

Internal Political Efficacy of Middle Class in Transitional States

—Comparing China and Vietnam¹

ZHU, Yan HONG, Chuan

Abstract:

This paper examines the middle class' internal political efficacy in transitional China and Vietnam and finds that Chinese middle class' internal political efficacy significantly weaker than their counterparts in Vietnam. And the Chinese middle class is fragmented between managerial middle class and professional middle class, the former being weaker in internal political efficacy. However, we cannot find equivalent differentiation in Vietnam case. The author argues that middle class' socio-political attitude is strongly affected by the role of state in the transition. In China, the differentiation occurs due to the changing state role from centralization to decentralization, then back to a "regulatory state"; but in Vietnam, the decentralization is still under way. Existing theories on whether the middle class is a fragmented class cannot fully explain the situation in transitional states.

¹ Direct all correspondence to ZHU Yan, Rm. 542, 622/7 Mid-Huaihai Rd, Shanghai, 200020, P.R.China (zhuyan@sass.org.cn) Tel: (86)136-4160-5641 This paper is in the proceedings for Asia Barometer study, and the authors want to express sincere thanks to Prof. SONODA Shigeto and his affiliated research institute, who generously allows the use of a full set of Asian Barometer survey data. Thanks also go to Prof. LIU Xin, Dept of Sociology, Fudan University, for his warmest support and suggestions during the writing. And the authors had informal discussions with their colleague, Ms. ZHAO Yong, graduate student in Fudan University. Her insightful opinions are highly appreciated.

Introduction

Whether the middle class is differentiated in terms of socio-political attitude? There has been heated academic discussion on this issue.

Some researchers hold that the middle class largely shares similar value and thus depicts a high level of homogeneity. They believe that middle class is by and large conservative and indifferent towards mass politics, not only in advanced societies (Goldthorpe 1995) but in newly developed countries as well (萧新煌 1989; 李春玲 2010).

Others propose that the middle class is fragmented, rather than uniform, in their socio-political attitude. The cleavage lies between middle class members working in public sector and private sector (Heath & Savage 1995), further reflecting different assets they are possessing (Savage, Barlow, Dickens & Fielding 1992).

Political efficacy is a substantial component of socio-political attitude. In the western democracy, political efficacy measures the civic orientation of various political participation forms, which directly relates to the competitive election and voting (Gilens, Glaser & Mendelberg 2001). But for transitional economies, such as China and Vietnam, which lacks the competitive political party system, how strong is the middle class' political efficacy? Is there any internal differentiation? Whether the middle class in transitional states is fragmented or homogeneous? These are all substantial questions referring to the social structural transformation and its consequential implications. This paper shall address these questions and seek tentative answers.

Middle class and the state

As to the socio-political attitude of middle class, classic democratic theory argues that, the middle class is an active stabilizer in western democracy (Dahl 1971; Lipset 1959). Empirical support that a significantly large middle class would reduce the frequency and magnitude of social conflict, thus bringing up a more stable and sustainable social structure (Acemoglu & Robinson 2008). The long-term stability after World War II in western society can be seen as the consequence of a rising middle class, and the middle class, at the same time, benefits from it. As the winner in the post-WWII period, the middle class becomes more or less conservative in their political orientation. Their participation in politics is overshadowed by the static and even rigid institutions. The middle class grows indifferent towards the politics, or re-aligns with conservative party (Goldthorpe 1995).

In east- or southeast-Asian transitional economies, the birth of middle class is also reliant on a strong developmental state (萧新煌 1989). Middle class, benefiting from transition, would not seek any radical change to the institutions (李春玲 2010). Rather, it largely keeps certain distance from politics, or shows favor and loyalty in state-arranged political participation, e.g. in local People's Congress voting (Liu & Zhu, 2010).

These existing studies have all regarded the middle class as a highly homogeneous group in their socio-political attitude, rather than address the internal differentiation

Several other researchers raise an insightful viewpoint, pointing to a clear cleavage within the middle class, mainly between managerial middle class and professional middle class. This is due to different types of capital (or asset) in the possession of two sub-groups: managerial middle class possess organizational asset, while the professionals have cultural asset. Organizational asset is bound with particular position and external to the people who possess it. Once the position is lost, the manager correspondingly loses the organizational asset. On the contrary, cultural asset is intrinsic to professionals and not subject to any particular position. When the professionals shift from one place to another, this cultural asset moves along (Savage, Barlow, Dickens & Fielding 1992).

