1. Introduction

The study of international or rather global politics, seeks to provide an account of politics in the broadest domain. The domain of international politics in the twenty-first century is characterised by the increasing number of actors pursuing common and personal interests. It is largely due to the globalised, interdependent nature of the current international political environment that the concepts of sovereignty and power deserve further evaluation.

The exercise of authority and power are facts as old as time, throughout the ages men have tried to explain and understand how and why political authority is organised. Sovereignty is a concept used to explain political power, to attempt to understand the complex interactions that take place as man strives towards the most effective and efficient form of societal organisation.

The purpose of this discussion is to attempt to provide a clearer interpretation of the terms power and sovereignty and to gain an insight into the relationship between these important concepts which advance our understanding of the organisation of political authority.

2. The emergence of sovereignty

Porfessor Hinsley, in his book aptly titled Sovereignty (1986:1), calls sovereignty a concept and not a fact, a theory or assumption applied to political power. He says that the term originally expressed the idea that there is a final and absolute authority in the political community (Hinsley 1986:1). The concepts of sovereinty and state are intertwined and "the concept of sovereignty emerges in the wake of the rise of the state" (Hinsley 1986:17). While the emergence of the state is a necessary condition for sovereignty it is not sufficient. Hinsley explains, "A community and its government must be sufficiently distinct, as they are only when the government is in the form of the state, before the concept of sovereignty is relevant. But the appearance of the concept is still delayed until the community and its government, society and state, remaining necessarily distinct in some respects, have integrated to a certain extent in others. It is only when the community responds to the state and the state responds to the community in which it rules that the discussion of political power can take place in terms of sovereignty" (1986:21).

The importance of what Hinsley said lies in the fact that sovereignty cannot exists without a state and will not be found in societies in which there is no state structure. Sovereignty is a political idea, a form of legitimation, a way

of thinking about power and rule (Hinsley 1986:25). The question that then must be asked is what caused people, rulers, philosophers and scholars to begin to think about power and rule in terms of state and sovereignty?

Since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the state has been regarded and accepted as the basic unit of international politics and the concept of the sovereignty of states was formally recognised. But the ideas of state and sovereignty had been slowly emerging in Europe in the centuries preceding 1648. The concept of the state emerged out of the collapse of the feudal system (Nossal 1998:200).

(a) The collapse of feudalism
According to Labuschagne (5), the social, economic and political conditions in Europe during the Middle Ages have had a significant and even decisive influence on the development of sovereignty. Although the collapse of feudalism is seen as the birthplace of the sovereign state, there are a complexity of interelated factors which brought about the transformation of medieval Europe making the reorganisation of political authority possible and even necessary.

Nossal (1998:200-204) identifies the following broad trends:
(i) The Transformation of the feudal economy
The following profound changes began to undermine the economic order of medieval Europe:
1. Increasing urbanisation
2. Demographic trends - dramatic decreases due to epidemics
3. Disease and crop failures resulted in the reduction of agricultural labour forces and the
   emergence of a money economy
4. An increase in trade, both within Europe and between Europe and elsewhere
5. New forms of property appeared e.g. stocks
6. The commodification of land
7. Shifts in military technology allowed local rulers to increase their spheres of military
   control.
(ii) Changes in religious belief
"Changes in thought and practice in religious beliefs also began to undermine the universal Christian cosmology on which the hierarchal feudal order during the Middle Ages was largely based" (Nossal 1998:201). According to medieval Christendom, all power on earth was derived from God, even the right to rule or to exercise political authority came from God. The Reformation and wars of religion caused people to question the authority of the Church in Rome. By the 16th Century it had become clear

that there needed to be a division between the power and authority of Church and state.

(iii) Intellectual changes: The Renaissance

The intellectual movement known as the Renaissance brought about a resurgence in the humanist views of history and politics (Nossal 1998:203). In such a conception of politics, man creates political authority of more accurately man confers political authority to those those deemed fittest to rule.

The feudal era was characterised by ill-defined boundaries of authority (Nossal 1998:203) which were not conducive to the creation and maintenace of a stable political, social and economic environment. Dramatic changes to the social, religious, economic and political activities led to the emergence of a new form of political organisation: the concept of sovereign state became a standard political norm, a new way to legitimise political authority and functioned mainly "to strengthen the claims of power or to strengthen the ways by which political power may be called to account" (Hinsley 1986:25).

3. The concept of sovereignty

(a) Definitional aspects

Many authors offer comment on the definitional aspects of sovereignty. Some of the statements which are most useful to this discussion are:

•Hinsley (1986: 26): "the idea of sovereignty was the idea that there is a final and absolute political authority in the political community...and no final and absolute authority exists elsewhere".

