Abstract

The postcolonial problematique par excellence is how the colonial subject may acquire subjectivity independent of imperial hegemony. The traditionally expected solution - formal postcolonial sovereignty - has in many cases not lived up to the expectations, not least because the premises for and substance of sovereignty was and is still determined (at least in large part) by Western hegemonic structures including the very institution of state sovereignty. This paper argues, on the one hand, that there is no alternative to articulating sovereignty: Ours is a world of states. On the other hand, sovereignty may be articulated in much more complex ways than suggested by a choice between independent sovereignty and brute imperial submission. In this world, the relevant – and broad – question for postcolonial polities is how to articulate sovereignty to enhance subjectivity – relegating the narrow question whether to opt for independent sovereignty to just one among a series of considerations. The paper bases its claim on an analysis of the ways in which a series of formally non-sovereign polities play active roles in legal, discursive and practical games played with the concept of sovereignty. The paper shows that the paradiplomatic strategies of these polities softens the sharp distinction between either sovereign or not, allowing them a subjectivity as ‘sovereign but not quite’, which is decidedly post-colonial.

Keywords

Sovereignty, subjectivity, paradiplomacy, postcolonial theory, overseas territories

1 Rebecca appears as an author in square brackets on this draft paper for two reasons. The formal reason is that she has used up her four appearances on this ISA Convention. The substantial reason is that, while this paper originates in a joint intellectual efforts, she has not had a fair chance to embrace the their present formulation. So both of us deserve credit – the responsibility is all Ulrik’s.
Postcolonial subjectivity – full formal sovereignty or sovereignty games²

The postcolonial problematique par excellence is how the colonial subject may acquire subjectivity independent of imperial hegemony. Western colonialism involved keeping the colonized in ‘the waiting room of history’ by insisting that their subjectivity was not yet ready for independence. Anti-colonialism first and foremost meant the struggle to make the colonizers leave so that the colonized could decide for themselves; the aim was to form new, sovereign nation states. Formal postcolonial sovereignty has, however, in many cases not lived up to the expectations of the colonized. Formal independence did not mean freedom from exploitation; it did not mean freedom from submission to hierarchies; it did not mean freedom to decide and act on your own. Not just because local tyrants often took over, but also because the premises for and substance of sovereignty was and is still determined (at least in large part) by Western hegemonic structures including the very institution of state sovereignty. The net flow continued to go from South to North, resources extracted by global economic structures. Whether the new, local government structures tried to work as a counterforce or the new, local sovereigns participated in the exploitation of the broader strata of the population.

Postcolonial sovereignty, hence, has not meant the subjectivity aimed for. State sovereignty can, nevertheless, hardly be escaped. Realist theories of international relations as well as international legal theory would have us believe that sovereignty is a question of either/or. And the present world is indeed structured as a globalized international society of states - which means that there is no alternative to articulating sovereignty. Sovereignty can, however, be articulated creatively in more ways than what appears as an either/or choice between postcolonial sovereignty and imperial submission. On closer inspection, our world of states is structured by a number of mutating configurations of polities which are neither just relations of equal sovereignty nor relations of brute imperial hierarchy. Polities may be related in ways which distribute subjectivity in much more complex and dynamic ways. A number of games can be played with the either/or concept of sovereignty; linguistic games and practical games adds to the complexities and the dynamics of subjectivity and sovereignty after coloniality proper.

This paper shows that non-sovereign polities can engage in such games while still in the ‘waiting room’ and that these games in the waiting room are far from inconsequential. Hence, the relevant question for postcolonial polities is a broad how to articulate sovereignty to enhance subjectivity – relegating the narrow question whether to opt for independent sovereignty to just one among a series of considerations. The paper bases its claim on an analysis of the ways in which a series of formally non-sovereign polities play active roles in legal, discursive and practical games played

² Most empirical cases and examples discussed in this paper are drawn from a collective research process, which we directed, comparing the sovereignty games played out in the triangular relation between the EU, the OCTs, and their respective metropole, member states. The full case studies, which involves more sovereignty games than the paradiplomatic ones played by the OCTs, are available in Adler-Nissen & Gad (eds.) (2012). An earlier version of this paper was discussed at the Island Dynamics conference on “Local Actions in a Global Context. Paradiplomacy by Subnational Jurisdictions”, 15-17 January 2013, Spitsbergen. The project was funded by the Danish Council for Independent Research (Social Sciences); the Carlsberg, Augustinus, Stjerngren, and Letterstedtska foundations; and the Center for European Politics at the Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen.
with the concept of sovereignty. A series of 'overseas countries and territories' of a handful of European states are imperial remnants in the sense that they never opted for formal sovereignty; small polities – cramped in tiny islands; stretched across vast oceans; and/or tucked away in far corners of the world. Nevertheless, their paradiplomatic activities allow them a subjectivity – not just in relation to other sub-national jurisdictions, but also in relation to the international system of states, represented by both sovereign states other than their metropole and by international organizations of states like the EU.

**Subjectivity and sovereignty in Postcolonial Studies and International Relations**

When economic exploitation, identificatory hierarchies and distribution of agency are concerned, the relation between subjectivity and sovereignty is crucial. Both International Relations theory and Postcolonial theory were born with an intimate relation between sovereignty and subjectivity squarely in the centre of their intellectual infrastructures. In IR, both ‘realist’ theories and international legal theory presents state sovereignty as a precondition for subjectivity in the international sphere – while differing over where sovereignty come from: In realist analysis, sovereign is the one who has the power to assert itself as such – in legal analysis, sovereign is the one who has the right to become so. Empire fused the narratives when legitimizing its rule by insisting that the natives did not have the capabilities necessary to exercise sovereignty – yet - but demanded patience while the civilizing mission of empire was allowed to prepare the colonized for sovereign subjectivity. Anti-colonialist critique insisted that the colonized was indeed ready to leave this ‘waiting room’ of history – thereby in effect agreeing that sovereignty was the precondition for real subjectivity. Both IR and Postcolonial Studies, however, harbor alternative strands of theory which in combination may provide a better take on the relation between sovereignty and subjectivity.

When reading realist international theory, it appears as if the state is a given – and that state sovereignty is the only way of achieving international subjectivity. According to Kenneth Waltz, sovereignty means that a state ‘decides for itself how it will cope with its internal and external problems’ (1979: 97). Morgenthau (1956) echoes Carl Schmitt in insisting that sovereignty cannot be divided and may only be determined as a post-facto rationalization of some kind of ‘real’ power.3 This image of political life is peculiarly parallel to international legal theory. International law traditionally sees sovereignty as an either/or question. Either the state is sovereign or it is not. From this perspective, sovereignty is the exclusive right to exercise, within a territory, the functions of a nation-state and answer to no higher authority (Espersen, Harhoff and Spiermann 2003:142). In both realism and international law, the concept of sovereignty puts forward a choice of only two options when relating two units: Either both are sovereign and they are therefore equal – or the one is hierarchically subjected to the other which is therefore the only one of them who is sovereign. Through the lenses of realist IR scholarship as well as international law, non-sovereign polities are

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3 Cf. Moore (2011) for the importance for Realist IR of Schmitt’s concepts of security and sovereignty.
mostly observed as only objects. Arguably, when they are not sovereign, they have no separate agency (Browning and Joenniemi 2004:700f; 2008:144).

