Original Article

Provincializing Westphalia: The Eastern origins of sovereignty

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Abstract This article critiques the 'Westphilian narrative' of the sovereign state. The dominant Eurocentric account assumes that the sovereign state emerged through a series of developments that unfolded endogenously within Europe, none of which were influenced or shaped by impulses that emanated from the East or from the non-Western world. Having outlined the various Eurocentric theories of the rise of the sovereign state, the bulk of the article forwards a non-Eurocentric alternative narrative. While accepting that there were multicausal economic, discursive, political and military foundations to sovereignty, I argue that each of these was significantly enabled by Eastern influences, in the absence of which the sovereign state might not have made an appearance within Europe. In the process, I suggest that the rise of the sovereign state occurred during the era of, and through the impact of, 'Oriental globalization', thereby recasting the relationship between sovereignty and globalization more generally.
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Introduction: How and Where was Sovereignty?

Probably the first concept that students are introduced to on 'International Relations (IR) 101' is that of sovereignty. There they will be introduced to the 'Westphalian sovereignty narrative': that sovereignty originated at Westphalia in 1648 through a series of developments that were endogenous to Europe before it was subsequently exported as the 'gift of civilization' to the 'Rest' through the gracious vehicle of Western imperialism. This may better be described as a *Westphilian narrative* owing to its Eurocentric nature; a bias that goes hand-in-hand with a concomitant *Eastphobia*. Moreover, this narrative is bound up tightly within a *Westphilian straitjacket* owing to the point that such

an analysis is constrained by its inability to factor in non-Western inputs in the making of sovereignty (Hobson, 2007a). That is, its ambit is confined within the parochial mental and metageographical limits of Europe.

Though claiming to be a general introduction to the discipline, the conventional 'IR 101' module fails to historicize the emergence of the sovereign state, taking for granted that its origins can be located exclusively within Europe. This manoeuvre often appears as an innocent 'matter of convenience' because, having driven past a series of historical signposts, the lecturer can arrive as quickly as possible at the post-1945 world where the 'real IR' subject matter is contained. As we shall see, this 'matter of convenience' is less innocent than first appears given that it obscures a subterranean Eurocentrism that lies at the base of much of the discipline of IR in both its conventional and critical wings (Barkawi and Laffey, 2006; Hobson, 2007a; Hobson, 2009; Hall and Hobson, 2009). Surprisingly, this narrative is often replicated by the many critical theorists who argue that globalization is now transcending the modern sovereign state. Thus, they sometimes concede the 'realist' point that the sovereign state was created by the Europeans and that it was the pivotal actor in IR between 1648 and 1945 before claiming that this is no longer the case (for example, Burton, 1972; Camilleri and Falk, 1993). All in all, most IR scholars assume that the sovereign state miraculously appeared almost overnight in 1648. And this is the usual message that students on IR 101 receive.

However, in the past decade or more, the historiography of sovereignty has received detailed empirical analysis, usually undertaken by various critical and/or revisionist scholars. This body of literature takes two major points for departure. First, most such scholars are interested in developing a historical sociology of the state and of IR more generally. Not surprisingly, they have located manifold *social* processes that led to the rise of sovereignty in Europe. The seminal article in IR was, of course, written by John Ruggie, who challenged neorealist historiography and its ontological premises (Ruggie, 1983/1986). Ruggie took to task Kenneth Waltz's 'continuity problematic' – that Waltz's structuralism 'contains only a reproductive, but no transformational logic' (Ruggie, 1983/1986, p. 151; cf. Waltz, 1979, p. 66). Thus, he argued that Waltz has no way of explaining the transition from the heteronomous feudal political system to the modern system based on the sovereign state. It was this piece that set some IR scholars on a new research path as they sought to produce a historical sociology of state and systems change. The task was not merely to produce a more satisfactory historical sociological account of the rise of the modern sovereign state and state system but also to develop alternative approaches to neorealism. Indeed, the rise of the historical sociology of IR (HSIR) was informed by these twin focuses. Thus, various scholars produced explicit critiques of neorealism as they went about

rethinking the rise of the sovereign state in Europe – most notably Justin Rosenberg (1994) and Hendrik Spruyt (1994) – before they were followed by a subsequent wave of scholars.

More recently, this first aspect of the revisionist literature on the rise of sovereignty has become complemented by a second. This can best be summed up by the founding question, 'when was sovereignty?' Thus, in addition to producing alternative historical sociologies of IR and the sovereign state, a fresh wave of scholars have interrogated the temporal assumption that sovereignty was born in 1648. Some have claimed that modern sovereignty only emerged in the nineteenth century (for example, Thomson, 1994; Reus-Smit, 1999; Osiander, 2001), whereas others have traced its roots back much further (Teschke, 2003).

My two founding questions take an alternative departure to all the extant accounts of the rise of sovereignty. This involves asking not 'when' but '*where* was sovereignty?', and not simply 'why' (as in the functionalist tendency of much of the extant literature) but '*how* was sovereignty?' Both these questions point to the important role played by the East in the rise of European sovereignty. And this in turn responds to the point that all extant theories are Eurocentric insofar as they assume that we can explain the origins of sovereignty by looking at causal processes that exist only *within* Europe. Thus, despite their many ontological and chronological/temporal differences – which are profound – the fact is that such revisionism ultimately produces variations on a conventional Eurocentric theme.

