

論文

A Model of the Modern Nation State: A Methodological Approach

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1. The study methodology

1.1 Modernization and the modern nation state: from the perspective of China

This study will form a part, more exactly, the first part, of a larger research project, which tries to explain the specific problem of China's political modernization through exploring the inner coherence between ideological beliefs and social systems.

More than one century has past since China began its modernization process towards the end of the nineteenth century. However, it seems that China has not entirely succeeded in its modernization. One popular criticism, coming especially from the West, is directed at the non-democratic nature of the communist regime, arguing that China must transform its political system into Western-style liberal democracy.

However, it is not clear that we should identify modernization with democratization. Modernization is a deeply rooted concept in the modern world. It is nonetheless by no means clear what the term exactly means. In the case of China, revolution, industrialization, and democratization have all at times been regarded as different ways to achieve China's modernization and as moments in the process itself. Revolutionary total war was justified as the means to overturn the reactionary regime and to gain national independence; the totalitarian communist regime of Mao's era got its legitimacy, to a large extent, from its role in establishing the industrial foundation of the nation; and the post Mao reformist regime justified itself through further promoting economic development. Now, it seems that, with the country becoming economically more powerful and facing all kinds of social problems, the communist regime is beginning to lose its ideological justification and the issue of democracy is coming to the forefront.

Democracy is now the central characteristic of the political system of "developed countries", it is also one important ideology used to justify their legitimacy and their advantageous positions in their relationship with "developing countries". However, we should not simply agree that modernization equals to democratization. Democracy in its present form is characteristic of only a comparatively short period in the history of modern Western nation states. And until recently, democracy was not the ideology adopted in dealing with countries outside of the community of "modern nation states," for example, American Indians in the early colonial period, or African and Asian countries at the height of imperialist period, or even "third world nations" during the Cold War period. Imposing democracy on non-democratic developing countries only became strongly advocated with the rapid progress of globalization after end of the Cold War. However, many recent examples have shown that adopting democracy under the strong pressure of the "international communities" cannot solve the problems faced by developing nations or make them modern like Western countries.

Though the meaning of the term "modernization" is far from clear, the pursuit of modernization nonetheless constitutes a powerful force in modern world history. And modernization is often the standard by which a

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nation is judged to have succeeded or not. For example, it is a common understanding that Japan has become a modern nation state while China has not completely modernized its state.¹ This immediately raises the question: what is the standard that serves as the basis for this judgment. In the case of China (as in that of many other countries), the modernization process was triggered by its encounter with the modern West, including westernized Japan, and was mainly due to the imperial regime's incapacity to deal with the invasion of Western colonialism/imperialism. It seems that the goal of this transformation, as stated by some of its major proponents, was to follow the Western model and to build a modern state as strong and powerful as Western nation-states.

If we define the goal of China's modernization as to become a Western-style modern nation state, the next important question then is: what is modern nation state? The purpose of this paper is to construct a model of modern nation state. This will constitute a crucial part in my larger research project to explain the complexity of China's political modernization. In later research, using this model of modern nation state as a comparative standard, I will first examine the case of Ancient China to see to what extent China has become a modern nation state. The argument is that Ancient China, on the one hand, had already attained some characteristics similar to those of the modern nation state while, on the other hand, it was also radically different from a modern nation state, and that there is an essential continuity in the political structure of ancient China and modern China, which explains (to some extent) what we mean when we say that China has not succeeded in its political modernization. In the second part of my project, I will examine some major political thinking in ancient and modern China in comparison with some modern Western political thinking, to show, one, that there is a clear correspondence between ideological difference and institutional difference in Ancient China and modern Western nation states, and, two, to show evidence of the actual persistence of traditional political thinking in important modern Chinese political figures such as Sun Yat-sen and Mao Zedong. My thesis is that these partially contributed to, and can be correlated with, the "non-modern" character of the political structure of "modern" China. In this sense, the model of modern nation state constructed in this paper is the first, fundamental, step of the whole research project.

1.2 An operational model of modern nation state

Since the modern nation state is a historical phenomenon and an ongoing dynamic process, its concrete and specific forms vary in time and place.² Given that this paper is not a historical study, it will not examine the real history of any particular nation state. It is also important to note that this paper is not a philosophical exploration; I am not trying to find out the essence of the phenomenon of the nation state.³ In view of the role it will play in my larger research project, my goal is to formulate an operational model of modern nation states, which can serve as a comparative standard to examine the case of China. Methodologically, this way of constructing an abstract model is somewhat similar to the way Tocqueville described the "ancient regime". The model will be a general and rather abstract interpretation or representation of one specific historical reality — the modern nation state. To use the words of Weber, the model will be an "ideal type". Though it might not exactly correspond to any particular nation state, the model nonetheless will more or less reflect some common characteristics of different national varieties.

Thus, this paper will try to construct a comprehensive model of modern nation state. Modern nation states will be examined as a system which includes not only the internal structure of the state but also the international relationships among them. Furthermore, this paper will explore the characteristics of modern nation state not only from a purely political point of view but will also try to find out the cultural and economic implications of this political structure. Based on some major descriptive works by Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, Karl Polanyi, Earnest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, and others, the second part will try to identify several

fundamental characteristics of modern nation states. In part three, I will attempt to draw a coherent picture of the system of modern nation state by relating these characteristics together.

