

**Modern State Building
and the Problem of
“Intermediate Institutions”:**

Religion, Family and Military in East Asia

Xiaoming Huang

Dr Xiaoming Huang is a Senior Lecturer in East Asian politics at Victoria University of Wellington. He received his PhD in international relations from the University of Southern California and has taught or been a research fellow at the East-West Center, the University of Tampere, the University of Trondheim, Peking University, the Academy of Korean Studies and Seikei University.



Dr Huang's current research interests focus on modern political and economic development in East Asia. He is the author of *The Rise and Fall of the East Asian Growth System 1951-2000: Institutional Competitiveness and Rapid Economic Growth* (RoutledgeCurzon 2005), which was nominated by the International Convention of Asian Scholars for the best study on Asia in the field of Social Sciences in 2005.

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Asian Studies Institute

Victoria University of Wellington

PO Box 600

Wellington, New Zealand

Telephone +64 4 4635098

Fax +64 4 463 5291

Email asi@vuw.ac.nz

Web www.vuw.ac.nz/asianstudies

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the problem of intermediate institutions in modern state building in Japan, Korea and China. In particular, it investigates how the state tried to redefine its relations with the forces of religion, family and military in building a direct, effective and exclusive relationship with the individual. The absence of religion-dominated governance, the long history of a centralized state system, and the critical role of the family and military in reinforcing the state in pre-modern society created a local pattern of modern state building in which these significant social and political forces have only gradually lost their capacity to compete with the state as a form of public authority and, consequently, their emergent relations with the state have been ambiguous. This study also finds evidence of a “breakthrough” that divided the process of modern state building into two distinct phases in which different patterns of power relations existed among the state, religion, family and military. These ambiguous emergent relations and the “mid-way breakthrough” constitute two defining elements of the institutional dynamism of modern political development in East Asia.

Key words: modern state building, institutions, religion, military, family, East Asia, Japan, China, Korea, political development.

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Modern state building has been a difficult problem for many East Asian countries, presumably because of institutional and cultural settings different from the West where the problem of modern state building first emerged. But to understand the precise nature of the problem, a mere recognition of the differences is clearly insufficient. We are well informed about traditional institutions and culture in East Asia, but often end up puzzled by the unique characteristics of state institutions there; the particular ways of their operating; and the unique patterns of their relations with other significant social and political forces. What is missing, perhaps, is an understanding of the dynamic process by which the modern state has tried to establish itself and, in the process, redefine the role of those other forces that might have been forms of public authority in the past or have the interests as well as the capacity to compete with the state as a form of public authority in the formation of the new modern state.

This article looks at the problem of intermediate institutions in modern state building in the “East Asia Three”: Japan, Korea and China.¹ More specifically, it looks at whether and how traditional forms of public authority have been transformed into an intermediate institution, and the institutional consequences of this transformation. An intermediate institution here can be defined as an organized social and political force operating between the state and the individual on a single basis, such as that of religion, ethnicity, coercive force, or kinship. These forces tend to be a form of public authority in pre-modern society in setting values and behavioral boundaries for the individuals, and therefore maintaining public order. The general expectations of modernization theory from Max Weber onwards² are that with the monopolization of public authority by the state in modern state building, these forces transform themselves or are shaped into intermediate institutions, with the exception of the military which, as an institution, becomes irrelevant *inside* the modern state. As intermediate institutions, these forces lose their capacity as a form of public authority, and become secondary to the state, which then becomes the sole legitimate form of public authority. The power these forces hold over the individual is thus exerted through the state.

However, the path to this theoretically ideal scenario has been complicated in East Asia by several factors. In West Europe, the modern state emerged as a

supreme political structure over the church, feudal fiefdoms and city-states, which had exercised public authority in one form or another.³ In East Asia, however, a well-established state with monopoly of public authority has long existed. Moreover, religion was not a form of public authority and the problem of secularization was irrelevant. Third, key significant social and political forces, such as religion, family, military, i.e., those expected to compete for public authority in pre-modern society, had formed relationships with the state. Some were marginalized and had become an intermediate institution already; others were incorporated into the state institutions and shared public authority with the state; and still others often challenged the authority of the state and at times exercised the power of public authority without regard for the state. Modern state building in East Asia therefore dealt with a very different set of challenges from West Europe. The real problem has been the competing forms of public authority in the early stage of modern state building, and how they were reshaped in the transformation of the state itself to meet the challenge of modernization.

This article specifically examines three cases in the redefinition of these relationships: how the state has “crafted” its relations with, respectively, religious organizations, armed forces, and the family system, arguably the key forms of public authority in pre-modern society. These three cases are chosen because they highlight important differences between West Europe and East Asia in terms of the historical pattern and dynamism of institutional development, and they are the primary components of the institutional setting in traditional East Asian societies.

An underlying proposition of this study is that political modernization, in an institutionalist sense, involves the intensification of human efforts for greater efficiency, effectiveness, fairness and humanity in the organization of large-scale activity in mass society.⁴ Critical to modern state building is the shaping of public authority operating on these values and the consequent relations of the state with those other significant forces. It is this key problem that has featured “abnormally” in the East Asian countries from a Western perspective and requires a careful investigation.

The Problem of the Modern State

Let us start with the notion of the modern state. Often the word “state” is used to mean either, narrowly, the public authority within a given territory, or, broadly, a politically organized body of people under such a public authority, i.e., the polity. Such a distinction is important for our understanding of the problem of the modern state. A *modern polity* is a body of people under a single public authority organized on the principle of equal membership. This principle of equality, arguably a key modern value, involves, according to Lucian W. Pye (1966:47), mass participation, legal universalism and merit-based access to public office.

On the other hand, a *modern state*, in its narrow sense, is, again from Pye (1966:45-47), about the capacity and functionality of public authority in providing order in mass society. “The *capacity* of a political system” is measured by its outputs and how much it can affect society and the economy; effectiveness and efficiency in the execution of public policy; and rationality in administration. Functionality concerns the structures and institutions of government offices and agencies, and ultimately their functions.

To manage mass society on these values, a neutral public authority would rise above other competing forms of authority; claim a direct and effective relationship with members of the polity; and exclude the significant presence of competing forms of authority from its direct interaction with the citizens and transform these competing forms of authority into intermediate supporting institutions.

This two-tiered definition of the modern state – a public authority with necessary capacity and functionality for mass society, and a polity driven by the principle of equal membership – provides a more useful and informative conceptual framework for understanding the problem of the modern state than what is taken for granted in existing theories. Take Max Weber, for example: for whom the notion of reason and bureaucratic rationality gives modern institutions a distinct essence.⁵ As part of the institutional rationalization for conditions and values different from earlier times, centralized bureaucracy is a response to the conditions of the mass society. Recognizing the importance of bureaucracy, Weber clearly sees the modern state as an ideal candidate for the role of public authority in providing effective and efficient governance for mass society.⁶

But Weber does not stop here. With an almost exclusive emphasis on the role of religion in the organization of society, he sees the change in the basis of legitimacy for the *modern polity* primarily as religion-driven. According to Weber, in a mass society in which human interaction intensifies under a religious polity, the problem of political order and its justification emerges. Secularism and scientific rationalism rise to replace religions as an essential justification for modern political order. In search of such a political order, the “worldly” interests of the people involved have to dominate. As Donald E. Smith (1974:4) explains, polity secularization is “the process by which a traditional system undergoes radical differentiation, resulting in separation of the polity from religious structures, substitution of secular modes of legitimization and extension of the polity’s jurisdiction into areas formerly regulated by religion.”

