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## **21st Century Technological Innovations and its Impact on Greatly Reducing the Existential Quality of Territoriality of the Modern Nation-State while Maintaining Nation State Empirical Strength**

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21<sup>st</sup> Century Technological Innovations and its Impact on Greatly Reducing the Existential  
Quality of Territoriality of the Modern Nation State while Maintaining Nation-State Empirical  
Strength

Olivia Fahrmann

Honors Thesis

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## ABSTRACT

In this paper, I aim to connect technology's progression with the empirical validity of a state and the disintegration of territoriality of a state. Technology and its progression has seen a significant bolster of the past twenty years in its capacity to be used by states in order to strengthen their domestic power. While, this has been ongoing, technology also redefines how states may reach one another. Technology has given states the chance for repression of citizens via acritical intelligence and other controlling factors, but it has also given states the technology to hack intentional grids, commit online warfare and control international feelings towards a country. As technology continues to progress, the new schematics of international relations is ever changing. This research aims to study already existing case studies on technology and its impact, while potentially giving guidance on how to predict future impacts on states and global sovereignty.

Modern technology and its impact on the modern nation state, its implications on the international relations of the world is a realm of international relations that is every changing, ever growing and every producing new issues to address, but it is necessary to start in facing them head on. In this paper, the aim is to explore technology's current impact on nation states. In order to do so, the original nature of states, how that nature has changed over the course of time due to technology deeply impacting the nature of states and their impact on the international arena will be studied and discussed. This area of study is relatively new seeing as technology and the internet as we know it is less than 20 years old, a mere blimp on the timeline of international relations. It is continuously evolving in its nature and its implications in a nation state and the world. In the modern era there seems to be no limitation on the evolution of technology due to the role of development in such quick intervals and of such large effect. Due to the rapid improvement of technology its progression and effects are hard to track in relation to the imminent effect on states. However, this study aims to look at the course of the past 20 years of shifting in states that have been brought on due to technology with various case studies of autocratic and democratic states. Looking at case studies serves as the best way can to observe how states and the international theatre will need to adapt and act in order to keep stability for citizens and continue to act as a sovereign nation under technological advancements. These ways are necessary to determine, because technology has brought and will continue to bring about an onslaught of troubles in relation to the internal sovereignty of a nation and also global sovereignty. Technology in the sense of this thesis is the variety of uses it can serve for a nation state in the form of internal and external affairs. For instance, technology can be use in the form of internet control, social media repression and a data limitation. For external matters, technology can be used as a new form of warfare, with virus technology capable of slipping

hackers and malware through sovereign borders without detection. This is uncharted territory for many nation states on how to handle technology and to what advantages and disadvantages it can bring to a state. However, this new dawn of technology does not bring the same amount of advantages to all nation states in the same applicable way. For authoritarian states and democracies, technology brings about different uses, which is in part to the foundational differences of both types of governments. It is also different for the uses of the foundation pieces of each government. Due to this new dawn of technology, I make the conclusion that in previous and current authoritarian regimes technology is used as a repressive tool for the self-interest of retaining juridical validity for the government structure, and is therefore, by its use for repressive nature, is more likely to enforce the validity of a government without the necessary approval of its citizens. Whereas in democracies, it presents a challenge in how to control technology use from outside malevolent forces and how to protect against technology misuses under democratic principles. In all, 21<sup>st</sup> century technological innovations and its impact on greatly reduces the existential quality of territoriality of the modern nation while also providing the capability to maintain a nation state's empirical strength.

To begin explaining what has led states to be in their current form it is necessary to understand that states were formed out of greed for monetary and juridical control by bandits that later turned into quasi- government structures. Mancur Olsen, in "Dictatorship, Democracy, Development" describes and outlines the path in which autocracies and democracies first began to emerge and form their own sovereign states. Olsen's argument is founded on the basis that true sovereign states evolved from rampant crime being transfigured into localized crime by a single bandit acknowledging the benefits of laying claim over specific territory rather than continuing to stay a migratory bandit. As many bandits tried to lay claim on a specific piece of

territory, they fought over the chance to rob the citizens of that land in an effort to gain as much as they could. With numerous bandits trying to control a single piece of territory, it was a lose-lose situation for both the inhabitants and bandits. First, each bandit had the job of warding off other bandits. This proved difficult in an effort not to be killed while trying to gain as much profit off of the people. Second, the inhabitants of the sought over land were losing stability and control over the region and were losing money as well. In relation to the impact on the inhabitants of the area Olsen says, “anarchic violence cannot be rational for a society: the victims of violence and theft lose not only what is taken from them but also the incentive to produce any goods that would be taken by others.”<sup>1</sup> So the civilians residing in the area would lose more and gain nothing from having to pay taxation to a multitude of bandits and had no incentive to produce goods. The effect of banditry not only has negative short term effects, but long term effects. Bandits, from the uncertainty of the future have no order or control in the ruling capability, would lose interest in the long term safety of the state and stop producing goods. In effect, from human self-interest, bandits eventually began to kill off others in order to gain larger amounts of territory for themselves. This was also motivated by the interest to gain complete empirical control and larger sums of money. It was also in the interest of the people for a singular bandit to do so because, “if a roving bandit rationally settles down and takes his theft in the form of regular taxation and at the same time maintains a monopoly on theft in his domain, then those from whom he exacts taxes will have an incentive to produce.”<sup>2</sup> So, in the interest of control and income, bandits became rulers, self-titling themselves into controlling a territory, under the guise of an autocracy. Olsen, dubs this the first blessing of the invisible hand, “the rational, self-

<sup>1</sup> Mancur Olsen, *Dictatorship, Democracy and Development*, (American Political Science Review, 1983), 567.

