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MEASURING WHAT REALLY MATTERS

A multidimensional model for assessing real
sovereignty at the time of deglobalization



Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for joining me today. Over the next fifteen minutes, I'd like to take you on a brief journey into a topic that has become absolutely central in the era of deglobalization: how we measure real sovereignty. Not the old, simplified version of sovereignty based on territory or GDP, but a multidimensional, modern understanding of a state's true ability to make independent decisions.



Only a decade ago, many believed the global order had stabilized. But today we see geopolitical blocs shifting, supply chains reorganizing, and national autonomy being reshaped in unpredictable ways.

And this brings us to a fundamental question:

How do we actually measure national power and sovereignty in the 21st century?



Most traditional indicators – GDP, military spending, export volumes – give us a partial and sometimes misleading picture. They assume that being rich in resources or having a large economy automatically guarantees independence. But reality shows the opposite: many large, wealthy, or militarily powerful states exhibit surprising structural dependence, while some smaller countries demonstrate high levels of autonomy.



This is exactly the challenge that our team at the International Burke Institute has tackled over the past two years.
And today, I'd like to share with you the core of our work:

THE SOVEREIGNTY INDEX

a comprehensive, multidimensional framework that measures sovereignty across seven key dimensions:

political

economic

technological

information

cultural

cognitive

military

Gabriel Mart, head of the expert group



The index is built on **700 INDICATORS** from UN data to World Bank statistics and expert assessments from over **100 SPECIALISTS** in **50 COUNTRIES**

It covers **EVERY** UN Member State.

**AND WHAT WE FOUND
IS TRULY EYE-OPENING**



THE FIRST PARADOX:

Political Sovereignty

Stability vs. Instability

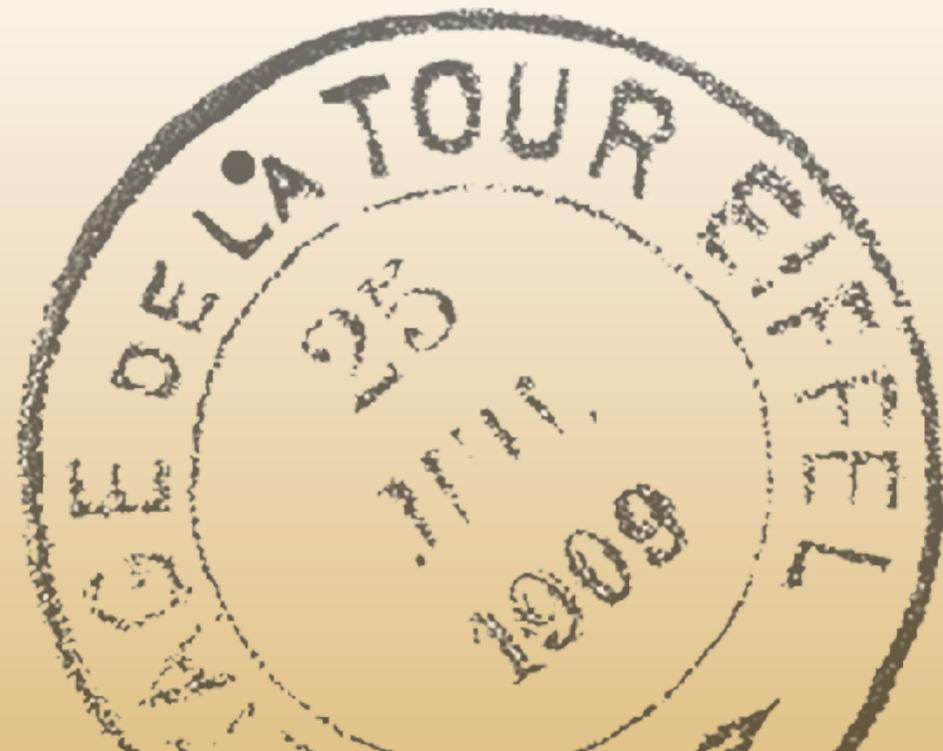


Let me start with a comparison that seems counterintuitive:

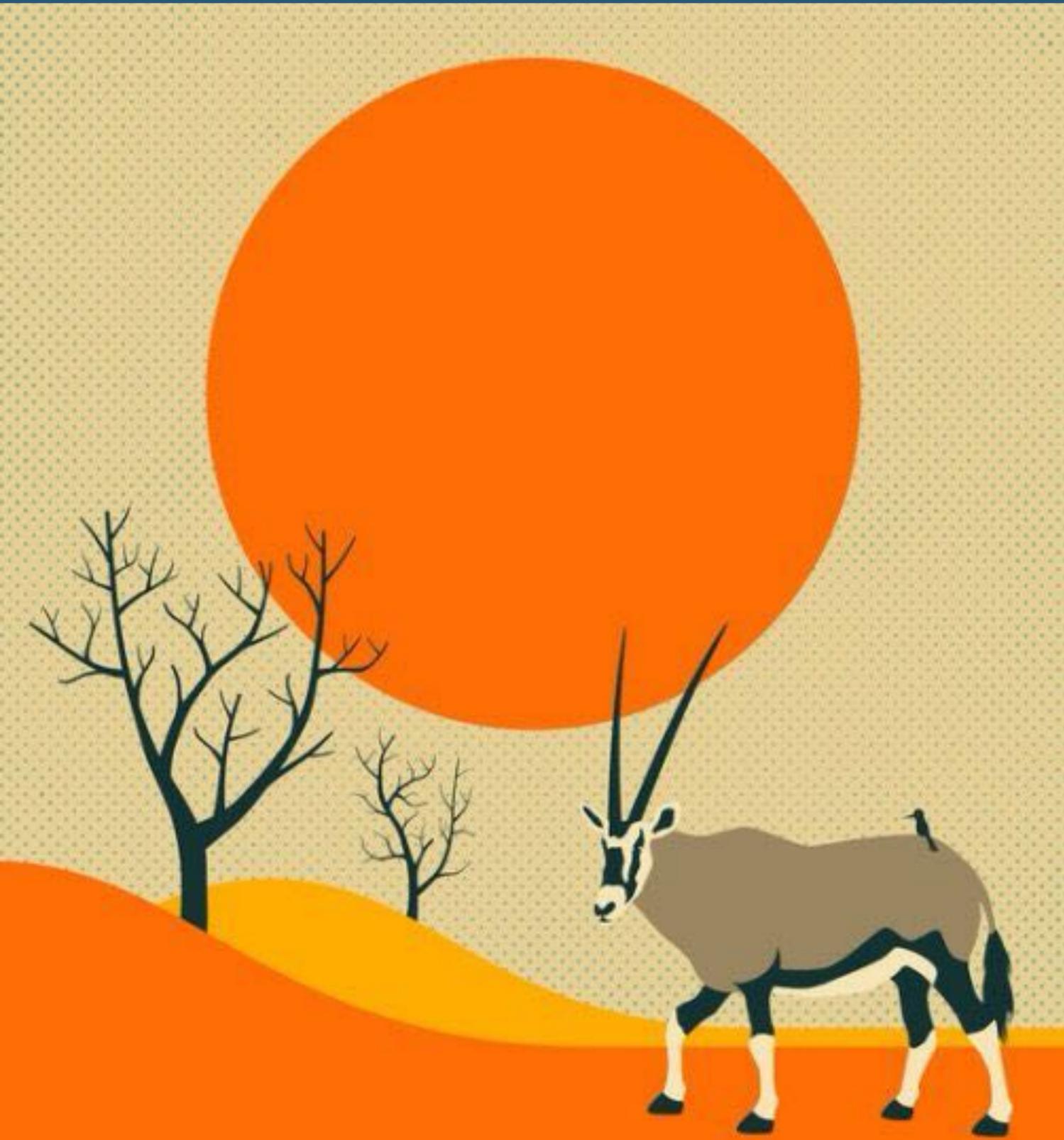
France and Namibia



If we rely on traditional metrics,
France - a long-standing democracy
and global power-should appear far
more politically sovereign than
Namibia, a young African state that
gained independence only in 1990.