On this background, the practical reality of the postcolonial state has in mainstream international relations, led to a critique of the traditional perceptions of sovereignty and, particularly, to a conceptualization of the weak states left by decolonization as an expression of a ‘pathological form’ of sovereignty (Spruyt 2005; Turner 2002; Jackson 1990). The postcolonial state is not able to perform the subjectivity expected of a sovereign state by the international theorist (Seth 2013a:9). Perhaps the postcolonial peoples are not able to build such a state for some inherent reason, if not ‘race’ then perhaps ‘culture’ (Harrison and Huntington 2000). This account of colonialism and decolonization, however, grossly glosses over the biases built into the hegemonic discourses of sovereignty to the benefit of white, Western states (Grovogui 2012).

Historians and sociologists paint a more nuanced picture of sovereignty. To begin with, the concept of sovereignty has a diverse and uneven past. As Jens Bartelson notes, ‘to start a history of sovereignty with a definition of the term sovereignty would be to subject its historicity to the sovereignty of the present, and hence to narrow the scope of investigation’ (Bartelson 1995: 13). The conditions for sovereignty have altered even over the last few decades (Barkin 1998). Indeed, sovereignty should not be seen as a permanent situation. Other ways of organizing world politics have been prevalent and continue to exist. This is why Ferguson and Mansbach suggest the label ‘polity’ to describe ‘those entities with a measure of identity, a degree of organisation and hierarchy, and a capacity to mobilize persons and their resources for political purposes.’ Moreover, almost all epochs ‘have been characterized by layered, overlapping, and interacting polities – coexisting, cooperating and/or conflicting’ (Ferguson and Mansbach 2008: 140). Such a more nuanced view of which entities may count as relevant in the international is a first crucial step towards a nuanced analysis of subjectivity as it allows a play between different forms of relations between these entities ranging from imperial submission to sovereign equality.

Meanwhile, mainly outside the International Relations discipline, the search continued for cracks in the hegemonic, Western discourse, through which postcolonial subjectivity could emerge. Postcolonial studies, naturally, has a sustained concern with the foundational question (Kohn and McBride 2011): How is independent subjectivity achieved? Saïd’s (1978) seminal study detailed how Orientalism as a Western discourse immunizes itself from any input from ‘the Orientals’ – and, hence, serves as an integral aspect of imperialism and colonialism. In relation to various Orientals, the Western subject and particular Western powers thus retained sovereignty and annulled any Oriental subjectivity. Spivak (1988) explains how the subaltern is structurally barred from speaking as subaltern in relation to Western modernity: subjectivity is only achieved by subjecting to modernity. But subjecting to modernity is not in itself a quick fix. A central way for imperialism to uphold supremacy is to relegate the colonized to an eternal ‘waiting room of history’ (Chakrabarty 2000:8-9; cf. Seth 2013a:9). With the Enlightenment, “man appears in his ambiguous position as an object of knowledge and as a subject that knows” (Foucault 1970:312; italics inserted; cf. Helliwell & Hindess 2013:76). But only Modern Westerners are “seen as knowing subjects ... while ... contemporaries who are thought to belong to the past are seen ... mostly as objects” (Helliwell
A profound example of how imperial projects has been seeking legitimization as a civilizing mission may be found with J.S. Mills as he supplemented his general argument for liberties and participation with a “not yet” qualifier regarding the colonized (Chakrabarty 2000:8-9; Helliwell & Hindess 2013:77-79). A modern, responsible subject was to be nurtured and developed – under the custodianship of the imperial masters – before colonized peoples could enter history as their own masters. Often, however, the imperial overlords found no or only lacking progress – and rather than leading to questioning of the custodianship, this observation was utilized to legitimize a prolonged stay in the waiting room.\footnote{Wæver (2000) recommended the EU to apply the same logic as a governing technique towards Turkey by letting enlargement proceed by the slowest speed still credible. A decade later, credibility seems to have waned.}

After WWII, however, local elites insisted that they (if not necessarily all of their peasant compatriots) were ready for sovereign subjectivity in the form of independent states. Academic Postcolonialism has often inherited this anti-imperialist reflex from its practical political predecessors: it does not like the state so much that it wants its own. The local elites, however, based their insistence on subjectivity on a variety of answers to the foundational question. Mbembe (Mbembe 2002: 241) shows how the foundations chosen by influential strands of political and academic postcolonialism implies unsustainable essentialisms: One prevalent version constructed indigenous identity as a self-sufficient, native alternative, which the (de)colonized could return to. Another option was to construct identity on the basis of victimhood - and hence reduce it to a derivative of the Western ‘Other’. Both essentialisms belie a history that is much more complex. In contrast, Mbembe advocates an analysis which acknowledges both diffraction among the colonized (2002: 262) and a sustained entanglement among colonized and colonizing agents and cultures (2001; cf. Grovogui 2012). Such a perspective allows subjectivity on the part of the colonized – in the past, present, and future.

Similarly, Bhabha suggests that the very ambiguity of the colonized’s mimicry of the practices of the colonizer opens room for subjectivity in what at first appear to be pure imperial sovereignty. By appearing ‘white, but not quite’, the colonized put the ‘white’ norm into question. But what opens up for postcolonial subjectivity and agency is, according to Paolini, not hybridity or ambivalence as such but rather the paradoxical accept of hybridity as part of one’s identity and the everyday, practical handling of ambivalent power structures (1999: 107–19). Mbembe describes how the postcolonial subject in its everyday interactions with state power assumes multiple identities ‘confirming in passing, the existence of an undoubtable institution ... precisely in order to better “play” with it and modify it whenever possible’ (Mbembe 1992: 23). Paolini explains Mbembe’s point: ‘It is precisely because th[e] everyday space is ambivalent and identity is multiple that post-colonial subjects are able ... to improvise, bargain with, and reshape their environment’ (Paolini 1999: 119). In Mbembe’s original conceptualization, this ‘environment’ which may be reshaped, seems to be thought of as domestic or even local. But the same is true for the international environment.
In such a process of reshaping an ambivalent international environment, however, it is not obvious that having your own states is the most efficient. Yes, the sovereign state is there – but it might be articulated in creative ways. Our take on the relation between subjectivity and sovereignty combines the historical sociology of Ferguson and Mansbach and the poststructuralist postcolonialism of Mbembe and Bhabah with the Wittgensteinian concept of language game. Ferguson and Mansbach’s affirmation that more polities have subjectivity in the international than just sovereign states. Bhabha and Mbembe demonstrates how structures of domination are always imperfect and, hence, invite resistance and creativity. From this point of departure, it is not possible to conceive of sovereignty today as (just) a question of either/or. One way of grasping just how it is not, is by analyzing how games may be played with it. We have elsewhere suggested defining a sovereignty game to involve two or more players who, in their interaction, make strategic claims about authority and responsibility with reference to a traditional, ‘either/or’ concept of sovereignty. Contemporary sovereign states and polities which qualify as potential states maneuver between dependence and self-determination; and in these maneuverings, sovereignty is a card that can be played – or played on – in different ways. The articulation of the ‘either/or’ concept of sovereignty need, notably, be neither explicit nor affirmative in order for it to be vital for the game.