<sup>2</sup> Mancur Olsen, *Dictatorship, Democracy and Development*, 568.

interested leader of a band roving bandits is led, as through by an invisible hand, to settle down, wear a crown, and replace anarchy with government”<sup>3</sup> which sparked the interested in bandits to stop migratory practices.

Olsen boils down this argument for the rational interest within a person as to the foundation of what sparked setting boundaries of a territory and the creation of governments of an area. This foundation is critical in acknowledging that from the very beginning of state structures governments and their leaders were, and continue to be, self-motivated in earning for themselves and keeping the validity of the government stable. He phrases it in a way that was relevant to the era of bandits and primitive violence, “governments for groups larger than tribes normally arises... because of self-interest among those who can organize the greatest capacity for violence.”<sup>4</sup> For bandits, empirical stability was the ability to raise an army. Bandit rationality is the state origin of what would now be self-interest. It is just particular to the time and place that states began to form. Olsen states that “bandit rationality induces the bandit leader to seize a given domain, and to provide a peaceful order and other public goods for its inhabitants, thereby obtaining more in tax theft than he could have obtained from migratory plunder.”<sup>5</sup> So therefore, in roots in self-interests, bandits formed their own governments in their own territories to foundationally beginning a nation, thus incentivizing civilians to produce (by producing a sense of new safety) and then gaining more by taxing for profit. This is where, for my research purposes, forming autocracies started to grow roots of self-interest at the cost of the citizens.

The most important takeaway from Olsen’s article, by roving bandits settling down and acting in their own self-interest, they set the path for state formation and government evolution.

<sup>3</sup> Mancur Olsen, *Dictatorship, Democracy and Development*, 568.

<sup>4</sup> Olsen, 568.

<sup>5</sup> Olsen 568.



This is proven in the fact that “any individual who has autocratic control over a country will provide public good to that country because he has an “encompassing interest” in it.”<sup>6</sup> So, it is always in the best interest of the ruler to create public good, because it is in the best interest to their civilians to be willing and invested to produce goods and continue to pay taxes. This cycle allows for the continuation of a state to be stable and free of anarchy. If the people feel safe in the state and well protected by their ruler, they are more likely to engage in the social contract. In essence, citizens will become more willing to continue the tradeoff of autocratic rule when they are consistently receiving protection and goods they otherwise would not get without a stable ruler. In addition, an analysis of an autocratic state must take into account “the stationary bandit’s incentive to provide public goods at the same time that he extracts the largest possible net surplus for himself.”<sup>7</sup> So, when the formation of a state occurs out of the self-interest of a bandit to make permanent territory and tax specific citizens within that area, they create a state of which it is centered around their self-interest of profiting off the civilians and the civilians having trust in the ruler providing safety and public goods, a key foundation of an autocratic state.

To look at how Olsen’s theory applies to real implications of statehood, looking at Robert H. Jackson and Carl C. Rosberg article, *Why Africa’s Weakest States Persist: The Empirical and Judicial in Statehood*, outlines an effort to explain as to why some of Africa’s states continue to maintain statehood while ridden with weak leadership, ethnic divides, and other dividing factors when they are like autocracies. Jackson and Rosberg present this question to try and grasp how states with leadership that isn’t validated, conflicting ethnic groups, and other dividing factors

<sup>6</sup> Olsen, 569.

<sup>7</sup> Olsen, 569.

can survive, yet other states, if ridden with the same issues, would cease to exist as states. To look at case studies about the foundational stability of various states is important to discuss with the implication of technology, because understanding the stability of a state with the variation of technology can help point to hypothesize how empirical and/or juridical validity is an important factor in how technology will impact a state.

To continue researching the impact of state variations, the definition of empirical and juridical state hood should be defined in order to understand what factors are changing in the wave of new technological progressions. Juridical statehood applies to the territory and independence over that territory a statehood recognizes.<sup>8</sup> Further, on the international scale, “determinate and recognized frontiers are therefore a basic institution of the state system and an essential legal attribute of any state.”<sup>9</sup> The article, asserts the claim that the juridical validation of a state can only be valid if looked upon in the same way by the international community. So, in order to be held up as a state, the government must lay claim and continue to uphold the boundaries in which they set forth as their own. Applying this to Jackson and Rosberg’s research, they present the definition and application of empirical, which they claim is the government security provided to a state to enforce stability, law and such. To define empirical statehood they quote Brownline’s two attributes of a state, “ “a permanent population [which] is intended to be used in association with that of territory, and connotes a stable community,” and an “effective government, with centralized administrative and legislative organs.””<sup>10</sup> This would assume that juridical and empirical attributes are both needed to define a state; a population to

<sup>8</sup> Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, *Africa’s Weakest States: The Empirical and Juridical in Statehood*, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983)

<sup>9</sup> Jackson, Rosberg, *Africa’s Weakest States*, 13.

