous (with development into absolute) sovereignty that functions; that is, the political system is in a constant state of tension and a state of emergency. The functionality of such a system is ensured through control over the social reality of the population, the use of physical violence, a system of disciplinary mechanisms, and the exercise of a power that stands above the law and constitutes both the laws themselves and the normative space. In such a system, law is

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[10] Examples of closed political systems are the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Cuba, and Myanmar.

perceived not as a way to codify the social order but as an instrument of direct subordination. In closed political systems, autonomous sovereignty proceeds from the quality of power (control over the system of violence) and the number of followers (the apparatus of the system of violence).

Sovereigntism as a "New" Political Reality: Factor Analysis

From the point of view of international law, sovereignty has been transformed into an attribute of a state independent of outside influence. However, the process of globalization that is taking place in our time calls into question the existence of sovereignty. Globalization presupposes, if you look at its substantive part, at least three main aspects: universalism (as a system of universal norms, laws, and rules), codification (as ordering, first of all, the system of power relations and control systems), and unification (as a method of managing diversity with their further reduction to a single model).

In this perspective, we get at least two discursive directions: first, sovereignty as a system of power relations, and second, sovereignty as an attribute of the state, independent of outside influence. In such a consideration of sovereignty, the question arises about the study of sovereigntism as "politicized sovereignty." Modern researchers view sovereigntism either as a derivative of populism, particularism, and nationalism (Howell & Moe 2020; Kimball 2020; Sharma 2020) or as a mechanism for influencing communities about the internal politics of the state (Strang 1996; Rensmann 2016; Beetz & Rossi 2017; Agnew 2019).

In our opinion, for a more comprehensive and systematic analysis, it is necessary to separate sovereigntism as a *political movement* that claims to ideologically justify itself (here taking the form of political parties or organizations, e.g., French Action, France Arise, Popular Republican Union in France, New Force, Brothers of Italy, in Italy, Falange Española de las JONS, and Vox, in Spain) from sovereigntism as a set of *practices*, that is, immanent, discrete events or actions of a sociopolitical nature (rallies, protests, revolutions, uprisings) aimed at delegitimizing sovereign power or at deconstructing political reality itself.

So, if "sovereigntism [is] the belief in the uncontested primacy of national-level politics and the call to recover at this precise level (institutionally as well as territorially) power that has slipped away to more distant and diffuse layers of governance" (Kallis 2018: 299), then sovereigntism is adjacent to or conjoined with such social and political phenomena as particularism, separatism, nationalism, and populism. Sovereigntism is a natural reaction to the processes of globalization and universalization taking place in the modern world. Therefore, sovereigntism must be considered a completely natural reaction, a response to globalization, when the processes of integration and universalization "undermine" the ability of the authorities to focus exclusively on internal factors when making political decisions.

In order to conceptualize sovereigntism as a political phenomenon, we suggest analyzing the factors of the emergence and implementation of sovereignty, which are

largely associated with the crisis of sovereignty itself as a system of power relations, on the one hand, and with the crisis in the system of internal government on the other. We distinguish the following factors: (1) the crisis of collective identity, (2) "universalization of the universal," (3) a clash of ideologies, (4) the crisis of the legitimacy of power and the system of universal control, (5) populism and particularism as instruments of sovereignty, (6) autonomization of sovereignty in open systems, and (7) the crisis of sovereignty as a discursive field.

The crisis of collective identity. Sovereignty, as was said earlier, presupposes the development of a certain collective identity, which constitutes a binary position in relation to the external environment. In other words, sovereignty appeals to society as a whole, the "friends" of the political system, which organizes them and protects them from "enemies" from outside. This "we or they" opposition is necessary to legitimize the system of power relations, as well as to create disciplinary mechanisms for managing the political system.