2. The characteristics of the modern nation state

2.1 Modern nation state's monopoly of legitimate violence

The primary characteristic of a modern nation state may be that the state has attained the sovereign power over its territory. In his text *Politics as a Vocation*, Max Weber defines the modern nation state as "a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory."⁴ This definition of modern state as "monopoly of legitimate violence" implies that within a modern state, it has become illegitimate for individuals and groups to use violence without the authority of the state.

In order to gain this sovereign power, the state had to break down the traditional relationships between groups. Historically this is related to the rise of absolute monarchies in sixteenth and seventeenth century Western Europe, when the princes struggled for autonomy from the papacy and gradually took over political power from the feudal lords. One crucial element in this process of state building was the formation of a centralized and rationalized state bureaucracy, which provided a unified and effective apparatus of power for the absolute monarchies and at the same time led to a *de facto* loss of power on the part of the nobles.

In a modern nation state, local political entities which might constitute obstacles to the centralized state power have disappeared; and as a consequence, instead of being members of a clan, serfs of a lord, etc., everyone within the state has become an independent and equal individual. Even civil war within a modern nation state is different from feudal war; it is a dispute about and struggle for the central power.

2.2 The rational and representative nature of modern state power

In a modern nation state, state power, though sovereign, is no longer the private possession of the ruler. State authority has become something public and gained the characteristics of rationality and representativeness. Even in the period of absolute monarchies, monarchs were increasingly claiming legitimacy as representing the people. For example, Saskia Sassen states that, when Louis XIV tried to sell public goods to finance the Thirty Years War, he was told that the king was the protector and not the owner of the common realm.⁵ Similarly, Louis Dumont, quoting Landes, reminds us that the absolute monarch "abandoned, voluntarily or involuntarily, the right or practice of arbitrary or indefinite disposition of the wealth of [his] subjects."⁶

The representative nature of modern nation state became even clearer with the transformation from absolute monarchy to party politics and the advent of plebiscitarian democracy. As Weber points out, modern party organizations increasingly became rational election machines, the goal of which is to seek "profit" through political control. Candidates are selected and platforms fashioned in party conventions according to the chances of grabbing vote. While to attain power might be the real concern of the party, in order to win the election, the party must try to reflect, balance, and compromise various interests of its constituents. In this way, state power stopped being absolute. Weber viewed politics as a vocation, and argued that professional politicians should have an ethics of responsibility, which means to consider for the foreseeable results of one's action, rather than the ethics of the ultimate end, which might lead to the justification of means by ends.⁷

A major principle of modern state administration is rationality, which means, among other things, that government officials should be recruited and promoted on the basis of talent, and state administrations should be carried out according to the principle of rationality. Related to administrative rationalization is the separation of administration and political power. According to Weber, even in the period of absolute monarchy, there was a gradual abolition of the prince's autocratic rule in favor of expert officialdom, especially in areas

like finance, war, and law. However, ultimate separation was not achieved before the age of party politics. Actually, the formal separation of administration and political power was a way to counter the disturbing effect of the spoils system, under which, the winning party usually turned over a large number of official positions to its own followers. The civil service reforms brought to an end the spoils system by making most administrative positions lifelong functions associated with pension rights. Modern bureaucracy finally evolved into a highly specialized profession.⁸

Actually, administrative rationalization and accountability of state power are closely related to the problem of corruption. Once corruption reaches a certain level, the state loses its legitimacy. In the modern nation state, the separation of state administration and state power makes systematic corruption less possible. On the one hand, without the arbitrary intervention of those who have power, rationalized state administration becomes more efficient. On the other hand, having less direct means to exploit political power for personal advantage and being institutionally checked by elections and other mechanisms, those in power become more accountable.

2.3 Modern nation state's role to promote a homogeneous national culture

Homogenization is an essential characteristic of the modern nation state. Homogenization is a dynamic historical process, which can take place on a variety of dimensions: religion, ethnicity, language, etc. When it acts on a certain dimension, let us say religion, as in the early stage of state building in modern Western history, then that dimension becomes a central political issue.⁹ As modern nation states became progressively secularized, the idea of toleration emerged and prevailed, while religion retreated to the private sphere and ceased to be politically relevant. The need for homogenization, however, still remained, though it then took place along other dimensions, such as language, ethnicity, or race, for example.

Homogenization is closely related to the concept of equality, which is also an essential characteristic of the modern nation state. The pursuit of equality is also a dynamic historical process, and the "content" of equality is constantly changing. The fundamental difference between homogenization and equality lies in that the former is a "positive" process, which requires certain differences to be erased in reality, while the latter is rather a fictional attitude, in the sense that it says that certain differences will not be taken into account, at least for political ends, as if these differences did not exist. For example, when homogenization acts on the dimension of religion, religious minority groups might be forcibly converted, assimilated, expelled, or even physically destroyed. Equality for its part means that individuals are considered equal (in relation to the law) notwithstanding many differences between them, for example, religion, gender, age, wealth, position, ethnicity or even culture. These dimensions are then treated as not politically relevant. Thus, in the case of homogenization, individuals will be made the same on a certain politically important dimension, while in the case of equality, their differences on other dimensions will not be taken into account politically. Actually, both homogenization and equality reflect, though in different ways, the need or requirement of homogeneity in modern states.