<sup>10</sup> Jackson, Rosberg, 5

occupy a set territory and a centralized government to rule over those civilians. While this article mainly looks at how African states have persisted whilst not necessarily meeting this definition of the standards of a state, Jackson and Rosberg make a generalized claim that empirical attributes for a state is, “a centralized government with the capacity to exercise control over a state’s territory and the people resign in it.”<sup>11</sup> This would conclude that empirical authority relies on how effectively the government can retain power to exercise the control. By exercising control that is generally conceived as the ability to make, implement and enforce all laws, policies and regulations set forth by the government.<sup>12</sup> If a state loses their empirical validity to control their defined state then they lose the ability to function in any capacity that would be considered foundational to the effective running of a state.

In Jackson and Rosberg’s article they delve deeper in other works in order to provide an all-encompassing look at the definition of empirical statehood. To achieve this they dive deeper, “Michael Oakeshott’s delves further into looking at empirical attributes to exercise control, stating that “the modern state consists, among other things, of both an “office of authority” and “an apparatus of power”.”<sup>13</sup> These two factors are critical in recognizing not only what makes a state, but what a state wants to keep and make more of in terms of prowess. In this definition, it is seen in states, such as in Africa, that one state may possess legitimacy, but not have the power to prove it, or have the opposite, a lot of imposing power, but not legitimacy to the area or their civilians.<sup>14</sup> This shows that in the international sphere a state may still operate with or without both attributes of empirical statehood, but at the crux of the definition of empirical attributes is

<sup>11</sup> Jackson, Rosberg, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Jackson, Rosberg, 6.

<sup>13</sup> Jackson, Rosberg, 6.

<sup>14</sup> Jackson, Rosberg, 7.

imposing at least one or both of those empirical foundations upon the inhabitants of the state. A government to achieve this will try and keep power in the means of one or more of those foundational factors.

The conclusion of empirical and juridical statehood is that both are necessary for a state to thrive, but technology can redefine how empirical standing is held and how if any, juridical reason can be upheld. It will also realign how juridical borders are seen as no longer an imposition to neglecting the power of a states sovereign borders. However, Jackson and Rosberg argue, “a political system may possess some or all of the empirical qualifications of statehood, but without the judicial attributes of territory and independence is it not a state.”<sup>15</sup> This constitutes that in order to be a state, fundamentally, the government must have a territory they claim and their own. This territory serves as a physical space that actualizes the government to which they can rule over and control the lives of a civilians. Again, this has roots in the notion of bandits creating private territory in order to turn more profit in taxing their citizens. The real test is whether a state can live up to this bar constitutes as a test of sorts to provide territorial jurisdiction.<sup>16</sup> If a state does not have a territory they control that means that they do not have an official state. A state cannot operate with no land, it cannot hold. So while, a state may have empirical control over their land, if they do not have land to hold on to, they are not an official state. The real test of the coming age of technology will be if juridical borders are upheld, how important empirical standing of a state will become.

Applying the stability of statehood to technology is a constantly evolving topic due to the fact that technology in the modern-era is consistently expanding in its applicable capabilities for

<sup>15</sup> Jackson, Rosberg, 13.

<sup>16</sup> Jackson, Rosberg, 13.

developing nations and even stable nations. Technology can be applied to many areas of a state, such as military sector, private sector, and public sector, but for this research internet technology and additional technological advancements useful to governments is important in understanding and answering the core question of how states have been impacted in the 21st century with the rise of technology. Private technology will be understood as the evolving internet access that private civilians have within a nation, this technology can be accessible by phone, private computer, public computers and more. The important distinction about this type of technology is that the overarching value of it is that the average citizen has access to it, leading to ease of sharing ideas across a variety of platforms to a multitude of audiences.

The case study that proves the argument that technology impacts countries in both the judicial and empirical sense is the state failure of Africa in the late 20th century. The world saw a majority of countries in Africa breakdown into nation-states after communist regimes evacuated the area. They then had the unique opportunity to develop by themselves, on their own conditions of government. At that point in the late 20th century, many of the world's nations were perfecting nuclear weapons while African states were trying to establish their legitimacy on bases of empirical rule. To start off behind the race, left states with holes in their establishment and the lack of ability to retain credibility in government. This left African states vulnerable to new issues that already developed nations would not encounter at such extreme pressure. Already lagging behind on development, technological advances soon brought about issues that a developed nation would be largely immune to, but that a still- developing nation is not so immune to. Technological advancements made available to the public in the form of radio, internet and phones enabled more room for anti-establishment resent and further divided the leftover divisive nature of African states.

