

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
ABSTRACT

Historically, the state has been the principal actor in international affairs, and sovereignty has been at the cornerstone of the interstate system over the last several centuries. Its existence though constrained by exceptions has generally been accepted in international relations and law, evident by the state centrality of the discourse. The current phase of globalization characterised by increased interdependence and transcendence of territorial boundaries has challenged the assumptions of the concept. In this light, this thesis sets out to examine the relevance of sovereignty in the context of globalization.

The central argument of the thesis is that the states' capacity to independently effect decisions in the economic, political and social spheres has been significantly curtailed as a result of developments in the global political economy. The depth and breadth of the integration of the global production and financial system, with its socio-political implications has challenged the sanctity of territorial integrity, and made the sovereign autonomy of the state virtually obsolete. Although the sovereign state remains an active part of the international system, the Westphalian system of state-led world politics is being eroded.