

Rethinking geographies of sovereignty: Towards a conceptual framework of situated sovereignty

Bastian Lange¹  | Marco Pütz²  | Bianca Herlo³

¹Institute of Geography, University of Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany

²Economics and Social Sciences, Swiss Federal Institute for Forest Snow and Landscape Research WSL, Birmensdorf, Switzerland

³Design Research Lab, Berlin University of the Arts, Berlin, Germany

Correspondence

Bastian Lange.

Email: Bastian.Lange@uni-leipzig.de

Abstract

We engage with debates on shifting geographies of sovereignty in the digital age by providing a conceptual framework for “situated sovereignty”. Our contribution draws on a review of the scholarly literature and current sovereignty practices. We aim to move beyond state-centred and territorial understandings of sovereignty. A common discussion is the necessity of reconfiguring notions of sovereignty. However, hardly any studies have discussed the sociospatial configurations of practising sovereignty in the digital present. We conceptualise practices of sovereignty along intersecting strands of scholarly literature that have scarcely been related, drawing from political geography, science and technology studies, and critical digitalisation studies. Reviewing the literature, we identify three fields framing current practices of sovereignty—(i) state and territory, (ii) civic engagement, and (iii) digitalisation—based on which we develop a conceptual framework of situated sovereignty. Our framework addresses the situated role of sovereignty practices from a spatial point of view. We propose pragmatism, legitimacy, and governance as three analytical themes for better understanding current and future shifting geographies of sovereignty and enhancing sovereignty studies.

KEYWORDS

civic engagement, digitisation, governance, legitimacy, political geography, practice, pragmatism, situatedness, sovereignty

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2023 The Authors. *Geography Compass* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Geographies of sovereignty are continuously shifting (Agnew, 2020; Couture & Toupin, 2019). Our aim is to complement the common understandings of sovereignty by pointing out its shortcomings and proposing a new, more epistemic understanding of sovereignty. Sovereignty is defined as the structural power mechanism and institutional authorities that are attributed to the people and in modern societies exercised through representative bodies such as elected parliaments. From a history of ideas perspective, sovereignty is a concept closely related to statism. In its traditional definition, as coined by Jean Bodin and Thomas Hobbes, sovereignty aims to combine powers and ensure stability by pooling resources and establishing a clear hierarchy of responsibilities, checks, and balances.

Over time, the process of concentrating power has broadened to include an increased democratic orientation. The term also encompasses the right of a state's citizens to exercise their self-determination, including their individual rights vis-à-vis the state (Grimm, 2013; Nootens, 2013). These conceptions of sovereignty have always remained closely linked to a geographic-territorial orientation, despite the rise of cybernetic thinking from the second half of the twentieth century onward, and thus of thinking in networks (Lambach, 2020). Consequently, understandings of sovereignty are still strongly territorially conceived, defined by political and administrative boundaries; thus, sovereignty is primarily thought of in terms of the boundaries of nation states but also of other territorial entities, for example, states, federal states, or even municipalities (McCormack, 1999). Moreover, against the backdrop of digital transformation, sovereignty has gained enormous importance globally in the last decade, in political, public, and scientific discourse, on the part of very different actors (politics, organisations, civil society, individuals) and in diverse references—from cybersecurity to consumer sovereignty (Thiel, 2019).

Common representations of these changing geographies of sovereignty are processes that originate as an interplay between globalisation and regionalisation (Moisio, 2006). Both are perceived as competing forces in so different phenomena, such as European integration, international migration, or responses to recent crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, or financial crisis. Recent contributions on the concept of globalisation—and in recent years the planetary—(e.g. Mould, 2023) suggest being more specific regarding the holistic assumptions of the planetary and, consequently, addressing distinct human practices in its specific contexts. Following this critical approach and especially with regards to digital transformation, we must rethink existing concepts of sovereignty and question the very “nature of sovereignty” (Floridi, 2020, p. 5).

We recognise a growing political need for democratic engagement and an increasing awareness of the demand for democratically practised digital sovereignty in recent years. We refer to the activities of actors that take place outside the usual administrative routines and institutional contexts but which can nevertheless change and influence a great deal on the ground. These sovereignty practices are therefore about recognising, occupying, and making use of the scope for action that, in principle, all citizens can create for themselves, not only politicians through decisions in parliament or administrative actors through administrative action.

Conceptually, there is a lively debate on how to foresee these activities that aim at realising democratically grounded modes of “doing sovereignty” as “hybrid governance arrangements” (Baud et al., 2021), “reconfiguring urban governance” (Davidson et al., 2019), or new “governance orders” (Young, 2021). Due to the great importance of non-state actors in our understanding of sovereignty, we acknowledged a great closeness to the concept of governance in our reconceptualisation of the term, with non-state actors also playing a major role. In some respects, sovereignty is the lubricant that makes governance work.

However, where and how to practically do sovereignty remains unclear. Knowing where and how to practise sovereignty has become even more urgent, as responses to recent global crises stress the need to design policies at different scales (Sharp & Raven, 2021). Correspondingly, we push the debate in the direction of rethinking geographies of sovereignty and conceptualising the spatial dimensions of “doing sovereignty”. Much has been stated about the necessity to reconfigure sovereignty (Agnew, 2020; Blühdorn & Butzlaff, 2019; McConnell, 2009; Mountz, 2013). Therefore, taking a closer look at the “doing of sovereignty” can, illustrated on the basis of practices and processes,

indicate how, in the implementation of these practices, collective action processes in which citizens experience self-efficacy and in which sovereignty intentions can be recognised and grasped.

We engage with conceptual discussions on the sociospatial configurations of “doing sovereignty”. To move beyond state-centred and fixed territorial understandings of sovereignty, we need to rethink the geographies of sovereignty in the digital age. We do not refer to territory as a bounded space. Rather, territory involves different ways of thinking about geographic space, and territories themselves result from territorial practices. As our realities can no longer be divided between the analogue and the digital, socio-technical developments force us to reconsider the dynamics of power and control on a global level on the one hand and adequate sociospatial terminologies on the other. To better understand and improve our knowledge of emerging practices of sovereignty in the digital age, the key question is: How can practices of doing sovereignty be conceptualised from a spatial point of view?

So far, the local and regional levels have been addressed as significant and analytically relevant spatial concepts involving the reconfiguration of private (corporate) and public governance and power. To bring forward a conceptual understanding that helps to address and analyse the shifting and oscillating relational geographies of sovereignty between global and local/regional contexts, we understand globalisation and regionalisation as processes of doing and re-doing sovereignty in the digital age that are highly situated and still differ significantly from region to region.

