Chapter 9
The Nation-State/Empire as a Unit of Analysis in the History of International Relations: A Case Study in Northeast Asia, 1868–1933

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Abstract In this chapter I propose the notion of the "nation state/empire" as a new way of conceptualising an actor in international politics, and as a basic unit in an analysis of international politics for the period between the late nineteenth century and 1945. The period is exemplary for two reasons. First, in the late nineteenth century, the nation state that was based on popular or national principles of legitimacy became prominent: at the same time, many nation states were competing for new colonial acquisitions. Second, as elaborated below, many empires retained formal colonies throughout the interwar period.

In the first section of the chapter I will demonstrate how this notion of the nation state/empire can be located in debates on the state system. Acknowledging a recent move to incorporate empire both as an idea and as an actor in analyses of international relations, the chapter nonetheless questions a still widely assumed dichotomy between the nation state and empire in these works, and suggests the need to see them as an integral unit. This also means the need to see the European state system and the extra European system as an integral whole. It argues that the international society of the time may be best understood not as a society of relatively equal national states, but as one composed of nation states/empires with diverse power. In the second section of this chapter I apply this notion whilst examining the international politics of Northeast Asia between the late nineteenth century and 1933. I see Japan as an empire in which the problem of the international society of nation states/empires was manifested.

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Introduction

In this chapter I propose the notion of the 'nation-state/empire' as a new way of conceptualizing an actor in international politics, and as a basic unit in an analysis of international politics for the period between the late nineteenth century and 1945.[1] The period is exemplary for two reasons. First, in the late nineteenth century, the nation-state that was based on popular or national principles of legitimacy became prominent: at the same time, many nation-states were competing for new colonial acquisitions. Second, as elaborated below, many empires retained formal colonies throughout the inter-war period.

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By using the notion of the nation-state/empire, the chapter pinpoints the two major themes of this book, 'beyond the nation-state' and 'the process of governing globalization'. First, the notion draws attention to the fact that many modern nation-states were empires, which contemporaries called "Great Powers", and whose boundaries went beyond the metropolitan nation (the nation where the imperial metropolitan centre was located). Their 'national' state was the imperial state which governed the territories beyond the metropolitan nation. These metropolitan national "centres" did not exist independently or separately from their colonial "peripheries", and the "peripheries" also shaped metropolitan national ideas and institutions, which in turn became the bases for global governance.

Second, this notion of the nation-state/empire emphasizes the role of not only the nation-states, but also empires in managing and governing what we now call the globalization process. Empire-building was a part of the development of the infrastructures for governing various trans-national movements of people, goods and money. Making and enacting on the international codes and norms for

[1] I have already used the notion of the nation-state/empire elsewhere. In 2002, I used the term in my analysis of Wilsonian internationalism in the Asia-Pacific region. In 2007, I further articulated the idea in the context of the debate on informal empire. See Akami 2002, 2007.

[2] On some important recent attempt, see Cox et al. (2001) and Jones (2006). They are mainly concerned with the relationship between empires and the Third World. This perspective probably also explains why these works still largely assume the dual systems of the "West" and "non-West".

managing these issues was, therefore, not only an inter-national exercise (among independent nation-states), but also intra-empire (imperial/colonial matters) or inter-empire exercise (among empires). This meant that the making of global norms involved both the concern of empires' colonial governance and inter-empire politics.

While this nexus of the nation-state and empire has been largely neglected in mainstream works on globalization, the Introduction and following chapters of this book demonstrate how empires have been present at various levels of inter-"national" and trans-"national" actions. Mueller-Pohl and Ellis discuss the convergence of national and imperial interests respectively in the areas of cable networks and educational networks. The other authors suggest that "inter-national" or "trans-national" projects were indeed "imperial", "inter-empire", or "trans-empire". Thiemeyer, for example, shows how the development of an international monetary union in Europe could be understood as a French empire project. Casteel argues that a German project in Siberia was "transnational" and "imperial", whilst Ewing also discusses "inter-empire" alliances against cable radicalism in the Middle East.

As the Introduction and each of the chapters make clear, this book reflects a shift in historical studies from compartmentalization and essentialization to multi-layered inter-connectivity. The notion of the nation-state/empire epitomizes this very point, focusing in particular on the mutually constitutive relationship between metropolitan centres and the colonial peripheries. The idea is mainly inspired by recent scholarship on empire and post-colonialism. Unlike Hannah Arendt, who in 1951 argued that European empires' colonial activities little affected their metropolitan structures of politics and law,[3] Ronald Robinson suggested in 1986 an asymmetrical, yet still two-way relationship between the metropolitan state and colonial collaborators.[4] While Robinson called such a view "eccentric" in 1986, by 2002 Catherine Hall summarized a recent trend in post-colonial literature as:

> The idea that colonies and their peoples were made by the colonizers was of course nothing new: what was new was the argument that this relationship went both ways, even if in unequal relations of power.[5]

I am, however, not proposing the notion of the nation-state/empire in order to examine cultural and social aspects of these entanglements between the metropolitan centres and the colonial peripheries. Excellent works have already done in this area, as discussed in the Introduction. Instead of this, by using this concept of the nation-state/empire in a historical case study, I want to suggest that the idea that the European system and the extra-European system existed in parallel is historically inaccurate. Furthermore, the notion of the nation-state/empire questions the assumption that the International Society was comprised of "liberal" and "democratic" nation-states. More specifically, it questions an assumption that "liberal"

[3] Arendt noted: "It is characteristic of imperialism that national institutions remain separate from the colonial administration"; Arendt 1951, p. 131.

[4] Robinson 1986, pp. 267–89.

[5] Hall 2002, p. 2.

ideas and institutions, which became the basis of the global governance system, were formed within the metropolitan centres internally, *and then* applied to the rest of the world. In contrast, the notion (nation-state/empire) put forward here allows us to see that colonial peripheries were constitutive elements of metropolitan "liberal" ideas and institutions, that metropolitan actors had complex motivations, and that the global norms derived from these metropolitan/colonial ideas had ambivalent impacts on the people beyond the metropolitan nations.[6]

In this chapter, the nation-state/empire is treated as an actor and a basic unit in international politics during the historically specified period, and is to be distinguished from imperialism. The chapter's focus is the state. It suggests that the modern state was often not only the national state that governed the nation, but also the imperial state that governed its formal colonies. This national/imperial state had a physically defined territory, an entity that I am calling the nation-state/empire. By empire, therefore, I do not mean certain kinds of power relations in which the centre of power is unclear, as Negri and Hardt have suggested,[7] but a formal empire with a formal colony or colonies that the imperial state gained by treaties and/or military conquests.[8] Imperialism here is understood as the specific nature and/or idea of the policy of a certain political regime. This was based on asymmetrical economic and political power relations, and was backed by the use of force or at least the threat of using force.[9]

Accordingly, the political regime, which conducted an imperialistic policy, as this chapter will elaborate, further, might not have had a formal colony. In other words, a non-formal empire, like the Japanese state before 1894, conducted an imperialistic policy. Furthermore, even metropolitan states, which possessed formal colonies, condemned other states' imperialistic nature and/or policies. Examples include the Allied powers' criticism of the Central Powers during the First World War, and the U.S.'s criticism of Japanese aggression in Northeast China (then called Manchuria) in 1931–1932.

Lastly, the terminology, nation-state/empire, suggests that analysis is made from the perspective of the colonizer, not the colonized. This concept is, however, relational in the sense that empires could not exist without their less powerful counterparts.[10] I use this concept, therefore, in order to present a critical view of, not to accept and justify, the power hierarchy among the nation-states.

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[6] Semmel, for example, examined the connection between ideas of radical metropolitan social reform and its imperialist foreign and military policy. Semmel 1960.

[7] Hardt and Negri 2000.

[8] For a definition of formal and informal empires, see Gallagher and Robinson 1953. For further debates on formal and informal empires and the use of the terminology beyond 1945, see the essays in Mommsen and Osterhammel 1986.

[9] The term 'imperialism' is often used for 'new imperialism' of European Empires after the 1880s, while others understand it more broadly. See Mommsen 1981; Chilcote 2000.

[10] Akami 2007, pp. 34 f.

Empire Versus the Nation-State in the Discourse of International Relations

Hitherto the nexus of the nation-state and empire has been largely neglected in the discourse of international relations. This is even more pronounced when we analyse international politics between the late nineteenth century and 1945, the crucial transitional stage to decolonization in our human history. Here instead, empire has often been understood in opposition to the nation-state. Arendt, for example, regarded imperialism as the ideology of an empire that was inherently expansionist, and argued that "this expansionist movement . . . could only destroy the political body of the nation-state".[11] Such a view has been dominant in critical scholarship, which regarded empires as oppressors and exploiters of weaker actors. Indeed, lesser political entities and nations resisted imperial rule, and many national states were created when they became independent from the empires in Europe after the First World War, and in Asia, Africa and the Pacific after the end of the Second World War.