This fundamental difference marks two types of assets, subjecting the managerial groups to the constraints of their position in any hierarchy. Such constraints fetter the managers, turning them more cautious and conservative, less oriented towards active protest and interest appeal. At the same time, knowledge elites are much less bound to their role in the power structure. The cultural capital follows them into different positions and seeks returns from labor market. They naturally have more appeals to the legitimate rights. Assuming that they have more bargain power with the state, they are usually more radical in terms of socio-political attitude.

This theoretical standpoint does not treat the middle class as a homogenous group, but rather differentiated. It lays focus on the sub-groups within this social stratum, and tries to offer theoretical explanation emphasizing asset types. The relationship between asset and asset holder is different, since some assets are external to the holder, while others inseparable from the holder. And it also raises an important point that, the middle class is differentiated in their relationship with the state regime (Savage, Barlow, Dickens & Fielding, 1992:194-195).

If we trace back the origin of middle class in the West, we shall clearly see that the birth of middle class is inseparable from the state active role: to the European nation-states such as Britain, their colonies abroad and unequal international trade have brought them huge amount of wealth, which facilitates new patterns of production and consumption. In the meantime, domestic trade and service sector also emerge and grow at a great magnitude, giving birth to an elite group of rich businessmen and professionals as an early form of modern middle class (Smail 1994). The United States are slightly different from the European counterparts, in the sense that globalization has fully blossomed by that time. Nevertheless, the formation of a middle class in the States is also the result of wealth and capital accumulation, not only from the domestic industrial structure change (Mills 1951), but from the capital flow world-wide as well. Much of the direct production has been exported to less developed nations, while domestically many positions are created to run the global capital. Those who are so positioned are middle class.

Furthermore, capital expansion and operation in the developing countries has also

resulted in dramatic changes in social structure, and the rise of middle class in those contexts.

Apparently, a Western middle class emerges in some special circumstances: the rapid accumulation of huge amount of wealth brings about unprecedented changes in production and consumption, both in the west and elsewhere. To realize the effective management of such amount of wealth and to adjust to the new producing and consuming pattern, the society is in urgent demand of managers and experts who have relevant knowledge, and they are the middle class.

In post-Socialist societies such as China and Vietnam, the middle class comes into being against the background of global capital in-flow. At the same time, we also should pay attention to how the newly-established market system interacts and evolves with the persisting party-state institutions, how the middle class relates to the state regime, and what the implications the relationship has on the socio-political attitude of middle class.

Transition in China and Vietnam and the emergence of a Middle Class

In the late 30 years, China and Vietnam have both experienced transition from state socialism towards market economy. These two countries catch our attention because they both stand out for some particular features compared to other transitional economies: Communist party sustains as the ruling power and leads the transition from the very beginning; political structure largely remains intact; large scale of rapid privatization does not occur, with majority of the assets and resources are still in state possession. Both countries are predominantly agrarian, but achieve much higher growth rates than many other transitional economies. (Chan, Kerkvliet & Unger 1999; McCormick 1998; Walder 2003:901; Walder & Nguyen 2008: 253-254) These commons make China and Vietnam ideally comparable. However, this paper intends to zoom in and to focus on differences in their transitional path, which bring about divergent social consequences behind the apparent similarities. What is to our interest here is the middle class' political efficacy.

Some scholars understand transition in Asian countries from state socialism to capitalism as a bottom-up trajectory: emerging private property rights stand side by side with public ownership, market mechanism co-exists with redistributive system, and the authority has multi-dimensions, e.g. traditionally authoritarian from party-state along with rational domination from modern bureaucracy. This sharply diverges from east-European "top-down" transition and central-Europe's "borrowed capitalism" (Eyal, Szelenyi, & Townsley, 1989). China and Vietnam depict features of a mixed form of capitalism: they both adhere to an ownership structure dominated by public ownership, but allow room for a variety of other property rights; the private ownership once ideologically condemned is now re-defined as an effective form of public ownership; market functions as the new mechanism of resource planning and distribution, along with the persisting redistributive command economy; private entrepreneurs bamboos from grass-root efforts in both transitional economies; economic reforms pave way for the vigorous growth, followed by administrative