Doing or practising sovereignty in cities and regions implies that they constantly shift their sovereignty through processes of growing or shrinking, adaptation, transformation, or stagnation. Accordingly, the underlying challenge of urban and regional planning and development is to be capable of acting, to preserve and create room for manoeuvres, and, lastly, to take actions to master present and future challenges. Concepts related to agency, actionability, capacities to act, or empowerment are crucial to understanding actual practices of sovereignty. Since sovereignty is about enabling actors to make decisions in the collective interest, practising sovereignty is highly situated.

These observations can be scrutinized beyond formalised planning logics, such as in the field of neighbourhood, village, and urban development planning, where they play an increasingly important role. They act freely and initiate independent processes, such as the “Urban League” in Germany. Other examples of this “sovereign action” beyond the market and the state can be seen above all locally and regionally, for example, in neighbourhood, village, and urban development, new regionalisation of public tasks (public transport, regional nature parks), and citizens' initiatives. This is often the case with new issues, such as dealing with migration, shrinkage, energy transition, and post-growth on the ground.

In the course of time, these activist digital networks, for example, in the form of the re:publica in Berlin, have developed into a temporary sovereignty node for digital agendas, digital rights, human-centred technological futures, and civic tech/alternative technologies. Rather, it is the original sovereignty that makes actors act. Whenever actors succeed in doing something, when they become active, or when they unfold their power to act, then sovereignty shows itself beyond the legal framework or the formal development and implementation of political concepts, programmes, and strategies (i.e. policies).

In this paper, our aim is to rethink the geographies of sovereignty. We do this by conceptualising practices of sovereignty along intersecting strands of the scholarly literature that have yet to be extensively related, drawing from policy and governance studies, science, and technology studies, critical digitalisation studies, and human geography. Based on our reading of the literature, we identify three conceptual fields framing current practices of sovereignty: (i) spatialities (territory, state, scale, and region), (ii) civic engagement, and (iii) digitalisation. Our review of the scholarly literature motivates us to introduce the conceptual framework of “situated sovereignty”, which we define as a practice-based collaborative, self-determined action to open alternative spaces. We introduce situated sovereignty as a conceptual framework to better understand informal, ad hoc, and interventionist action grounded in local and regional practices of self-organisation and civic engagement to deal with contemporary challenges and resulting in hybrid governance arrangements that emerge over time and space. Our perspective is related to understandings of collective sense-making outside formalised democratically legitimised institutions, as discussed in the scholarly literature (Casey, 2018; Dittrich et al., 2014; Greenwood et al., 2019; Hinton, 2014; Hünefeldt & Schlitte, 2018; Janssen et al., 2015; Madsen & Josephsson, 2017).

Our understanding of “situated sovereignty” is informed by concepts of social practice (Herlo et al., 2021; Schmid & Smith, 2020), concepts and usages of the term situatedness (Lippert et al., 2015), and especially Dewey's philosophy of pragmatism (Dewey, 1981, 1989). We ground our thinking on Dewey's philosophical pragmatism but broaden the practical “doing” by linking it to democratic valuing that needs experiences among individuals and collectives alike (see e.g.; Bridge, 2021). Pragmatism also refers to debates on the applicability of actor–network theory to geographical subjects (Bridge, 2021; Cenere, 2021). Sovereignty practices also relate to the capability approach pioneered by Amartya Sen in the 1980s, which focuses on what people are effectively able to do. Especially in relation to alternative (technological) practices that differ from governmental policy perspectives, critical digitalisation studies highlight the role that local practices and civil society play worldwide in collaboratively helping democracies to focus on issues of human rights, privacy, and protection of individuals and addressing the complex challenges that face us today (Couture & Toupin, 2019; Lambach & Oppermann, 2022; Wright, 2020).

Situated sovereignty refers to socio-cultural practices that are guided by “situational circumstances” (Casey, 2018), which place practical action above theoretical reasoning (Bartels et al., 2020; Bridge, 2021; Hünefeldt & Schlitte, 2018). “Theoretical reasoning” refers to relying on complex belief systems with collective forms of legitimisation, while practical reasoning is a process to modify intentions and beliefs. Taking this observation further, we provide a conceptual frame to show the added value of “situated sovereignty” when analysing the diversity of “doing sovereignty”. Examples of situated sovereignty include local currency, shared infrastructures, circular and solidarity economy, regional commons and commoning, housing cooperatives, and community agriculture and forestry, as well as field configuring events such as the annual tech festival re:publica festival for digital society.

We introduce situated sovereignty as a conceptual framework to better understand informal, collaborative, ad hoc, and interventionist actions as prefigurative policy making. Accordingly, our interest is in researching local and regional practices (forms, expressions, spatialities) of self-organisation, civic engagement, or local initiatives to address contemporary challenges. Understanding the “doing” of sovereignty helps to propose ways to design sovereignty practices, preparatory planning, and participation procedures and to design relevant sovereignty regimes anew. In that respect, sovereignty as a concept is never territorially bounded or fixed but rather dynamic, agile, and fluid and needs to be built repeatedly according to new situations, as the understanding of sovereignty changes over time and depends on many different contextual factors. To grasp today's self-determined capability of individuals and communities to act in a networked world, sovereignty should always be considered against their societal, planning, and political contexts.

2 | GEOGRAPHIES OF SOVEREIGNTY

Before proposing our conceptual framework for situated sovereignty in more detail, we discuss sovereignty and the practices of sovereignty along intersecting strands of the scholarly literature that have scarcely been tied together. We identify three conceptual fields framing current practices of sovereignty: (i) spatiality (territory, state, scale, and region), (ii) civic engagement and (iii) digitalisation.

2.1 | Spatiality: Territory, state, scale, and region

The scholarly debate regarding the sovereignty of places and spaces is usually associated with terms such as “territorial sovereignty” or “regional sovereignty” (Agnew, 2005). Sovereignty is inherently characterised by a spatial or geographical element. In policy studies and political geography, we traditionally link sovereignty to state authority. Aside from a basic definition of sovereignty as national sovereignty, exercised through political, legal, or fiscal means, a variety of other understandings of sovereignty exists. Scholars refer to “sovereignty regimes” (Agnew, 2005, 2019), “disaggregated sovereignty” (Dean, 2010), “energy sovereignty”, “food sovereignty”, or “indigenous digital

sovereignty" (In Kukutai & Taylor, 2016). In political and geographical debates, scholars place the resulting formations as, for example, multiscale governance arrangements (Geels & Schot, 2007; Kreating, 2020; Strambach & Pflitsch, 2020), thereby acknowledging the weakened local state.