Imperial remnants and postcolonial sovereignty games

Sovereignty games can be studied by comparing a) their codified formalization in legal texts with b) the negotiation of meaning in general and identity in particular in public debate, and with c) specific forms of diplomatic praxis (e.g. meetings, negotiations, documents). Sovereignty games are, we submit, played more or less distinctly and more or less prominently in all relations involving two or three players. Our conceptualization of sovereignty games is inspired by Wittgenstein’s idea of a language game. This conceptualization builds on both conventional constructivists (Sørensen 2002) and radical constructivists (Fierke and Nicholson 2001; Aalberts 2004; 2010) who have used Wittgenstein to grasp the strategic aspects in the use of language, that is, language games in relation to sovereignty. For a detailed discussion of the concept, see Gad & Adler-Nissen 2012 and Adler-Nissen & Gad 2013.

For a full discussion of the analytical strategy employed to produce the empirical examples utilized in this article, cf. Gad & Adler-Nissen 2012; Adler-Nissen & Gad 2013. The analyses presented in this paper are all taken from a recent study focusing on the triangular relations between the EU, a series of non-sovereign ‘overseas countries and territories’ and their metropole EU member states. Even if some of the specific paradiplomatic games presented are not particularly related to the EU, there might still be a bias to the material engaged. In the process of European integration, sovereignty has mutated into what has been characterized as ‘late sovereignty’ (Walker 2003). No longer (only) territorially divided, sovereignty in the EU is (also) functionally divided – in some policy areas, the EU claims sovereignty; in others, the member states do: now and then claims clash; and sometimes sovereignty tends to disappear altogether, as no one takes responsibility (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Gammeltoft-Hansen 2010). This ‘late sovereign’, functional organization of sovereignty which characterizes the EU in its relations to its member states might, arguably, have spread – more or less definitively – to transform also other sovereignty relations of the states involved. Having been – in EU business - accustomed to sovereignty being a less black and white question, the EU member states may have taken this approach with them to other relations, including the ones with their respective OCTs. The point of this paper, however, is not to make a definitive claim about how sovereignty has changed everywhere, nor to make a quantitative assessment of how much sovereignty has changed. As we limit ourselves to demonstrate that it is indeed possible to play games with postcolonial sovereignty, it makes sense to look for these games where they are most likely to occur.
more polities which claim or could credibly claim sovereignty. But the games form distinct clusters depending on the polities involved (Sørensen 2002): Russia and China, i.a., insist on playing traditional ‘high sovereignty’ games; in Europe, the pooling and functional re-division of sovereignty make up a ‘late sovereign’ game (Walker 2003). A distinct type of sovereignty games – the postcolonial - concerns the acquisition of sovereignty; the very constitution of actors in the international.

In practical politics, the most obvious result of the anti-imperial struggle – involving a first round of postcolonial sovereignty games - was the sovereign, post-colonial state. The tidal wave of decolonization began with giant India immediately after World War II and petered out in the 70ies and 80ies as a number of small islands gained independence (Baladacchino 2012). However, the postcolonial realities of many of the new, sovereign states, hardly met the expectations of the previously colonized subjects – not least because of the sustained asymmetries of the second round of postcolonial sovereignty games (Grovogui 2012). The postcolonial states are still net exporters of wealth, the peoples of the Global South are still inscribed in submised positions in identificatory hierarchies of race, culture, etc., and their practical agency in relation to their own situation is still muffled by the inequality of resources which is the result of the ongoing extraction and by the selfsame prejudicial hierarchies inscribed also in international law.

However, left behind by the process of decolonization were a number of imperial remnant; polities very small in terms of population size, which preferred exploring what kinds of sovereignty games could be played while staying in the waiting room of history. Being neither formally sovereign nor simply hierarchically subordinated to their metropole, the self-governing countries are political entities that do not readily fit the conceptual categories offered by the conventional theory addressing international politics and international law (Palan, 2003:74; Anghie, 2005:38-39). Self-government arrangements may even include transfer of jurisdiction in some areas of foreign affairs (Loukacheva 2008:109) – an area traditionally so closely articulated to sovereignty that it is considered the prerogative of the sovereign. While legal texts and practices do not constitute these ‘Overseas Countries and Territories’ (OCTs) as strictly sovereign, when approached from a social science perspective, it becomes evident that the OCTs do articulate and refer to the legal and absolute concept of sovereignty. In a peculiar sense, the status – and, more pertinent; the practices – of non-sovereign imperial remnants – like British Virgin Islands, French Polynesia, Caribbean Netherlands (a.k.a. Netherlands Antilles) and Greenland – are closer to the suggestion that subjectivity emerges from hybridity.

The polities studied varies – even if all tiny compared to the global players that gets most attention – a great deal in terms of resources and ambitions. In terms of population, the OCTs range from the uninhabited to archipelagos with up to 300.000 inhabitants. But more importantly, the political ambition of the OCTs vary a lot; some aim for independence; others aim for integration with the metropole; yet others cherish their hybrid position; some are deeply divided over which road to choose. Because of the diversity of ambitions, the rationales of the paradiplomatic strategies pursued in postcolonial sovereignty games played also differ. What this paper submits however, is that paradiplomatic strategies – legal, rhetorical, and practical – can be and are employed in games
which question the relationship between sovereignty and subjectivity as conceived in both international relations and postcolonial studies.

The political discourse in and of these polities certainly articulate the colonial heritage. A few examples should make the point: In 2009, the EU prepared a ban on the import of sealskin. In a letter to addressed to the presidents of the European Commission and the European Parliament, the speaker of the Greenlandic parliament warned that Europe was repeating the colonial policies pursued in South America 400 years ago and thereby committing ‘cultural genocide’ (Motzfeldt, in KNR 2009; ICC 2009). In a statement to the European Commission preparing a revision of the EU legal framework for the association of the overseas countries and territories of its member states, the Conseil Economique, Social et Environnemental of French Polynesia explicitly referred to colonial injustices by claiming that France – and the EU – are historically indebted to Polynesia because the islands have endured French nuclear testing on its territory (CESE 2008: 1), thereby involuntarily contributing to French and European security (cf. Hannibal et al. 2012). In the British Virgin Islands, popular reactions to IGO and NGO efforts to regulate tax havens (Maurer 2008) regularly invoke the abduction and abuse of BVIslanders’ African forefathers as slaves as the imperialist precedent – an apprehension echoed in BVI premier Ralph O’Neal’s question to an American reporter “Why is it that we now in the colonies, because we are still a colony, can’t have a financial center? … If you’re doing something and you’re saying I can’t do it, are you saying that I’m inferior?” (quoted in Maurer 2012). In that sense, these polities definitively qualify as (post)colonial.