Orthodox scholarship of international relations has also accepted such a dichotomy. Stanley Hoffmann, for example, noted that

> all theorists of international relations have taken for granted the notion of a 'system of states' . . . The dichotomy in their minds has been: systems of several states versus imperial systems.[12]

As a result, analyses of the state system had to a large extent not incorporated empires.[13] Hedley Bull's 'International Society' is one such example. He defined international society as follows:

> [A] group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, [that] form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions.[14]

For Bull, the state "possesses a government and asserts sovereignty in relation to a particular portion of the earth's surface and a particular segment of the human population".[15]

Although he does not exclude empires as a variation of the state,[16] empires disappear from his discussion on the historical development of an international

[11] Arendt 1951, p. 125.

[12] Hoffmann 2002, p. xxviii.

[13] This is not to say that a hierarchical aspect of international politics has been ignored: cf. Clark 1989; here, hierarchy is understood as a structural mechanism for reform, and its focus was the hierarchy among independent states.

[14] Bull 2002, p. 13.

[15] Ibid., p. 8.

[16] Bull's states included not only city-states, dynastic absolutist states, and nation-states based on "popular or national principles of legitimacy", but also empires – "multinational states, such as European empires of the nineteenth century" and "the oceanic imperial states of Western Europe". Bull 2002, pp. 8 f.

society in the nineteenth century. In this development, he suggests, the ideas and realities of the international society emerged in Europe as a Christian International Society, and developed into European International Society.[17] He argues:

> By the nineteenth century the orthodox doctrine of the positivist international lawyers was that international society was a European association, to which non-European states could be admitted only if and when they met a standard of civilization laid down by the Europeans.[18]

To an extent Bull regrets a receding universalistic element, but accepts this development as the reality of the time. The premise was then set as: the European International Society of states "existed out there" by the time of the nineteenth century.[19] Accordingly, subsequent works on the International Society (the English School) were concerned with the two main questions: "when was each extra-European state drawn and accepted into the *expanding* European society, and how?" (emphasis added).[20]

This premise was based on three related assumptions in which the 'empire' aspect of the European states has been largely neglected. First, the International Society was composed of European nation-states. Second, this Society existed *independently* from the outside world: it had emerged first in Europe, and *then expanded* into the rest of the world. Third, these nation-states developed advanced civilizations internally within Europe, and independently from the rest of the world.

By the late nineteenth century, however, many of the European metropolitan states were already global. They had formal and informal colonies beyond Europe, and in the late nineteenth century they went into a new phase of colonization. Meanwhile, Europe had been defining itself not internally, but in relation to "new worlds".[21] Furthermore, its metropolitan life-styles, infrastructures, economic and social developments had long been funded and even shaped by exploitive interactions with its formal and informal colonies. As Stuart Hall reminds us, what we think most essentially English, the 'English' cup of tea, was a product not of the British nation, but its colonies.[22]

The idea of the expansion of the International Society, therefore, neglects these elements of empire, as well as the fact that this European international society was the society of the nation-states/empires. Instead, European (and American) empires

[17] Ibid., pp. 26–36.

[18] Ibid., p. 32.

[19] Although Onuma is generally critical of Bull's idea, he agrees on this point. Onuma 2000, pp. 63 f.

[20] Zhang 1991, p. 3. The most significant works in this tradition are Bull and Watson 1984 and Gong 1984.

[21] Hall 1992, pp. 289 ff.

[22] Hall 1991, pp. 48 f. The British merchants smuggled opium to China via India to pay off their debts for tea leaves, the production of which was then taken over by the plantations in the British colonies of India and Sri Lanka. Sugar had been produced in the Caribbean islands by slave labour, and the British (as well as the Swedish, French and Dutch) ended this system only in the mid-nineteenth century, when it was then taken over by cheap 'local' labour.

were often termed collectively the 'West', which was viewed not as an oppressor, but as a positive agent of political and economic modernization and liberalization of the 'extra-European' world.[23]

Criticism of this orthodox view is not absent in the literature of International Relations. Stephen Krasner argues that "the idea that states ought to be autonomous, free from external intervention, was only developed as an explicit principle" in the late eighteenth century, and that breaches of this sovereignty state model have been more a norm than an exception.[24] By examining major treaties made between 1648 and 2001,[25] he has demonstrated how this model has been violated in four ways: conventions, contract, coercion and imposition.

Although Krasner does not refer to empire here, by doing so, one can explain two of these types of violation. First, Krasner defines 'convention' as the following:

> During the nineteenth century, the domestic autonomy of all of the successor states to the Ottoman Empire as well as many Latin American countries was compromised through contractual arrangements involving international loans.[26]

European nation-states/empires made these contractual arrangements, and they did so in the areas trade as well as finance. Historians understood such unequal trade treaties as the basis of the British "informal empire of free trade",[27] while others applied this notion of informal empire to the other empires.

Second, Krasner defines violation by means of coercion and imposition, as follows:

> Coercion occurs when rulers in one state threaten to impose sanctions unless their counterparts in another compromise their domestic autonomy . . . Imposition occurs when the rulers or would-be rulers of a target state have no choice: they are so weak that they must accept domestic structures, policies, or personnel preferred by more powerful actors or else be eliminated. When applied against states, coercion and imposition are violations of international legal as well as the Vattelian sovereignty. When applied against the would-be rulers of not yet created states, coercion and imposition are violations of the sovereignty state model . . . *but not violations of international legal sovereignty* . . . (emphasis added).[28]

The above pattern fits well the relationships between Euro-American empires and weaker states or with their formal colonies (would-be states) in the late nineteenth and first two decades of the twentieth century. The empires legitimized colonization of these "weak states" or "non-states" after the use of force through

[23] On the historical process of positive values being associated with the idea of the 'West', see Roberts 1985. Cynics might suspect that the term had been invented in order to cover up unsavoury aspects of the empires' extra-European doings. On the ideas of the West in the discourse of International Relations, see O'Hagan 2002.

[24] Krasner 2001, p. 17. This state sovereignty model was developed by the Swiss international lawyer Emmerich de Vattel, and in his view the model has been "a cognitive script: its basic rules are widely understood but also frequently violated".

[25] Treaties selected are: Westphalia, Utrecht, Vienna, Versailles, Helsinki, and Dayton.

[26] Krasner 2001, pp. 26, 28.

[27] Gallagher and Robinson 1953, pp. 11 f.

[28] Krasner 2001, pp. 30 f.

internationally accepted (among empires) legal documents that assumed "limited sovereignty" of weaker counterparts.[29]

One can even argue that a similar violation of sovereignty could have happened within the nation-state, and see the making of the nation-state as a process of internal colonization. Nation-state creation was often the process of making a dominant nation *the* nation among many nations within the territorial boundary of a certain state. As a result, lesser nations within this territory became 'minority groups'.

The 'pure' nation-state with no history of possessing formal colonies, or of being colonized, has rarely existed in international history. Most nation-states experienced some degree of internal colonization in their making. The pure nation-state is, therefore, an ideal prototype, rather than representative of a majority. Most nation-states contained imperial/colonial constituents within their territorial boundaries.

Other criticism of the idea of the International Society has come from scholars of International Relations, who reflect recent debates on empire and postcolonialism. Edward Keene, for example, stressed that imperial/colonial relationship as a critical factor in the idea of Grotius's international law. He argued that Bull's notion of the International Society had focused on the European state-system, and neglected "the other pattern of order, which developed roughly simultaneously in the colonial and imperial systems that were established beyond Europe".[30] Scholars of international law, such as Antony Anghie and Wilhelm Grewe, also argue for the centrality of empire, not the nation-state, in the development of international law.[31] Their works also indicate that colonialism was a crucial and integral part of the development of ideas and institutions for global governance.

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[29] One of the most influential works of international law in the late nineteenth century noted, "Some States are completely sovereign and independent … The sovereignty of other States is limited and qualified in various degrees"; Wheaton (as 1936), p. 44. Wheaton's book was first published in 1836, and in 1936, the book was described as "a classic in the literature of International Law" by James Brown Scott. Scott ("Preface", in ibid., p. 6a). The same phrase was also included in the 1904 version (Wheaton 1904, p. 51). For the case of Africa, a leading British international law expert noted in 1894 that it was unthinkable to bestow "uncivilized natives" with sovereignty, as cited in Koskenniemi 2002, p. 127.

[30] Keene 2002, p. xi. For a critical assessment of the problem of post-colonialism in International Relations, see Bain 2003.

