Globalisation: Sovereignty or Anarchy Beyond Modernity?

CHIARA BOTTICI

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CHIARA BOTTICI

BADIA FIESOLANA, SAN DOMENICO (FI)

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by Chiara Bottici

According to a common view, globalisation implies a loss of control over our lives. By depleting the decision-making capacity of individuals and governments, it questions one of the basic conditions for the exercise of politics. Whereas some celebrate this new condition as the triumph of the global market over politics, others point to the danger that it implies for the achievements of modernity. Both sides, however, conceive of globalisation as a kind of natural phenomenon taking place above our heads and with no possibility of arrest. Consequently, it is often presented as a condition of disorder. Zygmut Bauman, for instance, argues that since social order means being able to keep things under control - as has been the case during the modern era, globalisation is simply another name for the new world disorder, for the fact that our destiny is slipping out of our hands.[1]

The diffusion of this perception of impotence is the starting point of this paper. However, I will suggest that this condition is not the result of the decline of politics as such, but that it is – rather - a sign of the crisis of its modern version. Modern thinkers have conceived of politics as the privileged place for the ambivalent pursuit of rational mastering and individual autonomy that has been described as the distinctive feature of modernity, and they have identified the sovereign state as the main agency in charge of its implementation: once this latter was brought to a crisis point, the impression was that politics was declining altogether.

As a privileged point of view to show how globalisation has questioned the modern conception of politics, I will focus on the sovereignty *versus* anarchy dichotomy. By this expression I mean the tendency of modernity to conceive of politics in terms of a dichotomous view which separates its internal domain, subject to sovereignty, from the external one, dominated by mere anarchy. I will start by analysing the dichotomy "sovereignty *versus* anarchy", illustrating the crucial role that it has played within modern political theory (§.1). I will then move on to globalisation and to the issue of its relationship with political modernity, arguing that the former has crucially questioned the latter (§.2). Subsequently, I will try to demonstrate that globalisation, together with political modernity, has also undermined the conceptual apparatus through which this latter conceived of itself, and particularly the sovereignty *versus* anarchy dichotomy. Following the

[1] See Baumann 1998 p. 67.

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distinction between the regulative and constitutive roles played by this dichotomy in modern political thought, I will try to show that globalisation has placed both the former (§.3) and the latter (§.4) in question.

1. Sovereignty and anarchy: two dichotomous concepts

As first pointed out by Thomas Kuhn, every theory operates within the boundaries of a scientific paradigm whose assumptions may be not recognised immediately, but which are adopted as an unquestioned research framework. These presuppositions provide the conceptual coordinates of the problems that are important for researchers, and at the same time they then orient towards a possible set of solutions. Only during scientific revolutions are these assumptions questioned - by encountering their intrinsic limits, scholars open the path for the onset of a new scientific paradigm.[2]

This remark also seems to hold true for political theory. The conceptual apparatus by which political thinkers tried to capture the reality they were witnessing operated within specific assumptions, working through the centuries as guidelines, as the boundaries within which thought was expected to move. In this paper, I argue that one of these unquestioned presuppositions was the dichotomy of sovereignty *versus* anarchy. Stemming from the early theorists of modern state, this assumption operated in Western political thought by identifying the problems which had to be faced as well as the main strategies for solving them. To support this view, I will first show in what sense the pair sovereignty *versus* anarchy can be considered as a dichotomy, moving on to analyse its relationship with modern political thought.[3]

According to Norberto Bobbio, a dichotomy is a pair of concepts acting to divide a universe into two jointly exhaustive and reciprocally exclusive spheres, i.e. such that all the members of our universe belong to one of them and, at the same time, those who belong to one cannot belong contemporarily to the other. A dichotomy also has to be principal, in the sense that other conceptual couples can converge in it. The two concepts may then either be defined one independently of the other, or the first may be defined in a positive and the second in a negative

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[2] See Kuhn 1962.
[3] Among those emphasising the importance of this dichotomy, see Ashley 1988a and 1988b. Even if I share Ashley's interest in the construction of knowledge, my analysis differs from his postmodernist approach because I do not aim at putting forward an holistic critique of modernity as such, but rather at analysing how some of its conceptual tools have worked through the centuries. As a consequence, I do not share his method, aiming at showing that such a dichotomy is the result of the "heroic practice" of the Western reasoning man and his "narrative of domestication of politics" (Ashley 1988b, p.103). On the contrary, I hold that it is not a prerogative of the modern Western rationality to think in terms of dichotomies.