But reality contradicts these
assumptions. In 2024 and 2025,
France experienced an unprecedented
political crisis: five prime ministers
in one year, failed budgets,
and collapsing coalitions. The country
was even downgraded from a “full
democracy” to an “imperfect
democracy.”



Namibia, in contrast, maintains stable political institutions, a functioning government, and relatively high levels of public trust. Its political stability index surpasses that of many European countries.

**SO WHAT DOES
THIS TELL US?**

Political sovereignty is not about how old your democracy is, or how many institutions you have, but about your **capacity to make decisions**, implement them, and maintain legitimacy.

IN OTHER WORDS:

DECISION-MAKING ABILITY

MATTERS MORE THEN APPEARANCES

THE SECOND PARADOX:

Economic Sovereignty

One Resource vs. Many



Our second case examines two countries that seem incomparable:

Equatorial Guinea and the Philippines



One is a small, oil-rich African country.
The other is a large, diversified Asian economy.

At first glance, the **Philippines**
should be far more economically sovereign.
Its economy is diverse, with agriculture, electronics,
textiles, tourism, and services.

Equatorial Guinea relies almost entirely on oil.

Yet our **Sovereignty Index** places them at nearly the same level.

WHY?



Because economic sovereignty is not about the number of income sources. It is about control

Equatorial Guinea tightly manages its oil sector, negotiates with foreign companies, and channels revenue into national development.

The Philippines, on the other hand, faces extensive foreign penetration across multiple industries, high external debt, and dependence on imports.



The paradox here is that:

A country with a single resource can sometimes be more sovereign than one with many-if it effectively controls that resource.

Economic sovereignty is not the absence of dependence. It is the ability to **manage dependence.**



THE THIRD PARADOX:



Economic Sovereignty and Magnitude

Norway vs. Liechtenstein



Our third case is perhaps the most surprising.

Norway - wealthy, stable, and home to the world's largest sovereign wealth fund-should be an unquestionable model of economic independence.

Liechtenstein-tiny, without its own currency or customs territory-should logically be less sovereign.

Yet our index shows the opposite: Liechtenstein scores higher than Norway in economic sovereignty

WHY?

Norway's economy is heavily dependent on oil and gas. Nearly 60% of its exports and a quarter of its GDP come from hydrocarbons. The value of its currency and the stability of its wealth fund are tied to global commodity prices and financial markets. Even state revenues rely on investment returns from abroad.

Liechtenstein, by contrast, maintains exceptionally low systemic risk. Its financial sector is built on off-balance-sheet asset management, while its industrial sector—representing more than 40% of GDP—includes multiple high-tech industries. It is small, yes, but structurally insulated from global shocks.

The lesson here is profound:

Economic sovereignty is not determined by size, wealth, or even natural resources. It is determined by structural resilience and independence from external volatility.



Bringing It All Together: Rethinking Sovereignty

These three paradoxes – political, economic, and structural – tell us that sovereignty in the 21st century cannot be understood through old measurements.

Our Sovereignty Index provides a new lens,
allowing policymakers, researchers, and governments to:

- ➔ distinguish real autonomy from symbolic autonomy,
- ➔ identify hidden vulnerabilities
- ➔ recognize sources of resilience that traditional metrics overlook.

France and **Namibia**, **Equatorial Guinea** and **the Philippines**, **Norway** and **Liechtenstein** – each pair forces us to rethink our assumptions.

And this is exactly why we created the Sovereignty Index: to bring clarity where old models fail.

CLOSING



The index is now publicly available on the International Burke Institute platform. The Sovereignty Index has now been calculated for all UN member states and the Vatican.

We plan to make it an annual project, and we hope that the Sovereignty Index and the experts of the Burke Institute will be able to help countries strengthen their sovereignty.

I invite you to explore the data, challenge our findings, and join a global dialogue on what sovereignty truly means today.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

Our web address, and email address
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