[31] Grewe argued this point in 1944, and 1984 (second edition) in his German publication, which was translated into English in 2000; Grewe 2000, pp. 23–29. Part Two, Chap. 8 discussed in particular the Spanish-Portuguese negotiations and Vitoria, while later chapters dealt with the French and British empires and international law; ibid., pp. 240 ff. I would like to thank Zachmann for his insight into Grewe's works. While Grewe's argument was more to legitimize the anticipated German phase of international law, recent critical works on international law were influenced by post-colonialism. Anghie argued that although the idea of international law as a tool of colonialism had been well established by 2005, his new point was that colonialism was central in the development of international law. Anghie 2005, pp. 2 f. In addition to politics of dominant empires, Clark pointed out the other critical factor which contributed to norm changes, the role of the "public conscience" of World Society; Clark 2007, pp. 1–9.

To argue that empire was a crucial factor in the making of international codes and norms for global governance, however, is not the same as to understand empire as an integral component of the nation-state. Despite recent critical work, it is still common to see the European system and the extra-European system being portrayed separate, not integral. It is also common to find neglected the complex roles and impacts of empires in international politics between the late nineteenth century and 1945. Krasner, for example, does not refer to Euro-American empires of this period when he discusses the violation of state sovereignty. Instead, he draws attention to how these "great powers" acted for a progressive cause, such as "[securing] minority rights in eastern and central Europe" in 1832, 1878 and 1919.[32]

Let us now apply the notion of the nation-state/empire to Northeast Asia in this rather neglected period.

The International Society of the Nation-States/Empires in Northeast Asia

Before 1919: The Making of the Meiji Nation-State/Empire

It is not difficult to incorporate empire in an analysis of international politics between the mid-nineteenth century and 1919. What is difficult is to understand the metropolitan state's formal colonization process as an integral part of the nation-state-making in metropolitan centres, which included the development of greater popular political participation.

In the context of Northeast Asia, most scholars do agree that imperialism was the defining factor for international politics during this period. They regard European powers not as democratic nation-states, but as exploitive empires, and saw that Japan "imitated Western imperialism", although its imperialism was "different from Western imperialism".[33] In contrast, scholars of the English School have understood the period as one of the "expansion of the European International Society" into Northeast Asia, and of the "socialization" of the states in the region

[32] Krasner 2001, pp. 32 f. Krasner concluded with three reasons why this "organized hypocrisy" of violating state sovereignty has been characteristic of international relations. First, actors, by which he distinguished state from empire, "have different levels of power". Second, "rulers … will be responsible to different domestic norms", to which they are more bound than they are to international obligations. Third, when more than one rule exists in an international context, "there is no authority structure" to decide which rule is to be applied; ibid., p. 42. Clark notes the role of the Great Powers, and uses the notion of hegemony as an institution to understand the power hierarchy of the International Society; Clark 2011, pp. 203–28.

[33] Beasley 1991, p. 6; Peattie 1984, pp. 6–15; Peattie 1988, p. 217. Peattie's point, however, was made in reference to European maritime empires, and he noted that this distinction could not be made between the imperialism of Japan and that of other continental European empires; Peattie 1984, p. 14.

to this Society. The European nation-states that constituted this Society, as they see it, were agents of modernization and civilization, not oppressors of the regional states.[34] One of the most recent works from this school by Suzuki Shogo, however, acknowledges that the English School had neglected the empire element. He argues that socialization meant learning "imperialistic behaviour as well as the 'standard of [European] civilization'".[35]

The point I would like to stress is that this idea of the "standard of civilization" was not contradictory to "imperialistic behaviour", but they were integral parts of colonization. Here it is useful to understand history of international law as the development of the law for nation-states/empires. In the nineteenth century, so-called international law experts recognized military conquest as an accepted state action,[36] and international law not only regulated these actions, but also legitimized the result of the use of force in post-conflict settlements. The rhetoric of civilization was a crucial factor in this process. As one of the most influential works of international law of the time, Henry Wheaton's *Elements of International Law* (first published in 1836), made clear, only "civilized" nations shared the ideas of reason and justice on which international law was based.[37]

To be sure, certain international law experts tried to promote humanitarianism inspired by natural-law on behalf of the "uncivilized". They did not, however, regard "uncivilized" nations as being equal to "civilized" nations. Civilized nations, which were recognized only in the presence of uncivilized nations, were imperial nations (the nation-states/empires). These metropolitan international law experts tried to regulate and manage their empires' colonial activities. In this process, while they maintained humanitarian concerns with "uncivilized natives", they ultimately legitimized their states' colonial activities either reluctantly or unwittingly.[38] Koskenniemi points out the irony: these experts advocated the establishment of creating a formal colonial administration as a means of protecting "natives" against uncontrolled private colonial activities in the 1880s.[39] A comment by a leading British international law expert, John Westlake, summarized this point in 1894:

> International law has to treat natives as uncivilized. It regulates, for the mutual benefit of the civilized states, the claims that they make to sovereignty over the region and leaves the treatment of the natives to the conscience of the state to which sovereignty is awarded.[40]

[34] Watson 1984, pp. 27, 29, 30. Such a view was also common in works which applied modernization theory to the case of Japan. Reischauer and Craig 1989.

[35] Suzuki 2009, pp. 20–25, 27.

[36] Wheaton (1866) 1936, p. 33. The point was also included in the 1904 edition; Wheaton 1904, p. 38.

[37] Wheaton (1866) 1936, p. 20. The point was also included in the 1904 edition; Wheaton 1904, p. 24.

[38] On this ambivalence among international law experts between being an advocate for universal humanitarianism and a legitimizer of colonialism, see Koskenniemi 2002, chap. 1 and 2.

[39] Ibid., pp. 143 ff.

[40] Cited in ibid., p. 127.

The "uncivilized" nature of "natives" justified empires in dictating the their lives for them. The consequences of the actions of metropolitan liberal legal experts, therefore, might not have been so much the empowerment of the "natives", as the preservation of the interests of empires.

The Meiji state (the Japanese state in the Meiji period, 1868–1912) emerged into this international politics governed by the international law of the nation-states/empires. It was a 'weaker state' located to the far east of Europe and the East Coast of the U.S.

When the Meiji state took power from the Shogunate in 1868,[41] it was not an empire yet in the sense that it did not have a formal colony. In January 1868, the Meiji state declared itself to the other empires which already had diplomatic relations with the previous Shogunate state: the new Meiji state restored the emperor (*Tennō*) as the political head of the state (*Ōsei fukko*).[42] In 1868, however, the emperor had no empire. The diplomatic documents of the first two decades of the Meiji period indeed referred to the Meiji state not as the Japanese empire, but either as the Japanese state (*Nihon koku*), the Japanese government (*Nihon seifu*) or occasionally Great Japan (*Dai Nihon*).[43]

The Japanese state started to call itself an empire before it had a formal colony, in order to be treated equally in international law, which was defined by the nation-states/empires. The first diplomatic document that used the term 'the Japanese Empire' (*Nihon teikoku*) appeared in June 1886, still almost a decade before the Meiji state gained its first formal colony. The use of this new term reflected the Meiji state's conscious quest to be treated equally with Euro-American nation-states/empires in international law. This 1886 document was concerned with treaty reform with the relevant empires,[44] marking a new phase of treaty reform negotiations that had begun a month earlier.[45] Three years later, in 1889, *Nihon teikoku* became the official term for the Japanese state, when the Meiji Constitution (*Nihon teikoku kenpô* or the constitution of the Japanese empire) was proclaimed. The Meiji state, however, still had no formal colony at this time.

Despite the use of the term 'empire' in legal documents, one could argue that the Meiji state was an informal colony of free trade with the treaty empires. The previous Shogunate government (1603–1868) had entered into bilateral treaties with other empires (the U.S., Britain, France, the Netherlands and Russia) in 1854–1855. These treaties were followed by the Treaty of Amity and Commerce:

[41] This was the same period as the national integration of Italy in 1870, and Germany in 1871.

[42] "Kaikoku washin no hōshin o tsuguru chokugo" 1 January 1868, "Taisei fukko o rekkoku ni hōzuru kokusho" 10 January 1868, in: Kodama et al. 1991, pp. 118f.

[43] A survey of the 50 main diplomatic documents between 1854 and 1886 shows that *Kōtei*, a generic term for an emperor, was used, and not the specific Japanese term, *Tennō*. Gaimushō 1955, pp. 1–106.

[44] "Eidoku gōan jōyakusho" (an agreement between Britain and Germany on the reform of the [unequal] treaty), 15 June 1886, reprinted in Gaimushô 1955, pp. 107–111.

[45] On 1 May 1886, Foreign Minister Inoue Kaoru held the first conference for treaty reform with the heads of the missions of the treaty powers in Tokyo.

it was formed with each of these empires in 1858, and inherited by the Meiji government in 1868. Each treaty included two major unequal clauses: Japan had no tariff right over the goods of the treaty empires; and their residents came under their consulate jurisdiction).

