

# Sovereignty Explained: The Core Concept in Politics and Law | Easy Wisdom

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June 14, 2024

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In political theory and international law, sovereignty has always been an intricate concept, shaping the governance and independence of nations. It refers to the ultimate authority or power within a state or nation and encompasses both internal and external autonomy for states. In practical terms, sovereignty refers to the supreme authority of a country to manage its own affairs without interference of others.

## The components of Sovereignty

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**State Autonomy:** Sovereign states have the right to govern themselves. This means they can create and enforce their own laws, manage their internal affairs, and make decisions without being influenced or controlled by external entities. State autonomy ensures that each country can maintain its distinct identity, cultural practices, and governance style, free from external domination or coercion.

**Recognition:** When a state recognizes another state, it formally acknowledges that the entity meets the criteria of statehood (defined territory, permanent population, government, and the capacity to enter relations with other states). This acknowledgment affirms that the recognized state has the right to exercise authority within its borders without interference. This recognition forms the basis for diplomatic relations and treaties.

**International Law:** Sovereign states interact with one another based on international law. Treaties, alliances, and agreements are formed keeping in mind the respect for each state's sovereignty. Take the example of The Paris Agreement on climate change wherein countries commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Each country sets its own targets and strategies, respecting its sovereignty while contributing to a global effort.

## Is Sovereignty absolute?

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Source: Bahai Teachings

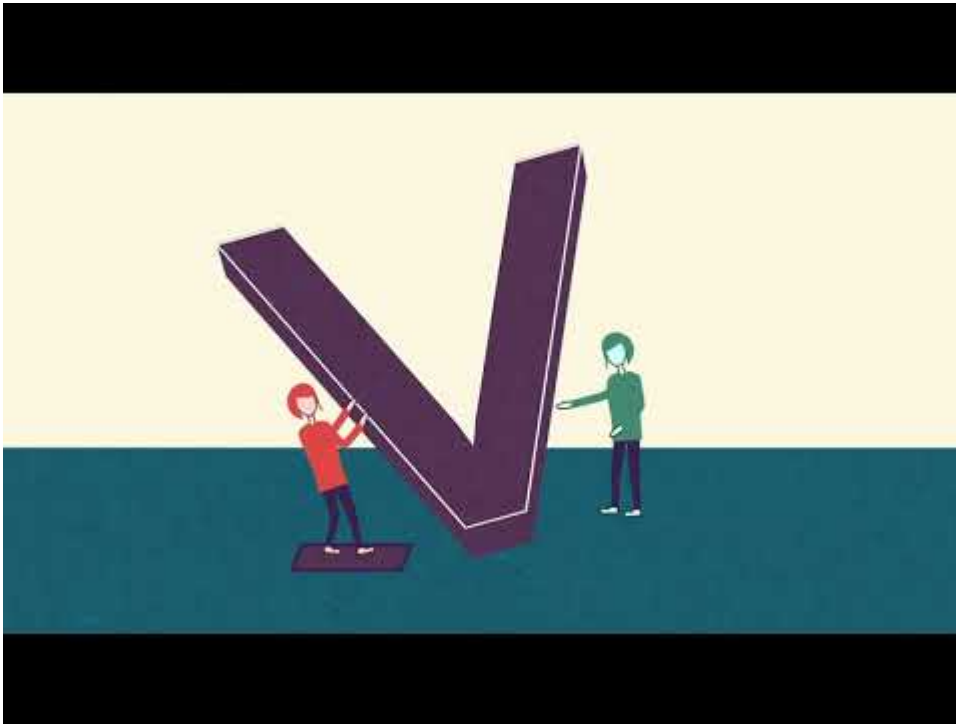
But it is important to note that sovereignty is not absolute. It is balanced with cooperation and mutual interests in international relations. While states govern themselves, they often give up on some autonomy to collaborate on global issues, such as trade and security, reflecting the interdependent nature of the modern states. For example, in the European Union, the member states maintain sovereignty but share certain powers and policies for economic integration, legal standards, and regional stability, demonstrating how cooperation complements sovereignty.

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## **Difference from similar concepts**

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<b>Concept</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Relation to Sovereignty</b>	<b>Key Differences</b>
Sovereignty	Supreme authority within a territory	Overarching authority that encompasses ultimate legal and political power within a state	Comprehensive authority and ultimate decision-making power
Autonomy	Degree of self-governance and independence	Can exist within a sovereign state, particularly in federal systems or autonomous regions	Limited to self-governance, not full supreme authority
Independence	Freedom from external control or influence	A condition often associated with sovereignty, especially in international relations	Focus on freedom from external domination, not on internal authority
Jurisdiction	Official power to make legal decisions and judgments	A component of sovereignty, involving legal authority in specific areas or matters	Can be limited to specific areas, not comprehensive like sovereignty
Power	Ability to influence or control behavior, people, and events	Sovereignty includes governing power, but power can exist independently in various forms	Power can be economic, military, etc., without implying legal authority
Legitimacy	Rightfulness or acceptance of authority	Important for effective sovereignty, but distinct from it	Sovereignty is a legal concept; legitimacy is about acceptance and recognition
Control	Exercise of power or authority over a domain	A function of sovereignty, necessary for enforcing laws and maintaining order	Control is operational and practical, sovereignty is legal and theoretical



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