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RESEARCH ON THE WEAKENING OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

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ABSTRACT

A systematic analysis of the multi-dimensional impact of globalization on national sovereignty from the perspective of political science theory. By constructing the analytical framework of "state-centrism-globalism", this paper reveals the internal logic and manifestations of the weakening of sovereignty and explores the adjustment strategies of sovereign states in the new global governance system. Research shows that the weakening of sovereignty is essentially a process of reconstructing the authority field, and its development trend is characterized by asymmetry and reversibility. By combining the review of intellectual history with theoretical criticism, it presents both the logic of the evolution of classical theories and highlights the paradigm revolution triggered by globalization. By combining quantitative data with typical cases, reveal the specific manifestations of the weakening of sovereignty in three dimensions.

KEYWORDS: Globalization; State sovereignty; Research on Weakening Phenomena

1. INTRODUCTION

The shock of globalization has reshaped the power relations of modern states in cyberspace as a field, and traditional theories of sovereignty are constantly encountering unprecedented practical paradoxes. The flow of transnational capital has also transcended territorial boundaries, supranational mechanism segmentation policies have tended to be autonomous, digital technologies are breaking down the physical barriers of cultural identity, and sovereign states are trapped in governance predicaments in the interaction of decentralization and re-centralization. The cKurrent academic perception of the weakening of sovereignty presents a polarized result. One is mainly the neorealists who firmly believe that sovereignty is an essential attribute that cannot be transferred, and the other is globalists who declare that the "final conclusion of sovereignty" has arrived. This paper mainly focuses on the theoretical lineage of political science and actively reveals the asymmetric characteristics and complex mechanisms of the weakening of sovereignty in the process of globalization by deconstructing the diachronic evolution of the concept of sovereignty. And the study uses a combination of institutional analysis and case comparison methods, along with empirical evidence such as multinational corporate tax avoidance and the priority of EU law, as well as the cultural infiltration of digital platforms, in an attempt to answer how the state maintains governance effectiveness through the creative reorganization of sovereign elements in the era of globalization undergoing reconstruction in the field of authority? This question is not only related to the paradigm change of sovereignty theory, but also has practical strategic significance for developing countries to actively respond to institutional power imbalances.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: DECONSTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF THE CONCEPT OF SOVEREIGNTY

2.1. Evolution of Classical Sovereignty Theory

The evolution of state forms and changes in international order have always been closely intertwined with the formation and development of modern sovereignty theories. From the birth of the theory of absolute sovereignty in the 16th century to the institutionalization of the principle of sovereignty in the 17th century, the classical theory of sovereignty has already established the legal basis of the modern nation-state. Their core logic can be summarized as a dual process of authority centralization and boundary clarification.

2.1.1. Bodin's Theory of absolute Sovereignty: Theological Disenchantment and Centralization of Power

Jean Bodin, the French political thinker, was the first to define sovereignty as "the absolute and permanent supreme power of the state" during the European political crisis triggered by his Reformation. In his *Six Letters to the State*, he put forward that sovereignty has three attributes: indivisible, non-transferable and beyond the law, and its core function lies in the ability to unify and integrate divided social forces through legislative power. Jean Bodin's theory made two historic breakthroughs: one of them was the replacement of religious authority with secular sovereignty, which resolved the legitimacy dilemma of the medieval "double sword theory" where church power and monarchy stood side by side; The second one provided the centralized state with a theoretical weapon against feudal separatism through the absoluteness of sovereignty. It is a reminder that although Jean Bodin emphasized the supremacy of sovereignty, he still placed the sovereign under the moral constraints of natural law and divine law, which laid the groundwork for later theories of the legitimacy of sovereignty.

2.1.2. Hobbes' view of contractual sovereignty: The legitimacy shifts from theocracy to human rights

Thomas Hobbes, the British statesman and philosopher, reconstructs the philosophical basis of the theory of sovereignty in *Leviathan*. Starting with the hypothesis of the "state of nature", he argues that individuals transfer their rights to the sovereign through the social contract in exchange for the security of life. Hobbesian sovereignty is characterized by the distinct instrumental rationality that the authority of the rulers, whether in monarchies or parliamentary systems, comes from the collective authorization of the ruled, and that the boundaries of their power are merely limited to maintaining order. This contractual framework addresses the secularization of the legitimacy of sovereignty, shifting the foundation of political authority from the "divine right of Kings" to the "consent of the people" model. But Hobbes' theory also reveals an inherent contradiction, that is, the absolute sovereignty constructed to end the "war of all against all" might instead become the main source of oppressive power. This paradox is manifested in contemporary times as an eternal interaction between national security and civil liberties.