Loosely speaking, modern nation states have constructed homogeneous national cultures. ("Culture" of course is a "suitcase word" that can include a variety of different things.) Ernest Gellner in his *Nations and Nationalism* interprets the homogeneity of national culture as a basic requirement of modern industrial society. He argues that modern society is characterized by constant cognitive and economic progress. Compared to the more organic and stable division of labor which existed in agrarian society, the division of labor in modern industrial society is more complex and constantly changing, and requires explicit, precise, and context-free communication among members of society. One important role of the modern state is to maintain a "high culture," a unified and pervasive national culture, to facilitate the existence and development of this industrial modern society. The state does this mainly through a universal educational system, which in principle provides generic training to all members of society. According to Gellner, in modern nation states "high culture" has

become universal, that is to say, it is now the culture of every one, rather than that of a privileged group. In this sense, it has become a kind of “popular” culture, different from the “high culture” monopolized by the ruling class in most traditional societies. “High culture” has also largely become secularized and old (religious) doctrines have lost their authority over it. What has become more important are idiom and style of communication, that is, the language itself. The “high culture” in modern society is deeply education-dependent, and thus must be maintained and protected by the state. It is only in this sense that the universal national culture can reasonably be called “high culture.” Gellner argues that in modern secularized society, rationality has come to be the underlying bureaucratic and entrepreneurial spirit; everyone is “gelded” in the sense that he or she identifies with his or her profession and education. In this sense, Gellner says, modern men are made of “incorruptible” metal.¹⁰

2.4 The role of the modern nation state in promoting economic progress

As Gellner rightly points out, modern commercial and industrial society is based on constant cognitive and economic progress. The legitimacy of the modern state’s authority lies to a large extent in its ability to promote and guarantee this progress. Modern state power not only acts to maintain a national “high culture” to serve the industrial society as discussed by Gellner, it also provides the institutional guarantee for the development of national economy, among others, the legal protection of property rights and free contract.¹¹

In *From Mandeville to Marx, the genesis and triumph of economic ideology*, Louis Dumont points out that, in traditional society, relations between men are more important than relations between men and things, property rights are enmeshed in social relations, while in modern society, the primacy is reversed, there emerged an autonomous category of wealth. In modern society, on the one hand, economy has become an independent category, distinct from the political. On the other hand, as Polanyi argues in his *The Great Transformation*, the role of the state in the development of modern industrial economy is nonetheless indispensable. In the West, the state played a fundamental role in the establishment of the market system in the early period of capitalism, guaranteeing the basic conditions of the free market in the laissez faire period, and providing macro-economic control after the break-down of the free market economy in the 1930s. According to Polanyi, pure market economy cannot come into existence by itself, and total freedom of market mechanisms is disastrous; it is the political, the state, that maintains the wholeness of the society out of the atomic factors of labor, capital, and resources of the market economy.¹²

2.5 Territoriality and the modern nation state

Territoriality is another fundamental characteristic of modern nation states. Though all kind of political entities have to occupy certain physical space, their relationship to space is different.¹³ The territory of a modern nation state is a lot more than just a piece of land. Territoriality is the specific way modern nation states occupy space. A modern nation state has exclusive authority over its territory. In principle, territory must be contiguous, each part of the territory touching another part, between which there are no holes, which means that within it there is nowhere that is not under the rule of the centralized state. Territory is isotropic, in the sense that every part is in principle as important as any other part, or, to put it in other words, sovereign power should be equally applied everywhere within the territory. Actually, sovereignty, individual rights, homogeneity, equality, national culture and national economy all go together with territoriality. Modern states build their territory through homogenizing their population; and as a result, within the territory are homogeneous populations with equal rights; the state defines individual rights through laws and guarantees them through its monopoly of legitimate violence. Saskia Sassen describes this process as the territorialization of authority and rights.¹⁴ Alongside the territorial sovereign state, national culture and national economy were also

essentially territorialized.