But, crucially, these polities cannot be conceived of as just ‘colonial’ - even if premier O’Neal self-identifies with that term. Their relation to their metropole is that of a traditional, colony: undifferentiated, hierarchical submission. Their position involve – paradoxically - independent claims to renounce independence: Maurer (2012: 130) provides one example as he quotes the BVI’s answer to the same EU query: “[T]here is little enthusiasm in the territory for changing our constitutional status.” An even more blunt version may be found in the answer which Surinam’s premier got when he asked his colleague in the Dutch Antilles to join him in preparing for independence: “If you allow yourself to be hung, it does not mean that I will do the same” (quoted in Hoefte and Oostindie 1991: 5). Acquiring their own sovereign status exists as a very real option, embodied in the neighboring islands which did opt for their own flag pole in front of the UN headquarters. The OCTs just didn’t choose independence. But since they did make a choice, they can no longer be counted as traditional colonial subjects, rather they represent a peculiar type of postcoloniality.

We claim that the way these micropolities mime certain aspects of sovereignty – appearing ‘sovereign, but not quite’ – produces a hybridization which questions sovereignty as an either/or concept. The micropolities – in certain situations, and in varying degrees – assume or simulate a state-like identity which allows them to play with and possibly modify the institution of sovereignty. They do, in other words, perform subjectivity without sovereignty. When playing sovereignty games, one of the strategies by which non-sovereign polities may involve themselves is paradiplomacy, defined as ‘all those external activities by non-sovereign jurisdictions that simulate
and approximate the formal, legal and recognized diplomatic practices of sovereign states’ (Bartmann 2006: 544).

These paradiplomatic strategies are employed in a range of issue areas. The following sections concentrate on three concerns central to academic postcolonialism: Global economy, indigenous representation, and practical paradiplomacy. First, the different roles of OCTs in relation to global finance are discussed. A number of the most prominent tax havens are islands, which are not sovereign, but nevertheless has sufficient subjectivity to utilize their status as independent jurisdiction to offer capital an attractive statutory home for which a comparatively small fee can be levied. This arrangement, however, has come under pressure – and different OCT employs a variety of strategies to either alleviate or increase the pressure. Second, the question of indigenous representation gives rise to sovereignty games involving paradiplomatic strategies. Traditionally, the global movement of indigenous peoples have played games at the margins of one of the foremost institutionalizations of the international society of states; the United Nations – generally seeking out cracks in the state system, challenging state sovereignty. The situation ‘on the ground’ in a number of these non-sovereign polities, however, is a lot more complicated. These two sections on finance and identity surveys a number of cases to demonstrate the complex diversity of roles and dynamics found in cases which are alike in terms of sovereignty status. To get a better understanding on the specific games and distribution of agency involved in the variety of paradiplomacy which is most closely involved with traditional state sovereignty, the third analytical section analyzes in more detail one particular case: Even if Greenland depends on Denmark for its special relation to the European Union, in both rhetoric and (para)diplomatic practice it decisively retouches Denmark out of the picture, thereby constructing a relation of sovereign equality between itself and the Union.

Overseas Territories in global finance

A central theme in anti-imperialist struggles is economic exploitation. Recently, a central issue in critiques of global inequality which has spiraled a series of small, non-sovereign but autonomous polities to the top of the global agenda is their particular role in global finance. A number of these polities offer themselves as ‘offshore’ financial centers. Some specialize in old school bank accounts, others in ‘brass plate’ incorporation, yet others have developed each their own niche (cf. Palan 2012; Maurer 2012). All variations of the offshore have, however, in common that the basic rationale for capital to go there has been low or no local taxes – and discretion vis-à-vis the tax authorities of the countries where account holders live and companies do business. These arrangements have come under pressure from NGOs and from a number of individual governments.

Our perspective differs from how Cornago (2010) develops a conception of the ‘paradiplomacy’ of sub-state entities in a contribution to Constantinou and Der Derian’s (2010) efforts to recover ‘sustainable diplomacies’ as ways to mediate estrangement excluded from the Westphalian, state-monopolized diplomacy. The discourses and practices in focus for our analysis may, on the one hand, be counted as a sub-category of paradiplomacy as understood by both Bartmann and Cornago. On the other hand, we focus particularly on the ways in which these practices do articulate the concept of sovereignty, rather than fly under the radar of official, sovereign diplomacy – only the concept of sovereignty and the practices of official, sovereign diplomacy are articulated creatively.

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who are increasingly coordinating their efforts via intergovernmental organizations like the OECD, the G20, and the EU. From the perspective of the subdiscipline of International Political Economy, it may appear subjectivity, and in the last instance sovereignty, are with the structures and agents of global capital as “The City [of London] created a symbiotic sovereignty [including the overseas financial centres] … that strengthened the City’s hold on global finance.” (Palan 2012: 104, 110). Our contention is that such an account of the distribution of subjectivity is too simple. On the one hand, a number of the islands in question involve in paradiplomatic activities to divert or alleviate the pressure against their newfound source of income. On the other hand, the spectrum of roles for OCTs in these games are both more diverse and more complex than one might first expect.

Particularly the EU invites, both literally but also per se by virtue of its late sovereign constitution, the OCTs to play paradiplomatic games. As it is common practice in the initial stages of EU reform cycles, the European Commission began the process towards revising the present legal arrangement for its relation to the OCTs – which are constitutionally linked to a member state but not part of the EU – by assembling its initial thoughts assembled in a green paper. The Commission then invited the OCTs (and others) to comment. The British Virgin Islands – like most of the OCTs – answered the accompanying questionnaire in a way which produced a more or less coherent narrative representing their polity in what Maurer characterizes as “a sovereign voice, a sovereign register” even if other registers, scales and constituencies are more prominent in other aspects of the offshore industry (Maurer 2012:142). The BVI, in their answer, accept that they need “to meet international regulatory standards” (2008:2), but insisted also that “The Commission has a responsibility not to seek to impose higher standards in the OCTs than in EU member states and to ensure it is properly aware of what the OCTs themselves want rather than deciding this for them’ (British Virgin Islands 2008: 5), thereby “gestur[ing] towards a desired position of equality with EU member states” (Maurer 2012:142). The non-sovereign BVI performed a post-colonial subjectivity by answering the late-sovereign EU as if it was its sovereign equal.