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way; in this case, the first is held to be the strong term, whilst the second, the derivate, is called the weak term.[4]

Let us move to the pair sovereignty *versus* anarchy. These constitute a dichotomy for they are able to divide the universe of politics into two jointly exhaustive spheres - so that what does not belong to the domain of sovereignty is commonly considered to belong to that of anarchy – and, at the same time, they are mutually exclusive, because what is included in the first cannot be part of the second. As we can see, sovereignty is the strong term, i.e. it is defined positively, whilst anarchy is usually defined negatively as the lack of sovereignty. We may also argue that both terms stem from the two faces of sovereignty, the internal and the external: on the one hand, there is the internal domain of sovereign power which does not recognise any superior power; on the other, we have the external anarchical domain of equally sovereign powers facing each other.[5]

According to its classical formulation, by "sovereignty" we mean the existence of a supreme power, which is defined *territorially* and has the *exclusive* right to resort to force both internally, against private violence, and externally, against other sovereign entities.[6] From its very first formulations the concept of sovereignty was strictly linked with that of the state, where this latter, following Max Weber, may be defined as an institution characterised by the (tendentially) successful claim of the monopoly of legitimate physical coercion over a specific territory.[7] Sovereignty, as the claim to *superiorem non recognoscens* power within a specific territory, is indeed the political and juridical concept which supported the modern state in its fight against the two universalistic coordinates of the Pope and the Emperor. Whilst the medieval system was characterised by a set of overlapping and interwoven authorities, the modern organization of power appears as a system of homogeneous political entities which are territorially defined and aspire to the *exclusive* exercise of power.[8] This is an absolute novelty in history: before modern times no power has ever presented itself as claiming *exclusive* sovereign power within a clearly defined territory.[9] However, political power need not be territorial

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[4] See Bobbio 1985, p.3.

[5] Among recent contributions on the concept of sovereignty see Bartelson 1995, Biersteker 1996, Ferrajoli 1997, Gilson 1984, Hinsley 1966, Hoffmann 1998, Klein 1974, Krasner 1999, Weber 1995.

[6] See Bodin 1583.

[7] See Weber 1919, p.55.

[8] There is a huge literature on this topic. See for instance recent contributions by Matteucci 1993, Pierson 1996, Poggi 1990, Spruyt 1994. For a more philosophical approach see Morris 1998.

[9] One could here object that modern federalism represents an alternative to this conception, since the federal power cannot claim exclusiveness of power. However, in my view, modern federal polities were still completely within the paradigm of sovereignty: if we look at sovereign power from the point of view of participants, the power may appear as shared, balanced and divided, but if we look at it from the outside, i.e. from the point of view of an external observer, it will still reveal a certain unitary character, in the sense that it is always possible to identify an

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and need not be territorially fixed. Furthermore, even where systems of rule are territorial, and even where territoriality is relatively fixed, the prevailing concept of territory need not entail mutual exclusion – the archetype of non-exclusive territorial rule being medieval Europe with its patchwork of geographically interwoven and overlapping rights of government.[10]

These two features of modern power - territoriality and exclusivity - create the conditions for a dichotomous view of politics, presenting the two spheres of sovereignty and anarchy as mutually exclusive. Once political power began to be conceived of as corresponding to a territorially defined political space and as recognising no superiors within it, i.e. as *internally* sovereign, then it appeared unavoidable to conceive of the *external* relationships between these political entities as the anarchic clash among equally sovereign powers. According to the conceptual context, anarchy may be understood either in its etymological meaning as a mere absence of government or - with a semantic slide - as a condition of chaos. This semantic slide is in fact typical of modern political thought. By presenting sovereignty as the only alternative not just to the absence of government, but also to chaos, some modern political theorists have pushed the concept of anarchy from its etymological meaning towards the idea of a condition of disorder from which we must escape. That is to say, in their attempt to provide a justification for sovereign power, they present sovereignty as the only alternative to disorder and, thus, as the *sine qua non* condition of social order, i.e. as the necessary – if not sufficient - condition of it.

The thought of Thomas Hobbes seems in this case to be paradigmatic: in his attempt to provide a justification for political obligation, he presents a condition of anarchy, both domestic and international, as necessarily implying chaos and disorder. Witness to the English civil war, Hobbes devoted all his energy to showing that sovereignty was the only alternative to anarchy, where this is the defining feature of the category of the state of nature. Since, according to his pessimistic anthropology, he conceived this latter as a condition of war, where isolated individuals moved by antagonistic passions were continuously exposed to the danger of violent death, sovereignty was presented as an alternative not only to the absence of government – anarchy in its etymological meaning, but also to a condition of chaos where *homo homini lupus*: only by associating with each other and placing themselves in awe of a sovereign power through a social covenant (respectively, *pactum unionis* and *pactum subjectionis*) can individuals escape the state of nature.

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ultimate authority, no matter in what way and at which level this latter is exercised. The very fact that modern federalism has been unable to go beyond the dichotomy federation *versus* confederation is, in my view, a clear a sign that it was still within the paradigm of sovereignty.
[10] See Ruggie 1993, p.149.

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Inaugurating a long tradition, Hobbes then applied this description of the state of nature to international relations.[11] After saying that although there had never been any time wherein particular men were in a condition of war one against another, he argued that this was what normally happened in relationships among sovereign states.[12] Because states were not subject to any common power, they all enjoyed the same freedom to do everything that they judged to be in their own interest as individuals enjoyed in the state of nature.