2.6 Modern nation states as an international community and world system

The concept of the modern territorial sovereign state presupposes the existence of a plurality of states and an international system. As Heather Rae points out in *State identities and the homogenization of peoples*, nation building was a mutually constitutive process in which the boundary was constructed through internal homogenization and interaction with other states that were also in the process of internal consolidation.¹⁵ Carl Schmitt in *The Concept of the Political* defines the political as the distinction of friend and enemy. According to Schmitt, the characteristic of the modern nation state, a particular form of the political, is that the friend-foe distinction coincides with territorial separation. The inside of the territory of a state is inhabited by the same people, the homogeneous members of the nation or citizens of the state; outside, are other nation states which constitute potential enemies. Schmitt argues that there is always the possibility that a potential enemy becomes an actual one, threatening the way of life of the nation, and thus the possibility of real conflicts among nations. The state power is sovereign because it is the state that, in critical situations, defines who is the enemy and fights him with all the power of the nation. Actually, Schmitt's concept of sovereignty, based on the friend-foe distinction, is not contradictory with, but rather complementary to Weber's conception based on the monopoly of legitimate violence. While Weber defines state power from inside, Schmitt defines it from outside, and in the process he presupposes the existence of an international community of modern nation states. Schmitt's idea that no enemy exists within the nation is essentially equivalent to Weber's argument that the state holds the monopoly of legitimate violence and that private violence has become illegitimate.¹⁶

Thus, borders between modern nation states separate political entities of the same nature; beyond the borders of a nation state are other nation states which are political entities of the same kind; modern nation states recognize each other's sovereign power over their own territory; they constitute a club, cooperating and competing with each other. Simultaneously, this international system of modern nation states has an "outside," made of countries which are not regarded as modern nation states and are hence not included in the club. These "no-nations," to use a term coined by Tagore, nonetheless constitute a necessary condition for the "progress of modern nations," and thus are passively (and often violently) incorporated into a world system dominated by modern nation states.¹⁷ When discussing the development of national capitalism, Saskia Sassen argues that the construction of national political economies in the West was essentially related to their worldwide expansion.¹⁸

In *The Nomos of the Earth*, Schmitt argues that in continental Europe, there exist (or at least existed) rules, agreed upon by the international community that limit the intensity of enmity among its members. However, those rules of war were not applied outside of Europe, in a space that was regarded as open land where no legitimacy of power was recognized.¹⁹ Schmitt suggests that, to some extent, the free land outside Europe constituted a precondition for the limitation of warfare inside Europe. However, given that modern states power has its foundation in the nation as a whole, conflicts among nation states, though usually regulated and restricted to some extent, nonetheless had the potentiality of turning into catastrophic wars. This has been evinced by the two world wars. Hannah Arendt, whose political stance is quite different from Schmitt's, argues in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* a somewhat similar conclusion, that the ruthless practices perpetrated by Western powers in their colonies were brought back to their homelands during WWII.²⁰

2.7 The concept of nation and nationalism

Benedict Anderson defines modern nations as "imagined communities." According to Anderson, two factors essentially contributed to the emergence of modern nations. The first is administrative centralization. When the functionaries of an absolute monarchy frequently encountered each other on their upward-spiral road toward

central power, there emerged among them the consciousness of connectedness. The second factor is vernacularization promoted by print-capitalism: the movement to use vernacular language for writing and publishing. Through vernacular reading materials such as newspapers and novels, there came into being among fellow readers the concept of an imagined community, the nation, with its temporal and territorial dimensions. Anderson argues that, as a substitute for traditional social lineages and loyalties, the idea of nation constitutes a new form of social cohesion. For modern secularized individuals, the nation in which they are born and the culture in which they grew up has become something they naturally feel tied to. Thus, replacing religion, the nation constitutes a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, and of contingency into meaning.²¹

To the movement of state functionaries described by Anderson, we may also add Gellner's description of the mobility of industrial workers and entrepreneurs within the state territory, which equally, if not more, contributed to the sense of connectedness among members of society. Further, Anderson's concept of vernacularization means that mainstream culture began to be expressed in the language of the masses, which is precisely Gellner's point when he argues that in the modern nation state "high culture" becomes the culture of everyone. Both Gellner and Anderson also point out that nationalism became an underlying political principle in modern society. In many cases, nationalism constituted the driving force in modern nation state building. Nationalism demands that state and nation should be identical, which means that those in power should be nationals. State power should be accountable to its people/nation and try to promote national culture and economy; the state must also protect its national interest from the invasion of other nations. And further more, as Hechter in *Internal Colonialism* points out, nationalism also implies that the state may pursue its national interest by exploiting other nations, especially those who have not successfully acquired a political roof.²² As Wolfgang Mommsen points out, in the period of high imperialism, there was a religious-like zeal of nationalism constituting the ideological justification for colonial expansion and the rivalries among major powers which finally led to WWI.²³

3. A model of the modern nation state

3.1 Relationships between the above characteristics of the modern nation state

At first sight, the six characteristics above, which are based on the works of scholars from different disciplines, holding various viewpoints and sometimes divergent political stances, are not clearly related to each other. However, I believe, we can actually draw a coherent picture of the modern nation state by exploring the interrelationship among these seemingly independent and unrelated characteristics.

The first two characteristics, the modern state's monopoly of legitimate violence and the rational and representative nature of modern state power, to some extent present the nature of modern state power from the point of view of the political system. On the one hand, the state holds sovereign power over its territory; intermediary groups between individuals and the state, which might compete with the political power of the state, disappeared. On the other hand, the monopoly of legitimate violence does not make the modern state a political entity sitting above and dominating a politically powerless society, as in a despotic state or in many traditional societies. Rather, modern state power became increasingly "representative," and the state rules the society largely through a rationalized bureaucratic system. The dialectic relation of these two aspects of the nature of modern state power has been illustrated by the historical transformation from absolute monarchy to representative government. Actually, the elements of rationality and representativeness had already emerged in the period of monarchy, though they became more evident in the new state form. And the state's monopoly of legitimate violence, though it seemed more obvious in the first period due to the "absoluteness" of those monarchs, is actually strengthened in the further development of modern state form.

