

Truly enough, even in the period of the highlight European nation-state, the sovereignty of the nation-state was not, could not be, absolute. Such sovereignty was however upheld as a political and cultural ideal - and formed also a basic cornerstone of modern international law.

From the end of the Second World War - and gathering momentum from about the seventies on, this autonomy of the nation-state, became continuously weakened. They were weakened first by the growing importance of international corporations. Second, they were weakened by the development and institutionalization of the vicarious European institutions - those of the European Community of FIGI, of the Council of Europe, and the like.

Third they were weakened by the very process of the decharismatization of the political centres, to which we have referred above. Fourth, they have also been weakened by the continuous flow of immigration across and to nation-states.

VIII.

All these developments will necessarily greatly effect the institutional structure and dynamics of small states. It is as yet probably too early to analyze systematically the impact of all these developments on; there are, as far as I know, yet no systematic researches about these processes. Accordingly, I would like only to point out some preliminary indications which could perhaps serve as beginnings of a research agenda.

The changes in the international, especially European state system, and in the very premises of nation-states, will probably change the nature of the problems facing the small states. Thus the small states will face challenges of far-reaching internal restructuring.

In most general terms these states will have to act less as relatively self-enclosed entities, and their different sectors will become more directly interwoven with parallel or complementary economic cultural and social sectors of other societies.

These developments will open new opportunities before various sectors of small states, new economic as well as social and cultural niches and possibilities.

Such developments will probably increase the relative autonomy of the different sectors. Their developments will probably increase the importance and strength of various networks - formal or informal alike, and each of