tension behind by overlooking similarities and parallels, and closes off the early modern in an overly dramatic act of modern periodization.

For in practical matters, the post-reformations "pre-Bodinian" polities which made up Europe during the early sixteenth century acted in ways largely recognizable to us today. On the whole, polities made alliances, sent and established embassies, collected taxes, demanded the undivided obedience of their subjects and increasingly denied the existence of any other legitimate authority than God above them (see de Carvalho 2014). But more importantly, they spoke of the limits of legitimate political authority in "sovereign" terms. I believe this to be crucial. If we are to venture with our conceptual arsenal into times when our modern terminology cannot be found, we must ensure that at the very least, historical actors made reference to concepts similar to ours. As I have briefly illustrated above, the restructuring of political authority which was a condition for autonomous entities to be constituted in sovereign terms was a consequence of the religious fragmentation of Europe from the 1520s onwards. This has two implications for the question of "when sovereignty". While we can, with caution, make sense of Europe in sovereign terms after the reformations, before the reformations, we cannot.

The transformation Europe went through during the reformations in terms of the limits of political authority happened without references to a modern understanding of sovereignty, which came about only later. The reconceptualizations offered by theorists and lawyers such as Bodin, the Stephanis and others should not be seen as innovations paving the way for a sovereign world, but instead as attempts to make sense of political changes which had already taken place, or a transformation which they were experiencing. In claiming for themselves the supreme right over churches within their lands, rulers dramatically changed what political authority entailed, a change that begged to be addressed in political theory and law. Just as these theorists, we would do well to recognize that the decades in Europe from the reformations are an integral part of a system made possible by the concept of sovereignty – if not (yet) the term.

A Non-Eurocentric Approach to Sovereignty

Ayşe Zarakol

The idea that the concept of sovereignty emerged (first and exclusively) in Europe is so ingrained that most scholarship dealing with this issue does not even specify that its arguments are derived from European materials *only*. This is not to say that the sovereignty literature makes any explicit claims about the emergence of sovereignty outside of Europe (or even lack thereof); it is disinterestedly silent about other regions. This silence is then inevitably[2] filled in the reader's imagination with the usual assumption of the non-West temporally lagging behind the West on this issue as well. To their immense credit, organisers of this forum have not rested on such a problematic trope and have tasked me with discussing "sovereignty outside of the West". I will therefore focus on the broad issue of how thinking *comparatively* and *beyond the West* can radically change our thinking about modern sovereignty.

First, depending on how one defines sovereignty, one could make a plausible claim that aspects of it were much more developed outside of (Western) Europe earlier, including in regions with which "Europeans"[3] had contact. Confronting such a claim requires us to also entertain the hypothesis that "Europeans" borrowed some of their ideas about sovereignty from developments elsewhere. It is *only* a possibility that certain ideas about certain aspects of sovereignty travelled East to West, a possibility that can be proven or plausibly ruled out, but until now, the historical record has not really been interrogated with this particular hypothesis in mind. Second, even if there were no exchange of ideas from "East" to "West", the realisation that certain aspects of modern sovereignty also arose in the "East" around the same time should give us pause. Even if such developments in the East and the West happened completely independently of each other, the synchronicity might point to larger systemic causes our current theories are not well-equipped to deal with. And more importantly, we would need ask why the earlier developments in the East did not culminate in the nation-state model as the

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[2] Given the social hierarchies that animate our understanding of the modern international order (see e.g. Zarakol 2011).

[3] I am using this term and others such as "international system" anachronistically for clarity of communication.

slightly later developments in the West, which would then require us to revisit our theories of state and system evolution.

In the remaining, I illustrate these possibilities briefly via specific examples before turning back to the implications of this comparative rethinking for modern IR.

Supreme Authority: A Borrowed Idea?

As Bartelson notes, "making sense of sovereignty…entails making sense of its component terms – supreme authority and territory – and how these terms were forged together into a concept" (this forum). He then suggests, quite reasonably, that notions of supreme authority emerged (*in Europe*) sometime in the Middle Ages, followed in the seventeenth century by the evolution of the legal-political doctrine that this supreme authority should be exclusive, and that this exclusive supreme authority was properly married to territory only in the nineteenth century. I agree with Bartelson's dating; but even those who do not would likely concede the chronological ordering he posits, i.e. that the notion of supreme authority predates territorialisation. In this section, therefore, I want to leave the issue of territorialisation aside for moment and briefly consider whether the development of the notion of an (exclusive) supreme authority was unique to Europe.