> It has been the source of greatest preoccupation and contention when conditions have been producing rapid changes in the scope of government or in the nature of society or in both. It has been resisted or reviled—it could not be overlooked—when conditions, by producing a close integration between society and government or else by producing a gap between society and government, have inclined men to assume that government and community are identical. (Hinsley 1986: 2)

Sovereigntism, on the other hand, demonstrates and constructs a completely different matrix of social actions. In connection with splits in collective identity, sovereignty raises the question of the opposition "we or they" inside the political system, and not outside it, when sovereignty and sovereign power itself become "enemies" and the split social structures and communities become "friends." The paradox of this situation is that sovereigntists, on the contrary, are trying to revive the collective identity as a "national whole," pointing out the inconsistency of the authorities, and their inability to maintain political order or the integrity of the entire system. This happens because any sovereign power should be a single whole, and the processes of globalization differentiate and fragment it. In this case, "national identity is never a finished product; it is always in the process of being constructed and reconstructed" (Doty 1996: 123).

A vivid example of such opposition is the migration crisis in the EU in 2015–2019, when, on the one hand, the EU member states refused to comply with the decisions of the supranational authorities, such as the European Commission, and on the other, nationalist social structures within individual countries refused to follow the decisions of both national and supranational authorities. In this situation, a discourse of migrants and refugees as enemies of the citizens of European states came into being (Pew Research Center 2016), when origin, religion, and language were named as key factors in the formation of both the national and collective identity of the EU member states. That is, sovereigntism actualizes issues related to fundamentalism as a political reaction to key factors: origin (place, status, position), language of communication (methods and forms of communication), and faith (religion, ideology).

"Universalization of the universal." The *state of modernity*, which is the dominant form of political organization in our time, presupposes the universalization of its own space, that is, the optimization of the mechanisms and tools for managing territory, population, and security. A sovereign state presupposes the universalization of the political system, the codification of the social and political space for more flexible and optimal management. However, globalization also implies the universalization and unification of many political and social structures.[11] In this regard, a problematic situation arises when processes overlap, namely a "universalization of the universal." Integration into the global space undermines the legitimacy of the very political order of the state as it indicates the imperfection of its universal norms, the imperfection of its universality. The globalization of the supranational level establishes the preconditions for the deligitimization of the sovereign power at the state level.

However, in our opinion, there is also a reverse process, which we can call the "paradox of universalization." It lies in the fact that the universalization of one's own political system in the context of the institutional design of the state does not lead to the optimization of this system but to its expansion. For example, political reforms in Ukraine over the past five years can be called an example of such a "paradox of universalization": the judicial reform, the anticorruption reform, the economic reform—all of them are aimed at creating new institutions within the political system (e.g., National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, High Anti-Corruption Court of Ukraine, Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office). That is, the nature of the "paradox of universalization" lies not in the optimization of the political system as a mechanism for articulating power relations but in how political power itself is deconstructed, when viewed through the prism of governance and political decision-making. Therefore, sovereigntism in this context can be viewed as attempts to develop mechanisms to optimize the political system as a result of, for example, an emerging political crisis. That is, sovereigntism becomes a reaction not so much to the paradox of universalization as to the inability of institutions to effectively and optimally interact within one system.

Clash of ideologies. Another important factor in the emergence of sovereigntism is the clash of ideologies, and specifically the clash of constructed sociopolitical realities. The triumph of neoliberal ideology at the end of the 20th century is gradually fading, giving way to other forms of ideology, such as nationalism, fundamentalism, and traditionalism. A vivid confirmation of this development is the situation in Hong Kong (China), where a crisis of the management system arose associated with a clash of two ideologies the ideology of the PRC itself, which can be described as modernized traditionalism, and the ideology of Hong Kong, which can be described, primarily in economic terms as neoliberalism. Another example is the post-Soviet space during the period in which the former republics of the USSR gained their independence and the ideology of socialism (regulating) collided with the ideology of Western neoliberalism (regulated). The third example is Iran during the 1979 Islamic Revolution when Islamic

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[11] As exemplified in the creation of a personal identification system, and common databases on internal security issues, the opening of borders, and the adoption of resolutions, memoranda, and decisions of international associations (the UN, IMF, World Bank, NATO, and others).

fundamentalism and the liberal order clashed in the course of an unsuccessful attempt to Westernize the state ("universalization of the universal").

The clash of ideologies implies not only different social realities but also a different set of values, as well as ways of understanding reality (Dapiran 2020; Loong-Yu 2020). In the political, economic, and cultural spheres of society different ideologies can manifest through the construction of reality, forms of awareness of reality, and in different social practices or rituals, values, attitudes, or norms of behavior. The clash of ideologies takes place in one of the social fields, affecting different aspects of social life. The purpose of such a clash is either to oust one of the ideologies or to try to consolidate the conflicting ideologies.