By 'provincializing Westphalia', I aim to reveal the manifold Eastern and global forces that informed the rise of sovereignty in Europe, thereby placing Westphalia in its proper global context – hence my question '*where* was sovereignty?' In this way, Eurocentric parochialism is replaced by a globalism in which the East is returned to the analysis as a site of progressive agency. And at the same time, I prefer to ask 'how' rather than 'why' was sovereignty? Current theories assume a functionalist evolutionary logic where sovereignty is ushered in principally to serve the interests of a particular actor or group of actors. It is true that some neo-Weberians have claimed a primary role for contingency and discontinuity, which allegedly emerges from their multicausal and multispatial models (Giddens, 1985; Mann, 1986). But, this is negated by their Eurocentrism; a metanarrative that necessarily imputes an evolutionary logic wherein the unfolding of unique, internal European properties leads to the rise of sovereignty. Focussing on the *how* and *where* of sovereignty shifts the analysis away from evolutionism and the Eurocentric *logic of immanence* towards a non-Eurocentric notion of discontinuous change. Thus, my non-Eurocentric approach reveals a series of contingent influences that impact Europe from 'outside' and are, therefore, partially independent from internal European processes.

Finally, I seek to reorient conventional arguments concerning the relationship between globalization and sovereignty. As indicated above, for many IR scholars, it is treated as almost axiomatic that sovereignty and globalization are antithetical. Thus, sovereignty allegedly emerged at a time when globalization did not exist and, conversely, the rapid development of globalization after 1945/1973 engenders the decline of sovereignty (for example, Reich, 1991; Camilleri and Falk, 1993; Falk, 1997). This view has been challenged in the last decade by a number of authors working across a range of theoretical perspectives (for example, Hirst and Thompson, 1996; Weiss, 1998; Krasner, 1999; Rosenberg, 2005). Although my approach has certain overlaps with the latter perspective, it also offers distinctive ways of thinking about state–globalization relations. In particular, I argue that globalization is as significant today as it was for much of the post-1450 era. More importantly, I argue that globalization was Eastern-led for most of the period of its existence – emerging very gradually after 500 during the 'Eastern Age of Discovery' and moving forward more rapidly after c. 1450. My key claim is that the sovereign state emerged during an era of what I call 'Oriental globalization'. My point is not that 'globalization' can be unproblematically extrapolated back in time from the present to 1450 CE so as to convey a single monolithic process for this would obscure critical ruptures that have punctuated globalization through the longue global durée. Indeed, although modern and Oriental globalization share many things in common, they also exhibit crucial differences. But, despite these differences, the role of Eastern agency after 1945 has had the effect of deepening and broadening sovereignty at the very time when globalization is said to be in full swing. Thus, if Oriental globalization and Eastern agency was the midwife, if not the mother, of European sovereignty, so under modern globalization Eastern agency has ensured the spread and commitment to external sovereignty across the non-Western world.

Two further introductory points are necessary in order to contextualize the following discussion. First, unlike many, though not all, of the accounts of the rise of the sovereign state I develop a multicausal or ontologically pluralist account that gives roughly equal weighting to economic, discursive, military and political factors. The whole process of European development is thoroughly overdetermined by a range of factors that exist within and beyond Europe. Moreover, singling out any single causal variable as 'ultimately determining' is problematic because each can be found to exist within one or more regions in the world in different periods of world history. Only in Europe did they combine to produce sovereignty. And this process was itself a result of interaction with multiple non-European actors and processes.

Second, I shall not engage in the temporal problematique of the revisionist school, fascinating though it is. I shall simply assume that sovereignty began to emerge in the seventeenth century even though it took a good deal longer

before it was institutionally consolidated. Thus, although external sovereignty was apparent in the late seventeenth century, it would be wrong to present it as consolidated in an organizational sense given that a range of non-state political actors continued to play a role in international politics – the English East India Company, for example, was as much a political as an economic actor right down to 1858. Yet more problematically, no European state was fully internally sovereign until the end of the nineteenth century. Thus, although Louis XIV could proclaim that 'L'état c'est moi' as much as Frederick the Great could boast that 'I ruin the authority of the Junkers and build my sovereignty like a rock of bronze', the fact is that private political actors remained important for centuries to come. Indeed, as even Max Weber conceded, the First World War was in part a product of the private political power of the Prussian Junker class (Weber, 1988, p. 294; Weber, 1994, p. 235). Indeed, until 1918, the German state was unable to differentiate between public/national interest and private Junker interests. Despite acknowledging these complexities, this article should not be seen as a contribution to the debate on when sovereignty emerged in Europe. Rather, my argument is that the *exaggerated* emphasis accorded to the question 'when was sovereignty?' has, despite its impact and interest, *obscured* the role of the East in this process. And this latter issue is the primary optic of the article.

The article is divided into three sections. In the first part, I briefly review Eurocentrism and explain how it is internalized within extant accounts of the rise of sovereignty. The second section sketches a picture of Oriental globalization that existed between roughly 500 and 1800. Part three reveals *how* the more advanced Eastern 'resource portfolios' (Eastern ideas, institutions and technologies) diffused across the global economy through Oriental globalization where they were assimilated by the Europeans to propel sovereign state formation. At base, my claim is that Westphalia can be 'provincialized' by revealing it as located within a conjunctural analysis of the *longue Oriental global durée*. The piece concludes by reflecting on the issue of discontinuity and, more generally, on the relationship between globalization and sovereignty.