Our understanding of territory and sociospatial relations refers to the TPSN framework introduced by Jessop et al. (2008). They suggest that territories (T), places (P), scales (S), and networks (N) must be viewed as mutually constitutive and relationally intertwined dimensions of sociospatial relations. Jessop et al. (2008) reframed recent debates on sociospatial theory to better grasp the "inherently polymorphic, multidimensional character of sociospatial relations". The authors questioned the privileging of a single dimension of sociospatial processes, scalar or otherwise. They argue for a more systematic recognition of the polymorph organisation of sociospatial relations in multiple forms and for an extension of recent contributions to the spatialisation of the strategic-relational approach.

In this context, functional or administrative boundaries are not constitutive, nor are they effective for many sovereignty intentions and assertions; of relevance, instead, are horizontal networks (spaces), in which places have an important role. Following Löw (2008), territories and territoriality are constructed through communication and practices, forming "spatialities". Our understanding of "spatialities" shows that all actors are involved in the production of space, and consequently, their understandings of sovereignty are recognisable as spatially relevant practices. Digital technologies, in particular, have led to a multiplicity of relational spaces in and alongside powerful state- or market-dominated spaces. Practices of forming space and place, for example, the DECODE project in Barcelona, configure new spatial relations. DECODE, as an EU project on data sovereignty, provides tools that give individuals control over personal data and enable them to use them for the common good.

Consequently, the widened range of multiple actors puts cities and regions and the institutional framework all over the world under enormous stress and challenges established formal procedures of local state-defined sovereignty (Eneqvist & Karvonen, 2021). Outside of democratic states, authoritarian self-understanding has only recently been claimed as the very moment of state sovereignty. Instead of the way authoritarian states have claimed (digital) sovereignty so far, sovereignty should be understood as a broader principle that gives democracies space/room to formulate visions for accountable forms of governance in the digital realm.

As sovereignty is highly contested, depending on specific priorities, interpretations, and subjects, it is obvious that many sovereignty studies deal with borderlands and political conflict (Jones, 2012; Kraudzun, 2017; Murphy & Evershed, 2021; Stein, 2016). The securitisation of the border through the construction of roads, fences, and floodlights transgresses and ignores the imposition of sovereign authority at the previously open and lightly guarded border. Mason and Khawlie (2016) introduced the concept of "fluid sovereignty" to denote configurations of state authority in which flows of living and nonliving things, within, and across borders, render insecure claims of unconditional territorial control. The development of the EU and the ongoing European integration illustrate that "sovereignty is multi-layered, overlapping, fragmented and under constant re-definition" (Moisio, 2006, p. 444). On the one hand, the EU is a post-modern reaction or adaptation to globalisation, bringing back small, weakly bordered neo-medieval forms of territoriality. On the other hand, the EU emerges as a novel political actor performing sovereignty over a post-national territory.

The rescaling of states is resulting in new governance arrangements (see e.g. Agnew, 2005, 2019, 2020; Brenner, 1999; Elden, 2009; Mountz, 2013; Willi et al., 2018). New local and regional governance arrangements focus on bottom-up and place-based initiatives involving diverse stakeholders (Pütz et al., 2017; Willi et al., 2018). Regional policies have become increasingly regionalised, targeting subsidiarity as a key strategy.

From a geographical point of view, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown, that fixed spatial boundaries either on the level of the nation state or within state coalitions has reinvented the role of the nation state as a definer of everyday rules, restrictions, health services, and access to public institutions (Willi et al., 2020). Underneath the level of the national state, the distribution of the crisis was unequal, highlighting the various scales of the region and even sub-regions. Unequal distributions of infections have questioned the uniformity of national health policies and their legitimacy. The same applies to trans-border migrations that have caused an ongoing exchange of infected working migrants and—regarding health and regulating policies—delegitimised the effectiveness of sovereign nation state-based actions.

Literature sensitive to place and space highlights the role of place-based sovereignty. Accordingly, sovereignty is often practised with reference to territories (Jurkevics, 2022). A closer look at the dynamic and shifting geographies of sovereignty reveals these processes as those of regionalisation. This is because many everyday problems and tasks go beyond a municipal scale and require cross-sectoral collaboration as well as collaboration across borders. In this respect, regional governance means establishing regional sovereignty as a way of exercising self-determination and applying the concept of sovereignty to political entities other than states, such as sub-national institutions or indigenous communities (e.g. In Kukutai & Taylor, 2016). Regionalisation includes the institutionalisation of regional processes, the establishment of regional development agencies, and the empowerment of regional actors.

2.2 | Civic engagement

The debate on the role of civic engagement has moved away from a static institutional and territorial perspective on governance to a more flexible, dynamic, and de-territorialised conception of governance (Benz et al., 2007). Conceptually, the increased spectrum of civic engagement challenges the formal routines of doing and negotiating regional development processes from the top down.

Recent emphasis has been presented on the role and the prefigurative character of hybrid actors and their relational networks (In Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003). Furthermore, greater attention on non-state civic actors in processes of legitimacy building, power regulation, and decision-making can be observed (Baud & de Wit, 2009; Colona & Jaffe, 2016; Pierre & Peters, 2000). In these constellations, different actors are collectively involved in defining the 'rules' and processes. These broadened forms of doing civic involvement are an expression of an increased demand for power acceptance, and for the acceptance of the public will towards managing common affairs in the light of intensified and unforeseen crisis.

A wide debate on concepts of democracy and citizenship aims to see how contemporary policy-making arenas and public participation approaches may better represent marginalised social groups, local activists, and collaborative alliances in the decision-making (Gaventa, 2006; Herrle et al., 2015; Innes & Booher, 2004). Emerging forms of citizenship built up within social movements and civil society organisations to empower their members and engage with state institutions have been explored (e.g. Holston, 2013; Hordijk et al., 2015; Scott & Barnett, 2009).

Looking closer at the internal mechanism and the social positioning of these civic structures, a growing debate on the various processes of legitimation, the interplay of official planning, and participation processes (Carpenter & Horvath, 2022), the civic collectives act as structural intermediaries between formal state institutions and the wider public (Hargreaves et al., 2013), popped up. All these scholars aim at deciphering the processes that are associated with different "sovereignty making". Scholars debate how the output of planning, dialog, and negotiation processes is used in influencing decision-making processes (Baud et al., 2021).

Taking these observations further, we refer to "civic engagement" as an attempt at brokerage and sense-making among intermediary agents: Apart from the formalised democratic modes of "doing sovereignty," it becomes obvious that civic collectives locate themselves at the interfaces of different demands, disciplines, and social worlds to be able to create the corresponding added value through appropriate networking while arguing for their specific thematic interest. They are brokers of social capital and thus translators, mediators, and facilitators (Schmid & Smith, 2020). As thematically focussed interest groups, their work is project-based and thus designed for constant transformation and cooperation to achieve their goals. Thus, they counter the structural changes of today's capitalism, in which hierarchical, often network-based, forms of organisation displace the hierarchical, monolithic structures of the industrial age and their democratic representations. Co-designing and experimental civic engagements have found their way into various formalised "places of negotiation", for example, social living labs or "policy innovation labs" (Williamson, 2015). They represent a pioneering approach for actions, design-based creative methods, and situated civic engagement reconfiguring modes of sovereignty. This applies especially to the relationship between sovereignty and the digital.