•Michael Walzer (in Nossal 1998:206) points out that a "sovereign state is first and foremost an idea, a way of conceiving how to organise political authority"

•According to Labuschagne (6), post-Westpahalia Europe was characterised by "territorially bound sovereign states, each with its own centralised bureaucracy and each layning claim to a monopoly on the legitimate use of force within its territoral boundaries"

•Foccault (1991:102) observes that since the emergence of modern capitalism, state centred sytems of government have organised territorialised regimes with sovereign authority around particular coercive techniques for disciplining space, populations and individuals to create a new system of production and consumption.

•According to Luke (1996), containment in space by power constitutes sovereignty and territorality as governmentality.

•Hegel emphasises that a sovereign is an autonomous, individual unit. According to him, sovereignty depends on the fact that the particular functions and powers of the state are not self-subsistent or firmly grounded

either on their own account or in the particular will of the individual functionaries, but have their roots ultimately in the unity of the state as their single self.

(b) Implications of sovereignty

I can therefore summarise that sovereignty has the following important implications:

(i) A sovereign state is an organised, legitimate political authority.

(ii) Internally, a sovereign state has the authority to make and power to enforce laws. This further implies that it is the highest and most powerful recognised authority in the state and has authority over citizens.

(iii) Externally, sovereignty implies the equality of states and the ability of a state to exist as a member of the international community free from the interfrence of other states. Sovereignty is closely linked to the ability to exercise independence of action.

(iv) The exercise of sovereignty involves to protection of a specified territory and the preservation of the welfare of the state.

(v) Sovereignty implies an internal power base which allows and recognises the right of the state to exercise legal and legitimate authority, economic power to ensure continued survival and military power to protect the territory from threats.

(vi) Sovereignty involves recognition by society of the functions and powers of the government as well as recognition of other governments of the right to rule and sovereign authority of the state.

4. Classical approaches to sovereignty and power

(a) Machiavelli

I believe that it is pertinent to begin this section with a brief look at the work of Nicolo Machiavelli. Possibly his most recognised work The Prince was completed in 1513 and is still one of the most influential pieces of political literature. Machiavelli choose to address the causes of the rise and decline of state and sought to find a means to preserve the state; a way for statesmen to make it permanent (Sabine 1973:317).

An intrinsic characteristic of Machiavelli's writings is his ability to remove religion, morality and social considerations from the domain of politics. The prupose of politics is to preserve and increase political power and politics

then becomes and end in itself (Sabine 1973:318). which infuses his work with a certain moral indifference.

(i) Government and the individual

Machiavelli's writings proceed from the assumption that human nature is essentially selfish and statesmen operate from ego and the desire for power. Philosophers such as Bodin and Hobbes also proceed from the concept of a state of nature characterised by competion and greed and acknowledge the neeed for rule of law to guard against anarchy. According to Machiavelli, government is founded on the weakness and insufficiency of the individual, who is unable to protect himself against the aggression of others unless supported by the power of the state (Sabine 1973:321). In this context, the power of the ruler is built on the imminence of anarchy and security is possible only when the government is strong (Sabine 1973:321). This logically leads to the idea of a sovereign authority.

(ii) The rule of law

The Prince is a largely presriptive book, in which Machiavelli advocates ways by which a ruler can transfrom a corrupt society or newly acquired government into a stable political authority. He admits the necessity of the use of force and despotism to reform or create a state but through the rule of law, the singular sovereign creates the moral and social constitution of society (Sabine 1973:323). As Machiavelli explains, it is necessary for a prince to have his foundations well laid, otherwise he will go to ruin; "The chief foundations of all states, new as well as old or composite, are good laws and good arms".

His view that law embodies both legal and moral aspects of behaviour, lead to one of his most controversial ideas: it follows logically that if the ruler as creator of the state is outside law, he is outside morality as well. The only standard to judge his acts is the success of his political expedients for enlarging and perpetuating the power of the state (Sabine 1973:323).

(iii) Contributions and insights

As Burd (in Sabine 1973:329) explains, 'Living at a time when the old political order in Europe was collapsing and new problems both in state and society were arising with dazzling rapidity, he endeavoured to interpret the logical meaning of events, to forecast the inevitable issues, and to elicit and formulate the rules which, destined henceforth to dominate political action, were then taking shape among fresh-forming conditions of national life."

His most valuable contribution to this discussion results from his practical approach to politics which, while ignoring social, economic and religious questions, focuses on politics and the maintenance and exercise of power.

The meaning he attached to the state is still widely accepted today and the idea of the state as a sovereign political authority has evolved from his writings. As Sabine (1973:329) explains, the state as an organised force, supreme in its own territory and pursuing a conscious policy of aggrandisement in its relations with other states, became not only the typical modern political institution but also the most powerful institution in modern society.