The issue of secularization and scientific rationalism is acute in the rise of the modern state in West Europe. It becomes problematic, however, when one tries to look for the same concerns in East Asia. Scientific rationalism can rise in response to a wide range of human interests and developments, and is not a phenomenon exclusively tied to “modern” society. The development of science

and technology over several centuries in China⁷ is a case in point. Secularism naturally challenged the world view of Christendom; however, no religion has ever significantly influenced or affected governance in China, much less has China as a polity been ruled by anything like the Church, as occurred in Europe. In addition, the moral support a religion often gives the state has been provided exclusively by Confucianism⁸ for much of China’s long history. On the spiritual side, the problem of greater reason and purpose for humankind has been approached religiously in various ways, such as through Daoism and Buddhism. But these religious forces have never been able to extend their influence to public affairs in China, much less the state itself. To a large extent this is also true of Korea and Japan, where religion has never been an independent political institution and, indeed, the state would not allow religion to become one. In both countries, Buddhism was at various times promoted as a form of state religion. But it was the state that promoted, incorporated and when necessary, marginalized or even suppressed Buddhism. In Korea, for example, Buddhism developed something of a force of its own in Koryo-period Korea, and while the later Chosôn dynasty sought explicitly to squelch this force, Buddhism has never been a form of public authority in its own right. There is no evidence, therefore, to see secularism via scientific rationalism as *the* defining moment for modern political development.

There seems to be a problem, therefore, in Weber’s theory of the modern state. Weber recognizes the unique importance of mass society and, thus, the need for public authority to provide a justifiable order and effective management, but his narrow view of the cause of the transition to a modern polity fails to spell out the full range of institutional dynamics in its formation and its relationship with intermediate institutions. In modern state building, public authority needs to develop a direct, and perhaps exclusive, relationship with the individual for effective and efficient execution of its functions – hopefully, without the interference of other significant social and political forces. Therefore, marginalization of these forces from public authority is imperative. However, modern state building is not merely a replacement of God’s direct relationship with the individual by that of the state. In a historical setting where the state already has the monopoly of public authority, with the collaboration of other significant social and political forces, some of these forces can well be instrumental in this modern transformation, because they have a historically rooted institutional capacity that the new state has to rely on. Therefore, instead of becoming a marginalized intermediate institution, these forces may find themselves continuing to share public authority with the state, or even exercising the power of public authority in the name of the state. Let us now take a closer look at how these issues have played out in East Asia.

Modern state building in Japan, China and Korea

Unlike in West Europe, the state long existed in the East Asian Three, even well before their more recent modernization efforts. In China, centralized public authority emerged ever since the Qin dynasty (248-207 BC) established itself and went through fundamental institutional reforms and changes aimed at a unified political, economic, social and cultural system. Along with the state, the family was promoted as a principal agent of public authority, and its justification was embedded in state ideology, i.e., Confucianism. The military, particularly when given the power of local jurisdiction sanctioned by the central state, was a major concern for the security of the state. But there were no autonomous feudal authorities as in pre-modern Europe. Regional lords were primarily the beneficiaries of the state, acting as agents of state authority. The state's power penetrated down to the individual through the centrally appointed local agents of the household, taxation, family, examination, and conscription systems, etc.⁹

Influenced by the Chinese model of centralized state, reforms of the same magnitude took place in Japan as early as the 7th century, and resulted in the Yamato state, “the earliest central polity” (McClain 2002:12). The Seventeen-Article Constitution in 604 laid down the constitutional foundation for a sovereign state headed by the emperor. More importantly, the Taika Reform of 645 established the centralized state with a bureaucracy of functional ministries and local agents that extended state power to every level of the “new administrative hierarchy” (McClain 2002:13). The reform also abolished private ownership and established a centralized system of land tenure and taxation.¹⁰

A similar model of a centralized state was adopted in Korea around the same time. According to Carter J. Eckert and his colleagues (1990:28, 35), “an administrative structure fully characteristic of a centralized aristocratic state was created in Silla in the reign of King Pophung (514-540).” They further observe that, “with the emergence of centralized aristocratic states centered on monarchical power, the new concepts evolved that all of the nation's land belonged to the king and that all of the people were his subjects.” One can argue that a centralized state appeared even earlier in the other two early Korean kingdoms, Baekje and Goguryeo, long before Silla itself coalesced as a unified state.

While a centralized state system had long existed in Japan, China and Korea, state power became increasingly problematic prior to their modernization attempts in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Significantly, the early Chinese model of a central state gave way to a feudal state in Japan in the 13th century. The Tokugawa era saw competition among regional warlords, with the winning faction taking over the government. Prior to the Meiji Restoration in the late 19th century, the state, in its traditional form, had lost most of its capacity and functionality, and public authority was exercised by the winning faction of the

competing warlords and contested by the rest. Several hundred years of the feudal system required the Meiji Restoration to restore not simply the power of the emperor, but also that of the centralized state system. This same scenario occurred in China the early 20th century. For Korea, external threats to state power were greater than domestic ones and led to colonial rule by the Japanese in the first half of the 20th century.

Given historical circumstances, the pressure for “better” institutions and state-society relations operating on different rationalizing values came mainly from what I call “institutional envy” among the social, political and intellectual elites, informed by their intensifying interaction with Western countries in the late 19th and early 20th century, and growing fascination with Western institutions of government and economy that presumably made possible the “rich country and strong army” in the West.

The initial problem in early modernization attempts was over the legitimate holder of public authority. In Japan, the Meiji Restoration “restored” the emperor to that position in 1868. In China, after the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in 1911, a constitutional republic was set up. Colonial rule by Japan had made the issue ambiguous in Korea. But after the collapse of royal authority and Japan’s victory over other foreign powers with competing claims on Korea, the Japanese colonial authorities did manage to establish an effective and exclusive public authority in Korea.

The establishment of the Republic in China in 1911 can be seen as a first major concrete step towards building a “modern” state,¹¹ driven by a combined force of genuine new political and economic interests within China, and influences and pressures from outside. The new republic was a modernist move, as it resulted in the impersonalization of the state and provided an institutional framework for the newly re-established public authority to implement modern values. State power was “restored” to Chinese rule. Unlike the Japanese case, however, there was no clear successor to the emperor as the effective holder of the public authority until Chiang Kai-shek’s Northern Expedition in 1927, which ended the conflicts among regional warlords and restored the central government. Because of the prolonged civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists, and the war with Japan, the extent to which the central government exercised public authority was limited.¹² In fact, the legitimacy of the Nationalist government to rule on behalf of the state was constantly challenged, not just by the Communists. The notion of a Chinese polity with a fixed territory under an effective central government did not seem to reflect much of reality until Mao finally established the People’s Republic in 1949.

Modern state building in Japan¹³ presents a slightly different picture, one that is widely seen as closely mirroring the European experience, in which there

was a clear rise of the modern state. However, the building of the modern state in Japan did not start from scratch.¹⁴ In fact, the intention of the framers of the Meiji Restoration was to “restore” and “revitalize” the centralized state model symbolized by the emperor. As part of the restoration, for example, land titles and administration of regional domains were “returned” to the national government, and the emperor and government acquired new powers. This revitalized state became the soul behind the “rich country, strong army” campaign that shaped the institutional design of the Meiji system and its subsequent developments.

While the recentralization of public authority was relatively smooth, the state’s relations with other competitors for public authority, such as the military and religious forces, were troubling. Collaboration and bargaining among these forces led, in the 1930s and 1940s, to an imperial state with the combined force of the royal household, the military, and Shinto, the state religion. The emperor was not only a symbol of imperial power as in the past, but also now a symbol of Shinto as well. The revitalization of the emperor-centered state, in combination with the power of the military and religion, has made modern state building in Japan unique.

The building of the modern state in Korea, again, took a different path. The annexation of Korea by Japan in 1910 seemed to be a turning point.¹⁵ Before that, Korea’s state institutions had been modeled after the Chinese system for centuries and carried much of the characteristics of the Chinese model of a centralized state.¹⁶ Under Japanese colonial rule from 1910 to 1945, “modern” economic and social activities took place, from mining and manufacturing, to railway and land survey, and to banking and taxation, including a centralized government that integrated Korea with the greater Japanese empire. To place Korea under Japan’s effective control and management, Tokyo took all possible steps to eliminate institutionalized interference between the state and Koreans. They dismantled the Korean standing army, banned political parties and press, and promoted the Japanese language, social customs, religious faith, and political allegiance in line with Tokyo. In a sense, modern state building during the colonial period was very much an imposition of an absolutist state from above and from outside, which attempted to exclude challenges to the power of the new public authority.