Since the debate on civic engagement has conceptually ignored the formative role of digital technologies, we are aiming to point out how digital-based practices have recently changed our knowledge regarding the reconfiguring of geographical proximity and distance relations worldwide. This is even more relevant, as long-standing socioeconomic and infrastructural disparities between the centre and periphery have not dissolved due to technological distribution but rather lead to new places, including places that have been left behind (Hepp et al., 2022). Both aspects show the necessity of taking a closer look at the configuring premises imposed by digitalisation.

2.3 | Digitisation

Information, access, and networking beyond borders and governments, as some of the main promises of the networked society, might still determine the ways in which we frame civic opportunities for individuals and organisations to exercise their roles in the digital world self-determinedly. The narrative of the mere idea of the global, participatory, and inclusive sphere of cyberspace (Barlow, 1996; Negroponte, 1995) has been faltering for some time—at the latest since questions of privacy, security, and data ownership became reinforced into critical consideration through the revelations presented by the whistleblower Edward Snowden in 2013 (Couture & Toupin, 2019; Pohle & Thiel, 2021).

A key concept that underlies many political conversations when speaking of digitalisation is digital sovereignty as a form of striving for more independence and self-determination in the digital world (Pohle, 2019). Across all areas, individuals, communities, and regions face manifold opportunities as well as challenges and risks to their self-determination. In a very short amount of time, most areas of our societies have been transformed by digital technologies and the global technical infrastructure of the Internet. Its growing role in politics, at the national and European levels and beyond, and its implications for people, the environment, and technology make it urgent to examine how digital sovereignty is understood and the consequences of lacking it.

The focus on democratic digital sovereignty (as opposed to authoritarian claims or “laissez-faire” logics of the area of the so-called Californian Internet) brings about a perspectivation of digital sovereignty that no longer looks mainly at the dominant role of the state but considers digital self-determination and autonomy through collective and collaborative governance, sustained by civil society initiatives and social movements (Couture & Toupin, 2019). Understanding digital sovereignty from this democratic self-determination point of view is to perceive the concept as a right to be claimed and a process constantly in the making, as a condition of the ability to critically partake in the societal digital transformation. The latter requires profound and well-informed debates around technology, regulation, and digital literacy (German Consumer Affairs Council, 2017). This lens stresses the importance of inclusive digital participation, as it frames digital sovereignty as a performative practice that requires constant deliberation, renegotiation of rights, and assessments of risks, opportunities, and capabilities (Pierri & Herlo, 2021).

Digitalisation has created not only supranational corporate dominance but also a weakening of the national sovereignty scale. As a counterreaction, national-based as well as local civic-based attempts have begun to bridge the separated fields of action between sovereignty and digital networks. Since the transformation of analogue public rights to digital ones, a large strand of the debate in recent years has been dominated by technological optimism. It has highlighted access, information, and participation in the vein of providing new positive narratives against global inequalities. At the same time, the fulfilment of digital sovereignty has raised the question of how democratic self-determination points at citizen's and individual's right to be claimed as a constantly shifting process. This is even more important when pointing to digital support tools (decentral contact tracing) in a pandemic as an opportunity to critically partake in everyday life again. Digital sovereignty in the light of practising civic engagement implies a deterministic, technology-driven perspective. However, from a social inclusive point of view, practice-based approaches demand design practices that consider the rights and skillsets people need to understand and control their data as a main aspect of their digital literacy.

3 | SITUATED SOVEREIGNTY: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES

Building on three stocks of recent local and regional debates and their efforts to approach collective forms of “doing sovereignty” and “practices of collaborative action”, we propose to rethink geographies of sovereignty beyond traditional geopolitical understandings of territorial sovereignty. We aim to push the conceptual debate further to better understand how cities and regions practice sovereignty and how this practice is situated in place, time, and context. Given that civic engagement has always defined itself as agency and distinct empowerment, recent local and regional sovereignty formations in the digital age do it similarly. Understanding (digital) sovereignty is about capacities to act, governance, and enabling actors to make decisions in the collective interest (Herlo et al., 2021). In that respect, sovereignty as a concept is never territorially bounded or fixed but rather dynamic and fluid and can be deciphered as highly situated. Taking this grounding idea further, spatial sub-categories such as scale, network, or space and place help us to understand the idea of “situated sovereignty” that is inscribed in distinct space, time, and context.

Our conceptual framework of situated sovereignty helps to identify fluid interactions between situation and space more easily than in the past for the understanding of “doing sovereignty” (Chatterton & Pusey, 2020; Herlo et al., 2021). Local expressions stemming from collaborative actions are objects of investigation that give scholars easy access to observable social practices and changing situations (de Vaujany et al., 2019; Grabher & Ibert, 2013). They are indicative of enhanced degrees of freedom of choice; there are hardly any constraints that people in civil society experience through political exposure, organisational structures, hierarchies, production plans, or pressure to perform.

Communities and collaborative practices may be a delimiting element of such freedom, giving social practices and transactions some orientation (Schüßler et al., 2021). This, in turn, can be seen as a prerequisite for the emergence of situatedness, because once a decision for collaboration has been made and reference to a (thematic) community of practice has been established, experimental forms of doing “things collaboratively” are likely to unfold (Ibert et al., 2015; Lange et al., 2020). Situated practices flourishing in local niches appear as a firmly rooted bulwark against estranged formalised political powers and self-assured social innovation from below.

Situatedness, largely based on temporal collaborative sense-building, identity formation, and conducive social transactions, may thus serve as a counterbalance to the rule of experts, political dirigisme, and state-defining actions. Situated sovereignty might not only give a clearer impression of the spatialities that emanate from the wealth of relations, cross-references, and agency established by civil society. It might also explain the dynamism that many other bottom-up approaches entail.

We propose three analytical themes to conceptualise “situated sovereignty”: (i) pragmatism, (ii) legitimacy, and (iii) governance.

3.1 | Pragmatism and situated sovereignty

Pragmatist understandings of situatedness (Bridge, 2021; Hünefeldt & Schlitte, 2018; Lowe & Chiu, 2020) promise to give clearer insights than before into relevant dynamics of sociospatial practices, of reiterated transactions that form and legitimise situations, and of social innovative approaches towards political will and to multiple internal (communities) and external relations (networks, politics, other social fields). They have the potential to reveal the richness of social phenomena that characterise open fields, that is, social forms, processes, and constructions of meaning that continually change and provide fluid spatialities. Phenomenological approaches may be helpful in the theoretical and empirical description of such situatedness, as they provide intimate knowledge about the individual's natural involvement in complex social processes (De Vaujany & Aroles, 2019; de Vaujany et al., 2019; Fabbri & Charue-Duboc, 2013; Hünefeldt & Schlitte, 2018).