reform, but no more profound political reform so far in both states (Le Dang Doahn 2009; 窪田光純 1997; 叶富春 2008). We see the state imperatives change dramatically in China and Vietnam, from a role of stubbornly rigid political leadership towards a developmental state who sets priority on modernization (布莱克, 1988: 89). The two governments have both adopted and cultivated market institutions, and strongly led the transition path from the very beginning, in the severely lacking circumstances (李文, 2003: 49-51). In a word, we see a fairly significant state role and strong will to develop.

Nevertheless, if we examine more closely, we shall see that Vietnamese trajectory sharply differs from the Chinese path. The most relevant to our discussion is whether the state has adjusted its role in the whole process of transition: China has gone from decentralization to a “regulatory state” in the mid-90s, while Vietnam, since Renovation (*Doi Moi* in Vietnamese) in 1986, is still decentralizing its power.

Reform in China set off in late-1970s. Reforming a centralized command economy to a decentralized market system has tremendously motivated the direct producers (吴敬琏 2003). The ownership of the means of production, once solely monopolized by the state, is now partially privatized, and the property rights for human capital, once incomplete, can get rid of administrative manipulation and seek economic returns in the labor market (刘欣 2010). However, this decentralization is not consistently adopted in three-decade reform. Mid-1990s marks the cleavage of China’s economic reform. Top leadership in Beijing strategically re-defines the role of the state and re-orientes the reform. The first 15 years of the reform is to decentralize the state power and to pursue a larger social and private sector (*Guo Tui Min Jin* 国退民进); then the later 15 years witness a re-appear of a “regulatory state” (Naughton 2009). The party and the state again start to lay a heavy hand over the social arena and private sector. The society and non-state sector is shrinking again along with an ever-growing powerful central regime. In fact, the party-state institutions always persist, which means that more power the government is endowed with, the more powerful the ruling party is. Thus we see a Chinese transition from centralization to decentralization, and back to centralization again.

Vietnam shared quite a few similarities with its Chinese counterpart during the take-off period: both nations were trapped in deep poverty and had to make a vital decision of taking on reform (Boudarel & Nguyen Van Ky 2002; 廖建夏 2007); a powerful state played the role as the functional substitute for market (李文, 2003: 56). However, when Vietnam proposed *Doi Moi* in 1986, it not only introduced the market mechanism but also re-assess the Socialist line (*Lu Xian* 路线) in an all-round way, which differs from China. One of the major components is raised in the Sixth Plenary Meeting of Vietnamese Communist Party Conference (*Yue Gong Liu Da* 越共六大), saying that the Communist Party is not the only, but among several others, leading force in Vietnam (芬斯顿 2007). The leadership structure in state regime has also substantially changed: the government and the parliament (equivalent to the People’s Congress in China) now enjoy more power, and the party retrieves to a great extent from many facets (窪田光純 1997). The Central Committee of Communist Party are

still in charge of some sub-committees, but they are mainly research bodies for some development strategies and theoretical principles (芬斯顿, 2007: 359-365). The party proposes guidelines and leaves the policy and planning in the hands of the government and parliament, with few intrusion from the party institutions (窪田光純, 1997: 98-100). If we trace back the Doi Moi in Vietnam for the last two decades, we could easily find that Vietnam has been trying to get away from the regulatory state regime and step towards a decentralized, functional new type of regime (叶富春, 2008: 140-141).

Economic assets from both domestic and abroad have accumulated in an astonishing rate in China and Vietnam. Along with the expansion of education opportunity, now two societies have more or less similar economic and social context as western societies had one or two hundred years ago. Two countries now set the stage for an emerging new middle class. And the socio-political attitude of this group is largely affected by the role of the state.

Studies on political attitude and political efficacy have shown that, the depth and frequency of voluntary political participation cast positive effect on people's political efficacy (Karp & Banducci 2008). The more the state regime empowers the people, the more decentralized the state is, the higher political efficacy people have. If we believe this mechanism applies to different social and political settings, then we may propose a hypothesis based on previous analysis of China and Vietnam's transition:

Hypothesis 1a: The middle class in Vietnam has higher political efficacy than China's middle class.