The colonial legacies have been both discredited and carried on after independence. Clear Japanese symbols were removed, destroyed, and dismantled. But some important institutions and practices have survived, such as the education system, economic institutions, corporate organization, and social practices. More importantly, the framework of the modern state – a centralized government, a strong army, and a direct, effective, and sometimes brutal relationship between the state and its citizens – was retained in the South, after only a very brief period

of competitive politics in the late 1940s. As a result of experiences under Japanese colonial rule, a strong sense of national identity was forged. A powerful and penetrating state with a military-style polity was wanted not only for protection from possible threats from North Korea, but, more importantly, for the rapid economic catch-up and modernization that the state took as its primary mission later on.

The overall experiences of modern state building in the three countries under discussion show that there are some profoundly unique conditions in these countries as a whole that have affected the shaping of the modern state there. An institutional framework for public authority had long existed, even though its legitimate holder had been contested in different ways prior to the perceived start of modernization. Rather than a rise of the modern state, there has been a process of transformation of the state itself, or re-imposition of the centralized state, to meet the challenge of modern conditions. Moreover, for many in these East Asian countries in the late 19th century and much of the 20th century, to modernize was to develop a strong and powerful polity, and a strong state was necessary and important for such a modernization process. For them, modernization was more about material achievement and the state’s ability to deliver that. Much of the state’s efforts to redefine its relationship with other significant forces and build direct relationships with the individual went to serve the overall campaign for a powerful and competitive polity and an effective and efficient state. This quest has significantly shaped the local patterns of modern state building.

The Military and the Modern State

The military has a long history as a candidate for a key form of public authority and can be regarded as the most serious challenger to the modern state. While some might expect that professionalism¹⁷ of the military is essential to the modern state, the East Asian experience demonstrates, however, that state-military collaboration or even symbiosis, where the military becomes a politically active part of public authority, can be an important part of modern state building. Professionalization of the military in East Asia came only at a later stage. In the East Asian Three, early modern state building was dominated by the military: either as an important force in the government as in the early Meiji and Taisho eras; as a single, unified force taking direct control of government and exercising power in the name of the state as in Showa-era Japan and the Third, Fourth and Fifth Republics in Korea; as armed factions exercising power in a given region despite the state as in early Republican China; or as an integral but submissive part of the party-military-state apparatus in Leninist China under Mao.

In the Japanese case, the anti-Tokugawa shogunate movement leading to the Meiji Restoration was made possible by the successful rebellion of regional

warlords, particularly those from Choshu and Satsuma domains. In 1869, daimyos (feudal lords) of four key domains that helped restore the power of the emperor returned the registry of land and people to the emperor. Indeed, as D. Eleanor Westney (1986:168) has commented, “military institutions were the leaders in the organizational transitional from Tokugawa to Meiji” and in the building of the new Meiji state. The military’s demand for resources acted “as a major stimulus in the development of other systems, from the centralized tax system to universal primary education, but they also served as powerful models for those systems.”

After the establishment of the new national armed forces following the restoration, the rebellious forces from Choshu and Satsuma took control of the army and navy respectively and formed the military factions, or the *gunbatsu*,¹⁸ that meddled in state affairs until the end of World War II. The notion of “political soldier” (Matsushita 2001:2) had always been a glorious concept for members of the young national army since the Meiji Restoration. The Imperial Prescript to Soldiers in 1882 gave the military “special status” in society (Westney 1986:186). This concept became deeply embedded in military officers’ thinking. In the early post-Meiji Restoration period, little difference existed between military officers and civilian officials working in government. Military officers were expected to advise and participate in running state affairs. The armed forces were often used for domestic police functions (Matsushita 1960; Westney 1986:187) and acted as an organized interest group in the new political process. Westney (1986:188) reports that

the 1890s witnessed the movement of top-ranking military officers into the ministerial portfolios concerned with ...all critical areas in terms of required resources and task structures of the military. In fact, civilians did not form a majority of the cabinet until 1898; and during the Meiji period as a whole, military officers held 45 percent of the civilian cabinet posts.

At the same time, with the establishment of modern party and electoral systems, political parties became an increasingly effective platform for national policy debate and formulation. This situation led to a growing tension between the military and other political forces in their efforts to influence the direction of the state’s domestic and international policy. As international problems and military actions overseas became urgent and the *gunbatsu* became increasingly active and aggressive in domestic politics, the militarization of the government and state affairs accelerated.

The political power of the *gunbatsu* greatly expanded in the first half of the 20th century. Restrictions on active duty military officers becoming Minister of War were lifted, and, in fact, this post was held by an active military general thereafter. In the military itself, a state affairs officer was established, and in 1937, young cadets, with the support of right-wing revolutionary forces outside the

military, launched a failed military coup. In 1941, General Hideki Tojo was appointed prime minister and formed the military cabinet.

The expansion of the military’s political power and influence, however, was only one part of the whole picture. Immediately after the Meiji Restoration, the new state sought to reorganize the military and transform the fragmented feudal armed forces into a modern professional army. The first challenge was to remove the institutional basis for feudal armed forces. In 1872, therefore, the emperor issued instructions abolishing the domains and replaced them with a prefectural system. In 1873, the government issued the Conscription Edict that abolished the armed force for regional daimyos and established the national army.¹⁹ Military service became a citizen’s obligation to the state, rather than to a domain daimyo. In 1883, the emperor issued the Imperial Prescriptions to Soldiers, which demanded the “absolute loyalty of the soldiers to the emperor” (Umetani 1978:166; also Hane 1992:96).

A second challenge was to clarify the relationship between the military and the government, or rather, the separation of the military from the state. The centralization of the armed forces away from the domain daimyos was not intended to give control of the military to politicians, but to promote a unified national armed force. During the first 10 years of the Meiji, the *Dajokan*, the Grand Councilor of State, controlled both civilian and military powers. In 1878, the Chief of Staff was established within the cabinet, which was independent of the Ministry of the Army, while the emperor was commander-in-chief of the armed forces. These new arrangements greatly reduced the power base of the feudal warlords, centralized the organization of the armed forces, tied the new national army to the state, and provided the institutional basis for the formation of such an army.

The history of building a modern national army and state-military relations in Japan reveals clear efforts since the Meiji Restoration to depoliticize the military, turn the feudal forces and factions into a national army, and place the army firmly under state control. But the setup of the Meiji government also reflected a much more complicated reality in which those in possession of coercive power continued to consider themselves an indispensable form of public authority. The new state institutions and arrangements in the polity largely accommodated this political reality. Only the total demolition of the military structure and the command power of the emperor at the defeat of Japan in World War II removed the military from the political scene.

As in the Japanese case, the new republic was established in China via successful military campaigns by regional warlords against the emperor, the holder of public authority. While Chiang and Mao differed on ideology, they agreed on seeing the military as an integral part of their party and government apparatus. Under Mao’s

idea that the Party should “direct” the military, the Party then set up branches at all levels of the military. There remains a substantial overlap in personnel between the government and the Party in corresponding departments. At the same time, the military has been promoted as the legitimate tool of the Party, and soldiers, as model citizens.²⁰

The role of the military in society and its relations with the state, as established under Mao, matches what Amos Perlmutter (Perlmutter 1977) calls the “professional revolutionary soldiers” model, in which the military sees itself as the primary defender of a revolutionary cause. In China, the military is by definition political, as an instrument of the party-state. In terms of modern state building, therefore, there have never been efforts to marginalize the military from state affairs. Rather the party-state has incorporated the military, and formed a “symbiosis” (Bickford 2001:31; also Shambaugh 1991) with it. While this critical aspect of the Chinese state has changed somewhat over the past 20 years or so,²¹ the People’s Liberation Army remains unable to stand on its own and break down this Party-State-Military symbiosis.