2.1.3. *The Westphalian System: Institutionalized Practice of the Principle of Sovereignty*

The Treaty of Westphalia signed in 1648 greatly marked that the theory of sovereignty had transformed from philosophical speculation to the level of international law principles. The system established three core principles: the exclusive jurisdiction of states within their territory, territorial sovereignty, the equal status of states in international law regardless of their size, legal equality, and the prohibition of external forces from interfering in the internal affairs of other states, the principle of non-interference. These rules have established the spatial order of modern international relations, making sovereignty a core symbol of national identity. But the Westphalian system is essentially the product of the game among the major European powers, that is, it can ease religious conflicts by recognizing the status of Protestant states, but it can tacitly allow colonialism to trample on sovereignty in non-European regions. This "double standard" greatly reveals the inherent fragility of the principle of sovereignty, that is, there is always an interaction between the universal claim of sovereignty and the practice of power politics.

The continuous evolution of the classical theory of sovereignty has shown a clear dialectical trajectory, that is, Jean Bodin has solved the problem of the source of authority, while Hobbes has reconstructed the problem of the foundation of legitimacy, and the Westphalian system has achieved institutional solidification. These three have jointly shaped the modern manifestations of sovereignty, such as exclusive authority in the form of territory, hierarchical order in the form of states, and the mechanism of legitimizing power in the form of law. But this construction system has encountered fundamental challenges in the era of globalization, such as digital technology dissolving the governance significance of territorial boundaries, transnational actors shaking the monopoly position of state authority, and global issues forcing the transfer of sovereignty. The decline in the explanatory power of these classic theories prompts the emergence of new theoretical paradigms.

2.2. *Theoretical breakthroughs in the Age of Globalization*

The advent of the era of globalization has reshaped the network space of practical relations of sovereignty, which prompts political scholars to shift from a "state centrism" perspective to a "multi-level governance" perspective, forming three major theoretical breakthrough directions: deconstructive critique of sovereignty, fluid analysis of authority, and overlapping construction of governance.

2.2.1. *Krasner's "Organized hypocrisy" theory: The practical Paradox of the Principle of sovereignty*

In his book *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*, Stephen Krasner, a renowned American political scientist, reveals that Westphalian sovereignty is more of a "discourse construction" than a practical norm. Through practical argumentative research, he has discovered systemic contradictions among states in four dimensions of sovereignty: formally recognized international legal sovereignty, Westphalian sovereignty in terms of actual control, domestic sovereignty in terms of governance effectiveness, and interdependent sovereignty in terms of policy autonomy. A typical example is the provision by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that attaches conditions to loans erodes the domestic sovereignty of the borrowing country, but the borrowing country still has to maintain the complete appearance of international legal sovereignty. This "organized hypocrisy" has shown that the principle of sovereignty can be used by states as both a shield against external intervention and a tool for the legitimacy of such intervention. Krasner's theory has shattered the myth of the "indivisibility" of sovereignty, which has provided a dynamic framework for analyzing the issue of sovereign assignment.

2.2.2. *Strange's Theory of the Transfer of Authority: The Rise of Power by Non-State Actors*

In her 1996 book "The Retreat of the State", the late renowned British international relations scholar Susan Strange pointed out that globalization has led to the transfer of four structural powers - security, production and finance, and knowledge - from the state to the market. Multinational companies, such as Apple, use tax havens to circumvent sovereign jurisdiction to restructure industrial policy space through global value chains, and international credit rating agencies influence countries' ability to finance by assessing sovereign credit, and digital platforms challenge cultural sovereignty through data monopolies, etc., Strange emphasizes that these transfers of authority are asymmetric. That is to say, developed countries can maintain a "sovereign premium" through rule-making power, while developing countries are forced to cede policy space under market pressure. Her analysis has already revealed the economic roots of the weakening of sovereignty, that is, the squeeze on the governance space of nation-states by the global capitalist system.

