



Captives of Sovereignty

JONATHAN HAVERCROFT

A picture of sovereignty holds the study of politics captive. *Captives of Sovereignty* looks at the historical origins of this picture of politics, critiques its philosophical assumptions, and offers a way to move contemporary critiques of sovereignty beyond their current impasse.

The first part of the book is diagnostic. Why, despite their best efforts to critique sovereignty, do political scientists who are dissatisfied with the concept continue to reproduce the logic of sovereignty in their thinking? Havercroft draws on the writings of Hobbes and Spinoza to argue that theories of sovereignty are produced and reproduced in response to skepticism. The second part of the book draws on contemporary critiques of skeptical arguments by Wittgenstein and Cavell to argue that their alternative way of responding to skepticism avoids the need to invoke a sovereign as the final arbiter of all political disputes.

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I first worked with James Tully more than twelve years ago as a Master's student at the University of Victoria. He first introduced me to Wittgenstein and J. L. Austin in a directed readings course in the fall of 1998. I recall him asking me, "How about you work through the first 200 remarks in the *Investigations* for next week?" At the time I thought "That's it!?" Here I am, twelve years later, still grappling with the first 200 remarks! Through the years Jim has been everything one could ask for in a mentor. He points out the blind spots in my arguments, offers encouragement during the difficult times, and a nudge when I need to work harder. Lisa Disch has read countless different versions. She has a keen eye, and has on many occasions asked just the right question at just the right moment to get my thinking back on track. She also came up with the title for this book after I had struggled for so long with different combinations of the words sovereignty, captivity, and pictures. Jeff

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In a certain sense, I first began working on this project as an undergraduate student at Concordia University. I was working on a presentation on Isaiah Berlin's "Two Concepts of Liberty," and Jim Moore recommended that I read Hannah Arendt's "What is Freedom?" as well. Her declaration: "If men wish to be free, it is precisely sovereignty that they must renounce" leapt off the page, and in many ways it has held me captive for all these years. In the intervening years my thinking on sovereignty has developed through numerous conversations with friends and scholars across North America. At the University of Victoria my ideas were prodded and transformed through classes and conversations with Warren Magnusson, Rob Walker, Avigail Eisenberg, and Brad Bryan. At the University of Minnesota I learned so much from Mary Dietz, Jim Farr, Bill Scheuerman, Dick Price, Colin Kahl, Kathryn Sikkink, August Nimtz, John Mowitt, and Martin Sampson. The graduate student cohort at Minnesota was an intellectually lively one, and there was a strong tradition of more senior students mentoring junior ones. While there, I made many friends who have helped this project in numerous ways. Thank-you especially to Ashley Biser, Amy Skonieczny, Shirin Deylami, Bill Gorton, Roudy Hildreth, Ann Towns, Helen Kinsella, Meghana Nayak, Kartik Raj, Michael "Grover" Nordquist, Isaac Kamola, Serena Laws, Susan Kang,

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