We may now ask why, if the state of international anarchy is analogous to the state of nature, states are not induced, like individuals, to exit from such a condition. Hobbes' answer was clear: the sovereignty of individual states, which determines a "posture of warre" in relations among them, was the same that enabled them to maintain that condition of peace where social life could flourish internally.[13]

According to Hobbes, then, sovereignty, which guaranteed peace within states, necessarily led the condition of international anarchy. It was no chance that Hobbes devoted only few pages of his main work, the *Leviathan,* to international relations: his problem was civil, not international, anarchy. As we shall see, this is a very common approach in modern political philosophy, however different the single conceptions of anarchy may be. The sovereign state is more or less implicitly assumed as the *telos* and perfect model of political life. Political theorists seem to dedicate all their energy to the discussion of issues surrounding it, whilst international relations seem to deserve only secondary attention, an appendix chapter.

One may now object that Hobbes' conception is not representative of the contractualist tradition as a whole and even less so of modern political theory. I will try to answer this problem in two steps. Concentrating on only those aspects which are relevant, I will first analyse the relationship between Hobbes' thought and contractualism and, second, its relationship with modern political theory. This will enable us to introduce a distinction between the regulative and constitutive roles of the dichotomy sovereignty *versus* anarchy, which will be the starting point of the second part of this paper.

As many scholars have noticed, Hobbes occupies a particular position within modern contractualism. The conceptual syntax by which this tradition is defined (state of nature, civil society and social contract) can have very different outcomes according to the philosophical and anthropological context. However, we could argue that lying behind the dichotomy between civil society *versus* state of nature, which is defining to this tradition, there is always the dichotomy sovereignty *versus* anarchy. Thus, however much conceptions of the state of nature may differ (sometimes being considered as a war of everybody against everybody, sometimes

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[11] On the influence of the concept of state of nature over international relations theories see Beitz 1979.

[12] See Hobbes 1651, I, 13.

[13] See Hobbes 1651, I, 13, 5. For a detailed discussion of this point see Bull 1981.

as an imperfect social condition, and sometimes as the original phase of humankind when man was free and happy) this remains a condition from which we must exit in order to enter a civil society characterised by the existence of a sovereign power. Be this the absolute sovereignty of Thomas Hobbes, the limited type proposed by John Locke or, lastly, the popular sovereignty of Jean Jacques Rousseau, the establishment of sovereignty is always justified by contraposition with a state of nature that, however positively it is conceived, is still viewed as a condition of anarchy. This is the reason why the dichotomy civil society/ state of nature has such a normative potential: by opposing sovereignty to the disadvantages of an anarchic state of nature - ranging from the uncertainty of law enforcement (Locke) to the danger of violent death (Hobbes), it provides grounds for political obligation, i.e. a justification for loyalty towards the sovereign power.

In modern contractualism, then, the dichotomy sovereignty *versus* anarchy plays a rather crucial role. First, it points to the relevant problems, i.e. those which deserve most attention - among these the anarchy *problematique*, that is to say, the fact that anarchy started to be conceived of as a problem because it was viewed as implying social disorder, and the related issue of the justification of sovereign power. Second, it orients towards certain guidelines in order to outline specific solutions – as is the case, for example, of the contraposition between state of nature/civil society. I will call the former the *constitutive role*, because by identifying the significant questions it contributes towards drawing the contours of the discipline, whilst I call the latter the *regulative role* because it consists in orienting towards a set of possible solutions.

Let us now move to modern political theory. Even if we admit that the dichotomy sovereignty *versus* anarchy played the kind of role described above within contractualism, it is difficult to see how this could hold true for modern political theory as a whole. A first remark concerns the importance of this tradition of thought. It occupies a crucial place within modernity, not so much because of the language through which it is expressed - inherited from previous traditions - as because of the central place it accords to proper modern issues. From this point of view, we can argue that with respect to the set of theories usually indicated as "modern political theory", the dichotomy sovereignty *versus* anarchy plays a constitutive role, i.e. it operates by pointing out which problems are relevant. Most of the issues raised by modern political theorists are, for instance, related to some extent with the issue of sovereignty - how to organise it, how to limit it, how to make it accountable, and so on. However much particular points of view may differ, sovereign statehood is always the necessary assumption, and if it is not the solution to everything, it is at least the starting point.

