

Collaborative Discussion 1 – Peer Response: Ying Chan – Michael Geiger

A very good post Ying, you address an important point with your argument that states are confronted with new difficulties in the digital, internationally connected world.

In addition to the more difficult prosecution based on national rights in the international arena, governments are confronted with further challenges from digital technologies in relation to their sovereignty and the right to non-interference in the internal affairs of states. According to the principle of sovereign equality of the United Nations, which was enshrined in the UN Charter in 1945, all states are equal before international law and have fundamental control over matters within their borders and are protected from unlawful outside interference (United Nations, N.D.).

The 2016 presidential election in the United States of America shows that this principle can be undermined by digital innovations, especially in the field of social media. Through social media campaigns, American voters were shown personalized campaign ads via Facebook in order to manipulate them in their voting decisions (Lewis & Hilder, 2018). The personal information and preferences of the voters concerned were provided by the English company Cambridge Analytica. While interference in the election campaign by Russian interest groups was suspected but not proven, Cambridge Analytica has clearly established that an English company had a direct influence on the 2016 American presidential election (Chan, 2019).

Based on these facts, but also the assumptions of interference by Russia, it can be stated that states are increasingly confronted with a new danger of external interference in national interests and their sovereignty through digital media. The thesis put forward by Grabosky (2001): "Old Wine in New Bottles?" cannot be

confirmed in this context, since such an influence is not possible in the analogue world and has not yet taken place in this way up to this point in time.

References:

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