Gallagher and Robinson regarded such unequal trade clauses as the basis of the British informal empire.[46] These treaties complied with an international legal framework that was accepted among the nation-states/empires of the time. The Meiji state had no choice but to enter this framework as a lesser partner.[47]

For the Meiji state, a repeal of these unequal clauses meant becoming an equal nation-state/empire (Great Powers: *Rekkyō*). Shortly after notifying the establishment of the new state to the treaty empires, it issued a chartered statement on foreign policy to the domestic public in January 1868.[48] Its foreign policy principle was "to open a country and cooperate [with other powers]" (*Kaikoku washin*).[49] Here, repealing the unequal treaty clauses was clearly the new state's most significant foreign policy objective, and it recognized that to achieve this military might have to be accompanied by knowledge and skill in international law.[50] It is symbolic that after the Meiji state annexed Korea (1910) it repealed all these unequal clauses (1911).[51] A civilized state, therefore, meant a mighty state and an empire, and this combination made a newcomer state legally accepted as equal to the other nation-states/empires.

In 1868, the Meiji state fully understood the dual nature of the international law of nation-states/empires. Henry Wheaton's *Elements of International Law* had been translated into Japanese and was read among the Meiji elite. On one hand, the Meiji elite realized that international law was a significant and necessary tool for enhancing the status of a lesser country, such as Japan.[52] On the other hand, they understood that international law was created by and worked for Euro-American empires.[53] In late 1868, therefore, a leading member of the Meiji oligarchy noted

[46] Gallagher and Robinson 1953, pp. 11 f.

[47] Auslin 2004, p. 148. Auslin indicates that the new treaty which the Meiji state concluded with the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1869 further clarified Japan's status as an informal colony of free trade to the 14 treaty powers; ibid., p. 162.

[48] This was 2 months earlier than the famous Chartered Oath on the principle of domestic governance (14 March 1868).

[49] "Kaikoku washin no hōshin o tsuguru chokugo", 1 January 1868, reprinted and compiled in Kodama 1991, pp. 118 f.

[50] Its three stated goals were: first, it would reform the unequal treaties; second, it would build up military capacity and increase national prestige; and third, it would comply with international law; idem.

[51] All the consulate jurisdiction clauses were repealed in 1899, and the tariff right was restored to Japan in 1911.

[52] Yamamuro 2002, p. 598.

[53] It was first translated in China, and then introduced to Japan and Korea; in Japan, it became a textbook on international law in schools in various places after 1865, and after the Meiji Restoration, it was studied in schools and universities. Yamamuro 2002, pp. 222 ff.

that "international law (*Bankoku kōhō*) was a tool to exploit the weak".[54] The Meiji state was soon to use this tool in its colonization process.

As the Meiji state did not have a formal empire, it was also not a nation-state in the sense that it was not governed by the principle of popular legitimacy until 1889. Since it sought to be modern and civilized, it began drastic domestic reforms in its first few years. It soon achieved this goal, and emerged with modern economic, financial and education systems, a standing military, and transportation and telecommunication networks.[55] Yet the Meiji state was still dominated by the new oligarchy (*Hanbatsu*) that led the fall of the Shogunate government. They soon, however, took a path to constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy.

They desired to be equal with the other powers, but domestic factors also contributed to the oligarchy's decision to move to parliamentary democracy. The oligarchy was concerned with the survival of the state. In the first two decades of its rule, the Meiji state faced fierce opposition. There were *samurai* rebellions and numerous riots against land tax and conscription, many of which were violent.[56] Former *samurai*s who missed out on becoming a part of the oligarchy also mobilized broader anti-oligarchy government forces. In the mid-1870s they pressured the government to open the political process to a "popular" election. As a result, the government promised to create a constitution, and began to prepare drafting it in 1876. The oligarchy understood bourgeois revolutions as a dominant and irreversible world trend. It was inevitable, they concluded, that all regimes throughout the world sooner or later had to abandon absolutism and "share political power with the people (*jinmin to seiji no ken o wakatsu*)".[57] In 1881, the oligarchic government promised the establishment of a national representative assembly (and a general election) in 10 years' time.

As a result, by 1890 the Meiji state had become a modern nation-state, with a political regime as democratic and as authoritarian as many contemporary European constitutional monarchies. The Meiji oligarchic government tried to

[54] Kido Takayoshi's diary entry of 8 November 1868, cited in Yamamuro 2002, p. 598. In 1874, a textbook in what became the Tokyo Imperial University even called international law "Rekkoku kôsaihô" (law of intercourse among the powers). Ibid., p. 224.

[55] The Meiji state abolished the old status system (1868–1872), introduced the new currency (1871), established the national banking system (1872), reformed the land tax (1873, 1877) and promoted industries; it began the new school system (1872, then reformed this in 1879 and 1886) and towards the end of the Meiji era (1912) it achieved a 98 % school attendance rate (for boys, 99 % and for girls, 97 %). The Meiji state also established conscription (1873), whilst the central government structure was reformed in 1873. The Home Ministry that supervised the police force and local governments was founded later that year. It also began to build modern national transportation and communication networks (telegraph, from 1869, postal service, from 1871, railway, from 1872) while also developing shipping services.

[56] More than a 100 such riots were listed in the official records, both in 1869 (110) and 1884 (167); Aoki 1994, p. 335.

[57] Itō Hirobumi's note on constitutional government of 19 March 1880 in Kaneko 1943, p. 194.

preserve its power against elective bodies,[58] and modelled its constitution on that of Prussia to achieve this goal. It declared the Meiji Constitution in 1889. While the constitution limited the power of the Diet[59] and the Cabinet, it nonetheless established a constitutional monarchy, and parliamentary democracy had begun.[60] In 1890, the first general election took place, in which 1.1 % of the whole population was able to vote.[61]

Could this Meiji nation-state have become just a nation-state without becoming an empire? Meiji policy-makers conceived the idea of a buffer zone to protect the sovereignty of the Japanese state from other empires' advances. This could be formed either by the internal colonization of these areas to become a part of the nation-state, or external colonization as a part of the formal empire.

According to Yamamuro Shin'ichi, such an idea of a buffer zone had emerged already in 1786. This was almost 70 years before Commodore Perry's arrival in Tokyo Bay, and a century earlier than the Meiji Restoration. At this time of the late eighteenth century, the Shogunate government and certain regional domain (*Han*) governments in Japan were aware of foreign threats: Russian advancement in the North, and French and British colonial expansion into Asia. As a result, books on defence policy began to emerge, and in 1786, one of these pioneering experts, Hayashi Shihei, wrote *Sangoku tsuīran zusetsu* (Illustrated survey of the three poles [of the West, China and Japan]). In this book, he argued that Japan needed to annex the northern island (*Ezo*), the southern islands (the Ryūkyū Kingdom), and Korea as a buffer zone in case these other empires tried to invade Japan by allying with China.[62]

Hayashi's idea that Japan needed outposts nearby to secure its independence was a piece of geopolitical wisdom, something military strategists did not have to "learn from the West", but "saw". A similar idea was apparent among Meiji politicians. In 1890, Yamagata Aritomo, the so-called father of Japan's modern army and one of the most prominent members of the oligarchy, became Prime Minister after the first general election. In his speech at the first Imperial Diet, Prime Minister Yamagata justified the defence budget, and argued that in order to defend the independence of the state against mighty powers (*Rekkoku*), it needed to secure not only its

[58] It issued the order to create the peers (1884) as a preparation for establishing the (non-elective) House of Peers, and set up the Cabinet system (1885) and the (non-elective) Privy Council (1888).

[59] The Meiji Imperial Diet had two houses, the House of Peers and the House of Representatives.

[60] All political actors, including the emperor, were now bound to the constitutional process and to his ministers' counsel; Mitani argues that the Emperor's prerogative was meant to act as an integrating force for these multiple power centres, but in reality it was entrusted to, and shared among these power centres; Mitani 1988, p. 60. The Constitution became the centrepiece of Japan's modern legal system, which included the Criminal Codes (1880) and the Civil Codes (1899).

[61] The percentage increased as the electorate was expanded; in 1900, it was 2.2 %, 1919, 5.5 %, 1925, 20.8 %, and finally it reached 50.4 % in 1945 when the universal (male and female) franchise was realized.

[62] Yamamuro 2002, pp. 581 f.

sovereignty border (*Shuken sen*) but also its interest border (*Rieki sen*), which was "closely connected to the security (*Anpi*) of the sovereignty border".[63] For Yamagata, this interest border meant Korea.

In order to secure such a buffer/interest zone, the Japanese state needed to take control of the area. This, however, did not necessarily have to take the form of external colonization. The state could colonize an area and integrate it into the nation-state (internal colonization). By 1890 when Yamagata made the above speech, this was what the Meiji state had done on the northern front (Ezo) and the southern front (Ryūkyū Kingdom). The internal colonization in the south, however, challenged China's suzerainty over the Ryūkyū Kingdom. Only after Japan's military victory over China in 1895, therefore, did Okinawa (a new prefecture name for the former Ryūkyū Kingdom) become 'internationally' recognized as a part of the Meiji 'nation-state'.[64] By 1890, the only missing buffer zone for the Meiji state was Korea.