African states suddenly departing from communist regimes to their own state rule was hard to transition, further negatively fueled by the already present juridical borders being haphazardly drawn without consideration to the inhabitants of the newly drawn borders, an instance where juridical validity had an impact on empirical validity. Whenever Africa was divided up by European countries, those in power divided ethnic groups and drew “nation” lines without consideration of the ethnic makeup of each new state. This caused the split of ethnic groups and the forced cohabitation of ethnic groups that would normally not have interaction to such level. This gave a foundation for distrust of government structures to make choices that would be in the interest of every group or have the same positive impact on each individual group. This served as a breeding ground for resentment between ethnic groups. With these preset conditions in mind, it is easy to see why nation-states in Africa failed after becoming free of communist rule, “the conditions that led to the breakdown of order in Africa include the authoritarian nature of its states and their rulers’ penchant for predation.”<sup>17</sup> Once given the opportunity to rule themselves, like bandit mentality as seen in early Europe, rulers began to take control of an area where its citizens needed them. This mentality was purely selfish and almost mob-like, it was a race to claim an area and create a government, but what was fundamentally missing was the empirical weight behind the government structures that were being created. Anyone can claim a piece of land is their own and what they rule, but it takes the trust of government leadership to make a nation an empirically sound one as well. There is also the argument that “ethnicity and violence are joint products of state failure”<sup>18</sup>, but I disagree on the basis that ethnicity is used as a mechanism, or cover, for conflict that produces state failure.

<sup>17</sup> Jackson, Rosberg, 7.

<sup>18</sup> Jackson, Rosberg, 7.

However, it can also be a product or consequence of state failure. Ethnicity is a versatile ideal when talking about building a nation. Ethnicity is a part of every single person within a nation. When a government holds good empirical standing, ethnic groups get along enough to keep the state running at status quo. However, when a government does not hold good empirical standing, ethnic groups can start to find divisive lines which start to wear away at the status quo of the nation. So, state failure is both produced by the erosion of ethnic groups and causes the erosion of ethnic groups, which can also be underlying factors in the stability of the government to be able to withstand external changes, as such to technology.

As seen in Rwanda and the Arab Spring, technology now has the power to instigate or further a conflict or war like never seen before. The Arab Spring is a more recent case study that displays the progressive nature of state sovereignty and technological advancements. The Arab Spring, on its foundation, was perpetuated by social media and communicative technology. While it is a contentious issue whether social media was used for communicative purposes with resistance groups or as a news source for the rest of the world, this was a large world event that centered around social media and its newfound strength of influence over international and global citizens. Technology's role in inciting violence is especially evident in the Rwandan Genocide. The Rwandan Genocide started its origins when two ethnic groups were pinned against each other by Belgium's divisive border drawing, which created a deep divide between the two groups for years. Technology fueled the progression of the conflict with the creation of the Hutu Power Radio. Radio technology seems trivial in today's modern era of warfare and technology, but in Rwanda it was the means by which the genocide was instructed to begin and also served as a mechanism to put forth anti-Tutsi propaganda before the genocide. Technology served as a critical cog for the Hutu's to start what they were groomed to believe was their right

to do. TV and camera crews were also able to communicate with the world the horrific reality of the genocide by means of technology in the form of photos, videos and audio. It is hard to see what the genocide would be without technology.

This divisive nature of technology can create opportunities for the emergence of new conflict and new avenues for that conflict. Rosberg and Jackson explore this idea by presenting the research of, “careful empirical researchers, such as Hegre (Hegre, Gates, et al. 2001; Hegre 2004), confirm that new democracies and intermediate regimes -- those lying somewhere between stable authoritarian and consolidated democratic governments -- exhibited significantly higher rates of civil war.”<sup>19</sup> As the world starts to look at technology, it needs to look at how it affects domestic structures. In the latter half of this research I will talk about how technology, if used in a specific way, will only enhance the states capability to either enhance or achieve empirical validity. However, technology may also open up the door for more divisive natures within a society as well. This topic will be later touched upon in China and within other developing nations, but Rwanda is a good case study to see that technology gave another dissenting group the power and the avenue to come to fruition with their thoughts and actions. For autocratic regimes, technology gives government the specific opportunity and chance the squash, or potentially enhance (if in their interest), dissenting opinions.

This notion also works hand in hand and is seen with the disintegration of sovereign borders and respect for another nation’s empirical statehood. Hypothetically, if a nation-state respected a neighboring nation-state or any other nation-state, they would respect the borders set forth by that nation-state. Yet, conflicts occur where nations invade other nations, and in the present day, send military technology to invade a country instead of sending ground troops. This

<sup>19</sup> Jackson, Rosberg, 11.



would not occur if the nations respected the empirical power of another state and its sovereign borders. However, the disintegration of sovereignty today can be attributed to the influx of technology that allows all diffractions of intrusion into a country and the rise of differing opinions on a given nation's government's validity.

But technology today is not only in the interest of government structures, but citizens as well as applicable by Mancur Olsen's "Collective Action" which seeks to understand why groups act in ways that they do in relation to working as a group and coming together for what they perceive to be the group's best interest. This quest to seek the rationality behind collective action correlates to the question of how technology impacts state growth, because technology is now redefining how collective action is shown throughout societies by civilians in their interactions with the internet. Technology, especially to the likeness of social media, allows people to have individual voices. Due to this, collective thoughts and actions, are made more easily accessible to a mass population and due to evolution of technology. This continues to make it possible for civilians to join together in more cohesive ways for a variety of issues. Another side effect of technology and collective actions is that technology also gives rise for more avenues of dissent against government actions, thoughts, etc. The new horizon of collective action in response to progressing technology is especially evident in the Rwandan Genocide and the Arab Spring.