The contemporary evolution of the military’s relationship with the state in South Korea²² mirrors much of what we have seen in the case of Japan at the time of the Meiji Restoration. The 1950s saw the South Korean economy on the brink of collapse. The government was utterly corrupt and unable to manage or perform. Civil unrest was believed to be the work of the Communist North. The country was hungering for a strong and effective public authority to provide order and security, and make the economy work. The military took the challenge in 1961 under the banner of “anti-Communism” and “economic nationalism” (Han 1993:47).

But what led General Park Chung Hee and his group to take control of state power and rule the country for almost 20 years also had to do with the institutional setting inside and outside the military. Inside the military, there were again significant similarities between Korea and Japan.²³ A key aspect of the military’s internal structure was active factionalism among high-ranking officers. Korea did not have the tradition of *gunbatsu* before its rule by the Japanese. However, after the restoration of Korean sovereignty after World War II, significant institutional changes contributed to growing factionalism in the military. Members of the new national army of post-War Korea, the National Defense Security Garrisons, came from different backgrounds: the Recovery Army, the Independence Army, the Chinese Army, the Japanese Army Cadets, the Special Korean Volunteers Army, and others. The varied backgrounds of its members became part of the historical roots of military factionalism. The military’s personnel system also contributed to the rapid expansion of factionalism, and thus made the military more inclined to take political action (Lee 1982:284). For example, there was no term limit for the Chief of Staff or other high positions in the

military, which caused long lags in the promotion of high-ranking officers and therefore tensions among them.

Outside the military, new circumstances also helped the rapid growth of the military's influence and capacity, and cultivated the notion of the political soldier. Because of insurgents mobilized in the South by North Korea, for example, the new national army was given one key political mission from the very beginning – to prevent “domestic insurgencies,” which the army faithfully carried out. Also, from early on, the Military English Academy trained elite officers for the new army. With the help of US army personnel and financial assistance, the Korea League of Military Elites was set up in 1946 to institutionalize the vision and values of the new national army. One need only look at the operation of this league to understand the sense of national and social responsibility these military elites cultivated among themselves. Park Chung Hee, and his collaborators and successors, Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo, were all graduates of the military academy.

Once it seized power, the military ran the country more or less like an army. Parliament and elections still existed, at least nominally, and the generals managed to transform themselves into elected civilian presidents (Park, 1963-1979; Chun, 1980-1987; and Roh, 1987-1992). But the real power existed in ad-hoc, military command-post arrangements such as The Supreme Council of National Reconstruction under Park, and The Special Policy Committee on National Defense under Chun. As in the early Meiji period, the military dominated the state.

And again, as in Japan, there is another side to the institutional dynamics. Since independence, the military itself has undergone a comprehensive “modern” transformation.²⁴ The centralization of the armed forces and military affairs started with the issuance of the National Army Organization Law (1948), which legitimized the military as a principal part of the modern state, placed the armed forces under the direct command of the President, and set up separate jurisdictions for the Defense Department and Chief of Staff. The education and training of the military were institutionalized and used to nurture the loyalty of the soldiers to the state. Efforts were made from the late 1950s, particularly after Park established himself as the president, to curb the spread of factionalism. The Military Personnel Law in 1962 placed limits on service terms in high-level positions, and introduced a professional career system for mid-level officers, with standardized criteria for career promotion and personnel management. With the institutional foundation for a modern professional army gradually taking root, the military was able to very quickly transform itself into a non-political professional army, once the larger environment for the military's involvement in state matters had gone. The election of Roh Tae Woo as president in 1987 through an open competitive constitutional process symbolized the point of the military returning to the barricades.

The above discussion shows that building a strong and effective army capable of supporting the state has been seen as a critical part of modern state building in the East Asian Three. Unlike in Western countries, the military was a defining force for the new state as it embarked on modernization. The modernization process has been pursued with the principal support and close engagement of the military. On the other hand, the state intended to streamline its relationship with the military and prevent it from becoming a legitimate form of public authority and a political challenge. The balance between these two contradictory dynamics did not work out well in the cases of Japan and Korea in their early modern state building, but in China, it has been effectively achieved.

Religion and the Modern State

The same ambiguity in the state's attitude toward the military can be found in its relations with religions. Historically in East Asia, the state has tried to eradicate the military, economic and potentially political power of religious groups and reduce them to a mere social and communal existence with no significant influence on state affairs. In the East Asian Three's early modern reforms, this tradition has largely continued. In terms of the separation of state and religion, "modernization" in these countries was complete and thorough. However, religions can also offer an important supporting basis for the new state. This interaction between the two has been more thoroughgoing in Japan than China or Korea, presumably because of the greater complicating role of Confucianism in the latter two. As Charles F. Keyes and his colleagues (Keyes, Kendall and Hardacre 1994:5) argue,

state policies toward religion in Asia have been shaped not only by modernization goals but also by the needs of states to legitimate their rule and unify their populace....While commitment to modernization entails rejection of those aspects of a society's past deemed impediments to a rationalized bureaucratic order, nation-building depends on the very opposite move....The process of creating modern nation states has thus entailed two rather contradictory stances toward religion.

The ambiguity is reflected in the rise and fall of two major religions in Japan, Buddhism and Shinto, before and after the Meiji Restoration.²⁵ Buddhism was officially established as a state-sponsored religion in the Seventeen-Article Constitution in 604. From then on until the 16th century, the state promoted and gave "institutional support" to Buddhism, providing land and finance for Buddhist temples, incorporating them into the state structure, and forging a relationship of mutual support and dependence with Buddhism. During the Nara (710-794) and Heian (794-1185) periods, Buddhist temples and priests reached such a level of status and influence that Japan was called a "Buddhist state" or "Buddhocracy" (McMullin 1983:18), in which Buddhism became the undeclared state religion, and state authority was described in Buddhist terms.

However, with power and influence, Buddhist temples and priests increasingly became independent of state authority, and turned themselves into a “state” within the state, playing actively between the emperor and the *bakufu*. The temples and priests started to confront the challenge of the *bakufu*, but not until the 16th century, when the *bakufu* firmly controlled the state and implemented a series of religious reforms, did the power of the Buddhist temples and priests begin to be confined.

Under the rule of Nobunaga Oda and Hideyoshi Toyotomi in the late Muromachi (1392-1573), reform policies were put in place to reduce the military, economic and social powers of the temples.²⁶ The *bakufu* took over the power to appoint temple administrators, forbade Buddhist priests to bear arms, abolished guilds for the organized interests of Buddhist priests in trade, confiscated all land holdings of the temples, “abolished court ranks and titles for priests and temples, discontinued the custom of celebrating Buddhist ceremonies at the court, replaced the practice of hereditary access to high priestly offices by a government nomination system” (McMullin 1983:248).

As a result, the temples no longer commanded armies; their members were disarmed and lost much of their land holdings and control over commercial mercantile enterprises. Buddhist temples were no longer an independent military, economic and political force posing a challenge to the state. As McMullin (1983:255) points out, “the state-religion mutual dependence thesis...was rejected” and Buddhism has been largely reduced to a moral force under the control of state authority ever since.

The state’s efforts to define its relations with religion did not stop there. After the Meiji revolution, the state sought to frame the newly restored power of the emperor in religious terms, under the two simple slogans “separation of Shinto and Buddhism” and “eradication of Buddhism”(Collcutt 1986:143).²⁷ In order to achieve its goals, the Meiji government started to treat Shinto and Buddhism differently through the Separation Edict of 1868, and elevated Shinto into the state religion (Hane 1992:108). The state practiced Shinto as official state ritual; took over the administration of Shinto shrines, most notably the Grand Shrine at Ise, incorporating them into the state apparatus;²⁸ and promoted Shinto in schools, the military and society at large. In 1872, the Meiji government proclaimed the three principles of state Shinto (Yamaguchi 1999:40) that unified Shinto, the state and the emperor.