The nature of modern state power essentially corresponds to its major functions in society. The third and the fourth characteristics, modern nation state's role to promote a homogeneous national culture and to promote economic progress, are concerned with the role of the state in modern industrial society. Different from what existed in most traditional societies where the economy was largely subordinated to the political, the economy in modern society has become an independent domain, in the sense that economic relations have gained a kind of dominating position within the social relationships of modern society, and economic development seems to have become one major concern of the society. Alongside the development of a modern industrial economy is the appearance of a national culture. Different from most traditional societies where the ruling class monopolized high culture while a multiplicity of vernacular and rural cultures existed among the ruled, modern culture has become the culture of everyone. Furthermore, modern culture is largely secularized, imbued with the spirit of rationality which has become the underlying principle of both political and economic organizations. The modern nation state has played an important role in the building up of this modern industrial mass society. The establishment of a unified political entity in the early period of state building at the same time provided the basic condition for the growth of a national market and a national culture. In modern history, the state gains its legitimacy mainly by promoting economic development through providing the institutional guarantees of the economic system and on occasions directly taking part in the economic operations, and through maintaining a secularized universal national "high culture."

The fifth characteristic, the territoriality of modern nation state, could to some extent sum up the former four characters of modern nation state. In contrast to most political entities in traditional society, the modern state is territorially defined. Within the territory, society has become a homogeneous nation with the development of a national economy and a national cultural. The state has monopoly of legitimate violence over its territory and it achieves its legitimacy by representing the nation and promoting its progress. It is in this sense that the modern state has become a nation state.

On the other hand, territoriality also relates to the sixth characteristic, that is, the modern nation state's relations to other nation states, as well as with those people who have not yet become nations and built their own nation states. The point of this sixth characteristic is that a modern nation state is not an isolated entity; there exist a plurality of modern nation states, that is, an international system, and there is an "outside" to this community of nations. Modern nation states recognize the legitimacy of each other over their own territory, but they do not recognize the legitimacy of "outside" peoples over the places where they inhabit. Modern nation states regard the "outside" not as made up of territories, but as a space that is open for them to explore and exploit.

The last character is the prevalence of the concept/idea of nation and of nationalism in modern nation states. The nation state is a modern political phenomenon, which is essentially "constructed." In a modern nation state, the concept of nation has become deeply rooted in the mind of national members and has become fundamental for social cohesion. Nationalism has become the ideological justification for political movements in modern nation state building, in their conflicts, as well as in their exploitation of the "outside" world.

Based on this understanding of the basic characteristics of modern nation state, I will next try to construct a model of the system of modern nation states from the political viewpoint and then to further explain it by exploring the modern state's relation to economy and culture.

3.2 The system of modern nation state

From the perspective of the structure of power, modern nation states constitute the dominating powers of the world political system. There are three layers in this system: the territorial sovereign state, the international system of sovereign states, and the world system, which is itself dominated by sovereign states, but also

contains other types of political entities, that is, “no-nations.” Weber’s definition of the modern state as holding the monopoly of legitimate violence can be regarded as concerning only the first layer of the nation state itself, while Schmitt’s friend-foe distinction pertains to the second layer of international relations among nation states; finally, discussions on modern nation states’ relationship with countries that do not belong to the club of nation states are related to the third layer of the world system. In consequence, the system of modern nation state can be depicted as a three-concentric-circles system. These are not just three circles placed one beside the other but constitute a whole, in which the largest circle, the world system, contains the second circle, the international system, which itself contains individual nation states. (See figure 1.)

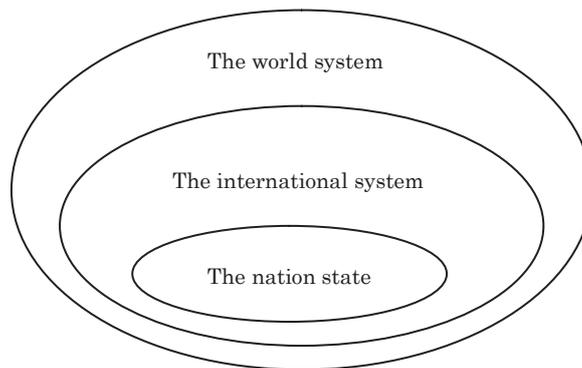


Figure 1. The system of modern nation state

At the core of this system is the modern nation state itself. Within its territory the state has successfully obtained the monopoly of legitimate violence. Private violence is prohibited, which means that individuals and groups have no right to resort to physical force without the authority of the state. To put it more clearly, the legitimacy of the state comes to a large extent from its ability to prevent private violence and to guarantee peace within its territory. Historically, the establishment of the sovereign power of the modern state implied the destruction of the traditional political structures and at the same time the transformation of the members of all kind of groups into individuals, the equal citizens of the nation state.