The references to social practice that scholars of pragmatism make come close to geography's concern with the social construction of place and space, although without directly addressing it. How, then, can the relationship between situatedness and place/space be theorised within the further debate on sovereignty?

One answer given by phenomenological approaches can be read as a complement to pragmatism (e.g. Hünefeldt & Schlitte, 2018). Referring to the basic idea of humans being 'cast into the world' (uttered in various ways by Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Clancey). Hünefeldt and Schlitte (2018) concluded that humans always face a natural life-world that they cannot escape. Being tied to situations and their shifts, social agents mostly deal with places that are involved in the evolution of situations and that force them to define a moment of sovereignty for at least this situation.

The need for theoretical concepts that interrelate agency, situation, or context and space has caught attention. The common point of reference in all of their debates is Dewey's definition of situations. Dewey (1981, p. 18) assumes that agency is based on transactions that involve human and non-human elements. The outcome of a series of overlapping and interrelated transactions is reflected in humans as experiences. Experience 'happens' within situations that are characterised by "a large number of elements existing across wide areas of space and long periods of time, but which, nevertheless, have their own unity" (Dewey, 1989, p. 291, cited after Bridge, 2021, p. 420). Situations thus "reflect the complexity of relations between material and organic elements" (*ibid.*).

In this pragmatist perspective, 'situatedness' describes a state in which an individual or group experiences its everyday life. More specifically, the context provided by a situation becomes relevant for action if it is involved in practices of problem solving and in overcoming uncertainty through experimental action (Madsen & Josephsson, 2017, with reference to Dewey, 1939). This is the connecting point to the increasing role of experimental spaces, where new collaborations are tested, experienced, and formed according to "big challenges".

In the terminology of Madsen and Josephsson (2017), everyday 'occupation' denominates successive events of 'doing' that individuals perform in their everyday lives. According to the authors, "From this perspective, an occupation always takes place in and is dependent on the specifics of a situation. Hence, situatedness refers to "specific situations in which occupation takes place" (Madsen & Josephsson, 2017, p. 1).

The theoretical framework that Dewey (1981) and other pragmatists offer promises to facilitate the identification of transactions, the condensing of repeated transactions into experience, the intermingling of relations of individual and collective experience with networks of internal and external relations, material elements, influences, societal 'modes of operation', the planful or unintentional invention of things and procedures, and finally the self-declared or externally declared quality of such inventions as novel or as a spreading innovation. As far as the complexities of the formation of space and place are concerned, it might be helpful to integrate a recently developed theoretical lens. We must stress that the task consists of getting rid of preconceived ideas of space that present it as a fixation of political, social, or economic processes.

3.2 | Legitimacy and situated sovereignty

For decades, new practices and habits of demand and use have come up against understandings of boundaries and the drawing of boundaries in the everyday use of space. When boundaries are no longer fixed but mobile and realigned, they mean different things to different people (Balibar, 2002). This decouples the notion of scale (local, regional, national) from fixed spatial-territorial categories of fixed demarcations. If the latter do not have universally valid but different effects on social groups, a concept of sovereignty that can no longer be described territorially—understood as an appropriation of space acquired through everyday practices of use, for example, in the form of "my group", "my neighbourhood", or "my community". This a theoretical gap.

The varying subjective understandings of borders that extend beyond physical space, which often overlap and counteract each other, are then ciphers for everyday appropriations of space (in the physical as well as the digital), in the sense of a self-empowerment in the appropriation of space that marks other borders than, for example, an administratively-territorially limited space. Approaches to the process of bordering emphasise, for example, the flexible ways in which actors relate to situated social and spatial elements of their lifeworlds (Johnson & Jones, 2014). Subsequently, the description of different sociospatial scopes of borders—of the fixed local as well as the global—

shows the fuzziness that it has created: on the one hand, in relation to territorially defined understandings of sovereignty, of the people and institutions acting within it, and on the other hand, in relation to everyday practical understandings of self-determined use of “my” space.

These practices are to be understood as expressions of different understandings of space appropriation as well as distinct legitimacy doing that reveal space as a heterotopic reference point from the perspective of everyday use practices (Willi et al., 2023). To move away from a primary consideration of conflicts and points of friction, fixed concepts of boundaries and scales (such as local vs. global) should be questioned. Integrative approaches conceptually reveal how fluid places and flexible forms of social and socio-technical construction “hybridise” within “horizontal” social fields and how processes of social practice, as well as their materialities, can be continually re-referenced (Löv, 2008). This shift in sociospatial relations is, again, fuelled by the digital transformation and the readjustment of local versus global, leading to an increased hybridisation and complexity of the fields of action of individual spatial appropriation practices.

Contrary to the notion of fixed boundaries and associated nested and stacked understandings of hierarchy, as well as predetermined levels of scale, a look at the respective different ways in which spaces are constructed shows that sociospatial contexts each open up different contingent spaces for action. The relational perspective on different forms of appropriation of space points the way to recognising different expectations and interests of use and placing them in relation to the political question of for whom the space should be used.

3.3 | Governance and situated sovereignty

The understanding of how power is distributed throughout multi-scalar governance arrangements is perceived as very important (Swyngedouw, 1997). Views of dominant actors may prevail with the knowledge of less-powerful actors marginalised (Allen, 2011, p. 24). Therefore, the view of “situated sovereignty” is important in order to acknowledge alternative action among various hybrid governance arrangements that emerge over time and space. Governance concepts play an important role in spatial research, especially when understanding the role of intermediary actors and their political positioning. A basic component of these governance concepts is to address the engagement of intermediary actors, bottom-up initiatives, and collaborative action between civic society, the market, and politics. Regarding the specificity of intermediary actors, it is worthwhile to look at different understandings, concepts, and forms of situated sovereignty.

Self-governance and self-rule are perceived as the ability of a person or group to exercise all necessary functions of regulation without intervention from an external authority. It may refer to personal conduct or to any form of institution, such as family units, social groups, affinity groups, legal bodies, industry bodies, religions, and political entities of various degrees. Self-governance is closely related to various philosophical and socio-political concepts, such as autonomy, independence, self-control, self-discipline, and sovereignty. In the context of nation-states, self-governance is called national sovereignty. In the context of administrative division, a self-governing territory is called an autonomous region. Self-governance is also associated with political contexts in which a population or demographic becomes independent from colonial rule, absolute government, absolute monarchy, or any government that they perceive does not adequately represent them. It is therefore a fundamental tenet of many democracies, republics, and nationalist governments.