At the same time, the Meiji government required all religions to be depoliticized, and that Shinto be non-religious. A law was passed in 1899 that prohibited religious priests from political assembly and running for public offices, and required the Grand Shrine at Ise to give up its status as a secular legal entity. Moreover, religious freedom was declared in the Meiji Constitution.

Depoliticization of religion and religious freedom were designed to prevent religions from being used as a platform for political advocacy (Ueno 2000:125; also Masafumi 1992; Ohara 1992).

The complete separation of state and religion was implemented only after Japan's defeat in World War II. In 1945, the Occupation authorities issued Shinto Instructions, stipulating the principle of the separation of state and religion: prohibition of support for shrines with public funds; prohibition of Shinto education at school; removal of related content from school textbooks; and prohibition of visits by civil servants to shrines. The 1947 Constitution recognized the principles of religious freedom and separation of state and religion. While the spirit of early post-War idealism has been more or less preserved, the relationship between the emperor and Shinto is far from settled.²⁹ Debate within academic circles and among politicians goes on.

The Japanese experience demonstrates that religions have been an integral part of state efforts in social and political management. Even when Buddhism was popular and widely accepted by society and supported by the state, it never managed to obtain an independent basis for its influence. The state or regional daimyos always considered themselves as agents and regulators for religious interests and behavior. Unlike Europe, where the modern state rose over a Church-dominated empire, the new Meiji state made great efforts to promote Shinto as a form of spiritual support.

As in Japan, the state's relationship with religions in Korea was largely settled long before the modern age.³⁰ The resultant state-religion relations involve three critical aspects: the moralization of state religion, depoliticization of all religions, and severe suppression of politically motivated religious forces and activities. Buddhism as a systemic religious presence in Korea was introduced from China in the 4th century. After Silla (57 B.C.-A.D. 935) unified the three kingdoms on the peninsula in the mid-7th century, Buddhism became the state religion and, with state support, temples rapidly spread. However, the role of Buddhism in providing ideological and moral support for the state was gradually taken over by Confucianism, which increasingly influenced the organization and management of government from the 10th century onwards. In the late Koryo (918-1392), anti-Buddhist sentiments started to gain currency among elites. In 1392, the new Chosôn dynasty officially accepted Confucianism as the state ideology and wanted to remove all Buddhist influences from the state. It replaced Buddhist with Confucian ceremony; confiscated all the landholdings of Buddhist temples and greatly reduced their number; converged eleven Buddhist sects into seven; eliminated retainers of temples; and abolished the monk recruitment system. Given the usual view that Confucianism is not a religion in a strict sense, the Chosôn dynasty in fact "separated" the religion from the state.

The policy of suppression also extended to Catholicism and Protestantism, which started to spread in Korea in the 18th century and were feared and attacked as "evil religions." Particularly during the reign of Kings Sunjo (1801-1834) and

Heonjong (1834–1849), priests were persecuted under the prevailing law. A wave of “religious perils” in the first half of the 19th century led the government to arrest and persecute thousands of Christian priests in order to wipe out these “evil religions.” Religious execution became systemic under the first 10 years of King Kojong’s reign (1863-1907).

Religious suppression lessened somewhat during the Japanese colonial rule (Shin 1995). The Annexation Treaty of 1910 included religious freedom as in the Meiji Constitution. A law enacted in 1922 gave religious organizations the status of legal entities even denied to Shinto shrines in Japan. A key aspect of the balancing act was to rectify the Chosôn dynasty’s harsh religious policy toward Buddhism. The colonial authorities took steps to protect and revitalize Buddhism: temples were repaired and Buddhist districts reorganized. In 1911, the colonial authorities passed a law to put temples under the government’s direct administration, protection and financial support. The colonial authorities remained suspicious of Christian churches, but managed to keep them at arms’ length, trying to stay on positive terms while watching them carefully (Kang 1976: 32; Shin 1995). A second aspect of the balancing act was the introduction of Shinto and its imposition upon Korea. Students were required to pay allegiance to the Japanese emperor. Shinto shrines were built and practice of Shinto ceremony was required, along with the use of Japanese language and names.

However, while the colonial authorities promoted and encouraged religious diversity, religious institutions themselves were very much kept away from becoming a platform for political advocacy. Buddhist organizations and properties were placed under the government’s strict control, and their activities were “limited to matters of pure religious nature” (Kang 1976:87). Political and social forces mixed with religious inspirations, and other religious sects, such as *Tonghak*, a religion-fueled farmers’ rebellion movement in the late 19th century, were treated as political parties. Their activities were monitored, fund raising limited, facilities closed, and schools shut down.

It can be seen that the basic pattern of the state-religion relationship in Korea became established in the early 19th century, several decades before Korea embarked on modernization. A clear line was drawn to confine religious institutions to non-political activities. With Confucianism as state ideology, there was no need for religion to provide moral support or spiritual justification for state authority. Buddhism and Christianity were suppressed, marginalized, or discredited, and turned into a social presence irrelevant to state affairs. Since the Korean War, Christianity has rapidly spread in Korea, and Christian converts cast a significant presence in society.³¹ Christian organizations, Catholic ones in particular, were notably active in the democratization movement in the 1980s. But what they challenged was the type of regime, rather than the overall institutional model with the state as

the primary form of public authority. Religious forces in this sense have been operating as an intermediate institution within the overall political system dominated by the state.

The state-religion relationship in China mirrors many aspects of those in Japan and Korea. Religions – Buddhism, Islam and Christianity – in the sense of a supernatural power in control of human destiny, came mainly from outside China. As in Korea, this external origin is perhaps an important reason for a troubled relationship between state and religion in China. With the emperor considering himself as the representative of the supernatural power, or “heaven,” room for another supernatural power did not exist. Moreover, Confucianism and the Chinese bureaucratic institutions of central management had existed long before “alien” religions made their way into China. They provided social, moral and administrative functions that would have been performed by the church in pre-modern West Europe.

Consequently, the state’s efforts to define its relationship with religion have concentrated mainly on preventing religions from becoming a form of public authority. For much of the history of their existence and expansion in China, Christianity as well as Buddhism appealed, or were allowed to appeal, mainly as a source of humanitarian or psycho-therapeutic care. Beyond that, their attempts to become a form of public authority in defining the values and behavior of the individual often met with state suspicion and led to the religions’ harsh suppression, or even elimination. Religions under Mao were banned all together. While the three major imported religions survived centuries of suppression and marginalization, many indigenous religious movements did not.

State-religion relations in East Asian countries, particularly in the early modern era, reconfirmed the European experience of settlement through violence. In Europe, such conflicts occurred when the state, or the kingdom, rose to challenge the legitimacy, jurisdiction and authority of the Church. In East Asia, it was the religions that rebelled against the authority of the well-established state.

The East Asian experience also raises important questions about the grounds upon which state-religion relations are to be settled in the process of modernization: Can institutions other than the state lay claim to public authority? Can religious interests be a basis for state legitimacy? What is the justification for the separation of state and religion? What is the role of religion in modern society where equal membership and the capacity and functionality of the state are its ultimate values, and where the state seems to have established itself as the primary advocate and enforcer of these values? These are issues not only for East Asia, but modern state building in general.

Family and the Modern State

If the military and religion can be somewhat remote for many citizens in their relationship with the state, the family is a primary institution that bears heavily on the state's efforts to develop a direct relationship with the individual. On one hand, regulations on family matters, marriage included, are an important form of “the expression of state power” (Glosser 2003, xiii). On the other hand, the state's vision and capacity often depends as much upon family behavior as on public law. This is especially the case for the East Asian countries for two main reasons. First, the family has been promoted in state ideology, namely Confucianism, as a cornerstone of social order and an integral part of the centralized state system. Second, the family has evolved to become a primary unit of human association and activity. In both the public and private spheres, the family is seen as a primary value, a preferred form of human relations and association, and a legitimate platform for social interaction and representation.