(b) Jean Bodin

In 1576, Jean Bodin published a work entitled Six livres de la reʹpubliգue which was written with the purpose of strengthening the king. The break up of the medieval church resulted in a change in political thinking and out of this the concept of the organisation of political authority in the form of sovereignty emerged. The importance of his work lies in the fact that it took the idea of sovereign power out of theology and the theory of divine right and put it into the realm of political thought (Sabine 1973:372). Bodin was perhaps the first man to state a theory behind the word sovereignty (Hinsley1986:71). Writing at a time when France was overrun with civil and religious wars, Bodin worked to find a basis of ideas on which the harmony of the political community could be founded (Hinsley 1986:120).

(i) The state and sovereign power

Although he had no clear theory on the state, Bodin defined it as "a lawful government of several households, and of their common possessions, with sovereign power" (Sabine 1973:375). The distinguishing characteristic of a state was its sovereignty or sovereign power (puissance souveraine). One of Bodinʹs most important ideas was the characterisation of the sovereign in terms of power as opposed to the traditional notion of the divine right of kings. As Hinsley (1986:121) explains, the recognition of an absolute power was essential if the political community was to escape the disharmony set up by the conflict of new developments with medieval and feudal fetters, and if it was to maintain its security and achieve its social objectives. His central point followed logically from this, that if the existence of such a power was necessary and in the interests of the community, then the character of the political community made it necessary that this power be recognised as sovereignty (Hinsley 1986:121). The necessity for the use of sovereignty lies in the need to establish rule and order, to be able to make laws and to declare war or peace.

To him the distinguishing attribute of a sovereign is the right to make law and law becomes then the command of the sovereign.
"The first attribute of the sovereign prince therefore is the power to make law binding on all his subjects in general and on each in particular. But to avoid any ambiguity one must add that he does so without the consent of

any...All the other attributes and rights of sovereignty are included in this power of making and unmaking law, so that strictly speaking this is the unique attribute of sovereign power" (X,iv).

(ii) The rule of law
Bodin empahasises the importance of the family unit as the basis for the community and the state. When families unite for common purpose such as defense or the pursuit of mutual advantage, they form villages and cities and when these are united by a sovereign authority, a state is formed (Sabine 1973:375). Bodin attributed the formation of the state to a rule of force but he did not conceive of sovereignty as being justified merely by power (Sabine 1973:375). He makes it clear that a well-ordered state cannot exist until a sovereign is recognised but he does not specify how or why the citizen ought to render obedience to the sovereign (Sabine 1973:376). The closest distinction that he makes is that the loyalty of the citizen is based on the obligation to obey the laws and commands of the sovereign. This obligation is founded on justice.

Similar to Hobbes' view on the state of nature and the anarchic behaviour of mankind without law, Bodin acknowledges that the rule of law is necessary for the creation of an orderly society. He concludes that as the origin of commonwealths was in force and violence, and "a citizen is defined as a free subject who is dependent on the sovereignty of another" (VII, iv). He acknowledges that a certain form of social contract exists between citizens which results in a transfer of decision-making power from the citizen to the state. As Bodin explains, "The people has renounced and alienated its sovereign power in order to invest him with it and put him in possession, and it thereby transfers to him all its powers, authority, and sovereign rights, just as does the man who gives to another possessory and proprietary rights over what he formerly owned."(VIII,iii)

Bodin's views on the family place a certain limit on the power of the sovereign because according to him the family was the sphere of the private and the state is that of public. As Sabine (1973:376) explains, sovereignty to Bodin was a different kind of ownership; the prince is in no sense the proprietor of the public domain and cannot isolate it. The sovereign is also limited in his exercise of absolute power by the acknowledgement of Divine Law and the ruler is still subject to the laws of God and of nature (VIII,ix). But other than these restrictions a sovereign is not bound by the laws that he makes.

(iii) The sovereign as absolute and perpetual power
Bodin emphasises power as a characteristic of the state and a citizen as subject to the sovereign power. He classifies a commonwealth as

containing three essential elements namely family, sovereign power and common concern. He describes a practical political form as being a "rightly ordered government" (I,i) and makes no room for distinction between good and bad forms of government only for the different ways in which a sovereign governs i.e. monarchy, aristocracy or democracy. By doing so, Bodin highlights that the way in which power is executed is dependent on the form of government but regardless of form the government is still a sovereign.