Following this line of thinking, Hajer and Versteeg (2005) argued that an analytical expectation of governance is that practices of ‘performance’ and of experiences should be paid more attention, considering shared viewpoints and the development of joint sense-making of sovereignty ‘rules’. Essential and pressing crisis phenomena often drive actors to collaborate, acknowledging that the requirement to work out effective solutions to problems is key (Driessen et al., 2012). Each action is situated within a specific governance arrangement, and a distinct spatial context.

4 | CONCLUSION

Situated sovereignty as a concept provides a promising tool for studying the shifting geographies of sovereignty in the digital present. The key is to include situated forms of doing and belonging in this perspective. The analysis not only delivers a key for tracing the success or failure of practical bottom-up approaches to independent socialities under the

tutelage of 'do-it-together' or collaboratively acting temporal communities. It puts the spatiality of these approaches into perspective—that is, as open, changeable, and fluid processes and, thus, preconfigurative governance arrangements. In this respect, we contribute to research on new forms of sovereignty, situated forms of 'doing' and 'practices', and why sovereignty differs geographically. Sovereignty can hardly ever be described in terms of fixed spatial formations, such as territories. Situated sovereignty has the potential to understand places as represented by strong ideas of local and regional autonomy amid the search for alternative, diverse, and post-capitalistic spaces (Schmid & Smith, 2020). This emancipatory component of situated sovereignty is not limited to local niches and counter communities. It is also present where social practices are developed beyond the structuring power of organisations and political interventions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to two anonymous reviewers. We would also like to thank Markus Hesse and Klaus Kunzmann for helpful comments on earlier drafts of the paper.

Open Access funding enabled and organized by Projekt DEAL.

ORCID

Bastian Lange  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3619-900X>

Marco Pütz  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7868-6864>

REFERENCES

- Agnew, J. (2005). Sovereignty regimes: Territoriality and state authority in contemporary world politics. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 95(2), 437–461. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.2005.00468.x>
- Agnew, J. (2019). National and regional integration. In D. Richardson, N. Castree, M. F. Goodchild, A. Kobayashi, W. Liu, & R. A. Marston (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of geography*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118786352.wbieg0424.pub2>
- Agnew, J. (2020). Taking back control? The myth of territorial sovereignty and the brexit fiasco. *Territory, Politics, Governance*, 8(2), 259–272. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2019.1687327>
- Allen, J. (2011). Topological twists. *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 1(3), 283–298. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2043820611421546>
- Balibar, É. (2002). *Politics and the other scene*. Verso.
- Barlow, J. P. (1996). A declaration of the independence of cyberspace. 8, retrieve Feb. 12th 2016.
- Bartels, L. E., Bruns, A., & Simon, D. (2020). Towards situated analyses of uneven peri-urbanisation: An (urban) political ecology perspective. *Antipode*, 52(5), 1237–1258. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12632>
- Baud, I., Jameson, S., Peyroux, E., & Scott, D. (2021). The urban governance configuration: A conceptual framework for understanding complexity and enhancing transitions to greater sustainability in cities. *Geography Compass*, 15(5), e12562. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12562>
- Baud, I. S. A. & De Wit, J. (Eds.) (2009). *New forms of urban governance in India: Shifts, models, networks and contestations*. SAGE.
- Benz, A., Lütz, S., Schimank, U., & Simonis, G. (2007). Einleitung. In A. Benz, S. Lütz, & U. Schimank (Eds.), *Handbuch Governance. Theoretische Grundlagen und empirische Anwendungsfelder*. Wiesbaden. VS - Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften. S. 9–26.
- Blühdorn, I., & Butzlaff, F. (2019). Rethinking populism: Peak democracy, liquid identity and the performance of sovereignty. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 22(2), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431017754057>
- Brenner, N. (1999). Beyond state-centrism? Space, territoriality, and geographical scale in globalization studies. *Theory and Society*, 28(1), 39–78. <https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1006996806674>
- Bridge, G. (2021). On pragmatism, assemblage and ANT: Assembling reason. *Progress in Human Geography*, 45(3), 417–435. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132520924710>
- Carpenter, J., & Horvath, C. (2022). Co-creation and the city: Arts-based methods and participatory approaches in urban planning. *Urban Planning*, 7(3), 311–314. <https://doi.org/10.17645/up.v7i3.6106>
- Casey, E. (2018). Place and situation. In T. Hünefeldt & A. Schlitte (Eds.), *Situatedness and place* (pp. 9–26). Springer.
- Genere, S. (2021). Making translations, translating making. *City*, 25(3–4), 355–375. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2021.1935782>
- Chatterton, P., & Pusey, A. (2020). Beyond capitalist enclosure, commodification and alienation: Postcapitalist praxis as commons, social production and useful doing. *Progress in Human Geography*, 44(1), 27–48. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132518821173>