The Westphilian Narrative of Sovereignty

The idea of Eurocentrism is today reasonably well-known and I shall not repeat all the details here (Said, 1978; Amin, 1989; Bernal, 1991; Blaut, 1993; Hobson, 2004, chapter 1). The essence of Eurocentrism lies not simply in the claim that Europe is placed at the centre of all things progressive in world history – past, present and future. More important is the point that Eurocentrism posits a clear dividing line between East and West. Up until

the eighteenth century, it was often recognized that East and West were conjoined in all manner of ways. Indeed, it was the Jesuits in the seventeenth century who reminded the Europeans that the compass (magnet), gunpowder, paper and printing originated in China. But, from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, European thinkers, as they went about the construction of European identity formation, sought to invent an imaginary *line of civilizational apartheid* between East and West. Having separated out the East from the West they elevated the latter to the centre of progressive world history while simultaneously relegating the former to the ghetto of world history's dark periphery. That is, the Western Self was imbued with all manner of progressive, if not virtuous, endogenous characteristics or properties that made its breakthrough to political and economic modernity inevitable. These comprised many features, most notably liberalism, democracy, individualism, rationality and science. Conversely, the East was intellectually cleansed, banished to – and contained within – the other side of the civilizational frontier, granted only regressive properties, which ensured that progressive political or economic development remained blocked. The properties of the East were cast as the mirror image opposite to those found in the West: authoritarianism/Oriental despotism, collectivism, irrationality and religious mysticism. All in all, this culminated in the conclusion that (in Max Weber's terms) the West became infused with an 'ethic of world mastery', whereas the East was governed by an inert, traditional conformity.

These ideas developed at the very same time that the Social Sciences were emerging. But rather than critique this Eurocentric package of ideas, Western social scientists – from Hegel to Marx and Mill to Weber – endogenized them into their theories of political and economic development. As such, European progress came to be understood to have unfolded solely *within* Europe. Put differently, Europe was enshrined with a 'logic of immanence', in which the causal processes that gave rise to sovereignty unfolded in an evolutionary manner within Europe on account of its exceptional properties. Moreover, this assumption has remained central to Western narratives, finding its way into the recent revisionist histories of sovereignty today. Moreover, with a few notable exceptions (for example, Shilliam, 2006) many HSIR scholars who theorize the rise of the sovereign state have failed to problematize the Eurocentrism of conventional IR historiography (see Hobson, 2007b). A brief examination of the major theories of the rise of the sovereign state – from both inside and outside of IR – can serve to reflect this point as well as set the scene for the subsequent discussion.

Common to many of the major perspectives is the emphasis on Europe's unique anarchic multistate system. Unlike in Asia where imperial or single-state suzerain systems supposedly existed (that is, Oriental despotism), Europe underwent constant competition between the major political units that in turn

created a progressive dynamic (Gilpin, 1981; Giddens, 1985; Collins, 1986; Hall, 1986; Mann, 1986; Tilly, 1990). This competition came to a head in the century following 1550 during the European Military Revolution. For as the costs of warfare escalated owing to the deployment of new technologies – the gun, cannon and gunpowder – so rulers adapted by centralizing state power in order to raise the necessary taxes. Accordingly states became internally sovereign – as allegedly bureaucratic polities operating through Weberian rationality – while simultaneously emerging as externally sovereign, so that they could manage the problem of recurring warfare. But, at base, Europe developed in this way as a result of its unique multistate system and accompanying interstate competition. And the absence of such a state system in Afro-Asia meant not simply that the non-West failed to develop equally rational states but that the story could be narrated as one that was endogenous to Europe. This framework finds its clearest expression in realist and neo-Weberian theories, although it also plays an important role in various liberal and world systems accounts (cf. North and Thomas, 1973; Wallerstein, 1974; Jones, 1981). Indeed, although Wallerstein, for example, views Europe's uniqueness in its multistate system (which he confusingly calls a 'world economy'), it is in large part the presence of the capitalist 'exit threat' under conditions of state fiscal-military crisis within a multistate system that leads to the emergence of a capitalist system based on sovereign states (Wallerstein, 1974, Chapter 3). Such a progressive dynamic was impossible outside of the West as the East was allegedly dominated by Oriental despotisms, or what he calls 'world empires'.

A second argument concerns the importance of long-distance trade within Europe. The rapid commercialization of the European economy after 1450 led to the emergence of strong capitalist forces, which in turn created new coalitional possibilities for monarchs, enabling them to centralize power. Douglass North and Robert Thomas (1973), along with Hendrik Spruyt (1994), see the roots of the modern sovereign state in this trading system and the deepening of commercialization. And, of course, this forms the foreground to Wallerstein's perspective, if not to Braudel's (Wallerstein, 1974; Braudel, 1992). As I shall explain later, it is puzzling that within this generic perspective most scholars fail to investigate what is at the other end of this long-distance trading circuit, with the implication being that it extended merely to the 'boundaries' of Europe. Indeed, when Wallerstein and Braudel talk of world economies, they refer to more or less discrete regional entities (such as Europe), even if Braudel allowed for some cross-pollination between civilizations.