Hypothesis 1b: There is no significant difference between China and Vietnam in terms of middle class' political efficacy.

Is the middle class fragmented?

Now we shall explore whether there is internal differentiation between managerial middle class and professional middle class to see whether and to which extent the middle class is fragmented.

We have argued that, when the state decentralizes its power, the middle class naturally gains more opportunity in political participation, which consequentially raises their political efficacy. And when the state regime reclaims its role as an ultimate regulator, it would overall affect the middle class, but in different magnitude onto managerial and professional middle class. How powerful is this effect? It depends on two factors:

1) How powerful or influential s/he is in the daily work situation? The less hierarchical power s/he is endowed with, the more effect a changing regime would cast on him/her, thus the lower political efficacy s/he has.

2) How large is the gap between expectation towards political participation and actual opportunity s/he is given? The larger the gap is, the lower political efficacy s/he has.

Let's take a look at the first factor, the work situation of middle class. The managerial elites usually enjoy a certain level of manipulative power, to personnel, financial issues or any particular project. Exerting the manipulation would grant the managers a feeling of exercising "simulative political participation"². The managers clearly feel the effective influence, even manipulation, which they cast on others in their work situation. This is a "simulation-room" for macro-politics, decision-making and implementation, and the managers are important players in this simulation. The power in the hierarchy and the respect from below would bring about a sense of efficacy. Even though this is by nature not political efficacy, individuals cannot easily distinguish in-between. Furthermore, this type of efficacy also diverts the managers' aspiration for "real" political participation, and off-sets the disappointment if not given enough chances.

Another aspect with the nature of the management work is that, the managerial middle class is closer to the center of a hierarchy, esp. those administrators working in the government. They largely get involved in real politics and policy-making in an institutionalized way. In transitional states which still have a large government, a significant part of the administrators are bureaucrats. They are in fact the only "political man" under the condition that lacks competitive party system: they deal with politics, make political decisions and put them into social practice. This proximity to the political power center would naturally bring them sense of political efficacy, since their job influences people's daily life.

Let's turn to the second factor, the gap between expected and actual political participation.

A shift from traditional institutions to bureaucracy governed by rationality shall make the society increasingly dependent on a variety of knowledge and skills. Accordingly, those who possess knowledge (the cultural capital) would have more bargain power in different arena, and then have stronger appeal to political power (Savage, Barlow, Dickens & Fielding 1992; Eyal, Szelényi, & Townsley, 1989). However, a stronger will to participate in politics does not necessarily leads to a higher political efficacy. It also depends on to which extent those expectations are fulfilled.

Whether people regard their political participation as effective refers not only to their objective position in the social structure, but also to their subjective perception of who they are and what they should have. If granted more effective participation opportunities to meet ever-increasing political aspiration, people would not feel a large gap between expectation and reality, leading to higher level of political efficacy; but if the real participation is less in frequency and low in effectiveness, a gap would occur, which leads to lower level of political efficacy.

What we witness in China? The professionals have in their hands the knowledge asset, which the society desperately needs. They expect to have a stronger saying in

² In fact, if we pay a bit attention to the recent topics dealt with in political sociology, it is easy to find that "politics" is everywhere, including gender politics, family politics, and, which is relevant here, office politics.

the political process, but are hampered by an ever-growing state regime. The managerial group has organizational assets in their possession. These assets are bind with their title and position. The fear of losing the position would reduce their aspiration for more political rights (Savage, Barlow, Dickens & Fielding 1992). And the desire of political participation does not increase tremendously, since most of them are already exercising political power, virtual or real.

In this light, the Chinese middle class would differentiate in political efficacy, professionals lower than managerial group. But in Vietnam, the state power is consistently shrinking, giving middle class more opportunity of effective participation in an all-round manner. Thus we would not see an internal cleavage.