The lesser attention devoted by Hobbes to international relations was not unusual. As Martin Wight has pointed out, the real question must focus on why there is no tradition of international theory, certainly none as conspicuous as that of political theory. In my view, if political philosophy seems to have rejected taking international relations as the subject of its analysis, this is because it devotes all of

its energies to the sovereign state: this latter appeared for centuries to be the culminating and exhaustive point of political life, beyond which there only remain mere "relations". This is also the reason why, according to Wight, political theory is usually held to be a theory of "good life", whilst International Relations is considered as a theory of survival: what is the extreme case (revolution or civil war) within state borders, is between states the rule. In other words, the international is the domain of repetition where no progress is possible, so that the appropriate point of view is not that of political theory, but that of mere historical interpretation.[14]

Therefore we can conclude that the dichotomy sovereignty *versus* anarchy is also principal, in the sense proposed by Bobbio, i.e. it works by recalling other dichotomies such as those we have just seen: internal *versus* external, progress *versus* repetition, political theory *versus* international relations.[15] The first of these, which refers to the two faces of sovereignty, is the spatial presupposition of the dichotomy sovereignty /anarchy, whilst the second represents its temporal corollary: inside the sovereign space we can speak of justice, democracy, human rights and progress, while outside there can be only the repetition of the clash between sovereign powers. The third and final dichotomy points instead to the disciplinary boundaries between political theory and international relations.

2. Globalisation and the modern configuration of power

Having shown in what sense the two terms sovereignty and anarchy may be said to constitute a dichotomy, and having reconstructed the relation between this latter and modern political theory, I will turn now to the issue of globalisation. I will first briefly delineate my approach to globalisation and to the problem of its relationship with political modernity. Thereby, I will also start arguing that it is not politics as such that is questioned by globalisation, but - rather – politics in its specifically modern version.

One of the features of the contemporary globalisation discourse[16] is the idea that the mobility of capitals and the trend toward the unification of the labour market are progressively reducing politics to the role of *ancilla oeconomiae*. Whereas some celebrate this new condition as the victory of the market over politics, others, deprecating it, try to negate its existence by talking of a "myth of globalisation". Analysing the way in which this myth has spread the neoliberist dogma of the "absence of alternatives", Pierre Bourdieu tends, for instance to minimise the trend

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[14] See Wight 1966. One of the main exceptions to this observation is the thinking of Immanuel Kant, who takes relations among states as his primary object of analysis. All the same, we can argue that his fluctuation from the proposal of a *Weltrepublik* to that of a *Völberbund* is due to his incapacity to rid himself from the model of the sovereign state.
[15] See Walker 1993.
[16] By "discorse" I mean a series of linguistic and social practices.

toward a single labour market.[17] According to Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson, instead, what we are witnessing is no novelty, but rather an intensification of the internationalisation of economy which started during the *belle époque*: in their view, not only the globalisation of production – and therefore the role of truly transnational enterprises – but also the globalisation of financial markets – according to many, the hard core of the whole process - is overestimated, for this has been perceptible for more than a century.[18]

All these approaches share the tendency to look at globalisation in its purely economical aspect – a trend which, paradoxically, unites neoliberists as well as their adversaries. In my view, however, it is not by disputing the existence of the globalisation of economics, or its novelty, that the neoliberist dogma "there are no alternatives" can be questioned. A much more efficient strategy consists in pointing out that economic globalisation is only one side of a process which encompasses all spheres of human life: in this perspective, the "mythical" assumption in the globalisation discourse is in fact the idea of a separation between politics and economics, together with the image of the market as a self-propelling mechanism which can emerge only when politics is left to one side. On the contrary, as Stubbs and Underhill, following Polanyi, argue, a market is a political device to achieve certain outcomes, conferring relatives benefits on some and costs on others in both political and economic terms.[19] Therefore, I will look at globalisation in a multidimensional perspective, because it is only in this way that the interplay between economy and the complex institutional framework in which it takes place can emerge.

Globalisation, in its numerous aspects – economic, financial, environmental, technological, political and cultural, has created such a situation that events, decisions and activities in one part of the world can have significant consequences for individuals and communities in other quite distant parts of the globe. It has, therefore, been conceived of as a set of processes which shift the spatial form of human organisation and activity to transcontinental and inter-regional patterns of activity, interactions and exercise of power.[20] It involves a stretching and deepening of social relations and institutions across space and time such that, on the one hand, day-to-day activities are increasingly influenced by events happening on the other side of the globe and, on the other, the practices and decisions of local groups or communities can have significant global reverberations.

The stretching of the social chains of interdependence, which - from Rousseau to Elias – had been identified as the sign of the civilising process, has gone well beyond the West, their birthplace, and tends now to become global in its scope.

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[17] See Bourdieu 1998
[18] See Hirst and Thompson 1997.
[19] See Stubbs, Underhill 1994, pg.19. The same line of reasoning is pursued by Hardt and Negri who, by developing their concept of empire, point out that there cannot be any economic system which is not supported by a juridical and political order (Hardt, Negri 2000, pg 9-10)
[20] See Mcgrew 1992 or Held, Mcgrew, Goldblatt, Perraton 1999.