Korea, however, could not become a part of the Japanese nation-state. Here, the Meiji state first had to eliminate China's suzerain right to control Korea, and it was the victory in this war with China, which made the Meiji state a formal empire, because Taiwan (not Korea) became Japan's first formal colony (1895).[65]

[63] Yamagata Aritomo's speech, 6 December 1890, reprinted in Dai-Nihon Teikoku Gikaishi Kankōkai 1926, p. 469. This point has been well discussed among scholars. See, for example, Jansen 1984, p. 67.

[64] Immediately after declaring the change of regime to the treaty empires, the Meiji state began formalizing its territorial border with Russia in the north (1869) and in the south (1871); it renamed Ezo 'Hokkaido', and sent settlers from the mainland to claim this land against Russian advancement. Being concerned about the intervention of other powers, especially the U.S., it also asserted its authority over Ryūkyū, which had been under both the Satsuma domain of Japan and the Qing dynasty in the Shogunate days; against the opposition of the Qing dynasty and the Ryūkyū Kingdom, Ryūkyū was formally integrated into the Meiji nation-state as Okinawa Prefecture in 1879. In similar fashion, Hokkaido became a part of the Meiji nation-state in 1886; Qing China, however, continued to claim its suzerain power over what was now Okinawa, and it was only after 1895 that the Meiji state took full legal control there. On making people in Ryūkyū and Ezo Japanese nationals, see Morris-Suzuki 1998, pp. 23–28.

[65] In 1895, the Meiji state failed to take possession of the Liaodong Peninsula in China because of the Triple Intervention of Russia, France and Germany. The Meiji state's first 'external' military expedition was to Taiwan in 1874 (still under the suzerainty of the Qing dynasty). According to McWilliams, then Foreign Minister Soejima Taneomi did indeed have colonial ambition towards Taiwan as well as to Korea in 1873–1874, although his vision was not realized as he was defeated politically beforehand. McWilliams 1975, pp. 238, 274 f. Significantly, in 1873, Soejima argued that the lack of China's control over indigenous tribes in Taiwan meant that China's suzerainty did not extend to a certain part of Taiwan, and he justified Japan's military expedition to Taiwan in 1874 as 'punishing' their violence against people in Ryūkyū. The expedition was intended to establish the Meiji state's claim over Ryūkyū. Suzuki has also stressed Japan's colonial intentions, not only with regard to military conquests over Taiwan, but to demonstrate Japan's prestige as a civilizing empire; Suzuki 2009, pp. 147–52.

The Japanese 'empire' now added substance to its name,[66] and became a nation-state/empire.

Colonization of Korea was not an absolute necessity in order to maintain the independence of the Meiji nation-state, at least in the minds of some of the Meiji elite. The first alternative was an alliance among the three independent states (Japan, Korea and China) against other empires, an idea already conceived in 1862.[67] Soon after the Meiji Restoration, the Meiji state concluded a treaty with the Qing dynasty (1871) with both parties being seen as equal and independent states. The treaty was, however, not a military alliance, nor did it indicate both states' commitment to the state sovereignty system.[68] The idea of an East Asian alliance remained the hope of a minority, and by the turn of the century Meiji officials even dismissed the idea as 'damaging' for its treaty reform negotiation with other empires.[69]

The second alternative was to control Korea under joint management with the Russian empire. According to Zachmann, the idea that the Meiji state should have a military alliance with another empire emerged after Japan's victory over China (1895), although there was no consensus on which empire this partner should be.[70] In late 1901, Itō Hirobumi (recently Prime Minister for a fourth term in October 1900–June 1901) was exploring the possibility of such an alliance with Russia as a way of avoiding either party's formal colonization of Korea and coordinating both empires' interests in the peninsula. The then Prime Minister, Katsura Tarō, however, saw the Japanese empire's interests in Korea as being incompatible with those of the Russian empire, and argued for Japan's alliance with Britain.[71] Katsura's view prevailed, and the Anglo-Japanese alliance, which regarded Russia as a common enemy, was concluded in 1902.

All these options were different means to take control of Korea, which Meiji foreign policy-makers as vital for the security of state, nation and then empire. In order to secure this vital national/imperial interest and legitimize its control over Korea, the Meiji state not only used force, but also international law, the rhetoric of the state sovereignty system, and metropolitan public opinions. Initially in 1873, a majority of the Meiji elite overruled the use of force (a military invasion of Korea)

[66] Even after it formalized possession legally, however, the Meiji state still had to use force to suppress local resistance.

[67] In 1862, Katsu Kaishū, Navy Minister of the Shogunate government, argued for such an East Asian alliance. Yamamuro 2002, p. 586.

[68] Yamamuro argues that both states saw it as a means towards their other strategic agenda: China wanted to prevent Japan from allying with European empires, while Japan wanted to challenge China's suzerain status over Korea; ibid. p. 601.

[69] In 1885, Fukuzawa Yukichi had already argued that Japan should be included in a league of Euro-American empires. On the views of the officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in this period, see Zachmann 2009, p. 72.

[70] Ibid., pp. 43 f.

[71] Itō to Katsura, 6 December 1901 and *Katsura Tarō jiden*, both compiled in Kodama 1991, pp. 133 f., 135 f. Nish 2001, "Itō Hirobumi", pp. 87 f.

because they judged that the Meiji state was not ready and lacked a great cause (*taigi*).[72] Three years later, the Meiji state imposed an unequal treaty on Korea (1876). Then in 1895, it eliminated China's suzerain right over Korea by defeating China. The Meiji state justified this war against China as a "great cause" – "securing the independence of the Korean state" from China's suzerain rule.[73] It utilized, therefore, the rhetoric of the state sovereignty and international legal conventions for nation-states/empires. The military victory resulted in the peace treaty of 1895, the first article of which noted that "the Qing state (*Shin koku*) would recognize the Korean state (*Chōsen koku*) as a completely independent state". The second article then violated China's sovereignty, detailing various interests that China was obliged to hand over to Japan.[74]

After 1895, the Meiji state further eroded Korea's sovereignty with a similar combination of force and modern codes and norms of international relations of the time. In 1905, it eliminated the other remaining empire in Korea, Russia, by force. It then made Korea Japan's protectorate in 1905, and finally a formal colony in 1910. For the years 1905–1910, as Alexis Dudden demonstrates, the Meiji state used a combination of force, the international legal framework, and the argument that Korea was not 'civilized enough' and needed guidance in order to legitimize the process of occupation. While other nation-states/empires were concerned with Japan's aggressive imperial policies, they nonetheless saw the annexation as legal, and Japan's prestige increased.[75]

Kant argued that republics were unlikely to go to war with each other,[76] and this argument was often used to support the idea that popularly elected regimes (whether a republic or constitutional monarchy) were less likely to engage in military aggression. Historical cases, however, did not always endorse this point. Already in 1874, Itagaki Taisuke, a leading advocate of parliamentary democracy and anti-oligarchy, used the term 'empire' (*Teikoku*) for Japan, much earlier than the official documents did. He argued for the equality and liberty of the people in Japan, as well as the prestige (*Son'ei*) of the emperor. If the people had the right to govern themselves, he argued, it would foster independent spirit, and increase the

[72] In October 1873, Ōkubo Toshimichi argued that this invasion was too early, first, because of drastic reforms the Meiji state had begun, the foundations of the state were yet to be established, and widespread discontent was still evident; second, the cost would be enormous and the Meiji state would need to levy higher taxes or seek foreign loans, either of which would further burden the domestic economy; third, much more preparations and planning would be required for such military action; fourth, this military expedition might provide an opportunity for Britain to intervene in Japanese domestic matters; fifth, he could not find a great cause for this invasion; Ōkubo 1928, pp. 53–64. The government was also still negotiating the northern borders with Russia at this time (resolved in 1875).

[73] Mutsu Munemitsu's account, compiled in Kodama 2002, pp. 125 f.

[74] "Nisshin kōwa jōyaku," signed on 17 April 1895, in Kodama 2002, p. 128.

[75] Dudden 2005, pp. 60–73, 109–111.