Likewise, the debates in the Cayman Islands legislative assembly on the relations to the EU describes a relation to the British government in which the Cayman Islands and the UK – when it comes to offshore finance – has each their distinct national interest, based on the interests of local constituencies, to take care of (Vlcek 2012:123). The late-sovereign constitutional setup of the EU, then, invited the Cayman to take the adjudication of these interests to the European Court of Justice to find out, whether Whitehall could impose the European Savings Tax Directive on a polity distinctively outside the EUs jurisdiction. Shunting this formality aside, article 17, paragraph 2(ii) of the directive states that the member states “shall apply these provisions . . . [in] all relevant or associated territories (the Channel Islands, Isle of Man, and all dependent or associated territories in the Caribbean)” (OJ L/157, p. 45). The ECJ, however, dismissed the case, in part because it found that “if the proposed directive is adopted, to take the necessary domestic (municipal) measures to ensure that, once the directive is implemented in the United Kingdom, the same measures will be applied to the territory of the Cayman Islands, this consequence, if it comes to pass, will not flow legally from the directive itself.” (Court of the First Instance of the European Communities 2003: paragraph 67). In this case, the paradiplomatic efforts did indeed meet a solid brick wall of formal sovereignty, as the British government could – credibly, according to the constitutional arrangement
of the Cayman Islands – threaten to legislate directly as it felt necessary without the consent of the locals (Vlcek 2012; Sharman 2008). But the Cayman Island’s very attempt to challenge the UKs sovereign right to limit its own sovereignty over the Islands at the negotiating table in Brussels demonstrates post-colonial subjectivity. And speaking as if sovereign seems to pay off: Cayman activism in the ongoing constitutional turf wars with London has produced a British promise to consult before unilaterally deciding on behalf of the Islands (Vlcek 2012: 126).

Turning the attention from the British Overseas Territories, the Nordic self-governing countries (particularly Greenland and the Faroe Islands constitutionally linked to Denmark) plays a very different role in relation to the initiatives to render global capital transparent for taxation. Prominent among the initiatives are OECDs drive to promote agreements in which two or more jurisdictions agree to exchange of “information that is foreseeably relevant to the determination, assessment and collection of … taxes, the recovery and enforcement of tax claims, or the investigation or prosecution of tax matters”. An important element in getting the OECD initiative rolling was to out the rotten apples. This approach appeared to work: the ‘black list’ of wholly ‘un-cooperative Tax Havens’ was soon emptied as all promised to comply to the new standard. As the criteria for leaving an unofficial ‘grey list’ was signing 12 agreements, a Nordic ‘package deal’ soon became popular. The Nordic Council of Ministers offered the tax havens a coordinated agreement allowing them to tick off seven of the 12 boxes needed; Not just the five sovereign Nordic states but also Greenland and the Faroe Islands counted as they have jurisdiction over their own fiscal matters. Soon Greenland was among the most popular partners for the negotiators from the tax havens – some of whom were old acquaintances from the paradiplomatic forum Overseas Countries and Territories Association coordinating the OCTs dealings with the EU (cf. Hannibal et al. 2012). Critics at the time pointed to the absurdity of tax havens ‘white washing’ each other off the ‘grey list’ by making mutual agreements with no effect on information or revenues - rather than agreeing to give information to the first and third world countries from which funds are hidden. But eventually, the OECD standard is not just 12 agreements but “all major business partners” So

9 http://www.oecd.org/countries/liechtenstein/listofunco-operativetaxhavens.htm
10 The leading force behind the Nordic package project, Torsten Fensby, implies that the number 12 had no official status (Sævold 2012: 95). Nevertheless, it seems to have had the effect of getting the avalanche rolling (Sævold 2012: 95).
12 http://www.oecd.org/ctp/exchangeofinformation/taxinformationexchangeagreements.htm
14 Torsten Fensby, personal communication, 2013.01.07. The ‘Statement of Outcomes’ of the 2010 meeting of the OECD Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes could claim that the agreements
in this game, the (para)diplomatic strategies which the Faroes and Greenland chose to pursue by taking part in the Nordic package deal project, worked contrary to the most discussed role for overseas countries and territories.

Economic exploitation is one important concern of anti- and postcolonialism. Decolonization was meant to solve the problem – neocolonialism the name for the fact that it did not. The affluence of some of the (post)colonial islands harboring offshore financial centers is not just relative to postcolonial poverty of some African states – it is, most probably, relational in the very concrete sense that some of the funds were diverted from African state budgets to private and corporate bank accounts overseas. Paradiplomacy is one strategy which these islands employ in sovereignty games to defend their parasitic practices. Other OCTs, however, choose to pursue different strategies in the same games: The Nordic OCTs played a limited but decisive role in getting the OECDs fiscal transparency drive over the first hurdles. By signing the OECD sponsored agreements both groups of non-sovereign polities gain international recognition of their responsibility-while-in-the-waiting room.

Indigenous identity and representation – competition and convolution

As the great wave of post-WWII decolonization leveled, a growing number of peoples have been identified as indigenous: They – or their advocates – point to the way their identities have been marginalized as their territories have become parts of states to which they do not feel any ownership. Within the UN, a ‘Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues’ has been established to facilitate a dialogue between the UN member states and these peoples marginalized by the state system. So in (international legal) theory, you may either have a subjectivity as a (sovereign nation) state or as an indigenous people/nation) without a state. Available options for indigenous peoples would seem to be either – most radically – to reconfigure the fundamental concepts and principles organizing the international system of states; to fight for an independent state; to insist on being left alone by both the particular state in question; or to acquire some sort of autonomous status within the state. In practice – including particularly paradiplomatic practice – things are often much more complex; more games may be played which involve subjectivities articulating sovereignty and indigenous identity in a variety of ways. In a number of the OCTs, a majority or minority of the populations may credibly be categorized as indigenous peoples by advocates and theorists applying objective standards – but the people in question do not always identify themselves in such terms. And even if they do, such an identification may entail to diametrically opposed stands in similar policy questions.

were “now universally accepted standards of tax transparency” (p.3), http://www.oecd.org/tax/transparency/46107244.pdf

15 For different interpretation of one case – the Greenlandic – in terms of more or less clashing concepts of sovereignty promoted by the Inuit as an indigenous people and the Danish state and its Greenlandic extension, see Shadian 2010, Gerhard 2011, Strandsbjerg 2013.
One obvious symbol of national identity – along with flag, insignia, hymn, etc. – is currency. The French Pacific islands all use the *Franc des Colonies Françaises* (CFP) and debate whether to ask Paris and Brussels to switch to the Euro. But in this question, the positions of the proponents of full formal sovereignty in Polynesia and New Caledonia respectively are at odds. In Polynesia, the separatists favor the Euro, as Louis Savoie, a foreign affairs advisor to then President Oscar Temaru, explains: ‘The Pacific Franc is not a real currency; it is an administrative currency, a substitute money, an anomaly. … The euro is not a colonial currency … Introducing the euro in French Polynesia would be a way to go beyond the bilateral relation with France’ (quoted in Poirine 2012:164). So to Polynesian separatists, paying with Euros in your local *Carrefour* signifies a subjectivity which is less colonially submitted than if you pay with CFP. To the contrary, the separatists in New Caledonia, a prominent element of the indigenous *Kanaky*, do not want the euro because its banknotes do not carry distinctive signs of the Kanak identity, whereas the Pacific Franc does (Brown 2012: 177; Poirine 2012:164). They find a truer representation of their identity in the symbols on the currency than the symbolics of issues the banknotes. By insisting on interlocking two separate sovereignty games – France will only ask the European Commission to allow the Euro to replace the CFP if the Polynesia and the New Caledonia both agrees – France has successfully turned the CFP/euro question into a stalemate.