As he explains, "Sovereignty is that absolute and perpetual power vested in a commonwealth...I have described it as perpetual because one can give absolute power to a person or group of persons for a period of time, but that time expired they become subjects once more." (I, ii) He later says that, "the principal mark of sovereign majesty and absolute power is the right to impose laws generally on all subjects regardless of their consent" (VII, xiii). The recognition of a sovereign power allows for the creation of a political society and in doing so counteracts the law of nature and the state of anarchy which exists without the rule of law.

In the context of the period in which he was writing and the purpose of his works, it is obvious that Bodin acknowledges a monarchy as the best form of government. He bases this claim on his belief that commands must proceed from a single will, "absolute power must be unique or it is no power at all" (II,i), and the essential mark of sovereignty is the power to command. An interesting point that he makes is that a state does not lose its sovereign status when it enters into alliance and treaties with more powerful states, for example the creation of protectorates. He explains that even in treaties of unequal alliance, where one party defends the authority of another, this does not make the latter a subject of the former. (VII, v). Sovereignty is perpetual and "perpetual authority is understood to mean for the lifetime of he who exercises it" (VIII, iii).

In his own words, "Whether then one exercises the power of another by commission, by institution, or by delegation, or whether such exercise is for a set term, or in perpetuity, such a power is not a sovereign power, even if there is no mention of such words as representative, lieutenant, governor, or regent, in the letters of appointment, or even if such powers are a consequence of
the normal working of the laws of the country."(VIII,viii) This marks a point of contradiction in Bodin's work because he earlier redefined Aristotle's six forms of government into just three and held that the form of government is the way in which power is executed and that the people transfer authority to the sovereign giving him the right to act.

As Sabine (1973:384) notes, Bodin's political philosophy is of no slight importance. His main contribution to this discussion lies in the theory of sovereignty in terms of power and 'the definition of the state as a relation between political inferiors and a political superior and of law as command" (Sabine 1973:384). He represents a certain starting point in political thinking where the importance of the state and sovereign are being more fully acknowledged, a tradition which continued in Locke, Hobbes and Grotius' writings.

5. The Realist Perspective

I agree with Robert Keohane (in Viotti & Kauppi 1993:187) when he explains that realism is a necessary, if not essential, component in any coherent analysis of world politics because its focus on power, interests and rationality are crucial to any understanding of the subject. The realist perspective is relevant to this discussion specifically because of its focus on the state and the importance of power in international politics.

(a) Classical realist assumptions
1. The state is the most important actor in international politics. States are the key unit of analysis and the study of international relations is the study of relations among these units (Viotti & Kauppi 1993:5). The state is a unitary actor and is essentially a rational
actor (Viotti & Kauppi 1993:6). According to Dunne & Schmidt (in Baylis & Smith 2001:150), sovereignty is the distinguishing trait of a state.

2. The international system is anarchial. Because of the sovereign equality of all states, there is no central authority capable of controlling state behaviour (Baylis & Smith 2001:257).

4. The struggle for and use of power is at the core of international relations. As Robert Keohane explains (in Viotti & Kauppi 1993:192), "states seek power (both the ability to influence others and resources that can be used to exercise influence); and they calculate their interests in terms of power, whether as an end or as necessary means to a variety of other ends". The state aims first to organise power domestically and then to accummulate power internationally (Baylis & Smith 2001:150).

5. Although some realists hint that the accummulation of power is an end in itself, most realists would agree that the ultimate concern of a state is for security (Baylis & Smith 2001:151). In the words of Henry Kissinger, "a nation's survival is its first and ultimate responsibility; it cannot be compromised or put to risk" (in Bayliss & Smith 2001:152).

6. According to Luke (1996), sovereign states are rational self-seeking actors which are resolutely, if not exclusively, concerned with relative gains because they must function in an anarchial environment in which their security and well-being ultimately rest on their ability to mobilise resources against external threats.

(b) State sovereignty and domestic security

(i) Thomas Hobbes

In Thomas Hobbes' work, The Leviathan (1652), he presents a strong case for the necessity of a powerful centralised political authority. Hinsley (1986:141) claims that Hobbes' work was the first clear formulation of the concept of sovereignty in English political thought. According to Hobbes, before the establishment of a common power, man would be in a state of nature and would continually be in the "posture of war". The existence of a common power is a precondition for the existence of law and the need for a common authority is based firstly on "the need to direct actions for common benefit" and secondly to compel men to order in fear of punishment. Hobbes, like Machiavelli, has a very cynical approach to the nature of mankind and he believes that force is a very important tool of governance. "Covenants, without the sword, are but words, and of no strength to secure a man at all. The bonds of words are too weak to bridle men's ambition, avarice, anger, and other passions, without the fear of some coercive power".

