

# Power of language in the making of international law - the word sovereignty in Bodin and Vattel and the myth of Westphalia

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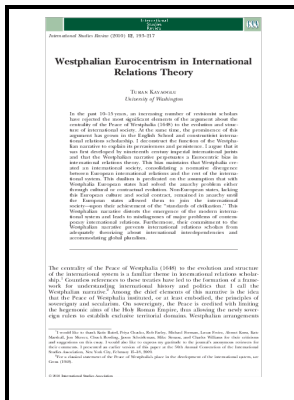
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**The Power of Language in the Making of International Law: The Word Sovereignty in Bodin and Vattel and the Myth of Westphalia: Beaulac, Stephane: 9789004136984: Books**

On the one hand, some of the contributors to this volume understand sovereignty as a condition of possible agency, ultimately being constitutive of both political entities and the larger society of which they form part. It is in the intellectual context of the new possibility of philosophy, and the great new challenge facing philosophy, that I place Stéphane Beaulac's important book.

## Concept of Sovereignty Revisited

The relationship between transnationalism and sovereignty receives a refreshing treatment in the hands of Jef Huysmans, who raises the question whether the existence of transnational practices really defies the logic of sovereignty in international politics, or if it merely constitutes one of its many reproductive circuits. If I have understood van Roermund correctly, popular sovereignty does indeed possess the long-disputed capacity to legitimize itself without recourse to anything over and above the people thus constituted. Such a view of concepts and their meaning is exactly what is contested in a piece that promises to be an influential contribution to the present debate.

## Concept of Sovereignty Revisited

Held, Democracy and the Global Order.

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His work takes advantage, in particular, of several of the hard-earned lessons of twentieth-century philosophy and social experience.

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In pursuing this inquiry, the contributors argue that both internal and external factors have increased the sovereignty of sub-national levels of governance: sovereignty is a continuous variable. He then describes how these meanings have continued to condition our understanding of sovereignty despite or possibly because of our best efforts to secularize our political and legal theories.

#### **The Power of Language in the Making of International Law**

Drawing on classical hermeneutics and deconstruction, Beaulac then devises an interpretative scheme that purports to make sense of the salience of the concept of sovereignty and the myth of Westphalia in the shaping of the normative structure of the modern society of states. As regards sovereignty, it is shown that Jean Bodin introduced the word in *Six Livres* for the purpose of having the French ruler enjoy supreme power in the hierarchical organisation structure of society. The chief virtue of this volume is the consistent ambition among its authors to explore and tackle these paradoxes head on, rather than brushing them under the carpet as has frequently been done in contemporary political theory.

#### **The power of language in the making of international law (2004 edition)**

When properly understood, therefore, the concept of sovereignty retains much of its explanatory power and normative relevance. The constitutional pluralism and multidimensional order that characterize late sovereignty display considerable continuity with the old order in the way that they handle the tension between law and politics, yet they have certain distinctive features of their own. One main upshot of this reorientation has been to claim that language, rather than being a neutral medium of representation, is actively involved in the constitution of legal and political reality.

#### **Concept of Sovereignty Revisited**

As Jo Shaw argues in the case of electoral rights and the question of boundaries in the European Union, this again boils down to what has been a recurrent theme throughout this volume, namely the problem of how to construct a European demos on the basis of an idea of the EU as a legitimate political order, and conversely. Yet, contrary to initial expectations, the linguistic turn has increased rather than diminished the staying power of the concept of sovereignty within legal and political discourse. Richard Bellamy shares these concerns with democratic legitimacy and rights within the European Union, but delivers a different solution.

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