In yet another French overseas dependency, Mayotte, separatism is marginalized as most of the population agree on clinging to French (1st world) sovereignty – with all the European integration that may come with it – to avoid Comoro (3rd world) independence. As the French language, however, is not widespread as mother tongue in Mayotte, the status and character of the local language has become pivotal for games how to fit this anomaly into nationalist discourse. One game situate the defence of the local tongue within the long-standing struggle between French and the (mainland) regional languages. The local Direction of Regional Languages of Mayotte – supported by educated and, hence, francophone Mahorans – refer to the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages, 1992, in defence of Shimaore (the name given to the local version of the Swahili-derived language used throughout the Comoros archipelago). Metro officials see the rules of the game otherwise, imposing French aggressively, and valuing local tongues less than is the case in other dependencies, owing probably to their very prevalence. This debate is reminiscent of metro regionalist movements of the 1970s and 1980s; locals have internalized French micro-nationalism. Simultaneously, a second game is played by linguists, officials, and the elite, both in Mayotte and in the Comoros. Both start from the ideological position that language and political borders are ‘naturally’ identical. Ergo, Mayotte, which is part of France, has its own language reflecting its unique choices. Pan-Comorians, in contrast, insist that all four islands speak the same language with minor variations, proving that the Comoros archipelago is ‘really’ a single political entity. In these games, the preferred national sovereignty – French or Comoro – is the outcome taken for granted when constructing a (linguistically based) subjectivity to support the conclusion.

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16 This paragraph relies heavily on Muller (2012:190-2).
In New Caledonia, where indigenous Kanaky and French Caldoche settlers constitute the two largest minorities, everybody seem to agree on the need for ‘greater integration’ of New Caledonia within its regional context. But the competition to represent both indigenous particularity and New Caledonia as a whole in regional fora has made for surprising paradiplomatic maneuvers. The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) was originally established out of sympathy for the Kanak pro-independence movement and played a leading role in the 1980s in seeing the French territory included on the agenda of the UN Decolonization Committee. Recently, however, not only the independence forces but also the non-independence forces seek confirmation of their legitimacy through supporting New Caledonian membership of the Forum. In parallel, the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) composed of the independent countries of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu – and the separatist Front de Libération National Kanak et Socialiste (FLNKS) of New Caledonia, support for whose pro-independence cause was the raison d’être for creating the MSG in 1986, as tensions in New Caledonia were escalating and the independence question came to a head. The FLNKS still sees itself as the sole legitimate representative of New Caledonia in this body, which it considers to be a check on French actions. However, recently New Caledonia’s – anti-independence, Caldoche – president Philippe Gomes turned the tables by using the ‘decolonization’ category in an attempt to have New Caledonia, still a French sovereign territory, accepted as a member of the MSG. A step further along this path was taken when the New Caledonian Congrès, led by President Roch Wamytan, former leader of the FLNKS, signed an agreement with the MSG. According to this agreement, New Caledonia will henceforth provide financial support for the MSG which, in return, will promote French as one of its official working languages. So an indigenous separatist in public office spend public money to support an organization, consisting of separatists and independent neighbor countries ruled by indigenous ‘sister peoples’ – an organization designed to support separatism, but courted by anti-independent settlers. A complex set of subjectivities struggle to occupy positions from where sovereignty may credibly be (dis)claimed.

In the other end of the world, the Inuit Circumpolar Council is a splendid example of how a similar set of paradiplomatic fora may be convoluted in a way which resists any clear cut distinction between state and indigenous identity. The ICC is a transnational organization – spanning four states – involving people in Canada, Alaska, Chukotka, and Greenland who identify as Inuit. Challenging the indivisible sovereignties over the Arctic claimed by the Arctic states, the ICC in 2009 adopted a ‘Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic, basing the challenge, i.a., on the observation that ”Sovereignty is a contested concept … and does not have a fixed meaning”. Organizationally, the ICC consists of four ‘member parties’, each representing Inuit in one of the four states – and each organized according to the laws of these states. In the case of Greenland, members are a range of civil society organizations The Charter of the ICC, however,

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17 This paragraph relies heavily on Brown (2012: 173-4).

18 Originally Inuit Circumpolar Conference, but re-named to signal its more permanent structure.

was also acceded by *Inatsisartut*, the Parliament of Greenland established by law by the Danish Parliament as part of the Greenland Home Rule arrangement which is territorially rather than ethnically defined. Accordingly, a handful of the members of the Greenlandic delegation to international ICC meetings are appointed by this parliament, lately including representative of the *Demokraatit* party which generally refrains from defining its political project in ethnic terms. Moreover, the annual budget of the *Naalakkersuisut*, the executive arm of the same legal extension of the Danish state pays a substantial part of the annual expenses of the Greenlandic body of ICC. The involvement of the Danish state with the international level of the ICC became even more intimate when H.R.H Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark was the official patron of its 2010 General Assembly taking place in Nuuk.

These examples show how indigenous identity does not function as an unproblematic foundation for indigenous subjectivity – whether in the form of sovereign diplomacy or as para-diplomacy. Subjectivities play games, confrontational or collaborative, to define, shape and prioritize identities which may then perform subjectivity at another level or in different fora – or these second order subjectivities may never get to performing if the games keep the identities from coagulating.

**Retouching the metropole away on paper and in practice**

A traditional anticolonialist concern is the lack of independent subjectivity for the colonized without sovereignty. There is no doubt that full formal sovereignty does open some possibilities for subjectivity and agency otherwise closed – but in practice, non-sovereignty may open other possibilities. Formal sovereignty over Greenland resides unquestioned in Copenhagen – even if the US only acknowledged this in a 1951 Defence Agreement against being free to substantially do whatever deemed necessary on Greenlandic soil (Lidegaard 1999:179-188, 334-5, 407), and even if the 2009 law of the Danish parliament on Greenlandic self-government acknowledges that Greenland constitutes a people in the sense of international law including the ensuing right to determine its own future.