Hobbes' view was that the only way to create a common power to "defend them from the invasion of foreigners, the injuries of one another, to secure them and their own industry so that they may nourish themselves and live contentedly", is to confer all power and strength to one man or an assembly of men. As Sabine (1973:433) explains, "Security depends upon the existence of a government having the power to keep the peace and to apply the sanctions needed to curb man's innately unsocial inclinations. The effective motive by which men are socialized is the fear of punishment, and the authority of law extends only so far as its enforcement is able to reach".

This covenant between subjects and the authority is the key to the creation of a sovereign state. This covenant involves a transfer of power and a certain sacrifice of personal liberties, from the individual to a central, common authority and in exchange for submitting to the will and power of the sovereign, the individual gains security and order. According to Sabine (1973:432), the power of the state and the authority of the law are justified only because they contribute to the security of the individual, and there is no rational ground of obedience and respect for authority except the anticipation that these will yield larger individual advantage than their

opposites.

Hobbes describes this covenant as a binding contract between individuals by which all resign self-help and subject themselves to a sovereign (Sabine 1973:433). He stated it as: *I* authorize and give up my right of governing myself, to this man, or this assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy right to him, and authorize all his actions in like manner.

Hobbes defines a sovereign in terms of an individual "of whose acts a great multitude, by mutual covenant one with another, have made themselves every one the author, to the end he may use the strength and means of them all as he thinks expedient, for their peace and common defense". The main duty of the sovereign is the securing and preservation of all contentments of life. The power of the sovereign cannot be limited or divided; sovereignty absorbs all public rights (Hinsley 1986:143). Hobbes does not clearly distinguish between society, state and government, to him society has only one voice and that this the voice of the sovereign who makes it a society (Sabine 1973:435). Sabine (1973:435) explains further that Hobbes' view of sovereignty is that it is indivisible and inalienable, for either his authority is recognized and a state exists or it is not recognized and anarchy exists. All the powers of government are inherent in the sovereign: legislation, the administartion of justice, the exercise of force and the organisation of intitutions of government (Sabine 1973:435).

Through the social contract between individuals, the common power becomes a sovereign with the duty to secure the welfare of the state through the creation and enforcement of "good laws" (laws that are fair and needful for the good of the people). Hobbes contends that if the rights of sovereignty are taken away, the commonwealth is dissolved and man returns to a state of nature.

Realist theory operates from the assumption that the presence of a sovereign authority domestically solves the problems of order and security for the individual (Baylis & Smith 2001:150) since this is provided for them through the coercive institutions of the state. within a territory, sovereignty means that the state has the monoploy on the legitimate use of force and has "supreme authority to make and enforce laws" (Baylis & Smith 2001:150).

(c) State sovereignty and international relations
Applied to the internal structure of a political society, sovereignty involves the belief that there is an absolute political power in the community but when applied to the international environment, sovereignty means that no supreme authority exists (Hinsley 1986:158). This paradox is a logical

consequence of the concept of sovereignty, as Hinsley (1986:158) explains, a state which claims to be free of limit and control within its community is bound in logic to concede the same freedom to other states in theirs.

According to Hegel, the nation-state is mind in its substantive rationality and immediate actuality and is therefore the absoolute power on earth. this means that every state is autonomous and sovereign against its neighbours. Additionally, every state has the right to be recognised by others as sovereign. In this context, international relations is governed by the contracts between sovereign authorities and these contracts are dependent on the arbitrary will of autonomous participants.

According to the realist perspective, anarchy is a defining characteristic of international politics because without a *L*eviathan, hegemon or world state, states as unitary, sovereign actors are in a constant state of competition characterised by distrust, suspicion, jealousy, conflict and war (Viotti & Kauppi 1993:41). The implications of Hobbes' writings for international relations is that without a social contract among states to create an authority over states, there are no obligations to govern the relations between states.

Hegel explains that in a state of nature, welfare is the highest law governing the relation of one state to another. Sovereign states act, in relation to other states in terms of justifying wars and treaties, in terms of actually injured or threatened welfare. Survival of the state is the purpose of foreign policy initiatives.

(d) The survival of the state and the quest for power
Realists claim that because of the anarchic nature of the world system, states are in constant competition and the only way to guarantee survival is through the accumulation of power (Baylis & Smith 2001:150). To most realists, the struggle for and use of power among states is at the core of international relations (Viotti & Kauppi 1993:36). As Morgenthau said, "International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. Whatever the ultimate aims of international politics, power is always the immediate aim" (in Viotti & Kauppi 1993:36).

Power is the actual capacity to influence human behaviuor (Nel & McGowan 1999:10). It is a relative concept and one's power can only be conceived of in terms of one's ability to influence the actions of another. *L*ukes (in Nossal 1998:90) explains that A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests.