Another effect of technology on citizens is that ultimately changes in information technology evolution lowers the cost of believing untrue things for citizens, causing more opinions on the empirical validity of a state. Participatory politics is greatly affected by this since it is based on the assumption that the facts given to them are empirically valid even if civilians may have differing opinions. To have more nonfactual ideas and implications of them floating

around and being potentially ingrained in society implies that participatory politics is undermined due to the introduction of new ideals that further undermine the empirical validity of facts given by the state. Social contractarianism implies the indispensability of a shared factual metanarrative by extension it suggests that there are real costs to abdicating the facts that make constructive debate and compromise possible. This shows that the new implications of the shared factual metanarrative being dispelled by ideals that undermine the validity of the state can, and will, have costly implications. Cost one is the fact that social sanctions state that most people are ashamed by the rejection of fact and dismiss those who reject reality as unstable or amoral. Cost two is that in a standard historic media demand for empirically untrue media is low so the cost of producing media that satisfies small market is high. Consequently, there are few entrances in the market for “alternative reality news”. By extension, there is a deontic cost associated with average people believing things they know are unlikely true. Deontic in this sense are words that may or may not establish societal rules and formalities. This fundamentally changes the way in which the state is perceived and the factual narrative is continually questioned as technology progresses and enables more nonfactual ideals to be projected and accepted. This directly impacts how a citizen may view the state and how much faith they put in the social contract.

Rebecca MacKinnon in “Liberation Technology: China’s “Networked Authoritarianism”” makes the point that new technology in authoritarian countries has the ability to further legitimize the regime, allowing the same, if not more, control to be possessed by the government. She states that “it is unwise to make the assumption that the Internet will lead to rapid democratization in China or in other repressive regimes. There are difficult issues of government policy and corporate responsibility that must be resolved in order to ensure that the Internet and mobile technologies can fulfill their potential to support liberation and

empowerment.”<sup>20</sup> This is the basis of what issue technology brings about to nation states, the power for the government to heavily restrict citizens and their ability to reach the outside world or to allow the Internet to be a new found freedom. Technology opens up a door in which governments may seek out repressive measures to silence citizens on the internet. “At the same time, in the networked authoritarian state, there is no guarantee of individual rights and freedoms. Those whom the rulers see as threats are jailed; truly competitive, free and fair elections are not held; and the courts and the legal system are tools of the ruling party.”<sup>21</sup> During this time of unprecedented technological advancements, citizens are feeling a certain sense of false freedom. They see the Internet as an outlet, one they never have had before and one they are excitedly using. However, “at the same time... the government has continued to monitor its people and to censor and manipulate online conversation to such a degree that no one has been able to organize a viable opposition movement.”<sup>22</sup> China in this case, is too large and too powerful with their capability in repressing Internet technology that the false sense of freedom to citizens is just that, a false sense of freedom. So while citizens may feel as if they have a new found voice to address social and political issues, they are not a condition that would actually effect any decisions and changes made in the government.

In all, civic life is ill- prepared for the negative externalities that developing technology brings forth. Technology’s accessibility has brought upon a rapid onslaught of new ideas and marketable faster ways to publish and access them which changes factual basis of which social contracts are applied. Social contracts used to be a mutual agreement between governments and

<sup>20</sup> Rebecca MacKinnon, "Liberation Technology: China's "Networked Authoritarianism"." *Journal of Democracy* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011) 33.

<sup>21</sup> MacKinnon, *Liberation Technology: China's "Networked Authoritarianism"*, 33.

<sup>22</sup> MacKinnon, 33.

its citizens. Citizens accepted the fact that governments take in order to give, the take would be taxes, effort, etc. in order to get protection and a stable country. However, this social contract lies on the citizen believing in the agreement on the foundation of the empirical strength of a nation. So, social contracts are therefore undermined as well with the evolution of technology due to the foundation of belief being shaken with the spread of information, true or false. An effect is the balkanization of facts.

Steven Feldstein in “The Road to Digital Unfreedom: How Artificial Intelligence is Reshaping Repression” states that Artificial Intelligence systems, products of rapid technology development and the need for the state to stay in control over technology development, can and are being used as repressive measures for regimes. This is relevant to this research due to the fact that this impacts the way in which regimes stay in power and uphold their empirical status to both their citizens and the global theatre. To start this analysis, he states that “AI systems are showing their potential for abetting repressive regimes and upending resurgence of authoritarianism.”<sup>23</sup>, which is a new dawn of the acceptance of the true impact of technological progression. This is especially important to recognize and study because “autocracies have achieved new levels of control and manipulation by applying advanced computing systems to the vast quantities of unstructured data now available online ...”<sup>24</sup>, a categorical explanation of the base level implications of technological advances. Further, “these innovations are a game-changer for authoritarian efforts to shape discourse and crush opposition voices”<sup>25</sup>, showing that governments can and will use technology to crush opposition voices within the government. On

<sup>23</sup> Steven Feldstein, "The Road to Digital Unfreedom: How Artificial Intelligence is Reshaping Repression" *Journal of Democracy* (Johns Hopkins University Press 2019), 41.

<sup>24</sup> Feldstein, "The Road to Digital Unfreedom: How Artificial Intelligence is Reshaping Repression", 41.