Substantially, however, Greenlandic subjectivity on the diplomatic stage appeared earlier – most noticeable in relation to the European Union. In 1973, Greenland had to follow Denmark into what was then the European Communities despite a clear majority against in Greenland in the 1972 referendum. This was one decisive factor behind the introduction in 1979 of a Greenlandic home rule arrangement which allowed a new, separate, referendum leading to Greenland leaving the EC in 1985. Following negotiations, Greenland transferred to the legal status as an ‘ Overseas Country or Territory constitutionally linked with a member state’ with tax free access to the common market made conditional on a ‘satisfactory’ fisheries agreement. This marginal position – outside the EU, but inside a member state – has been utilized by Greenland as a platform (to quote the Greenlandic prime minister; see Gad 2012b) to secure a steady stream of Euros to the Greenlandic budget and access to EU cooperation programs. In 2006, a separate ‘partnership agreement’ was added to the formal relation.
Since 1992, a Greenlandic bureaucrat with a Danish diplomatic passport has been posted in Brussels, formally to take care of Greenlandic ‘commercial interests’, as stated in the legal basis for the home rule arrangement. The first representative, however, immediately expanded the interpretation of this to include the full range of interests and contacts – and he successfully made independent Greenlandic visibility a top priority (Vesterbirk 2006). If you visit the Danish Embassy in Brussels at Rue d’Arlon 73, not only will you alongside the Danish– and as customary at member state representations – the European flag find the Greenlandic and the Faroese flags hanging in equal stature by the entrance. But furthermore, if you proceed down the street to No. 71, you will be able to visit the Greenlandic and Faroese representatives through a separate entrance without having to pass by the Danish insignia. Another example of how Denmark is retouched away in the practical handling of Greenland’s relations to the EU, concerns one of the main points on the program of a Greenlandic minister’s visit to Brussels: When a Greenlandic minister goes to talk to a Commissioner, Denmark does not interfere. There might be a junior Danish diplomat present in the room – s/he might be visible to the accompanying Greenlandic officials and perhaps to the Commission officials. But the Greenlandic minister would not necessarily notice. Neither would the European Commissioner, for that matter. Greenland does not declare independence, as it could formally easily do – but on a number of occasions, Greenland mimes sovereignty.

The Government of Greenland also routinely retouches Denmark away when rhetorically describing the relation to the EU – at home and when talking to Europe. One example is the way in which the then Minister for Finances and Foreign Affairs defended the present relation to the EU in a parliamentary debate in 2007 is telling. The minister begins his argument against re-accession to the EU by recalling on whose lap Greenland will have to sit to be at the table:

“In the present constitutional situation a membership of the EU will only be possible as a part of Denmark. ... Greenland will not directly and automatically be guaranteed participation in meetings where questions of interest for Greenland are dealt with. Participation will in every single case have to follow an agreement with the Danish government and have to take place as part of a Danish delegation.”

Interestingly, this future-to-be-avoided (because it allows a disturbingly prominent role to Denmark) is contrasted to a present in which Denmark does not stand between Greenland and the EU:

“[T]he prescriptions for mutual dialogue in existing agreements [i.e., OCT, fishery and partnership] are better at securing Greenlandic interests at direct meetings between the Commission and Greenland... [Now, w]e can have a direct dialogue with

20 Greenlandic official, interviewed in Copenhagen, 24 February 2011.

21 Even if his staff would probably—to secure that the Commission does not interfere in the constitutional arrangements of a member state, expect that a Danish diplomat is present (Commission official, interviewed in Brussels, 24 March 2011).

22 Josef Motzfeldt (IA), Minister for Finances and Foreign Affairs, 24.04.2007.
the EU, and if we become members, then we will have to be dragged around by Denmark inside the EU.”

So when explaining the benefits of the present relation to the EU to a domestic audience, Denmark disappears: Greenland and the EU have a direct – and in that sense an equal – relation. In this way, a Greenland is presented to its own people which has broken with the colonial dependency of the past and is, already now, taking care of its own international relations. A Greenland which, for all practical purposes, enjoys sovereign equality in relation to the EU.

As mentioned above, in 2008, the European Commission published a green paper on how to revise the EU’s arrangement for the OCTs (cf. Gad et al. 2011; Hannibal et al. 2012). The Greenlandic response to the Commission was not co-ordinated with the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which is in charge of Denmark’s relations to the EU. In its reply, Greenland presents itself as on its way to be on equal terms with the EU: ‘A future model [of the OCT-EC association] should take into account the European strategies vis-à-vis Greenland as an OCT as well as a strategic partner.’ (Greenland 2008:11, italics inserted) – a strategic partner which may demand that the EU ‘enter into bilateral dialogue.’ (Greenland 2008:7). This equality is constructed in two steps: First, Greenland stresses the unique resources which it commands – resources to which the EU may only have access in Greenland: Greenland is “the place to identify new possibilities that arise with the melting of the ice in terms of potential and future shipping routes and maritime traffic” (Greenland 2008:2, underlining in org.). In parallel, Greenland presents itself as in command of “an unprecedented energy potential” which allows Greenland to project a subjectivity for itself: “In terms of energy security Greenland can be a future important player and can be a facilitator in this respect.” (Greenland 2008:2). Second, Greenland lays out a game in which the EU needs to reward Greenland for its loyalty; for working with the EU rather than other parties (Greenland 2008:3).

The threat of depriving the EU of the future resources is explicit: Greenland stresses its indignation over the EU’s ban on the import of seal skin – and this problematique is linked to how the EU in the future should consider how to act in relation to Greenland if the EU wants to keep up a good relation and, thereby, access to the strategic resources of Greenland: “This is for Greenland an issue of principles and will be the cause of strong reactions which will not be beneficial to the strong and constructive relationship between the EU and Greenland.” (Greenland 2008:3)

Formally, Greenland has only the sovereignty delegated from Copenhagen – and Greenland is only allowed the present (beneficial) status in relation to Brussels as a direct result of its relation to a

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23 Josef Motzfeldt (IA), Minister for Finances and Foreign Affairs, 24.04.2007.

24 According to a Danish official interviewed.

25 Cf. Noel Parkers theoretical perspective on how ‘marginal’ polities may seek to get awards for placing their loyalty with one ‘center’ polity rather than another (Parker 2008:13).

26 Regulation (EC) No 1007/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2009 on trade in seal products. According to the regulation, placing on the market of seal products is only permitted when these products result from hunts traditionally conducted by Inuit and other indigenous communities to ensure their subsistence.
member state, Denmark. But disregarding its formal status, Greenland plays games with (Danish) sovereignty. When handling practicalities in Brussels, Danish presence is carefully calibrated to the least possible. In the narrative on Greenland's relation to the EU told to parliament at home, Denmark is not present – a Greenland taking care of its own business is already here. When envisioning the future, Greenland – acting on its own – invites the European Commission to join in a future from which Denmark is absent. The limited subjectivity circumscribed by Danish sovereignty, which Greenland has commanded, has been employed to play rhetorical games and games in paradiplomatic praxis which make postcolonial Greenland appear almost sovereign but not quite.

