

point. Note that subordination of sovereign countries under supranational and international organizations and courts is still voluntary to a certain extent.

A distinction between four different notions of sovereignty by Krasner (1999) is very helpful here. He distinguishes between *interdependence sovereignty* (the ability of a government to control activities within and across its borders), *domestic sovereignty* (refers to the organization of authority within the country), *Westphalian sovereignty* (refers to the independence of external authority structures) and *international legal sovereignty* (the recognition of one country by another/others). The only notion which provides for a clear cut-off point between countries with full sovereignty and other territories, is the last one. International legal sovereignty implies the right to sign treaties with other countries and to join international organizations. Our term «full sovereignty» is thus equivalent to international legal sovereignty, although there are some jurisdictions like the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, where it is difficult to decide whether they are fully sovereign according to this standard.²³ Such rare borderline cases do not pose a problem for our analyses in the following chapters and there is no need to go into greater detail here.

Note further that many of our results can be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to other small jurisdictions, be they federal units (*Bundesländer, Länder* or *Kantone*²⁴) or – as mentioned above – small territories with an extraordinary degree of autonomy, like, e.g., the Channel Islands, Gibraltar and Niue. To generalize, jurisdictions without full sovereignty (thus not fulfilling (a), but complying with the two following features), asymptotically obey our approach to a possible definition of VSC with monotonically increasing degree of sovereignty. Nevertheless, international legal sovereignty is a prerequisite to be considered as a VSC in this study.

²³ Especially countries or authorities which are only recognized by some other countries are difficult to assign. Fortunately, there are not many such cases.

²⁴ These are the names of the federal units in Austria, Germany and Switzerland, respectively.