Our lives increasingly depend on peoples and activities taking place in remote regions of the globe, and we therefore feel ourselves increasingly less able to master our destinies. However, what we perceive as loss of control is in fact a result of the fact that this is no longer exercised by traditional sites of power. That is to say, the widespread feeling of impotence is the effect of a disjuncture between the fact that the social chains of interdependence are stretching themselves to the point of corresponding to the extremes of the globe, whereas politics - and particularly democratic politics - remains anchored to its traditional boundaries.[21]

The sovereign state, a promoter of globalisation, seems indeed to be one of its most illustrious victims. The exercise of sovereign power has been associated during the modern age to a capacity of rational control over territory and its resources, and the political realisation of the project of modernity also depended on this capacity. The very idea of a project, which, as the possibility of disposing of and organising resources in a rational way towards the pursuit of an end, is a typically modern idea, seemed to depend on the possibility of looking at the whole of a society from the point of view of state sovereignty.

Political order was conceived in these terms, too – as is clearly symbolised in the image of the Panopticon.[22] Despite the fact that this model - as conceived by Bentham – has remained unrealised, it may still be considered as the metaphor of the aspirations of modern political power: the subjugation of space to the exercise of power was to be realised by a rigid separation between the supervisors, remaining in the shadow, and the supervisees, who were always and completely visible. In the passage from the perspective of *ex parte principis* to that of *ex parte populi*, the problem became that of justifying political power in the face of individuals' freedom. The modern solution was that of popular sovereignty: deleting the distinction between the rulers and the ruled through the principle of democratic legitimation, popular sovereignty was thought of as the device by which to realise that interweaving of rational control and individual autonomy which characterised modernity. The expression "popular sovereignty" is the result of the ambivalent aspiration of modernity towards the rational mastering of the society and its resources, on the one side, and towards the freedom of its members, on the other.[23]

In my view, what globalisation questions is precisely this solution. Together with sovereignty, it is democracy itself which is in danger. By stretching the social chains of interdependence, the symmetry between who takes decisions and the addressees of such decisions, upon which democracy itself ultimately rests, breaks down at many important points. The territorial anchorage of the state, its correspondence to precise territorial and functional boundaries, was at the same time the limit and the force of the modern state: it enabled it to control territory as

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[21] The first stressing this disjuncture was David Held (see in particular Held 1995).
[22] See Bauman 1998 pg 55.
[23] On the ambivalence of modernity see Bauman 1991 and Wagner 1994.

well as to define the body of the citizens called on to participate in the democratic process.

As pointed out by Jürgen Habermas, among others, in reference to this territorial anchorage, the expression globalisation evokes the image of fluxes which undermine the control of frontiers, threatening the whole edifice. Put in different words, the ruler is no longer she/he who controls the territory, but rather she/he who has maximal speed at his disposal.[24] The compression of space and time that has been brought about by globalisation implies a tendential depletion of that "attrition of distance" which guaranteed the modern state the possibility of controlling the space for the exercise of sovereignty – as defined by its territorial boundaries.[25]

The globalisation of capitals and the liberalisation of the labour market have, indeed, determined a condition whereby a great number of economic activities tend to get rid of spatial constraints. Certain sectors of production, particularly those in high technology, now have a transnational scope. Thanks to the communication revolution, enabling transport costs to be reduced and complex information to be transmitted, the production process is fragmented and different segments of production are displaced to remote regions of the globe. In this way, global elites escape territorial constraints and the social burdens and responsibilities that these define.[26]

Even more striking is the erosion of state sovereignty due to financial activities. Contemporary communication technology and the liberalisation of markets has made it impossible for a single state to control financial transactions. The speed by which bytes travel from one computer to another has cancelled the distance separating Wall Street from Tokyo and Shanghai. Moreover, all these changes have contributed to increase the role played by financial transactions: this electronic herd travelling instantaneously from one side of the globe to another has now reached such proportions as to determine the destiny of individuals, groups and communities. In no other case is the equation *power - speed* as evident as in that of financial activities.

In the security field, too, technological changes have undermined resistance to the destruction capacity once exercised by distance in space. Therefore, environmental and security issues appear as another significant example of the equation power-speed. As for the application of technological innovations to the military strategy, we can see the present condition as the last stage of a process in which the quantitative growth of the destruction capacity has ended in a qualitative change marking the passage from one epoch to another. Just as firearms once made the creation of large political spaces possible, enabling the sovereign power to overcome feudal castles, today nuclear and chemical weapons undermine single

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[24] See Habermas 1998.
[25] On this point see Harvey 1990 and Bauman 1998.
[26] On this point see Beck 1997 and 1998, Strange 1996, Stubbs Underhill 1994.

states' capacity to defend their boundaries: as the former marked the passage to political modernity, the latter might accompany a new significant shift in the paradigm.[27]

Another threat to the capacity of single states to defend their citizens is represented by environmental issues. This is perhaps the case in which the stretching of the social chains of interdependence is more pregnant: not only because the scope of issues such as that of the global warming is significantly global – in the sense that nobody can be certain that they can escape its consequences, but also because they mark the point where the expansive dynamics of modernity encounter a limit, i.e. the limits of the available spatial and natural resources. This is the argument put forward by scholars like Martin Albrow, who argues for the end of modernity and the passage to a global age: if the projecting rationality is the main feature of modernity, and territorial and natural resources are the presuppositions for its realisation, then, in his view, globalisation – as the point of encounter with the limits of these resources – could be considered as marking the end of modernity, whereas as production of the world as a whole would represent the passage to a "global age".[28]