Like the military and religion, the family was an important form of public authority in pre-modern society, and modernization in a sense means to remove the function of the family as such, and, in the case of the East Asian countries, to deny patriarchal authority (Wu 1998-1999). The tension between the existing family system and modern values created a profound dilemma for the state in promoting such values. To understand this problem, let us first take a look at traditional family values and their institutional manifestations. In Japan, the traditional family before the Meiji Restoration was seen as part of the state apparatus, and thus there is the concept of the “family state” (Sasaki 2002:181).³² In this family state, the family was incorporated into the state system as the primary unit, and managed family affairs on behalf of the state. Moreover, the state as a whole, with the emperor as the head, was seen as an extension of the family. State authority and the authority of the family head are simply forms of the same public authority at different levels. Here, there was a unity between the loyalty of the citizens to the state and the filial duty of family members to the family head. In reality, as Robert Wu (1998[4]:122) notes, the authority of the male household head dominated the individual's relations with others, inside and outside the family.

The Meiji reforms established a system of compromise between those who wanted to preserve the traditional family system and those who wanted the state to have direct and centralized authority over the individual (Sasaki 2002:182). In 1872, the first Household Registration Act established a unified national system of household registration. This new system, however, preserved many of the key aspects of the traditional family state: the power of the household head to permit or consent³³ and to administer the official registration of the family members; the family as the primary unit of the state; and the emperor as the head of the extended family.

In 1898, the Meiji Civil Code set up a new household registration system under which the old system, centered on the family head, and the new system, centered on individual identity, coexisted. The administration of household registration became the business of the government, and individuals obtained some freedom from the family in their new direct relations with the state. The “primogeniture system” of the samurai class was reformed to extend the rights to all “commoners.” This aspect of the modern reform was reversed later in the Taicho Household Registration Act, which abolished the national system of individual identity registration, and returned to the household-centered registration tradition. As Nobutaka Ike (1969:160) notes, instead of trying to restructure the family system in line with modern values, “the Meiji government took steps to impose the samurai type of family structure on the entire population.”

Significant progress in modern reform on the family system in Japan, therefore, was not achieved until the end of World War II when the Meiji Civil Code was formally abolished.³⁴ The Constitution of 1947, in particular, Article 24, and the Family Law of 1947, completely abolished the household-centered registration system, and confirmed the principles of individual freedom and gender equality – eliminating restrictions on the wife. Marriage became contractual and the sole basis for family. Parents are now equal in forming the centre of the family; and only one pair of parents is permitted for each household – ending the administration of generations of the family under one household. Siblings are entitled to an equal share of family properties. On the basis of these post-War reforms, Japan completed the transformation from the traditional family system to the modern “institutional family” (Sano 1973:71; also Wu 1998-1999).

The Japanese case demonstrates the importance of the family as one of the intervening layers between state and individual. Modernization involved the state taking over many of the responsibilities the traditional family household head had and forming a direct relationship with the individual. In Japan, this was achieved not through a violent, or even competitive process between state and family, but rather through subtle modifications of the traditional family system. The efforts of the early Meiji to create the modern family – equal membership within a family with direct state regulation – quickly lost their momentum. The Confucian family model prevailed and was promoted by the state as ideal. Instead of removing the family from the state’s direct relations with the individual, the state succeeded in expanding family relations and incorporating them into the new state system. Again, only after World War II did fundamental reforms take place.

The male household-centered system is also found in traditional Korea, though the authority of the household head came largely from social custom rather than from the state’s institutional delegation. In fact, its first civil code in 1912, the Korean Civil Ordinance, issued under the Japanese colonial rule, stipulated that,

“kinship and inheritance among the Korean people shall be determined by custom but not in accordance with the law (Japan’s civil code)...” (Bae 1978:119; also, Han 1992).

Under this patriarchal system, according to Kim Byongkyu (1971:48), the male household head has the powers to lead, integrate, and protect the family members; give permission to family members to separate from the family; to intervene in all matrimonial affairs of his family; marriage was considered the union of one family with another: a means for lasting lineage and observance of rites for the ancestor.

Patriarchal authority was supported further by control over family property which belonged not to any individual member, but rather to the family as a whole, represented by the household head.

Particularly important in the case of Korea is the issue of gender equality among family members.³⁵ For the purpose of this article, the problem is whether a woman, particularly a wife, is a full legal entity under public authority. Under the traditional system, women were considered “incompetent” and their identity and relations were defined and controlled entirely by the male household head. With the rise of “colonial modernity,”³⁶ revisions of the original 1912 law were made in 1925 to allow women to file for divorce and make polygamy illegal (Bae 1978). The Civil Code of 1958 abolished the system of treating the wife as incompetent, recognizing her as a fully competent being. A clear attempt was made here to establish a direct relationship between the state and “women,” even without a fundamental change in the male dominant family system. The principle of equality between men and women was not recognized until the Civil Code of 1968. The dependence of women’s status upon the male household head, that is, the family interference in women’s direct relationship with the state, was not completely eliminated until 1989 when a new set of amendments were made to the Civil Code against the backdrop of the historic political transition in 1987.

The Chinese case is complicated by two unique aspects of the overall institutional setting: the long history³⁷ of public authority regulating family matters and the programs of significant reforms in the 20th century, first as part of the New Culture Movement in the 1920s and 1930s (Glosser 2003); then, in the 1950s, as part of Mao’s radical social programs (Diamant 2004); and finally, as part of the reformation in the post-Mao era from the 1980s (Davis and Harrell 1993). In China, the direct regulation of family matters by the public authority has long existed (Zhu 1999). In the early Qin dynasty (BC 248-BC 207), a marriage was legitimized if it met the requirements of the *Rites*, of which consent of the parents was paramount. Under the Qin legal code, acknowledgment by the state became necessary for a marriage to be recognized. In the Wei (534-556), Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) periods, The Household Law by the

government and The Household Decree by the emperor regulated the embellishment and dissolution of a marriage and the rights and obligations of the husband and wife. In the Song (960-1279) period, one needed a marriage registration document in order to marry. Many of the legal regulations on marriage and family were concerned with preparing the family as a basic unit for social order. Thus these regulations were more about the relations a marriage would activate and the rights and responsibilities associated with them than about the rights and privileges of the individuals involved.

The 1911 revolution led to the establishment of the national legislative house in 1928 and the first civil code in China's history, the Republic of China Civil Code. Driven by the same strong statist tradition, the new civil code carried on many of the elements of the traditional family system: the rights of the husband to manage household properties, the privilege of the husband in the parents' relationships with their children; and the denial of an inheritance right to the wife. But at the same time, regulations informed by the new modern principles of social life were also included. The new family code in 1931 "equalize[d] the grounds" of marriage for men and women and "called for women's equality, easier access to divorce, more equitable property rights for women, and the abolishment of concubinage and bigamy" (Glosser 2003:110; Diamant 2000:3).

What is interesting here is not so much how revolutionary the state-led family reforms were, but how strongly it was believed that the state is justified in exercising such power and influence directly over the individual. As Susan L. Glosser (2003:83, 98) observes, "The Nationalist vision of the family and its place in state-society relations required an intervention in family affairs far greater than China's imperial governments had ever attempted or wanted. . . . The Nationalists justified their intrusion into the family with the language of family reform and state-strengthening." Like the builders of the Meiji system in Japan, the Nationalists did not dissolve the family entirely; they "preserved it, albeit in somewhat streamlined form, as the essential building block of a new China."

In Glosser's (2003:86) careful documentation of the change in the state's general approach to family matters, the Nationalist state "took a much more directive stance than the flexible Qing bureaucracy in mediating tensions and conflicts between state statutes and local custom" and saw

the family as a link between state and individual and of the state as the ultimate source of authority and object of loyalty. By placing the state at the head of the family structure – making it, in essence, the individual's parents and ancestors – the government tried to reinforce individual rights vis-à-vis the joint family while simultaneously maintaining social stability.

