

## **Internal, External, and Everything in Between: Another Four Chapters on Sovereignty**

The concept of sovereignty provokes confrontation. In this day and age of Twitter rigmarole, probably not a day passes by without someone coming out of the woodwork to tell us what sovereignty is and is not about. Serious academic discussion on the concept is equally common, with new books being published every year. Indeed, to even begin acknowledging the most important contemporary works on sovereignty is a daunting task for any scholar.

Despite its seemingly high quality and quantity, in many cases the academic writing on sovereignty is almost as fruitless as the discussions on social media. Few people make a serious attempt at dissecting the concept itself, rather resorting to some general definition of the concept or stating that the concept is too debatable to be understood. This leads to scholars talking past one another, since they have a different conception of sovereignty. The issue has been recognized by Martti Koskenniemi who has claimed that sovereignty cannot have a fixed content that one could unquestionably apply to a particular situation. The concept has no natural extent, which leads to a seemingly absurd situation: a state that has given away its power or right to make decisions to other states or international organizations is just as sovereign as a state that rejects all forms of international cooperation.

Koskenniemi identified one, perhaps the most crucial, binary opposition for sovereignty: legal versus factual. I argue, however, that the discussion on sovereignty needs three more of such oppositions, or rather distinctions. First, as already many have done, we must distinguish between *internal* and *external* sovereignty: the authority of the state toward domestic and foreign entities. But second, we must also perceive sovereignty as either *abstract* or *territorial*, meaning that sovereignty can be linked to a territory but also viewed as not being territorially bound. The third distinction exists between *formal* and *material* sovereignty, the former referring to an undefined or all-encompassing authority and the latter to a particular set of rights or powers. Finally, in accordance with Koskenniemi, there is sovereignty as the *factual* power of the state and as the law-given *legal* right to authority.

These distinctions are, in my opinion, a necessary starting point if any meaningful discussion on sovereignty is to be had at all. They constitute what I call another four chapters on sovereignty, following in name Carl Schmitt's 1922 essay and Paul Kahn's 2012 book. My presentation, which draws on my work on air sovereignty, will be an overview of why we need these distinctions, what they mean, and how they present themselves in and between societies.