The crisis of the legitimacy of power and the system of universal control. The state has the legal right to use legitimate violence—this is Max Weber's classic definition, which outlines the state of modern states as political systems. Therefore, just as "on the level of economic policy, a state is considered sovereign when it has control over policy and decision-making mechanisms related to monetary and fiscal policy" (Maris 2019: 230), a political state is sovereign when it controls the reproduction of the political order, the mechanisms of legitimizing political decisions, and ensures the security of the population. Representatives of sovereigntism very often become catalysts for social movements (protests, revolutions, and so on). Quite often they resort to the use of violence against the authorities (police, prosecutor's office, army, national guard), which is illegitimate and illegal, that is, outside the law, but within the boundaries of legal regulation.

If sovereignty presupposes a system of power relations that is based on the use of legitimate violence and disciplinary mechanisms to maintain order, then sovereignty shows the inability to use violence, independently resorting to violence. In addition, the practices of sovereignty show the inability of liberal democratic states to maintain order without using violence (e.g., the protests after the death of George Floyd in the US, the Yellow Vest Movement and Standing at Night in France). From the point of view of sovereignty, such violence is usually physical. From the point of view of the state, it can take the form of both physical violence and different forms of sanctions, exclusion, displacement, and the deprivation of rights or freedom.

Another aspect of the current state of sovereignty is the loss of control over the territory and, above all, the borders of the state. The sovereignty of the state, and the power within this state, are determined by the ability to control the movement of goods, capital, and services, that is, to exert control over movement and distance. Failure to ensure traffic control or border control leads to the so-called illegal socioeconomic processes, including arms and human trafficking, drug trafficking, smuggling, and terrorism. To this list, in the 21st century, control over information and the internet is added, both of which can become quite real catalysts both for changing political reality and for the emergence of social movements.[12] Given the modern processes of

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[12] An example, Is the "Arab Spring" of 2011–2015 the active phase of the uprisings when the social networks Facebook and Twitter became the main instruments of social movements in North Africa and the Middle

globalization (integration, universalization and codification), open political systems tend to the autonomy of their own sovereignty, giving preference to solving internal problems to the detriment of international ones.

For example, in November 2020, an internal political conflict broke out in Ethiopia between the federal government and local authorities in the Tigray region, where regional general elections were held despite the federal government's ban because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The federal government had to send in an army to stabilize the situation. Thus we see the process of delegitimation of federal power by the regional elites, and this can be viewed as a practice of sovereignty — an attempt to define the boundaries of power and to redistribute power at the same time. Another example is the military coup in Mali that took place on August 18, 2020, in response to the political crisis and mass protests over the resignation of the country's president, Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta. It is also necessary to mention the military coup in Myanmar that took place on February 1, 2021, and became a catalyst for sociopolitical protests, as a result of which an institutional and political crisis arose, at the center of which is the question of the possession of power and the ability to dispose of it.

Populism and particularism as instruments of sovereigntism. Another feature of the current state of social relations is populism (considered as the leveling of established power relations) and particularism (considered as the desire to legitimize individual interests to the detriment of national or supranational interests). Populism plays the role of a catalyst for political relations that is based on antipodes—opposition within the political system, and the construction of the image of an external or internal enemy. Particularism, on the other hand, produces the interests of communities, individual social structures, as urgent, necessary, and relevant. Donald Trump's 2016 electoral victory, Brexit, Hong Kong's 2014 "Umbrella Revolution", Zelensky's victory in the presidential elections in Ukraine, the victory in the parliamentary elections in Italy, and Italy's "Five Star Movement" are all examples of the use of both populism and particularism that can and should be considered in the context of the practice of sovereignty.

Also, in addition to particularism, one of the trends of our time is particularity as manifested in the transfer of certain state functions to private companies, communities, or structures (e.g., outsourcing practices). This, in turn, leads to the fragmentation of sovereignty into many smaller sovereignties in the field of economic and trade relations, the imposition of law and order, the conduct of military or armed operations, and the provision of social, cultural or other services. The legitimacy of sovereignty with particularity depends on the state's degree of control over the private sector and on the strength of the state's influence over outsourcing companies.