2.2.3. Herder's "Overlapping Authority System" model: The Networked Reconstruction of Sovereignty

David Held of Scotland, breaking away from the traditional dualism of full possession or total ceding of sovereignty, suggests that sovereignty is evolving into a multi-node and multi-level network of authority. In the governance of climate change, national sovereignty and the Paris Agreement's emission reduction mechanism, as well as sub-national actions of urban climate alliances and carbon trading markets of multinational corporations, form a nested authority structure. A typical example in this regard is the EU's "multi-tier governance" practice, where member states cede sovereignty over their currencies to form the eurozone but retain core political sovereignty through the principle of subsidiarity. David Herder argues that this "decomposition of sovereignty" is not a zero-sum game problem, but rather that he enhances overall governance effectiveness through the sharing of rules. The theoretical value lies in providing a normative framework for the "post-Westphalian order."

The paradigmatic significance of this theoretical breakthrough is manifested in the three shifts of sovereignty theory innovation in the era of globalization, from the entitism that focuses on the practical forms of sovereignty in different "relational network Spaces as fields" to the relational theory, from the binary oppositions that recognize the stepwise nature of sovereignty assignment to spectral analysis, and from the defensive discourse that explores feasible paths for sovereignty adaptation to the constructive strategy. These theoretical breakthroughs not only deconstruct the myth of the absoluteness of sovereignty, but also provide analytical tools for the strategic choices of states in the face of the impact of globalization, that is, how to achieve a dynamic balance between the transfer of sovereignty and the maintenance of autonomy, in order to become the core proposition of political science in the 21st century.

3. THE PRACTICAL DIMENSION OF WEAKENING SOVEREIGNTY

3.1. Infiltration of economic sovereignty

The erosion of economic sovereignty by the impact of globalization is mainly manifested in the double process of "transfer of rule-making power" and "compression of policy autonomy". The core issues of economic sovereignty, such as traditional tax rights, monetary rights and industrial policy rights, are being systematically impacted by cross-border capital flows, international institutional constraints and the restructuring of global value chains.

3.1.1. The transfer of regulatory power to multinational corporations: the supranationalization of capital power

The global tax avoidance system of multinational corporations poses a direct challenge to national tax sovereignty, mainly in the case of Apple transferring global profits to jurisdictions with low tax rates, for instance, an EU investigation in 2014 found that Apple's actual tax rate in Ireland was only 0.005%. Also, the OECD statistics in 2018 showed that the average global corporate income tax rate dropped from 28% in 2000 to 22.4%, reducing the fiscal space of developing countries by 12% to 15%. The Economist survey in 2020 pointed out that multinational companies further weakened the autonomy of national policies through "Regulatory Capture", resulting in 73 percent of the world's top 500 companies influencing host country legislation through lobbying alliances. For instance, the US Chamber of Commerce successfully blocked the full implementation of the EU's digital services tax.

3.1.2. Policy constraints of international financial organizations: Institutionalized infiltration of structural power

The conditions attached to loans by the International Monetary Fund, or IMF, are also reflected in the transfer of economic sovereignty. According to the IMF's 2021 report, the \$57 billion loan deal it provided to Argentina included 117 reform provisions, covering areas such as enhanced central bank independence and energy subsidy cuts, as well as labor market flexibility. Such structural adjustment plans have substantially embedded the neoliberal policy paradigm into the national governance system, which has led to the "hollowing out" of economic sovereignty in developing countries. The World Bank's procurement rules also restrict policy autonomy. For instance, in the Belt and Road Initiative, the exclusion of Chinese contractors from some financing projects because they do not meet the "international bidding standards" clearly shows the selective exclusion of development models by international rules.

3.1.3. Global value chain reconfiguration of industrial sovereignty: de-territorialization of production networks

The share of global trade in intermediate goods has risen from 40 percent in 1990 to 60 percent in 2022, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which has led to a rapid decline in the effectiveness of national industrial policies. The semiconductor industry is a typical example. The U.S. ban on Huawei's chips was partly due to disruptions in the supply of Dutch ASML lithography machines, and China's

technological roundabout was achieved through the testing process of packaging in Malaysia. The breakthrough of Huawei's 7-nanometer chips in 2023 is the best proof.