[76] Kant 1957.

prosperity (*Shōsei*) of the empire.[77] In the 1880s–1900s, the anti-oligarchy and parliamentary democracy advocates were often supporters of Japan's colonial expansion.[78] Matsuo Takayoshi and Andrew Gordon also demonstrate a similar tendency among advocates for the universal male franchise movement in Japan in the following decades.[79]

Was this a sign of the "immature" or "under-developed" democracy of Japan? It might rather be understood as a problem inherent in the system based on the nation-state/empire. Indeed in the 1880s, "advanced" nation-states in Europe, which were furthering greater political participation in metropolitan centres, were formally colonizing Africa and Asia by using military forces and international law. Formal colonization was at times thought to be a means for providing social welfare in the metropolitan centres, or even the means to protect "natives".[80]

For Western European powers that were largely maritime empires, colonized territories were mostly located far away (except for cases such as Ireland). It was easier for them to argue their metropolitan "national" policies were detached from their colonial doings. Such separation was, however, harder for other continental/congruent empires that colonized neighbouring nations. Arendt recognized that the dichotomy between the nation-state and empire could only be applied to maritime Western European empires, not to the continental empires in Central and Eastern Europe (the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire).[81]

The Meiji nation-state/empire was emerging more like these contiguous empires. It made a crucial strategic decision in the mid-late 1900s, and it is clear how its rhetoric shifted from pushing for the creation of a buffer/interest zone for the independence of the nation-state to the expansion of an empire (the nation-state/empire).[82] Japan's victory over Russia in 1905 moved its empire's front line to the central part of Northeast China (Manchuria). This was a new buffer zone against Russia, which was also seen as resource-rich. Kitaoka Shin'ichi argues that Japan's imperial/national defence guideline (*Nihon teikoku kokubō hōshin*) of 1907 marked "a shift from the Navy-led defensive policy of an island empire to the Army-led offensive defence policy of the continental empire". This 1907 document noted:

[77] [Itagaki Taisuke], "Risshisha setsuritsu no shuisho," April 1874, compiled in Kodama 2002, pp. 63 f.

[78] Norman 1940, pp. 201–204; Miyaji 1973. Sakeda argued that a hard-line foreign policy was a standard feature of anti-oligarchy and pro-constitutional democracy groups in the 1890s and 1900s. Sakeda 1978, p. 3.

[79] Matsuo 1998; Gordon 1991.

[80] Semmel 1960, pp. 23–8; Koskenniemi 2002, pp. 143–5.

[81] Arendt 1951, pp. 223–5. The point is clarified more in the 1968 version; Arendt 2003, p. 161. The terms used by Arendt were continental imperialism and overseas imperialism.

[82] At the same time, one can also see that the line between internal and external colonization was less clear for contiguous empires than for maritime empires.

> The Japanese empire should now seek an active expansion, not only defending the already established interests in Manchuria and Korea. It should now promote non-official expansion to the southern part of Asia and the other Pacific shore across the ocean.[83]

This continental empire remained integral to the metropolitan nation-state. In the Meiji era (1868–1912), the Japanese state created formal and informal colonies,[84] according to the international norms and conducts of nation-states/empires. While it developed metropolitan parliamentary democracy and sought to modernize and industrialize the country, it subjugated and governed the people in the formal and informal colonies, suppressing their rights and exploiting their resources for metropolitan needs. While maritime empires also treated colonial subjects and metropolitan subjects differently, continental empires were confronted by the problem more intensely because they subjugated neighbouring nations.

After 1919: The Nation-State/Empire in the Time of the League of Nations of the 1920s

Towards the end of the First World War and in its aftermath between autumn 1918 and spring 1919, a new norm was emerging in international politics. Erez Manela argued that Woodrow Wilson then "became for millions worldwide the ... most prominent exponent of the vision ... of a just international society based on the principle of self-determination". Examining this transnational momentum, Manela demonstrated that a new norm, self-determination, entered into international politics.[85] Can we then still apply the notion of the nation-state/empire as a basic unit of international politics in the period after 1919?

Wilson did not cause anti-colonial movements, as the movements already existed. He did, however, give legitimacy to the term self-determination, which also consolidated various existing anti-colonial movements. As Manela demonstrated, Wilson did not invent this empowering term, but took it from the Bolsheviks. The expression he used in the 14 Points was "the consent of the governed", a sort of uninspiring managerial terminology.[86] This change in

[83] Kitaoka 1985, p. 12. In 1905, as a result of the military victory over Russia, the Meiji nation-state/empire gained not only the territory of the south of Sakhalin, but more importantly, significant rights in the southern part of Manchuria. These rights were: leasing of the main railway lines in the southern part of Manchuria; mining and other interests along the railway line; the right to protect these railway lines and associated interests and the territory of the tip of the Liaodong Peninsula, where there were significant trading and strategic ports. The Meiji nation-state/empire established the legitimacy of these rights internationally in 1909–1912; ibid., p. 32.

[84] Through military might and treaty negotiations (imposed under duress), the Japanese state became a part of the collective of these nation-states/empires which made China their informal colony; Duus 1989, pp. xi–xxix.

[85] Manela 2007, pp. 6, 218–9, 220, 221.

[86] Ibid., p. 41.

terminology in early 1918 proved to be crucial: now anti-colonial activists, not colonial administrators, could own the term, which captured the desires of millions beyond Europe. Combined with Bolshevik influences, anti-colonial movements were given momentum.

As a result, self-determination became a new norm after 1918. Wilson condemned 'new' colonial acquisition as being morally wrong at the Paris Peace Conference. Then, in Europe, the principle of self-determination came to be applied, and the new nation-states were created in the aftermath of the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires.

Although Hobsbawm ended his age of empire in 1914,[87] empires continued to rule in the aftermath of the First World War. The victorious British, French, Dutch, American and Japanese Empires not only retained their formal colonies, but some even gained new territories or new mandates.[88]

Beyond Europe, the basic unit of international politics did not shift from empires to the nation-state.[89] As Akira Iriye argued, "[u]ntil after World War II, the Far East had been a land of empires, not nation-states".[90] Yet these empires were also nation-states in the metropolitan centres. The nation-states/empires, therefore, remained the main actors in international politics after 1919.

Accordingly, the League of Nations' new world (not European) order was not the order of just the nation-states. There were the 'pure' nation-states (the nation-state without an empire) that had existed before 1919, such as Switzerland, and those that were newly created in Europe in 1919, such as Poland. There were the nation-states which used to be empires, but had lost their colonies, and joined the League, such as Germany, Austria, Hungary and Turkey. There were also the former allied empires which remained nation-states/empires, and as well the colonies of these empires, which remained as colonies even after 1919. Among them, new nation-states/dominions, such as Australia, had self-government and a greater autonomy in domestic affairs. Along with former allied nation-states/empires, some of these dominions (such as Australia and New Zealand) became mandate powers. Then there were former colonies of defeated empires, which became mandates.

The nation-states/empires (so-called great powers) were the most influential actors in the League of Nations and League-related international organizations. These great powers were the League's permanent Council members and they were central in the League's implementing bodies of technical (expert) committees. When colonies were invited to attend the League's official international forum or

[87] Hobsbawm 1994, p. 338.

[88] In the case of Japan, new territories were gained in Shandong, a former German territory in China during the war, which Japan made other powers accept at the Paris Peace Conference. The territory was "returned" to China at the Washington Conference of 1921–1922.

[89] Manela did not argue that this shift occurred either, but suggested that the failure of Wilsonian anti-colonialism in 1919 to deliver what it had promised led its supporters to alternative, and more radical anti-colonialism, and to the "revolt against the West"; Manela 2007, pp. 212, 224.

[90] Iriye 1965, p. 4.

other unofficial ones, colonial officers or bureaucrats from metropolitan centres represented the colonies' interests.[91]

At the same time, smaller powers (nation-states without an empire, or with dominion status) were to play a greater role after 1919. The League discussed and decided important matters at the General Assembly, at which each country, whether it was an empire or not, had an equal vote. These smaller powers, such as Australia and China (especially Nationalist China after 1928), actively used the League as a stage to enhance and assert a greater sovereignty.[92] Furthermore, as Giddens suggested, the League of Nations co-opted experts and their organizations into their operations. These experts became influential within the League's technical committees and other international organizations. They had greater input into decision-making, voicing views not necessarily as state representatives.[93] Reflecting the rapid technological development of telecommunication and greater popular political participation, the League was also conscious of the "moral force of public opinion".[94] As a result, the League became a site where these various actors negotiated new norms of international conduct. The League also disseminated these new norms to experts and policy-makers, and propagated and educated the public about them.[95]

It was, however, not only the nation-states, but also the nation-states/empires that negotiated and formed these new norms for what we now call global governance at the League and League-related organizations. While the process also was intended to integrate other voices, the managerial concerns of empires remained an important factor, and negotiation entailed cooperation and conflicts among empires. Members of the League's mandate committee, for example, represented major nation-states/empires and new mandate powers. They were not eager to let their mandates (let alone their own colonies) go independent too soon. Pedersen argues that the League's mandate committee did not advance the new radical idea of self-determination, but rather showcased to the world public that mandate powers were 'discussing' this new norm.[96]

As a result, a new rhetoric of legitimization of the colonial rule of nation-states/empires became prevalent at the League. New colonization by military conquest was now condemned as morally wrong. On the other hand, the League's nation-states/empires members stressed the inability of a given mandate (or a colony) in

[91] Akami 2002, pp. 98 ff., 142 ff., 200 f.

[92] Herren 2009. I owe this reference to Frank Beyersdorf.

[93] Giddens 1985, pp. 261 f.; Dubin 1983, p. 491.

[94] Akami 2008, p. 12. Carr thought there was too much expectation of the moral power of public opinion at the League; Carr 1939, pp. 31–38.