The pusuit of power is essential to a sovereign state in order to gurantee

national security, which a realist would say is the main national interest of all states. Because there is no higher authority to prevent or counter the use of force, security can only be realised through a self-help system (Baylis & Smith 2001:153). The spiral of insecurity created by the self-help method of providing security is termed the security dilemma (Baylis & Smith 2001:153). John Herz (in Bayliss & Smith 2001:257) explains that the security dilemma is "a structural notion in which the self-help attempts of states to look after their security needs, tend regardless of intention to lead to rising insecurity for others as each interprets its own measures as defensive and the measures of others as potentially threatening." As this scenario suggests "one state's quest for security is often another state's source of insecurity" (Dunne & Schmidt in Bayliss 153). It is ironic that in searching for security, states often undertake actions that leave them feeling no more secure than before. As Frederick Dunne put it, "so long as the notion of self-help exists, the aim of maintaining the power position is paramount to all other considerations" (Viotti & Kauppi 1993:129)

A further irony is that the most powerful countries - The United States, Great Britain, China and previously the USSR - are spending the most money, labour and efforts in pursuit of what decision-makers deem to be national security interests (Duetsch 98). Deutsch (98) further explains that, "a nation's feeling of insecurity expands directly in relation to its power. The larger and more powerful a nation is, the more its leaders, elites, and often its population increase their level of aspirations in international politics." According to realist thought the only way to check the aggression of a militarily powerful, economically efficient, ambitious state is through the creation of a balance of power. Balance of power has been a realist concern dating back to Thucydides, and in a British Foreign Office report written before World War I, the following statement was made, "The only check on the abuse of political predominance derived from such a position (military and economic strength as well as ambition) has always consisted in the opposition of an equally formidable rival, or a combination of several countries forming leagues of defense" (in Viotti & Kauppi 1993:50). In other words, realists admit that states find it expedient to band together and pool their capabilities to oppose a state or group of states who appear to be gathering a disproportionate amount of power (Viotti & Kauppi 1993:50). Security and stability is provided through alliance and coalition to maintain a certain balance of power. In an anarchial system populated by sovereign states seeking survival, alliances will be formed to deter or to check aggression and to balance power against threatening states (Baylis & Smith 2001:153). Security and stability in the international system is provided through alliance and coalition to maintain a certain balance of power.

It is important to note that although there is no hierarchy of authority in a

system of sovereign states, there is a hierarchy of power. It can be said then that international relations is the interactions between sovereign, autonomous states in a system characterised by anarchy where the system is governed by a need for power. A sovereign's ability to exercise power in the international system and even the foreign policy options available to them, depends on their relative power and their position in the hierarchy of power. Change and stability in the international system are dependent on the power configurations, be it hegemonic, equilibrium of a balance of power resulting from alliance (Baylis & Smith 2001:153). Anarchy plus the distribution of capabilities define, for many realists, the international system at any one time (Viotti & Kauppi 1993:50).

(e) Balance of power and the distribution of capabilities
Through the maintenance of a balance of power, a hegemony is avoided and a certain degree of stability is maintained in the system. There is a view amongst some realist scholars that there is a systematic tendency towards balance (Viotti & Kauppi 1993:51). Kenneth Waltz (in Viotti & Kauppi 1993:52) observes that in international relations "the freedom of choice of any one state is limited by the actions of all the others". In other words, foreign policy makers are not free from external constraints. Game theory and systematic analysis would then make the prediction of the furture actions of states possible as their behaviour could be determined as rational actors with certain capabilities operating within a defined system. Keohane (in Viotti & Kauppi 1993:206) makes a strong case for why this has not in practice been possible. Realists could overcome this by placing a renewed emphasis on the importance of power capabilities. As Keohane (in Viotti & Kauppi 1993:206) explains, "When realist theorists say that, given interests, patterns of outcomes will be determined by the overall distribution of power among states, they are using power to refer to resources that can be used to induce other actors to do what they would not otherwise do, in accordance with the desires of the power-wielder".

Power capabilities reflect not only military and economic factors but political and social also. In its most basic form, a state's power base is a function of the ability of a government to ensure the compliance of the population with government decisions or commands. As such the more dependable the compliance of the population, the greater the potential power of the state (Duetsch 77). It can therefore be said that a state's power capabilities rest on its ability to maintain internal sovereignty. It is through power, the possession and accummulation thereof, that sovereign states interact and affect interactions in the international political arena. Even though all states seek to maximise national interest and ensure the survival of the state, foreign relations do not occur in a

vacuum and are governed by the ability of a recognised authority to gain influence over others and to pursue national interest. The realist assumption then is that patterns of outcomes in world politics will be determined by the overall distribution of power among states (Keohane in Viotti & Kauppi 1993:206).