Therefore, we argue that professionals' political efficacy is more fragile to the changing role of the state, compared to a managerial middle class. When the state reclaims its power and domination, and erodes the society and manipulates the market, it would negatively affect the professionals' political efficacy in a more profound way, compared to those in the managerial position. Managers and administrators have more exertion in political or semi-political sphere, while the professionals would have to endure stronger tension during the on-going modernization and persisting heavy hand from the state. More hypotheses would be deducted from the above logic of reasoning:

Hypothesis 2a: In China, due to the expansion of a "regulatory state" in the midst of the reform, the professional middle class has some weaker political efficacy than the managerial group.

Hypothesis 2b: In Vietnam, the professional and managerial middle class is not differentiated in terms of political efficacy.

In the next section, we shall see if those hypotheses hold true.

Method and findings

This study uses the data from the Asian Barometer survey dataset, which is the largest pan-Asia comparative study dataset. This survey has so far been taken 5 waves, respectively on 2003、2004、2006、2007 and 2008, totally including more than 30 countries. The structured questionnaire integrates content such as family life、consumption preference、socio-political attitude and action、life satisfaction etc. This paper uses part of the China and Vietnam data on 2003 and 2006. To increase sample size, we merge cases of these two years and get 2117 and 2800 samples respectively for Vietnam and China.

We use multiple-linear regression model in this study.

Dependent variable is the political efficacy. This concept has two dimensions, internal political efficacy and external political efficacy. We only focus on the internal political efficacy. Though the questionnaire provides some scales on external efficacy, but only to China. Missing data in Vietnam causes difficulty in making complete measurement of political efficacy, but internal efficacy can at least give a "snapshot"

of the political attitude in both countries.

The measurement of internal political efficacy is a Likert scale (q192, q193, q194). It contains three statements and asks the respondent to score from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5). The three statements are:

—Generally speaking, people like me don't have the power to influence government policy or actions

—Politics and governments are so complicated that sometimes I don't understand what's happening

—Since so many people vote in elections, it really doesn't matter whether I vote or not

We first test the Pearson correlation among every two statements and finds reasonably high correlations³. Thus we believe that these three statements are on one direction of measurement. In order to increase the analytical sample size, we replace the system missing data with the mean score⁴. Then we add three statement scores together and therefore get a score between 3 to 15, measuring the internal political efficacy. The higher the score, the stronger the respondent disagrees with the statement, the stronger internal political efficacy s/he has.

Independent variables are country and middle class sub-groups. Country is a binary variable: China is coded as 1 and Vietnam 2. Middle class sub-group is also a binary variable: Managerial middle class is coded as 1 and professional middle class coded as 2.

To divide middle class into managers and professionals is somewhat arbitrary in this case, since the survey does not contain detail information about respondent's occupational status and we could not identify those groups with a strictly-defined class schema. However, we still can exploit the multiple-choice question of "Occupation (q291)" to differentiate between managers/administratives and professionals. A managerial middle class include "Business owner or manager of an organization with over 30 employees" (code 5) and "senior manager" (code 7). A professional middle class include "employed professional or specialist" (code 8). Self-employed professional are not salariat, then not in the category of new middle class.

Code 5 puts business owner together with manager. This is truly problematic, since owners are large proprietors rather than salariat. But referring to recent year's survey in urban China, the chance of getting in touch with bourgeoisie is very small. This grouping only causes ambiguity logically, but would not much affect the outcome. Actually, even in advanced society, large proprietors share a fairly small percentage in general social survey's sampling frame (Erikson & Goldthorpe 1992). Concerning this study, the vital problem is the lack of choice of "government officials

³ A Pearson's correlation coefficient among these three statement scores are .47 between q192 and q193, .36 between q192 and q194, and .36 between q193 and q194.

⁴ The mean score is calculated based on other respondents' valid answers in 2003 or 2006. The treatment of missing data has always been a controversial practice. However, since replacement with mean score is a robust treatment, thus this a cautious treatment, which adds more credibility to the model if it still has explanatory power.

or civil servant”, which forms a large group in transitional economy like China or Vietnam. But we could speculate that, given the choices in the questionnaire, bureaucrats would choose managers of an organization or senior manager. Thus this group would largely overlap with the managerial middle class, which is not a big deal in our case.

The control variables are age, sex and education level. Age is continuous variable. Sex is binary variable: male is coded 1 and female 2. Education level is also a categorical variable, with low, medium and high education level.