The second circle corresponds to the domain of relationships among territorial nation states. Outside the territory of a modern nation state are the territories of other nation states. On the one hand, modern nation states in principle regarded each other as equals and recognized the legitimacy of each other’s sovereignty over their own territory, which implies that they could “cooperate” with each other and set rules to manage their relationships. On the other hand, there was always the possibility of conflicts; or in the words of Schmitt, nation states are potential enemies. Modern state sovereignty lies not only in its monopoly of legitimate violence within its own territory, but also in its right to wage war against other nations. The legitimacy of this sovereign power comes from the state’s role, or duty, to protect its national interest from the invasion of other nations. Thus, in this second circle of the international system, all members have the same claim to legitimate violence for their own preservation, and as a result, violence is always possible.²⁴ But at the same time it is also possible to set up rules that partially regulate the form and intensity of their conflicts.

The third and most external circle corresponds to the world system including, on the one hand, modern nation states and, on the other hand, countries which have not transformed into modern nation states. This world system is to a large extent defined and dominated by nation states. In the colonial period of modern world history, the legitimacy of the political powers in countries outside of the nation-state club was not recognized by nation states. They were regarded as backward peoples and as open lands, free to be exploited by modern nation states. Violence in these open lands could be unlimited. Under the “legitimate” claim of expanding their national interests and culture, modern nation states invaded those countries, colonized them, pillaged their

possessions, exploited their resources, or even at times exterminated large proportion of their population.

The existence of open lands and the unlimited nature of the violence that was exerted there, as argued by Schmitt and other scholars, can to some extent be regarded as a condition for the limitation of violence among nation states themselves in the second circle of international system. At the same time, however, colonial and imperial expansion also constituted one source of conflicts among nation states. This may especially have been the case as open lands were disappearing with the progress of the nation states' colonial expansion, and as the local peoples started their own national independent movements that struggle to shake off the shackles put on them by modern nation states and to transform themselves also into nation states in the process. In the end, unlimited violence was brought back to the second circle of nation states themselves. Given that the modern state in principle can mobilize the energy of the whole nation, unlimited violence among nation states can lead to the collapse and to the end of the whole system of modern nation state. One can argue that the twentieth century witnessed this progressive ending of the system, which started with the two world wars and has now almost finished with the progress of globalization after the end of the Cold War.

3.3 Modern state as a nation state: its relation to the economy and national culture

The modern nation state is the political institution characteristic of modern society, in which the political has ceased to be the predominating aspect of social life, as was usually the case in pre-modern society.²⁵ The coming into being of modern society witnessed the simultaneous rise of three realms: politics, economy, and culture. Besides the political realm, there are now economic and cultural ones, and each has become relatively independent. At the same time they are closely related to, or even confluent with each other. Actually, they are not really independent "things" or realities, but are three aspects of one and the same modern society. (See figure 2.) The nature of modern nation states cannot be fully understood if we ignore the modern nation state's relationships with the economic and cultural aspects of the society.

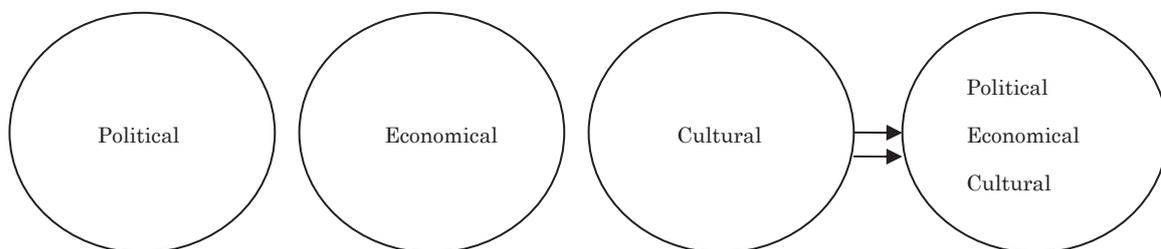


Figure 2. The system of modern society

In relationship with the economy, it is well known that the modern nation state developed in parallel with the modern capitalist economy. In the early history of the modern nation state, the prince and merchants joined hands in fighting against feudal lords. On the one hand, the establishment of uniform administration to serve the prince's interest of centralizing state power also had the effect of creating a unified national market. The state's effort to transform those who before were under the control or protection of all kind of groupings and communities into "free" individuals, actually led to the creation of labor supply for capitalist production. And the intention of promoting economic growth was manifest in the absolute monarchs' mercantilist policies. On the other hand, merchants not only paid taxes to their prince but also on occasions directly financed his enterprises. And the expansion of capitalist economic relations progressively destroyed traditional group loyalties which reinforced the hold of the central power.

The correspondence between the political and economic aspects of society became even clearer with the bourgeoisie's ascent to political power and the transformation of early modern states to representative states. The state was increasingly regarded as the engine of social progress, using state laws to guarantee the basic

rules of capitalism. There seems to be a dialectic relation between the political principle of equality and the *de facto* inequality entrenched in capitalist economy. Thus the modern nation state can be regarded as essentially the state form of capitalist modern society.