What is questioned by this scenario is the modern conception of power and, as I will try to show, in particular the idea that state sovereignty is the only alternative to anarchy and disorder. The modern paradigm of politics was indeed characterised by the tendency to present the sovereign state as the condition for social order and to conceive of this latter according to the model of the Panopticon: if we remain within this paradigm, then Bauman's conclusion that globalisation is simply another name for world disorder seems unavoidable. However, as I will try to show, globalisation actually drives us towards a change of paradigm that goes beyond the modern conception of social order.

3. Globalisation: sovereignty or anarchy?

In order to face the issue of the ways in which globalisation has questioned the dichotomy of sovereignty versus anarchy, I will recover the distinction between regulative and constitutive roles. First, I will argue that globalisation has toppled the regulative role of the dichotomy, showing that an "anarchic" global order is possible and therefore that sovereignty is not the only solution to the problem of anarchy. Subsequently, I will instead try to show that these phenomena, by casting doubts on the basic presuppositions of our dichotomy, have also questioned the constitutive role of the dichotomy together with the context that it provides.

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[27] Among the others insisting on the epochal shift represented by this innovation, see Cerutti 1993, 1995.

[28] Albrow 1996. In contrast to Albrow I do not argue in this paper for the end of modernity as a whole. Here, I am mainly interested in the consequences of the processes described for *political* modernity, and particularly for the sovereignty versus anarchy dichotomy that I have been reconstructing.

The idea that sovereignty was not the only alternative to anarchy has also been criticised by several theories of international relations, such as that put forward by Hedley Bull, which do not consider globalisation as a source of relevant changes in the international system. According to Bull, the belief that international order can be achieved only through the centralisation of power necessarily implies a reliance on the reasoning he calls *"domestic analogy"*: taking the condition of anarchy as a necessary source of chaos and disorder meant applying to international relations the domestic model of social order.[29] So even if we accept with most of the modern political theorists that sovereignty is the condition of social order domestically, which is questionable in itself, there still remains the problem of applying these remarks to the international realm. On the contrary, according to Bull, if we want to catch the specificity of international order we have to get rid of the domestic model and to look at the way in which international institutions affect actors' behaviour, contributing thereby to delineating what he calls the "international anarchical society". In Bull's view, we can talk of an international order not only because relations among states exhibit certain patterns of regularity – a Hobbesian *bellum omnium contra omnes* would indeed suffice to this end - but also because states in their interacting seem to sustain some elementary and primary goals. Among these latter, he then addresses the preservation of the society of states itself, the maintaining of the external sovereignty of individual states and, finally, the goal of peace.[30]

Now in my view we can accept this conception of international order only with some qualifications. First, insofar as Bull considers war as one of the basic institutions of international society,[31] he incurs the difficulty of presenting peace as a primary goal of the international society and war as the means of achieving it. One way out of this tension could be to take the limitation of violence, instead of peace, as a primary goal of international society. Indeed, whereas war can be considered as a means by which to obtain a limitation on violence- meaning thereby a limitation that can occur either in space or in time, there seems to be too strong an opposition between war and peace to say that the former is a way to achieve the latter.

Second, I do not think that the preservation of the sovereignty of states can (still) be considered as one of the basic goals of international activity. As we will see, the current phenomena of globalisation throw doubt on this point, together with some other assumptions of Bull's conception. The most important of these is precisely the Westphalian image of a world of sovereign states interacting as discrete units in the pursuit of their interests. On the contrary, as I will try to show, the global order is no longer an order *inter-nationes*, as Bull conceived of it.

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[29] See Bull 1977.
[30] See Bull 1977, p.16.
[31] See Bull 1977, p. 8

Nevertheless, Bull's approach is a good starting point to stress how we can conceive of social order even in a condition of anarchy. However, when he stressed the role played by international institutions in maintaining social order in the international sphere, he was still looking mainly at the world of the Cold War, and therefore at the role of traditional institutions such as the balance of power, international law, diplomacy, etc. As a consequence, he was unable to capture the degree to which globalisation itself modifies these institutions and the role they play in the international realm.