Since the dependent variable, independent variables and control variables are missing more or less in some cases, the valid research sample is 492 cases, including 335 Chinese cases and 157 Vietnamese cases. The descriptive statistical report of the analytical sample is shown in Table 1:

Table 1. Descriptive statistical report: China Vs. Vietnam

Variables	China	Vietnam	Statistical Sig. Testing
Male (<i>Yes=1</i>)	.60	.52	$\chi^2 = 2.6418$
Age	36.52	35.57	$t = 1.0578$
Education			$\chi^2 = 2.59$
Low	.06	.02	
Medium	.15	.19	
High	.79	.79	
Middle class groups			$\chi^2 = 29.34^{***}$
Managerial Middle Class (<i>Yes=1</i>)	.32	.10	
Professional Middle Class (<i>Yes=1</i>)	.68	.90	
Internal Political Efficacy	7.87	9.85	$t = -8.88^{***}$
N	335	157	

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$ (One-tale Sig. Test)

First of all, we shall use a full model to see whether there is overall difference between Chinese middle class and Vietnamese middle class in terms of internal political efficacy.

$$\text{Model 1: } y_1 = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1(\text{Country}) + \alpha_2(\text{Age}) + \alpha_3(\text{Gender}) + \alpha_4(\text{Education level}) + \varepsilon_1$$

Tabel 2. OLS Regression of political efficacy between two countries

Variable	Model 1 (y_1)	
	Coef.	Std. Error
Age	.011	(.012)

Gender ^a	-.095	(.212)
Education level ^b		
Medium	-.555	(.553)
High	-.478	(.512)
Country		
Vietnam ^c	2.019***	(.225)
_cons	7.974***	(.726)
N	492	
<i>F</i>	16.23	
df	486	
Adj R ²	.134	

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001 (One-tale Sig. Test)

a. Male as the reference group b. Low education as the reference group

c. China as the reference group

Table 2 shows that, after controlling age, gender and education level, Vietnamese middle class has a significantly higher level of internal political efficacy compared with the Chinese middle class. Vietnam is about 2 times higher than China, if we arbitrarily take the coefficient as it is given in the model.

Hypothesis 1a is empirically supported and hypothesis 1b is not grounded as far as we can see from the data.

Strangely, none of the control variables has any explanatory power towards the middle class' internal political efficacy in these two transitional economies. This type of political attitude and orientation seems not vary with age, gender or education level in our sample.

Secondly, In order to analyze the internal differentiation within middle class, we then cross-tabulate the country and occupational group, making four categories—— Chinese managerial middle class (CMMC), Chinese professional middle class (CPMC), Vietnamese managerial middle class (VMMC), and Vietnamese professional middle class (VPMC).

We try to explore if middle class is fragmented within each country. Then we respectively set CMMC and VPMC as the reference group in model 2:

$$\text{Model 2: } y_2 = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1(\text{Country} * \text{Middle class}) + \alpha_2(\text{Age}) + \alpha_3(\text{Gender}) + \alpha_4(\text{Education level}) + \varepsilon_1$$

The results of regression model are displayed in table 3:

Tabel 3. OLS Regression of political efficacy within each country

Variable	Model 2 (y_2)	Variable	Model 2 (y_2)
Country * Middle class		Country * Middle class	
CMMC (as reference)		CMMC	-1.646** (.636)
CPMC	-.588* (.275)	CPMC	-2.234*** (.618)
VMMC	1.646** (.636)	VMMC	
VPMC	1.613*** (.300)	VPMC (as reference)	-.033 (.630)
Age	.009 (.012)	Age	.009 (.012)
Gender ^a	-.044 (.214)	Gender	-.044 (.214)
Education level ^b		Education level	
Medium	-.617 (.552)	Medium	-.617 (.552)
High	-.464 (.511)	High	-.464 (.511)
_cons	8.423*** (.754)	_cons	10.070*** (.936)
N	492	N	492
<i>F</i>	12.31	<i>F</i>	12.31
df	484	df	484
Adj R ²	.14	Adj R ²	.14

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$ (单侧检验)

a. Male as the reference group b. Low education as the reference group

Table 3 shows different patterns of middle class' internal political efficacy between two countries. In China, the professional middle class has a significantly weaker internal political efficacy compared to the managerial middle class, which supports hypothesis 2a.