The answer is a resounding no. In fact, from a comparative world-historical perspective, it could be argued that Europe was the clear laggard in the "invention" of this notion. Indeed, the literature is not just Eurocentric in this regard, but dissonantly so: while non-European polities are remembered (often through the eyes of their contemporary European observers) as examples of "tyranny" (or later "Oriental despotism"),[4] they are almost never credited for having developed their own version of supreme authority or "absolutism" (considered an indispensable fundamental step to modern sovereignty in the European context).[5] This may be partly attributable to the fact that there is little to no awareness that non-European polities, like their European counterparts, had *also* been marked by a competition between what Hobbes called "*Temporall* and *Spirituall* government" prior to the emergence of notions of "supreme authority".[6] Non-European

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[4] See e.g. Çırakman 2001; also Hobson and Sharman 2005.
[5] The argument is usually associated with Anderson 1974, but the literature building on Anderson, especially in IR, is not particularly nuanced. See Hobson and Sharman 2005 for an overview.
[6] This is because eighteenth century and onwards caricatures of non-European polities (as exemplified by Nicolas Boulanger's verdict that in Asia monarchs are treated as visible gods) are read back into history.

polities may not get credit for what is considered an innovation in the European context because in their case this has been rendered a "natural" part of their history.

Needless to say, it is a mistake to assume that non-European polities were static across time in this, or any other, regard. To take just one example, prior to the period contemporaneous with European late Middle Ages, Muslim societies were characterised by an utter divorce (from eighth and ninth century onwards) between political authority, which had the power of sword but not the ability to make any law, and religious authority of the *ulama* who interpreted (and therefore made) law. From a law-making perspective, then, Muslim rulers, of say, the twelfth century, had even less authority than their Christian counterparts. At the same time, the clear of division of labour made it easier for Muslim rulers and the *ulama* to coexist and these relations were not marked by the same competition that existed between the European rulers and Papal authority (See e.g. Crone and Hinds 2003; Zarakol 2017).

Nevertheless, it was still a radical "innovation" for a Muslim ruler of a later period - whether he be Ottoman, Safavid or Mughal - to claim supreme authority over the *ulama* and especially the power to make (temporal-secular) law that could supersede *sharia* (spiritual-religious law). We do not see any such claims by Muslim rulers until at least the fourteenth and (more clearly) the fifteenth centuries. Yet in this period, rulers all over Eurasia, including Muslim rulers, start usurping law-making powers from (usually religious) competitors, in rather radical moves towards centralisation of authority. Interestingly, a growing body of scholarship links the development of this phenomenon to Mongolian invasions from the East, and the notions of *yasa* and the supreme lawgiver (as in Chinggis Khan) that the Mongolians spread on their path, which radically transformed Muslim Empires (see e.g. Burak 2013). It's also worth recalling here that a similar argument had been made about Russia and the influence of the Golden Horde on the Russian understanding of sovereignty (see e.g. Halperin 1983).

Turning back to Western Europe, we know that most scholars of sovereignty see the sixteenth or even seventeenth century as a pivot point for when political authority got the upper hand vis-a-vis religious authority. This is about a century behind Muslim empires (and Russia) who themselves were considerably influenced by the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. Given that the chronological order of the innovation of "supreme authority" also follows the geographical spread from East to

West within a time frame that is appropriate for the historical period, we must then at least ask, however gently, whether exclusive "supreme authority" was in fact a *norm* of that particular "international system", spreading from East to West.[7]

It is impossible for me to answer such a big question here, but in lieu of an answer, let me make a provocative observation about the existing sovereignty literature. Within the sovereignty literature, as we all know, certain authors – Bodin, Hobbes, Filmer etc. - are credited for developing the arguments for supreme political authority. However, even those accounts that are sensitive to historical context, e.g. of Skinner's, cannot but avoid contextualising these authors in mostly "national" or regional bounds anachronistically projected onto a time with geographical imaginings rather different from our own. Moreover, very few works ask where these authors got their inspiration for such innovations in "sovereignty", beyond Roman law. Yet even a cursory glance shows that these authors were not unaware of the polities to the East and even referred to them as demonstrative examples.[8] Awareness by itself does not indicate copying, but at the very least suggests an influence usually overlooked, the magnitude of which could range from inconsequential to substantive. Who knows? Unfortunately, this question of an Eastern influence on sovereignty will have to remain a provocation until the primary literature can be studied with fresher eyes.