[95] Pedersen 2007, pp. 1–33. On these normative works of the League's Health Organization, see Borowy 2009, pp. 143–60.

[96] Pedersen 2006, pp. 560–582. Anghie argues that the mandate system demonstrates how central colonialism continued to be for international organizations after 1919; Anghie 2005, p. 117.

apolitical areas (public health or labour management), and used this argument to justify their continued rule.[97]

While the League's order could be understood as the order of various types of the nation-state, including the nation-state/empire, the international order in Northeast Asia in the 1920s was defined by factors other than the League. Japan and China joined the League, but among the major nation-states/empires that were either located in Northeast Asia, or had a big stake in the region, the U.S. and Russia did not become members. The region's order after 1919 was, therefore, defined more by the Washington Treaties (1922), which embodied the American-led new regional order of the Pacific region.[98] This still excluded Russia, but complemented the League's order. Consequently, scholars have called the regional order of the inter-war period the Versailles-Washington system.[99]

The Washington Treaties were in essence agreements among the nation-states/empires. These treaties, led by the U.S., checked Japanese expansion, secured the Anglo-American regional naval supremacy, and reaffirmed the existing interests of those nation-states/empires in China and the Pacific. In 1921–1922, the U.S. nonetheless initiated a modification of the imperialistic behaviours practised by the various states and an adaptation of a multilateral and cooperative framework.[100] Its most important initiatives were to respect China's sovereignty, and to restore its tariff right and abolish the extraterritoriality of the empires.[101]

Another international agreement, the Pact of Paris (or Kellogg-Briand Pact), defined states' conduct in Northeast Asia and elsewhere in the world in the 1920s. Fifteen countries, including the U.S., Britain, France, Italy and Japan, signed it in August 1928.[102] Its formal name was the "General Treaty for Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy", and it aimed to abandon war as a means of solving inter-state disputes. The treaty was the beginning of outlawing war.[103] At the same time, however, it was also a pact for the nation-states/empires. Its initial signatory members were mostly the nation-states/empires, and it protected their existing formal and informal colonies against new aggression.[104]

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[97] Akami 2010.

[98] Iriye 1965, p. 16.

[99] Hosoya 1993, p. 11; Hattori 2001, pp. 4–12. Hata regarded the system as "protect[ing] the interests of the two major victorious powers, Great Britain and the United States"; Hata 1988, p. 282.

[100] Iriye understood this as a U.S. attempt to "demolish the existing system of imperialist diplomacy". Iriye 1965, p. 14. On Iriye's definition of the diplomacy of imperialism, distinguished from an empire's diplomacy, see ibid., p. 5.

[101] Ibid., pp. 18, 20 f.

[102] 63 further countries would join later on, including the USSR.

[103] The wording of Clause 1 of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution of 1946 came from the first article of this Pact of Paris, and is still in place today.

[104] While this prevented an attack on their existing territories and spheres of influence, the governments of the U.S., Japan and Britain interpreted the pact in the light of their own Monroe Doctrine. Accordingly, the British government reserved an exception of its applicability to the

These treaties, concluded largely among the nation-states/empires, constituted a legal framework for their international actions in the 1920s and 1930s. Accordingly, the defining spirit of Japan's cooperative diplomacy of the 1920s (*kyōchō gaikō*) could be described not only as inter-nationalism, but also inter-empire-ism. It pursued Japan's national/imperial interests through economic means and multilateral cooperation with other nation-states/empires, while respecting China's sovereignty outside Northeast China (Manchuria).

How do we then understand Japanese aggression in Manchuria in 1931, and the relationship between Japan and the League in 1931–1933 through the notion of the nation-state/empire?

1931–1933: Japan's Policy Towards China and the League

An orthodox historiography has tended to see the Japanese aggression in Manchuria in 1931–1933 as a watershed for Japanese external policy shift from internationalism to nationalism. Scholars especially stressed the rise of nationalism among military officers in Japan to explain this alteration. Internationalism declined, as often argued or assumed, in the 1930s, while the Japanese government stopped complying with international law. Ian Nish, for example, understands the period of 1932–1936 as that of Japan's foreign policy's "departure from internationalism", and argues that internationalists lost to stronger advocates of nationalist objectives.[105]

A framework of nationalism versus internationalism, however, does not work for an analysis of Nationalist China's foreign policy in the same period. Nationalist China used the League's multilateral framework in its attempt to restore and assert its sovereignty in 1928–1937. Already in mid-1929, it had appealed to the League against Russian aggression in Manchuria: although the League did not react then, China continued to use the League. Kawashima Shin argues that this was a conscious decision by Nationalist China to improve its international status. It pursued a League Council seat and it also initiated cooperation with the League to build up the state's capability in public health (from 1929) and expanded the scope of this cooperation into other technical, economic and cultural cooperations (from 1931).[106] By doing so, Nationalist China tried to restore its sovereignty, and to refute imperialistic arguments that China was an "incompetent" state and needed guidance from outside. In 1931, before Japan's Guandong Army began its

regions of the world where it thought special and vital interests existed for its own peace and security, while the Japanese government informally communicated its wish to preserve a special right in Manchuria; Yanagihara 1996, pp. 154 f. I owe this reference to Urs Matthias Zachmann.

[105] Nish 2002, pp. 85–101; it was a period of struggle for Japanese internationalists against anti-Leaguers; these anti-Leaguers included army officers whose "pursuit of the nationalist objective was stronger than any pressure to conform to world public opinion"; Nish 1993, pp. 8–16.

[106] Kawashima 2006, pp. 30 f.; Osterhammel 1979, pp. 661–80.

aggression in Manchuria, the League had been involved in major flood relief in China. On 14 September, only a few days before the aggression began, China also became a League Council member. After the Japanese army garrison opened hostilities on 18 September, Nationalist China quickly appealed to the League. The League's inter-national framework then supported China's efforts to assert its sovereignty against empires.

A rather artificial opposition between nationalism and internationalism was indeed a projection of contemporary "liberal [non-communist/socialist/anarchist] internationalists, as much as later scholars".[107] As these internationalists made clear, internationalism meant the pursuit of the national interests in cooperation with other nation-states.[108] Nitobe Inazō, a leading internationalist in the 1920s who became the League's Under-Secretary, noted that in order to be an internationalist, one had to be a nationalist. His fellow Wilsonian internationalists in other countries shared the view.[109]

The second common understanding of the 'Manchurian Incident' is to see the League as an advocate of a new norm based on the principle of self-determination of the nation-state. Japan tried to comply with this new norm in the 1920s, but reverted back to the old nineteenth century norm of imperialism in the 1930s. As such, the Japanese aggression in Manchuria in 1931 was understood as a challenge made by Japan's old norm of the empire to the League's new norm of the nation-state. Here, an 'insufficient' level of modernization and democratization in Japan was also assumed to be a factor which hindered its political, economic and social system from stopping imperial aggression in 1931–1932.[110]

Japan had, however, been a nation-state/empire since 1895. In this context, nationalism in Japan was not merely an inward-looking ideology to integrate the nation, nor an ideology for defending its sovereignty against other empires. As was the case for other empires, nationalism was also an external ideology for asserting national/imperial interests and prestige. E.H. Norman and Maruyama Masao used the terms "radical nationalism/statism" (*Kagekina kokkashugi*) or "ultra-nationalism/statism" (*Chō kokkashugi*), to denote the ideological source of Japan's imperialism.[111] Here, the nexus between the nation-state and an empire was indicated.[112]

The notion of the nation-state/empire can take our analysis of international power dynamics in Northeast Asia in 1931–1933 beyond an artificial dichotomy of internationalism versus nationalism or internationalism versus imperialism.

As pointed out earlier, inter-nationalism in the 1920s could be understood as inter-empire-ism which meant a pursuit of imperial interests in cooperation with

[107] Nish 2001 "The Uncertainties", p. 301.

[108] Akami 2002, pp. 8 ff.; Burkman 2008, pp. 216 ff.

[109] Akami 2002, p. 146.

[110] Norman 1943, pp. 56 f.

[111] Norman 1941, pp. 261 ff.; Maruyama 1968, pp. 11–28. Such a view became a conventional understanding. See, for example, Hanneman 2001, pp. 42 ff.

[112] Titus 1983, pp. 184 ff.

other empires. Many Wilsonian internationalists of the 1920s, including Nitobe, did not challenge their countries' empire status, nor did they condemn their colonial possessions. The Versailles-Washington system in Northeast Asia meant to secure the existing national/imperial interests of the major nation-states/empires, which had high stakes in the region.