In contrast, we could not find any internal differentiation within the Vietnamese middle class, meaning that professionals and managers/administrators have largely the same level of internal political efficacy. Hypothesis 2b has also gained evidence.

Furthermore, both sub-groups of the Vietnamese middle class depict higher level of internal political efficacy in comparison with the Chinese managerial middle class. Since managers in China have higher political efficacy than professionals, thus hypothesis 1a gets further support.

Analysis and Discussion

Based on the main findings, we may summarize several arguments.

Chinese middle class is not a highly homogeneous group. Instead, it is fragmented in terms of political attitude. This cleavage occurs between professional middle class and managerial middle class. These two groups have different relations with state regime, which results in divergent political attitude.

Managerial middle class has more opportunity of “simulative political participation”, which allows them to practice domination and manipulation in their work situation. They are closer to the powerful person or decision-making body, thus enjoy a higher level of autonomy and monitoring. These practices would grant them a feeling of “efficacy”—effectively casting influence on others. On the other hand, they possess organizational asset, which is bound to external position. The fear of losing the position and associated power would hamper their active participation in politics. Low expectation and high efficacy together lead to higher level of internal political efficacy.

Professional middle class, to the contrary, is farther away from the administrative power, and sometimes marginalized in the power hierarchy. They have much fewer opportunity of practicing politics and “simulative politics”. At the same time, they have knowledge asset at hand, and they naturally appeal to more political rights and participation. High expectation and fewer chances of real participation result in lower level of internal political efficacy.

Nevertheless, in Vietnam, no clear differentiation has occurred so far according to our data. We could not rush to any assertion now. Rather, we need more concrete evidence from various sources to arrive further argument. The measurement for internal political efficacy and the definition of middle class might be contested. It would need more cautious treatment. Apart from that, no difference within the middle class might also be attributed to other issues, for instance, the duration of the ongoing reform. It means that Vietnam shall depict similar pattern as the reform continues.

And we also find that the socio-political attitude of middle class is tremendously affected by the role of the state. To the transitional country, the state has played a significant role in cultivating and deepening the market institutions. In the expansion of modern bureaucracy grows a middle class. This group benefits from the retrieval of an omnipotent party and dominating command economy. Given enough opportunity to decision-making, they would enjoy the autonomy and have a say in the politics. The Vietnamese middle class has experienced an ever-shrinking party-state regime, thus overall shows a higher level of internal political efficacy; while the Chinese middle class does not confront a consistent power decentralization, the state reclaiming its domination over society and economy in the latter half of the reform, it deteriorates the middle class’ internal political efficacy.

The “fragmentation theory” proposed by Savage et al is illuminating to our understanding of the transitional contexts, though this theory is based on the western empiricals. Regime power and state role affect the middle class, and differently onto

the sub-groups, mainly through different assets in their possession. But to explore deep into the mechanism of how it takes effect and what effect it brings, and how it interacts with different political institutions, these questions are all substantial and needs further empirical studies and theoretical imagination.