Precursors to Territoriality: A Parallel Development?

It is not only our understanding of European political development that has suffered from methodological internalism. Similar blinders had also distorted our understanding of non-European polities, until quite recently. Thankfully, revisionist histories have been rapidly expanding our understanding of such, from the Ottomans to the Mughals to Russia and China. In this section, I briefly review some of these arguments to show that even if we dismiss the provocation of the previous section, there is also an equally plausible argument for the parallel development of sovereignty outside of Europe in the "Early Modern" period.

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[7] To their credit Anievas and Nişancıoğlu (2015) spend considerable time on ways the Mongols influenced Europe, but they do not consider that the influence may have extended to the ideational realm.

[8] E.g. Bodin in *République* (1992 [1576]), II, 5): "If the prince is an absolute sovereign, as are the true kings of France, Spain, England, Scotland, *Ethiopia, Turkey, Persia* and *Muscovy,* whose authority is unquestionably their own, and not shared with any of their subjects, then it is in no circumstances permissible either by any of their subjects in particular, or in general, to attempt anything against the life and honor of their king, either by process of law or force of arms, even though he has committed all the evil, impious and cruel deeds imaginable." Italics added.

What research shows is that in addition to the aforementioned experiments with notions of "supreme political authority", many of these non-European polities were also moving in territorial directions. To give just a few examples from the Ottoman trajectory: during the reign of Mehmed II (1446-8, 51-81), there was the institution of "the *akçe* zone between the Danube and the Euphrates, an area in which many different currencies had been in place" (Tezcan 2010, 89). While the development of a common currency *zone* is not by itself enough for a finding of *territorialisation*, it is undeniably a step in this direction. More significantly, in the sixteenth century the Ottoman polity simultaneously pursued confessionalisation (with regard to Muslim subjects) and the recognition of the "territorial aspect" of such arrangements via "international" treaties: "By 1555, at the same time that Charles recognized the territorial integrity of the Protestant princes, Süleyman came to recognise the sovereignty of the Safavid Shah within the latter's territories by signing the Treaty of Amasya. With this treaty the new religious divisions within Islamdom became increasingly territorialized, while Ottoman and Safavid rulers devoted themselves to the multipronged projects of state and confession building backed up by various measures of social disciplining" (Krstic 2011, p. 97). Just as the Treaty of Augsburg had to be reaffirmed in Westphalia, the Treaty of Amasya would have to be reaffirmed almost a century later, in the Treaty of *Kasr-ı-Şirin* (1639), which established borders within the Ottoman and Safavid realms, borders which hold to this day between Turkey and Iran.

Contra the position of the previous section, I am not contending here — even as a provocation — that the Ottomans (or other non-Western polities) may have developed territoriality *before* Europe. I am in fact firmly convinced by arguments (as summarised by Bartelson in this forum) that the emergence of modern territoriality must be located in the nineteenth century, and not earlier (see also Benton 2010; Buzan and Lawson 2015). What I am suggesting instead is that the *precursors* to modern notions of territoriality that some authors (see e.g. Elden 2013) have located in medieval and early modern European practices had their parallels elsewhere. It is only once this is realised that we can ask the truly interesting question as to why such precursors matured into a modern notion of territoriality in (Western) Europe and not in other regions. Once again, this is too grand a question to answer within a short essay, but for a start I am intrigued by Natasha Wheatley's suggestion (forthcoming) that maritime empires required thinking spatially, whereas continental empires thought about sovereignty

claims in more temporal terms. In any case, for our purposes here, the real exciting possibility is that "early modern" sovereignty (both in terms of development of supreme political authority and the gradual move towards territoriality) was most likely a Eurasian phenomenon. Even conceding as much would require a radical rethinking of the IR historical narrative.

"Modern Sovereignty": Straightjacket or Scapegoat?

I have argued above, provocatively, that the development of the two main components of modern sovereignty may not have been uniquely European, as is usually assumed. This may seem like a simple statement, but it has fundamental implications, and not just for our understanding of the *European* trajectory. Thinking about sovereignty comparatively also inevitably raises questions about the narrative about the forced and wholesale exportation of the "Westphalian sovereignty" to the rest of the World. If aspects of "Westphalian sovereignty" had originated from or had developed independently also elsewhere in the world, "Westphalian sovereignty" cannot *just* be a violent alien imposition (even if it was often experienced as that), and we must therefore also question what about nineteenth century dynamics caused it to be seen as such.

Clearly much more comparative work on sovereignty is needed.