Forming part of international institutions seems increasingly to be the only way that all states have at their disposal to govern the processes of globalisation: it is only by surrendering part of their formal sovereignty that states can to some extent recover the efficacy of their power. This is the reason why in the last few decades we have witnessed a surprising rise in the number and typology of international institutions. These include not only proper bureaucratic international bodies, but also regional institutions and a growing number of informal institutions dealing with specific issues, such as the so-called "international regime".[32]

By "international institution" I do not only mean institutions typified by, for example, the United Nations or World Bank. Following Robert Keohane, I mean any persistent and connected set of rules (formal and informal) that prescribe behavioural roles, constrain activity, shape expectations and contribute to defining the universe of meaning by which actors' behaviour is interpreted. Institutions shape expectations because they are information sources and because, by threatening exclusion from the benefits of cooperation, they determine actors' preferences to a remarkable degree. Moreover, together with this regulative role, institutions also play a role that is constitutive, namely, that of helping to define the meanings by which behaviours and interests are defined.[33]

While clearly the result of globalisation, international institutions are also, in turn, producers of it. Globalisation does not have, however, an immediate homogenising impact: it can help to increase the differences, not only among individuals - global elites on the one side and those constrained to remain local on the other -[34] but also among regions of the world.

Certain regions react to global challenges by enhancing their levels of interdependence. Together with global institutions there is, then, a growing number of regional institutions such as the European Union, NAFTA, ASEAN, and MERCOSUR. In the case of the European Union, interdependence has reached the level of a supranational institution - implying a pooling and sharing of sovereignty

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[32] See Krasner 1983.

[33] See Keohane 1989, p.6. In contrast to Keohane, I add the function of transmitting meanings in the definition of institution. However, we may notice how, despite his departing from a realist approach, Keohane recognises some of the claims made by constructivists (see Keohane 1989, p.9).

[34] On globalisation as process enhancing social inequalities, see Baumann 1998, Amin 1997, Hirst and Thompson 1996.

among its members.[35] These are, however, very particular regions, characterised by what Keohane and Nye call "complex interdependence", namely, a model of interaction characterised by multiple communication channels among societies, encompassing formal and informal links among elites, transnational organisations, multinational corporations, and social movements[36] – whereas other regions seem to react in the opposite way to the same phenomena.

Still, it remains that global politics has definitely made it clear that international actors are not only states and governments, but, to a growing degree, international organisations (governmental and non), regional institutions, transnational bodies and, not least, individuals. Thanks to the communication revolution and to the growing institutionalisation of international life, all these actors play a much more visible role, incomparably greater than that exercised in previous centuries. Whereas both Bull and Keohane, by presenting states as the fundamental actors of the scene,[37] were still linked to the traditional Westphalian image of international system, it seems that this latter no longer suits the world of global politics. Indeed, in so far as the global order is no longer an order *inter nationes*, but rather a complex interplay among different actors bringing different issues onto the scene, a rediscussion of the modern paradigms is needed.

Together with the actors, the script of international politics has changed, too. In regions where different issue areas are connected and a multiplicity of non-state actors have come into play with their various interests, the political process has changed: actors' interests change, as do ways of pursuing these, too. On the one hand, we have witnessed a redefining of the international agenda – such that issues which were once the object of domestic politics are now placed close to traditional international issues like peace and security; on the other, the way of dealing with these issues has also changed because, at least in certain areas, negotiations and the threat of being excluded from cooperation have taken the place of direct resort to force. The growth in the number of international institutions based on multilateral agreements, but able to influence people's lives heavily, implies a relative loss of importance of the monopoly of physical coercion: other forms of coercion, perhaps less manifest, but therefore also more insidious, are emerging.

The ever-growing institutionalisation of global politics does not yet mean fair cooperation, either. There are governments and social groups who can turn these processes in their own interest and gain the maximum benefit from it, whereas others can only accept what is proposed to them under the threat of exclusion. As already suggested, globalisation does not mean homogenisation, and - even less - equal distribution of welfare. The landscape of contemporary global politics is indeed extremely varied. As well as regions characterised by complex

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[35] See Keohane and Hoffmann 1991.
[36] See Keohane and Nye 1977.
[37] I am here referring in particular to the evolution of Keohane's thinking in the 80s when he seemed to move closer to Waltz's neorealism (Keohane 1986).

interdependence, there are others where global processes are weaker and produce quite different results.

The global order thus appears as a highly complex system, neither sovereign or anarchic. In such a system, political authority is diffused and partly overlapped within single territories, contending thereby for the loyalty of their citizens. One of the concepts by which scholars have tried to capture this new reality is that of "multilayered global governance".[38] This term indicates that the governance of globalisation already exists, although it is different from traditional forms of government. Whilst this latter usually implies some kind of centralisation, the term "multilayered governance" means instead a reticular and decentralised structure. As a network it is formed of thousands of interwoven threads, where political authority is diffused and therefore a unique seat of power is difficult to identify.

Therefore, we can conclude that in spite of the absence of an overarching sovereign power, the world of global politics is not the domain of disorder, as those relying on the modern dichotomy sovereignty *versus* anarchy tend to think. However, to say that a global order exists does not yet mean that it is just or democratic. On the contrary, I argued that globalisation can well contribute to increasing inequalities, whereas the diffusion and transfer of power upwards creates a dangerous vacuum of legitimacy. In fact, while traditional seats of democracy lose their power, this latter is exercised by institutions that at most have only an indirect legitimacy, but which usually do not even aspire to democracy. The sense of losing control, from which observation this essay began, seems in this light to be justified: traditional sites of power have been eroded in favour of actors escaping from existing mechanisms of democratic accountability, whilst in their place institutions where democracy encounters difficulty in taking-off proliferate. This determines a gap between those who take decisions and their addressees, which may explain why globalisation is sometimes perceived as a natural catastrophe.

