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MANAGEMENT PAPERS

Sovereignty@Bay: Globalization, Multinational Enterprise, and the International Political System

 Download[Stephen J. Kobrin, University of Pennsylvania](#)**Document Type**

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Abstract

This article is concerned with only one aspect of the vast literature on MNE–state relations: the impact of the MNE on sovereignty, autonomy, and control. It argues that the mainstream literature of the sovereignty at bay era did not predict the end of the nation-state or conclude that sovereignty is critically compromised either in theory or practice. In fact, while the terms ‘sovereignty’, ‘autonomy’, and ‘control’ appear frequently in these discussions, they are rarely defined or even used precisely. At the end of the day MNEs are international or cross-border entities which are of the existing inter-state system firmly rooted in national territorial jurisdiction. The problems posed by the traditional MNE for both states and the inter-state system tend to involve issues of jurisdictional asymmetry, jurisdictional overlap and control, rather than sovereignty in its formal sense. The hierarchical or *Fordist* structure of the traditional MNE reinforces the core values of the modern international political system: state sovereignty and mutually exclusive territoriality.

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Keywords

MNE-state relations, globalization, international political system, multinational enterprise, inter-state system, state sovereignty

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subjects (corporations, different associations, global media holding companies etc.) interlace into one tangle. Separate local events and conflicts influence a great number of countries.

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