<sup>25</sup> Feldstein, 41.

the flip side of the coin, they can also project voices who are in favor of the government and positive news of government actions. This is extremely important in looking at how governments are now continuing to enable their empirical status without much of a cost. Artificial Intelligence repression is so swift due to the fact that “it requires considerably fewer human actors than conventional repression, entails less physical harassment, and comes at a lower cost. Yet it may well have a more wide-ranging and systematic impact.”<sup>26</sup> This gives governments even more incentive to use it as a tool to keep its powers. Whereas it used to be intrusive and expensive to maintain favorability among the country, new technology is making it easier, quicker and less expensive to make a more favorable position for the government. The new dawn of AI technology has made it more accessible for governments to start to repress the citizenry into believing well of the government, whether or not the government is working in the best interest of the people.

From this it is deducible that technology evolution not only impacts nations on the federal level, but state government as well, because states have become their own artificial intelligence, where their citizens need to be legible. States also see humans as a policy problem that needs to be solved. This emergence of thought comes from the horizon of big data analytics, as technology is monitoring those using it and its output is analyzed. This has brought about the horizon of trying to control false news, but can also be misconstrued as the hindrance of the right of citizens to technology and the internet. The largest example of a state controlling citizens is North Korea, however this is also evident in places such as the United States who possess the same technology to monitor citizens, but claim to be following democratic principles when doing so. As technology progresses and gives citizens a better and more open platform to air opinions

<sup>26</sup> Feldstein, 42.

and grievances, those potentially dissenting opinions from citizens make them targets of the government to control in order for the government to continue on their path of empirical stability.

Before the dawn of technological innovations, countries started to rework the way in which their actions supported their own self-interest of survival, and this change has only been exacerbated by technological progression in the favor of the accessibility of governments to manipulate technology to their advantage. Feldstein notes this shift stating that “even before the onset of digital repression, the landscape of contemporary authoritarianism was shifting in noteworthy ways.”<sup>27</sup> AI continually gives governments a critical advantage in keeping the power they may have felt was slipping away seeing as now “...autocratic leaders are embracing digital tactics for monitoring, surveilling, and harassing civil society movements and for distorting elections.”<sup>28</sup> Now, ever before, the temptation to use technology for the benefit of the power enhancing of the regime remains in front of the leaders. That temptation does not go unused. In today’s autocratic regimes they see and use technology as the great new frontier of continuing to maintain power and extend their prowess even further than before. Because of this, the onslaught of challenges brought forth by new technology does not stop for autocracies, but can trickle down into the democratic sphere as well.

Democracies at their very core are established on the idea that they are governments by the people, whereas autocracies are governments established by the governing leaders, for the governing leaders. The difference is indicative of the fact that normally democracies would have no need to use technology to bolster their empirical status, seeing as the people generally support

<sup>27</sup> Feldstein, 43.

<sup>28</sup> Feldstein, 43.

them as they were the ones to allow them into office. However, Feldstein notes that technology will bring forth even concerns for democracies. Feldstein notes this concern with the question, “will the temptation to take advantage of AI’s surveillance potential ultimately corrode democratic safeguards?”<sup>29</sup> He asserts that even most secure, advanced democracies are not impenetrable from the effect of technology. In the United States specifically, “protecting individual rights and placing checks on governmental authority, the potential for state overreach remained vast.”<sup>30</sup> In recent events, this can be seen in citizen’s asking the what if questions about how other countries could interfere with matters of democracies. The questions also ask how democratic governments can overstep in their use of technology for the betterment of its citizens, but really oversteps onto their freedom. Regardless of the over looming threat over all countries, “the danger is much greater for fragile democracies or countries with authoritarian tendencies.”<sup>31</sup> rather than well-established democracies. This is due to the fact that if there are already markers there for a regrade into authoritarian regimes “the repressive potential of AI may lead to even steeper deterioration”<sup>32</sup>, technology just speeds up the process that has been going on for a while. This is also likely due to AI proving “its repressive value for the autocracies now pioneering new technologies, copycat behavior by other governments is likely to follow.”<sup>33</sup> In contrast to the United States, in modern day China, “AI is an essential component of the broader system of control that underpins Communist Party rule.”<sup>34</sup> So AI is the holy grail of technological tools for China’s continued rule. However, in America, we are already running a democratic system, so

<sup>29</sup> Feldstein, 46.

<sup>30</sup> Feldstein, 47.

<sup>31</sup> Feldstein, 48.

<sup>32</sup> Feldstein, 48.

<sup>33</sup> Feldstein, 48.

<sup>34</sup> Feldstein, 48.

“we are in the best position to consider how to regulate private companies and prevent abuses.”<sup>35</sup> Most importantly, “AI technology is “dual-use”: it can be deployed for beneficial purposes as well as exploited for military and repressive end”<sup>36</sup>, so it is significant to note this shows the duplicity of technology in the modern day. Technology is only what the state making it turns out to be. So if a repressive state like China is using it for repressive measures to stay in power, then the regime will continue to be legitimized. However, if a place like Africa is using it may be to foster legitimacy for the regime in order to gain more power. In a place like America, technology is both dangerous and advantageous because it can protect against attacks from other countries, but it can also twiddle away the way democratic principles.