4. Spatial presuppositions of the dichotomy: map and territory

Having shown how globalisation has questioned the regulative role of the sovereignty *versus* anarchy dichotomy, I will now turn to what I called the constitutive role of the dichotomy, i.e. its power to address some issues as those which are fundamental. My argument here is that if we stop conceiving of the world in terms of homogeneous political sovereign entities, international anarchy itself is no longer a problem *per sé*.

In doing so, I will focus on the conception of political space. In the first section of this essay, I have pointed out that territoriality and exclusiveness of power are the basic presuppositions of the dichotomy sovereignty *versus* anarchy. I have subsequently argued for the need to rethink the exclusive character of political

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[38] See Held, Mcgrew, Goldblatt, Perraton 1999.

power, given that power in the world of global politics appears as diffused and multifaceted. I will now try to spell out further why the territorial conception of power – as it has been developed by modern political theory – should also be rethought.

The modern age has been characterised by a revolution in the social perception of space. Indeed, space is not an absolute quantity, but a human one, a function of the time which man uses to run it along. Spaces widen and narrow according to the technical evolution of mankind. Once it was the human body that was the unit of measure for space: distances were then fathoms and feet. However, with the modern revolution, the qualitative space of traditional communities has become the objective and quantitatively measurable space of Renaissance perspective and modern science. As a consequence, the way in which space is represented has also changed: whilst medieval charts were qualitative, because they used to reproduce all the human and natural elements that a traveller could see, modern maps represent an objective homogeneous space.[39]

The emergence of the modern organization of power implied a process of conquest and a definition of space that would not have been possible without this revolution in the perception of space and time – the two basic dimensions of human experience. For a modern conception of political power to be accepted, it was thus necessary for space to be perceived as a uniform and objective reality, subject to the exercise of a unique sovereign. This is the reason why control over maps was so important: they were the direct means by which to control the social representation of political space.[40] Maps of the territory, which as a homogeneous and univocal division of political space would have been impossible during the medieval age, became, in modern times, the most common way of representing political power and rendering it immediately perceptible.

Today, it is this way of perceiving political space which seems problematic. What a political map hides may turn out to be much more important than what it shows. To take just a few examples, in a world in which global warming connects the long-term fate of many Pacific islands to the actions of tens of millions of private motorists across the globe, and in which the amount of financial transaction travelling instantaneously from one side of the globe to the other has reached such proportions as to determine the destiny of groups and communities, the very idea of a political community as a homogeneous exclusive territorially delimited unit is at best unconvincing and at worst anachronistic.[41]

These remarks also hold because, dealing with globalisation, we are not only facing an "objective trend". These processes have now reached a point where they have become reflexive, since an increasing number of social actors reveal that they perceive the entire globe as the potential theatre for their own action. I am not only

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[39] See Bauman 1998 and Harvey 1990.
[40] See Harvey 1990 pg 248. The author reproduces here a portrait of Queen Elisabeth standing on a map of her territory as representing the power of the dynasty over individuals and the nation.
[41] See Mcgrew 1997 pg.237.

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thinking of the economic elites, who move in space looking for the places allowing the best investment, but also of what has been called "globalisation from below", that is to say social movements and those figures who remain too often in the shadow when dealing with these topics: migrants. In both cases, we cannot understand their action only in terms of objective phenomena: "subjective" determination to act is instead fundamental, and it is precisely this determination that reveal a consciousness of the whole globe as the stage of action.

In such a context, the modern representation of a sovereign state system, each perceived of as a discrete unity, as a homogeneous and exclusive space, becomes increasingly anachronistic. Political boundaries keep their importance, and sometimes they become fortresses to outsiders, but they also change their meaning: states continue to provide infrastructures and frameworks for globalisation, but the very idea of a political map is always less pregnant. What is obscured by clear-cut state boundaries, what remains on the borderline or takes place in the immaterial space of virtual economy risks being much more important than what is highlighted by existing political boundaries.

If borderlines are confused and populated by new actors, then it is no longer possible to draw a line separating the internal sphere of sovereignty from the external one of anarchy. In a world where the distinction between domestic and foreign politics is itself questioned, it is impossible to distinguish the domain of anarchy from that of sovereignty, and it is therefore the whole sovereignty *versus* anarchy dichotomy that is called into question. With this dichotomy, the other related dichotomies – inside/outside, progress/ repetition, political theory/international relations - also lose their significance. Like the spatial presuppositions of the main dichotomy, the temporal corollary has also declined. If we cannot distinguish the internal from the external sphere of sovereignty, then the possibility of progress should not be confined within state boundaries, just as political theory should no longer be separated from International Relations.

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