Reference

- Acemoglu, D. & Robinson, J. A. (2006). *Economic origins of dictatorship and democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Alpert, W.T. (2005). (Eds.). *The Vietnamese economy and its transformation to an open market system*. New York: M.E.Sharpe.
- Boudarel, G. & Nguyen Van Ky (2002). *Hanoi—City of the rising Dragon*. Duiker, C. (Trans.). Lanham, ML: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC.
- Chan, A., Kerkvliet, B.J. T., & Unger, J. (1999). (Eds.). *Transforming Asian socialism: China and Vietnam compared*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Dahl, R. (1971). *Poliarchy: Participation and Opposition*. Yale, CT: Yale University Press.
- Erikson, R., & Goldthorpe, J. (1992). *The Constant Flux: A Study of Class Mobility in Industrial Societies*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Eyal, G., Szelényi, I., & Townsley, E. (1998). *Making capitalism without capitalists: Class formation and elite struggles in Post-Communist central Europe*. New York: VERSO.
- Gilens, M., Glaser, J., & Mendelberg, T. *Having a say: political efficacy in the context of direct democracy*. Paper prepared for the American Political Science Association annual meeting, San Francisco, CA, Aug. 30-Sep.2, 2001.
- Glewwe, P., Agrawal, N., & Dollar, D. (2004). (Eds.). *Economic Growth, Poverty, and Household Welfare in Vietnam*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.
- Goldthorpe, J. (1995). The service class revisited. In T. Butler & M. Savage (Eds.). *Social change and the middle classes*. London: University College London Press.
- Heath, A. & Savage, M. (1995). Political alignments within the middle classes, 1972-89. In T. Butler & M. Savage (Eds.). *Social change and the middle classes*. London: University College London Press.
- Karp, J. A. & Banducci, S. A. (2008). Political efficacy and participation in twenty-seven democracies: how electoral systems shape political behavior. In *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 38: 311-334.
- Kornai, J. & Qian, Yingyi. (2009). *Market and Socialism—In the light of the experiences of China and Vietnam*. London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Le Dang Doahn. (2009). Market economy with Socialistic orientation: the evolution in Vietnam. In J. Kornai & Yingyi Qian (Eds.). *Market and Socialism—In the light of the experiences of China and Vietnam* (pp.162-181). (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lipset, S. M. (1959). Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy. In *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 53: 69-105.

- Liu, Xin & Zhu, Yan (2010) *Middle class and voting in local congressional election*. Presentation in the 4th China Study Forum, Shanghai, China.
- Marsh, I., Blondel, J., & Inoguchi, T. (Eds.). (1999). *Democracy, governance, and economic performance: East and Southeast Asia*. Tokyo, Japan: United Nations University Press.
- McCormick, B. L. (1998). Political change in China and Vietnam: coping with the consequences of economic reform. In *The China Journal*, No. 40, Special issue, pp. 121-143.
- Mills, C. W. (1951). *White collar: the American middle classes*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Naughton, B. (2009). Market economy, hierarchy and single-party rule. In J. Kornai & Yingyi Qian (Eds.). *Market and Socialism—In the light of the experiences of China and Vietnam* (pp.135-161). (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- O'Rourke, D. (2004). *Community-driven regulation—Balancing development and the environment in Vietnam*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Savage, M., Barlow, J., Dickens, P. & Fielding, T. (1992). *Property, bureaucracy & culture—Middle-class formation in contemporary Britain*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Smail, J. (1994). *The origins of middle-class culture: Halifax, Yorkshire, 1660-1780*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Walder, A. G. (2003). Elite opportunity in transitional economies. In *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 68, No. 6, pp.899-916.
- Walder, A. G. & Nguyen, G. H. (2008). Ownership, organization, and income inequality: Market transition in rural Vietnam. In *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 73, April, pp251-269.
- [日]白石昌也 编，2006年，《越南政治、经济制度研究》，毕世鸿译，云南大学出版社。
- 布莱克，1988年，《现代化的动力》，四川人民出版社。
- 古小松 主编，2007年，《2007年越南国情报告》，社会科学文献出版社。
- 李春玲，2010年，“寻求变革还是安于现状？——中产阶级社会政治态度测量”，2010中国社会学年会论文。
- 李路曲，2002年，《东亚模式与价值重构：比较政治分析》，人民出版社。
- 李文，2003年，《东亚社会变革》，世界知识出版社。
- 李文 编，2007年，《东亚：政党政治与政治参与》，世界知识出版社。
- 廖建夏，“越南的经济发展”，载于《战后东南亚经济史（1945~2005年）》（pp.338-402），覃主元等著，2007年，民族出版社。
- 刘欣，“中国改革以来的制度变迁与阶层结构转型”，2010中国社会学年会论文。
- [日]窪田光純，1997年，《躍動的國家：越南》，林雅倩译，大展出版社有限公司。
- 吴敬琏，2003，《当代中国经济改革》，上海远东出版社。
- 萧新煌 编，民国78年（1989年），《变迁中台湾社会的中产阶级》，巨流图书公司。

叶富春 等著，2008 年，《东亚政府与政治比较研究》，黑龙江人民出版社。

[澳]约翰·芬斯顿 编，2007 年，《东南亚政府与政治》，张锡镇 等译，北京大学出版社。