Technology has also produced a new issue of creating peoples whose net worth exceeds that of the government under which they are citizens, thus no longer creating a need for the wealthy to empirically validate the government under which they had a social contract with. Technology created this problem due to the race to produce cutting edge technology. With the rapid growth of technology came the rapid net worth growth of those who produced it. This is a large issue, because essentially, if a government is empirically strong due to their economic power, a person with more could be their own form of government. As a whole, this lowers the empirical value of traditional notions of government. It also gives rise to the new issue of controlling private access and use of technology in the notion of how governments would use technology. This can be a rising issue in technology companies beginning to take on the role of development of technology for government and military use outside the sphere of what its

<sup>35</sup> Feldstein, 50.

<sup>36</sup> Feldstein, 50.



intended purposes are. If a person can individually do this, this gives citizens another reason to stop or lessen their empirical support of the government.

Christopher Walker, Shanthi Kalathil and Jessica Ludwig in “The Cutting Edge of Sharp Power” looks at the new dawn of technology and how this advent of technology can and will start to redefine the notion of sovereignty and the power of states on an international scale never seen before. This is relevant to my research, because as power is defined and strengthened under technology use the power of states to have more influence abroad also grows. This is relevant to the claim that states now have more means and ways in which to influence the meaning of sovereignty and international relations. They state that “manipulation of information at its source and a wider offensive by antidemocratic powers in the realm of ideas have challenged some deeply held assumptions in democratic politics.”<sup>37</sup> China is a foundational starting point for looking at how exactly a state has grown in its own technological strength and exerted it abroad in order to pursue more empirical strength both domestically and internationally. The article states, “a more multidimensional view of the modern Chinese party-state is now gradually coming into focus as analysts start taking into account China’s global impact on democracy, rule-of-law norms, and human rights, including the freedom of expression.”<sup>38</sup> This approach looks at how technology penetrates all sectors of nation states, enabling them to penetrate that power of technology in a more global way. In China’s case, as stated before, China has used technology to alter how its citizens receive news, participate in technology and what is said about the government on the Internet. First establishing control domestically with technology is important to a state, because in that way they can establish ultimate power at home. In regards to

<sup>37</sup> Christopher Walker, Shanthi Kalathil and Jessica Ludwig, "The Cutting Edge of Sharp Power ." *Journal of Democracy* (Johns Hopkins University Press 2020), 125.

<sup>38</sup> Walker, Kalathil and Ludwig, "The Cutting Edge of Sharp Power", 125.

the ramifications of the international realm of technology crossing states and interfering of the sovereignty, the data is still new, but the patterns of domestic use can be put forth as prediction pieces for how technology will be used on an international scale. This is evident in the fact that, “Although China today is heavily interconnected with the international system, it has not become more transparent and accountable... CCP has striven to reshape the global landscape in a manner that suits its preferences...”<sup>39</sup> This means that as the first country that the world knows is capable of producing less masses of technological repression for its people China is not willing to come forward with their practices, advances and more in an effort to keep control over their own progress. This is directly in line with the ways in which authoritarian regimes wish to make and keep their power. Technology divides the government and the nation in the matter of the freedom of technology and accessibility to it, which is put behind a veil of smoke and mirrors of absolute freedom to it and the monitoring of it. Nations, in their best interest are not forthcoming with how much they monitor people’s access and use of technology.

The important point of the article is establishing the way in which the world has come to recognize technology as the new age of ways that states interact with one another both for positive and negative. They start by marking that indeed, “the global authorization resurgence did not emerge overnight... early 2000s, the autocrats were already rebuilding their capacity to exert influence.”<sup>40</sup> This is an extreme theoretical based off the fact of what is capable of a regime if their prowess for technology is extensive; “the authoritarian’s refined and expanded activities threaten the integrity of institutions from media and entertainment companies to university to professional sports enterprises—all of which are vulnerable to manipulation precisely because, in

<sup>39</sup> Walker, Kalathil and Ludwig, 126.

<sup>40</sup> Walker, Kalathil and Ludwig, 126.

free societies, such institutions are open to the outside world.”<sup>41</sup> The fact that some regimes are not forthcoming with what they have power to do puts the world and the sovereignty we know at extreme risk for sudden resifting in the perception of international relations as “authoritarians are investing massive resources to attain a leading position in global markets—and in the process they are changing how people around the world perceive facts and engage with technology.”<sup>42</sup> However, it falls as no surprise that autocracies are only willing to keep the information for themselves as “the aim of these autocracies is make information available in a selective way, something that is both integral to censorship and a key attribute of sharp power.”<sup>43</sup> This statements solidifies the point that states work in favor of keeping their empirical power.

In further relevance to my research, as states begin to harness more power in their technological prowess, they also grow in their power to exert that power upon other states, which will prove difficult if states are not willing to recognize the threat of this. The article starts exploring this by imploring that “democracies must reckon with authorization who are working to reshape the international environment”<sup>44</sup>, seeing as democracies will be the leader in the response to authoritarian regimes exerting technology for malicious purpose since they are have technology freedoms in place. However, the article also notes that some democracies may struggle with this seeing as “all this is occurring while established democracies are distracted by their own internal struggles”<sup>45</sup>, so if technological advances do not necessarily have a direct worry to democracies they will not look at facing the worry in that immediate moment. This is perfectly summed up in the statement, “the afterglow of the immediate post- Cold War period,

<sup>41</sup> Walker, Kalathil and Ludwig, 127.

<sup>42</sup> Walker, Kalathil and Ludwig, 128.

<sup>43</sup> Walker, Kalathil and Ludwig, 128.

