

## **GSI Caravan**

Project Title: Conditions of Sovereignty

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### **Project Overview**

As two decades of the twentieth-first century has past, in the present day, with radical proceedings of globalization and informatization, the seemingly outdated concept of “sovereignty” has again caught people’s attention.

While in modernity sovereignty has been transferred from the prince to the people, the framework of the concept has not been sufficiently problematized. Indeed, in political theories people have pointed out the limits of this concept. But when considering the very way in which “nation-state” has been criticized from 1990s onwards, we have to concede that a critical examination of the concept of sovereignty is yet to be carried out.

On the other hand, while theoretical examinations of the concept are insufficient, in reality “sovereignty” has increasingly become a polemical concept. In different forms, people have been worried about the possibility that “decisions” made under democracy may be detached from the “sovereign” —Britain’s “Brexit” is exemplary in this regard, while “Trump” may be understood as a similar phenomenon. On the other hand, however, against the background of global competitions, democratic government based on “popular sovereignty” has been regarded as a shackle for the international competitiveness of the state. As a result, along with the unprecedented empowerment of governance (the administrative power), the fundamental principle of modern democracy, namely the legitimation through the determination of will based on “popular sovereignty,” has been dramatically devalued.

The corona-virus provides us another chance to reconsider this problematic. Quite a few people expected the state of emergency, which might indeed be necessary. Why? Of course, we have to take into account unneglectable differences when talking about people’s reactions in different areas. However, few people have ever put into doubt the very fact that the state of emergency was not a result of a democratic decision-making based on popular sovereignty, but a decision made by the administrative power. What is happening is that, while administrative power is in effect outweighing popular sovereignty, this fact is only ambiguously recognized retroactively.

Taking into consideration different political experiences over the world in the present-day, this project aims at a theoretical and philosophical reexamination of the conditions that determine the concept of sovereignty. Is the democratic government based on popular sovereignty possible on earth? Is the concept of sovereignty presupposed by democracy effective in reality? How can democracy respond to those who are passionately after sovereignty?

Of course, in order to answer these questions, we have to go beyond pure theoretical investigations and examine different concepts of sovereignty that are operative in different states and areas as a consequence of historical and geographical dynamics. Is the concept of sovereignty, as originated in Europe, still effective to comprehend the current states? What kind of concept of sovereignty do they embrace in the present-day? For instance, how is “sovereignty” conceptually deployed in Islamic areas and China?

As these questions are indispensable to understanding the current world, as they are a necessary piece of global studies, they also constitute the most fundamental motivation for the research team.