A third argument focuses on the role of demographic crisis. Here emphasis is placed on the crisis that occurred as a result of the Black Death that hit Europe initially in 1347. Some see in this a fundamental cause of the crisis that led to the emergence of centralized states, whereas others see it as a proximate cause.

North and Thomas occupy the first category, arguing that the eradication of over a third of Europe's population served to enhance the relative bargaining power of the peasantry *vis-à-vis* the nobility. This ultimately saw the commutation of feudal dues for cash payments and the emergence of free wage labour and a monetized economy. And when coupled with rulers' need for enhanced tax revenues in the face of escalating military costs, the way was opened for the emergence of centralized nation-states that granted private property rights to the capitalist class (North and Thomas, 1973, especially Chapters 7–8). Various neo-Marxists also view the crisis of feudalism as leading from the Black Death, although class struggles are seen as determining the direction of this process. Resulting class struggles in the context of commercialization saw the rise either of capitalist agriculture or the migration of peasants into towns, in turn leading to the rise of centralized states which protected the ruling class (cf. Anderson, 1979: Brenner, 1985). Either way, it is assumed that the Black Death and the subsequent commercial recovery were endogenous to Europe.

A fourth argument focuses on the importance of the Italian city–state system where the practices of standing diplomacy and the early creation of borders (rather than loose boundaries) between polities were first instigated. The French invasion of Italy in 1494 incorporated Italy into the wider state system. The practice then spread outwards across Europe, and was avidly taken up by Louis XIV's France before becoming institutionalized at the European level in 1648. Garrett Mattingly (1973) places considerable emphasis on the invention of Renaissance diplomacy, while noting that what lay at the base of the later concept of sovereignty was the notion that states tolerated 'within themselves little islands of alien sovereignty' (Mattingly, 1973, p. 268). Justin Rosenberg gives a Marxist spin to this argument by arguing that all this was made possible in Italy for the 'first time' owing to the presence of 'early' capitalism there (Rosenberg, 1994, Chapter 3). Once again, focus is on endogenous European developments and Europe's unique institutional inventions – capitalist and political.

A fifth argument considers the autonomous role of new ideas and norms, which again are thought to be unique to Europe. Ruggie, for example, while accepting that a range of materialist factors was important, nevertheless places special emphasis on the Italian Renaissance. He singles out the emergence of a 'single-point perspective' in art, first developed by Filippo Bruneschelli around 1425. This, he argues, was extremely significant given that '[t]he concept of sovereignty … represented merely the doctrinal counterpart of the application of single-point perspectival forms to the spatial organization of politics' (Ruggie, 1998, p. 186). Chris Reus-Smit (1999) takes a different tack to Ruggie, arguing that the modern form of sovereignty only emerged in the nineteenth century as the new European norm of liberal-individualism infused sovereignty with its moral purpose. And Daniel Philpott (2001) emphasizes the

role of the Protestant Reformation, which produced an epistemic challenge to the hegemony of Catholicism and, with it, the Papacy. Thus, the notion of *cuius regio, eius religio* (whose the region, his the religion), which was announced as a constitutive principle of European international society at the Treaty of Augsburg in 1555, established the idea of non-interference by external authorities. And this, of course, crystallized into the emergence of the sovereign state system at the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.

These are the main ideas, which are found, although in numerous permutations and combinations, within the major theories of the rise of sovereignty in Europe. What makes all of them distinctly Eurocentric is the assumption that sovereignty emerged through the unfolding of the European 'logic of immanence' – that is, through a set of evolutionary processes that were endogenous to Europe.[1] For in recounting the story as one that unfolds endogenously within Europe, they necessarily omit from their analyses any positive or influential role that may have been played by Eastern agents. In the process, these perspectives – either implicitly or explicitly – treat the various Eastern societies/civilizations as supplying merely counterfactuals that serve to 'confirm' their Eurocentric explanations of European sovereignty. Crucially, this is an ingenious, although largely subconscious, manoeuvre because it leads them to intellectually cleanse the East from the progressive story of political modernization, thereby maintaining the constructed 'intellectual line of civilizational apartheid' that marks Eurocentrism. Above all, it is this manoeuvre that continues to bind IR within a Westphilian straitjacket and confine it to the provincial pasture of Westphalian Europe. But, if we shift our focus laterally by deconstructing this line of civilizational apartheid, we necessarily bring into focus various East/West dialogues that *inter alia* enabled the rise of the Western sovereign state. My point of departure lies in the claim that the Western sovereign state was not born *before* globalization but during the *longue durée* of Oriental globalization. In what follows, I seek not to produce a final account of the rise of the sovereign state but rather to reveal the Eastern forces which influenced the major processes that each perspective singles out as distinctive.

The Rise and Development of Oriental Globalization

Barry Buzan's and Richard Little's observation provides a useful introduction to my alternative narrative of globalization.

> It seems to be almost self-evidently true that Europeans created the first global international system by bringing all parts of humankind into regular and strategic contact with each others … [But] as writers like

> Hodgson (1993) have demonstrated, Eurocentric accounts invariably ignore the Afro-Eurasian system that existed long before the Europeans began to extend across the globe. (Buzan and Little, 2000, p. 20)

Indeed, it was not the European Age of Discovery that launched the tentative origins of what we today call globalization, but the Afro-Asian Age of Discovery in the centuries after 500. More specifically, this Eastern Age of Discovery went hand-in-hand with the emergence and reproduction of a nascent Afro-Asian-led global economy.