- Colona, F., & Jaffe, R. (2016). Hybrid governance arrangements. *European Journal of Development Research*, 28(2), 175–183. <https://doi.org/10.1057/ejdr.2016.5>
- Couture, S., & Toupin, S. (2019). What does the notion of “sovereignty” mean when referring to the digital? *New Media & Society*, 21(10), 2035–2322. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444819865984>
- Davidson, K., Coenen, L., Acuto, M., & Gleeson, B. (2019). Reconfiguring urban governance in an age of rising city networks: A research agenda. *Urban Studies*, 56(16), 3540–3555. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098018816010>
- Dean, M. (2010). Power at the heart of the present: Except, risk, and sovereignty. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 13(4), 459–475. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549410377147>
- De Vaujany, F.-X., & Aroles, J. (2019). Nothing happened, something happened: Silence in a makerspace. *Management Learning*, 50(2), 208–225. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507618811478>
- De Vaujany, F.-X., Dandoy, A., Grandazzi, A., & Faure, S. (2019). Experiencing a new place as an atmosphere: A focus on tours of collaborative spaces. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 35(2), 101030. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2018.08.001>
- Dewey, J. (1981). The later works 1925–1953 (Vol. 1). In J.-A. Boydson (Ed.), *1925: Experience and nature*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Dewey, J. (1989). The later works 1925–1953 (Vol. 16). In J.-A. Boydson (Ed.), *1949–52: Essays, typescripts and knowing and the known*. University Press.
- Dewey, J. (1939). Theory of valuation. In *International encyclopedia of unified science II*. (Vol. 4, p. 11–67).
- Dittrich, Y., Eriksen, S., & Wessels, B. (2014). Learning through situated innovation: Why the specific is crucial for participatory design research. *Scandinavian Journal of Information Systems*, 26(1), 29–56.
- Driessen, P. P. J., Dieperink, C., Laerhoven, F., Runhaar, H. A. C., & Vermeulen, W. J. V. (2012). Towards a conceptual framework for the study of shifts in modes of environmental governance—Experiences from The Netherlands. *Environmental Policy and Governance*, 22(3), 143–160. <https://doi.org/10.1002/eet.1580>
- Elden, S. (2009). *Terror and territory: The spatial extent of sovereignty*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Eneqvist, E., & Karvonen, A. (2021). Experimental governance and urban planning futures: Five strategic functions for municipalities in local innovation. *Urban Planning*, 6(1), 183–194. <https://doi.org/10.17645/up.v6i1.3396>
- Fabbri, J., & Charue-Duboc, F. (2013). The role of physical space in collaborative workplaces hosting entrepreneurs. In F.-X. Vaujany & N. Mitev (Eds.), *Materiality and space: Organizations, artefacts and practices*. Houndmills, basingstoke, hampshire (pp. 117–134). Houndmills.
- Floridi, L. (2020). The fight for digital sovereignty: What it is, and why it matters, especially for the EU. *Philosophy & Technology*, 33(3), 369–378. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-020-00423-6>
- Gaventa, J. (2006). Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. Triumph, deficit or contestation? Deepening the ‘deepening democracy’ debate. (IDS working paper 264.
- Geels, F. W., & Schot, J. (2007). Typology of sociotechnical transition pathways. *Research Policy*, 36(3), 399–417. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2007.01.003>
- German Consumer Affairs Council (Sachverständigenrat für Verbraucherfragen). (2017). Digitale Souveränität. Gutachten des Sachverständigenrats für Verbraucherfragen.
- Grabher, G., & Ibert, O. (2013). Distance as asset? Knowledge collaboration in hybrid virtual communities. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 14(1), 97–123. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jeg/lbt014>
- Greenwood, A., Lauren, B., Knott, J., & DeVoss, D. N. (2019). Dissensus, resistance, and ideology: Design thinking as a rhetorical methodology. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 33(4), 400–424. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1050651919854063>
- Grimm, D. (2013). *Souveränität: Herkunft und Zukunft eines Schlüsselbegriffs*. Berlin University Press.
- Hajer, M., & Versteeg, W. (2005). Performing governance through networks. *European Political Science*, 4(3), 340–347. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.eps.2210034>
- Hajer, M. & Wagenaar, H. (Eds.) (2003), *Deliberative policy analysis: Understanding governance in the network society (Theories of institutional design)*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511490934>
- Hargreaves, T., Hielscher, S., Seyfang, G., & Smith, A. (2013). Constructing grassroots innovations for sustainability. *Global Environmental Change*, 23(5), 827–829. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2013.07.003>
- Hepp, A., Jarke, J., & Kramp, L. (Eds.) (2022), *New perspectives in critical data studies. The ambivalences of data power*. Springer.
- Herlo, B., Irrgang, D., Joost, G., & Unteidig, A. (Eds.) (2021), *Practicing sovereignty. Digital involvement in times of crises*.
- Herrle, P., Fokdal, J., & Ley, A. (2015). Transnational networks of urban poor: Key for a more collaborative urban governance? In P. Herrle, J. Fokdal, & A. Ley (Eds.), *From local action to global networks: Housing the urban poor* (pp. 195–202). Routledge.
- Hinton, P. (2014). ‘Situated knowledges’ and new materialism(s): Rethinking a politics of location. *Women: A Cultural Review*, 25(1), 99–113. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09574042.2014.901104>
- Holston, J. (2013). Spaces of insurgent citizenship. In J. C. Lin & C. Mele (Eds.), *The urban sociology reader* (2nd ed., pp. 248–423). Routledge.

- Hordijk, M., Miranda, S. L., Sutherland, C., & Scott, D. (2015). Participatory instruments and practices in urban governance. In J. Gupta, K. Pfeffer, H. Verrest, & M. Ros-Tonen (Eds.), *Geographies of urban governance: Advanced theories, methods and practices* (pp. 127–146). Springer.
- Hünefeldt, T. & Schlitte, A. (Eds.) (2018)., *Situatedness and place: Multidisciplinary perspectives on the spatio-temporal contingency of human life*. Springer.
- Ibert, O., Hautala, J., & Jauhiainen, J. (2015). From cluster to process: New economic geographic perspectives on practices of knowledge creation. *Geoforum*, 65, 323–327. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2015.06.023>
- Innes, J. E., & Booher, D. E. (2004). Reframing public participation: Strategies for the 21st century. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 5(4), 419–436. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1464935042000293170>
- Janssen, M., Stoopendaal, A. M. V., & Putters, K. (2015) Situated novelty: Introducing a process perspective on the study of innovation. *Research Policy*, 44(10), 1974–1984. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2015.06.008>
- Jessop, B., Brenner, N., & Jones, M. R. (2008). Theorizing socio-spatial relations. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 26(3), 389–401. <https://doi.org/10.1068/d9107>
- Johnson, C., & Jones, R. (2014). Where is the border? In R. Jones & C. Johnson (Eds.), *Placing the border in everyday life, Border regions series* (pp. 15–32). Ashgate Publishing.
- Jonas, A. E. G. (2012). Region and place: Regionalism in question. *Progress in Human Geography*, 36(2), 263–272. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132510394118>
- Jurkevics, A. (2022). Land grabbing and the perplexities of territorial sovereignty. *Political Theory*, 50(1), 32–58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009059172111008591>
- Keating, M. (2020). Beyond the nation-state: Territory, solidarity, and welfare in a multiscalar Europe. *Territory, Politics, Governance*, 9(3), 331–345. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2020.1742779>
- Kraudzun, T. (2017). Sovereignty as a resource: Performing securitised borders in Tajikistan's Pamirs. *Geopolitics*, 22(4), 837–862. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2017.1284817>
- Kukutai, T. & Taylor, J. (Eds.) (2016)., *Indigenous data sovereignty: Toward an agenda*. ANU Press.
- Lambach, D. (2020). The territorialization of cyberspace. *International Studies Review*, 22(3), 482–506. <https://doi.org/10.1093/isr/viz022>
- Lambach, D., & Oppermann, K. (2022). Narratives of digital sovereignty in German political discourse. *Governance*, 36(3), 1–17. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gove.12690>
- Lange, B., Harding, S., & Cahill-Jones, T. (2020). Collaboration at new places of production: A European view on procedural policy making for makerspaces. *European Journal of Creative Practices in Cities and Landscapes*, 2(2), 67–85.
- Lippert, I., Krause, F., & Hartmann, N. (2015). Environmental management as situated practice. *Geoforum*, 66, 107–114. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2015.09.006>
- Löw, M. (2008). The constitution of space. The structuring of spaces through the simultaneity of effect and perception. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 11(1), 25–49. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431007085286>
- Lowe, R., & Chiu, L. F. (2020). Innovation in deep housing retrofit in the United Kingdom: The role of situated creativity in transforming practice. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 63(2020), 101391. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2019.101391>
- MacCormick, N. (1999). *Questioning sovereignty: Law, state, and nation in the European Commonwealth*. Oxford University Press.
- Madsen, J., & Josephsson, S. (2017). Engagement in occupation as an inquiring process: Exploring the situatedness of occupation. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 24(4), 412–424. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14427591.2017.1308266>
- Mason, M., & Khawlie, M. (2016). Fluid sovereignty: State-nature relations in the hasbani basin, southern Lebanon. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 106(6), 1344–1359. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2016.1213155>
- McConnell, F. (2009). Governments-in-exile: Statehood, statelessness, and the reconfiguration of territory and sovereignty. *Geography Compass*, 3(5), 1902–1919. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8198.2009.00274.x>
- Moiso, S. (2006). Competing geographies of sovereignty, regionality and globalisation: The politics of EU resistance in Finland 1991–1994. *Geopolitics*, 11(3), 439–464. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040600767891>
- Mould, O. (2023). From globalisation to the planetary: Towards a critical framework of planetary thinking in geography. *Geography Compass*, 17(9), e12720. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12720>
- Mountz, A. (2013). Political geography I: Reconfiguring geographies of sovereignty. *Progress in Human Geography*, 37(6), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132513479076>
- Murphy, M. C., & Evershed, J. (2021). Contesting sovereignty and borders: Northern Ireland, devolution and the Union. *Territory, Politics, Governance*, 10(5), 661–677. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2021.1892518>
- Negroponte, N. (1995). The digital revolution: Reasons for optimism. *The Futurist Washington*, 29(6), 68.
- Nootens, G. (2013). *Popular sovereignty in the West: Politics, contention, and ideas*. Routledge.
- Pierre, J., & Peters, G. (2000). *Governance, politics and the state*. Martins Press. ISBN-13: 978-0230220447.
- Pierr, P., & Herlo, B. (2021). Exploring digital sovereignty: Open questions for design in digital healthcare. *Design for Health*, 5(1), 161–175. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24735132.2021.1928381>