At this point, a slightly more detailed discussion of populism versus sovereignty is warranted. Researchers have noted that "populism emerges and gains traction when political entrepreneurs with strong leadership qualities explore already existing identity conflicts" (Stankov 2021). This is an internal contradiction of power itself, which political

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East. They helped protestors maintain communication, and coordinate their actions in an attempt to bring order to the resulting sociopolitical chaos.

scientists consider, among other things, to be the field of struggle for the possession of political power and power resources (recalling the ancient Greek understanding of politics as a struggle). In our opinion, populism is not so much an ideology as an instrument or a way to achieve a fairly rapid buildup of electoral support for a particular politician or political party, with a subsequent redistribution of power relations.

The Argentine political scientist Ernesto Laclau defines populism as an emancipatory social force through which social or political groups that are marginal in their behavior challenge dominant power structures (Laclau 2005). To some extent, we agree with his thesis, since populism opens up opportunities for nonsystemic structures to become part of the political system, having enlisted the support of voters. However, the definition of populism in terms of emancipation (and this is a characteristic thesis for representatives of post-Marxism) confronts us with a dilemma concerning both the role of the state in the life of society and the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion.

Emancipation presupposes liberation followed by equality, while populism, in our opinion, appeals to the creation of a certain sociopolitical field in which the practice of excluding social or political groups from the process of producing politics will be reproduced. In other words, populism is viewed through the prism of ideology and hegemony. However, we propose to follow the research logic of Paris Aslanidis and shift the emphasis from the ideological aspect to the discursive one (Aslanidis 2016), to consider *populism as a discourse, that is, methods of political communication with the obligatory construction of an unstable and differentiated discursive field in which the mechanisms of inclusion or exclusion are reproduced*. One should not call populism a discursive frame, since a frame denotes a more or less stable structure of the individual's representations of social reality with obligatory reflection. Populism is, first of all, a communication of emotions that ignores rational ways of justifying positions, beliefs, norms or values.

It is in the discursive context that populism can be viewed as an additional tool or method for the reproduction of sovereigntism. Why can't they be identified with each other? Here it is appropriate to outline our assumptions on this matter. First, we view populism as a discourse with the subsequent creation of a discursive field, and sovereigntism as a political movement and political practices. Second, populism is focused on the internal space of state policy, while sovereigntism is opposed to the external space of state policy (though it does not exclude the redistribution of power within the political system). Third, populism, as a rule, has a carnival character or is presented as a certain political performance. That is, it is stylized for certain sociopolitical circumstances (see articles on populism as a political style by Moffitt & Tormey 2014 and Sengul 2019), while sovereigntism is a societal phenomenon in which questions of community, collectivity, solidarity, and the achievement of specific goals turn out to be dominant.

Fourth, populism sooner or later becomes personified. More precisely, it acquires a leader (Geiselberger 2017: 50–53) who strives to institutionalize the discursive field of populism by being elected president or deputy, and dominates his or her own party in parliament establishing control over government institutions. Sovereigntism, on the other

hand, is a rather collective and poorly personified phenomenon in which the place of leadership is taken by the glorification and mythologization of specific groups or individuals. Two examples are the women who challenged the riot police during the protests in Belarus in July–August 2020 and students who protested against the arrest of Alexey Navalny in Russia and were later expelled from state universities in January 2021. Other examples include the "Nebesna sotnia" ("Heavenly Hundred"), those individuals killed during the 2014 Ukrainian revolution, and the "QAnon shaman," who was among those who stormed the US Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Therefore, integrating populism as a discourse and sovereigntism as a practice or movement in the context of neoliberalism (which we may take as a set of doctrines, ideas, and directions without a clearly expressed ideology), we will itemize those opportunistic features that affect both categories. Populism directly depends on a sociopolitical or economic crisis; that is, the emergence of populism is possible in the context of an immediate crisis of the sociopolitical system, for example the global economic crisis of 2008 (Slobodian 2018: 25) and the subsequent chain reaction in political, social, cultural, and other spheres. Sovereigntism also depends on crisis, but with one important difference: sovereigntism is a point of bifurcation, that is, a critical state of the system that causes uncertainty. Thus populism is a derivative of the crisis, while sovereigntism is primary in relation to the crisis. Sovereigntism can both provoke a crisis (the storming of the US Capitol, a coup d'êtat in Myanmar), and legitimize a crisis that has already begun (the protests in several countries against the COVID-19 restrictions).

