Jacek Czaputowicz, Suwerenność (Sovereignty)

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Jacek Czaputowicz’s recent publication on sovereignty merits attention: his civil service experience, research expertise and political commitment set this work apart from others. During the 1970s, Jacek Czaputowicz was part of the opposition movement against the communist regime. During the period of martial law in the early 1980s, he spent a year in detention. Post-1989, Jacek Czaputowicz has occupied high-ranking positions within the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, notably from 2008 to 2012, as the director of the prestigious National School of Public Administration (KSAP) – Polish ENA. Jacek Czaputowicz also served on the Executive Board of the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) in Maastricht. A graduate of the Warsaw School of Economics (SGH) and the University of Oxford, Jacek Czaputowicz is a noted lecturer and researcher and holds several posts including at the University of Warsaw. His recent publications are mostly devoted to theories of international relations and international security.

The latest book by Jacek Czaputowicz has an extremely short title: “Sovereignty” (Suwerenność), an example of exemplary brevity which belies a rich and thorough study of almost 500 pages, more than 50 of which contain bibliographic information. As indicated by the author himself, this book is the culmination of ten years of research on the idea of sovereignty. It is also important to note that it is published by the prestigious Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM); the most important Polish think tank on international policy.

Over and above the issues of globalisation that challenge and confront sovereignty on an everyday basis, for the states of Central and Eastern Europe, the issue of sovereignty is current and important. After decades of Soviet control, many states have again experienced the previously thought bygone, encroaching ambitions of independence by other centres of power. Indeed, recent events in Ukraine have revived the spectre of territorial wars between states and, in this very specific, timely context, sovereignty fully deserves a major study.

The aim of the author is to approach this notion from all possible viewpoints. Sovereignty can be understood from many often quite remote perspectives and this book is divided into six chapters that represent the diversity of approach. Naturally, the first chapter is devoted to different definitions of sovereignty, outlining the respective disciplines. The author defines the concepts of state, federation and the
sovereignty of law, highlighting the attributes of sovereignty: territory, recognition, legitimisation capacity and inalienability.

Czaputowicz primarily focuses on two important dimensions of sovereignty: where it is situated (within the state or outside it); and its impact (big or limited impact). The author also makes some important distinctions between forms of sovereignty: internal and external; formal and material; positive and negative to name but a few.

The second chapter is a short monograph on the history of the state, focussing on the different movements that led to the present form of government. The author looks first at pre-modern forms of sovereignty, the Greek cities and the Roman Empire, and then devotes several pages to what he calls the “Respublica Christiana”, which refers to the Middle Ages and the various centres of allegiance. In this context the author highlights the existence of rivalries at several levels: between the feudal lords, between monarchs, and finally between the Pope and the emperor – rivalry which ended in the victory of the monarch and the emergence of the modern form of the state. Importance is also attributed to Westphalian Treaties (1648) which confirmed this trend. The subsequent pages deal with later changes: the regionalisation of the state, the rise of the absolute state and the emergence of the nation state.

As part of the reflections on the regionalisation of the state, the author, using the work of M. Ferrera, offers an interesting explanation for successive developments. Czaputowicz suggests that closed borders on the one hand and the increasing loyalty to the central state power on the other, eventually contributed not only to the creation of the state, but also to the emergence of the nation, democracy and mass distribution. Another interesting passage relates to the formation of the nation: the author suggests that in states such as France it took the form of *demos*, while in the case of scattered nations lacking state framework, such as Germany, Italy or certain Central European nations included within multinational states, the ‘nation’ rather took the form of *ethnos* which altered the subsequent functioning of the state. The author concludes this chapter by comparing successive forms of sovereignty: dynastic, territorial and national.