6. The modern state : state security and the maintenance of national power in a globalised system

For most of the Cold War era, academics and statesmen focused mainly on national security in terms of the military capabilities needed to deal with the threats facing them (Baylis & Smith 2001:255). More recently, however, it has been widely acknowlegded that security includes political, economic, social, environmental and military aspects. Barry Buzan (in Baylis & Smith 2001;255) defines security as "the ability of states and societies to maintain their independent identity and their functional integrity." The implication that security involves freedom from threats to core values links the ability to maintain security to the concept of sovereignty. The provision of security then becomes the ability of a government to maintain state sovereignty in spite of threats to its existence.

Preserving a way of life and national identity and providing territorial security have, since Westphalia, been the duty of the state. Since the state is the highest legitimate political authority with a monopoly on the legitimate use of force, security has become the priority obligation of governments (Baylis & Smith 2001:256).

(a) Conflict and co-operation in the international system
Realism has a rather pessimistic approach to international politics and with the implications of sovereignty, in that realists generally do not see the opportunity for permanent peace (Baylis & Smith 2001:256). All that states can do is to try to balance the power of other states to prevent any one from achieving overall hegemony (Baylis & Smith 2001:256).
(i) Neo-realism or structural realism
As an slight variation on the realist school of thought, neo-realism explains national security or insecurity as the result of the structure of the international system (Baylis & Smith 257). In an article by John Mearshimer (1990), he explianed that the Cold War was a period of stability in which the balance of power prevailed. The collapse of the bipolar system ushers in a new period of instability and conflict resulting from power rivalries. Challenges to security originate from disagreements over the limits of authority and the competition for power.

For neo-realists, international politics is characterised by a relentless

security competition in which war is always a possibility (Baylis & Smith 2001:257). Co-operation between states is limited and is "constrained by the dominating logic of security competition, which no amount of co-operation can eliminate" (Mearsheimer in Baylis & Smith 2001:257).

(ii) Possibilites for co-operation between states

Among the school of neo-realist thought, there is a branch which is altogether less pessimistic about the possibilities of co-operation between states. Barry Buzan argues that since the 1980s we have seen the emergence of a more mature anarchy "in which states recognise the intense dangers of continuing to compete aggressively in a nuclear world" (Bayliss & Smith 260). According to Buzan, states are internalising the understanding that national securities are interdependent and that excessively self-referenced security policies are self-defeating (Bayliss & Smith 260). This 'mature anarchy' is evident mainly in the intregrative, co-operative approach to security been pursued by European states. The members of the European Union have resolved to settle disputes by diplomatic channels and the realisation that the security needs of one is best served by the sercurity of all has led to a new form of political engagement where the state insitutions are no longer the absolute providers of security but the supranational organisation has established a framework of intergrative relations so intertwined that the threat of war from a neighbour is less likely. Economic and political integration in Europe has establish a certain detente on the use of force to resolve conflict, thereby providing a new type of security.

(b) A new type of sovereignty?

The European Union differs from other regional organisations in that it is supranational in nature. Supranationalism is an attempt to combine existing independent and sovereign political entities and to fashion a new form of political authority <u>over</u> the existing sovereign nation states (Nossal 1998:463). The EU has to a certain degree become a sovereign actor in global politics and shares the same priviledges as other sovereign states for example the collecting of revenue, the making, adjudicating and enforcing of laws (Nossal 1998:265). The EU can also exercise power against member states outruling, outvoting, fining or sanctioning them (Nossal 1998:265).

The EU is more than just an economic community and as it has taken on an identity and authority of its own, it is more than just a regional organisation based on co-operation between sovereign states. In this organisation, member states have sacrificed a certain degree of their sovereignty and transfer an amount of power to an institutionalised authority in order to establish and maintain political and ecomonic

security. Supranationalism has evolved from the realisation that co-operation and unity offer a stability and security which the nation-state cannot maintain on its own. The regional organisation has usurped some of the traditional functions of the state such as the regulation of foreign relations and has created new ways to organise authority and to exercise power.

The contract between states and a supranational organisation is not dissimilar to Hobbes' version of the social contract between individuals to create a central authority. The full influence of this evolution to a higher form of political organisation will be seen in the future but in a system characterised by globalisation, the creation of stability might best be served through greater regional and international co-operation and intergration. Authors like Waltz may be correct in that the system creates a balance of power whether willed or not and regionalism can be seen as a way to counteract the current hegemonic order. The need to develop regional institutions is a manifestation of globalisation, in very much the same way as the spread of the nation-state as the principle political form was earlier a product of increased global interaction (Baylis & Smith 2001:641).