Now we should further add culture (understood in the broad sense of the term) to our discussion. As Weber points out, the Protestant religion during the Reformation provided a kind of spiritual basis for the expansion of capitalism. The coming into being of secular state theories out of the background of religious war provided the ideological justification for the incipient modern state through the idea of legitimacy resting on the consent of the people, and thus gave political order a basis free from religion. On the other hand, as Anderson points out, the unification of territory brought by centralized rule and the development of national capitalism, especially print capitalism, facilitated the creation of a vernacular national culture and the appearance of nationalism. As a reaction to popular nationalist sentiments, even the princes began to identify themselves as nationals to save the legitimacy of their power. Finally, the secularized vernacular culture became the “high culture” of the modern nation state. One major concern of the state is to maintain this high national culture which is regarded as not only an important condition for cognitive and economic progress in modern industrial society but also as one source of state legitimacy.

Thus, it is through facilitating the development of a national economy and national culture and basing its power on them that the modern state became a nation state. National interest constitutes a primary justification of all kind of state enterprises. This is also clearly exemplified in the modern nation states' colonial/imperial expansions. In fact, modern nation states did not really try to incorporate colonial territories into their own territories and to turn the population living there into citizens. Rather, they ruled their colonies in a very different way from the way they ruled their homeland, as an allegedly superior nation or race ruling over inferior people. As Sassen points out, the worldwide expansion of the market economy in the period of high imperialism was essentially to serve the interest of national capitalism.²⁶ And as many other authors point out, nationalism was the motive force of the nation states' imperial expansions. These world scale expansions were ideologically justified by the promotion of national culture and the carrying out of the national will. Educational systems were (usually) established in the colonies to “civilize” the local populations, or more exactly to changing them into a people behaving and thinking like the metropolis nation. However, ironically, nationalism in the mother country also implied the refusal to accept large number of already “civilized” colonial people as equal nationals.

In short, the sovereign power of the modern nation state lies not only in its monopoly of legitimate violence to guarantee internal peace and to wage war against enemies, but also in its institutional role to guarantee the basic condition and interest of a unified national economy and to promote and maintain a homogeneous national culture. The transformation of the modern nation state from absolute monarchy to representative government was also closely related to the dynamic process of the development of national capitalism and nationalism.

4. Conclusion

Based on the descriptive theories of many scholars, this paper first identifies several central characteristics of modern nation states. Then, a model of the system of modern nation states is constructed in part 3 by relating those characteristics together. Part 3 also examined the state's relationship to the economic and cultural aspect of modern society to further explain the nature of the modern nation state.

However, we must acknowledge that modern nation state is a historical phenomenon and a dynamic process. It has its roots in the pre-modern history of Western society. It constitutes the dominating political structure in

modern world history, with its national varieties and its specific forms changing throughout this history. Moreover, with the progress of globalization, the system of modern nation state is undergoing dramatic change with the transformation of the world's economic and political structures.²⁷ Thus, the abstract model of modern nation state could be made more precise if we examined more carefully the modern nation state's historical varieties, its predecessors, and the coming political forms which might replace it. Indeed, a more perfect model would better serve my later work on China's political modernization.

In this context, I want to point out that the following study on the political modernization of China might also contribute to a better understanding of the nature of modern nation states. This is because China, a major Eastern county, is one of those "no-nations" which has been passively (yet forcefully) involved in the world system dominated by Western nation states and, following the Western model, was motivated to pursue modernization by building its own nation state. Furthermore, having modernized itself to a large extent but not having completely succeeded in transforming itself into a modern nation state, China nonetheless also constitutes a major actor in today's globalization process and hence in the coming into being of a new world order. Thus, on the one hand, a model of the modern nation state as a comparative point is needed to examine the case of China. On the other hand, the exploration of the changes of China's political structure in modern history, which is the purpose of my overall research project, might further our understanding of the system of modern nation states and of the present transformation of this system accompanying the phenomenon of globalization.

NOTES:

- 1 I use the terms "modern state" and "modern nation state" here interchangeably, because I think that the modern state is essentially a nation state, I will discuss this point in detail in the later parts of the paper.
- 2 The extreme claim might be that there only exist particular nation states such as France, Germany, Japan, etc., and states in their specific historical circumstances, such as eighteenth century France, nineteenth century France, etc.
- 3 Essence is usually understood as a coherent reality which exists outside the phenomenon itself, and is realized in the world of phenomena.
- 4 *From Max Weber: essays in sociology* / tr., ed. with an introd. by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills. - London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1964, *Politics as a Vocation*, pp. 77-128, p.78.
- 5 *Territory, authority, rights: from medieval to global assemblages* / Saskia Sassen. - Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, c2006, p. 80. Sassen wrote by mistake that it was to finance the Hundred Years War" while it clearly can only be the Thirty Years War.
- 6 *From Mandeville to Marx: the genesis and triumph of economic ideology*/ Louis Dumont. - Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Pr., 1977, p. 6.
- 7 Max Weber (1964) pp.77-128.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Historically, the homogenization process in the West was first exemplified by the "one king, one religion" principle proposed in the Treaty of Westphalia.
- 10 *Nations and nationalism* / Ernest Gellner; introduction by John Breuilly; pbk. - 2nd ed. - Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2006, p. 18.
- 11 Paul Dumouchel describes the concept of justice guaranteed by modern state power as derivative from the prevailing economic discipline of scarcity. 物の地獄：ルネ・ジラールと経済の論理 / ポール・デュムシエル, ジャン＝ピエール・デュビュイ著；織田年和, 富永茂樹訳. - 東京：法政大学出版局, 1990.2.
- 12 *The great transformation: the political and economic origins of our time* / Karl Polanyi; foreword by Joseph E. Stiglitz; introduction by Fred Block. - 2nd Beacon pbk. ed. - Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 2001.
- 13 Saskia Sassen (2006)
- 14 See Saskia Sassen (2006), chapter 2 and 3.

- 15 *State identities and the homogenisation of peoples* / Heather Rae ; - Cambridge, U.K. : Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- 16 *The concept of the political* / Carl Schmitt ; translation, introduction, and notes by George Schwab ; with Leo Strauss's notes on Schmitt's essay translated by Harvey Lomax ; foreword by Tracy B. Strong. - Chicago : University of Chicago Press , 1996.
- 17 *Nationalism* / Rabindranath Tagore. - New York : The Macmillan company , 1917.
- 18 See Saskia Sassen (2006), chapter 3.
- 19 *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum*/ Carl Schmitt - Translation & Introduction by G. L. Ulmen Telos Press Publishing, 2006)
- 20 *The Origins of Totalitarianism*/ Hannah Arendt – New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1951 – see especially volume 2 *Imperialism*
- 21 *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* / Benedict Anderson. - Rev. ed. - London ; New York, N.Y. : Verso , 2006.
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- 24 This is similar to Hobbes' state of nature. The difference lies in that in Hobbes' state of nature, the subjects are individuals, while in the international system of modern nation states, the subjects are states. Actually Hobbes had already mentioned that Sovereign States in relation to each other remain in the state of nature. See *Leviathan* / Thomas Hobbes; Bristol: Thoemmes Continuum, 2003.
- 25 Though in many traditional societies, especially in the West, the dominating aspect of social life was religion, religion actually held political power and thus could be regarded as a specific way of political control. *Between you and me I don't think so, but this relates to the question: what is political?*
- 26 See Saskia Sassen (2006), chapter 3.
- 27 Sassen disputes the idea that the modern territorial nation state constitutes a historical political order which is a completely new phenomenon, arguing that some essential capabilities indispensable for modern nation state had already appeared during the medieval period. And similarly she argues that the coming political order resulting from globalization also inherits and reassembles important capabilities developed in the period of the modern nation state.

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A Model of the Modern Nation State: A Methodological Approach

NIU Geping

Abstract:

This paper is part of a larger research project on China's political modernization. Its purpose is to construct a model of the modern nation state, which can later be used to examine the case of China. Based on the works of Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, Karl Polanyi, Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson, among others, this paper first lists some basic characteristics of the modern nation state: the state's monopoly of legitimate violence; the rationality and representativeness of state power; the state's role in maintaining a homogeneous national culture and in promoting economic progress; the territoriality of state sovereignty; the international community of modern nation states and the world system dominated by them; as well as the prevalence of the concept of nation and nationalism in modern states. In the second part, the paper proposes a three-concentric-circle model of the system of modern nation states, in which the modern nation state constitutes the first circle, the international system the second, larger circle, and the world system the largest circle. Finally, the paper attempts to relate the economic and cultural aspects of the modern state to its strictly political structure.

Keywords: modern nation state, international system, world system, national economy, national culture

近代国民国家モデルについての考察 ——方法論的アプローチから——

牛 革 平

要旨:

本論文は、中国の政治的近代化に関するより大きな研究プロジェクトの一部をなしている。本論文は近代国民国家のモデルの構築を目的とする。これは、後にこのモデルを適用して中国のケースを考察することを視野に入れたものである。本論文の第一部では、マックス・ウェーバー、カール・シュミット、カール・ポランニー、アーネスト・ゲルナー、ベネディクト・アンダーソンなどの著作に基づいて、近代国民国家のいくつかの基本的特徴を挙げた。それは、国家による合法的な暴力の独占、国家権力の合理性と代表性、同質的な国民文化の維持と経済的発展の促進という国家の役割、国家主権の領土化、国際的なコミュニティと世界システムの形成、そして国民国家でのネーションという信念およびナショナリズムの浸透である。第二部は、三つの同心円としての近代国民国家システムのモデルを構築した。近代国民国家そのものは最初の円に当て、多数の国民国家によって形成された国際的なシステムは二番目に大きい円に当て、そして、国民国家に支配される世界システムは一番大きな円に当てた。最後に、近代国家の政治的構造と、その経済的側面および文化的側面とを架橋して論じることを試みた。