Particularly important to the emergence of this global economy after the sixth century was the formation of a series of interlinked regions or empires. These comprised T'ang China (618–907), the Islamic Ummayad/Abbasid empire in West Asia (661–1258), the Ummayad polity in Spain (756–1031) and the Fatimids in North Africa (909–1171). Moreover, the kingdom of Śrīvijaya in Sumatra was important in that it constituted the vital entrepôt that connected China to the Indian Ocean between the seventh and thirteenth centuries. These interlinked regions were vital in promoting an extensively pacified space that fostered considerable trade and enabled the transmission of the more advanced Eastern 'resource portfolios'.

Although a number of capitalist agents were important here – including Africans, Jews, Indians, Chinese and Javanese – the prime role in setting up the global economy was performed by the West Asian Muslims. The global economy comprised three prime routes, though the two most important ones were the Middle and Southern routes (Abu-Lughod, 1989). The Middle route had a land component, which linked the Eastern Mediterranean with China and India, and a sea route that passed through the Persian Gulf. The Southern route linked the Alexandria–Cairo–Red Sea complex with the Arabian Sea and then, as with the Middle (sea) route, the Indian Ocean and beyond to Southeast Asia, China and Japan. These routes ensured that Europe was fundamentally connected to the Afro-Asian-led global economy after about the eighth century, although mainly in an indirect way. And even during the period of the so-called Western hegemons from Venice onwards, all such powers were dependent upon Eastern trade for their survival.

With the 'Fall of Acre' in 1291, the Venetians came to rely on the dominant Southern route, which was presided over by the Egyptians. As Abu-Lughod claims, 'Whoever controlled the sea-route to Asia could set the terms of trade for a Europe now in retreat. From the thirteenth century up to the sixteenth century that power was Egypt' (Abu-Lughod, 1989, p. 149). Moreover, Venetian trade did not dry up after 1291 but continued on, especially given that the Venetians managed to circumvent the Papal ban and secured new treaties with the Sultan in 1355 and 1361. And right down to 1517, Venice survived because Egypt played such an important role within the global economy.

Moreover, after 1517 Venice continued its trading connection through the Ottomans.

Nevertheless, Eurocentrism claims that after 1492/1498, the Portuguese and Spanish initiated the process of proto-globalization, before the global batôn of power was passed to the Dutch and then the English. But in fact, European trading connections intensified thanks largely to the role played by the Muslims and Indians but, above all, the Chinese who sat at, or near the centre of, the global economy between c.1450 and 1800. Put differently, the Chinese economy sucked the Europeans into directly joining the global economy (as opposed to their indirect attachment between the ninth and late fifteenth centuries).

Of course, this claim will appear counterintuitive given that traditional Eurocentric history places much emphasis on the Chinese *withdrawal* from the international trading system as a result of the official ban that was proclaimed in 1434. This, it is thought, was vital in opening up a space or 'vacuum' into which the new 'all-conquering' Iberians poured, thereby bringing about a new era of Western global hegemony (Landes, 1998, p. 96). But, the ban was a myth, not least because Chinese merchants found all manner of ingenious ways of circumventing it. Indeed, the Chinese economy continued to enjoy a vast trading surplus, constituting a silver sink into which much of the world's silver found its way. This was also a function of the fact that around 1450 China's economy was placed on a bimetallic standard that was significantly silver based. How then did China suck the Europeans into playing a direct role within the global economy?

Most of the bullion that was plundered from the Americas was directed to Asia in order to pay for Europe's trade deficit with India and especially China. It also provided the liquid means to support Europe's direct trading presence in the Indian Ocean. Indeed, the major role played by the Dutch and English East India Companies was the carrying of this bullion back and forth between China and Europe. And it was this that supplied them with most of their profits (Frank, 1998, p. 135). Or as Frank graphically put it, the plundering of American bullion enabled the poor Europeans to buy a third-class ticket to board the Asian economic train and eventually enabled them to buy a whole railway car (Frank, 1998, p. 277). Similarly, a global silver-recycling process that was centred on China emerged in the 1450–1650 period. This occurred as a function of differentials in the silver–gold price ratio. Given that silver had a high price ratio to gold in China and a low one in Europe, so silver was exchanged for gold in China, which was then exported to Europe and exchanged for more silver before being exported back to China, where the process began afresh. Moreover, this process saw the creation of a new western trade route that extended from Acapulco to The Philippines via the Spanish Manila Galleon and then on to China via Chinese junks. Ultimately

this process took on the form of a continuous global silver-recycling loop, enhancing both Chinese and European development in the process, and sucking the Europeans directly into the whole global economy. Thus, 'had China … not had such a dynamic economy [such] that its metallic base could absorb the staggering quantities of silver mined in the New World over three centuries, those mines might have become unprofitable within a few decades' (Pomeranz, 2000, p. 273). Moreover, in the absence of this silver recycling process, there might never have been a European price revolution in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (Flynn and Giraldez, 1994; Frank, 1998, pp. 111–112). In addition to its indirect contribution within the silver-recycling process, the post-fifteenth century 'American' contribution saw the production of coffee, cotton, sugar, cocoa and tobacco flooding into Europe, courtesy of the exploitation of Black African slave labour, all of which boosted European production/consumption considerably (Drayton, 2002). All in all, therefore, the commercial revolution of the post-1450 period that underpinned the rise of the European sovereign state was substantially informed by developments within the wider Afro-Asian-led global economy that centred ultimately on China.