The study of populism in the context of neoliberalism takes place from the standpoint of opposing the neoliberal order to the authoritarian one (see Ivanou 2019; Edelman 2020; Diamond 2021). Researchers tend to assume that in most cases populism is used by leaders either in authoritarian political systems Belarus, Turkey, China, Cambodia or in countries where populism has become a catalyst for system authorization, for example, the US during the presidency of Donald Trump, Hungary during the premiership of Viktor Orban, and Poland during the presidency of Andrzej Duda. That is, populism is opposed not so much to neoliberalism as to liberal democracy. Because neoliberalism is more associated with economic policy, therefore, the political aspects of neoliberalism in the context of populist practices remain outside the field of political researchers. In addition, David Cayla points out that the roots of populism are to be found in the contradictions between democratic ideals and values citizens making political decisions through representative democracy; and neoliberal governance mechanisms in which competition and the market arbitrate social events (Cayla 2021).

The situation is different with sovereigntism. On the one hand, it can contribute to the autonomization of the political system with a further strengthening of authoritarian practices, that is, a "tightening the screws" by the current political elite (as in the case of the protests in Belarus 2020, the "Umbrella Revolution" in Hong Kong 2014, the attempted coup d'êtat in Turkey in 2016). On the other hand, sovereigntism can contribute to the undermining of the political situation, and the deconstruction of state policy, primarily by weakening the mechanisms for making political decisions and determining access to government institutions. In this regard, sovereigntism is a more

flexible mechanism for deconstructing globalization, since the internal political system, claiming the universality of its own order, is opposed to external structures that also claim the universality of their own political order. The political order should be seen as a way of organizing the population and territory within the boundaries of the state.

Autonomization of sovereignty in open systems. The absolute sovereign shows him or herself only in extraordinary situations—in emergencies and situations of uncertainty and instability. The relative sovereignty that is characteristic of open political systems has been rendered incapacitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the governments and leaderships of many countries followed the principle of tightening the system of universal control, and optimizing the legal system. The pandemic, however, showed two important aspects of the modern political organization of the population: first, the crisis of power as a way of communicating between the elites and the population, and second, the state of emergency as a mechanism to legitimize extraordinary actions attendant on possessing political power.

In this sense, sovereignty reveals itself as the ability of the state to solve nonlinear, uncertain, emergency situations through resorting to particularism and populism, on the one hand, and using the apparatus of violence and disciplinary mechanisms on the other (Žižek 2020). The ability of the state is also associated with the growth of authoritarian methods of government,[13] that is, with limiting democracy to resolve an emergency or with applying international law as a tool for autonomizing the political system (Ginsburg 2020). At the same time, the practice of sovereigntism (which produced protests against quarantine measures, and featured certain political decisions of the state and the inability of the state to respond to a changing social reality) appears to us to be a mechanism for the deconstruction of sovereign power. It is characterized by the presence of a binary opposition within the state and a dynamically (re)produced inversion (replacement of the main concept with an antipode, a diametrical other).

The crisis of sovereignty as a discursive field. Sovereignty derived from a special type of power relations; the power itself was transformed into an attribute of the state from the point of view of normative legal interpretation. In the sociopolitical field, sovereignty is a discursive unit, that is, something that is resorted to in situations of instability, bifurcation, or emergency. In this sense, sovereignty as a discursive field that presupposes institutionalization, the presence of a theoretical framework, the maintenance of boundaries, and the reproduction of universal communication systems, deactualizes itself.

Sovereigntism, on the other hand, becomes a mechanism for deconstructing or refuting sovereign power, constituted by a social movement (practices) that tries to change political reality. Discourse is an external space where a network of set positions, nominations, structures, and groups is placed. The object, on getting into the discourse

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[13] Such methods include restricting the movement of the population, restricting democratic rights and freedoms, the use of violence, and a strengthening of the disciplinary mechanisms for the reproduction of political order during a pandemic (as seen in Spain, Italy, France, and Great Britain). On the other hand, such restrictions may be a natural reaction of the political system to social movements challenging the practices of sovereigntism (through rallies, protests, uprisings), such as in the US, Russia, and Belarus.

field, starts experiencing pressure, coercion, and enforcement as a result of the need to follow the set logic. One of the important specificities of a discourse field is constructing the space in which the subjects interact with their predecessors retranslating their normative and value positions. In other words, in the discourse field interaction is an "exclusive" type of social practices (Foucault [1966] 2002: 129–132).