This change is reflected in the state's pro-active efforts to regulate matters such as family rituals, wedding protocols, the purpose of marriage, procedures for divorce, etc.

Nationalist efforts to build up the state’s direct management of family matters were carried on and further advanced by the new Communist state after 1949.³⁸ “The Nationalists presented family reform as a necessary step in transforming China into a strong, modern nation. The Communists harbored the same intention” (Glosser 2003:170), further subordinating the individual to the state. Like the Nationalists, the Communists in their major campaign of family reform in the 1950s “used freedom of marriage choice as a tool to reduce familial control of junior members and exert greater state influence over the individual” (Glosser 2003:200; also Diamant 2000:4; Davis and Harrell 1993:10). The Marriage Law of 1950 was in fact a family law. This law and its enforcement were significant in two aspects. First, the state established itself as the primary and direct controller of marriage and family matters. Second, it aimed to eliminate senior male dominance and authority in marriage and family affairs in traditional Chinese society, and, along with it, forced marriage, gender inequality, matrimony and child marriage, or other forms of what the Chinese called “feudalistic” practices, and to promote freedom in marriage choice, monogamy, gender equality, and state protection of the legal rights and obligations of the parties to marriage and family relations.

The new marriage law in 1980 and its amendments in 2001 further confirmed the principle of freedom not only in marriage choice, but also in divorce, as well as the principle of family planning, and responsibility of children for their elderly parents and that of parents for their children. While there is much debate over the nature and impact of the family reforms in the post-Mao era – whether they resulted in fundamental change in people’s attitude toward the family and traditional family values and practices – scholars agree that “the state continued to play a highly intrusive and coercive role” over family matters (Davis and Harrell 1993:3; also Diamant 2000:329).

It is perhaps indisputable that the actual practice of marriage and family matters in China is far more complicated than what might be expected of these new institutions. But the message in the building of these new institutions is largely compatible with modern values: the state wants to form a direct relationship with members of the society, and eliminate the privilege of males in defining the rights and obligations of other family members in marriage and family matters, and to redefine these rights and obligations on a completely new basis.

The problem of the family in modern state building shows a similar dilemma for the state and its ambivalent approach towards traditional institutions. The family has been the basic unit of society, and even of state management and social mobilization; the state still takes the family as an important social and cultural foundation of society. However, movements for equality and citizenship forced the state to challenge the traditional authority of the family in building direct and exclusive relations with the individual. Consequently, the modern

transformation of the family in these countries led to a dual value structure. In the public sphere, state-sanctioned institutions have firmly established their authority, increasingly encroaching upon the private sphere. In the private sphere, traditional norms and practices still very much define familial relations, and the family remains an active and effective regulator of the claims and expectations of its own members.

Conclusion: Modern State Building and Intermediate Institutions

This study is designed to look into the problem of intermediate institutions and modern state building in East Asia. The initial theoretical critique and general review of pre-modern institutional settings allowed us to hypothesize that the state, in its modern transformation, would endeavor to build a direct and exclusive relationship with the individual. In doing so, it would try to remove or at least reduce the institutional capacity of significant social and political forces such as military, religion and the family to have an impact upon the individual as a form of public authority, thus turning these forces into intermediate institutions or agents for organized individuals in relation to the state. Because of the unique pre-modern institutional settings in these countries, I also hypothesized that these other significant forces might end up sharing public authority with the state in facilitating capacity-focused modern state building.

The study has confirmed that the state has indeed tried to extend its power directly to the individual through establishing and consolidating state institutions, forging national identity and allegiance to the state, and imposing direct taxation, universal conscription and state regulation of family, religious and military affairs, etc. These efforts led to the breakdown of the traditional institutional structure and the rise of a sense of citizenship. They further strengthened the power of the state where there had been a tradition of strong and centralized public authority.

However, the institutional consequences of the efforts at modern state building have been complicated. Those significant social and political forces continued to see themselves as a form of public authority, particularly in the early phase of modern political transformation. Thus the military operated in the name of the state in Japan in the years leading to World War II and in Korea after the Korean War, and in Mao's China the military acted in symbiosis with the state. Moreover, efforts in modern state building in these countries allowed a continual heavy presence of the family in the state's relationship with the individual, and created a dual structure of authority whereby the state and family shared public authority. In these emergent polities, religion has been generally confined by the state to being an intermediate institution, with the exception of Japan where Shinto was early on elevated to state religion.

This study has also shown that modern state building is a dynamic process in which the qualities of the emergent polity evolve over time. In all three cases, the

early phase of modern state building saw the vulnerability of the state to competing forms of public authority and its willingness to incorporate those significant social and political forces, and share public authority with them in pursuing its modernizing agenda. In Japan after World War II and in Korea from the 1980s onward, the intervening capacity of family and military has been significantly weakened; the state’s extension of its direct power to the individual has made notable progress; and religions have settled into being intermediate institutions. In the Chinese case, the pattern seems to be still unfolding.

One can argue that this dynamic process is nothing unusual: modern state building takes time and happens in stages. The early stage is inevitably compromised by the legacies of the pre-modern institutional setting. But, as shown in this study, the interplay of the state’s interests and those of the competing forms of public authority will not necessarily lead to the establishment of a state operating on modern values and to the transformation of significant social and political forces into “intermediate institutions.” More research is needed on the dynamics of this “breakthrough” from the early phase of modern state building to a more mature modern state. This study, however, is sufficient to allow the following suggestions, perhaps as possible directions for further research. First, we need to consider changing economic and social conditions. If the modern state is a response to modern conditions of mass society as we have established earlier in this article, the necessity, viability and effectiveness of the modern state will be greatly enhanced by the intensification of these conditions. This intensification has been driven primarily by changing economic and technological conditions, conditions that will further erode the enduring power of the traditional forms of public authority and their capacity to compete and intervene. The different qualities of the prevailing institutions in relation to modern values before and after the critical breakthrough reflect such different conditions. This is particularly true in societies whose modern institutions originated elsewhere.

This leads to my second suggestion. We also need to consider the impact of international ideas, movements, and developments on modern political development in individual countries. We will not be able to understand fully the different patterns of modern state building before and after World War II in Japan unless we understand the ideas and impact of the MacArthur revolution. Likewise, we can not understand the dramatic political changes in the 1980s in Korea unless we understand the contemporary global movement of political and economic liberalization. It is evident also that both changing economic and technological conditions, and international developments and movements are facilitating such a breakthrough in China.

Modern state building, at least as seen in Japan, Korea and China, is a dynamic and historical process. The real breakthrough, i.e. the firm establishment of modern institutions, appears not to occur at the beginning of this process, but rather

somewhere down the road. In the early phase, we see bargaining between the consolidating state and competing forces of public authority and, consequently, an ambiguous relationship of the state with those forces. Whether the society moves further, breaks through critical institutional barriers, turns other competing forces into intermediate institutions, and emerges in a successful modern transformation is heavily contingent upon the institutional capacities of these significant social and political forces, changing economic and technological conditions, and the greater international environment. The transformation of competing forces into intermediate institutions can be seen as a principal indicator of breakthrough. The essence of modern state building, therefore, is how the necessary transformation of public authority in response to modern conditions interacts with the prevailing and often institutionalized social and political interests, and whether the latter will eventually accept the state as the only legitimate form of public authority and operate as intermediate institutions within the emergent polity.

The findings in this study have important implications for modern political development elsewhere. This can be seen at two levels. First, efforts at modern state building have led to various types of polities in recent human history. The concept of intermediate institutions can be useful as it traces a unique pattern of institutional evolution to its historical roots and sees modern state building as a process in which significant social and political forces give up their claims on public authority and settle their relationships with the consolidating state as the sole legitimate form of public authority. For a country to become a mature and genuine modern state, the transformation of these forces into intermediate institutions is an important threshold.