3.2. *The dispersion of political authority*

The dispersion of political authority is being deconstructed by supranational mechanisms and international norms as well as non-state actors.

3.2.1. *Supranational erosion: Institutional transfer of the EU's common business policy*

A typical example is the issue of the transfer of sovereignty among member states in the "Exclusive Competence" area of the EU, which shows that under the framework of the common business policy, member states lose the right to negotiate bilateral trade agreements and also have to undergo judicial review by the Court of Justice of the European Union (ECJ). The Netherlands was delayed in approval in 2022 because the Investor and State Dispute settlement mechanism, the ISDS, was suspected of undermining judicial sovereignty. The transfer of sovereignty is irreversible.

3.2.2. *Pressure to internalize international norms: Sovereign Compromise in climate change governance*

A 2023 UN assessment shows that 87% of 193 contracting states have revised their domestic legislation to match their emission reduction commitments. Germany has even included the carbon neutrality goal in its constitution. This "internalization of norms" essentially resets the priorities of national policies, such as India, which was forced to revise its coal consumption plan in 2022 in exchange for financing from the Green Climate Fund (GCF), even though its per capita carbon emissions are only one-eighth of those of the United States. This shows that international norms exert pressure through a "reputation mechanism," that is, through the Climate Action Tracker, CAT, to influence sovereign bond yields on country ratings, as well as the 0.6% increase in financing costs for Australia in 2021 due to a downgrade in its rating.

3.2.3. *Rise of Non-State Actors: Jurisdictional disputes at the International Criminal Court*

The International Criminal Court, or ICC, and some other non-state organizations are challenging the judicial sovereignty of states. For instance, in a 2020 investigation by the International Criminal Court that showed U.S. military war crimes in Afghanistan, the United States directly sanctioned their prosecutors as a counterattack. There are also groups like Amnesty International, such as the agreement that led the EU to freeze China-Eu investment, which mainly influences policies of other

countries through the release of reports and has formed a pressure network that transcending national boundaries, which has forced national policies to take into account external standards. The current political authority shows that countries still hold onto sovereignty in core areas such as military security, which is 37% more concentrated than in the economic field, but shows active concessions on economic and environmental issues. But we all know that global issues such as cyber security are gradually blurring the boundaries of this sovereignty.

3.3. *Solutionalization of cultural identity*

Digital technology and transnational capital reshaping the spatial logic of cultural identity have led to the delocalization of "symbolic sovereignty" and "systems of meaning". The three pillar rights of traditional cultural sovereignty, namely the discourse narrative right, the value interpretation right and the identity construction right, have been systematically challenged.

3.3.1. *Transnational media agenda setting: CNN's Global Discourse Network*

Western media reconstruct the cultural identity of other countries through "News Framing". CNN International, which covers 200 countries, uses a "terrorism and counter-terrorism" narrative frame for 76 percent of its coverage of the Middle East conflict. This discourse hegemony has led to a shift in cultural interpretive power. For instance, according to the African Media Initiative, 83% of the elite in 54 African countries rely on the BBC or CNN for international news, while the agenda-setting ability of local media has shrunk to 37%. Algorithmic push has exacerbated the one-way flow of culture, that is, Meta's news recommendation mechanism has pushed the Global South to receive up to 68% of Western content, while the reverse flow is only 12%.

3.3.2. *Digital platform culture penetration: Controversy over TikTok censorship Rights*

Social media platforms have become a new battlefield for cultural sovereignty games. TikTok, which has more than 1.5 billion monthly active users worldwide, has its content censorship standards constrained by ByteDance's Chinese background. A 2023 congressional hearing in the US revealed that TikTok's US team had only 35 percent autonomy in content decision-making, raising concerns about "digital cultural colonization."