The changing power structures of the world leads to changes in the organisation of political authority which in turn influences the way in which power is exercised. Just as the conditions in seventeenth century Europe were conducive to the re-organisation of political authority, so now is the world in the condition to re-evaluate the role of the state and to question who has legitimate power and what type of political organisation is best placed to exercise power in a global community frought with inequalities.

7. Sovereignty and power in the 21st Century

I think that it is pertinent to question whether or not a state can actually exercise its rights to sovereignty or if it is just an antiquated myth. There is a contradiction between the ideal of sovereign equality and the reality of a power based hierarchy. Is the ability to behave as a sovereign dependent entirely on the power at a state's disposal at any point in time? Does the concept of sovereignty ever exist in practice?

In The Grammar fo Politics (1941), Harold Laski says of sovereignty that it is of dubious correctness and that it would be of benefit to political science if the concept were surrendered on grounds that it has dangerous moral consequences. Much critism launched against the concept of sovereignty is based on the misuse of power and the use of

sovereignty as a means of justifing the use of absolute power (Hinsley 1986:217). Hinsley (1986:217) maintains that such critisms are not necessary neither logical, as the real significance and true function of the concept of sovereignty is to justify political authority. "It is the concept which maintains no more - if also no less - than that there must be an ultimate authority within the political society if the society is to exist at all, or at least if it is to be able to function effectively" (Hinsley 1986:217). Sovereignty is a means to organise power in a state.

The concept of sovereignty originated from the realisation of the developing state and the developing community that power had to be shared between them and the function of the concept was to provide a formula for the effective exercise of power (Hinsley 1986:222). Hegel sets two preconditions for the existence of a sovereign, that of objective law and a rational constitution. In international relations, sovereignty is a status, the key to the club, an essential qualification for the membership of the international community (Nossal 1998:259 ; Hinsley 1986:224). Hinsley (1986: 225) admits, though, that "it has become accepted of some states that they are sovereign in theory when in reality the historical development and the present condition of the territory in which they rule are not such as to have permitted the concept of sovereignty to emerge as the relevant or even as a possible basis for authority. Of some states, indeed, it has now to be accepted that they are sovereign even though they do not in fact rule effectively". In the international context, the concept of sovereignty means nothing more than the justification of the independence of the state (Hinsley 1986:225).

In the modern world, state sovereignty is being challenged and undermined by global forces that are "contragovernmental" such as drug cartels, religious fundamentalists, refugees, terrorism and globalisation (Luke 1996). In the same article, Luke contends that political realism faces "state-splintering movements" and that "old concepts like political realism, sovereign territorality are highly contestable...unstable, variable and unfixed". To argue that sovereignty is no longer compatible with changes in the international system is to associate sovereignty with the freedom to act as a state chooses. Sovereignty is an acknowlegdement that there is no higher recognised authority than the state and is, in fact, a result of the realisation that a collection of independent yet interdependent states coexist as an international community.

Especially since World War I, states have attempted themselves to establish an international political authority that would be superior to them in relation to decisions pertaining to war and peace. From The League of Nations to the Untied Nations, there have been attempts by

the major powers to create international order. Hinsley believes that the purpose of these efforts is not the establihnment of a higher political authority and the dissolution of the sovereignty of states, but rather that "they are exercising their sovereignty to bring about an agreed re-definition of their rights and duties within the international system" (Hinsley 1986:229).

In Robert Gilpin's analysis of change in world politics entitled *War and Change in World Politics*, he discusses political change as a product of changes in power relationships. He explains that "those actors who benefit most from a change in the social system and who gain the power to effect such change, will seek to alter the system in ways that favor their interests. The resulting changed system will reflect the new distribution of power and the interests of its new dominant members" (in Viotti & Kauppi 1993:147). In other words, the political system changes to reflect shifts or is changed by shifts in interest and power.

8. Conclusion

Much the same as in post-medieval Europe, there was a re-evaluation and re-organisation of political authority, there is scope for philosophers and theorists to question the continued existence of sovereignty and the ability of a sovereign to exercise power. The concepts of sovereignty and power are so closely tied to each other and dependent upon one another, that a re-organisation of political authority will in fact lead to a complete change in the language of politics. The sovereign state has been a characteristic of the international political order for the past three hundred years and has evolved out of a necessity or propensity for order. A sovereign excerises its power through the creation and maintenance of order and the provision of security. The power of the state to act as a sovereign is continually being challenged by forces such as globalisation, terrorism and regionalism and the continued existence of a sovereign nation-state lies in its effectiveness as an actor and its ability to be an actor in the international community is dependent upon the power structure of the international arena.