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The common theme of the readings I will focus on in this response is the interaction between international norms and the nature of the state. Raustialia begins by tackling the proliferation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in bargaining over international regulatory regimes. One interesting proposal he mentions is the option of overcoming the risk of international bargains being vetoed at the domestic level by bringing domestic actors directly to the international bargaining table. This suggestion does not refer specifically to NGOs – rather Raustialia is positing the existence of a new form of politics, a true blend of international and domestic, where sub-national players from different national actors bargain with each other as well as with national players. I find this idea intriguing as it points to the trend in international relations theory of lowering the barrier between international and domestic politics, and instead viewing the two as in many cases inextricable.

Another major issue that lies implicitly in Raustialia's article is the question of whether or not NGOs represent a force for global justice in the anarchic international system. The Raustialia piece focuses mostly on the transactional, strategic role of NGOs in global environmental negotiations. But in the Reus-Smit and Jackson readings the question of ideals and norms of justice come into play, and clearly many INGOs address issues of inequality among nation-states, universal human rights, etc. These pieces together raise but do not answer the question of whether the cause of global justice in its many dimensions is advanced or limited by the folding of INGOs into international bargaining. After all, while the intuitive answer would be that NGOs advance the cause of global justice, it may in fact be that these same NGOs have been coopted by the anarchic state system's negotiations and are therefore limited in their ability to promote idealistic norms.

Raustialia mentions "informal informals" – subsets of international negotiations from which NGOs are excluded. The discussion of this phenomenon begs the question, what are the implications of the idea that government-to-government negotiations are less formal than government-to-government negotiations in front of NGOs, or government-to-NGO negotiations? I immediately thought the existence of informal informals supports the autonomy of national leaders in the sense of the principal-agent problem of domestic politics. It also suggests that NGOs play a monitoring role during negotiations, not just afterward.

As a methodological note, the Raustialia piece suffers from sample size concerns. Using the singular case of the GEF to test his theory is problematic, and his attempt to justify it by demonstrating that the GEF is a representative case could use more work. One final point on the content of the piece: the common requirement for NGO inclusion of "relevant expertise" may in the future limit the participation of NGOs that deal in more general challenges of global justice, such as North-South trade, universal human rights, etc. In addition, NGOs are most frequently based out of one country or region, and the proliferation of NGOs from one particular set of nations can limit the global nature of negotiations.

Moving to the Jackson article, the first point that I found problematic is the assumption that sovereignty is a dichotomous variable. Krasner's chapter at least initially suggests that sovereignty should be conceptualized as four-part, and by extension that it should in fact be viewed as continuous. Jackson's argument leads to the conclusion that legal sovereignty is in fact detrimental to the development of empirical sovereignty in states where the former is granted before the latter emerges. He argues that African states exhibit Krasner's international-legal sovereignty (negative sovereignty) but face challenges to Westphalian and domestic sovereignty (empirical, positive sovereignty) on two fronts. Jackson emphasizes the bottom-up front: African states are not aligned with African nations and pre-colonial states, so African governments lack the connections to traditional power structures in their populations/territory. Krasner and Raustialia emphasize the top-down front: African states, due perhaps to backlash from the colonial era international regime, are perpetually engaged by international non-state actors that both pressure governments to make decisions according to their theories (Washington Consensus) and limit the organic development of state capacity by filling critical bureaucratic and informational roles governments should fill on their own.

Contrasting Krasner and Jackson with Raustialia raises the interesting question of how much the participation of non-state actors in international relations leads to the reduction of state capacity in critical areas such as monitoring and information-gathering. International non-state actors can be beneficial and detrimental to state sovereignty simultaneously, it seems, as Raustialia makes the argument that states ultimately control the access of NGOs to the international regulatory arena while Jackson/Krasner argue that quasi-states cannot fully practice empirical sovereignty without the participation of international non-state actors. We must then ask, where do these two theories meet? There should be some set of international non-state actors that fall into the Raustialia category of supporting sovereignty by filling critical roles for the state in international negotiations over collective goods, and also fall into the Krasner/Jackson category of reducing sovereignty by pressuring states to adopt their viewpoint and not allowing organic development fueled by necessity. In fact I would argue that NGOs that deal in both the developed and the developing world are particularly prone to this dual nature with respect to sovereignty, and that what we find from bringing these two categories together is that sovereignty is neither dichotomous nor continuous – it is cyclical.

Another element of Jackson's article, Grotius' analogy of states and individuals, poses the following set of questions. What is the relationship between the international norm of post-colonial self-determination of states and the international norm of equal human rights? What is the connection between the unit of the state and the unit of the individual in a globalizing world? Jackson mentions the equality of "all peoples" – does that imply the equality of all persons? This is of course the Kantian argument. The example of the Association of Small Island States gives us some insight into these questions – the people who make up states at dire risk from global warming do not negotiate in the international arena as an aggregation of human beings. They negotiate for their very lives as a collection of nation-states. Why do they view their chances of success as higher given that form of collectivism? Should we not care more about the lives of individuals than the continuation of states? How do we use the example of the proliferation of NGOs in international negotiations to promote the proliferation of concern for individuals in the same arena?

Jackson mentions that empirical sovereignty resides in the developed West and the Soviet bloc, but ignores the concerns over the misidentification between states and nations so prevalent in the latter. After all, Central Asia and the Caucasus experienced massive reorganizations of their populations during the Stalinist purges, and we see the challenges of multi-nation states for domestic sovereignty in that region to this day. Both Krasner and Raustalia discuss international policies that initially rely on the support of powerful nations but rapidly develop inertia of their own, and become international norms. Examining autocratic states we observe a contradiction as a result of this solidification of norms. On the one hand, autocratic states benefit from the norm of international legal sovereignty. On the other hand, they face challenges from the international and domestic arenas based on the fact that they do not observe other international norms such as universal human rights, abolishment of child labor (I'm thinking of Uzbekistan in particular), and even representational government. Some authoritarian states seem to have recognized that this contradiction could become problematic for their international and domestic legitimacy, and have made limited concessions to international norms other than sovereignty (Rory Truex' work on "Representation Within Bounds" comes to mind).