In *Simulating sovereignty* Cynthia Weber presents a critical analysis of the concept of sovereignty. Examining the justifications for intervention offered by the Concert of Europe, President Wilson’s Administration, and the Reagan–Bush Administrations, she combines critical international relations theory and foreign policy discourses about intervention to accomplish two important goals. First, rather than redefining state sovereignty, she radically deconstructs it by questioning the historical foundations of sovereign authority. Secondly, the book provides a critique of representation generally, and of the representation of the sovereign state in particular. This book is thus an original and important contribution to the understanding of sovereignty, the state and intervention in international relations theory.
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CYNTHIA WEBER
Purdue University
For Summa
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PREFACE

Sovereignty is often treated by international relations theorists as a foundational concept. Investigations of the state more and more frequently critically analyze the foundational status of sovereignty. Such analyses require more than just making the claim that sovereignty is a variable concept. They entail shifting through the various ways in which this seemingly foundational concept has been reconfigured in diplomatic practice. To do this effectively, the concept of sovereignty ought not to be examined in isolation either from history or from related theoretical terms. Additionally, attention must be directed to the ways in which various meanings of sovereignty, as they shift and are reformed, have been configured.

I investigate the relationship between sovereignty and its supposed conceptual opposite – intervention – because, as I argue, the sovereignty/intervention boundary is the very location of the state. I present a number of theoretical arguments to support this assertion. Then I turn to historical analyses of intervention practices by the Concert of Europe, the Wilson administration, and the Reagan–Bush administrations in which I trace the constitution and interpretation of community standards for legitimate intervention practices and their corresponding effects upon collective understandings of state sovereignty.

I weave critical international relations theory (informed by the works of Michel Foucault and Jean Baudrillard) into foreign policy discourses of intervention to accomplish two theoretical tasks. First, rather than redefining state sovereignty, this analysis ‘un’-defines (and therefore radically deconstructs) state sovereignty by questioning the historical foundations of sovereign authority. Secondly, this analysis provides a critique of representation generally and of the representation of the sovereign state in particular.

I suggest that the meanings of sovereignty no longer abide by what I term a logic of representation (in which referents [signifieds] and indicators [signifiers] are clearly demarcated) but instead abide by a logic of simulation (in which there are no ultimate foundations but
instead a chain of interchangeable signifiers). Theorizing the relationship between state sovereignty and intervention in a logic of simulation (and in a system of symbolic exchange) requires that we cease to assume representational relationships and pose representation as a question. Instead of asking “what is represented?” or “what are represented as the foundations of state sovereignty?” we now ask “how does the representation assumption affect our understandings of state sovereignty and intervention?” For international relations theorists to contribute to understandings of sovereignty, the state, and intervention, the failure of representation must be acknowledged and serious consideration must be given to the simulation of sovereignty. I begin this project here by examining how sovereignty might be simulated in contemporary diplomatic practice and how simulation transforms international relations theories of state sovereignty and intervention.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book has been a long time in the making. Along the way, innumerable people have taught me and encouraged me. Richard Ashley, Patrick McGowan, and Stephen Walker have been involved with this project from the beginning. I owe them my greatest intellectual debts. I was fortunate to spend a year at the Center for International Studies at the University of Southern California working on the early research and writing of this book. There, I benefited from conversations with Ian Bell, Thomas Biersteker, John Odell, and Jim Rosenau, among others. Another person I met at USC was Carolyn King who rescued me from my limited French by translating diplomatic correspondences into English.

Over the years, Roxanne Doty, Marianne Marchand, and Eric Selbin have engaged me in lively debates about sovereignty and poststructuralism. Surely, they have saved me from many a misstep. At critical moments, David Campbell, James Der Derian, Lisa Freeman, Richard Little, Tim Luke, Michael Shapiro, John Vasquez, and Rob Walker offered sage advice on how to present my arguments. Students, staff, and faculty at Purdue University provided me with encouragement and support, particularly Diane Rubenstein who read almost as many drafts of the emerging text as did I. Like Diane, Michael Weinstein kept me theoretically honest. Also, Carol Pech provided editorial and research assistance, as did Francois Debrux. I thank them all.

Finally, without the support of my friends in West Virginia, I may have done something “pragmatic” like get a law degree. I thank them for tolerating my impracticalities and for helping me to place my academic endeavors in perspective. This book is dedicated to my grandmother Hilda Lilyan Fye, who offered me similar combinations of unconditional personal support and cheerful intellectual disinterest.

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Parts of this work have appeared elsewhere. Parts of chapters 1 and 5 appeared in Alternatives (Summer 1992) under the title “Writing Sovereign Identities: Wilson Administration Intervention in the Mexican Revolution.” An earlier draft of chapter 2 appeared in Review of International Studies (July 1992) as “Reconsidering Statehood: Examining the Sovereignty/Intervention Boundary.” I thank the editors of these journals and their publishers for allowing these articles to be incorporated into this book.

Finally, I wish to thank Steve Smith and Michael Holdsworth of Cambridge University Press for recruiting this book to be in the Cambridge International Studies Series.