3.3.3. *The spread of consumerist values: Symbolic hegemony of global brands*

Multinational brands often deconstruct traditional value systems through models of lifestyle marketing. The controversy that Nike's "Just Do It" AD has sparked in Islamic countries is because their

individualistic narrative impacts the embodiment of collectivist cultural traditions. Also, according to a 2023 McKinsey survey, 62 per cent of Gen Z worldwide use consumer brands rather than nation-states as a symbol of identity. The "Cultural Appropriation" of luxury groups further blurs the boundaries of culture. For instance, Louis Vuitton's African collection saw sales increase by 40 percent in 2023, but only 3 percent of its designers are native to Africa. This "de-contextualized" cultural commodification has led to local knowledge being reduced to a consumption symbol of global capitalism.

4 ADAPTATION STRATEGIES OF SOVEREIGN STATES

4.1. Pathways to Sovereign Reconstruction

In the face of the multi-dimensional impact of globalization on national sovereignty, sovereign states often reconstruct the form of sovereignty through "legitimacy reengineering", "technology empowerment" and "institutional innovation" to form adaptive governance frameworks.

4.1.1. The legitimacy construction of the transfer of sovereignty: Practical Innovation of the EU's Auxiliary Principles

The EU has mainly addressed the legitimacy dilemma of sovereign assignment through the practice of the principle of Subsidiarity. The principle stipulates that decision-making power should be exercised by the level closest to the citizens as much as possible, and the EU should intervene only when member states are unable to act effectively. The 2023 revision of the European Climate Law stipulates that member states should retain the right to plan their energy structure, with the EU merely setting carbon neutrality targets and mechanisms for cross-border carbon trading. This "tiered authorization" is the main basis for the transfer of sovereignty to gain public opinion, as the European Barometer survey shows that 73 percent of citizens are in favor of coordinated EU action in the climate field, but only 34 percent are in favor of a unified tax policy. The practice of this auxiliary principle suggests that the legitimacy of sovereign transfers depends on a balanced performance of "functional necessity" and "democratic legitimacy".

4.1.2. Technological upgrade of sovereignty exercise methods: Sovereign Reconstruction of central Bank Digital currencies (CBDCS)

Digital currency technology has provided new tools for sovereign reconfiguration. Like China's digital yuan, which strengthens currency sovereignty through a controllable anonymous design, the 2023 pilot showed that cross-border transaction settlement

times were shortened from the T+2 rule to real-time, while the central bank retained the final review authority over transaction data. Also, the digital currency of the Caribbean nation Tonga is mainly using blockchain technology to defend against the erosion of cryptocurrencies.

4.1.3. Institutionalized barriers to sovereign defense: A wave of sovereign legislation in cyberspace

Legislation on global cyber sovereignty is showing a trend of defensive institutionalization. The EU's 2023 DMA Digital Markets Act, which mandates tech giants to open their data interfaces and imposes fines of 20 percent of their global turnover on violators, has already forced Google to adjust its search algorithm in Europe. Also, Russia's Sovereign Internet Act 2019 established a national DNS system, which successfully reduced the time of Internet disconnection within the country from 12 hours to 18 minutes in 2022. Such legislation addresses the challenge of digital sovereignty through "re-territorialization".

4.2. Exploration of new governance models

4.2.1. Application of flexible Sovereignty Theory: Adaptive Governance in Singapore's Smart Nation Strategy

Singapore responds to globalization risks with the concept of "Resilient Sovereignty". The Smart Nation Initiative, which outsources sovereignty over infrastructure to multinational corporations such as the National Cloud built in partnership with Amazon, retains core data control mainly through the Critical Information Infrastructure Act, or CIIA. The 2023 Global Resilience Index shows Singapore at the top of the world in terms of balance between digital sovereignty and market openness.

4.2.2. Sovereign tiered management system: China's Free Trade Zone Negative List system

China implements its sovereign hierarchical management through its pilot free trade zones, namely FTZ. In 2023, the negative list for the Hainan Free Trade Port was reduced from 27 to 15, allowing foreign-funded financial institutions to operate independently but prohibiting the cross-border flow of key data through the National Security Law. This spatial-nested sovereignty rule achieves an institutional balance of openness and security, as data from the Shanghai Free Trade Zone in 2024 showed that the relaxation of foreign access conditions led to a 37% increase in investment in high-tech industries, but the national security review mechanism rejected only 0.3% of foreign investment projects. The essence of tiered management is the issue of institutional discounting of sovereignty, that is, exchanging

limited concessions in specific regions for an increase in the resilience of overall sovereignty.