- Pohle, J. (2019). Digitale souveränität. In T. Klenk, F. Nullmeier, & G. Wewer (Eds.), *Handbuch Digitalisierung in Staat und Verwaltung. Living reference work*. Springer VS.
- Pohle, J., & Thiel, T. (2021). Digital sovereignty. In *Practicing sovereignty: Digital involvement in times of crises* (pp. 47–67). Transcript Verlag.
- Pütz, M., Gubler, L., & Willi, Y. (2017). New governance of protected areas: Regional nature parks in Switzerland. *Eco.mont*, 9(special issue), 75–84. <https://doi.org/10.1553/eco.mont-9-sis75>
- Schmid, B., & Smith, T. S. J. (2020). Social transformation and postcapitalist possibility: Emerging dialogues between practice theory and diverse economies. *Progress in Human Geography*, 45(2), 253–275. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132520905642>
- Schüßler, E., Senjenova, S., & Cohendet, P. (2021). Introduction: Organizing creativity for innovation: Situated practices and process perspectives. In E. Schüßler, S. Senjenova, & P. Cohendet (Eds.), *Organizing creativity for innovation: Situated practices and process perspectives (vol. Research in the sociology of organization)* (pp. 1–16).
- Scott, D., & Barnett, C. (2009). Something in the air: Civic science and contentious environmental politics in post-apartheid South Africa. *Geoforum*, 40(3), 373–382. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2008.12.002>
- Sharp, D., & Raven, R. (2021). Urban planning by experiment at precinct scale: Embracing complexity, ambiguity, and multiplicity. *Urban Planning*, 6(1), 195–207. <https://doi.org/10.17645/up.v6i1.3525>
- Stein, A. (2016). The great trilemma: Are globalization, democracy, and sovereignty compatible? *International Theory*, 8(2), 297–340. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971916000063>
- Strambach, S., & Pflitsch, G. (2020). Transition topology: Capturing institutional dynamics in regional development paths to sustainability. *Research Policy*, 49(7), 104006. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2020.104006>
- Swyngedouw, E. (1997). Neither global nor local: “Glocalisation” and the politics of scale. In K. Cox (Ed.), *Spaces of globalization: Reasserting the power of the local* (137–166) Guilford/Longman.
- Thiel, T. (2019). Sovereignty: Dynamization and contestation in the digital constellation. In J. Hofmann, N. Kersting, C. Ritzi, & W. J. Schünemann (Eds.), *Politics in digital society: Key problem areas and research perspectives* (pp. 47–60). Transcript Verlag. <https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839448649-003>
- Willi, Y., Nischik, G., Braunschweiger, D., & Pütz, M. (2020). Responding to the COVID-19 crisis: Transformative governance in Switzerland. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 111(3), 302–317. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tesg.12439>
- Willi, Y., Pütz, M., & Jongerden, J. (2023). Unpacking legitimacy in regional development: Asymmetric justification and the functioning of regional development agencies. *Territory, Politics, Governance*, 11(1), 158–173. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2020.1805352>
- Willi, Y., Pütz, M., & Müller, M. (2018). Towards a versatile and multidimensional framework to analyse regional governance. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 36(5), 775–795. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2399654418760859>
- Williamson, B. (2015). Governing methods: Policy innovation labs, design, and data science in the digital governance of education. *Journal of Educational Administration & History*, 47(3), 51–271. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2015.1038693>
- Wright, N. D. (2020). Artificial intelligence and democratic norms meeting the authoritarian challenge. In *Sharp power and democratic resilience series*. International Forum for Democratic Studies.
- Young, O. R. (2021). *Grand challenges of planetary governance. Global order in turbulent times*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Bastian Lange is Adjunct Professor at University of Leipzig, Institute of Geography (GER). His research focuses on urban governance, spatial transformation, regional development, and alternative economies.

Marco Pütz is head of the research group Regional Economics and Development at the Swiss Federal Research Institute WSL in Birmensdorf/Zurich (CH). His research focuses on environmental governance, regional policy, spatial planning, adaptation to climate change, and sustainability transformations.

Bianca Herlo is a postdoc at the Design Research Lab of the Berlin University of the Arts and research group leader at the Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society, Berlin (GER). She teaches and researches in the fields of civic design/social design, design justice, digital transformation and gender justice.

How to cite this article: Lange, B., Pütz, M., & Herlo, B. (2023). Rethinking geographies of sovereignty: Towards a conceptual framework of situated sovereignty. *Geography Compass*, e12728. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12728>