Conclusion

Over the past few years, sovereigntism has been evolving from a local phenomenon to being part of the global mainstream as it is actively taken up by both the populations of different countries and the political elites of these countries. The factors itemized above that contribute to the spread of sovereigntism show us one key tendency: sovereigntism is the antipode not so much of sovereignty itself but of the neoliberal order in the context of globalization. If sovereignty is an established system, then sovereigntism either remains a political movement or manifests in social practices, namely, in the practices of sovereigntism aimed at deconstructing or refuting sovereignty.

The factor tendencies that we observe today reveal sovereigntism as a way of autonomizing the political system. Such autonomization presupposes:

1) localization in political decision-making, that is, an orientation toward internal requests and needs;

2) transformation of the regime characteristics of the political system, that is, a departure from liberal-democratic values toward the principles and practices of autarkism and authoritarianism; and

3) an increase in the functionality of the universal control system through the increased use of violence, and mechanisms of disciplinary power.

In addition, the practice of sovereigntism can lead to a shift in the degree of strength of sovereignty from weak to strong ("tightening the screws") or from strong to weak (creating a horizontal set of sovereignties, a weak hierarchy or social mobility, a lack of bureaucracy, the dominance of norms or customs).

Also, the practices of sovereigntism show similar tendencies with the schisms in political and social systems proposed by Seymour Lipset and Stein Rokkan (1967). They analyzed the factors that determined social splits in historical perspective, as well as the main binary positions between which these splits occurred: center–periphery, state–church, city–village, owners–workers. If we analyze the events mentioned at the beginning of this paper (the growing dynamics of social movements) we see the existing dichotomy, when the periphery fights against the center for the sovereignty of its power and for the right to possess this power.

Another example of dichotomy is a political polarization between city and village regarding the support of one or another political elite. Dichotomy also exists when the church (and in a broader sense religion) claims sovereignty and legitimacy in the system of state sovereignty. It also exists when norms and rules (rituals, practices, ideologies) of different cultures collide and the social principles of fundamentalism become more acute,

and when different ideologies construct the social reality of a particular individual, as opposed to a collective identity (i.e., the individualization of society, the existence of many communities).

Also, by distinguishing between sovereigntism and populism, we showed that these two phenomena are not identical. Populism is a discourse that creates its own discursive field and strives for institutionalization. Sovereigntism, on the other hand, is the practice and movement within which the articulation of populism can take place. In other words, populism is used as a tool to focus on the practices of sovereigntism, which, in turn, do not always need populism. Still, both sovereigntism and populism can become the reason for the autonomy of the political system, its transition to a state of semiclosure or closedness, which is happening, for example, with the political systems of Bulgaria, Poland, or Hungary.

In this context, authoritarian populism is used as a means of legitimizing power, while sovereigntism can be used as a means to achieve specific goals. The examples of Poland and Hungary, as well as the US, Myanmar, Belarus, and other countries show that sovereigntism is an instrument of the majority, that is, of the population, while populism is an instrument of a minority, that is, of the power itself and its structures. Consequently, we can assume that sovereigntism at this stage of its development is "politicized sovereignty," that is, a way of identifying and fixing crises in the system, primarily crises of domestic political and legitimate, sovereign power. Practitioners of sovereigntism decompose sovereignty as an integral system into constructs, within the boundaries of which there is a struggle both for power itself and for its redistribution.

In connection with the increase in the participatory practices of the population of different states, sovereigntism is being transformed into an egalitarian (open for everyone, or at least for the majority) way of exercising power as a public policy, of developing and making political decisions, of making power accessible. Sovereignty in its turn remains an elite form of politics, when political elites act as limited holders of sovereign power. Finally, it is necessary to ask the question. *Will sovereigntism become a real policy, or will it remain a way of expressing the unstable and unpredictable "will of the people" aimed at deligitimating the established system of power?*

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