Two points emerge from this discussion that are of particular importance to the discussion of the rise of sovereignty. First, it seems no coincidence that sovereignty emerged at a time when the European economy was fully integrated in the rapidly expanding global trade that was significantly enabled by the Chinese economy's voracious demand for silver after 1450. Indeed, the profits that the Europeans derived through this were important in stimulating capitalist development within Europe. And second, although such economic connections were undoubtedly important, perhaps the ultimate significance of the Afro-Asian-led global economy was that it constituted a conveyor belt along which more advanced Eastern 'resource portfolios' were carried to Europe. These were then avidly assimilated by the Europeans to thereby make sovereignty a possibility. How, then, did this occur?

The Eastern Origins of Western Sovereignty

Eastern influences played an important role in shaping each of the sources of the sovereign state – economic, geopolitical/military, ideological/discursive and political. First to the geopolitical argument and the importance of the Military Revolution. As already noted, the centrepiece of this revolution lay in the deployment of guns, gunpowder and cannon, harnessed through scientific management procedures. But, these crucial military technologies were in fact invented in China during what might be called the 'Chinese Military Revolution' (c.850-c.1290). Gunpowder was invented around 850 after several

centuries of prior experimentation. Nevertheless, to the extent that some Eurocentric historians concede this, they respond by claiming that this was deployed only in Chinese fireworks. But, while it was used in Chinese flamethrowers around 969, by 1231, it was deployed in bombs, grenades and rockets. Moreover, by 1275, the Chinese had invented the first metal-barrelled gun firing metal bullets. And by about 1290, a crude cannon, known as the 'eruptor', had been invented (Carrington Goodrich and Fêng, 1977; Needham *et al*, 1986). Of course, this might have all been coincidence were it not for the point that there is good circumstantial evidence to suggest that these inventions diffused across to be subsequently copied by the Europeans.

Alhough Eurocentric historians attribute the discovery of gunpowder to Francis Bacon in 1267, it is noteworthy that the Chinese recipe for gunpowder was available in print form (published in 1044). Moreover, it was during the thirteenth century that numerous European friars were sojourning in China, and some have claimed that it was William of Rubrick (Bacon's friend) who, having returned back in 1257, could well have passed on the formula to Bacon (for example, Pacey, 1991, p. 45). Importantly, as Needham notes, Bacon's description bears an uncanny resemblance to Chinese firecrackers (Needham *et al*, 1986, pp. 47–50, 570–2). It is also noteworthy that the first English cannon of 1327, illustrated in a manuscript by Walter de Millemete, was an exact replica of the Chinese eruptor. Given that there is no evidence to support the claim that this cannon had been developed over a sufficient period of time in the English context before 1327, it seems extremely unlikely that this was an independent English invention. And it is possible that the Europeans finally, although belatedly, made the cannon and gun the centre-piece of their armies as they confronted the Ottoman Empire which was, as Marshall Hodgson originally pointed out, a 'gunpowder empire' (Hodgson, 1993). And when we note that the Scientific Revolution was partly informed by imported Islamic ideas (a point I return to below), it seems that without this Eastern help there might never have been a European Military Revolution.[2]

Moving on to economic factors, it makes sense to begin by treating the arguments revolving around European trade and Italian capitalism together. That Western Christendom underwent a commercial revolution and a financial revolution around the turn of the first millennium CE (if not a couple of hundred years before), and that the Italians were central players within the region, seem reasonable propositions. It seems unreasonable, however, to omit the more important role that was played by Islamic West Asia. Italy was important ultimately because, as Braudel notes, it constituted a vital trading bridgehead with Islamic West Asia and, after 1291, with Egypt (Braudel, 1992, pp. 128, 132). And Egypt in turn was the central nodal point in the global economy between 1291 and 1517, with some 80 per cent of all global trade passing through it. Although Islamic West Asia contributed directly to

the export of trade into Europe, its greater significance lay in its inimitable position within the global economy. Indeed, West Asian and Levantine Islam constituted the 'bridge of the world' relaying trade from the Indian and Chinese economic powerhouses into Europe. In turn, Eastern trade was then pumped around Europe by the Italians as it flowed from the Islamic world.

Without this Eastern trading stream, it is doubtful whether the Italians would have played such a proactive role within Western Christendom (which in turn had nourished the French Champagne Fairs, the German Hansa and other localized markets). Moreover, it would be incorrect to assume that the Italians were the originators of the financial revolution, for once again, almost all of the institutions that the Italians became famous for originated in West Asia. The famous *Commenda* partnership agreement (known as the *Collegantzia*), which was allegedly pioneered in Italy in the eleventh century, turns out to have been an Islamic invention – although in turn it had been developed from an earlier Persian institution (Udovitch, 1970). Noteworthy too is that Muhammad had originally been a *Commenda* merchant. Moreover, banks, bills of exchange (*suftaja*), cheques (*hawāla*), credit institutions and insurance originated in West Asia before they were disingenuously claimed as Italian inventions (Abu-Lughod, 1989, pp. 216, 223). And, last but not least, double-entry bookkeeping was not the monopolistic preserve of the Italians given that similar systems existed in China, West Asia and India. In any case, single-entry bookkeeping remained the dominant mode of accountancy in Europe until the nineteenth century (Goody, 1996). All in all, therefore, however important the Italian city–state system was in setting Europe on course for sovereignty, we cannot treat it in isolation from the wider global context. To do so would be to give a weighting to Italian agency that it cannot bear. What then of the economic development of Europe after 1450?