The Japanese Guandong Army's aggression in Manchuria in 1931–1933, and the subsequent metropolitan state's acceptance of the *fait accompli* of Japan's military occupation after December 1931, meant that the Japanese state now pursued its national/imperial interests by force, not just by economic or diplomatic means. The initial decision to use force was made by the Guandong Army, not the metropolitan state, which was still exploring other options for securing and expanding its interests in the region. The army garrison became increasingly agitated by the movements of Nationalist China, the U.S.S.R. and the League, planned its attack carefully, and waited for a chance to execute it.[113] The metropolitan state was unable to restrain the garrison from acting, and soon accepted the resulting military occupation and adopted it as its policy.

The Guandong Army and the metropolitan state therefore did not agree on the means, but shared the ultimate goal of securing Japan's national/imperial interests in Manchuria. In consequence, the Japanese state broke one crucial accepted norm after 1919: nation-states/empires would not change the pre-existing borders of their sphere of influence by force. This did not, however, mean that the Japanese state abandoned all the post-1919 norms of international conduct defined by the nation-states/empires and other new factors.

First, the Japanese metropolitan state attempted to manipulate post-1919 hierarchical power dynamics at the League of Nations to its own advantage. As noted, while the nation-states/empires held a dominant position at the League, smaller powers (the nation-states without an empire) and expert groups were increasing their influence. For Nationalist China, the General Assembly and the League's Health Organization, where the influence of experts was strong, were helpful in Nationalist China's effort to restore and assert greater sovereignty. By way of contrast, the Japanese tactics in 1931–1932 focused on the nation-states/empires in the League: it tried to exploit an anxiety among the nation-states/empires which had been caused by Nationalist China's greater assertion of its sovereignty and relinquishment of certain imperial interests in North China in 1926–1928.[114] The Japanese metropolitan state wanted these nation-states/empires to sympathize with Japan's anxiety over its interests in Manchuria.[115]

The Japanese state assumed that other nation-states/empires, especially Britain, were sympathetic to its claim for "internationally and legally acknowledged rights in China" and its argument that law and order needed to be restored to secure its

[113] Peattie 1975, pp. 107–118.

[114] Duus 1989, p. xxv.

[115] Yoshizawa Kenkichi, the Foreign Minister, wanted the League's inquiry commission to be composed of the nation-states/empires (great powers) in November 1931; Usui 1995, p. 13.

imperial interests in China.[116] This was evident in the report of October 1932 of the League's Inquiry Commission on the Japanese aggression in Manchuria, which was headed by the British Lord Lytton. As Nish argues, while the report condemned Japan's two major arguments (that the military acted in self-defence and that Manzhouguo was a genuine nation), it argued for protecting Japan's original, pre-September 1931 interests in Manchuria.[117]

Second, both the Japanese metropolitan state and Guandong Army used the post-1919 norm of self-determination to secure Japan's imperial interests in the region. The Guandong Army established not a new formal colony in its militarily occupied area, but a puppet regime, Manzhouguo, in March 1932. The garrison's intelligence unit had been manipulating local Chinese collaborators to establish new political bodies that were more cooperative with the Guandong Army than the now pro-Nationalist northern warlord, Zhang Xueliang. Less than a week after the initial military attack on 18 September, the Guandong Army's headquarters decided that it would establish an autonomous local government, which would consolidate these collaborators' political units in the military-occupied areas.[118] The Japanese metropolitan state tacitly agreed this means of controlling the military occupation by establishing a puppet regime, and formally recognized the regime by concluding a diplomatic treaty in September 1932.

Third, while this puppet regime did not adopt the principle of popular legitimacy, the Japanese imperial authorities (the metropolitan government, the Guandong Army and other Japanese official missions in Manchuria) wanted it to demonstrate its competence in governing to the world. The founding documents of various key official institutions thus included the department of public health, as well as the "law to secure [social and economic] human rights" (*Jinken hoshō hō*).[119] These documents stressed that the regime could look after social and economic rights and the welfare of the local population.

Fourth, the Guandong Army's headquarters at Shenyang (Mukden), as well as the Japanese metropolitan state, recognized the power of international public opinion and were concerned with the League's movements. In December 1931 the garrison decided to found a news agency in order to manage international public opinion in relations to the League. The Manzhouguo News Agency was then established almost a year later.[120] It was a propaganda and intelligence gathering machine, which sought to legitimize Japan's military occupation, its puppet regime and its 'guiding' role for the regime.

[116] Nihon kokusai seiji gakkai Taiheiyō sensō gennin kenkyūbu 1988, pp. 353, 359 f.

[117] Nish 1993, pp. 175 ff.

[118] [Kantōgun Sanbō honbu], "Manmō mondai kaiketsusaku an, 22 September 1931", in Inaba et al. 1964, p. 328.

[119] "Seifu soshiki hō narabini shokansei", [March 1932], in Kobayashi and Shimada 1964, pp. 410, 418, 426.

[120] Akami (forthcoming).

Fifth, Japanese experts sought to justify the military aggression within the framework of the international law of the time. China, the U.S. and the League condemned the aggression as a violation of the Nine Powers Treaty on China (one of the Washington Treaties) and the Pact of Paris. Except for a very few, such as Yokota Kisaburō, Japanese international law specialists, who had earlier supported the League, sought to justify the aggression within these legal frameworks.[121] Some went even further. Using Carl Schmitt's then-current geopolitical theory, Rōyama Masamichi, a prominent political scientist, argued for the need for a new category of international law, "regional international law", to deal with the Manchurian case.[122] This could be understood as an effort to "adjust" international law closer to the reality of the nation-states/empires.

The Japanese decision to withdraw from the League of Nations in March 1933 has been argued as the beginning of Japan's diplomatic isolationism.[123] The rise of nationalism and/or imperialism has often been cited as a major reason for this policy shift. This did not, however, mean the end of Japanese engagement with the rest of the world, the beginning of an inward-looking nationalism, or a reversion to the 'old' imperialist norm. Japan continued to appeal its case in Manchuria especially to the other nation-states/empires, which had similar imperial interests in China. It also did not dismiss the post-1919 factors of international politics, either. After 1933, Japanese foreign policy shifted the targets of its overseas propaganda from Geneva to New York. Just as many other countries did in the same period, it also began to develop a systematic policy for international propaganda.[124] This move reflected policy-makers' recognition of the new norms and conducts of international politics of the day – mass-based politics, new techniques of advertisement and propaganda, and new technological developments in telecommunication. These new norms and conducts, however, were not alternative to the use of force for the nation-states/empires. The world was moving into a new era of bloc economy in which the nation-states/empires were to tie their spheres of influence more closely together. The Japanese state used force to expand its yen bloc. Nor did greater transnational/empire networks guarantee or reinforce peace, as the Herren chapter here demonstrates.

The International Society of the nation-states/empires was a global system made of actors of different levels of power. It advocated 'liberal' and 'democratic' norms, but within the framework of empire. It reinforced the order, but often at the expense of weaker states and other political units. In other words, the system inherently contained grievance of weaker members. On one hand, the new norm

[121] Yokota based his criticism of the Japanese aggression on the theory of Hans Kelsen; Mitani 1974, pp. 233 f. On the movements of international law specialists after 1931, see Matsui 1979, pp. 361–405.

[122] Mitrani 1974, pp. 236–239. On the introduction of Carl Schmitt to Japan, see also Matsui 2004, pp. 1–22. I owe this reference to Urs Matthias Zachmann.

[123] Nish 2002, p. 90; Crowley 1966, p. 186.

[124] Carr 1939, pp. 137 f.; Akami 2008, pp. 22–29.

of self-determination encouraged anti-imperial revolts, which enhanced greater justice in the system. On the other hand, the existence of such systemic grievance gave a room for a weaker empire, such as Japan, to exploit it for strengthening its power in the system. It was this power hierarchy among the national/imperial states, not the power balance among relatively equal national states, which defined international politics in Northeast Asia in the inter-war period.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the need to examine the nexus between a nation-state and an empire, and understand developments at the imperial metropolis and colonial peripheries in a more integrated manner. For such an analysis the notion of the nation-state/empire was proposed, and this was then used in an analysis of international politics in Northeast Asia for the period 1868–1933.

The chapter suggested that the problem of the modern Japanese state could be understood not only as Japan's adjustment and then challenge to the International Society of the liberal, democratic and civilized national states. Rather it could also be understood as a problem inherent in the development of the nation-state/empire system. It was firstly demonstrated how nation-state building meant the making of the nation-state/empire, which involved internal and external colonization, and how the Meiji state used international law and the rhetoric of state sovereignty to legitimize its colonial expansion. Second, the chapter argued that the nation-state/empire remained a significant actor in international politics even after self-determination became a dominant norm after 1919. It demonstrated how this notion might interpret the new framework of international conduct in the 1920s, as well as Japanese aggression in Manchuria and Japan's response to the League in 1931–1933.

I hope that this paper will contribute to further discussion of the empire aspects of orthodox understandings of international politics, within and beyond the context with which this chapter has dealt. I also hope it has demonstrated that the issues of 'beyond the nation-state' and 'the process of governing trans-national issues' cannot be discussed without examining the role of empires as integral factors of many nation-states.

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