<sup>44</sup> Walker, Kalathil and Ludwig, 128.

<sup>45</sup> Walker, Kalathil and Ludwig, 128.

democracies failed to foresee the dark side of technological interdependence—namely, that it would enable modernizing authoritarians to reach across borders to censor and manipulate public discourse, sharpen polarization, and undermine democracy.”<sup>46</sup> Seeing that in repairing the world as democracies knew it, autocracies were left unchecked in their abilities to continue their repressive measures. In conclusion, “cyber sovereignty, in which national borders partition the internet and curtail or even halt the free flow of information, used to be dismissed as a dictator’s pipe dream... a splintered internet that essentially hews to this vision, with access for citizens of authoritarian regimes curtailed by censorship, surveillance, internet shutdown and the like.”<sup>47</sup> which show a new horizon in how the world will start to handle technology.

What is important in “The Cutting Edge of Sharp Power” is that it loops together the relevancy of technology to all countries and how it impacts global sovereignty, regardless of the regime system used by a country. Regarding to Democracies, the argument is made that “democracies have been slow to realize that the diffusion of technology does not automatically foster freer information flows and democratic practices; policies and norms must be deliberately crafted with these outcomes in mind.”<sup>48</sup> This has the implication that democracies need to be more alert on the external impacts technology can have on their society. Not only that, but the fact that technology can easily turn into a snowball effect of misguided use that can deteriorate democratic principles and violate the trust of the social contract with citizens. Democracies will also need to be more proactive in monitoring repressive technology use abroad noting that, “if authoritarian standards become more widely embedded, the space for independent information will continue to shrink, weakening the health of democracy where it already exists and hobbling

<sup>46</sup> Walker, Kalathil and Ludwig, 129.

<sup>47</sup> Walker, Kalathil and Ludwig, 130.

<sup>48</sup> Walker, Kalathil and Ludwig, 135.

prospects for democratic advances elsewhere.”<sup>49</sup> This would lead to the conclusion that if autocracies go unchecked in their power of influential technology advancements, the cracks in weak democracies and autocracies will become wider and the downfall into a stronger autocracy will seem more likely. This can be prevented by an international discussion on the long term ramifications of technology and making sure weaker countries have various safeguards in place in order to assure they do not fall into becoming a complete authorization regime. Looking toward the future of solving this, the authors plead that “open democratic societies have a key strategic advantage that closed authoritarian systems lack—the creativity and initiative of vibrant, pluralistic civil societies that can inform, support, and help to realize such a vision.”<sup>50</sup> This would mean that strong democracies will have to play a keep role in the years coming forward in assuring there are safe guards talked about and put in place in order to ensure that technology does not begin to control international relations.

As technology progresses, it may be necessary for the international community to form or revise a new definition and application of the meaning of sovereignty in order to adapt to the way technology is rapidly changing the way in which countries and citizens view a nation states’ sovereignty. As state’s have formed, whether it be a natural progression or one that was forcefully formed, they are a held up by the international community. In keeping with the international community and its safeguards, states have had the responsibility to respect and support the rights and sovereignty of another states. So that leads to the total idea of international statehood being “mutual rights and obligations... the right of a country to exist and not to have its jurisdiction violated, and its duty not to violate the rights of others.”<sup>51</sup> In keeping with that

<sup>49</sup> Walker, Kalathil and Ludwig, 135.

<sup>50</sup> Walker, Kalathil and Ludwig, 136.

<sup>51</sup> Jackson, Rosberg, 17.

definition, the notion of what a state's responsibility to the international community is will state the same, but the way in which that is shown is different than before. So, it is imperative that the international community recognize the new advantages and difficulties technology brings with respect to uphold a state's sovereignty and address ways in which to usher in a new approach to handle the changes. This is important if the sovereignty and integrity of a state is to be upheld within the international community.

The ultimate goal of a nation state is to keep their juridical and empirical statehood alive and technology is the biggest threat to that in the modern day with social media, military, etc. Technology is the new front of war for states and to combat it there are new extraordinary and divisive lengths that governments will go to keep the status quo. It all boils down to the bandit theory, someone in charge, or in some nations, the government, will do whatever it takes to consistently keep and uphold empirical statehood for their own personal interests and gains.

In conclusion, the ending of this research was not what I originally hypothesized. Coming into this research, it seemed as though technology would negatively impact the territoriality externality of state in every way. However, this research concludes that technology can both enhance and deteriorate the quality of territoriality of state. Technology redefines sovereignty in the notion that states can have more power and influence both in their state and in other states without compromising traditional notions of sovereignty. When a nation deploys some sort of traditional warfare, ground troops, drones, it is considered an act of war and treated as such. The leader of the government also has to respond to citizens. This has the typical effect of sovereignty. But technology, such as AI, surveillance and Internet forums, show that infringement of sovereignty is far less untraceable and countries can now get away with little consequence. Seeing as technology gives countries the ability to do such, but also the ability to

cover their tracks technology is giving global sovereignty a new definition in itself, and no countries are immune from the shaping power new technologies holds. It is showing that now more than ever juridical boundaries do not matter, empirical status does matter, the greater the technology the more that states are able to retain their sovereignty, both internally and externally. I look forward to continuing this research as technology progresses and countries start to produce more data on the impact on technology on their empirical status and its use globally.

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