It is worth beginning here by considering the Black Death. Many economic theories focus on the post-1450 recovery phase after the century of demographic crisis that opened in 1347 with the Black Death. Here, special emphasis is placed on the rapid growth of trade and commercialization that took off from where Europe had left off in 1347. But, it seems curious to discuss the Black Death without asking from where it originated. For this, disease was a near-global phenomenon whose impact was more devastating than the current AIDS epidemic. As William McNeill (1976) points out, the plague originated in China in 1331 and then spread westward across the Eurasian economy through the Oriental trade routes. It was carried along the caravan routes of the Mongol Empire before reaching the Crimea by 1346. It then penetrated the sea-trade routes to arrive in Western Christendom by 1347 (McNeill, 1976).

The ramifications of this point are far-reaching. For the Black Death brought an end to the Mongol Empire and with it the Northern route of the

global economy (Abu-Lughod, 1989, Chapter 5). This in turn served to isolate some of the Eastern parts of Christendom from the vital impulse that Eastern trade brought with it (most notably Russia). Could it be that the delinking of Russia from the Eastern trading economy with the end of the Northern route was responsible for setting Russia off on the road towards what Tilly (1990) calls the *coercive-intensive* path of state formation? Either way, the closing of the Northern route was significant primarily because it brought the middle and southern routes to the fore, both of which nourished the European commercial recovery after 1450. And once more we return to reconsidering the pioneering role that the Italians allegedly played in stimulating capitalism.

If the Italians are wrongly credited with various economic institutional innovations and as pioneers of global trade, it might be replied that their intellectual genius as captured by the Renaissance surely stands. That the Renaissance had major consequences for the rise of capitalism and the sovereign state in Europe seems fair. But the Renaissance was not a pristine European innovation. For the Europeans owe a large debt once more to the West Asian and North African Muslims, in the absence of which there might never have been a European Renaissance or equally a Scientific Revolution.

In particular, Islamic breakthroughs in mathematics (including algebra and trigonometry) were vital. The former term was taken from the title of one of al-Khwārizmī's mathematical texts (as a result of the translation made by the Englishman, Robert of Ketton, in 1145). And by the beginning of the tenth century, all six of the classical trigonometric functions had been defined and tabulated by Muslim mathematicians. This in turn, presupposed the use of Indian numerals, a method that was introduced into Europe by the Muslims and were known as Arabic numerals. Developments in public health, hygiene and medicine were also notable. Al-Rāzī's medical works were translated and reprinted in Europe some 40 times between 1498 and 1866. And Ibn Sīnā's (or Avicenna's) *Canon of Medicine* became the founding text for European medical schools between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. The Muslims developed numerous medicines and anaesthetics and pioneered the study of anatomy. Notable here is that the Egyptian physician, Ibn al-Nafis (d. 1288), whose work on the human body, which contradicted the traditional position of the Greek physician, Galen, fully pre-empted the much heralded work of William Harvey by 350 years. The Muslims were also keen cartographers, astrologers and astronomers, and their ideas were avidly borrowed by Europeans. Notably, Ibn al-Shātir's mathematical models bore an uncanny resemblance to those used by Copernicus 150 years later. And as early as the ninth century, al-Khwārizmī calculated the circumference of the Earth to within 41 metres. Significantly, the Baconian idea that science should be based on the experimental method had already been pioneered by the Muslims (not the Greeks). Moreover, Ancient Egyptian Hermetic texts also featured in the

Italian Renaissance, given that they were translated after 1460 by Marsilio Ficino at the Court of Cosimo de Medici. And the Eurocentric reply that the Muslims simply worked *within* the ideas of the Ancient Greeks misses the point that they were often critical of the ancient texts that they had translated and that they frequently took them in new directions. Moreover, there is a wealth of evidence to reveal how the Europeans accessed this Eastern knowledge (see Goody, 2004, pp. 56–83; Hobson, 2004, chapter 8). Accordingly, the very term European 'Renaissance' is problematic as it exaggerates its Ancient Greek foundations and denies its substantial Eastern heritage.[3]

Finally, it is worth briefly reflecting on the role of Protestantism, which has received relatively little attention in the contemporary literature (see Philpott, 2001; Nexon, 2009). Here, I can offer only tentative suggestions that require further research. But, it is striking to note the resemblance between Islamic theology and some of the key ideas of Martin Luther. The Islamic notion of *ijtihad* is a method wherein the Divine can be understood only through the application of reason and rationality. Moreover, Sufism rested on the idea that the believer should enter into a direct personal relationship with God, free of any mediating human authority. With this in mind, it deserves emphasis that such ideas were at their height at the same time when Luther emerged. Nevertheless, although the rise of Protestantism in Europe was undoubtedly one factor in the rise of sovereignty, it bears only a limited degree of causation. For without the economic, political and military factors that were also present, it would have remained an 'abortive revolution', stranded in mid-air with no means to transcend Christendom's political structure. Indeed, no single-factor or reductive model could adequately cope with what was an extremely complex process. And in turn, without the manifold Eastern influences that were imparted to Europe via Oriental globalization, it seems unlikely that sovereignty would ever have been 'made in Europe'.