Secondly, much of the debate on modern political development has focused on “developing,” or non-Western countries. Having “failed” in their modern state building, many of them are seen to have got their “institutions” wrong, or their culture is said to have difficulty adapting to the modern state. But the notion of intermediate institution goes beyond this dichotomous thinking. Religion, family and military can be “cultural” forces that complicate modern state building in a society outside the original West European model. On the other hand, seen from within the country itself, these forces have been very much “institutionalized” over a substantial period of political and social development. It is therefore not especially useful to see religion, family and military as either culture or institutions, and treat them as such in explaining modern state building. The notion of intermediate institutions treats these significant social and political forces as dynamic phenomena. Their relationship to modern values and institutions can change over time. Indeed, it is their transformation that has been at the core of modern state building in East Asia.

Endnotes

¹ In this paper, Korea refers to the entire Korean peninsula prior to the end of World War II and South Korea after Liberation. Likewise, after 1949, China means specifically the People’s Republic of China.

² For more on Weber and the modern state, see Held 1989 and 1992, and Pierson 2004.

³ For more on the emergence of the modern state in Europe as a process of international selection over its competitors, see Spruyt 1994.

⁴ The notion of mass society used here is different from that often associated with Daniel Bell (1962), which provides much of the inspiration for the so-called middle-class theory. The concept I use here is more about “modern conditions,” in which there are intensifying interactions on a large scale among individuals of higher mobility and fewer “primary group ties.” These conditions lead to individual behavior, communal norms, social relations, and national dynamics that are significantly different from those in the earlier times. From there, there is the problem of how such a society can be managed effectively, efficiently, fairly and humanely, given the declining effectiveness of the traditional family system, community, parochial faiths, values, norms and standards, and status-centered social structure. These conditions and the reformation of the society they demand become the principal rationale for the whole “project” of modern state building.

⁵ See Weber, “Bureaucracy” in Gerth and Mills 1958:196-266.

⁶ Weber “Politics as a Vocation,” in Gerth and Mills 1958:78.

⁷ See Needham 1954 for a comprehensive treatment on this subject.

⁸ Confucianism is not a religion in the sense often used. It is not spiritual or metaphysical but rather a very worldly system of moral standards and behavioral codes.

⁹ A study by Zhang Hoan and Bai Yihua (Zhang and Bai 1992), for example, details the development of local government structure at the village level from the Shang dynasty (about 1200BC) to the reconstruction of village governance in the 1980s after the collapse of Mao’s commune system, and how it has operated as “the primary government unit” of the national political system. See also, Lu 2003 for the household registration system, and Zhu 1999 for the family system. For a general treatment of the omnipresent state structure in Chinese history, see Spence 1999, and Fairbank and Goldman 1998.

¹⁰ For details of the reforms, see McClain 2002:12-14 and Sansom 1958:47-66.

¹¹ While there are competing views on when and how the modern Chinese state took its shape, Julia C. Strauss (1998) has a good discussion on major efforts in modernizing the state institutions after the 1911 Revolution. See also Kuhn 2002.

¹² Even under these circumstances, there were efforts by the Nationalist government to build modern institutions in many key areas during the early Republican period. See Strauss 1998.

¹³ For the shaping of the modern state in Japan, particularly in the early Meiji, see Hane 1992, particularly, Chapter 5, “The Meiji Restoration: The New Order”; and Jansen and Rozman 1986.

¹⁴ See, for example, Hall and Jansen 1968; Nakane and Oishi 1990; Hall, Keiji, and Yamamura 1977.

¹⁵ Even though many see Japan’s colonial rule as a brutal interruption to the natural evolution of a modern Korea, studies have begun to examine the emergence of modernity in Korea during Japan’s colonial rule. See Shin and Robinson 1999. For the debate in particular, see Shin and Robinson 1999:1-20; and Schmid 2002:1-22.

¹⁶ James B. Palais’ (1966 and 1975) work on the late Choson dynasty provides a good examination of the Chinese influence on the Korean system.

¹⁷ Professionalism is the principle that the military keeps itself politically neutral and operates under civilian command, rather than seeing itself as a form of public authority. The problem lies at the heart of the debate in the 1960s and 1970s, led by Huntington’s earlier work on military professionalism (1957). Those who challenged his thesis (for example, Janowitz 1964, Abrahamsson 1972) generally question “Huntington’s linkage between professionalism and political neutrality” (Godwin 1978:220), particularly in “new” or “developing” countries. As we will see in the current study, military involvement in politics reflects the legacy of the pre-modern institutional setting in the early phase of modern state building, and its professionalization (as defined here) is a key element of modern state building.

¹⁸ The gunbatsu refers to “a clique of political soldiers within the military that take advantage of customary privileges in the military system and exert influence on state affairs” (Matsushita 2001:15). It has two types: hanbatsu, or regional cliques, those from a regional domain and dominant during Meiji; and gakbatsu, or school cliques, those from the military academy and dominant in Taisho (1912-1926) and the first half of Showa (1926-1989).

¹⁹ For a more detailed account, see Hane 1992:96.

²⁰ For more discussion on the pattern of civil-military relations under Mao, see Jencks 1978; Godwin 1978. For the Chinese military system before the PRC, particularly its relationship with the state, see Wang and Liu 1986; Zhao 1986; Liu 1997.

²¹ Shambaugh’s work (2004) on “modernizing the Chinese military” is the latest to document the changes.

²² A case can be made that the model of state-military relations that has developed in North Korea matches very well that of China, while the one found in Taiwan under the rule of Chiang Kai Shek and Chiang Ching-Kuo is also comparable.

²³ A study by Kang Chang-sung (1991) gives a comparative investigation of many other aspects of the politics of military factions in Japan and Korea.

²⁴ Even before Japanese colonial rule, there had been efforts from the 1870s by the government to restructure army organization and central military management. The military reforms were intended to introduce modern weaponry, modern training and management. As Lee Donghee (1982:214) recognizes, these reforms focused more on the problem of command chain and reporting lines, however, and the military’s relations with the state was not an issue.

²⁵ For a broad view on the history of religion in Japan, see Toyota 1982 “Part I: The study of the history of religious institutions in Japan,” pp. 1-271.

²⁶ For a more detailed account of the religious reforms and their consequences on the state-religion relations in pre-Meiji times, see McMullin 1983.

²⁷ Given the fact that Confucianism and Buddhism, as part of the Three Treasures [Shinto, Buddhism and Confucianism] had dominated Japan, the new state campaign was clearly aimed at the demotion of Buddhism and marginalization of Confucianism. See also Kitagawa 1966:254.

²⁸ The government initially established the Jingikan (Department of Shinto) and then in 1872, the Board of Religious Instruction, to manage the religious matters. With these bodies in place, “the government insisted on functioning as a religious and moral agent” (Hane 1992:108).

²⁹ See, for example, O’Brien 1996.

³⁰ For a history of religions in Korea, see Grayson 1989.

³¹ It is estimated (Kim 1997) that Christians had grown from about one million in the early 1960s to about 14 million, or one third of the population by the late 1990s. James Grayson (1989:2) claims, “Korea is the only nation in Asia where Christianity has established itself during the past 200 years as a significant component of the national culture.”

³² “State” in this context refers clearly to the polity as discussed earlier. For more on the roots of the Japanese family system, see Henry 1981 and Sano 1973.

³³ For example, it was the power of the household head, namely the father, to approve the marriage of the children.

³⁴ For studies on this topic, see Sano 1973; Hendry 1981:26-30.

³⁵ For a background of the issue, see Wells 1999:191-220.

³⁶ “Colonial modernity” refers to the modernization believed to be achieved in Korea under Japanese colonial rule in the 1920s and 1930s. The problem of the traditional family system during the period has been a key and widely debated issue. See Shin and Robinson 1999 for further discussion.

³⁷ For a more detailed introduction to the roots of the Chinese family system, see Tao and Ming 1994; Zhu 1999.

³⁸ In addition to Glosser’s study, Neil J. Diamant (2000) also looks at China during the early Communist period as a case of the pattern of active state intervention in family matters.

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