The postcolonial – every island for itself

The analyses above of the legal, rhetorical and practical strategies employed in sovereignty games have a number of implications for the theorization and study of political subjectivity. Its most basic implications may be found in relation to the international system of states as it broadens the study of ways in which formerly colonized entities are acquiring subjectivity from focusing exclusively on full formal sovereignty. Today, certain forms of imperial representation have shown themselves to be counterproductive (Darby and Paolini 1994: 388). One of them is the traditional hierarchy between a sovereign, colonizing subject and a subordinate, colonized object. So where both international legal analysis and a realist power analysis would see a traditional, colonial relation, we have demonstrates that the practical distribution of subjectivity is much more complex. The postcolonial future is never a question of either/or but invariably a choice between different versions of ‘both–and’. In a sense, we agree with Hall (1996), who describes the postcolonial identity formation process as an oscillation between more or less strategic essentialism (cf. Spivak 1988) and the interplay of differences. At times, he argues, the anti-colonial struggle must coalesce around an identity posing certain fixity to obtain momentum. At other times the de-naturalization of the fixed, modernist categories takes precedence to allow for the emancipations of other identities than the postcolonial nationalist. In this sense, postcolonialism may both advocate modernist categories such as ‘identity’, ‘nation’, and ‘sovereignty’ (Mongia 1996; Appiah 1996; Hall 1996) and challenge the very same categories by promoting hybridization and creolization (Bhabha 1994; Gad 2005). The point we want to make here, is that this oscillation takes effect not only on the ‘inside’ of the ‘domesticated’ relation between colonizer and colonized but also on its ‘outside’, the international system of states.

In this vein, we have focused on other ways of acquiring subjectivity as a postcolony than full, formal sovereignty. These ways to subjectivity each involve acceptance of certain elements of the imperial legacies (cf. Darby and Paolini 1994: 377–8), of Western modernity, and of the state system – including, particularly, a concept of sovereignty. In other words, we reject the understanding that Poscolonial Studies should pivot around an ‘either/or’ choice between submission and resistance. Total resistance to all the categories of Western modernity is a lost cause in any case. Instead, subjectivity may be achieved by selectively accepting some (but not other) categories. ‘The state’ and ‘sovereignty’ are both categories that are difficult to escape altogether.
(cf Pasha 2013: 150, 155, 158) but sovereignty can be articulated in very different ways. Consequently, a rejection of the ‘either/or’ argument prevalent in certain strands of postcolonialism opens up new types of subjectivity, which on the one hand, involves staying in the waiting room allotted to not-yet-sovereigns, while, on the other hand, reconfigures the waiting room away from coloniality proper. In some cases and in particular ways, this new postcolonial waiting room may be more attractive than acquiring formal sovereignty. Indeed, the postcolonial entities that we have examined feature a combination of the resistance and instrumentalization of ideas and practices of sovereignty.

Such a ‘new subjectivity of the waiting room’ may – even for the very tiny player – culminate in formal sovereignty; the possibility exists, manifest in the alternative chosen by the neighbouring islands. Particularly Africa, however, harbors a number of cases testifying to the grave consequences of the sovereignty claims made in the heyday of decolonization (Grosvogui 2012). The disappointments of realized postcolonial sovereignty possibly account for the propensity of micropolities for choosing(!) non-sovereignty. ‘Mature manhood’, wrote Nietzsche, ‘that means to have rediscovered the seriousness one had as a child at play’ (1973: 94). Sovereignty claims are serious business – whether polities make them or not. If they do not claim sovereignty, they will have to live with the consequences – and after decolonization, they also have to live with the knowledge that they themselves have chosen submission. If – on the contrary – they do make a successful sovereignty claim it is also serious. Then they have to not only live with the consequences, they also have to take responsibility for managing the consequences themselves. Even worse if they make a sovereignty claim which is not successful. Sovereignty is always only a claim (Mac Amhlaigh 2012) waiting to be explicitly or implicitly accepted – or challenged. Moreover, one infelicitous claim will make future claims difficult, so timing is crucial. It is hardly possible to escape the question of sovereignty altogether. There is no way of escaping the dilemmas of this predicament – the seriousness of the games.

The arrangements inhabited by the formally non-sovereign micropolities may not look very heroic from the perspective of a staunch anticolonialist quest for a position and subjectivity independent from the powers and categories of Western modernity. In many cases, the arrangements do not live up to Kantian ethics: not every island can sustain itself as a tax haven. Rather, the arrangements which some of these micropolities have made are grossly parasitic not only on metropole resources and global economic structures in the abstract but also on other postcolonial micropolities: The affluence of some of the (post)colonial islands harboring offshore financial centers is not just relative to postcolonial poverty of some African states – it is, most probably, relational in the very concrete sense that some of the funds were diverted from African state budgets to private and corporate bank accounts overseas. By denying to be straight-forward parts of regional and national identities promoted as indigenous, some of these not-properly-postcolonialized polities weaken the legitimacy and power of these identities in the international. From the isolated perspective of a number of the individual micropolities non-sovereignty makes a sensible choice when compared to

27 We thank Iver Neuman for directing our attention to this quote. And for a lot of other things.
available alternatives. Even if by staying ‘colonized’ they opt out of the destructive sovereignty games otherwise played in their geographical region in a way which eventually come to assist in upholding these destructive games to the detriment of their – sovereign – neighbors. Moreover, if the subjectivity of the waiting room is used to play the sovereignty games well, the polity in question may even find the time well spent – and, when finally leaving, find itself better fit for struggling with the inequalities of the international.

The reality of subjectivity in the post-colonial ‘waiting room’

Rhetorical games and games played in paradiplomatic practice by postcolonial polities which chose to stay in the ‘waiting room’ rather than opt for independence are far from inconsequential. Therefore the relevant question for the last imperial remnants is a broad how to articulate sovereignty to enhance subjectivity – relegating the narrow question whether to opt for independent sovereignty to just one among a series of considerations. Formal sovereignty or not, as these polities perform a subjectivity of their own, they have already left behind their status as purely submitted colonial subjects. Paradiplomacy, in these cases, are not just activities flying under the radar of the official diplomacy of sovereign states; the legal, rhetorical and practical strategies employed construct these polities as ‘almost sovereign, but not quite’ in a way which in effect softens the sharp distinction between either sovereign or not. This special type of post-colonial sovereignty games thereby reconfigure the concept of sovereignty itself.

Paradiplomatic activities for these polities is a way to appear state-like. Paradiplomacy gestures towards sovereignty in a way which does not imply a claim to sovereignty but only issues certain, more limited claims. Playing sovereign, in other words, is a way of saying and achieving something different than sovereignty. In this way the sovereign state system does provide for agency for formally non-sovereign, yet post-colonial polities – for an agency for polities which should not have any if we conceive of international society as either/or, whether in terms of a legal right to sovereignty or in terms of a realist capability of sovereignty. Grovogui (2012) reminds us that postcolonial sovereignty is not just about the transfer of the regalia of power – but postcolonial subjectivity may be significant even without the formalities, when we are looking for a gradual reconfiguration rather than a wholesale rejection of the categories of Western modernity.

Legal, rhetorical, and practical strategies employed in games articulating the concept of sovereignty creatively make a difference for those postcolonial entities which stayed in the ‘waiting room’ by abstaining from declaring independence. Therefore, for these formally non-sovereign polities, the narrow question whether to opt for independent sovereignty is just one among a series of considerations. The relevant question for the last imperial remnants is rather a broad how to articulate sovereignty to enhance subjectivity. Choosing to stay in the ‘waiting room’ is not very heroic - it may even be parasitic on neighbors - but it might be prudent from a narrow, egoistic, view.