Conclusion

Reductionist explanations of the rise of sovereignty lead to an evolutionary approach in which one causal variable unfolds over a period of time. Multicausal models – although few in existence – appear to provide some sort of corrective to this problem. Indeed, this point has been made by various neo-Weberians in their critique of Marxist 'economic-reductionism' (Giddens, 1985; Mann, 1986; Runciman, 1989). It is precisely the shift to multicausality and overdetermination that brings the issue of 'discontinuity' to the fore. However, seen through a non-Eurocentric lens, this neo-Weberian insight leads to an analysis that shares far more in common with their reductionist 'counterparts' than they would have us believe. For the Eurocentrism of

neo-Weberianism returns us back to a mode of explanation that emphasizes the evolutionary European 'logic of immanence'. Accordingly, multicausality within a Eurocentric approach necessarily disappoints in terms of generating a genuinely discontinuous model of change. This ambition can, however, be achieved through a non-Eurocentric approach that brings to light the many influences that impacted Europe from the East. Because these happened unevenly and unpredictably and because the East constantly *retracked* the developmental path – economic and political – that Europe undertook, we must necessarily dispense with all evolutionary perspectives. Ironically, therefore, Max Weber's famous 'switchmen metaphor' can perhaps best be realized through such a global perspective.

One important issue that this global approach raises concerns rethinking the relationship between globalization and sovereignty. Of course, it might well be objected that globalization did not exist in the period under review. And to the extent that such scholars might concede that various non-Western forces shaped the rise of sovereignty, they might well reply that such connections do not sufficiently aggregate into the notion of globalization. This has been most fully developed and argued for by David Held and his co-authors in *Global Transformations* (Held *et al*, 1999). To fully counter this view would take an article in its own right. Here, I emphasize the single most vital aspect of the transformationalist definition of globalization – that globalization has significant *impact* propensity such that global diffusions and transactions can effect radical change in different parts of the world (Held *et al*, 1999, Chapter 1). Seen from this angle, I would suggest that globalization did exist in the pre-1500 era. For it was precisely the manifold diffusions of Eastern resource portfolios across the global economy that played such an important role in retracking the West towards sovereignty.

But, what of the contemporary relationship between globalization and sovereignty? Many scholars assume that globalization and sovereignty are antithetical. It is largely this assumption that has led so many IR/IPE scholars to focus their attention upon globalization and to reveal its transformative impact on states and world politics/economics. The analysis of this article, however, calls the zero-sum dimension of this relationship into question, not least because globalization and global interactions can be seen as vital in generating sovereignty. Although it might be objected that globalization today is different from global processes that existed in previous centuries, a non-Eurocentric approach can reconfigure our analysis of the present conjuncture, enhancing my claim further.

One of the clearest differences in globalizations – Oriental and modern – lies in the fact that under the latter we have seen a shift in the nature of global power relations. East–West relations were for the most part relatively harmonious under Oriental globalization. This clearly changed with the rise

of Western hegemony under its colonial and neo-colonial guises. But crucially, the East has responded by consciously embracing the sovereign state – mainly to act as a bulwark against any future potential Western colonialism – at the very time that globalization in its modern form is said to be in full swing (Acharya, 2005). Indeed, the revolt against the West that issued decolonization went hand-in-hand with the spread of the sovereign state beyond Europe. And the overthrow of colonialism was arguably one of the most poignant moments of Eastern resistance agency witnessed in the past two centuries. Thus, outside of the experiment going on within the European Union, the vast majority of non-Western states continue to cherish their hard-won and newly-earned sovereignty. Put simply, under modern globalization and the imperial/neo-imperial Western project, sovereignty has deepened and been consolidated in its external face across the world as Eastern actors have exercised their agency. In the light of this, we might close by noting that a non-Eurocentric approach to sovereignty casts the state/globalization relationship in a fresh light in both its historical and modern contexts.

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Notes

1 One partial exception is provided by Perry Anderson (1979) who considers the limits of Eurocentrism in the last part of his book. However, this fails to eradicate the Eurocentric framework of his argument about state formation in Europe.

2 As an addendum here, it is noteworthy that there were obviously intra-European factors that conditioned or made the assimilation of Chinese military technologies attractive. For example, as rulers sought to transcend the centrifugal political power of the nobles, especially after 1450, so the adoption of modern military technologies effected a shift away from the feudal mode of warfare. And arguably, it was only possible to begin this attack on noble/aristocratic power as a result of its progressive weakening following the impact of the Eurasian plague epidemic that hit Europe in 1347.

3 As a footnote to this discussion, it is worth nothing that the idea of extraterritoriality was not unique to Europe. Indeed, it seems hardly coincidental that the Venetian merchants were granted extraterritoriality in Alexandria, as even Mattingly concedes (1973: 63–4, 169–70).

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