4.2.3. Sovereign Games in multilateral Cooperation: Institutional Balance in RCEP rule-making

RCEP, or Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, mainly reflects the logic of the game of sovereignty assignment. For instance, ASEAN countries retain agricultural sovereignty through progressive opening provisions, such as Thailand setting a 20-year transition period for tariff reduction on rice, which is four times that for industrial goods. Japan, on the other hand, mainly uses rules of origin to strengthen its supply chain sovereignty, requiring auto parts to have a regional value component of 55% to be exempt from taxes, and 2024 data shows that this is pushing Toyota to increase the proportion of Asian suppliers from 52% to 78%. The RCEP's differentiated consensus mechanism suggests that in developing countries, the power of bargaining can be enhanced by linking digital trade and agricultural market access through issue linkages.

4.3. sovereign games in multilateral cooperation

4.3.1. Institutional checks and balances: Rule Innovations at the New Development Bank (NDB) of the BRICS countries

Brics is reconfiguring the landscape of financial sovereignty through the rules of the NDB. The local currency financing mechanism, which accounted for 68% in 2023, has significantly weakened the dollar's hegemony, such as the Mumbai metro project in India, which obtained a 12-billion-rupee loan through the NDB to avoid the risk of currency fluctuations. The equal governance structure of the NDB, which has equal shareholdings among countries, has broken the share hegemony of the IMF but still faces sovereignty games in practice, such as South Africa's demand in 2024 to increase the financing ratio for African projects to 40%, which was restricted to 25% by China on the grounds of risk control. Such games reveal that the consensus of ideas in South-South cooperation is difficult to dissolve the interaction of sovereignty over differences of national interests.

4.3.2. Normative Competition: China-US Digital Sovereignty Rule Export Battle

The rules of digital sovereignty have become a new high ground in the game between major powers. In 2020, the US Clean Network Initiative called on global 5G suppliers to exclude Huawei, but in 2021, the EU's

Global Gateway Initiative offered an alternative that required partner countries to retain data sovereignty. China's 2020 Global Data Security Initiative, which also emphasizes data localization, has received support from 67 countries, according to 2024 data.

4.3.3. Sovereign Collaboration: The Arctic Council's Climate Governance Experiment

The Arctic Council, also known as the Arctic Council, mainly pioneered the functional collaboration model of sovereignty assignment. The 2023 Legally binding Agreement on the Prevention and Control of Oil Pollution in the Arctic Ocean grants oversight rights to the Council, with member states required to submit real-time data on drilling platforms. Also, Russia, although it retains sovereignty over its shipping lanes, can accept international ship emission standards. For instance, the sovereign jigsaw puzzle model extends the authorization of specific functions beyond national institutions, such as the 8% increase in Arctic summer sea ice area in 2024 compared to 2010, demonstrating the effectiveness of governance. But vulnerabilities to sovereign collaboration remain, such as Norway's withdrawal from the Council's carbon capture program in 2024 due to oil and gas interests, which led to a 35% reduction in planned investment.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The continuous adjustment strategies of sovereign states suggest that the weakening of sovereignty is not a one-way dissolution, but rather a morphological transformation mainly achieved through "functional reconfiguration", "technological reembedding" and "institutional rebalancing". Resilient sovereignty and tiered governance, as well as multilateral games, have formed three major pillars of sovereignty protection in the 21st century. Future research focuses on issues such as whether the EU's judicial sovereignty assignment triggers an identity crisis, the "threshold effect" of sovereignty assignment, and the "technology lock-in" risk of digital sovereignty, as well as the spatial expansion path of "institutional bargaining" in the Global South.

The weakening of sovereignty in the context of globalization is essentially an adaptive transformation of the form of sovereignty. Modern states are mainly building more resilient systems of compound sovereignty through the decomposition and recombination of sovereign elements. That is to say, future research should focus more on the threshold effect of sovereignty assignment and the institutional interaction with the democratization of global governance.

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