

Measuring What Matters: A Multidimensional Framework for Assessing Real Sovereignty

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary sovereignty research reveals profound paradoxes that challenge conventional assumptions about national power and autonomy. Using the International Burke Institute's Sovereignty Index (Burke Index)—a comprehensive measurement system evaluating political, economic, technological, informational, cultural, cognitive, and military sovereignty across 700 points derived from UN agencies, World Bank, UNESCO, and expert assessments from 100+ specialists across 50 countries. In this presentation, we will first demonstrate how the Index methodology was applied to all UN-member states, then explore three counterintuitive empirical cases. First, tiny Cyprus significantly outperforms wealthy Gulf oil monarchies in cognitive sovereignty due to educational pluralism, media freedom, multilingual proficiency, and geopolitical hybridity rather than resource wealth (Wójcik, 2023). Second, heavily-sanctioned Iran demonstrates higher economic sovereignty than EU-member Italy because sanctions forced Tehran to develop autonomous production systems, parallel financial networks, and indigenous technological capacities, while Italy's European integration reduced control over monetary policy, fiscal decisions, and regulatory frameworks (Vuori & Hakli, 2023). Third, micro-state Liechtenstein achieves superior economic sovereignty compared to resource-rich Norway through strategic specialization, selective European compliance, and structural flexibility, whereas Norway's deep EEA integration obligates regulatory adoption without decision-making authority. This presentation aims to propose and demonstrate a new operationalized framework and research tool that fundamentally redefines how scholars and policymakers should assess national power in multipolar, deglobalized contexts. This tool will be shortly available for public usage hosted by International Burke Institute.

Keywords: cognitive sovereignty, economic autonomy, institutional independence, multilateralism, sovereignty measurement