The content of the third chapter describes the role of sovereignty in political philosophy. As the author points out, sovereignty is perceived in two different ways. The first refers to the Greco-Roman tradition that sovereignty belongs to the leader and to the state. The second is related to the Christian tradition in which sovereignty belongs to the individual, created by God. The first of these interpretations can be found in the theories of sovereignty offered by Jean Bodin and Thomas Hobbes, while the second in those of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Working through the theorists of international law, such as Hugo Grotius or Emer de Vattel, US federalist and Marxist thinkers, the author comes to contemporary philosophy, *inter alia* by making reference to Carl Schmitt, for whom sovereignty is the power to decide in cases of extraordinary circumstances, as well as postmodernist Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Jacques Derrida and Giorgio Agamben.

The fourth chapter is devoted to sovereignty in international relations. In the first part of the chapter the author reviews the different approaches: realism (Hans J. Morgenthau, Kenneth Walz), English School (Hedley Bull, Charles Manning), liberalism (Rawls), globalism (Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Michael Mann), critical theory (Andrew Linklater, Robert Cox) and cosmopolitanism (David Held, Martin Shaw). In the second part, the author discusses those approaches that
stigmatising the sovereignty of the state in the name of the sovereignty of the individual: constructivism (Alexander Wendt, John Gerard Ruggie, Anthony Giddens, Nicolas Onuf), feminism (Jean Bethke Elshtain, John Hoffman, Judith Ann Tickner) and postmodernism (Richard Ashley, Jens Bartelson, Chantal Mouffe, William E. Connolly, Stéphane Beaulac).

The fifth chapter deals with sovereignty as a pillar of the international community and discusses its institutions such as the balance of power, diplomacy, international law, and organisations. According to the author, one of the corollaries of the extension of this community was the colonialism that shaped the sovereignty of postcolonial states. The dilemmas of the contemporary state, are, he argues related to failed states, humanitarian interventions, human rights and environmental protection. Similarly, globalisation has a significant influence on state sovereignty and the form of the international community. Czaputowicz thus suggests that nowadays the concept of sovereignty has several meanings. In Europe and North America it conceals the idea of a post-modern state; in Asia and South America, that of a modern state; and in Africa and the Middle East, that of a pre-modern state.

The sixth chapter analyses the impact of European integration on the sovereignty of the state. The author seeks to shed light on the place of sovereignty in the theories of European integration and addresses them as a political system or a federation. Czaputowicz is interested in the creation of Community law and sovereignty in the constitutional systems of the Member States. European integration exerts much influence on the sovereignty of these states, through issues such as social and monetary sovereignty or European citizenship. Subsequently the author raises the question of democratic deficit and how to operate sovereignty within the European Union. In order to have access to new means of action and to ensure the prosperity of their citizens, Member States transfer some of their powers to the supranational level, and share other powers with the supranational level. Taking the ideas of Jean Bodin as a starting point, the author notes that several aspects of sovereignty which in the past appeared obvious, are no longer visible, suggesting that sovereignty has been transferred to a higher level.

In conclusion, Czaputowicz finds that sovereignty is an abstract concept which is not only used to delineate the borders of the state, but also, through this demarcation, used to shape the internal space of the state and its international environment. Moreover he suggests that sovereignty is changing as the result of a power struggle between the circles of power and social needs. Throughout history, sovereignty has belonged to God, to the monarch, to the state, and to the people. Today sovereignty is situated in a given area: not in a people or a nation. As the author rightly points out, the evolution of the attributes of sovereignty has not made states less sovereign: states remain sovereign, but exercise this power in a different, and constantly evolving, way.

This work impresses not just through its vast wealth of research, but also with its methodological rigour. The variety and depth of bibliographic information in page footnotes testify to the extent of the author’s knowledge. Jacek Czaputowicz refers particularly to works published in English, but also to texts written in Polish, Italian and French. Nonetheless, the book does not tire the reader with a rigid overuse of academic language. Quite the contrary. With all the qualities of a scientific work, the text is written with great clarity and allows all types of people to follow the reasoning of the author. To increase readability further, the author has included in
his book some thirty different tables and fifteen graphics which summarise in a very comprehensive manner the content of the text. As is often the case with such books, some may question whether the large scope of this work has not resulted in a superficial and unconvincing result. For this publication, this is indeed not the case: the author has brilliantly managed to combine a very broad scope with intellectual rigour and clarity of expression.